THE SOMALIA JOURNAL

1992 - 1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All photographs used as part of the RNZAF contribution and selected articles throughout the book are RNZAF Official unless stated otherwise.

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Opinions expressed in this journal are those of the individual contributions from the veterans of Somalia and do not neccesarily reflect the views of the New Zealand Defence Force.

20 years on ... remembering our time in Somalia

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INTRODUCTION

BY LOU GARDINER

Writing this introduction to the Somalia Journal provides the opportunity to acknowledge the first major United Nations deployment for New Zealand military personnel in the post Korea era.

Often this deployment has been overlooked in articles and discussions about the deployment of New Zealand military personnel. This deployment was the start of a very busy twenty years of operational deployments for New Zealand military personnel and perhaps for the first time since Vietnam, politicians, reluctant to commit troops to operational deployments in any sort of numbers, understood there was a real role for New Zealand military personnel to play in humanitarian, peacekeeping, peace-making and combat environments.

In December 1992, the US was authorised to organise the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) to establish a secure environment for humanitarian operations in Somalia. This was in response to a famine in Somalia where thousands of people were starving and many dying. The pictures on television were graphic and it was difficult not to be moved by the plight of these people. The real issue was not that food wasn't being provided by the relief agencies but that the food was held up at the Port as Somali militia extorted money from the relief agencies to allow the distribution of the food.

In March 1993, the UN established the United Nations Operation Somalia (UNOSOM2) to take over from UNITAF. UNOSOM2 was tasked with taking the appropriate steps to establish throughout Somalia a secure environment for humanitarian assistance. They were to do this through disarmament and reconciliation in order to produce the restoration of peace, stability, law and order.

The NZ Government was invited to make a contribution to UNOSOM2 and decided on a Supply Platoon, RNZAF personnel and three Andover aircraft and some Staff Officers to the UNOSOMII Headquarters for a 12 month period. Our Australian colleagues provided an Infantry Battalion for 4 months, in which it was allocated a Humanitarian Relief Sector and tasked with restoring peace, an Air Movements Group and Air Traffic Control personnel.

This deployment of NZ military personnel into a hostile environment was a first for many years, althoughbeit a small medical team was deployed to the Middle East in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It was a UN mission with a Chapter 7 mandate, that is, it was peace-making, not peacekeeping, which immediately indicates there was not much peace to keep. The Supply Platoon established its accommodation on a large sand dune on the seaward side of Mogadishu airfield while the RNZAF personnel established their accommodation reasonably close to where their Andover aircraft were located. Both locations often received rounds into their locations vividly reminding people that this operation had some real dangers. Rounds do not have to be aimed to wound or kill.

The Supply Platoon personnel were on occasions subject to fire as they moved between the Port, where they worked, and the airfield. When one considers the inexperience of NZ personnel in regards operational deployments, they handled this operational environment very well. The Officers and Non- Commissioned Officers stepped up to the plate. The personnel lost nothing alongside their much larger and more experienced contingents. They mixed well, they respected other military personnel, they were accepted as true military professionals and their performance earned them respect. They also mixed well with the Somali workers, treating them with respect. This approach is a characteristic of New Zealanders in general and the NZ military personnel were great ambassadors in demonstrating the characteristic.

The NZ suppliers employed at the Port numbered about 15 and supported a force of upwards of 30,000 at its peak, in rations. Every day they worked with the respective contingent's liaison officers ensuring that their ration demands were filled and ready for uplift.

Throughout the deployment the ANZAC relationship was enhanced greatly as personnel worked together well when this was required and assisted each other when the occasion arose. In the US Embassy compound, ANZAC house was the name of the facility where most the Australian contingent was accommodated. Many a drink and much banter were shared within this facility. Australian and NZ military personnel rekindled the relationship that had been built up over many operations and training exercises. As one Australian stated, "although we take the mickey out of each other, there is no other soldier that we would want in the next pit than a NZ soldier.". This statement sums up the ANZAC relationship.

The UNOSOMII mission ran from March 1993 to March 1995. New Zealand's participation in UNOSOMII finished in November 1994 and the last three New Zealanders in the mission were Lieutenant- Colonels Gardiner and Lilley and Major McDonald.

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OFFR

EDITORIAL

BY DEAN GROVES
(Somalia Veteran)

It is the last week of August 2013, I am writing this editorial and the journal still has a few articles to come from other veterans. All the articles were supposed to be completed in July, but I guess that is what you get when these projects are tackled and I should have known better having been the editor of the Army softball 60 year journal in 2009. Oh well, I am sure that the pain of putting it together will be well worth it.

I will also point out from the outset that I am not an editor in the true sense of the word. This journal was always intended to be a series of summaries from each rotation, accompanied by personal stories put together and merged into a journal by myself (the putter-togetherer). Being extremely passionate about my time in Somalia, volunteering to be part of the journal and the reunion committee was a fairly easy decision, but it does come with a cost.

When the journal was first mentioned, there were a few people from each rotation who volunteered to rally the troops and ask for contributions. After I did a bit of digging around I learned that there were three Army and two Air Force rotations based out of the Mogadishu Airport, and NZ military personnel employed at the Embassy. Only the middle rotation of the NZ Supply Platoon deployments managed to produce their own journal following their return to NZ. Their journal was a brilliant idea and a valuable tool to help trigger memories and flashbacks as the time passed. With the unrecorded history of New Zealand's contribution to Somalia and the reunion planned for 2013, the journal was a no-brainer.

Unfortunately, the momentum of the journal was very slow throughout the whole process, with the inevitable last-minute rush.

The articles you will read have the names and ranks of the authors as they were named and ranked 20 years ago, so when you see LtCol Lou Gardiner and not Chief of Army (MajGen Rtd), you'll know why.

When I corresponded with Simon Tregear (OC NZ Sup Pl 1994) by email in May 2013, he put the intent of the journal into perspective rather nicely. He said "… the journal will offer everyone interesting insights and contrasts between the rotations…".

With articles coming from different people, different Services, different rotations, and Somalia being commonly referred to as the 'Wild West', the journal is nicely poised to be our very own Wild West journal.

See what you think. Enjoy!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE

BY LTGEN RHYS JONES

The New Zealand Army and Air Force deployments to Somalia, from December 1992 to June 1994, mark a time of significant change in our operational deployments. The Cold War was over and the new "Peace Support" environment was significantly different to the past and not well understood. Whereas in the previous few decades we had become used to deploying to missions where state governments had agreed to ceasefires and there was a peace to keep, Somalia signalled a move to deployments in intra-state conflict situations, where 'peace' was fragile at best.

The first group into Somalia was the NZ Supply Detachment who set up their camp on a large sand dune within Mogadishu Airport. "Taniwha Hill" quickly became a popular spot as it overlooked the entire airfield and also had a spectacular view of the Indian Ocean. The Supply Detachment established and operated two facilities: a Rations Warehouse at the Sea Port and General Stores Warehouse at the Airport. The New Zealanders' networking and scavenging skills quickly came into effect in targeting the UN and the American forces to acquire those things that were needed for both the formal supply role and also for improving the comfort of Taniwha Hill.

In early 1993 the contingent in Mogadishu was joined by a 42 Sqn element with three Andover aircraft that established a large tented camp on the airfield. The RNZAF flew humanitarian aid, PSYOPS leaflet drops and the movement of UNITAF troops and NGO and equipment within the Somalia theatre.

There were also New Zealanders on the headquarters staff, whose roles, exploits and stories of danger are equally as important as the contingents.

There were three NZ Supply contingents (6 months each) and two RNZAF rotations (3 months each). In all, approximately 130 Army and 120 Air Force personnel deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia.

As has often been the case in our deployments, early on the threat to our people was low, and driving around the city was initially allowed. However, the security situation quickly deteriorated meaning that movement around the city and the immediate countryside was heavily restricted and mainly by Black Hawk helicopter. The NZDF at that time certainly did not have the sophisticated personal protection gear that we have today and it was a new environment to be wearing fragmentation vests and helmets, even when in the main headquarters camp. In our typical pragmatic New Zealand way, those who deployed trusted in their luck and professionalism, got on with the job, and did themselves and the NZDF proud. Again, in line with the nature of New Zealanders deployed on operations, numerous foreign partners and UN civilian staff were introduced to the Kiwi way of doing things including the haka and guitar songs late in the evening.

The Somalia mission risks becoming one of the many "forgotten missions" for the NZDF as it was quickly overshadowed by the much higher profile missions in the Balkans. If it hadn't been for the incident on October 3 and 4 1993 and the resulting movie Black Hawk Down, the dangers of the mission and New Zealand's involvement in Mogadishu would probably not have the recognition that they deserve.

Finally, I wish to pass my regards to all those who will gather for the reunion. It has now been twenty years since your deployment, and although missions since that time have taken a greater profile in the minds of the New Zealand public, as Chief of the Defence Force, I assure you that the record of achievement by the contingents is one that is honoured and respected, and that the personal danger that all were exposed to is recognised. Well done and thank you for what you have achieved.

BACKGROUND TO INTERVENTION

BY DAVID HAYNES

FOR MORE DETAIL SEE; The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996, The United Nations Blue Book Series, Volume V111, United Nations, New York, 1996.

“The efforts of the United Nations to end the human suffering in Somalia, foster reconciliation among the warring factions and promote national reconstruction led to one of the most challenging, arduous undertakings in the Organization’s 50-year history.”

Unlike most African countries, whose populations are divided culturally and linguistically into different tribes, Somalia is a relatively uniform country. The Somalis have a clan structure with the same language, culture and religion shared between all clans. Whilst many Somalis live in neighbouring countries, such as Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, the vast majority of Somalia’s inhabitants are ethnically Somali.

In colonial times, Somalia had been two separate colonies, the southern one run by the Italians and the northern one by the British. During the Second World War the British occupied Italian Somaliland. After the war the United Nations voted to grant independence to a united Somalia and in 1960, the two former colonies became one independent country. Due to the apparent uniformity of the population it was widely felt that Somalia had a solid foundation for political stability. Indeed, for the first nine years of its existence Somalia was governed under a parliamentary system. However, due to the deeply traditional clan structure, where elders and chiefs have considerable influence and individuals can trace their relations back many generations, western democracy proved fragile. There were many different parties, with coalitions being formed and re-formed in pursuit of clan interests. There were assassinations both of politicians and of public officials. Ultimately in 1969 the armed forces staged a coup. A long period of rule by President Mohamed Siad Barre followed.

During the Cold War both superpowers maintained an interest in Somalia due to its strategic location dominating the southern approach to the Red Sea, and thus to the Suez Canal. Both the Soviet Union and the USA had influence at different times, resulting in Somalia receiving military equipment of many types and in Mogadishu airport having one of the longest runways in Africa.

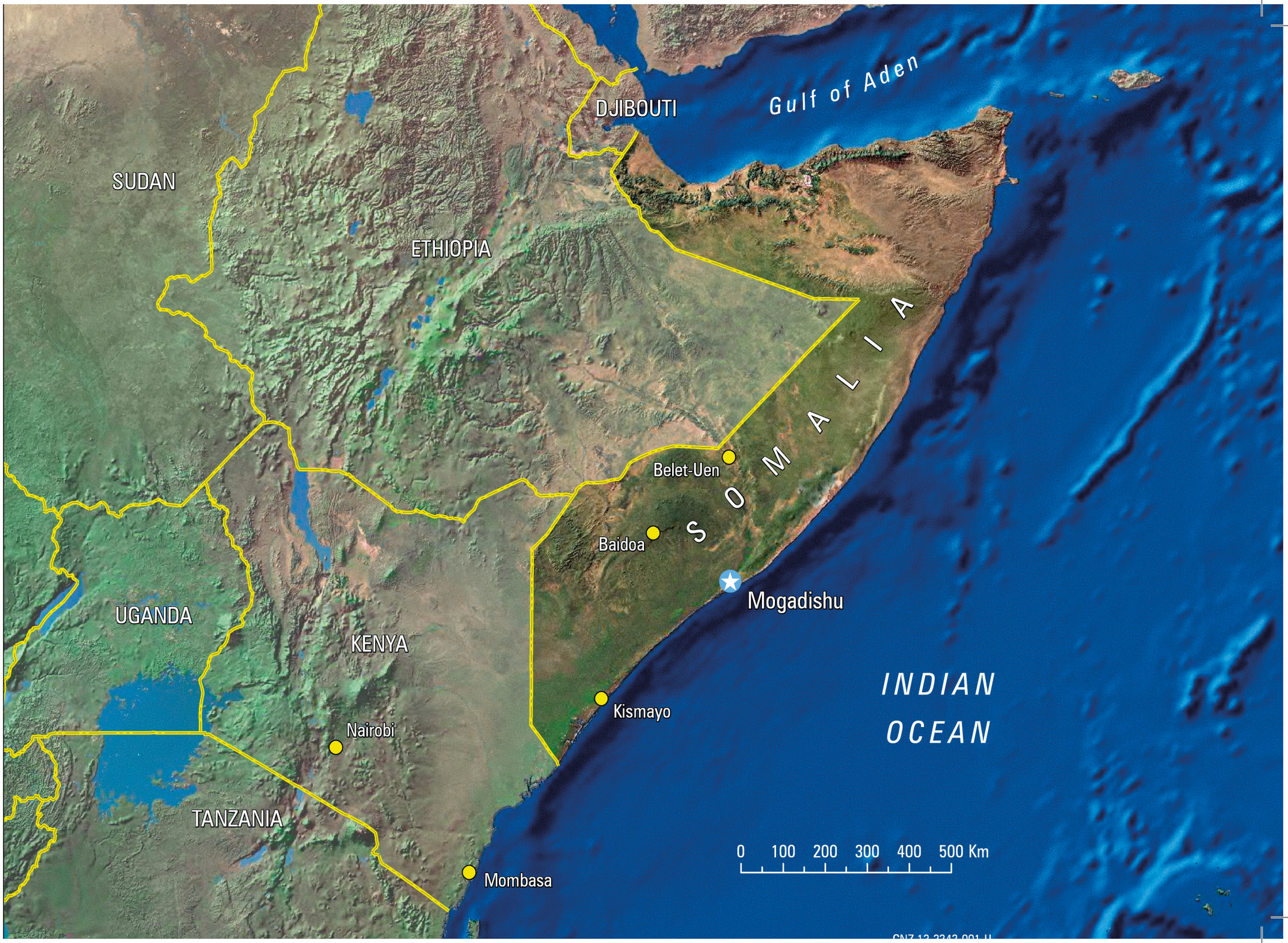
The Siad Barre Government proved authoritarian. It did not develop a broad political support base amongst the clans. Then, in 1977 and 1978 it fought a disastrous war with Ethiopia over the Somali-inhabited Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Ogaden flooded into Somalia. This upset local clan relationships within Somalia and contributed to instability. In 1978 there was a failed coup attempt. Coup members who escaped formed an armed opposition movement. Other armed opposition groups also formed and by 1981 a guerrilla war had started. Things worsened considerably in 1988 when one of the rebel groups captured the regional capital of Hargeysa. The government’s response was to destroy the city using aircraft and artillery. Possibly up to 50,000 people were killed, some 500,000 were driven from their homes and 370,000 fled to Ethiopia. Other regional, clan based, groups took up arms against the government.

By 1989, discontent with President Mohamed Siad Barre’s rule, including allegations of human rights abuses, lead to rioting in the capital, Mogadishu.

Fighting spread, with members of the different clans largely supporting their fellow clan members. A state of emergency was finally declared in December 1990. Siad Barre was overthrown in early 1991 and, although a new government was appointed, fighting continued and the institutions of a functioning state disintegrated. Large numbers of heavy weapons were captured by various factions.

Throughout 1991, there was fighting between various factional militias. The country began to disintegrate, with provinces in the North declaring independence. The fighting spread south of Mogadishu into the country’s main agricultural production area, between the Shabelle and Juba rivers. Crop production was disrupted, grain stores were looted and the prospect of famine loomed. By November 1991, there was intense conflict in Mogadishu itself. The major players were General Mohamed Farah Aideed of the Habr Gedir sub-clan of the Hawiye and Ali Mahdi Mohamed of the Abgal sub-clan. Both of these ‘warlords’ had at different times been declared president. The fighting in Mogadishu lasted for four months. Tanks, artillery were used, along with ‘technicals’ – pickup trucks mounted with heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft guns.

The widespread conflict resulted not only in the disruption of food production and looting of food stores but also in the disintegration of the instruments of modern society: police and courts disappeared, power generation and telecommunications ceased, power lines and telephone cables were looted. Essential services were not supported. Only 15 of the country’s 70 hospitals and clinics were still functioning by early 1992, and these lacked medical supplies.


Gulf of Aden
DJIBOUTI
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
Belet-Uen
Baidoa
Mogadishu
UGANDA
KENYA
Kismayo
Nairobi
INDIAN
OCEAN
TANZANIA
Mombasa
0 100 200 300 400 500 Km

Various UN and other aid agencies had been trying to provide relief and assistance, but the conflict in Mogadishu rendered them almost ineffectual and most were withdrawn.

The situation for the population of Somalia became perilous. From January 1992, the United Nations attempted to negotiate with the warring parties. By 3 March 1992, it appeared that both Ali Mahdi and General Aideed had agreed to a cease-fire. For the moment, open conflict ceased. It appeared that a small United Nations peacekeeping force would be welcomed into Mogadishu to supervise the cease-fire and to escort relief supplies. This did not mean that conflict ceased or that rational behaviour resumed. Two days after the cease-fire was agreed on 5 March 1992, a ship carrying wheat donated by the World Food Programme was shelled in order to prevent it unloading in Mogadishu.

In April 1992, the United Nations resolved to establish UNOSOM, later to be called UNOSOM I to distinguish it from the later, larger and more broadly mandated operation. This was a small operation and the situation continued to deteriorate. Concurrent with the establishment of UNOSOM I, humanitarian aid efforts were intensified. By mid 1992 the scale of the humanitarian disaster that was unfolding was still not widely understood; of a $117 million aid appeal issued by the United Nations in January 1992 only $41 million had been pledged by July 1992. However, by this time some momentum in the aid effort had been developed. On 27 July, the Security Council approved an emergency airlift of food to three southern regional capitals.

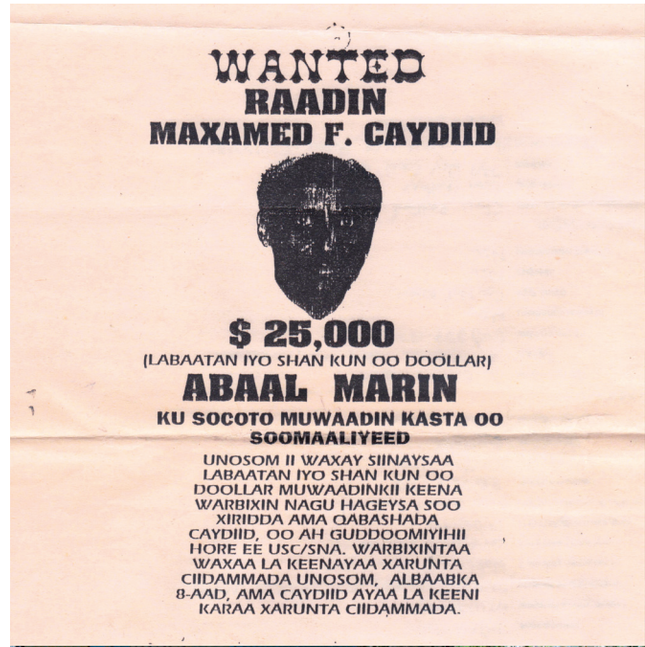
By July 1992, with scenes of mass starvation and suffering appearing nightly on the television news, the USA also felt compelled to act. At about the same time as the United Nations emergency airlift was approved the USA launched their own airlift; ‘Operation Provide Relief’. Finally famine related death rates began to fall.

As 1992 progressed the leading clan warlord in Mogadishu, Mohamed Farah Aideed, gained confidence and began to oppose the UN presence. He was not the only opponent or disruptive influence; for example, in August 1992 armed gangs looted the first large food shipment to reach Kismayo in the South. The continuing violence and chaos threatened to reverse the limited gains that had been made. It became apparent that the small UNOSOM force planned for Mogadishu would be inadequate to allow humanitarian aid to reach all those that needed it and, even before the first 500 Pakistani troops arrived on 14 September, plans were made to enlarge the force. This enlargement included additional personnel for the logistic support of UNOSOM. The New Zealand Supply Detachment (NZ Sup Det) was formed and deployed as part of UNOSOM I.

CDF Directive 16/92 was signed on the 22 Oct 1992. It stated, in part: “… requested that New Zealand contribute up to 27 personnel, consisting of a 25 man supply platoon, who will form part of the Logistics Battalion, plus two Headquarters staff on UNOSOM HQ …The primary task of the supply contingent will be to provide the central supply facility for the entire UNOSOM mission by coordinating the local supply and distribution of all rations, fuel and general stores.” This ‘platoon’ became NZ Sup Det. The two headquarters staff became four initially, and then grew. Their stories are told elsewhere in this journal.

By November 1992, there was widespread media coverage of the humanitarian catastrophe appearing on the televisions in sitting rooms around the world. On 25 November, an informal meeting of the Security Council discussed taking more forceful measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This permits the Council to authorise military action to restore peace, something which has become known as ‘peacemaking’ as opposed to ‘peacekeeping’. The same day the United States offered to lead a large military operation if the Security Council authorised more forceful measures. Following a meeting on 29 November, on 3 December the Security Council authorised the use of ‘all necessary means’ (code for the use of force). Thus, with UN approval, the USA formed and deployed the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) under the codename Operation Restore Hope. UNITAF was not commanded or funded by the United Nations. The USA commanded the force and individual contributing nations paid their own bills. The RNZAF contingent in Somalia formed part of UNITAF and thus came under a completely different command chain to the NZ Army troops already with UNOSOM. The RNZAF story is told elsewhere in this journal.

Filmed by the world’s press on 9 December 1992, US Marines swept onto the beaches of Mogadishu in hovercraft. Within three weeks UNITAF forces had restored sufficient peace to southern Somalia to allow relief efforts to proceed effectively. UNITAF also established a cease-fire monitoring group and the various warring factions agreed to stop fighting, to place their heavy weapons in custody, to disarm gunmen and to demobilise their militias. For a moment it seemed that the post Cold War world could resolve conflicts and that the world’s only superpower could impose peace.



But the USA did not want to remain in Somalia indefinitely and, even before UNITAF's deployment, had negotiated with the United Nations to form a stronger UNOSOM with a mandate that would allow the use of force. This was to become UNOSOM II.

On 26 March 1993, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 814 (1993). This resolution authorised an enlarged UNOSOM, UNOSOM II. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, UNOSOM II had the right to use force. The first New Zealand staff on the UN force headquarters arrived in late April 1993. UNOSOM II took over the command of operations on 4 May 1993 and the USA announced that Operation Restore Hope was complete and that Operation Continue Hope had begun.

American logistics troops formed part of UNOSOM II, but in addition the USA maintained an infantry Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in Mogadishu as backup and reserve for UNOSOM II. The QRF was not under UN command. They were commanded by the US Army's Major General Montgomery, who was also UNOSOM II's deputy commander. Further complexity in the command structure was added in August 1993 when, in response to the killing of a number of American soldiers, US special forces were deployed to Mogadishu. These troops did not report to Major General Montgomery, but direct to US Central Command in Florida. With three different forces, under three different command structures but operating in the same place, the stage was set for further tragedy.

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NZ SUPPLY DETACHMENT
22 OCTOBER 1992 TO 8 JULY 1993

LCPL NATHAN DONALDSON

The above article highlights the background surrounding the deployment of a 28-strong force that would be referred to as New Zealand Supply Detachment (NZSUPDET). This detachment would deploy and provide supply support to the 3500-5000 UN Troops that would contribute to the United Nation Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

The majority of personnel deploying were from 21 Field Supply Company based in Linton Military Camp. However, with the likelihood that further rotations would be required it was important to ensure supply personnel were selected from several Royal New Zealand Army Ordnance Corp units. The 28 strong team also included a medic, signaller and electrician/mechanic.

I think Capt Mike Mendonca's words are even more poignant now than they were when he wrote them. I quote: "In the years to come I am sure the horrors of Somalia will fade in our memories, and more pleasant recollections will be of the good times at Taniwha Hill, and of friendships that will last forever. None of us will ever forget (or regret) being part of history." Mike Mendonca, Pataka, 1993.

With these words let's begin our journey.

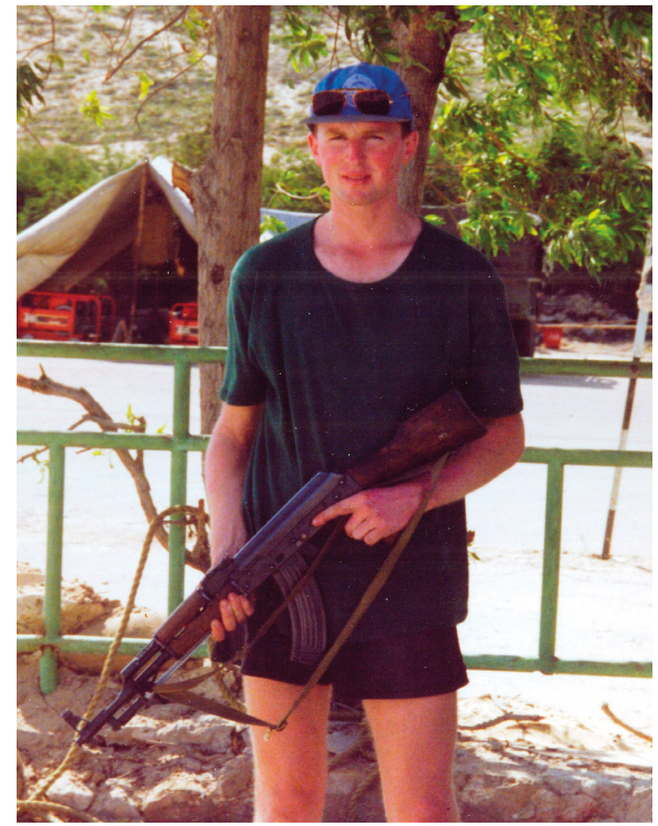
Nathan

NZ OFFERS TROOPS FOR
SOMALIA PEACEKEEPING ROLE

New Zealand has offered 28 troops to assist United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The move announced by Prime Minister Jim Bolger yesterday, comes just a week before the vote in the United Nations Security Council elections.

New Zealand is campaigning for one of the seats on the council, but officials were declining to link the bid to the troop offer. Mr Bolger said New Zealand contribution would be in a support role.

Article Dominion Newspaper Nov 1992



DETACHMENT DIARY

Date	Activity
October 1992	
Thursday 22nd	CDF Directive: 16/92 UNOSOM NZ SUP DET Formation Released
	During 2 LFG Skill At Arms 21 Sup Coy Soldiers informed of deployment
November 1992	
Friday 20th	NZ Sup Det Advance Party Departs NZ via Singapore, India, Pakistan and Kenya
December 1992	
Wednesday 9th	US Marines Land
Saturday 26th	RNZAF Reconnaissance Party depart NZ

Date	Activity
January 1993	
Monday 4th	Main Body meant to depart but didn't
Tuesday 5th and 6th	RNZAF UNITAF Rotation One arrives in Mogadishu
Wednesday 6th	Main Body departs Linton
Thursday 7th	Main Body departs NZ (Via Sydney, Singapore, Oman)
	RNZAF Andover's Arrive in Mogadishu
Friday 8th 0730hrs	Main Body Arrives in Mogadishu
Saturday15th	Pte T Kareko has kevlar helmet and UN hat stolen by US troops
Tuesday 19th	Pet Ops start working with the Americans
Thursday 21st	Mike Archer departs for Nairobi Local Purchase Cell
Saturday 23rd	Taniwha Hill Tavern opened - BBQ
Sunday 24th	Kiwis vs Americans Rugby International (Kiwi 30 - US nil)

Date	Activity
February 1993	
Friday 5th	Brigadier Bestic and Major Ngatai visit Mogadishu
Saturday 6th	New Zealand Day Celebrations
Friday 19th	Block One 60 hour leave break starts
Saturday 20th	Deputy Prime Minister (Don McKinnon) visits Mogadishu
Monday 22nd to 26th	WO2 Harding & Cpl Haami deploy to Djibouti to inspect UN POL and ORPs. Good holiday as they weren't there.
March 1993	
Thursday 4th	Kiwis vs Nondies Rugby International, Nairobi, Kenya (Kiwis lost)
Wednesday 17th	UNOSOM Chief Procurement Officer accuses Stores Section of mismanagement of airport warehouse
Friday 19th	Block Two 60 hour leave break starts
Sunday 28th ish	RNZAF UNITAF Rotation Two arrives
Monday 29th ish	RNZAF UNITAF Rotation One departs

Date	Activity
April 1993	
	Out of Theatre (OTL) leave breaks start
Friday 2nd	Lt Col Lou Gardiner departs after visit
Saturday 3rd	Tavern Extension Completed (stage three)
Tuesday 6th	Mid-tour celebrations for main body
Sunday 25th	ANZAC Day Commemorations
Dawn parade	
Sports activities (Soccer, Swimming and Donkey races)	
Hangi (300 Guests)	
Wednesday 28th ish	Lt Col David Haynes (SNO) and WO2 Peter Haines arrive Mogadishu (attached to UNOSOM II HQ)

Date	Activity
May 1993	
Friday 07th	Block Three 60 hour leave break starts
Wednesday 19th	Advance Party depart theatre (less Capt Mike Mendonca)
Saturday 22nd	Cpl Dion Rennie (compassionate) and Sig Steve Gobles (medevac) depart theatre for RTNZ
Friday 28nd ish	SGT Derek Billing (RNZAF) replaces Sig Goble
RNZAF UNITAF Rotation Two departs Mogadishu	

Date	Activity
June 1993	
Saturday 5th	23 Pakistani troops ambushed and killed in Mogadishu
Airport mortared and NZ Sup Det retreat to shell scrapes	
Monday 7th	All UN Civilians evacuated from Mogadishu
10-11 Jun	Taniwha Hill defences improved (shell scrapes and concertina)
Mon 14 Jun	Nathan Donaldson extracted to Nairobi for Aircraft loading TOD
Thur 17th	Two more Pakistani soldiers killed
Sat 26th	Nairobi, NZ Sup Det started loading Norwegian C130 at 3am and finished 3pm. Nathan Donaldson injured slightly at after match function (“went to Carnivores, fell down split my head open”)

Date	Activity
July 1993	
Sunday 4th	Lt Col Haynes and Sgt Tyler meet Advance Party NZ Supply Platoon in Nairobi
Monday 5th	NZ Supply Platoon Advance Party arrive in Mogadishu
Wednesday 6th	Main Body NZ Sup Pl arrive in Mogadishu on 2 x RNZAF C130.
NZ Sup Det Main Body depart Mogadishu for Kenya	
Thursday 8th	Rear Party (Sgt Tyler and WO2 Harding) depart Mogadishu for Kenya

Aug/Sep 1993	
	Contingent debrief and Reunion
NZ Sup Det disbanded	

WO2 TONY HARDING (CSM)

After some gentle persuasion from Richard, I offer some of my recollections of NZ Sup Det events prior to the main body eventually deploying.

Pre-deployment training went extremely well given it was developed, organised and run for the most part by ourselves. Considering that we had no idea on what we would be encountering, not a bad effort. Mark Sweeting ran our range shoots, and no-one could remember when they last had the opportunity to open fire on full automatic.

The RSM of 2 LFG offered words of wisdom for the boys, about lessons learnt in Vietnam. Unfortunately, it was based around what not to do whilst on R & R, but nothing about Training, Techniques and Procedures to practise in Mogadishu. There are fond memories of the injections, injections and more bloody injections. Eventually the dreaded bend over and touch your toes test. This won't hurt a bit, which certainly brought tears to a number of the guy's eyes.

A special bouquet must go to Major Carol Ngatai who established a strong information network for our families and dependants and throughout the whole pre-deployment build-up training she provided top cover for the team.

Comdr 2 LFG Col Rick Ottaway could be one mean son of a gun at times, but truly showed me a different style of his leadership during pre-deployment. I was summoned to his office; he wanted to know what welfare equipment for the troops had we packed? He then gave me his blessing to go and buy a whole lot more. Hence the well stocked games in the recreation tent, fridges, video etc. At one stage we were going to buy small beer fridges for each of the boys' accommodation tents, until reality kicked in on how where we going to run all of them.

I have to give a raspberry, to those involved in having myself and a few of the team go up on orders in the final week of training (just to add the stress). Again my new found friend Comdr 2 LFG put a stop to all that rubbish. So, be wary about following UPF accounting procedures in the future. Some people needed to find a real job.

I felt extremely sorry for our OC Capt Mike Mendonca and his then fiancée Stacey, whose wedding plans kept changing due to the lack of confirmed deployment dates. Of course the same angst was felt by the other boys' families. Blow me down Capt Mike's RTNZ dates also fell through, some guys had all the luck.

It was great that the advance party got away, but still wondering how come all the officers left with it. We Senior NCOs plucked our way through TV interviews and even a live radio interview with Paul Holmes whilst waiting at Auckland airport.

I have a fond memory of sending Mike Te Hau and Dion Rennie around to undertake a couple of welfare tasks at Gary Carver's house after he left on the advance party. It wasn't long before I received a distressed phone call from Gary's wife, that the boys had murdered their boundary hedge. Mike's answer was that it won't need trimming again for at least a year.

Last word of special thanks must go to the partners, wives and families of the team. Their resilience never wavered during a very unsettling period, and provided fantastic support whilst we were deployed.

All in all, many valuable lessons were learnt during our build up training, and no doubt we could have done it better. That said, I personally believe that the team gave 110%. With a little Kiwi ingenuity and great attitude, it worked and we got there and got the job done!

A/SGT RICHARD TYLER

RICHARD'S NZ SUPPLY DETACHMENT BLOG

THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

(Except what I missed out or jazzed up a bit)

During September and October no doubt the NZ Government, NZDF and the UN discussed and negotiated on a commitment from NZ to UNOSOM. Pakistan had committed the combat troops for security who formed PAKBATT (a Pakistani infantry Battalion of 500 Soldiers) and were stationed at the Airport and Sea Port. NZ began looking at options of logistic support for humanitarian aid …

How about a transport Squadron for aid distribution?

No, we'd need to send a maintenance element and spares support.

We could send some Suppliers, the UN said they have some forklifts they could use.

We can send them with the clothes on their back.

The CDF Directive 16/92 was signed on 22 October 1992, requesting that New Zealand contribute up to 27 personnel, consisting of a 25 man supply platoon, who will form part of the Logistics Battalion, plus two headquarters staff in the UNOSOM HQ.

"The primary task of the supply contingent will be to provide the central supply facility for the entire UNOSOM mission by coordinating the local supply and distribution of all rations, fuel and general stores."

NZ sent a recon party to Mogadishu in late 1992 (Lt Col Bruce Young and Maj Kevin Johnson). Meanwhile the deployed force component was decided and personnel were put to positions. By now we were forming as a team and had been named the New Zealand Supply Detachment (NZ Sup Det). So we had a name and an ORBAT, the contingent formed and pre deployment training (PDT) was conducted in Waiouru and Linton.

A word on NZSUPDET personnel

The personnel selected for the first rotation were the usual bunch of individuals, everyone had their own personalities, but what defined the detachment was that 60% of the members had been in the same unit for three years and up to 75% had been in the same unit for the past year. The 60% came from the Ready Reaction Force (RRF) Ordnance Support Group (OSG), the first operationally-focused Ordnance Unit formed by the Army in a number of years. The OSG had no in-base dependency, so this focussed their efforts on field force support. When the RRF moved to Linton at the end of 1992 it integrated with 21Field Supply Company and many of the OSG attributes were brought with it. The second defining attribute was the identity of Corps, unlike later contingents: only three members of NZSUPDET were not members of the RNZAOC. Instead of Infantry and Armour, the Army were sending suppliers to war.

"The contingent undertook frantic training in first aid, Arabic language and culture, weapons handling and stress management. There were endless inspections, briefs and innumerable needles at the MIR." – Mike Mendonca, Pataka 1993.

Richard Tyler writes: I was named as the 2IC for the General Stores Section, but luckily for me the Sergeant who was to be the IC decided that an operational deployment was not for him. So even though we had some non-travelling reserves conducting PDT, I was appointed to the IC position with acting rank. If I remember rightly, the next challenge was passing the medical examinations, while we were all fit and healthy for service in NZ, it seemed that some of us suddenly became physical wrecks that Doctors and Nurses believed would be unable to survive deployment. I was threatened with non deployment by a nurse due to liver issues, probably caused by pre-deployment celebrating. Luckily she accepted my argument that I would have a lot less access to alcohol in Somalia than I would if I didn't deploy – well, it wasn't a lie, but in hindsight!

Preparations gathered pace, the NZ Sup Det was advised that we had to carry thirty days of rations and water, packaged in white 20L plastic containers (this was later rescinded). About three years later the plastic containers were sold via disposals). Numerous kit checks ensued including a kit check by the LFG Commander on the Linton parade ground, which at least got us issued a second pair of desert boots.

The advance party deployed on 20 November 1992, the plan was for the main party to depart the following week. The advance party got as far as Nairobi, Kenya, and spent three weeks blocked from entering Somalia… waiting…waiting…waiting, meanwhile the main party remained in NZ…waiting…waiting…waiting.

Why? "In August 92, the UN Security Council endorsed sending another 3,000 troops. Factions in Somalia were splintering into smaller factions and splintering again. Agreements for food distribution with one party were worthless when the stores had to be shipped through the territory of another. Some elements were actively opposing the UNOSOM intervention… and had grown confident enough to formally defy the Security Council

and demand the withdrawal of peacekeepers, as well as declaring hostile intent against further UN Deployments".

When we finally got into Somalia and began talking to the UN expats, they came out with some good swinging light stories of happenings while the security situation deteriorated. Is there any truth behind them? Probably, but in my twenty years in retelling them maybe not much.

THE HIJACKED PLANE

A light aircraft travelling (from Nairobi to one of the airstrips outside of Mogadishu) with a party of UN civilians on board, landed and was greeted by some Somalia-based UN types. As they greeted each other on the ground, a Somali with his AK47 had climbed in the aircraft, took a seat in the cockpit, opened the window and informed the crowd outside that 'I own the plane'. Following negotiations, the Somali sold the plane back to the pilots for a considerable amount of money – what he did not know was that onboard the plane was a bag containing $1 million US that was being transferred to the UN staff in Mogadishu.

UN RENTAL CARS

When the UN descended on Mogadishu, it needed some wheels, so a fleet of brand new white Land Cruisers was purchased and delivered; of course a big Black 'UN' was painted on the doors to indicate ownership. Of course, one of these vehicles was stolen from outside the UN compound. What wasn't expected was that the next morning the car was back out front with the UN painted over and with a driver ready to drive the UN personnel around as required… in his vehicle. It was easier to employ the driver and his vehicle than to take possession back.

Events took a turn and the US Marines invaded. On 8 December 1992, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit performed an unopposed amphibious assault on the city of Mogadishu. Operation Restore Hope had begun and in the next few days the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) took form.

However, the Americans were able to calm the security situation and the NZ Contingent Advance Party were able to check out of Nairobi and check into Mogadishu, meanwhile the main party remained in NZ…waiting… waiting…waiting. Instead of we'll be home by Christmas, it became a call of we'll be gone by Christmas. UNOSOM I was effectively out of business as Big Brother was running the show.

THE MAIN BODY IN MOTION

Christmas came and went, the advance party were holding the logistic baby in Mogadishu. Under trying circumstances with bad equipment, they unloaded the UNOSOM supply ship, with 33 containers of rations and POL. The refrigeration on the containers had broken and the rotten food needed to be disposed of. Meanwhile, the local population could access the area and were distracting personnel and then stealing the supplies.

The main body got its marching orders, we reassembled in Linton and around 6 January 1993, departed for Auckland by bus. We stayed overnight at a hotel in Greenlane across from One Tree Hill and in the evening we were visited by Brigadier Bestic (Commander, Land Command) who farewelled us with the help of his Visa card.

We arrived at the airport and after a short delay of a couple of hours boarded the UN chartered aircraft that was to take us and the Australian contingent to Mogadishu. The aircraft was a DC10 configured so that the front half carried freight and the rear half had seats for the passengers

As we got clearance to depart the pilot gave us the good news, "Right we are off" and to the stewardesses "give them all a beer". The plane winged its way to Sydney, Singapore and Oman, while we quietly drank the UN's hospitality for the next 18 hours. Sometime in the night the plane landed in Muscat and we were disembarked into the airport transit area for six hours.

The aircraft left at 0-light hundred for the last hop, arriving mid-morning on the tarmac at Mogadishu. The main party disembarked to be greeted by a clearly happy advance party. After a catch up and a quick breather the invasion was over and the occupation began.

"Whilst staking a claim in the airport was easy, keeping the land grabbing Americans off our million dollar real estate was a constant problem. However in a moment of bilateral fervour (which incidentally didn't last long) the Norwegian HQ Company came to our aid with a 24 hour guard on the hill. Our real estate secure we eagerly awaited the arrival of the main body. On 8 January, they arrived. Several hours later the transformation of a Somali hill began, and the world famous Kiwi ingenuity emerged. A gravity-fed four stand shower was erected". - Tim Howard, Pataka, 1993.

What was to become Taniwha Hill started off as a patch of sand on top of a hillock, on one side an Airport, on the other a cliff leading to Indian Ocean. To the left of us was the Italian mess and to the right an American microwave signal relay HUMVEE. Half of the contingent remained to unload the aircraft, disembarking the kit onto civilian trucks, while the other half moved to the hill and

unpacked the trucks and began setting up the camp.

At this stage of UNITAF's invasion, Mogadishu Airport was not just filled with military transport aircraft C17 Starlifters, C5 Galaxy's, C130 Hercules (civil and military) the US forces were bringing in troops on chartered Boeing 747s. Space on the aprons was at a premium and MHE to unload wide body jets was limited. As our gear came off, we transferred it to civilian trucks that would never have passed a COF or WOF in NZ, driven by local Somalis contracting to the UN, this was our first look at the logistics assistance that we were to interoperate with. The crew of our aircraft were mainly concerned with unloading and departing Mogadishu, no overnight stopover for them.

When we first got to the airport you could see both Soviet and American hardware - a trashed Lockheed Martin C123 lying next door to MIG 21 fighters, further along the runway a pile of Italian tri-motor aircraft from the 1930s. It always amazed me how much military equipment was available in Somalia, but when you think that in the 1970s the Somali army consisted of 23 motorised or mechanised battalions, 9 tank and 9 artillery battalions and 4 Airborne battalions you can see with a breakdown in law and order how it gets into the hands of the clans.

Over the next couple of days, the Kiwi camp began to take shape, the accommodation, HQ and recreation tents appeared, showers (mark one) were dug and some camp equipment was organised. As the camp took shape a name was sought. In the mornings and evenings American female soldiers walked from their camp and mess on our boundary. Taniwha Hill was suggested as an option which found favour with all. Taniwhas as you are aware are a mythical Maori dragon and there seemed to be too many present walking our boundary.

The Toilets. "First one came from an American unit that the POL section traded ration packs for. The others were 'acquired' by POL section as American units left the APOD area. The Pisser Phone (urinal toilet). The design was from Vietnam day. Ours were made using American cam poles by the resourceful POL section again".

"Mike Te Hau & Dion Rennie after looking at the American 'beauties' that belonged to the American Tpt Unit that was just below the hill on sea side to the right as you look out to sea. They would constantly wander past our camp particularly at shower time when the initial shower was just the hessian screen. It turned out with the sun shining thru was see thru". - Mark Sweeting (email 2013).

As camp work became secondary, the NZ Sup Det started looking to their primary roles. The Pet Ops attempted to set up the POL Section, the Stores Section checked out their allocated building and the Rations Section began to consolidate their hold on the containers of foodstuffs the advance party had unloaded. The local purchase sections reconned their locations and it was decided to consolidate in Nairobi.

The UN had secured us the use of a large building on the airfield apron for the Stores Section. On our first inspection it was found to have no roof. Access to the building was through a cordon of concertina wire, we found we were surrounded – by the enemy? No by the Canadian Parachute Regiment. The building was in the middle of the regiment's HQ and because the UN had contracted locals as porters the Canadians did not want them to have access to their camp. Inside the building was some communication pylons and the Pakistani Officers' Tennis Court; their main concern was whether they would still have access to the tennis court when we began operating from the building.

The Stores Section had no warehouse and the Pet Ops had no distribution system, so for the first few weeks personnel were split between the Rations Section and improving Taniwha Hill. The paths on Taniwha Hill were initially built using sandbags and they all needed filling. As time passed sandbags were changed to numerous sections of surplus American aluminium runway planks.

The Rations Section were required to conduct a 100% stocktake of their 150 shipping containers, at the same time as being open for business to the UN dependencies.

“The original concept for the Rations Section operations was designed by the United Nations in New York the year, before the arrival of the US led Coalition Force. At that stage the plan was for 3,500 soldiers to be based in Somalia. Battalions were to be in Kismayo, Bossasso, Berbera and Mogadishu. The Headquarters was also to be based in Mogadishu. The resupply line was to be from France by sea every six weeks. Each Battalion was supposed to receive thirty-four 20 foot containers (including refrigerated). These containers would have sufficient food to support the Battalions until resupply was made. A reserve of ration packs was also to be held in each area. NZSUPDET Rations Section was to be responsible for receiving, checking and issuing the food for the Mogadishu area. Unfortunately this well thought out plan was suspended as the Americans took over the operation. Many contributing nations decided to support the Coalition rather than UNOSOM, which was likely to require a far longer commitment”. – Tony Harding, Pataka, 1993.

Norway had provided a Headquarters Company for the UNOSOM Operation, these personnel carried out the house and ground functions including sentries at the various UN buildings. Under the UNOSOM plan, they were also to ration the NZ Sup Det at their camp on the Airport. The Norwegians were located at the base of Taniwha Hill on the runway side. The Australian MOVCON personnel had set up adjacent to the Norwegians. While the whole of Mogadishu can be called a dust or sandbowl, being up on Taniwha hill or being down in Dust Valley was exceptional, we had a sea breeze and no mosquitoes (except in the laundry container).

For the first couple of weeks we were rationed at the Norwegian Mess, breakfast and lunch were always the same, black bread, salami and several flavours of pickled herrings. Dinners consisted of some sort of pre-packaged reheated meals from cans with side dishes of black bread, salami and pickled herrings. Needless to say this diet did not go down all that well with the Kiwis (and in some cases up it came up again) and some would prefer to eat the ration packs we brought over rather than go to the Norwegian mess. Within three weeks the HQ element had come up with a cunning plan and we were now taking our meals with the RNZAF 42 Sqn Detachment who were part of UNITAF, an arrangement that lasted until they left in May 93.

On 23January, Taniwha Hill Tavern was declared open by the SNO (Kevin Johnston), this was also the occasion of the first BBQ since we arrived. The sight and sound of searing steaks was a pleasure to behold and a taste not to forget. The BBQ tongs were strips of wood broken off packing cases. The first PMC volunteered was JJ King, and the occasion also saw the first dob session run by ‘Mr Entertainments’, Mike Te Hau. The tradition of birthday cakes was established (with a chemical ‘cylume’ stick as a candle) and the first presentation was to Tony Harding.

As February began, the UN contracted a local roofing company to install a roof on the Stores Section building. The Somali contractors had to first, steal the roofing materials from another building, before they could put it on ours; the UN paid the sum of US$60,000 for this work. Some surplus shelving was located at the port and moved into the building, stock started arriving and the Stores Section opened for business. The Rations Section employed Mustapha (a Kenyan who had got himself stranded in Mogadishu and couldn’t get home) and settled into their routine. The Pet Ops drew the short straw as the UN did not have an effective fuel operation or strategy - they were employed on scrounging (purchase and procurement, is their term), camp maintenance and assisted the US Marines with their Air refuelling tank farm and conducted aircraft and helicopter refuelling.

We took possession of the UN warehouse - well, half of it. Half of the building was designated for general stores and half for the UN communications section stores. This split was to occur over our entire tour. On the Comms side this started off with a few microwave pylons lying over the floor, looked after by a Somali civilian who was supervised by a UN civilian. As their operation grew a pile of computers, peripherals and other office equipment was added to the central pile on the floor. Meanwhile, on our side the shelving was installed, a security wall built and transit and storage areas defined. We received our first stocks about 300 boxes of envelopes and paper all labelled with the UNOSOM symbol in the corner. Flash forward - having participated in a couple of operations now, I realise that the Army really requires a fourth class of Combat Store namely Ammo, POL, Rations and Stationery.

The RNZAF detachment always seemed a bit more security conscious than us, maybe because their site was on the wire, whereas the baddies had to get through the Turkish guards, the Kiwi Air Force, Canadians, Italians and Aussies before getting near us. The NZ forces evacuation plan that the Air contingent came up with

(that Mike M explained was always worth a laugh) was that, in the event of an overwhelming attack, NZ Sup Det was to move from Taniwha Hill to the RNZAF camp down the hill, the aircraft would be loaded up and we would take off for somewhere else. It did not seem to be taken into account that the aircraft were parked between the camp and wire, and the RNZAF guns were firing through the aircraft. But when laughing at this you have to remember there was no other better evacuation plan except jump off the cliffs and swim to Yemen.

From an equipment perspective NZSUPDET was deployed with the kit on its back, apart from the water purification system, sat phone, generator and tentage. The original plan was that we would be under canvas for a maximum of three months; a portacom camp was sitting at the airport (redirected from the UN's Cambodia mission). The portacom camp remained dismantled at the airport until about March when it was transported to the US Embassy site and put together for the Embassy staff. The UN would provide vehicles and MHE. No vehicles deployed with the contingent and the advance party had arranged some basic transport, which was to last the entire tour.

"The advance party had organised a Landcruiser 7 seater and driver. A Landcruiser ute, later to be known as Brown Thunder, and driver, and a very small Isuzu truck with high cage sides that Rations used. Brown Thunder ended up being hired without a driver and POL Section used it as a UBRE and collection of "improvement" material. Brown Thunder came complete with bullet holes. Later on when UN vehicles arrived on a ship that the POL section unloaded an Isuzu 4 wheel drive was also obtained". – Mark Sweeting (email 2013).

The Mogadishu of January / February 93 was very different from the Mogadishu of May / June. The US presence was very high, AMTRACs were posted on many intersections – Pax America reigned supreme. No Somali carried visible weapons, all the Technicals had disappeared. UNOSOM was split over three different buildings in different parts of the city (Military HQ, Civil Affairs and the Secretariat). Travelling around the city required caution but did not appear to need real security, it became normal to travel in a vehicle with one soldier and the Somali driver. Carrying webbing gave way to just throwing a couple of magazines in a pocket and baseball hats replaced helmets, although fragmentation (flak) jackets were always in vogue outside of the Airport.

To travel to the Ration Section the vehicles were required to negotiate the village, a built up area with tall trees and kids for a 600m path followed by a right turn onto the two lane road of civilian traffic for about 2km to the main port. Vehicle security was tested within the first week of arriving when the cattle truck (Isuzu) packed with soldiers in the back, slowed down and a kid creeps up the side of the vehicle and takes Roger Inwood's sun glasses (and a chunk of his nose). Personally the closest I got to violence on the street was when I was passenger in the cattle truck and a Somali stepped off the kerb as we drove past and swung a baseball bat at the vehicle windscreen. In hindsight the swipe was never intended to connect, but a foot further and it would have.

Our (NZ) UN HQ Staff lived in rented residences outside the airport. The Australian contingent lived on the airfield, but soon after their Australia Day celebration (26 January) they rented a compound and house (a mansion). Weekend functions were common (rife) at residences and as usual, Kiwis could sniff out a party. Contingents held dinners and invited others nations such as Pakistan and French Foreign Legion, but Kiwis didn't feature on the Canadians or Italians invite list.

On 6 February, NZ Day as it was advertised or Waitangi Day as it is to Kiwis was held. This marked the first international opening of the Taniwha Hill Tavern, complete with guests, wero and haka. PTEs Alex Tauranga (now a nice shade of blurple from the sun) and Tim Kareko took the challenge of becoming the unit Kaiwero. Mark Sweeting and the Pet Ops built the pressure hangi cooker from 44 gallon drums and gas rings that cooked the perfect hangi (above the ground).

"Once the speeches and formalities were out of the way it was time to relax and enjoy ourselves. Well lubricated, the different nationalities tried to match our singing. We had wowed the crowd with our rendition of 'One Day At Taniwha'. The French almost outdid us with a rousing version of their national anthem ('The Marseillaise'). Then the Aussies tried to sing 'Advance Australia Fair', but were shouted down by a faction of their own countrymen who insisted on 'God Save the Queen'. The Americans squawked through "The Star-Spangled Banner', but then the Fijians stole the show. They put us to shame with their beautiful melodies". – JJ King, Pataka,1993

Just over the horizon leave beckoned. The UN allowed a 60 hour leave period for every 30 days in theatre. So in late February, NZSUPDET started their first wave of leave goers. Contingent members could hitch a lift on the UN Chartered Antonov. Nairobi was the preferred location for most of the contingent, mainly because the Local Purchase Detachment was there so, we could link up with them, cadge a ride and use their local knowledge and, as they were living at an hotel, stay at the same place.

The Jacaranda Hotel was in Westlands, the nice part of Nairobi, and obviously where the colonial masters had set themselves up. I was on leave with Duck, Meeks, Roger, Willy and Kelvin Dinwiddie. The first day was spent visiting the shops and markets followed by the bars and the nightclubs. We visited Carnivores a restaurant complex aimed at tourists where Kenyan waiters served game meats on spears, stabbed them into your table and asked if you wanted “Zebra”, or “Antelope”, or “Crocodile”. Following the meal there was a disco, which served the local cocktail Dawa.

A few of us went on a safari to the Masai Mara in the Great Rift Valley, travelling by mini bus throughout the park and living in tents overnight (couldn’t get away from canvas. Highlights were watching twenty mini buses stalking one rhino, the bus shuddering to a stop so we could photograph a tortoise on the side of the road, sitting around the tent drinking Tusker as monkeys whooped in the trees and a hyena or leopard walking around the site. On the return to Nairobi we took up the hospitality of the SAFAIR crews and had a South African BBQ at their apartment complex.

“The markets were a popular place to go, they had all sorts of carvings made out of ebony and sandstone. All of the items could be bartered for. The price depended on your ability to haggle your way to the lowest possible price. The boys had no conscience or should I say no guilt with the ridiculous prices they managed”.- Brent Haami, Pataka, 1993

Back in Mogadishu it was visitor season, and from February until early May they came thick and fast.

“… many visitors have come and gone, including Deputy PM Don McKinnon (who still hasn't paid for his $2.00 raffle ticket), Lt Gen Birks (UNOSOM Force Commander), Brig Bestic, and Lt Col Gardiner. Every time 'the boys on the hill' have entertained, the guests have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I still haven't managed to figure out what exactly brings people back to Taniwha Hill time and time again…Personally I think the popularity of Taniwha Hill is a combination of great hangi food, cold beer and the Kiwi hospitality. The Kiwis' easy-going attitude and willingness to socialise brings visitors back time and time again”. – Tim Howard, Pataka, 1993

On the sporting side, the detachment had taken on the US Marines at rugby and won 30-nil, this was played on a field of sand by the side of the runway with C-17 Starlifters and Russian Antonov’s landing and taking off. With NZSUPDET’s international profile raising, a game against the British Isles in Nairobi was organised and the team was despatched to take on the NONDIES (Nondescript Rugby Club). Thanks to Mr Wikipedia this the oldest Kenyan Rugby Club formed in 1923, however Mr Wiki says nothing about this important international match so, let’s hear from one of our own.

“The first line-out I asked this fella if he ate heaps of baked beans. Cause man it was like a Manuka tree up against a Kauri tree. By jeez they were big. But, never mind we got them in the rucks. We played four quarters of hot, thirsty, strength sapping rugby. We started slowly, and our defence was disorganised letting in a couple of soft tries … In the end, they beat us by five points. I reckon another 5 minutes and we would have had them though”.– Mike Te Hau, Pataka, 1993.

Routine and repetitiveness had set in over the novelty of the operations. UNOSOM chartered two Antonov AN 24s to move supply and personnel between Nairobi and Mogadishu on a daily basis and to other sites as required (Mombasa, Baidoa Baledoogle, Kismayo, Badere). SAFAIR also provided UNOSOM with a civilian C130 that delivered freight two or three times a week. The UN contracted a gang (probably in the literal sense) of Somali porters and their truck to move the goods unloaded from the aircraft to either the airport warehouse or the rations section at the seaport. The MHE was the number or porters it took to pick up a pallet and move it to the back of the truck.

Amazingly the Antonov aircraft came complete with Russian aircrew. This was my first exposure to Russians and brought up on a diet of Cold War movies and as a member of a western army, it was surprising to find them friendly and sociable. However their plane may have been a bit short on spares, it was always a worry when you could see the canvas showing through the rubber on the tires. One day on their approach the crew had noticed a crashed Antonov north of Mogadishu, once on the ground they tried to persuade us, the Aussies and the Pakistanis to take them out to the wreck so could look for some spare parts for their aircraft.

The second item of importance that the UN brought after stationery was welfare stores for the UN staff, these being classified as TVs and video recorders. It was 17March (Duck's Diary says so!), a beautiful sunny Wednesday morning with a gentle southerly trade wind blowing and the temperature already a warm 25 degrees (I know this because it was the same every day). Stores section trooped down to the warehouse and during the day receipted items off the arriving Antonov, which included 15 video recorders. Between the aircraft and the warehouse one disappeared – fairly obvious where, but it was never found. This caused the UN Chief Procurement Officer (an Irishman who had obviously taken it personally that the All Blacks regularly beat the Irish – why were the UN staff predominantly Irish or from Caribbean islands?) to beat his chest and generally accuse Stores Section of stealing and issuing stores to personnel not properly authorised (holding the signed Q1 demand). Things became fairly heated as he rampaged about having us all sacked and removed from the store. I guess this fracas was settled higher up the chain as we remained in the warehouse, but a UN international civilian was detailed to supervise the Comms warehouse and, indirectly, us. Meanwhile in the Comms warehouse the computer peripheral pile grew bigger and bigger, with no stock cards or records of issue.

As well as the aspects of supply, NZSUPDET did have some military obligations including being collared for UN parades, to welcome dignitaries and PT sessions, which were run twice per week with everyone rostered to take a session. PT sessions appeared to get harder as each PTI competed against the next. Mike Mendonca must win the prize for the best session, a fishing competition off the cliff at the rear of the Hill. A range shoot to zero weapons was organised, the range shoot was conducted in an old quarry (depression) south west of the airport, the raised walls of the quarry providing the targets to the front and stand for locals to watch from the side.

A Pakistani officer had been invited to attend and bring his AK47 with him so we could all fire it. As the first Kiwi fired the AK a couple of expended cartridges went flying into the swamp by our feet. This caused some consternation from the officer so he sent one of his soldiers to recover the cases. Meanwhile his other soldier had to stand to the side of the firer, holding a flak jacket up to deflect the cases on to the ground, not into the swamp. It would appear that he had to hand in the cases to the QM to get replacement rounds. In the butts were giant wheels of steel, half an inch thick, that were used as targets. Once inspected, it brought it home that there was no safety in being in a car if rounds are flying, as the steel was punctured with neat holes from the bullets. For me the shoot ended on a bit of a downer when it was realised that we where shooting up bottles of drinking water, while being watched by the Somali locals for whom water was in short supply.

In March, the Rations Section had been forced to move their operation from one warehouse to another within the Seaport. The UN and US began negotiating on a drawdown of UNITAF and a transition to UNOSOM II began. The US Marines had been withdrawing, replaced by US Army, and other Coalition members were beginning to take a larger role in security. Travel and personal security was reinforced and we began travelling around the city with at least three armed soldiers in each vehicle. The separate UNOSOM HQ sites began to centralise at the US Embassy for offices and accommodation, the residences began to shut down. The backbone of the American forces, the US Marines, were replaced with US Army formations. Nothing overt had happened to security but something was changing.

When driving, I was regularly carrying a pistol and Steyr, but I was still fairly complacent as the amount of ammunition carried was not increased. The webbing may have had six magazines but there was usually only one on the rifle and one in a pocket.

But life did have its lighter notes

At the Warehouse we had begun to store items arriving for a reformed Somali National Police. A Marine Major and his Gunny (Gunnery Sergeant) were our contacts for

this project. There was a good stock of Boots, handcuffs and Batons (locally produced from local hardwood trees, they came in 30cm and baseball bat sizes). To start with these guys travelled in HUMVEE and were part of UNITAF, as they were integral to the re-civilisation of Somalia they did not get to go home with the Marines and got attached to UNOSOM. So instead of a HUMVEE they were given a Japanese Clone Ute (Toyota or Isuzu). One night the Gunny came up to the Hill to get some gear from the warehouse, so I hopped in for a lift. First there was the scary drive down the windy hill as the Gunny tried to figure out the co-ordination needed to change gear with a stick shift in the dark and I had visions of us going over the side of the hill. Another factor in his lack of co-ordination was that while driving and steering he was pulling the indicator stalk back so that he had high beam, all the while telling me what a “stoopid” vehicle this was where high beam had to be held on. To assist his co-ordination problem, I leant over and pushed the high beam forward towards the dashboard so it stayed on, to his cry of delight – “Well, Just wait till I show the Major that”. I wondered how long the both of them had studied the problem without finding the solution.

I recall another Marine incident from the first few days of arriving in theatre. I hitched a lift to the seaport with a Marine in his Chevvy Ute, he was driving holding the steering wheel with a baretta 9mm pistol in his left hand. Every right turn I watched the steering wheel and barrel move towards the passenger seat I was sitting in. – maybe this was the closest I got to violence while travelling the streets.

Willy Ephia worked in the UNOSOM HQ Rations Section along with two Norwegian officers. They ordered the rations that were bought locally (Kenya) and moved to Mogadishu. One of the Norwegians had never tried avocado so he ordered some, but he was not going to order some just for him, he was going to order enough so everyone in UNOSOM could have an avocado. I can’t remember why we could not get them to the seaport, or even how they got to our warehouse, but they resided in a pallet crate in 30 degree heat and none of the other contingents wanted to even look at this strange fruit that was rapidly turning black even as you looked at it.

THE DAY IT RAINED

I only recall it raining one day in Mogadishu. It was a tropical storm that lasted about thirty minutes and two things are memorable. Firstly, the roof that the UN paid to be placed on the building wasn’t waterproof and let just as much water in that it kept out. The walls came alive with frogs and scorpions coming out of crevices and cracks and the pile of computers on the other side of the warehouse getting soaked with the rain.

Our Australian UNOSOM compatriots (MOVCON) had had enough of the dustbowl and had rented a large house with a compound northwest of K4 intersection, which they called “the Australian Embassy”. Glad to be out of canvas and with a firm waterproof base life looked good for them. Unfortunately their house was in the middle of “Aideed Central”.

Great Planning had gone into ANZAC Day 1993. The Aussies were held up in their Embassy so, they had no venue, the Turkish were invited but they were still the enemy and we wanted a hangi, not kebabs. So, Taniwha Hill was the logical place to hold the main function. Stage three of the Taniwha Hill Tavern extension programme was completed on 3 April, and a planned attendance of 300 people was expected.

The CSMs (Australian, NZ and Turkish) had located a knoll towards the southern end of the runway where the dawn ceremony would be conducted. A centrepiece cenotaph had been pillaged and built from plywood – well done boys.

In the early hours of Anzac Day, the NZSUPDET rose and made their way to the site. The commemoration involved:

- UNOSOM Kiwi and Aussies and Turkish troops
- RNZAF Detachment (UNITAF)
- HMAS Tobruk sailors

The day’s activities were planed around:

- Dawn Parade
- Breakfast and light refreshments
- Sports Morning (Soccer, Touch, Swimming)
- Donkey Races
- Official Welcome and hangi

The dawn ceremony included a flypast by a UN aircraft; this was especially effective as it came straight in from the rising sun at a couple of hundred feet straight over the parading troops. Following the dawn parade, we returned to Taniwha Hill for breakfast and light refreshments. We must have finally shocked the neighbours as I remember having a light refreshment while an American walked past screaming “Oh my God, they’re drinking beer for breakfast”.

I seem to remember a sports morning and recollect that soccer was on the agenda as opposed to rugby. Afterwards, Dave Tairi, and a couple of others sitting in a rock pool calling out to “Save the Whales”, to which

Brent replies by throwing rocks near them and the call to “Stone the Whales”. There is video evidence of this happening.

HMAS Tobruk was supporting the UNITAF forces at this time and they were invited to Anzac Day. The Donkey races will live forever all etched differently in each person’s mind. I recall that the races started between NZSUPDET / RNZAF / Australian Army / Australian Navy and were based on elimination rounds to determine a finals race. However, my greatest memory is of Dion Rennie being master of ceremonies and video operator with words “Dere are de Donkeys” and...

At about 1500 / 1600 hrs, we prepared the site for the official engagement, starting with Alex Tauranga’s challenge to the lead guest (can’t remember who but it was a high ranking Australian). This was followed by NZSUPDET performing the haka and the evening then generally fading into a haze of hangi and socialising. A sailor from the Tobruk was telling all and sundry that because he was a Kiwi his CO said he could stay at Taniwha Hill overnight. I don’t know if he actually was a Kiwi, but when the shore patrol turned up the next day he was found sleeping under the cenotaph.

JUNE EVENTS

UNOSOM II had been stood up and taken over from the US-led UNITAF. Thirty–six countries provided 28,000 personnel, a far call from the 5000 NZSUPDET was supposed to be supporting, not that we were responsible for rationing and supplying all of these troops. On 5 June, a force of Pakistanis were sent to investigate an arms depot belonging to Aideed. The Pakistanis met a Somali mob and a running battle began, and 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed (by some reports mutilated) and 50 wounded. Security and outbreaks of fighting between UNOSOM and Somalis continued.

On 7 June, the UN began evacuating all civilian staff from Mogadishu to their campus in Nairobi. From 12 June, the US forces in particular began attacking Aideed’s assets in Mogadishu in the hope of finding and arresting him. Also on that day, a Cobra helicopter attacked several buildings killing several Somalis. Four Western journalists visited the site and were beaten to death by a Somali mob, and one of the journalists was Dan Eldon, an American, who had visited Taniwha Hill on at least one occasion. On 17 June, UNOSOM issued an arrest warrant for Aideed, and a month later a reward of US$25,000. 18 June was probably the worst day of fighting when UN troops with US Airpower attacked and seized Aideed’s headquarters, but his troops fought back and six hours of street battles caused heavy UN and Somali casualties. (See Wikipedia, UNOSOM II and www.hiraan.co/news/2013/jun/29877)

The Wild West had arrived, and in some cases the UN civilians even began arming themselves. The US AC130 Spectres were patrolling the city at night and firing their 40mm and 105mm cannon into the city. Travelling around the city once lockdown was over had changed. It was now two vehicles, three soldiers in each vehicle and a C9 Minimi on one of the vehicles. As a contingent we were down to about 25 personnel, so it took a quarter of the contingent to move anyone anywhere around the city. New routes were devised that tracked deeper in the city but avoided Aideed territory.

I can no longer remember the events of June in a chronological order - some I recall, some I remember and other incidents are remembered only when my memory has been jogged by others’ words or writing. I thought that the Australians had moved to the US embassy in March or April, but it was the events of June that caused them to move.

There was a flurry of Australian radio comms (as we were on the same network). It transpired that one of their vehicles was being followed through the streets by a Somali mob and they were trying to get the Australians to open the gate of their residence to let them in. The evening continued with breathless radio messages over an armoured vehicle that had appeared in a nearby housing compound. Their house was in the middle of “Aideed Central” and he was beginning to flex his muscles, needless to say within the next few days the Australians had abandoned the Australian Embassy and were firmly ensconced in the UNOSOM compound (US Embassy).

DAWA FOR BEGINNERS

1 part Vodka

Crushed Ice

1 lime

1 Table spoon honey

1 Pestle (piece of wooden doweling)

Slice lime into wedges and place in strong tumbler, Apply pressure to the wedges with a pestle to release lime juice with out pulping.

Add the honey and then cover with crushed ice.

Pour vodka over and stir to mix the lime juice, honey and sprit.

(Robert McKie, Email, Jul 2013)

THE GREAT FRUIT AND VEGGIE DISTRIBUTION

Mogadishu was in lock down, those at the port were stuck (the beach road did not exist at this point), no UNOSOM vehicle movement was allowed and the Somali porters were not allowed on the airfield. A regular Antonov arrived from Nairobi with a load of fruit and vegetables for the contingents. Normally this would have been loaded on to a truck and transported to Rations section at the port. Instead, all available vehicles were pressed into service and the groceries were brought to the airport warehouse. With no temperature controlled environment the goods would not last long, so in the afternoon we got all the contingents Q staff located on the airport and ran a distribution point based on their strengths. So, you have 100 troops, you 50 and you 300… so you have one box of tomatoes, you can have three and you five.

One day, the UN civilian purchasing guy arrived in a convoy with some other vehicles (he had obtained a pistol for personal protection). We were regularly stood-to at night as violence flared up in the city. Thanks to Derek Billing (our replacement for Steve Goble) we could get CNN on the TV. It was great to watch some fireworks going on over the city and, once stood down, race down to watch the event as it was reported on CNN, with live feeds from the Olympic Hotel. We stood-to when either sniper fire or mortar fire came onto the airfield. One night a sniper was based in one of the large buildings opposite the airfield, suddenly to our right a couple of 50cal spotter rounds were fired from a hidden Pakistani 106mm recoilless and these were quickly followed up by the HE rounds that tore into the building.

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT...

Things were beginning to settle down (or we just got used to the new normal) when a chartered Antonov 12 (Russian C130 Equivalent) arrived from Dubai with a load of bacon, butter and other rations. As I greeted the pilots they were coming down from the aircraft with big welcoming smiles and in a hearty manner “Hello, Comrade, Tovarich, here is whisky and cigarettes for you”. Shortly after the OC and CSM were driven over by Kelvin Dinwiddie, the Russian pilot came over to the driver and handed Kelvin another bottle of whisky and a carton of cigarettes: “Gifts for my Kiwi friend”. He said hello to the others in the vehicles and headed off back to the plane. Kelvin turned to the bosses and gave them a sly grin, while the bosses wondered where their booty was.

This Antonov had been the cattle truck of the skies, it had a wooden floor and there were sheep droppings in-between the floorboards and the rations were in a pile in the centre of the deck. As the air conditioning was switched off and the temperature in the plane began to rise the butter began to melt. There was a wait while MHE was found, and eventually the Canadians loaned us their forklift and a driver. After about twenty to thirty minutes another Canadian soldier appeared and asked us “Can you guys stop work and turn the lights off, were being mortared over here?”. Which was news to us, so the driver lowered the forks and went off, while we all got out of the plane, leaving the Russian crew asking “What is happening, where are you all going?”. Movement to the sea port was prohibited so we called on every available fridge or freezer in each contingent’s camp and filled it with the rapidly melting stocks, but there was still stuff left over, so some was distributed to other units who

had the magic requirement - a BBQ. Eventually we had the plane unloaded, but they were now stuck on the ground overnight. So with normal hospitality we invited the Russian crew to a BBQ at Taniwha Hill, which lead to one of those sayings – “A year ago who would have thought that I would have been in Africa, having a BBQ of Hungarian bacon with a bunch of Russians!”

The AC130H Spectre was a spectacular piece of kit - a C130 Hercules sporting a 20mm Vulcan cannon, a Bofors 40mm and a M102 105mm gun. Based in Djibouti, but occasionally parked in Mogadishu, they began flying in pairs around the city at night. During stand-tos you could hear them flying around but never see where they were in the sky. Only once did one become visible, when the lead Spectre fired off its flares and lit the one following. It was amazing to watch these aircraft firing into 100sq/m compounds in the middle of the city. On15June Mike Mendonca handed me a 40mm shell casing with a note attached “This is from SPECTRE Mission pm 13 Jun 93. With compliments from Lt Col Conrad. He also thanks you for the b…..!” Well sorry Mike, he must have had a bit of a accent because that should have been bacon!. That shell case still sits on my desk with the minute from Mike sitting inside it.

While all this went on, it began to dawn that NZ Sup Det had only 1 month left in theatre. We were due to be replaced by the NZ Supply Platoon around 6-8July. However, the people who were supposed to organise our departure had all been evacuated to Kenya. Because we had been transhipped to Mogadishu by civilian charter, the UN were going to remove us by civilian flights. A plane was not chartered to carry us all home, we had the choice of making our way back to NZ by direct flight on Business Class, however if we chose to go via different locations you could fly economy and use the business class ticket to get further. The main thing we had to do was to make sure that no one in the UN figured out that they were flying 25 personnel to NZ via a variety of civilian routes, while at the same time an RNZAF C130 was delivering the Supply Platoon to Mogadishu and travelling back to Auckland empty. Of course we couldn't actually get on the C130, AirForce were only being paid for a one way delivery and the UN had included delivery and pick up of NZ Sup Det by their means.

I obviously was not good at hiding that day as Mike Mendonca collared me to organise the contingent travel home. First, I had to find out how everyone wanted to travel home and then get to Nairobi to navigate the UN bureaucracy and find a Kenyan travel agent. So for the last three weeks of the tour I headed to Nairobi on a Sunday afternoon and trudged around the city organising the travel then flying back to Mogadishu on either the Monday or Tuesday.

On one of those Sundays I was feeling a bit under the weather and just wanted to get to Nairobi to chill, but the Antonov was making stops delivering rations to contingents. It stopped in Baledoogle (or Badere) and a Nigerian Army contingent was there to unload the plane. After we all meet, their Warrant Officer watched the Sergeant, who supervised the Corporal, who supervised the baggies unloading the sacks of rice, etc.

This process began to go on too long (I had an appointment with a Tusker) so I joined in the chain and began moving some sacks. This caused general comments from the baggies and soon the corporal had joined the line and eventually the sergeant joined in which left the Warrant Officer supervising and the baggies laughing while the plane got unloaded faster.

I ran foul of the UN while arranging the travel, they didn’t like me hiring a taxi for the day to move around Nairobi, and apparently there are some rules about not claiming living allowances and booking the hotel up to the UN. On the last visit I had to sign for the travel allowances (around $US40K) to take back for distribution to the guys, very nervous wandering around Nairobi with that sort of cash. On that visit David Haynes and I met up with the NZ Sup Pl advance party, so in the evening I showed their CSM and OC around the nightspots of Nairobi their troops would soon be visiting and introduced them (not personally) to the Nairobi handshake.

We were down to the last couple of days, it seemed like everyone was scanning the skies looking for the RNZAF C130s to land. The NZ Sup Det had been broken up into a main body and rear party (basically section commanders). When the NZ Sup Pl arrived the main body was only going to be on the ground for a couple of hours and due to ship out in the late afternoon, while a rear party would stay till the next day and conduct a handover.

I don’t remember a welcome for the replacements, but there must have been one, though they may have had a requirement to unload the Herc before it left for safer spots. What did happen though must have made the 2nd contingent wonder what they were coming into, as it seemed in a flash the soldiers of NZ Sup Det all piled into Brown Thunder and drove off at high speed waving and laughing on the way to the apron and waiting Antonov.

While the UN may not have noted that an RNZAF C130 was on the tarmac, it wasn’t long before all of the packs and PSI were loaded for a return trip to Linton via

TANIWHA HILL
NZSUPDET
UNOSOM
REPORT TO
C.P

Whenuapai. The rear party waved the main body away and returned to Taniwha Hill to complete the handover.

While glad to be leaving, I could feel some melancholy about leaving Mogadishu. Our replacements had their own plans and the section commanders were not released for a handover until the late evening (no power in the Warehouse, can't see!). On my last night in Mogadishu, with flak jacket and pistol, I headed down to the Malaysian contingent (who had replaced the Canadians around the Warehouse) for dinner. While waiting for their O Group to finish, some mortar rounds came in and that ended the invitation.

Next morning we were advised that our flight had moved up and would leave at 1000. So it was a quick handover at the Warehouse to the stores IC Lt Stewart and Andy Canton. I could tell while explaining the situation that they looked at the Warehouse and thought 'what a mess' or 'what have these guys been doing for the last six months this place is a crock'.

NZ Sup Det effectively disbanded on 7 July 1993. By the time the rear party reached Nairobi, individuals were already emplaned for the return home and leave. There was no Force Extraction Team or Plan, it was get on the plane and get home or wherever.

Duck, Tony Harding, DaveTairi and I were travelling Nairobi > Dubai > Singapore on Emirates Air. The plane was delayed getting into Dubai and there was a mad rush for the ticket counter to connect with our next flight. As we pushed to the front and got our tickets the guy passed them back with the comment three are in first class and one in business. So we took our allotted seats and paused to look back at the CSM as he took his in Business class, although I heard he met up with a very nice Pakistani bloke and they tried to drink his section of the aircraft dry.

NZ Sup Det reformed once more in August or September for a contingent debrief with the psychologists and others no doubt. The weekend finished off with a reunion dinner and drinks.

UNOSOM1 RECON PARTY – LTCOL B. YOUNG & MAJ K.I JOHNSON

ADVANCE PARTY - MAJ K.I JOHNSON, CAPT M.A. MENDONCA, LT T.J.F. HOWARD, WO2 W. EPIHA, SGT G. CARVER & LCPL M. ARCHER.

UNOSOM HQ (NZ CONTINGENT)

UNOSOM1 – MAJ K.I JOHNSON, WO2 W. EPIHA.

UNOSOM2 – LTCOL D. HAYNES, WO2 P. HAINES.

NZ SUPPLY DETACHEMENT NOV 1992 TO JULY 1993

CAPT M.A. MENDONCA,
LT T.J.F. HOWARD,
WO2 T. HARDING,
SSGT M. SWEETING,
PTE W. ANDERSON,
SGT G. CARVER,
LCPL M. ARCHER,
CPL K. CORBETT,
LCPL D. COYLE,
PTE W. CRONIN,
CPL K. DINWIDDIE,
PTE N. DONALDSON,
CPL S. GOBLE,
CPL B. HAAMI,
CPL R. INWOOD,
PTE T. KAREKO,
PTE JJ. KING,
LCPL C.J. MEIKLEJOHN,
PTE J. PULLAR,
LCPL C. RATAHI,
CPL R. RENNIE,
SGT D. TAIRI,
PTE A. TAURANGA,
LCPL M. TE HAU,
A/SGT R. TYLER,
SGT S. WILLIAMS,
SGT D.A. BILLING (RNZAF).

AGUSTA A129

LCPL MIKE ARCHER

SOMALIA – DEPLOYMENT OF A LIFETIME.

I was at 21 Sup Coy when the news started to trickle through that there may be something on for Suppies to deploy overseas to a place called Somalia. But it was only a rumour. Then halfway through our 2LFG Skill at Arms in Waiouru, as we sat on top of Edinburgh Castle, completely knackered, Colonel Rick Ottaway turned up and told us members of 21 Sup Coy would deploy to Somalia to issue fuel, stores and food to UN soldiers. We then proceeded to get a bollocking from the FSM as "Horse" Anderson unwittingly had his rifle pointing at the Commander whilst it was loaded with live rounds ... not really a great start.

Once back at 21 Sup, a list appeared of the deployment group, including reserves. Everyone was assembled and then we just had time for 10 days of pre-deployment training before being sent on a short leave. Compared to what is covered in pre-deployment training these days, it was very light and I remember feeling a little surprised that we didn't cover more. But our bosses were working to a timeline, which became evident when I was named in the Advance party to deploy a very short time later. The deployment group was also named at this stage and one Ray Kareko was bitterly disappointed (read crying) that he wasn't deploying. But as the CSM Tony Harding had said, we couldn't take all the sharp soldiers on the first deployment, which consoled Ray a little bit (although I always wondered how Ray had managed to make the sharp soldiers category anyway...lol, or maybe Tony was just sick of Raymond's tears).

The Advance party assembled in the 21 Sup smoko room and were told we were deploying within the week. There was me, Major Cat Johnson, Capt Mike Mendonca, WO2 Willy Epiha, SSgt Gary Carver and that mischief Lt Tim Howard. It was at this time that I was thrown a LCPL brassard and congratulated on my promotion. It felt a bit surreal as all the previous promotions I had witnessed had always been in front of the whole company, with lots of back slaps and handshakes afterwards...not so for young Archer... I felt a bit ripped off, then slapped myself back to reality, went to the Cpls Club with the boys and celebrated…as you do!

Deployment day came...no long military flight for us, we were flying civvy all the way! We flew up through Singapore and then on to India; trying to catch some sleep in an Indian airport is almost impossible with a squadron of mosquitoes hovering above you, ready to empty you of blood. In Pakistan I had my AA batteries taken from me by a Customs egg head, and then he told me he had to do it or I would use them to blow up the plane. Terrorism wasn't really too big in the 90s, so I was pondering what kind of idiot would blow up a plane they were travelling on during the long boring flight down to Kenya, without being able to listen to my Walkman. I vividly remember landing in Nairobi as every other bugger on the plane started wailing and praying and I thought "what the hell...are we going to crash?!", but apparently this is normal in this part of the world.

So, we moved into the infamous Jacaranda Hotel...man, life was hard living there...Not. We had a room each and it was basically Wait Out until we received orders to move into Mogadishu, which wasn't going to happen until the Yanks had secured the place. So, we decided to go for a safari in the famous Masai Mara. In typical officer fashion, the young Lt went on a shopping spree in Nairobi and came back with a Safari suit and pith helmet, so he could look like the early English explorers. On the way down to the Masai Mara we passed a burning heap of rubber on the side of the road. Someone asked what it was and the driver told us it was a lady who had been "necklaced" as she was suspected of being a witch! I was like...what the hell! The safari was one of the most awesome things I have done. We stayed in a tented camp just outside the reserve and were guarded at night by Masai warriors, to keep monkeys and stuff away. Beers were cooled in the stream and food was cooked by our hosts. Awesome! The highlight of the safari was watching three lionesses stalk a zebra.

During this time we also got out on the town and eventually found the famous Carnivores, which quickly became a Kiwi favourite. Whilst here we made our first contacts with the expat community...the first contact actually happened to be one of our members grabbing some expat girl as she walked past. When she complained and he apologised she immediately picked up on our accents and the rest is history. Suffice to say the expat community looked after us very well during our time in Nairobi. One night whilst we were enjoying a ourselves at Carnivores we saw breaking news on the tele that the Yanks had landed on the beach at Mogadishu and had secured the airport. The next day our Major advised us we would be going into Mogadishu shortly, less Archer and Carver, as we were the Local Purchase team for Nairobi. I was a bit sad to be missing out on the action, but that is soldiering I guess.

A day or two after they left I got a call up to go and join them as they were expecting a UN ship to arrive loaded with food containers and needed help to unload it. A happy young Archer arrived in Mogadishu airport and was told by Capt Mike to put my bags in this Somali guy's 4wd and wait there. I looked at this guy and he

introduced himself as Omar and he was more blurple than all the Karekos put together... lol. As I was waiting I was scanning the North ramp and looked at an old warehouse. It had missiles and bombs lying in the corner and half a wall missing...little did I know it then but this was to be our stores warehouse. Then the rest of the advance party appeared and we got in and drove into town. We didn't have a weapon between us but Omar produced a large silver revolver when I asked Willy Epiha about weapons and told me we were safe. We arrived at a villa that had guards with AKs and an RPG at the gate. This three storey villa was to be home for the next few weeks.

The Americans were moving in thick and fast so we set off the next day to claim some ground in the airfield before it all disappeared. We found the now legendary Taniwha Hill site with the pipeline running through the centre of it. After discussions on suitability and how we would secure it, the good Capt hatched a great plan that newly promoted LCpl Archer would hoochie up here overnight and protect our ground from invading American forces until our Main Body arrived in a few days time. As you can imagine, the first thing that went through my mind was "Bugger off sir". Just after I had that thought we heard a small metallic clang and we all looked to our left. Barely 5 metres away a small trickle of black tar type substance began to ooze out of the pipeline...hmm, how did that happen...CLICK!...we had just been shot at!..we all ducked down behind the hill and hugged the sand. It is quite a strange feeling to know someone is out there watching and firing at you. The Capt immediately changed his mind about me staying there...much to my relief. So, on the way down from the position to the flat of the airfield we stopped in and asked the Aussies (ASC camp) to look after the land for us, which they were happy to do.

We needed a large forklift capable of lifting containers for the UN ship that was due to arrive in the port. Somehow a local forklift was arranged in the airfield and i was tasked to escort it to the Port...remember we had no weapons with us. So, I jumped into the cab of this huge Ratch forklift in the airfield and off we went down the road, just me and the Somali driver. We were halfway to the port when a food convoy came out of the Port. As we passed it a huge crowd came running out of a side street and blocked the convoy from going any further. They began to ransack the trucks and rip the bags of rice off them. It was turning into a riot and me and the forklift were stuck right in the middle of it. Suffice to say, I was absolutely crapping myself, hiding behind the driver and trying not to be seen by anyone. Luckily for me the Yanks came running out of the Port a few minutes later and fired some shots to break up the riot. We managed to get on our way again and made it safely to the Port...I think that is when my grey hair started growing...lol.

The ship finally arrived and the four of us (me, Capt Mike, Lt Tim and WO2 Willy) got into unloading containers and inspecting the contents of each one. All of the dry produce containers were in good shape, but I was standing just behind Capt Mendonca when he opened the first reefer...OMG! Green slime and one of the most disgusting smells I have ever smelt came out of that reefer. Capt Mike immediately closed it back up and then we both proceeded to throw up over the side of the port. The reefer refrigerator engine had broken down on the voyage and all the meat had gone rotten. Capt Mike asked the Ships captain how many more reefers were broken and was given a figure. He told the Capt not to unload them but to dump them at sea once we had finished unloading the good containers. We worked our butts off night and day for 24 hours unloading that ship, only stopping for a quick feed or drink when we could. I think the most sleep anyone got was 2 hours over that period, but by the end of it we had unloaded the ship

and moved all our reefers and containers over to our new food warehouse, inside the Port. Job done.

The UN wasn't waiting for our Main Body to arrive and wanted us to start issuing food as soon as possible. So, we hired some locals and got our act together and started supplying Pakistani and Aussie troops who badly needed rations. As we had lost a lot of our meat supplies I was tasked to go to a local market near our villa and suss out the local meat. So, once again the poor old gullible LCPL Archer was thrown into harm's way, but at least I had a weapon this time, as our driver had managed to get us some rusty old AKs the night before. Anyway, got in the truck with our local driver and went to the market to see this meat. It was all fly blown and dry and wasn't worth feeding to dogs. I stopped in the villa on the way back to the Port and grabbed a feed. As we were making our way back to the Port in our UN stickered cattle truck an old man walked across the road in front of us. The driver beeped his horn and then next minute I saw a pistol come out of the old guy's robes and it was aimed straight at me. He was less than 3 metres away and as I was ducking for cover I saw him pull the trigger! I ended up with my head in the drivers lap as I waited for this bullet to rip into me... which luckily didn't happen. But the driver stopped the vehicle and looked at me like "What are you doing Kiwi?" I yelled at him to "go!!!!!!", and set the AK to fire. I looked for the old man but by then we were already off down the road. We got into the Port and I went to one of our workers and bludged two smokes and went and sat in the forklift and went through the whole thing again... realising how bloody lucky I had been. I hadn't been shot and if I had managed to get a shot off in reply I am sure the Americans directly in line with me at the time at the entrance to the South Ramp of the Airfield would have blasted us up BIG TIME...UN stickers on the vehicle or not. It took me two smokes and half an hour to stop my hands shaking. WO2 Willy then found me, and realising I didn't smoke, asked me what was up. I gave him the low down and as soon as he had heard the story we were off to the villa. We grabbed some beers and headed for the roof. After about the 6th beer I was able to relax and by then the rest of the officers had shown up, so the event was relayed to Major Cat. This was reported back to NZ and I eventually received $79 (the Extra Hazardous Allowance – on application and approval) for that near miss event. My grey hair became a grey tide overtaking my head after that incident.

We were woken the next morning to the sound of gunfire. We headed for the roof and saw 3 American Cobra gunship helicopters taking turns at pummelling some target about 2 kms away. It was quite an amazing sight to see. That same day, the Main Body finally flew into Mog after being delayed time and time again from leaving NZ. They arrived almost a month later than expected. But their trip must have been very long and boring judging by all the beautiful Dutch hostesses that were kissing and waving goodbye to them from the chartered plane... I thought "you lucky "…. But it was great to finally have all the boys on the ground. That day Taniwha Hill began to take shape up on the ridge and became the home for three rotations of Kiwis throughout 93 and 94. The camp took shape quickly and in typical Kiwi fashion we made it as comfortable as we could, even creating a split level recreation/bar area complete with bar leaners and a sandbag couch.

Around this time, I managed to get a copy of a video that an Aussie Mov Op had taken before the NZ Advance party had arrived in Mogadishu. It showed 4 Pakistani APCs in a line facing off against a Somali Technical (a Toyota Landcruiser Ute with a 50 cal and tripod welded or somehow attached on the back) on the airfield apron. A Pakistani officer was yelling for the Technical to stop, as the Somali on the back of it was frantically trying to cock the weapon. After 3 warnings, the APCs opened up and chewed the vehicle to pieces, including the guy and weapon on the back of it. Amazing footage to see and the Aussie had turned down a large sum of money from a news network when they tried to buy it from him. Mike Te Hau now has my copy of that video so, hopefully the tight bugger shares it at the reunion so, we can all see that amazing footage...eh Koro!

The first few days on the Hill saw us without a shower, as we established our camp. We managed to get into the Marines showers but didn't listen too carefully when it was our turn...Water on...(awesome)...soaped ourselves up and started showering as usual. The water then turns off. "Hey, what's up with the water"... The water comes back on...sweet...rinse off and then soap up again... The water turns off again... "Next!" yells some Marine and we are told to get out... We replay with "Bro, we're still covered in soap and stuff". The American comes back with "Sorry sir, but you have to leave". So, out walk 6 Kiwis still covered in shampoo and soap...everyone in the line was cracking up at our expense...it pays to listen to instructions eh!

Anzac Day 1993...yeah! The hallowed day was looming and we had guests coming off an Aussie Navy ship to share the day with us. We had put in a great deal of Mahi some mean hours to this point and we wanted a memorable day so, all kinds of things were planned.

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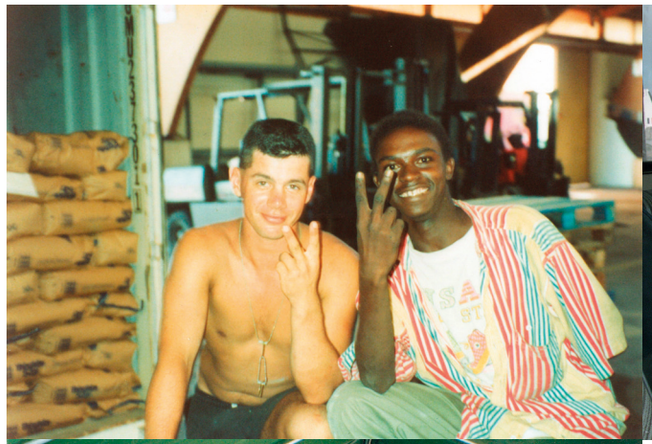


Suffice to say that the pre-party the night before Anzac Day was one of those things...but it happened anyway. At 5am, the guys were assembling in the Rec tent, tidying their uniforms, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes and getting ready for the Dawn Service. A head count discovered that one of us was missing...where the hell is Danny Coyle? A search of the camp found him asleep in the sand with his foot hooked in the razor wire. Mr Phillipino (aka Brent Haami) sorted him out, dry shaved him and threw him in a uniform. A couple of slaps later and he was back in the land of the living. We conducted a service with the Aussies down on the coral reef before retiring to the Hill to have breakfast and "light refreshments". Well, they didn't stay light for very long as the Aussies began the traditional game of Two-Up. We had our own entertainment lined up and the First Annual Trans Tasman Donkey Races kicked off with preliminary heats. It was hilarious to watch until we got to the finals...It was 3 Kiwis vs 3 Aussies...winner take all - national pride at stake! "And they're off!"… The final certainly wasn't your average donkey race...the threat of losing to the Aussies enticed such acts as tackling Aussie riders off their donkeys, with the same occurring to our boys from the Aussie spectators. It even got to one point where I saw Mark "the Snake" Sweeting tackle the lead Aussie donkey so he didn't win the race...bloomin hilarious. That is one Anzac Day that can never be replicated and will never be forgotten.

Well team, those are some of my memories from Somalia.

Some shout outs I have to mention;

1. Tim Kareko for thinking the bidet in his room at the Jacaranda Hotel was a drinking fountain... mmm did the water taste good bro?
2. Kelvin Dinwiddie...our mechanic broke more generators than he fixed. Did anyone check his qualifications?
3. Kelvin Corbett...typical medic...no weapon skills... managed to UD with his pistol and narrowly missed his foot.
4. Steven Goble...top bloke until he fell off the back of a moving wagon and wrecked his shoulder (RTNZ).
5. The Pet Op crew on leave in Mombasa...paid for three people while the other 3 come in through the back stairs. Ha ha. Paid a taxi driver to look after us all week, then we got him so trashed that Mark had to drive the taxi. Mamba Village and Kenyan handshakes...lol.

One last point...if anyone can confirm if Mike Te Hau actually did put a hole in the Italians' reverse osmosis machine, then that would confirm something I have been wondering about for the last 20 years.

CPL KELVIN DINWIDDIE

RNZEME (A REBEL TOUR)

A young fella sat in the passage side of a Unimog truck amongst a convoy of trucks waiting to leave Linton camp to begin yet another 4 week exercise, in Waiouru. In his mirror, the RSM could be seen walking the road then climbing the foot mounts to the cab to give me the good news “Get ya stuff, get off the truck you’re on your way to Somalia”.

A week later saw the young man getting jabbed with all sorts of needles that were to be given over a 3-week period in just one week. It felt like everyone I met wanted to give me something or stab me with a needle. New kit, nice blue hat some snazzy sand coloured boots and he was ready to go along with a medic and signalman who made up the rebel tour of NZ Supply Platoon deployment to Somalia.

Then as with anything in the Army hurry up and wait arrived and we waited and waited. It did give us time to meet the people we would be deploying with who made us feel welcome, were easy to get along with and great to work alongside. We got some real quality time at home for Xmas and then finally met back at Linton early in the new year for a bus trip to Auckland, a charted flight to Somalia via Sydney, Singapore and the lovely state of Oman.

In a DC10 with pretty flight attendants, alcohol and plenty of room in cattle class, we winged our way across the world, after a lengthy delay in Oman waiting for a window to get into what was then a very busy airport, learning that Muslim toilets would take a bit of getting used too we finally got off the plane in Mogadishu.

Hot, hot, hot and I bet this sand gets in everything were my first thoughts when I touched ground, then it was time to unload get up to Taniwha Hill and set up camp, make it home.

A nice young guy from the US Army who had a forklift that went across country but seemed to only go at one speed (flat out) brought our gear across from the tarmac and managed to turn our generator into a bowling ball that came to rest exactly where we had sighted it from some 20 metres away, for the first time I found out Yanks can’t understand Kiwi, but certain words are understood by everyone.

Tents went up, lights came on and a bar was made thanks to the guys and easy digging all was done in good humour and team work. What we didn’t have we borrowed and what we couldn’t borrow we stole - extra comfy stretchers the Americans had for beds, steel plates for walkways.

The first few months went by like a camping trip next to a sandy beach if a little noisy with aircraft coming and going every 30 seconds and fighting pits.

We played sports against other countries at the airfield. We gave the Yank Marines a hiding at rugby, had an interesting game of volleyball against the Italians and ozzo. Everyone got tanned.

Meals came via the Air Force until they went home then we tried Norwegian (what was that stuff, bad), meals ready to eat via USA, Pakistan curries and pita bread, as long as you didn’t mind holding hands with some bloke as you crossed the airfield and finally some great hangi courtesy of the first prototype of the kiwi “kai cooker” (44 gal drums). The Kiwi bar rocked, the haka was huge wherever it went and still one of the best days on earth would have to be Anzac Day in the Mog 1993.

Drama with the generator continued during this period. Someone couldn’t tell where the oil level finished and filled it until the oil came out of the filling cap finally ending its life mid tour. But to be fair petrol driven generators don’t like a lot of sand so it was more of a mercy killing. One of the rebels had a mishap in a Hummer and broke his collar bone and had to be replaced by someone from the Air Force. The fighting pits filled in with sand so we lined them with steel plates it seemed like a good idea until one of the Aussies took a dive into one during the night smashing up his teeth. Sand got into everything.

The first break in Kenya was epic spending a week on tented safari in the Masi Mara and nights at the restaurant Carnivores drinking dawa (wild honey, lime and vodka) eating some of the animals you had just seen. One thing I learned was it doesn’t matter where in the world you are there’s always a Kiwi nearby.

By now the locals had stopped throwing rocks at us every time we went out the gate and a few were even calling out Kiwi when we were down town looking to get a bottle of water or anything that we had to give them on our trips.

I will never forget the surreal felling of sitting on the back of the Toyota putting a magazine on the Steyr with live rounds for the first time about to go out the gate to the harbour and realising it wasn’t for play this time, driving down the road heart pumping watching your corners.

Or the first night we went out of the compound to take a dignitary back to his residence that he was staying at. Putting out protection around the vehicles when we arrived, coming back some of the locals were putting out simple road blocks, which we sped past.

The rebel tour spent their time working either at the

harbour unloading boats, the UN store located at the airport or driving Capt Mendonca the CO back and forth from the airport, it was on one of those trips past k4 that the 19 Pakistan soldiers were killed when they were unloading MREs (ration packs) to the locals. Aideed's men came through the crowd and opened fire. I remember going for a run at the back of Taniwha Hill past those coffins waiting to be loaded on to aircraft (bummer).

The place sort of turned to custard after that, watched a cobra gunship fire cannon rounds and Maverick missiles into town above the airport, had a night when the yanks had one of those Hercules gunships circling Mog firing its 105 shells from its canon.

Finally, it was time to go home and again scored big with the UN paying for flights. It was first class out of Kenya to Dubai, a week in Singapore and 3 hours going around and around Auckland waiting for the fog to lift with family on the ground.

CPL STEPHEN GOBLE

“ONCE UPON A TIME”

CRASH PRE-DEPLOYMENT

I was an RNZSigs Telecommunications Engineer Corporal and was assigned to a very far away a place, even further than my home of the Naki (The mighty Taranaki). Two of us left Papakura around 6 pm on a Friday to conduct some maintenance at HMNZS Irirangi in Waiouru. We got there about 10 pm and I was told to take the rental and head back to see my OC.

I see the OC (suitably wound up) and I am told that I am off to Somalia and that I was a lucky chap (other verbs and nouns may have been used…) and was to meet the contingent first thing the following Monday morning.

Obviously, I was very happy from the previous day, as the OC awoke me the next day to reiterate I was off to Mogadishu and had to be in Linton 07:45 Monday (last or second to last Monday of December). The pixies and elves appeared to provide myself a rental wagon to bring the satellite phone down and to pack up my room (I was totally occupied with unit administration and preparing the Satellite Unit, spares and tools, so I had a hand to box up my personal effects and other loose ends).

I rock up to Linton Camp and was warmly greeted by WO2 Tony Harding who was a good bugger about my situation (being a last minute inclusion is a bit of a head ache for the head shed). I knew the medic Kelvin Corbett from High School whom took perverse pleasure in jabbing me with injections four times a day for four days, both legs and arms at a time. I then meet the rest of the dudes and the mechanic Kelvin “EME” Dinwiddie and we immediately formed the “Rebels” (very much rebels without a cause).

Whatever the contingent had first up that morning, I took it in my stride.

First things first though, getting that satellite phone in theatre was a bit of a head ache to be fair. So, a few jars (glass pints) with Mark Sweeting and Dion Rennie where they suggested that a drunken chimp / monkey / baboon (Mark really punches above his weight when it comes to compassion) could do my job (my commission and attainment of Lieutenant Commander rank in later years attests to their collective wisdom…) and smoke signals would work from the Mog…Spurred into protecting my duty free privileges, I managed to convince the head shed to purchase an extra two mattresses and banded them around the two units and all got into theatre in tip-top shape.

IN THEATRE

We got off the plane and stepped into an oven. The Advance Party were all tanned darker than mahogany and tooled with black-market AK47’s. We head up to Taniwha Hill and assemble tentage and the like, and I remember how much water we drank in the first 48 hours in theatre, it was truly an obscene amount.

I got the Satellite up and working on the second or third day, had the console in a container and the antenna unit on a pallet and a bit of scrim to shade the unit and deflect a little dust and sand. Every day I would use a paint brush and clean the units as best as possible, morning and night. I vaguely remember getting shocks off the container, so Doc and I gave EME a hand in burying a few earth spikes to the container and the generator, probably made it worse?…

There wasn’t that much for me to do really, so I helped Doc being Duty Per around camp, cleaning and doing routine chores i.e. burning the bogger drums (aka fuel poured in and large violent flame = smoke signals back to NZ). We also filed and used sand bags around the camp as walk ways and cleaning communal stores. One day, God gave me and Doc a six pack each (rarer than rocking horse doo) and we went to beach and sat in tire tubes watching planes and land and take off the Mog air strip. It was an amazing sight, seeing the number and variety of aircraft come and go.

THE REBELS

We had a blast with the boys and head shed looked after us and EME made Doc and I look good, well more myself if the Christian truth must be known. To be fair, it wasn’t EME’s fault at all, as diesel generators made to NZ specifications don’t survive on a constant diet of hot blast furnace deserts, so much. EME must have had to swap out three or four before we ‘found’ a big bad UN genie that could power up Palmerston North.

I am pretty sure the CSM must have tuned EME up over something one day as thunder clouds where over Tony’s head, EME though was as happy as a soldier at a happy hour during work hours, as his Priority One generator spares turned up consisting of kiwi favourite food, and nothing else. It was truly glorious and like the good chap he was he shared it all around fairly with the contingent.

Going on leave was like winning lotto every day. You got to escape the heat and sand and actually be clean, and one was rich beyond a privates wildest dreams. Doc could speak pretty good Bantu / Kiss Swahili, me not so much maybe 200 odd words enough to get me into trouble. ‘Mojo Tuska Barity’ is one cold beer please, actually one cold type of beer called Tuska. You want two beers, I hear you ask, easy pleasy - ‘Mojo Tuska Barity’ |

'Mojo Tuska Barity', chur.

Wild life comes in two varieties. One that stalks you skilfully in clubs and bars late at night (I used Tim Howard's name by the way…), and a few Brit, Ozzy, American and European tourists. And after a strict diet in theatre a man can go crazy. Then, the plethora of wild wife which walks the Masai Mara and Great Rift Valley. Doc and I hire a little Suzuki Jeep from Nairobi, read the insurance terms and proceeded to break them all on the first day. We picked up a local on the way to the Masai Mara to be our guide.

We saw it all Lions, Cheetahs, big cats and small cats and the whole host of predators feeding. Doc thought it would be a good idea to run a scientific experiment (Naki lads are a curious bunch) and chase Ostriches through the long grasses of the Masai Mara. Leaving that road behind and hit 50 Km's according to the odometer is sobering stuff. I had my head out of the window looking for dry creek beads / pot holes and Doc was screaming at birds to hurry up (too much Roader Runner white man…)

We conquered the Lake Navisha, the Rift Valley, Mombasa and had Doc's school mates to crash with, truly we burnt the candle at both ends. I guess with Africa, everything is a little more vibrant and alive, from the sunsets and sunrises, to safari's, to ghettos and the most dangerous animal of them all, the Brit Ex Pat (yes Elvis is alive, not skinny Elvis either folks).

I remember the Carnivores Restaurant (the biggest open split oven you have ever seen, where skewers of game are carved on to hot steel skillets) in Nairobi with a whole host of us and the Dawa Man rocks on up (a Six foot Four inch Linebacker type.) Dave Tairi asks "What does Dawa stand for?", and the deep rumble of a reply states "Medicine". Dave asks the next question "Medicine, for that?". "You no remember" was the sage and informed reply, prophetic words indeed.

Drink of choice included Kenya Cane and a smooth and mellow sweet white rum that was made for Coke a Cola, zero to handsome to dance floor God at a great rate of knots. The mighty United States Dollar was King where by you could get specially priced conversion into Kenyan Shillings, and or a discount over the Kenyan Shilling quoted price (the into Kenyan Shilling can only be used in Kenya, so the USD was highly sort after to export profits out of Kenya).

Meet up with a few Ozzy infantrymen in Mombasa and those boys were having a bad run with discipline… a few defections (AWOL) and a few HIV cases too. They were out in the Bad Lands in Somalia and had no real down time. Well, we got to singing a few Men at Work songs for solidity and commiseration. You don't know how lucky you are sometimes; home sickness can make one feel sorry for oneself in isolation.

THE UNITED NATIONS FIELD SERVICE

With a decent diesel shack working I had pluck all to do other than read, sun bake, siesta, and stay out of the way. Thankfully, Mike Mendoza got me a secondment

to the UN Field Technicians which got me out of behind the wire and all over the Mog. I worked with an American ex-marine and we went all over the Mog erecting steel towers to strap on radio communications equipment.

Communications towers tend to be built on the high ground where possible and I got to see a fair bit of the lye of the land and the UN in general, both are basket cases in my humble opinion. Life was good and varied for a Sig, with no one day being the same and the location changing constantly. The other side of the coin is the more you see the more empathy you have for the people you are trying to help and more of an appreciation for the enormity of the task it is truly generational in span. You don't know how lucky you are.

ANZAC DAY

ANZAC day in the Mog was stuff of legends. My first recollection is Danny 'Hitman' Coyle sleeping face down with body amour on the camp razor wire fence (the Christian in me placed a full can in his DPM trousers pocket and one is his webbing, I am sure a few Yanks observed most excellent soldering skills via an extended period in the prone position). We then had a few Castle Lagers (can't touch the stuff now, auh maybe one at a pinch…) and watched the sun rise, and the look on Americans faces departing to go to the port for a day's work was priceless.

I was supposed to help prompt the Nigerian bugler with regard to the Last Post, there was a low fly over and a few Turkish Military in attendance. English was not a common tongue, so I nudged the chap and timing may not have been perfect, but the effort of all was certainly appreciated.

We play the Ozzies in touch and a few of us just sat in the sea in rock pool just off the touch field and chug away on an ale. For some reason we hitched back to Taniwha Hill and the French Foreign Legion did the honours I recall singing Jaunty Alouette and butchered it wholesale, so downhill was the only place to go with Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques:

Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,

Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?

Sonnez les matines! Sonnez les matines!

Ding, dang, dong. Ding, dang, dong.

Dion Rennie awakes and adds his voice to the rendition and it sounds good, so Doc and I stop singing and watch in awe. French Foreign Legion / Anglo Saxon honour is restored.

Fast forward to the donkey races and considerable malarkey that ensued. That led to the great Ozzy game of 'Two Up' coupled with refined appreciation of the naval staple of Rum, with an Ozzy sailor Leon, off the HMAS Tobruk. Things may get murky from now on… I meet a few Canadians whilst seconded to the UN and a few Yanks as well, the Mog has wind of our ANZAC National Day bash and any excuse to crash is used and abused. Well, a bunch of us think it would be a good idea to watch some WWF on cable, so we head off on the back of a Humvee somewhere to watch it. A short time after departing we speed up. Now, an African Sunset is a thing of great beautiful as is a cart wheeling Humvee… Well, I probably won Lotto that day because I only gently broke my collar bone after landing - full style points achieved.

Basically, I get back to Tanwhia Hill and get driven to the American First Aid Post. Now, I get x-rayed and bloods taken, with a dose of pain killers issued. I have to wait,

then life became very dreamy.

The flight back (Medivac back to New Zealand) takes nearly four days, but there is a glimmering bright spot. Dion (my escort) and I have an eleven hour lay-up in Dubai, and we have business class tickets. So, we rock into the business lounge after a bit of shopping. We are both small town lads with no real idea how the big bad world works.

Broken collar bones are great, well sort of, as everybody around you looks after you especially the in flight crew.

AOTEAROA SIDE

I get back to NZ and the Navy hospital in Devonport looking both very brown and very broken. The civilian doctor was not overly concerned about my collar bone, so I go NATO and get ejected from the consultation room. I then proceed to quietly express my displeasure of perceived rough shot treatment. I might have extended the outsourcing agreement to the nth degree… I suspect the next patient may have mentioned my outlook on affairs, and how in military culture if you don't do a good job your life expectancy may have diminished somewhat.

I go back in and it is all lovey dubby. Now, my situation was complex. I was on sick leave as an Army Corporal, seeing a civilian doctor and a different civilian specialist, with an Army unit, on an Air Force base in Hobsonville. Three months became ten and I had the best six months of my life on leave; three months convalescing, seven months back in the Naki on full pay crashing at my olds (I had never been so rich in my entire life).

END NOTE

I guess the other thing I learnt is that all good things must come to an end. I try not do a Bruce Springsteen (recreate Glory Days) I do however draw on the experience and look forward to the next thing. For myself it was travel with the Navy (I was Beer Officer in 2000 and I still remember that cans cost $ 0.48 duty free from both Dominion Breweries and Lion Breweries) and then to pursue a career in commerce. If my environment doesn't echo of some of the good times and things from the Mog and Tanwhia Hill, then I am not shy to make subtle changes or if the need arises, too exit stage left for fairer seas and kinder airs.

DANTE - THE HUSS

I got back to unit late and was harassed by the Orderly Room about some random over payment. I vaguely remember Doc and the CSM dishing out cash once a week (a Pay Parade, I think) and signing something, which got faxed back to New Zealand. I basically had to sign a form to return $ 1,200.00NZD over three pay periods.

I had stacks of cash and a great time and would have gladly paid $ 1,200.00 to get on the contingent as it is a once in a life time thing, notwithstanding the $1,800.00 USD fly back cash. I ended up calling an Army Lawyer and I calmly explain the whole thing and I was informed of a legal principle of 'good faith'. We reckoned that good faith applied here. And the form should be double sided and the good faith clause pointed out prior to signing the repayment from, mine was single sided without the good faith clause.

So, I complained that the New Zealand Army did not take me to civil court to revoke the good faith clause. I ignored the technicalities of who owed what and when. Being, take me to court or drop everything.

NZ ARMY
NZ ARMY
NZ ARMY
NZ ARMY
LAND CRUISER
DRIVE

CAPT MIKE MENDONCA

I caught up with Tim Howard earlier this year; he was in Wellington for the sevens. We talked about families and all sorts of old stuff, but invariably the conversation ended up with Somalia. Love it or hate it we decided, Somalia was an experience that must have made us all better men.

MILITARY UNINTELLIGENCE

We laughed at some of the daft things that happened:

- Before we left for Africa, we all spent a couple of days learning how to speak Egyptian Arabic. This was very interesting, but unfortunately of limited practicality on the ground. The language spoken in Somalia is in fact Somali.
- As the advance party, we were deployed into Mogadishu without weapons. This was not a very good idea. In our first week we had a least two armed incidents that I can recall. One was especially nasty, involving Mike Archer. As a result of these incidents we purchased a couple of AK47s in a street market (value = 1 pair of jeans). We figured we should at least give ourselves a fighting chance if we were attacked.
- Our logistics would be provided by the UN. But the UN had no logistics, there were no systems. There was some gear and supplies, but these turned out to be rubbish. The advance part unloaded every one of the 200 containers – many of them contained rotten food. The MHE was beyond the end of its life, and the water had been stored on top of the computer gear. When the water bottles all broke in the ship's hold, the computers were ruined. There were no UN trucks and the locals charged like wounded bulls for the use of their jalopies.
- The advance party lugged a briefcase with $US50,000 cash half way around the world – this had to be kept in a bank vault in Kenya.
- We had an allowance of $1 a day (fortunately this was in $US, we made a killing on the exchange rate). It was slightly galling working alongside Aussies who got $100 a day and were tax-free. Worse, we didn't have enough money to take leave. You needed to be able to take a break from Mogadishu.
- There was a cockup with pay and when we came home the Army presented some of us with invoices to pay back a couple of thousand dollars. I'm sure the Army was probably legally right. When a couple of us refused to pay up the Army threatened to pass our details to Baycorp. I wished I'd been in the Aussie Army.

I still remember this stuff quite vividly. These days, I'm sure the Army must be much better at supporting deployed contingents.

MISERABLE MOGADISHU

In Mogadishu, there are some things that are still quite vivid in my mind:

- The smell of the dead. Watching bodies being chucked into a hole and unceremoniously covered with a bit of dirt. Some locals once watched our video footage of a tangi and couldn't believe the respect we showed for the dead. This was a horrible clash of cultures.
- The US announced their arrival with a very low pass by some F-16s. They were so low they sucked your breath away, and the noise was deafening. It scared the shit out of everyone, and the baddies behaved for a few days. Unfortunately it was all downhill from there.
- Watching the first KIA being unloaded from a helicopter, and feeling a deep ache in my guts.
- Being shot at while driving to the US Embassy, and feeling a deep ache in my guts.
- Mike Te Hau's turn to cook again, and feeling a deep ache in my guts.
- Somali men chewing khat and going nuts in the afternoon.
- All non-military staff being evacuated when things turned bad, and hosting several fat, useless, overpaid bureaucrats at Taniwha Hill.

Thinking back, I think we probably did pretty well to get through that deployment in one piece. We certainly had some close shaves.

It wasn't all bad though; there was some fantastic stuff that happened and some fantastic leaders who – on balance – probably made up for the crap.

- The RNZAF arrived with their little Andovers, escorted by Martyn Dunne. I only saw him for five minutes – he immediately saw the folly of having no weapons and offered me his pistol (I already had the AK47 but wasn't about to show him –the AK was bright pink). Martyn gave us a pat on the back and some encouraging words that were well chosen and just what we needed.
- David Haynes showed up at some stage. His presence made a huge difference as he could see that some daft decisions had been made and he had enough grey hairs to be able to do the right thing, even if we didn't always agree. With David and Martyn's

governance I felt we were in good hands.

- The RNZAF officers were sensible and gave their troops a few dollars so they could actually take a break out of the combat zone. We followed suit, but we should have done better for our men.

MONGRELS IN MOGADISHU

For Tim and me, the real privilege of deploying to Somalia was to live for a while alongside 30-odd kiwi blokes. Someone emailed me a photo of the Detachment the other week. What a pack of mongrels. Brilliant, imaginative, inventive, musical, gregarious, energised, colourful, rambunctious, argumentative, rapscallion, generous mongrels.

We worked with about 20 different nationalities. Kiwis stood head and shoulders above all of the others. I might be romanticising, but this is how I remember the differences:

What Other Nationalities Did	What Kiwis Did
Ate official national rations (Norway was supposed to cater for us, but they only ate fish)	Got sick of fish, built a BBQ, built a mobile hangi, found out how to get decent meat from Nairobi, made a cooking roster, tried a few things, mostly ate well
Went to the Toilet everywhere	Convinced the US Marines Seabees to build us some dunnies. Set up a roster for burning of effluent
Would only do the duties for which they were trained. (The US even seemed to have a trade for guiding forklifts)	Drove anything, fired anything, fixed anything, talked to anyone, tried stuff, mostly in good humour
Were either teetotal or perpetually pissed	Planned, built and operated a bar under strict controls (that usually worked). Had a release valve, had a few dramas, had a lot of fun. Played guitars and sang.
Were bored a lot	See above. Also had a PT programme, a professional development programme (I remember a hilarious public speaking night), put aside time specifically for writing letters home, planned and conducted range shoots.
Stank	Designed, built and procured resources for daily showers

A few other things have stuck in my mind:

- After PT one day I decided to have the Drinking Olympics. We divided into teams and had boat races, the flexible half yard , weetbix races and a race involving clothes pegs on competitors' faces. It was all great fun but I should have known better than to let the guys drink during daylight and straight after PT. As the evening progressed there were a couple of scraps (one involving a local and a knife) and things started to get out of hand. Fortunately drunken brawlers are pretty harmless, and no-one was really hurt. There were plenty of apologies the next day, but it was probably a good release during a tough period.
- One of the more fiery guys saw and chased an American who stole a blue UN helmet from our compound. Furious, our guy (a Maori) raced into the US compound and yelled to a US officer 'I just saw a ….. …… thieving my ….. helmet!'. When he came back and calmed down, I asked the guy to write an official report. He wrote: 'I advised the US Commander that I had observed an African American serviceman remove UN property without proper authorisation'.
- Warrant Officer Tony Harding was the rock for the whole contingent. He never wavered from his duties, kept us honest when it was time to make hard decisions, and never lost his human touch. The only slight weakness in Tony's character is that he is a two pint screamer.
- One of our stronger leaders was Dion Rennie. He brought glory on himself and the contingent through some support he provided for the Pakistanis; this performance was formally recognised by the presentation of a live goat. Dion showed up with the terrified creature tethered to his belt. He couldn't bear to kill it, so later that night he sneaked back into the Pakistani compound, and liberated it into the small

herd that kept the Paki's in fresh curry.

- ANZAC Day was fantastic - my favourite memory was the Nigerian bugler who played the Last Post for us. His rendition was imperfect, but good enough, but his eyes were bulging because his warrant officer was standing behind him, ready to clout him on the helmet if he struck a bum note. From memory the poor bugger struck several bum notes. The Warrant Officer was a mean looking bastard, he had tribal leopard whiskers tattooed on his cheeks.
- My only grievance with our Detachment is around music. One of the finest kiwi bands that ever existed was called Th' Dudes. I was never allowed to play Th' Dudes at Taniwha Hill. The cool Maori bros who controlled the music refused flatly to play it (they preferred Tui Teka). I tried to pull rank but this didn't work in the bar. I am still of the view that the bros denied thirty young men their rightful music education.
- Some of the lads went to Zanzibar, one of them perked a 600 year old historic cannonball from Fort Jesus. I think Tony Harding made them take it back.
- When we drove out of the compound, the kids would all cheer 'hooray New Zealand!' We were chuffed with this, and would throw them lollies and other treats. One day I was driving with some French soldiers and I heard the kids yell 'Viva la France!', the French were chuffed and threw lollies etc. It turns out the resourceful kids recognised flags and used this knowledge to get lollies from every nationality.
- One day we stopped at a checkpoint and I was taking a swig of water. I heard a voice say 'Giff me water' and looked down to see a kid whose hands had been blown off reaching up for my water bottle. I gave it to him, but as we drove off I saw some able bodied kids bearing down on him to grab the water. I often wonder what became of that kid. Sometimes when things are tough at work I think about that kid and things don't seem so tough any more.
- Appropriately, we were presented our UNOSOM medals by a Turkish General. I was bloody proud of the guys that day.
- Steve Wagner is a nice bloke, we've always got on well without being great mates. But the day he walked into the tent at Taniwha Hill to relieve me, I greeted him like a long lost brother. It had been a long hard slog, and we were ready to come home.

SGT DEREK BILLING

LIVING IN TWO CAMPS

I deployed with the second RNZAF 42 Sqn Detachment, Operation Samaritan. The team commander was Flt Lt Steve Alexander.

I flew into Mogadishu on an RNZAF B727, out of RNZAF Whenuapai, via Darwin, Christmas Island and Diego Garcia (BIOT).

Upon landing at Mogadishu, the first deployment (42 Sqn det) performed a haka. I conducted a hand-over with F/O Darryl Cockroft and team over the next couple of days before they all departed on the B727.

My primary role was Communications Sergeant, looked after the Satellite communications and HF Rear-link communications and once familiar with the systems our team set about re-designing the rear-link antenna set-up to improve HF reliability HF rear-link was I think about 4-hops to Singapore, we managed to achieve I believe 83% reliability(?)

- Other memories include;
- Picquet Duty

A few trips into the Embassy, generally sitting on the back of a Unimog. On one of these trips, seeing a local scowl and point his finger at me and simulating a gunshot. I remember my wide smile and wagging a raised finger as if addressing a child and he laughed very hard indeed!

- Ended up driving the Unimog a few times
- Acting as security on a medical assistance mission into the country, alongside some Ugandan Soldiers (aggressive to say the least!) with our Medico
- Took a week or so but got quite used to 24-hour aircraft noise, everything from C5 Galaxy's, Boeing 757's, Italian Agusta Gunships, Antonov's, Chinooks, Blackhawks, Huey's, etc.

One night, eggs at dinner resulted in food poisoning throughout the entire camp. I woke about 02:00am and stuck my fingers down my throat and got rid of it all, which meant that I was relatively unaffected the next day. I ended up flying to Mombasa that day to assist the Andover crew, to many flight crew were affected by a 'bad-egg'! I remember that flight well, my first exposure to GPS, did a 'ramp-walk' while we flew low around the Australian Observation post on 'Ayres Rock' and a spot of low-flying across the desert.

Having a few to many Castle Lagers one night and Steve Alexander unable to wake anybody to attend to the generator, so he decided to refill it himself. Next day I helped the fitters to clean out the petrol and refill with diesel.

A group of us helping the US Seabees with a demolition job, destroying ammunition and captured arms, a huge amount that we had to unload into a big hole in the desert. We then set about carpeting the entire pile with plastic explosive (who was the bright spark to make a 'mouse-shaped charge' anyway!) and then retreating about .5 km away and the Seabee detonating the explosive. Biggest mushroom cloud I've seen, then the 'incoming' call!

I remember flying up to an Australian detachment at Baidoa with an American Intelligence team and coming across some Legionnaires, aggressive angry types I thought.

I went on R&R to Nairobi and took a Safari out onto the Masai Mara under canvas. Hearing the Hippo's at night and steering clear of them when they had their young with them. The Landrover broke down on the trip back to Nairobi.

The deployment was terminated early and it was while we were starting to pack up that I heard the NZ Army Supply Detachment's Signals Corporal (UNOSOM) had been MedEvac'd home, so I 'put my hand up' to stay on in his place. After some to-and-fro'ing with Defence HQ, I was attached to the Army Detachment (UNOSOM) and after I waved off the last RNZAF Herc from Mogadishu, I was officially part of the Taniwha Hill set!

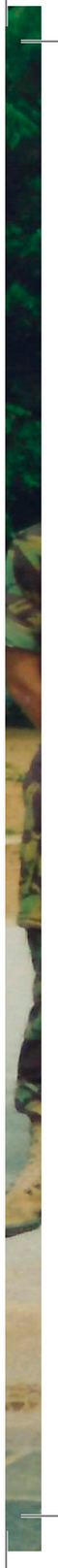
My role included looking after the Sat-Pak set-up and the internal UHF communications, but not much to do there as it was already in place and working well.

I got involved in camp duties that included picquet and kitchen duties. I also took part in the daily fitness sessions, which I thought helped our moral enormously.

I decided to help some of the boys to build a kitchen extension onto the bar with the copious amount of plywood that was available across the airfield (ex-American).

Kelvin Dinwiddie (electrician) decided that the electrical earthing system was not 'what it should be' and we set about expanding the earth and installing additional earthing stakes and copper cables that included the urinal, which was probably the only reliable earthing point in the whole camp.

I shared a tent with Kelvin 'Doc' Corbett (medic) and started accompanying him on his regular runs into Mogadishu, usually the 'Embassy' compound and the Port. Sometimes we went to other UN compounds and to the Australian Compound. These runs were in an Isuzu



or Toyota Hilux, we often shared the driving and the other was ‘security’. If we used the Isuzu we would often have one of the boys sitting in the back with the rear door unlatched, so that it could be kicked open and a Steyr deployed should it be required.

One of my first rides into the Embassy as a passenger I had the window down and my prescription sunnies were raked off my face by a local lad – I squealed like a girl, but it broke the ice and I was fine from that point on!

I progressed to becoming a regular driver for Captain Mike and others into Mogadishu, mainly to the port and the Embassy. Other trips included the Australian Compound and UN headquarters.

The Australian contingent (ASC) were camped down the hill in front of us on the flat of the runway and when their generator failed they moved up into Taniwha Hill, they were always at our bar anyway, so it was not much of a change at all.

I installed an internal telephone system (Don-10 cable) from the US Marine’s exchange ‘across the way’. Took about two days to pick out a trench in the coral and bury the cable under the road and through the camp, phones in the kitchen and Captain Mike’s Office (and tent?). I also installed a telephone ‘extension’ on the SatPak to Captain Mike’s tent, which meant he was able to be contacted from NZDF as the need arose.

About a week later one of the boys came and told me that the yanks were yanking up my Don 10! Apparently, they were tracing a fault and mistook our circuit for one of theirs. It took me about a day to put it all back to rights.

When the NBC moved their commercial satellite, so the footprint included Mogadishu, I made a television antenna with coaxial cable (50ohm cable was all that was available), which gave a pretty poor picture, but it was watchable and sound was okay. I did the same for the US Marine communications personnel, which they appreciated

The Toyota Hilux we inherited from the 42 Sqn Det was used for many of our trips into town and we had a soldier stand on the back with the C9 bipod sitting on the roof. The boys had bashed a dent into the roof and sat the C9 on a sandbag, but clearly this was not suitable, for a start just hanging on was a bit of an adventure, let alone even attempting to use the weapon. I set about building a wooden gun platform that was bolted onto the roof of the Hilux. Used 8” nails, plywood and 4x2 timber. Cut it all by chainsaw and assembled a workable product. We had to bash four holes in the corners of the roof and shove the bolts in to properly secure the platform, didn’t want it falling off! While the arc of fire was limited, it was a significant improvement and it included a swivel into which the bipod legs were placed and a handhold for the Soldier to ‘hang-on’ as the vehicle sped about town!

I went on another R&R trip, this time to Mombasa on a US Govt Oiler, a naval vessel that was operated by a civilian crew. I got involved working with the Radio Operator and in the course of the trip the Radio Operator was stricken with jaundice? and I ended up running the ships communications room on the return trip to Mogadishu! During R&R, I ran into a Kiwi aid worker and we headed up the coast and stayed at a mate of his resort. He had his 45 revolver as protection against aggressive locals and we were told under no circumstances to be outside after dark, and we thought Mogadishu was bad! When the ship arrived back at Mogadishu, we couldn’t berth because of the large scale

attack and/or threat(?). We ended up standing off-shore for some time and I managed to contact Taniwha Hill via UHF and Captain Mike preferred that we get ashore as soon as possible. So, I took him at his word and we called an Indian Warship patrolling in our vicinity and with the Captains permission, asked if they could winch us off (Helo) and drop us at the Mogadishu airfield. Next thing

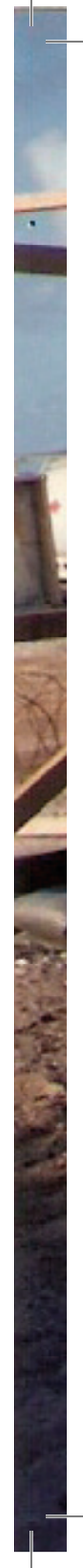
we knew a chopper was low flying up and down both sides and around the ship and a radio call to discuss a suitable winching station, which ended up being on the top of the aft cabin area. We were winched into an old Aerospataile Gazelle Helicopter operated by a Pilot and Crewman and flown into shore. They did a great job and I remember disembarking the Helo at the airport and conducting a very smart attention/salute which they both seemed to appreciate!

During a particular attack by Italian and US Forces on General Aideed's compound, we were alternating between standing on the hill and watching various gunships at work (while drinking coffee) and then watching the same stuff on television for a slightly different perspective. Some of the journalists involved I believe were killed during that assault?

We also heard 'blow-by-blow' radio comm coming through the television, the US raid on General Aideed's compound because it came through the television speakers, over top of the news story!

Some other memories include;

- Australian Signals Detachment at the Embassy, during the day they 'lost power' and all their fault-finding eventually found them wandering out to check the generator. However, upon reaching the generator location which was against the compound wall, it wasn't there! It appears the locals had simply climbed the wall, disconnected the generator and lifted it over the wall in a very quick time – amazing what you can achieve with manpower, adrenalin and khat!
- Watching a fire-fight between a Somali and the Pakistani's. US observation helo hovering over the Pakistani compound and spotting for them, who returned fire I think with a 150mm(?)
- Laying in a trench on the hill watching an AC130 delivering it's ordnance into the Aideed compound over a couple of nights, it was quite a light show.
- Driving back to Taniwha Hill after dropping a local worker at K4 and getting caught in a growing crowd. When Kelvin (electrician) and I saw the AK47's starting to appear, we did a quick 180 and drove quick-smart back into the airfield via the American entrance!
- On patrol with the US Marines late afternoon and into the night. Sitting in a Humvee and being swamped by angry locals who clearly wanted to take my Steyr off me given half a chance. I remember looking through the night-sight on my Steyr and seeing a great deal of movement around us. Coming across some poor sod slumped against a wall with his hands tied with wire and a bloke standing over him with an AK47. Both arrested and taken into the US Compound for interrogation and they would typically expect to be released some hours later. The Marine's assured me that all we'd done was interrupt the inevitable execution by clan members.
- Doc and I sitting in the vehicle outside a UN Compound (can't remember which one, it wasn't the Embassy) and watching some local beating some poor kid with a large stick and it not phasing us at all – I remember a casual discussion about the scene is about all.
- Visiting the Australian compound for a party one night. I drove the Hilux and 'famous last words' said to the RSM "I know a shortcut"! (REALLY dumb). Anyway, once we actually got there, a good night by all. I remember a discussion between an American civilian (Security) and somebody else (can't remember who), arguing that the windshield on his vehicle was bullet proof and would not even chip if it was shot with a 9mm round. They went out of the compound and I remember a 'double-tap' and all the guys ran to the parapet and peering out to look for the source of the rounds, but all the nurses and civilians ducked for cover under the parapet – who were the bright ones I wonder! They came back a short time later with the civvy shaking his head, he had a chipped windscreen but the 9mm rounds did not penetrate the windscreen!
- Flying out of country, departing Somalia on an old Russian Antonov turbo-prop. Low level tactical departure as I believe we had a bit of incoming as we took off(?). Passengers sitting in front of the unsecured cargo(!) and the air-conditioning failing so the aircrew dropped the ramp to get some ventilation.
- Landed in Nairobi and overnighted, then onto a South Africa Airlines B757 that was in very poor condition, flying to Johannesburg. The airline staff were attentive enough – that is until the movie started and they were conspicuous by their absence! When I eventually went looking for them they told us to help ourselves – they were far to busy watching the movie!



SSGT MARK SWEETING

November 1992 as a new SSgt and I had finally been picked to deploy as a Petroleum Operator as part of the NZ Supply Detachment, undergoing the training in Linton with pers being nominated in various roles of speciality work. This was what I had been waiting for years and now finally had the chance to put all the training we had done with the OSG to practise.

Seeing the advance party off with us to follow bought the whole thing closer to reality. The main body was on again, off again, with us finally saying our good byes to family and friends at the start of Jan 1993 leaving Linton for an overnight stop in Auckland prior to departure.

We boarded a charter flight next morning, once on board we were told by the pilot there was a problem with landing gear, we could take off but maybe not land, but while the problem was fixed he said the bar is open, I looked at the CSM, Tony Harding, as we had not realised there would be a bar on board, however there was a few “controlled” drinks while the fault was fixed and we departed for Sydney where we picked up the members of the Aussie contingent. Then it was onto Singapore where we all decided to purchase a bottle of top shelf to donate to our new social club as opening stock when the bar was established.

After a very long flight we other stopovers that now remain a blur, we finally landed in Mogadishu. On the way into the airport we flew past the biggest fuel farm I have ever seen and a large transport park full of white UN vehicles of all descriptions. Once on the ground I met Lt Tim Howard, few words were exchanged in welcome and I asked him were those the vehicles and equipment that Col Ottaway had briefed us about the UN Supplying for us prior to departing NZ, No he replied those are Canadian ours are over there, a couple of beat up Somali Toyotas, one of which would get the name Kiwi Thunder.

The plane was unloaded of all our gear and trucked up to our camp site later to be named Taniwha Hill. The OC & CSM came up with the plan of how the camp was to be laid out and we quickly got accommodation lines set up with tent mates being allocated for the next 6 months.

The first job was to find ourselves some better beds, the low camp stretcher that had been packed for us was useless as they sank into the sand so much. Soon Arch had us hooked up with enough cots for the whole contingent. This type of cot went on to be a NZ supply item a few years later. This was my first introduction to bartering and “borrowing” equipment from other countries, mainly the Marines, and this would go on to be the way of life for the next 6 months.

The SNCOs were taken on an orientation drive of the city by the Advance Party, this was a real eye opener to us all. Watching kids pinch sunglasses off marine’s faces was a classic. Somalis as we would learn were better “borrowers” of equipment than anyone we had seen before and you had to have your wits about you. Locals were very clever at putting children or woman between vehicles to try and separate your convoy and isolate a vehicle. Over the course of our tour I saw spare wheels removed from the back of 4 wheel drive doors as the vehicle drove through the market and a Aussie army Landover loose its soft top canopy as it drove through the market place.

We were shown the stocks, Fuel & Rations, which the UN had provided for us to account and distribute, big task ahead working out just what was there and what we had in the way of equipment. The Petroleum Section had ISO tanks with MT Gas and Diesel, some drums of oil and that was it. Our first fuel was dispensed using a local Somali and a large length of garden hose to siphon the diesel into the UN forklift. This dispense pack, (Somali) was soon changed for two portable dispense packs we acquired from the Marines, (long term loan). However the Pet Section job of dispensing UN fuel was short lived as we soon ran out of fuel and there was no future plan in resupplying us as the Americans had a supply already in place.

Development of Taniwha hill soon became a priority for the Pet Section and others with the construction of sandbag paths being one of the on-going tasks. The shower unit was established, but we soon realised that the scrim was fairly see thru and was one of the reasons the American “beauties” from the American Tpt unit across from us kept walking past at show (shower) time. They were why the camp was named Taniwha Hill. Solid walls were quickly found and later a container for ablutions and washing machine was sourced from the American POL unit.

The sandbag paths soon became a chore as they did not last, so the Pet section again managed to locate some spare A2 matting, which American’s had used to lengthen the runway, this made very good pathways as it clipped together solving the constant sand bagging of paths. It was also used in a couple of tents as hard flooring. I understand on a later rotation the matting had to be given back to the Americans!

The Rec tent come Bar was another achievement in its self with a small hill being levelled out one morning for PT by hand using shovels and rakes, well done to you all as this was a big achievement and to Brent Haami for his

design plan of the extension that later came about.

Being fed was a new experience to us all, with us all being catered for by the Norwegian contingent at first, but after several cases of people getting sick and maybe our idea of what meals should look like and taste like, we managed to move to lunch & dinner being provided by RNZAF who had a camp next to the runway. Getting to their camp you would see how many soldiers you could get on a Toyota landcruiser ute, not many had to walk! After the RNZAF left Mogadishu we were left up to our own resources and had a bit of a roster for cooking, which worked out well on most occasions.

Other than making Taniwha Hill a better place to stay, the Petroleum Section daily tasks revolved around water purification or source non potable water for ablutions, keeping the generators at the Rations section full of diesel, we had a short stint in assisting the Marines refuelling fixed wing aircraft, providing security for visiting dignitaries and at one time were Stevedores when a supply ship arrived and needed to be unloaded. The ship had a mixture of rations, general stores and UN Vehicles. On route to Mogadishu, the ship had struck bad weather and the holds were in a real mess, however it was quickly unloaded as we turned our hand to a very different skill set.

Kiwi Thunder, the Toyota Landcruiser ute, which we hired off the local Somalis, was our main vehicle in getting about, the act of inserting a twisted together wiring loom back into a socket to make the ignition circuit live soon became a real pain, so a “on off” switch was sourced from the Marines and wired in and to activate the starter motor you used the windscreen washer switch, different but effective.

ANZAC Day would have to be the best ANZAC parade and sports day I have ever attended, Complete with dawn service, made up from all three services from Australia , New Zealand and of course the Turks. The dawn service even had a fly past by the RNZAF - awesome. The small contingent did very well to host such a large number on the hill.

The Rec tent on the hill was a very popular amongst many countries and non-government organisation workers. Keeping it stocked at times became a bit of a mission, but with friendly Aussie move ops informing us that our “DGs” (Dangerous Goods) - bar supplies were now unloaded and ready for uplift, we managed to keep on top of it. This place proved to be where many deals were struck to keep the NZ SUP DET ticking along and many friends were made here. Thanks to the other members of the “Front Row Club” in keeping the entertainment going.

My thanks go to the rest of the Petroleum Section, Cpl Brent “Mr Phillino” Haami, LCpl Mike “ Mr Arch” Archer, Pte JJ “ Mr Joy Joy” King, Pte Alex “Mr Black American” Tauranga and lastly Omar the Somali worker for their hard work and diligent way they approached each task we were given, making this tour a very unforgettable 6 months.

NO 42 SQUADRON DETACHMENT UNIFIED TASK FORCE, SOMALIA
JAN- MAY 1993

ROTATION ONE (JAN TO MAR 1993)

In April 1992, the UN authorised the establishment of the United Nations Organisation for Somalia (UNOSOM) whose task was to monitor the cease-fire in Mogadishu, to provide protection and security for UN personnel, equipment and supplies at the sea and airports at Mogadishu and to escort deliveries of humanitarian supplies from there to distribution centres within the city and its immediate environs.

This effort was only a drop in the bucket when you consider the human pain and suffering that had crippled the entire country and, as a result, in August 1992, UNOSOM's mandate and strength were enlarged in an effort to enable it to extend its protection of humanitarian convoys and distribution centres throughout Somalia. NZs contribution to this mission was a warehousing unit of approximately 30 Army personnel which operated from the Port of Mogadishu.

However, the UN hadn't counted on the level of anarchy to which the country had slumped and the lone Pakistani battalion provided for protection of the UN aid effort was unable to stop most of the aid supplies falling into the hands of the various rebel factions. UNOSOM was, therefore, unable to fully implement its mandate.

To overcome this problem the United States proposed to lead a multinational force of member nations into the country to restore the climate under which humanitarian aid could again be distributed effectively by UNOSOM to those who needed it most. This initiative was eagerly sanctioned by the UN Security Council at the beginning of December 1992 which authorised this force, to be known as the Unified Task Force, or UNITAF, to use "all necessary means" to re-establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.

UNOSOM was to remain in existence and continue its responsibility for political aspects and for humanitarian assistance. The mandate for UNITAF extended only for the period necessary to restore an acceptable level of peace.

Within days of this decision a US Marine Expeditionary Unit was landed on the beach at Mogadishu Airport to spearhead Operation RESTORE HOPE. At the same time the US also approached a number of other countries, including NZ, to provide forces to the operation.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT PLANNING AND PREPARATION

New Zealand's participation was requested at the end of the first week of December and the Defence planning machine was immediately set in motion. Obviously, our participation had to be affordable and sustainable at a significant distance from our shores, but our contribution had to also fit within the size and shape of the planned coalition force. In addition, the Government also required that our contribution was to be seen as just that, a clearly identifiable NZ contribution. The depth of concern the NZ public had for the tragedy unfolding in Somalia had to be demonstrated, just as we had demonstrated our willingness to stand up and be counted during the Gulf War two years previously. In addition, the benefit to our relationship with the US must have been one of Government's considerations.

A further constraint imposed by the Government was that our contribution would be for an initial period of four months only, with an extension to a maximum of six months at Government direction.

The three basic contribution options open to the NZ Government to support Operation RESTORE HOPE were:

- the expansion of NZSUPDET and its transfer to UNITAF
- making an additional, significant, time-bound contribution, or
- making a financial contribution only.

It became clear very quickly that neither the expansion of NZSUPDET nor the financial contribution options met Government guidelines. Neither could be clearly identified as a New Zealand contribution. In addition, the expansion option raised the concern that we could be stepping into a commitment that would ultimately be difficult to withdraw from. So, the size, shape and capabilities of a force to make an additional, significant and time-bound contribution had to be determined.

Initial RNZAF staff work identified four options for an air only contribution. These were, in order of preference:

- Two C130
- Two C130 plus three Iroquois
- Three Iroquois
- Two Andover

The C130 and Iroquois options were seen as the easiest to support in a difficult theatre such as Somalia because a number of other nations would be operating similar equipment. For this reason the Andover was seen as somewhat of an unpredictable orphan. But as planning progressed the lack of an aircraft with the Andover's STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) capabilities within the coalition force soon became apparent and we saw a niche market that could be clearly labeled "New Zealand

contribution". As planning for this option progressed, aircraft numbers were also increased from two to three to guarantee two on line for daily tasking.

Whilst this planning was going on, Army were also looking at their options. The US had been clear in their call for assistance, just as our Government had been clear in its guidelines; their prime interest was in self-supporting battalion-sized contributions. The offer of a battalion was out of the question financially so Army proposed two main options: a Company Group with its own integral logistic support and capable of independent operations, such as vital asset protection, or a light Company that would have to be integrated into some other national force.

Quickly, the Andover option became the NZDF preferred option but, in the end, it was the Commander UNITAF who selected the Andover from the shopping list presented to him. On 23 December he signaled requesting the Andovers due to the "unique capability they would bring to the operation".

Late on that same day CDF signed his directive to CAS and most of the NZDF went happily off on Christmas leave.

For all the planning that had preceded it, the mission statement was deceptively simple, primarily because our concept of operations could not be pre-determined in any detail. Our mission was to "Provide three Andover aircraft and support personnel and equipment to assist the Unified Task Force in Somalia", period.

The NZ commitment to UNITAF was nicknamed OPERATION SAMARITAN.

On Boxing Day a four man reconnaissance party left NZ for Mogadishu to glean whatever they could to assist last minute preparations. However, transport problems that left the party stranded in Nairobi for two days meant that little, if anything, that was learned by the group could be translated into meaningful decisions regarding in-country support prior to the deployment of the main body. As a result, the detachment had to deploy prepared for all likely contingencies and a considerable amount of equipment was taken that was not required and had to be later backloaded to NZ or simply written off. A good example of this was a large and bulky water purification plant and its associated chemicals.

Due to the short notice for deployment very little in the way of pre-deployment training was achieved. Necessities such as weapons training, clothing and equipment issues, and inoculations, were fitted in but the possibility of a six month deployment made it equally imperative that personnel were given reasonable opportunity for leave with their families. With Christmas right in the middle of preparations this latter aspect was a critical consideration that would impact on morale downstream, both in Somalia and here at home in NZ.

The absence of pre-deployment training was able to be redressed for the second rotation of personnel that replaced the initial detachment at the end of March.

The three Andovers departed Auckland on New Year's Day, only nine days after their commitment had been confirmed. They were followed by a B727 carrying the remainder of the detachment personnel and three C130s over the next two days.

The Boeing and the first of the Hercules arrived in Mogadishu on the morning of 5 January, the second and third Hercules the following day, and the Andovers brought up the rear on the 7th. Although little information and guidance was available prior to deployment, contingency planning, intuition and guesswork were of a high standard and flying operations were able to be commenced the day after the arrival of the Andovers – something that came as a pleasant surprise to the UNITAF (USAF Tactical Air Command) Air Component staff.

From a contingency planning point of view it is worthwhile considering the effort required to deploy an aircraft such as the Andover halfway around the world and then expect it to operate in a harsh climate such as we encountered in Somalia. The three aircraft with the maximum airframe hours available had to be identified and penalty maintenance carried out - in this case one of the aircraft was in semi-VIP fit and had to reconfigured for the utility role. Each aircraft was hurriedly fitted with Navstar GPS.

Then there is the problem of actually getting them to where you want them. The relatively short range of the Andover dictated a deployment route that now sounds

like something out of a holiday brochure, while the most efficient way to actually fly the route was in a “transport” formation. The route took the three-ship through:

- Townsville
- Darwin
- Surabaya (Indonesia)
- Singapore
- Butterworth
- Colombo
- Male (Maldive Islands)
- Seychelles
- Mogadishu.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Unit’s mission statement was, of necessity, broad – to provide air support to the task force. The concept of operations was developed once the Detachment arrived in theatre.

UNITAF operations were restricted to the southern half of Somalia. This area was divided into a number of Humanitarian Relief Sectors (HRS) each under the control of a national battalion group. Apart from the Australians at Baidoa, each national contingent had its own strategic air transport support, either based out of home bases as did the French and Italians, for example, or based in Kenya, as were the US and the Canadians.

Each HRS was centered on a major provincial centre which supported an airfield that was at least CI30 capable. Thus resupply could be flown directly to the units, and major troop lifts into and out of theatre, often flown by civilian charter, could be flown into Mogadishu, or Nairobi, by strategic airlift and then redeployed within the theatre by national tactical airlift deployed for the specific task.

No 42 Squadron’s Andovers were the only tactical air component within UNITAF available to all national contingents. Within this overall scenario, the mission of the Andover was to provide daily administrative and liaison air links for all nations within the theatre. These tasks fell into two broad categories:

- Daily scheduled Standard Air Routes, known as STARS, and
- One-off tasked missions.

The STARS were initially flown twice per day, every day. The morning STAR would depart Mogadishu and service the airfields to the West and Northwest of the capital. This took us to: Baidoa (the Australian Bn HQ), Odour (French), Belet Weyne (Canadian), and Gialassi (Italian).

The afternoon mission took us to the south to Baledoggle (US) and Kismayu (Belgians).

As the operation settled down the requirement for these scheduled operations reduced as air tasking and scheduling became more efficient, to three services per week. Later, during the last few weeks of our deployment, a single “Kiwi STAR” was scheduled which called at all necessary airfields on an anti-clockwise route. This proved to be a very effective use of what was a very limited resource and any requests that couldn’t be met by the scheduled service due, either to time or space limitations, were simply allocated their own tasked aircraft.

The specifically tasked missions covered almost the whole gambit of tactical fixed wing air transport operations - air landed troop and freight operations, liaison, medevac, VIP, and psychological operations.

These latter tasks involved dropping leaflets over isolated villages that were beyond the immediate control of the deployed forces. This should have been a straight-forward task one would think: we overcame the isolation and navigation problems inherent in this featureless terrain by using GPS to best advantage, then, having located the village, dropping the leaflets on target shouldn’t have been too difficult. However, the thermal effects of the sun on the arid countryside weren’t taken into account and the only effect achieved by the first few missions was to create bright clouds of coloured paper hovering over the Somali desert long after the aircraft had departed. Most of the leaflets would have landed after the sun lost some of its intensity, but that would be somewhat downwind of their intended target.

This particular problem was overcome by typical Kiwi

ingenuity: jettisoning the leaflets still in their boxes, which, in turn, were attached to the aircraft by a long cord.

When the cord got to full stretch the boxes burst open and the leaflets were scattered well below the aircrafts slipstream and below the major thermal currents.

The only mission the unit wasn't called upon to perform was airdrop, due to the availability of suitable airfields, however, the equipment was deployed to do so had it been required.

The Detachment also flew a number of regular missions out of theatre into Kenya. These were primarily into Nairobi to uplift mail and fresh rations for ourselves and mail for the Australians. Once the task force was firmly established these missions were extended to provide R & R opportunities for detachment personnel, the NZ Army Supply Detachment and the Australian Battalion.

A planning figure of ten hours' flying per day had been anticipated and, although this was exceeded on a number of occasions, the daily average overall was nearer seven hours per day. Whilst this was not a particularly high rate of effort, it was consistent and duty days tended to be fairly long because tasked sectors, generally, were short.

However, the aircraft performed very well in what were extremely harsh operating conditions. Stone chips to propellers picked up at some of the less well-prepared strips were a constant headache - but we had learned to live with that with the Andover over the years. One aircraft remained unserviceable for two weeks awaiting a replacement for a burned-out generator loom, however, that was a function of the long and tenuous logistic system that we had to live with rather than a shortcoming of the aircraft itself.

Overall the Andover was selected to provide a niche capability within UNITAF and it did that admirably. In many ways it seemed that the aircraft appreciated returning to their RAF roots in the desert.

PROBLEM AREAS

The most significant problem that the detachment had to overcome was the very limited time we had for pre-deployment planning and preparation.

The total period available for planning was only three weeks and dedicated planning for the confirmed Andover commitment was only eight days. In this extremely limited period we had to prepare the unit for the possibility of a six-month deployment and, as far as possible, provide the personnel with the opportunity to spend some time with their families over the Christmas period.

Key detachment personnel were briefed on intelligence and organisational matters in as much detail as could be achieved in the time available, but the bulk of those deploying could only be given basic country and background briefings. This meant that most only had a cursory understanding of the political environment, climatic conditions and military organisation into which they were heading.

At the end of the first three months of the operation all personnel were replaced in recognition of the extremely harsh living and operating conditions that were encountered.

Because of the greater warning time given to the rotation, those involved in the second deployment were significantly better prepared for what lay ahead of them and their morale benefitted significantly as a result. Most importantly, they were better prepared both physically and mentally, and the additional period of notice allowed them to be better trained in ground defence skills.

The major lesson that came from the deployment of Operation SAMARITAN is that, as an Air Force, we could, and would, be expected to deploy in all manner of situations at extremely short notice.

CLIMATE

The climate in Somalia is extremely hot and humid, and the monsoonal winds are incessant. Our camp was set up on the only piece of real estate available to us within the defended perimeter of Mogadishu Airfield, a bare patch of sand right beside the flight line. This situation was perfect from the point of view of aircraft security, but somewhat less than ideal in almost every other respect.

The area was a dust bowl, and, being on the coast, suffered the full effects of the wind. Add to that the effects of ground-running and taxiing aircraft and it

was like living all day, every day, in a sand storm. Sand found its way into everything, technical equipment, tents, sleeping bags and even the food. Computer key-boards, for example, had to be sealed in plastic bags which kept out all but the most determined foreign bodies, but which made typing all but impossible. Identifying the correct key was only part of the problem because the plastic cover ensured that depressing one key served to give every other key in the immediate vicinity an equal chance of success.

The climate highlighted deficiencies both with our current equipment and with the physical and mental preparation of the personnel to live and work in the conditions. Current tentage, storage and pack-up containers were not designed for such harsh conditions. Tents were like saunas during the day, but if flaps and vents were opened to lower the temperature, mini sand dunes quickly established themselves on every flat surface.

Interestingly enough, camouflage nets proved to be superior to tents for working under because they let the sand blow straight through rather than collecting it.

The only real solution to the problem would have been container-type accommodation modules, but these were not available so the practical solution was to learn to live with it and modify technical practices to avoid the worst of the contamination. Eventually, almost every technical component not actually filled to an aircraft was safely sealed into plastic bags.

Not surprisingly, the harsh conditions also affected the personnel to a greater extent than the limited pre-deployment understanding predicted. The problem was not so much the severity of the conditions, but the constant exposure to it. It was impossible to escape the heat, humidity and sand even briefly and it was this factor that drove the decision to limit deployment lengths to three months. In the circumstances, this was a sound

decision when the flight safety implications are considered.

Apart from ensuring that personnel likely to be involved in such deployments are physically fit, that they are fully briefed on the myriad of problems associated with such an environment, and that they have access to reasonable medical support, there is little else that can be done in the way of pre-conditioning. The job was hard, the working days were long and everybody had a job to do, so, although the conditions were difficult, the pride with which everyone on the unit contributed to the mission laid the foundation for excellent unit morale.

LOGISTICS

In many ways the operation in Somalia was unique for the NZDF. It is unlikely that we will ever deploy to an area that requires a longer, or more convoluted, logistic pipeline for instance. Operation SAMARITAN relied on commercial freight-forwarding organisations to transport urgent and other technical spares and equipment from NZ to Nairobi (because there were no commercial flights into Somalia) and these were normally routed via London. The unit was unable to dedicate a storesperson to the task of receiving

and clearing these consignments on arrival at Nairobi, so a local agent was engaged to carry out this task. As a result, the receipt of often urgently needed spares could be a frustrating and time-consuming exercise.

This problem is of particular concern to an aviation detachment. Although the detachment deployed with all anticipated first-line spares in its technical pack-up, it is impossible to anticipate all possible requirements. Moreover, the value of aircraft spares and rotables do not always allow extra items to sit on the shelf on the basis that they just might be needed. The problem is that the efficient and well-greased logistic system that has been developed between the manufacturer and our operational bases to provide the swift movement of aircraft spares does not extend, necessarily, to East Africa.

Clearly, while this was a problem that couldn't be completely overcome, its worst effects were able to be overcome by judicious anticipation of the unit's requirements. Very careful monitoring of the condition of critical components helped in this respect but the penalty was an increased technical workload.

Another very frustrating aspect of this logistic problem was that all of the detachments' mail from home was consigned twice-weekly along this same route. In a situation where there was no public telephone system available for regular contact between the detachment and families here at home, the regular receipt of mail was a critical factor in unit morale. Unfortunately, the consignments of mail were anything but regular and three weeks between posting and delivery was not unusual. Month-old newspapers were read with much anticipation.

COMMUNICATIONS

Just as logistic support to Operation SAMARITAN was made all the more difficult by its geographic isolation from NZ, so too were strategic communications. The HF national communications link between NZ and the detachment was established utilising the existing node at Defence Support Unit SE Asia, which is situated in Singapore.

As a backup to the HF link, a portable satellite communications terminal was also deployed with a STU IIB secure telephone and a compatible secure fax.

The only drawback with the satellite system was its cost - calls to NZ and vice versa cost approximately $40 per minute so it was essential that its use was kept to an absolute minimum. With this in mind, the communications staff did a lot of experimenting with data transfer using a lap-top computer and a modem. By the end of the deployment they had this down to a fine art and were able to transmit a days' worth of message traffic via satellite in only a couple of minutes.

NZ was not the only nation using this method as all contingents faced the same problems. At one count in excess of 20 satellite dishes were spread across the roof of the UNITAF Headquarters building alone, each with its aerial cable disappearing into the window of one of the contingent offices.

The cost of satellite communications had one other drawback, and that was that it wasn't available for use for personal welfare calls except in emergency. The nearest public telephone network was in Kenya so one of the imperatives was to ensure that all personnel were given the opportunity to fly out to Nairobi for a break away from the heat, dust and noise once per month, and to make those calls home. One of the enduring lessons that came out of the deployment to Somalia was the confirmation of the immeasurable benefits to morale that can be achieved by the relatively simple expedient of providing this opportunity. And, the greater the difficulty in providing this facility the better it is appreciated and the greater its impact on morale.

CONCLUSION

The deployment of No 42 Squadron Detachment to Somalia from January to May 1993 was a period of intensive learning and, in some cases, relearning of old lessons for the RNZAF. The unit deployed halfway around the world to one of the most difficult operating locations the RNZAF has ever encountered with an absolute minimum of both warning and little opportunity for pre-deployment preparation and training.

Not withstanding, the unit overcame these initial disadvantages and achieved its mission of providing air transport support to UNITAF. In addition, the efficiency and flexibility with which this support was provided earned the unreserved praise of every nation we supported.

WG CDR JOHN DUXFIELD

Hi all – perhaps a quick grab of thoughts I recall:

- "Trev" coming back from Kiwi camp with the a couple of hundred meters of airfield phone system (Taniwha Hill's barbed wire?) caught over the back of the Hilux
- The infamous bikini photo on the beach that went around the world and had me on the phone to DC Ops at 0200
- Rescuing one of the other aircraft that had got low on gas and dropped into a "naked" strip up north – surreal sunset in the dust and haze with camels wandering across the horizon
- Getting 'set up' when the guys arrived back with a Humvee they had 'appropriated'from down the road (with the genuine owners in hot pursuit)
- The water trailer that (again) we acquired from the Marines and nearly brought home – but got the timing wrong when we drove onto the wharf and parked alongside the MEU freighter embarking the Marine unit
- The inbound detachment on relief keeping us awake for many hours with the band to end all bands
- A couple of young officers who overslept at Diego holding the B727 up and putting curfew into Singapore at risk 'fessing up to the boss who was smelly and unshaven because he had (also) overslept – but made the bus
- Visits to the MASH off the end of the airfield
- Visits to the Swedish hospital on the other side of the airfield
- VIP visits by Min Foreign Affairs that included Blackhawk flight over the Mog
- R and R adventures in Nairobi (anyone for a meal at Carnivores?)
- Hotel fire while on R&R in Mombasa – maint crew rescuing two UK tourists from the second floor (young and female of course)
- One memorable late night sprint across Mog in a Marines Humvee, dodging fires and barricades

And so it goes . . .

UN
unicef

ROBERT JOBE

THE SCARIEST NIGHT

How do you describe being extremely scared but so extremely excited! I was a smoker back in those days and a pack of smokes was 50 cents through the fence - cheaper than chips. There were obvious times when you didn't smoke and those times when you were allowed. This particular night I would chain-smoke, excited yes, scared – yes!

The intel for the week had been that the Somali aggressors had picked up some extra weapons - the odd tank, rockets, other weapons, and were massing for an attack on the airfield. Scotty had briefings with the CO about what our role would be and who would remain to defend our piece of turf. Now there were only four of us and we were located straight down the road from the main entrance - the first Coalition member who would have to defend the route to anyone else.

For the most of the day, no instances had occurred at the airport. The town was heating up. The US had made plans that they would have a C5 Aircraft sitting at the end of the runway with the engines running ready to go, and our RNZAF had roughly the same idea. Our aircraft as assets couldn't remain.

We were receiving updates as the day got on and started to turn to night. The plan was in place, the C5 sat at the end of the runway and our Andovers and pers were ready to go. Scotty, myself, Budgie and Metro got together, went over defensive positions, ammo counts, drills and were for the most part ready for what was coming. We also understood where the other Coalition nations were around the airfield, so we wouldn't have them in our arcs of fire. This was very serious now.

It was night now and there was streams of tracer in the night sky….it looked like fireworks and sounded like a roar. I pulled out my pack of smokes, Scotty had one, I had one and another . . .it was starting to get exciting and a wee bit scary. Across the other side of the road, the Canadians had dug in, they were ready. They came over to see us and asked us to join them if the going got rough, they handed us grenades and a lump grew in my throat. I took a cigarette out and said it's not much of a swap mate but have one!

The night sky looked liked shooting stars for what seemed like hours and we waited, listening to the noise around us, and we waited, watching the gate, watching our frontage, taking turns at our dug in sentry post It was scary and it was exciting, it was tiring and exhilarating and it was the scariest night.

THOSE MOMENTS

To and from the airfield and getting rocks thrown at us - hank God for helmets and protective kit.

At the US Embassy and coming under fire: the 50 Cals are going off and enemy ricochets are pinging around us. Scotty tells us to get on the back of the truck for protection, the driver jumps out though the cupola top and leaves his helmet in the truck. He jumps back in and grabs his helmet and jumps back out . . . we all laughed at the end of it. It was a rush!

Sitting at the day sentry post and the sun is starting to go down. I see a white tracer and yell "take cover". I heard the bang behind us. The officer that I was on sentry with was still sitting in a chair while I was in the fire trench. I got up covered in sand without a sense of humour and had words!

Prior to deploying, briefs were provided on Somalia including the weather. We were trying to keep the weight down in our packs and I asked Scotty about taking our raincoats. Scotty remarked, "nah we'll be right it hasn't rained there in ten years". I landed with the C130 and the ramp went down, I looked outside and it's raining, Scott pokes his head around the corner and says hi with a big smile and I remarked 'it hasn't rained in ten years you reckon!'

When we arrived we got into our routine and looked forward to a decent night's kip. How were we to know that the C5s took off oh early hundred in the morning? We sat up at the horrid noise and thought what is that? We got used to it after awhile and they faded into our dreams.

We prepared well with going to the range, practising

drills, briefs and what to expect. This is all in preparation for an aggressor or enemy who is an adult isn't it? We were out doing another routine pick up and a child has a weapon and picks it up and points it in our direction. I did what we are trained to do, I looked down through the scope putting the cross hairs onto the child's head and thought "oh God no, not a child, its not meant to be a child". I am ever thankful he lowered the weapon.

Invited up "the hill" and having a night with the UNOSOM Kiwi Contingent – priceless.

Watching people camp on fresh graves in the graveyard.

People gathering food at the rubbish tip.

Smiling children as we threw them lollies.

Down to the beach for a swim without weapons in tow.

Watching Somalis stab each other with knives to get food.

THE FUNNIEST TIMES

While in camp we all had that least enjoyable of duties which was to burn the waste, including the toilet waste. Our waste was collected in 40 gallon drums cut into a third to fit under a seat. One day while myself and Metro were out stirring waste while it was burning in a diesel/ petrol mix there was some sand splashes from rounds. Scott comes over to tell us to take cover and asks "didn't you see them"? I replied "it takes all your concentration to burn waste mate. Either way I wasin the shite"!

When on sentry duty, one of us 5 Mov Sqn soldiers had to be assigned with the RNZAF personnel. One night one half of my sentry was with an Air Force female. She walked into the post and when I looked up to give a brief I noted that the helmet was on back to front. I bit my lip and cried inside, and never said a thing. I cried myself to sleep with laughter that night.

Scott had been reading a book and you could tell he was really enjoying it. He got to the end almost to the last page only to realise it was missing. I posted it to him and made sure he got to read it at home.

COMRADESHIP

Us guys from 5 Mov Sqn had worked a lot with the RNZAF, particularly 42 Sqn and the mighty Andover. We felt at home on our tour and thank the people we served alongside in Somalia for an awesome tour. The RNZAF Command, air crews and personnel looked after us and we made it our duty to look after you, particularly if you came with us outside of the airport. The basket ball with Bob, the taiaha and haka practice with Joe, the chocolate from the fridge on sentry from the girls! It was a blast and we are proud to have served together.

CPL ROSS JAGGARD

I won't be there either unfortunately, work commitments and all.

But a few things that stick in my memory from the first detachment.

Having the rather unpleasant task of trying to empty the toilets on the 727 after our arrival in Mogadishu. For some reason we were unable to 'unload' as it were in the Seychelles. After backing the Hilux up to the appropriate discharge port on the aircraft and positioning the 2 x 44 gallon drums in the line of the theoretical trajectory, the appropriate lever was activated and the contents were discharged, with a very degraded accuracy. Not pleasant.

Having the CeeBees grade and level the area behind the ramp, only to drive the steel frame of the roller under the R/H elevator and into the cargo doors of the Andover that was parked tail over the sand in the knelt position. Took a while to get replacement doors and complete the aircraft skin repairs.

If I recall correctly the test flight didn't go exactly to plan either - a 'gust lock' issue. Not sure if the captain still owes beers for that one?

Travelling into the Stadium for the 'International' soccer game - we ended up playing the Aussies. Not our finest hour, still a fun afternoon.

Spray painting Kiwis on the tailgate of almost every Hummer that parked outside our security gate, there seemed to be more vehicles on the days that bacon and eggs were cooked, with the aroma drifting over the airfield

Let's not forget the land yacht, made of tent poles and wheels 'borrowed' from old aircraft servicing stands, courtesy of the defunct Somalian airlines. Thanks PK.

Waitangi Day spit, lamb, goat? Who cared? Attitude adjustment fluid, food, good company, brilliant!

Have a great time everyone, I will have a couple of beers for you.

CPL MARK SLOPER

We left NZ for Somalia just after New Year's. When we got to Singapore, Orchard Rd was still fully decorated from the New Year celebrations, outstanding! The hawkers tried to sell us all variety of fake watches etc. Ghosty ended up the owner of a new 'Rolex'. At the food markets the chilli Stingray were a favourite, bon appétit.

We didn't have time to get all our vaccinations done before leaving NZ and the Doc decided to use every available opportunity to jab us with needles to catch up. Many of us got jabs on the Boeing. While that was a success, jabs on the bus in Singapore weren't. I remember watching a needle go in, then the bus hit a bump and the syringe bounced up and down, the needle bent then came out again. Bet that hurt. Before the shocked recipient could react the Doc had shoved the bent needle back in and finished the job. Nice work Doc. Needless to say that was the last vaccination in the back of the bus.

While in the Seychelles, W/O Trev Fleming called everyone together for a meeting. We were heading into Somalia the next day. To stress the dangers we could face Trev informed us that mortars had been fired onto Mogadishu Airfield that day. Thanks Trev, but I prefer the ignorance is bliss philosophy.

The first days in Somalia were full on, putting up tents, digging holes and filling sand bags. At least there was no shortage of sand! We ran out of sandbags before all the tents were done and unfortunately the LACs were last in line. Yep, that's me. What was that about mortars Trev?

I went on the trip in the back of a Hilux for a bit of variety. We were at the back of a convoy and ahead of us was a truck carrying boxes of water bottles. One of the boxes fell onto the road. Loads of locals saw an opportunity to get something for nothing and 'nek minnit' there's a mêlée happening in front of us. I was expecting the driver to hit the brakes but instead he slammed his foot on the accelerator (I learned later that this was pretty much SOP to ensure vehicles were never isolated from a convoy, or stopped in a situation surrounded by crowds). The locals all managed to get out of the way just in time. Driving Mogadishu styles!

After a couple of weeks of heat and sand it was time for R&R. Welcome to Nairobi. First order of business was to change our USD into Kenyan shillings. The 'bank' exchange rate was day light robbery so somehow we found our way into a dark room at the back of a machinery workshop to get a better exchange rate. With back packs full of cash, Blubz, Ghosty and myself hired a plane and went for a fly over the Rift Valley, Lake Nakuru and Hells Gate. Wow, what an experience! Well worth the thousands of shillings we paid. The only thing missing was a narrative by David Attenborough.

We relieved ourselves of more cash by hiring a Suzuki 4X4. Driving in Nairobi is not like driving in NZ. A group of us packed out the Suzuki for a drive through Nairobi National Park, another highlight. We got caught out by the monsoons and before long lakes were forming around us. Blubz decided to try out the Suzuki four wheel drive with some offroading. Speeding along with mud spraying everywhere Mule yells out "pull a handbrakey". That was all the encouragement Blubz needed. Round we went, the wheels dug in and the Suzuki flipped on its side and we all made a quick exit out the sunroof. It's about now I'm thinking of the warnings we were given to stay inside our vehicles due to lions in the park. The damage was minimal. We righted the Suzuki, got it started, and pushed it out of the mud. Next stop Carnivores!

FG OFF NICK OLNEY

It was so long ago I can hardly remember!!

I remember when we first found out we were deploying, just before Christmas in 1992.

There was the mad rush of the maintenance boys servicing the aircraft and getting them ready for their transit to Africa and the aircrew squabbling over who was going and who wasn't. I recall it as the one and only time in my career that I have witnessed an entire Squadron ever spooling up for Christmas!

Being at the bottom of the food chain as a Pilot Officer navigator, I recall being run around doing all sorts of planning and prep for the deployment - grabbing charts for places I'd never heard of, or at least never thought the Andover would get to! We were also frantically running around ensuring our currencies, medical jabs and weapons qualifications were all up to speed as well. The Air Force hadn't had a lot of recent experience deploying aircraft and crews to operational theatres at short notice - with the exception of the C130s to the Middle East for Gulf War 1. Prior to that I think it was Vietnam!

When it came time to deploy on New Year's Day 1993, I still remember the mist/fog forming over the airfield as I drove to work, around five in the morning from memory. Pre-flight prior to departure was relatively benign, other than a few extra bits and pieces going onto the aircraft. It was just a hop across the pond to Aussie after all, although there were a few more people there to wave the three Andovers off. I was in the lead aircraft with the Det Cdr - Wing Commander John Duxfield (JD). Once we had done the formation flypast and set heading for Aussie, I vividly recall JD looking back and asking me how I found the new GPS units that had been fitted to the aircraft (literally overnight). My response was simple - it looked nice, and I had worked out how to turn it on! However with three aircraft and four crews he just happened to be crewed with the only Nav that didn't get issued the instruction manual! No matter - a quick check in on Pigeon (the Squadron inter-plane frequency), and we soon had the Nav leader on one of the trailing aircraft reading the manual to all three aircraft as we crossed the Tasman. By the time we hit top of descent nearing Brisbane all of us were relatively proficient in the basics of the device. Day two across the Gulf of Carpentaria (with redistributed instruction manuals now) and we were all A Cat GPS gurus by the time we got to Darwin.

Just getting to Somalia was enough fun. The flying once we got there was some of the most memorable of my career - 8000 odd hours later!

Hope you all have a great time.

42 SQN (RNZAF) ROTATION ONE (JAN TO MAR 1993)

John Duxfield, Greg Caie, Kev McEvoy, Kenny Murray, GT Roberts, Dave Webb, Sue Frew, Ross Jaggard, Ernie Bryant, Craig Gibbard, DVR Kyle Baigent, Bridget Norton, CPL Robert Jobe, Ghosty McLean, Jules Reynolds, Jack Singer, Matt Hill, Brett Marshall, PK Farrant, Zeke Garrod, Darryn Webb, Sandy Powell, Doc Farris, Leiv Bjerga, Jon Moore, Lance Homburg, Grant Russell, Russ Walker, Gary Wilson, Russell Martin, Mark Sloper, Greg Cox, Andy Greig, Trev Fleming, Steve Sagar, Greg Chilsolm, Chris Wilson, Joe Morunga, Paul GreenHalgh, Chris Brady, Bob Norton, Kate Hogg, SGT Scotty Vazey, DVR Redford Metcalf, Bryce Norton, Dave Hemi, Mike Cleeton, Ron Ferguson, Rod Dalton, Brian Haybittle, Craig McDonald, F/S Gumby Portas, Nick Olney, Mark Jardine, Craig Bennett

KAEC
STAG 3 BOAR BA
OPOTIKI HOTEL 8646
RIVERTON
7842
RIVERHEAD PU
D.S.B. OFFLOAD
CANBERRA
AUCKLAND
NAIROBI

ROTATION TWO (MARCH TO MAY 93)

VAUGHAN PAUL

And I thought that I knew all that was going on under my watch! My recollections of our time in Somalia centre around how cohesive the Detachment was and how well everyone worked and relaxed together – I think the best team I ever had the pleasure of being a part of (and commanding) during my 42 years in the RNZAF. However, there are a few recollections that others don't seem to have touched on.

An Andover trip to visit the Aussies at Baidoa and an overnight stay in the Andover Hilton. During our stay the Aussie liaison officer took a small group of us on a tour of the town. We were shown the dry river bed meandering through the town where UN estimates were that 6-7000 victims of the famine were buried in shallow graves in the soft sand. On another open piece of bare ground in the middle of the town two teams of lads were playing soccer, they even had white lines in the sand outlining the pitch. On closer inspection we could see three or four "humps" in the ground that were crossed by the white line – more shallow graves and a young population that were keen to get on with life.

Another Andover trip to Kismayu and a visit to the Belgian Battalion. The CO of the Belgian unit was a regular visitor to our camp as he was a regular commuter between Mogadishu and Kismayu - he invariably managed to arrive early enough for a bacon and egg breakfast before each journey.

The Belgian HQ was at the old port of Kismayu which, before the fighting, must have been a beautiful and interesting place. One of the biggest problems facing the Belgians was the fact that they were regularly impounding "technicals" with a wondrous array of weapons, ranging from .5 cal machineguns to aircraft 2.75 inch rocket pods, attached to their rear decks. Every time one of these vehicles was impounded a local farmer would turn up and complain that his only farm vehicle and the key to his family's livelihood had been stolen. The Belgians found the solution to the problem – they hoisted the vehicle off the ground by the port's remaining crane attached to the offensive hardware in question. When the welding or bolts gave way the vehicle crashed to the ground and the farmer was invited to drive his vehicle away. The Belgian Commander's comment was that since they had initiated this policy, not a single vehicle had been impounded for a second time.

Bacon and egg breakfasts were obviously a favourite amongst our coalition partners. I remember the morning an American excavator and driver turned up to resite our latrine and soak pits. I hope that I adequately thanked whoever arranged his visit because, fortified with the aforesaid breakfast, this guy set about trying to dig up our side of the airfield. Someone was sent down to stop him because I was getting concerned that if we had latrine pits to last for another year or two, we might just be required stay in-country until they were full.

Castle Lager from the NAFFI in Nairobi.

The Safari trip to the Masai Mara during our R and R break. What a wonderful opportunity to see something that most of us will never have the opportunity to see again and a great team to relax with. Someone earlier mentioned Carnivores, our team had to go twice because we couldn't eat it all the first time.

And, finally, on the climb-out from Mogadishu on the first leg home I was asked what I was planning to do on arrival in the Seychelles. My response was something along the lines of; first a swim and then a long Guinness. The response, or lack thereof, indicated that these younger aircrew didn't appreciate the finer things in life. So, the Boss's shout on arrival was a round of Guinness and that became the standard arrival pattern for each of the subsequent legs as we made our way slowly home.

I wish you all the very best for a successful and enjoyable reunion and a renewal of the comradeship that flourished in Mogadishu.

FG OFF DAVE LAMPEN-SMITH

Deploying to Somalia for the crew of the second rotation was via Diego Garcia, a day off by the beach, a swim in the pool and a few beers with the USN ratings in the mess. From the comforts of the US accommodation, the next day we were off to Mogadishu with a haka welcome, a stamp for the passport and being shown around the camp by the first rotation crew; who were keen just to get out of there. It was not much different to an Ex Wiseowl campsite really; mess tent to the right, ablutions straight ahead and accommodation tents all in straight lines to the left. So what was different; the heat, the sand, the barbed wire, the weapons, flak jackets and helmets, and the guard house, not really Wiseowl at all!

What about the flying? Thank goodness for GPS, which in early 93 didn't yet have its full constellation of satellites, not that we knew much about the technology in those days. We just knew it was way more accurate than dead reckoning and we were able to create our very own GPS approaches to each of the airports we operated to. We became very familiar with working with the US Marine Air Traffic Controllers in Mogadishu, with clearances for opposite direction takeoffs with C5s on final in front of us and also being cleared to cut in front of the larger aircraft for landing, using our inset threshold and vacating on to our ramp near the end of the runway.

Tail wind landings were the norm, so as to avoid overflying the city, but eventually it got too strong so we used a steep final approach, short landing and exiting the runway on our ramp just 1000ft from the threshold. The Italians tried a short landing the next day in their G222, but burst their tyres trying to stop. Needless to say there was no time for them to fix the aircraft on the runway and they had to taxi off with the burst tyres.

So what did we do? From what I remember we ran scheduled services around a number of the outlying airfields where Coalition Forces were located and a few psyops flights early on, dropping pamphlets over villages. The airfields included Baidoa, Bardera, Baledogle, Kismayu and Obbia. Regular flights were also conducted down to Nairobi for our own resupply (it seemed the US Provosts always visited on the same day we had a resupply flight, and they always visited late in the afternoon in time to be invited to stay for tea, what a coincidence).

These flights also supported the Australian contingent based in Baidoa. We flew regular mail runs and resupply flights for them and I remember the body repatriation flight we had to conduct from Baidoa after an accidental death while on patrol. When the Australians pulled out of Baidoa we conducted a number of flights, using the strops to secure the soldiers in the Andover. I recall they weren't very happy with the inflight service provided!

What about the camp? There were regular duties that all camp members were rostered to do, like cleaning of the toilets (more than one run across the road to the Canadian camp was needed when our toilets were being cleaned, can't believe we co-ordinated toilet cleaning with them so at least one camp had toilets 'open') and the night sentry duties. We did the best to make our bedspaces as comfortable as possible; swapping bits and pieces with the repatriating US Marines next door for their camp stretchers was a priority. The Air Force issued 'camping' stretchers may have been OK for a summer holiday, but not for weeks/months on end.

The camp had the recreation tent with Risk being a favourite, regular meal hours, BBQ nights with music (can't believe we were told to turn the music down one night by angry neighbours!) and a gym for those keen to work on their fitness. From memory we had only two stand-tos, one in the middle of the night (amazing how you can wake to a whisper of stand-to', but sleep through a C5 getting airborne beside us. The other stand-to' was as we returned from R & R, the camp was prepared for the perimeter of the airfield to be breeched by supporters of Farrah Aideed. Not surprisingly we had our get out of dodge plan Each camp member had an assigned aircraft to be on if the order to evacuate camp was made, each night they were refuelled with sufficient fuel to get to Kenya. In addition we had our day to day escapes from the camp by way of a swim on the beach, a tour of the city and surrounds with the Canadians in their Bison APCs, escort duties on the medical clinics and a week's R & R in either Mombasa or Nairobi. What an eye opener the trips in the city were. The smell, the destruction of all things civilised and small children 'shooting' their fingers at us as we drove past. The Canadians briefed us well on

our responsibilities in the APC, with weapons loaded and safety off as soon as we left the airport, arcs of fire and Rules of Engagement. Given the incident with the Black Hawks after we left Mogadishu, weren't we lucky nothing untoward happened to us?

The way home: the camp was split in two for the redeployment, those on the Andovers and those with 40 Sqn. We all departed on the same day, the Hercs overtaking the Andovers a few hours east of Mogadishu. Each Andover had a support crew of maintenance personnel and 'extras', the bunks were set up for those fast enough to get into them after the gear was up and a table for cards and eating. The first night was in the Seychelles, a pity it was the Detachment Commander who was the first to sleep through his alarm clock and come running late to crew transport next morning. The redeploy as a three-ship formation was a great way to finish the deployment, a bit of close formation practice during the day, and a debrief each night. I seem to remember Surabaya had a good hotel swimming pool! We thought we'd be leaving one aircraft behind in Sri Lanka after a complete comms failure out of Male, but the Avionics Techs were able to have it fixed by the time the new flight plan was filed. It wasn't plain sailing though, leaving Marty in Singapore with malaria and a broken aircraft in RAAF Amberley. Finally home on 28 May 93.

CAPT LINDA HARDIE, RNZNC

MUD HUTS AND FLIES - LIFE IN SOMALIA

I attend medical clinics about three times a week. The clinics are run by the International Samaritans Purse, a Christian aid organisation. The military supply support so the clinics run smoothly.

There is usually a US Air Force doctor, Zimbabwean doctor, a Nigerian doctor, myself and the International Samaritans Purse people. They have one or two doctors and four nurses.

The military support also includes manpower for sentries and crowd control. Without them the Somalis just swarm the clinics, talking and shouting, preventing consultations taking place. The International Samaritans Purse people just have to pack up and leave. The sentries channel the local people in a line and slowly, one by one, admit them to the clinic, much like a doctors surgery. Meanwhile the masses of fit but nosey people cram up to the razor wire watching and talking.

BUILDINGS

The mobile clinics change site daily and when in the city are usually in broken down buildings, most without roofs.

The clinics outside the city are in villages and are usually outside a mud hut under trees if possible. The day runs from 0800 hours till 1300 hours. Taking a water bottle is essential. The day is long and exhausting and no event such as morning tea exists.

The water bottles are attractive items and it's no use giving one water bottle out as it gets snatched so many times it is often dropped and they all miss out. Either way they get angry.

Often people line up and ask for food and get very disheartened when turned away. One very malnourished man who appeared just a skeleton, was told to go to a feeding centre.

He was given directions but had no energy to get there, so he sat and watched our clinic until we closed and left. I gave him a biscuit and cup of water which took him an hour to eat. Some cases we see are very sad.

In NZ they would have been admitted to hospital for weeks of care and treatment, but in Somalia they are expected to exist in the heat and wait - wait for what? People with tuberculosis are told in one or two years there will be a TB hospital open, then they must go there!

A poor woman with probable terminal cancer and a massive swollen abdomen is given pain pills and reassurance.

A twelve year old girl, writhing with muscle spasms, has a diagnosis of tetanus and is sent home with a sedative.

I wondered if it wasn't futile. I felt we achieved nothing and then I talked to a 70-year old volunteer who has done this for 40 years. She said they aim to help 20 percent of those they see, and they do.

FLIES

Children with ear infections in great pain have a dozen flies syringed out of their ears and they get better.

Seeing malnourished, severely dehydrated babies (twelve months old, but look no older than three) intravenously given fluids and the mothers given milk powder and advice.

A week later, after being close to unconsciousness, they are suddenly interested in their surroundings. Then I feel a sense of achievement.

I had to lower my expectations to get a sense of satisfaction. This is not NZ. This is a sad country. Sometimes people stand in line in the heat all morning only to be turned away five feet from the door at 1230. They get angry, some throw rocks.

One of our guys who came on sentry patrol showed some Kiwi ingenuity.

Instead of forcing the angry crowd back as the Marines were attempting, CPL Carl Leewai started to dance with his rifle above his head. Imagine a crowd surrounding him, clapping hands and laughing. New Zealanders have a different approach!

COMPASSION

Two New Zealanders come with me each time as sentries. It is a chance for our people to come in close contact with the Somalis and actually talk to them. Most have a very small knowledge of English.

They like New Zealanders and frequently ask us for help as we have more compassionate faces than the Marines.

It has been a great experience for me as doctors are often busy and I do the minor operations and IV treatments so that they can continue seeing patients.

When the military leave Mogadishu, the International Samaritans Purse people hope that there will be enough law and order to continue without the watchful eye of a sentry.

They hope to set up permanent clinics in permanent buildings so that people will know where to come for help and they will see some follow-up patients. Perhaps the percentage of patients helped will increase.

As they say, when hospitals reopen the standard of health care will increase and the sad cases will have some hope. They pray for that day."

MUD HUTS AND FLIES - 20 YEARS ON!

To remember back that far to a place that would have been a horror to grow up in. It was a huge culture shock to us back then, to be deploying on what was for most of us, our first overseas deployment. Leaving sedate, settled, safe New Zealand for a place that was reminiscent of my father's back garden – smelling of compost and rotten veggies, broken and empty beer bottles, broken concrete paths and overgrown vegetation. As a deployment whole, we all felt Mogadishu smelt like a rubbish tip. Leaving the fresh sea air that blew across the airfield and the camp; to venture into the hot, humid city, full of congested, white, broken buildings.

Many did patrols with the Canadians in their Bison APC s to get out among the people. There was only one medical person on each of the Air Force deployments. There had been two doctors before me and I was now the first nursing officer to go. I volunteered with 'Samaritan's Purse', an NGO, and was allowed to go twice a week, as long as I took along two 'escorts' from the camp. People put their names down to come out with me as well as the Canadians. It helped against 'cabin fever' for many of the stay-at-home campers. We had a bunch of marines as well, who helped protect and control the medical centres. We moved around all the time to new places, both as a way of getting to those who needed us, and as a security measure. We heard terrible stories of how Somali parents would throw their children down in front of Kiwi trucks, because they knew we would stop. Then they would plead and raid us for water and such. We did help a lot of people, but many were way beyond our help. Complete medical care is hard to give when you only see them once. I had a number of aero-medical evacuations during the deployment for sick marines or NGO members, which were always interesting and fun.

I remember one fellow who turned up at the clinic with External Fixation on his leg. He had fractured his lower leg and been seen by one of the American Field Hospitals who operated and fixed the metal casings which sit in the bone and come outside the skin, the length of his lower leg. The Field Hospitals often moved on with little notice and so, he presented to us with this fixation that had been there for some months, to ask if we could do anything about it. The doctor, not having any surgical instruments had Frank Dyer hunting through the vehicles tool box and with a bit of kiwi ingenuity, they all managed to remove it. Somalis, having grown up with little access to pain relief, have a very high pain tolerance.

Camp life was great and we had a great bunch of people. We all seemed pretty close. R&R in Mombasa was a fabulous experience. Quite a few of us managed to get a trip down to Tanzania for the passport stamp as well.

Memories of Anzac Day will go down as one of the better memorials I have been to. The airfield was a veritable cosmopolitan mix with many nationalities littered over it. The challenges of juggling ear-muffs in the middle of the night, when C5 Galaxies would land on the runway, next to our tents, were arduous. There was the race to have dinner when the Andover arrived with re-supplies; so that we could all have ice-cream before it melted. Many memories – deployments were a lot simpler then, more independent and less rules to follow. But health wasn't as good, it wasn't as safe, we weren't as prepared, gear wasn't as good. We 'borrowed' a lot of stuff we didn't have.

But we always gave it back before we went home!

Linda Lampen-Smith (nee Hardie)

F/S PETE FALLENI

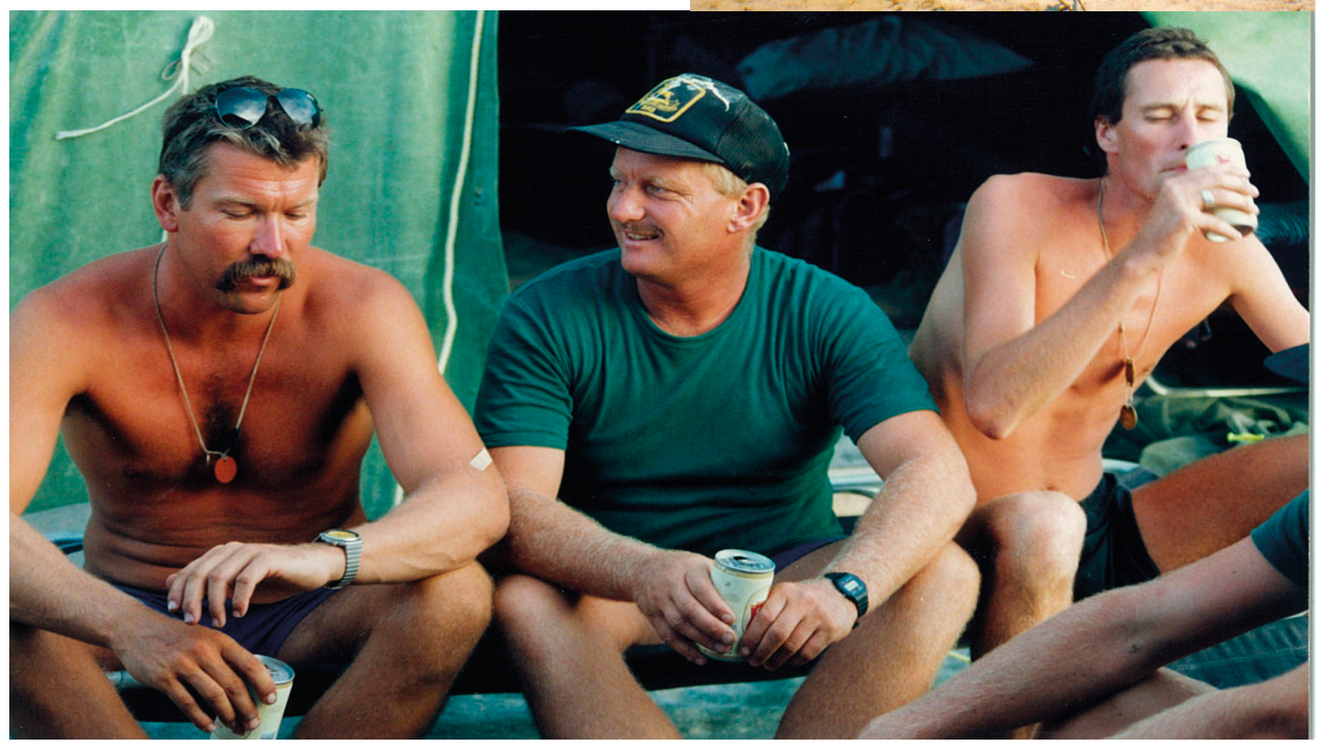
Whilst an awful lot of water has travelled under the bridge since 1993, a couple of funny things come to mind,involving a couple of our (RNZAF) characters from the second wave March to May 1993. It was one of our BBQ nights, towards the end of the mission when we may have marginally exceeded our three cans of Castle daily ration. Some of the lads, namely the then Sgts Steve Hourigan (Hourimai) and Cedge Blundell, Cpls Steve Fookes and Carlos Leewai and a few others decided a covert ops mission to “Paint a huge Kiwi” on the runway would be in order. Hourimai had to have a little snooze being a little puffed from the walk (commando crawl) to the threshold, so he lay down on the warm runway to rest up a bit and catch 40 winks. Fooksey then continued painting the outline of the Kiwi over the top of a ‘resting’ Hourimai.

Once finished Hourimai was woken and everyone legged it very quickly off the runway, (remembering flight ops run 24/7), leaving an almost complete outline of a Kiwi with a piece missing roughly the size and shape of small beached whale. Well early the next morning mass denial of the venture was the scenario, yet Hourimai was walking around covered in white paint stripes all over his back and he just kept saying he had nothing to do with it. Of course the evidence would suggest differently.

I was the then Deputy Flight Commander Maintenance (In the rank of Flt Sgt) I also recall dispatching the same Steve Fookes to burn off rubbish in the pits beyond the urinals only to hear massive explosions which sent everyone into a panic. It turned out we weren’t under attack as first thought - it was Steve throwing old engine start CRC contact cleaner aerosol cans into the fire (highly volatile) to see how big an explosion he could get, much to the Marines disgust.

I have one more which involved myself, F/O Pete Roberts (Navigator), Hourimai (again) and Cpl Pete Nowacki when on our R&R in Mombasa we went on a Dow Boat excursion going all native as such & had “any available hair plaited with beads” by the local ladies.

Pete Roberts had his fringe done, as did Pete Nowacki. Hourimai didn’t have enough hair up top ha-ha, so he had his chest hair done. I was sporting a rather large (grown especially for camp) Mexican moustache so I had it plated with beads. Upon returning to camp it was not all that well received and I had a few of the Senior Marines a little miffed as to who and what we actually were supposed to be, with one comment being, are you here on holiday or on deployment?



VINCE BINDING

CATERING CORNER

After several prompts from David (Poon) Lampen-Smith I eventually found my box of trinkets and photos up in the attic. Opening it up and looking through it, it rekindled some memories of what Somalia was and the role that I played over there.

Being part of the catering contingent and my first overseas deployment it was going to be a once in lifetime experience for me. A young LAC plucked from the safe kitchens of Base Auckland going on a tour of duty to the other side of the world, to a place I knew little about; to a conflict I knew little about; to conditions that I knew little about.

The catering team consisted of myself, CPL Steve Matthews (IC) and LAC Jenni McKibben as Chefs and assisted by LAC Raewyn Peffers and LAC Marcia Tibbles as the stewards.

I remember quite well the trip over and how every one on board the mighty 727 appeared to be excited about the adventure ahead of us, stopping off at Cocos Islands and then on to Diego Garcia. But probably more significantly I remember how quiet the flight from Diego to Mogadishu was.

On arrival we were greeted warmly and introduced to our new home. Everything appeared surreal but the intensity of the situation soon hit home and it was straight into work.

Our handover went smoothly and so started our introduction to Somalia and life around our camp. Hot, dusty, windy and did I mention hot! In the kitchen in particularly we were exposed daily to 35 C plus outdoors and 45 C plus in the kitchen. Sweat became the norm.

Dust was our main enemy especially when operating our antique cooking equipment. Constant issues with valves and seals deteriorating or becoming blocked because of the environment ensured that operating and maintaining these cookers was going to be an adventure in its self.

Camp routine settled down and we got on with the job adapting to the conditions and still being able to provide a veritable fare for those with us. Word certainly got around the traps about the Kiwis and their fresh rations and numerous offers of assistance from our Allies lined up at the main gate, normally about lunch time!

Being an avid football player I got involved with the local scene and any spare opportunity got out on to the dust fields and played. It seemed that the sport was indeed global with just about every country represented. My biggest highlight was being invited to referee a football match for the Pakistan Army. They had organised their own inter-unit football match and I was asked to come down and referee the grand final. Somewhat dismayed at the lengths they went to, I arrived at the required time only to be treated to a seat under the marquee next to the Commanding Officer and served ice cold drinks. So onto the game which was a hot, heated and passionate affair having to speak quite a few times to one individual who at the end of the game introduced himself as a company commander. At the conclusion of the game I was thanked by the CO and presented with a number of gifts including a gold and silver thread shoulder flash of the Pakistani Army.

Fortunately for me I was also able to get out and about. A trip down to Tanzania and seeing the spectacular Mt Kilimanjaro, a day trip down to Kismayu in southern Somalia and of course my couple of days off in Mombasa. My trip to Mombasa allowed me a chance to relax and kick back and enjoy some of the sights of this seaport in Kenya. Visiting the old Port (Fort Jesus) and experiencing a trip on Mombasa's public transport (27 people in a Toyota hiace van!); staying at the luxurious Bamburi Beach Hotel right on the water front, complete with a pool bar and air conditioning and their famous Cheeseburger and chips!. The highlight of this trip was along with Carl Leewai befriending some local Masai people and really getting to know them and their culture. The only downside was that one of my football shirts was stolen from the hotel washing!

As I sit looking through my box of bits more memories start flooding back: playing touch on the hardstand; cooking breakfast on the hardstand; melting my feet on the hardstand; chasing dogs out of the rations store; embassy runs into the city centre; our Somalia ladies who assisted in camp; the bucket showers; driving a mog for the first time; driving a forklift for the first time; our Canadian friends across the road; sitting in the sangar with the NVGs seeing some pretty interesting goings on after dark; playing Risk; the hand cranked washing machines; Corps day; visiting Taniwha Hill; ANZAC Day; going to the beach; seeing the Italians in their speedos; visiting the other countries' compounds; feeding horse stew at lunch after we had swapped it for some fresh rations with a couple of Belgian soldiers and not telling anyone until afterwards; drinking cans of coke from a tin can; getting a guided tour of a C5 Galaxy; 'stand-to' when General Aideed visited; watching the videos from home; the distant sound of gunfire; Castle beer; the big box of McDonald's on the way home courtesy of one of our Australian friends and the constant arrival and departures of aircraft of all types.

Looking back it was a hell of an experience and I enjoyed it with some great people.

CARLOS LEEWAI

Its been 20 years since Somalia and to remember everything would be an effort. I did a few operations for the RNZAF in my 20 years of service with amazing people with amazing talent. Somalia was my first and it was no stepping stone!

The pre deployment spoke of the 2 fighting generals and the amount of rebels on the loose with 'technicals' with all sorts of arms. There was a real possibility of dying in this foreign land!

When news first came from the Sqn W/O that I was going to be part of detachment 2 in Mogadishu, it was both a proud moment and a scary one. This is why we joined right? To see the world, do our jobs, make a change and hopefully come back alive!

ARRIVAL

Well what can I say? All the prep we did paled in comparison to what we arrived to. Everything you looked at was "broken", It was hot, dry and the first thing I remember stepping out of the aircraft was looking toward the building on the airport perimeter and seeing large artillery holes in them! This confirmed that we were definitely in the wrong place!! Got to camp and met up with comrades on the first rotation. It was good to see their smiling faces (not sure if they were happy to see us or glad they were going home in next day or 2)!!!

MEMORIES

- Well myself and Pete 'Fatters' Hattley took over the tent cordially called the Rats Nest (previously ruled over by Guy 'Ghosty" Mclean). First morning, Ghosty sneaks a rubber snake into me mozzie net, runs back in screaming "Snake, Snake". Well all hell broke loose. If I didn't love the bugger, I would have knocked his lights out! Ghosty and I were on the same recruit course and in the same dorm!
- "Poppie" Kevin Pope getting 'badged' by US Marines/ paratroopers one night. I mean they literally got the metal badge with 2 sharp prongs which are used to affix it to their caps…and drove it into Poppies chest. If I wasn't there to see it, I wouldn't have believed it! I mean, blood was shed and no by the enemy! As it turned out, Poppie did eventually change trades to become a fine Air Force paratrooper!
- "Borrowing" a Hummer off the Marines and doing a lap of the airfield! The poor dude came to camp, got offered some do da coruba and next thing you know, "I ain't seen nothing" was all he said! It was one hell of a ride! Not sure who else was in the hummer…but boy that thing was awesome!!! Sand dunes and all!
- Stevie Fookes driving the Hilux over puddles and wetting local Somalia workers carrying clothes…good one Steve, that was your clean washing!
- The 'Poons' romancing the Tarmac Tiles. Smooth moves in the jandals. I believe there was even wine enjoyed! It ended up in marriage so well done guys! What is it about love and war?
- Self and Vince Binding playing soccer with the Pakistani Forces. Was great to be playing footy with coalition forces. Had a great game!
- Going into Mogadishu with the Canadians in one of their APC's I was in the rear and my first time in an APC. Just remember going through snipers alley and the carrier commander crying out "Action" on the earphones. Everyone actioned their weapons. It was the first time I had the weapon in 'action' mode in anger! This was no longer training. Got into the city, saw the devastation and the hopelessness. Old folk looked like cows chewing on grass (some leaf that gave them highs). Children yelling 'mister', 'mister' waiting for anything to be thrown out. Canadian trooper throws something out of his MRE and children scramble. Dude comes with big stick and beats the children. Too late old man, the young child sprints away with the prize! Fresh shallow graves in the town reminder of death being transparent and normal around these parts! A game of soccer close by and children are laughing. Money blowing on the ground. Everyone sees it but no one picks it up. I guess money is worth nothing around these parts! Found the PTT button to tell the carrier commander there was a merc at the back of the APC with a local carrying some sort of automatic rifle on his lap. Couple of the Canadians came to the back and motioned the merc to slow down which they did before disappearing outta sight. Whew! Sigh of relief!
- Being shown around a USAF helicopter…got a ground demo of how the helmet controls the 30mm chain gun

at the front! Damn!

- Being shown around a USAF C5 Galaxy! That thing is AWESOME!
- Loved the Yank canteen with all the goodies one could buy!
- First 'Stand to' called one morning? Not sure after or before midnight. Lots of scrambling. Pete Hattley and I take 10 minutes flat to get ready in the dark… find our weapons and jump in the nearby foxhole! It took 10 minutes? We are in the foxhole and witness one or 2 tracer rounds flying overhead. Holy cow, people are shooting at us! Communication is a shambles. We are too far from the main tent, its dark and I am wondering 'what now'? finally get the stand down. Next morning, new stand to procedures are rolled out and everyone is nods in approval over a nice cuppa. Those that slept through it all (you know how you are) still asking 'what happened'? Should I tell someone it took Pete and I 10 minutes to get out of bed and into a foxhole…nah!
- Second Stand to when we came back from R&R. Pretty much got in from Kenya into full Stand To… not sure but it was one of the generals coming to the airport. It was hot, and I was hung over!
- Loads of music playing…Warren Tindal asking me non-stop to play "Tears in Heaven"! Karl Hooker showing his guitar prowess with his lightning hands!
- One American girl wanting to become a groupie for our small band in the deserts of Mogadishu…anyone remember her?
- JJ Boylan disappearing to the Canadian camps next door! Us Kiwis must have stunk. Either that or their camp was more 5 star than ours!
- Getting locals to weave me a woolen cap with me name on it. Funniest part was that they wrote my name on the side of their mud hut in with a stick (no pen or paper here) so that they would get the spelling

right. Cost me a couple of MRE's as the money was no good to them!

R&R

- Kenya was a nice place to visit. Went to Mombasa. Shared a room with Karl "Hooks" Hooker. What a great time we had there. Loads of stories there…but this was R&R and a place for some good rest! BTW, just read one of the other stories about the Kenyan Handshake. It is 100% true and I can confirm! "Herbs" testimonial should have a few good anecdotes on the matter lol!

GOING HOME

- It was great coming home. Greeted by the press and I believe myself and my Rottweiler "Khan" RIP made the main news. Was amazing being back amongst friends, family and greenery…its amazing how much one can miss grass!!! Mowing lawns was a luxury for rest of the year!

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to all that served for our country in the Somalia campaign. In the short term, I guess we can say we did a great job. In the long run, we can only pray that the region enjoys snippets of the freedom and security you and I share!

Thanks to No.42 Squadron for the experience and camaraderie shared during good and challenging times

Thanks to the re-union organisers for getting this going. I wish the event goes well with stories and other media to rekindle fond memories.

PETE ROBERTS (FLYING OFFICER NAVIGATOR)

20 years! Wow.

Unfortunately I won't be at the reunion as I will be overseas, but I am sure it will be a blast.

I am sure the operational side will be covered well so will touch on some other areas. Hopefully the statute of limitations still applies:

- Arriving in Mogadishu and thinking 'Holy Shite, This looks serious'.
- Getting the high five handover from the Zombie looking first detachment.
- Sundowners at the officers mess.
- Driving a Hummer down the runway with the lights off at night (Checking out the NVG capability!).
- Overseeing fire duty for the burnoff in the pit on the day before departure.
- Heading out on the runway and painting a huge kiwi bird on the threshold to welcome the Herc boys in. Hourie passed out on the runway. Fooksie and I finishing the job. Slapping paint on Hourie's face and hands (evidence) and leading him through the final farewell function so that he would take the hit should there be some fallout!
- Hourie giving his washing to the washing lady, complete with his 'urine bottle' and running after her yelling 'don't drink that, that's my medicine'.
- Marty and I sleeping in on ANZAC Day and thumbing a lift with a couple of Fijians to get to the dawn parade just in time to see the Andover fly past.
- Picking up the two Australian AWOL soldiers from Kenya and witnessing the reception from the soldiers on arrival.
- Testing the integrity of the flak jackets and helmets compliments of the Canadians – and subsequently trying to have our supply man make them disappear!!
- Testing the potato gun and having the Pakistani soldiers come running.

Cheers, good luck and enjoy the reunion.

SQN LDR NEIL KENNY

On Christmas Eve 1992 I was notified that I was to leave New Zealand to accompany three other officers on a reconnaissance to Mogadishu, Somalia, as the RNZAF was to detach three Andovers there for a period of time up to twelve months.

Along with Col Martyn Dunne, Sqn Ldr Murray Barron and Flt Lt Kevin McEvoy I finally arrived in Mogadishu to find a scene that defied anything we expected. All normal city infrastructure was destroyed, most buildings had rooves missing and anything of value looted and destroyed.

Our job was to prepare the way for the arrival of three Andovers early in the New Year. Most of our time was spent meeting with various (mostly US Marine) military groups to set up the area and support for our aircraft operation and to define what that operation was to be and what level of support capability was required.

No hotels for this detachment! Accommodation by necessity would need to be a tented camp beside the main runway with the aircraft on a steel apron alongside the camp. All support would need to be self-provided which kept Murray Barron very busy on the sat phone to New Zealand as the shopping list grew bigger and bigger and the detachment size needed also increased.

The tension in Mogadishu in December 1992 remained very high and only a few days before we had arrived some Somali rebels had attacked the freight apron of the aerodrome (beside where our camp was to be) with two “technicals” mounting ex-soviet anti-aircraft cannon. They had been driven off before creating too much damage but the defending Pakistani troops had killed several of them including one of the gunners on the back of one vehicle.

Other startling memories of the recce were crawling under our Humvee as gunfire began on the road between the sea-port and the airport, pistol cleaning lessons from Col Dunne (Murray and I hadn’t touched one for quite a while), sleeping under camouflage nets in the open at the destroyed American Embassy compound (now Operations HQ) while rockets flew overhead as two warring Somali factions fought it out on New Year’s Eve 1992 and the flight to Nairobi on the Russian Antonov AN-26 with all the luggage piled in the middle of the aircraft and held by a single strop running from the front to the back of the aircraft. Our Loadies and Air Movements staff would have had nightmares about that.

I returned to Mogadishu in March 1993 with the second detachment to a fully functioning camp, a much more settled security situation, better weather, a swimmable beach and a mature flying operation. We had the benefit of preparing ourselves at home with good quality training and some detachment bonding time prior to leaving.

The flying was awesome, good old trash-hauling around the airstrips within Somalia. This included daily visits to resupply the Aussies at Baidoa (infamous city of death). Another destination airfield was Baledogle, a former fighter base. Wrecked MIG-21s and Hawker Hunters of the defunct Somali Air Force still sat in revetments alongside the long but lightly made runway, the majority

of which had been damaged beyond use from repeated operations by US Galaxies and Starlifters. Hence our Andovers were able to use the remaining small undamaged portion of the runway.

We also did regular runs to Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya and to the Somali southern city of Kismayu where the Belgian Battalion was based. The longer flights allowed the aircraft to cool down properly inside which was a welcome relief for us and made us appreciate how much luckier we were than our groundies and support troops who were stuck with the high temperatures and humidity of Mogadishu. Also our views from the "office" were great including spectacular sunsets and the vast empty landscapes of Africa.

Other highlights and vivid memories for me were the camaraderie of the detachment as a whole, the regular foreign visitors to the camp including the US C-130 pilot with a broken arm gained while falling out of a tree at his hotel in Mombasa trying to dive into the pool, who had been posted to Mogadishu instead to serve his deployment as an ops officer (I am sure he came mostly for the company of the girls and a free beer or two), our one-day visit to the Belgians in Kismayu (including a very exciting low-level helicopter flight, guard duty with good company and night vision goggles, bucket showers (wonderful though), pooh-patrol (still known by that name at home when I clear up the section after our two dogs) and the very memorable ANZAC Day dawn service with the icing of the flypast added with perfect timing.

The detachment has been a defining moment of my life. I will never forget it – a sentiment which many of you who were there in either detachment will, I am sure, share.

Neil

42 SQN (RNZAF) ROTATION TWO (MAR TO MAY 1993)

WGCDR V. Paul, SqnLdr N. Kenny, CPL B. Doughty, F/O F. Dyer, P/O P. Roberts, F/S P. Falleni, P/O M. Starkey, LAC L. Brazendale, LAC V. Binding, F/O D. Lampen-Smith, Capt L. Hardie, K. Shierlaw, F/S FSTWD D. Lamb, LAC R. Peffers, DVR D. Thorn, LAC J. Mckibben, F/S J. O'Brien, CPL C. Leewai, LAC D. Mair, LAC M. Tibble, J. Dreaver, SGT ALM W. Tindall, CPL Q. Herbert, SGT ALM B. Leong, FltLt C. Pickering, AC K. Evison, FltLt J. Wangford, CAPT S. Newman, CPL S. Cooper, FltLt R. Shearer, FltLt A. Robertson, G. McBride, SGT S. Hourigan, SGT P. Meredith, LAC P. Hatley, CPL S. Fookes, CPL P. Nowacki, L. Cudby, SGT N. Allsopp, T. Lucas, CPL S. Matthews, SGT C. Blundell, P/O S. Goffin, M. Evans, LAC C. Hooker, SGT I. Atkins, LCPL D. Holman, SGT K. Newell, CPL A. Hill, A. Heikell, F/O S. Alexander, CPL S. McNaughton, SGT S. Aupouri, LAC G. Shore, CPL K. Pope.

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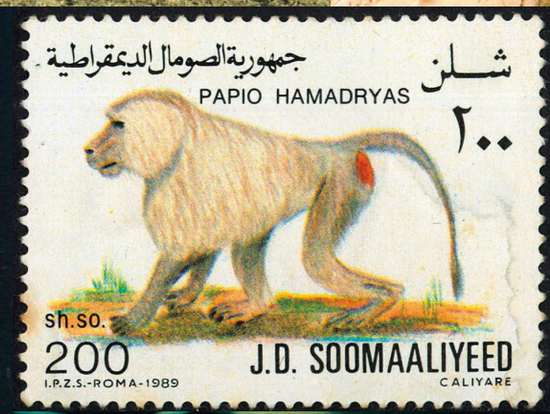
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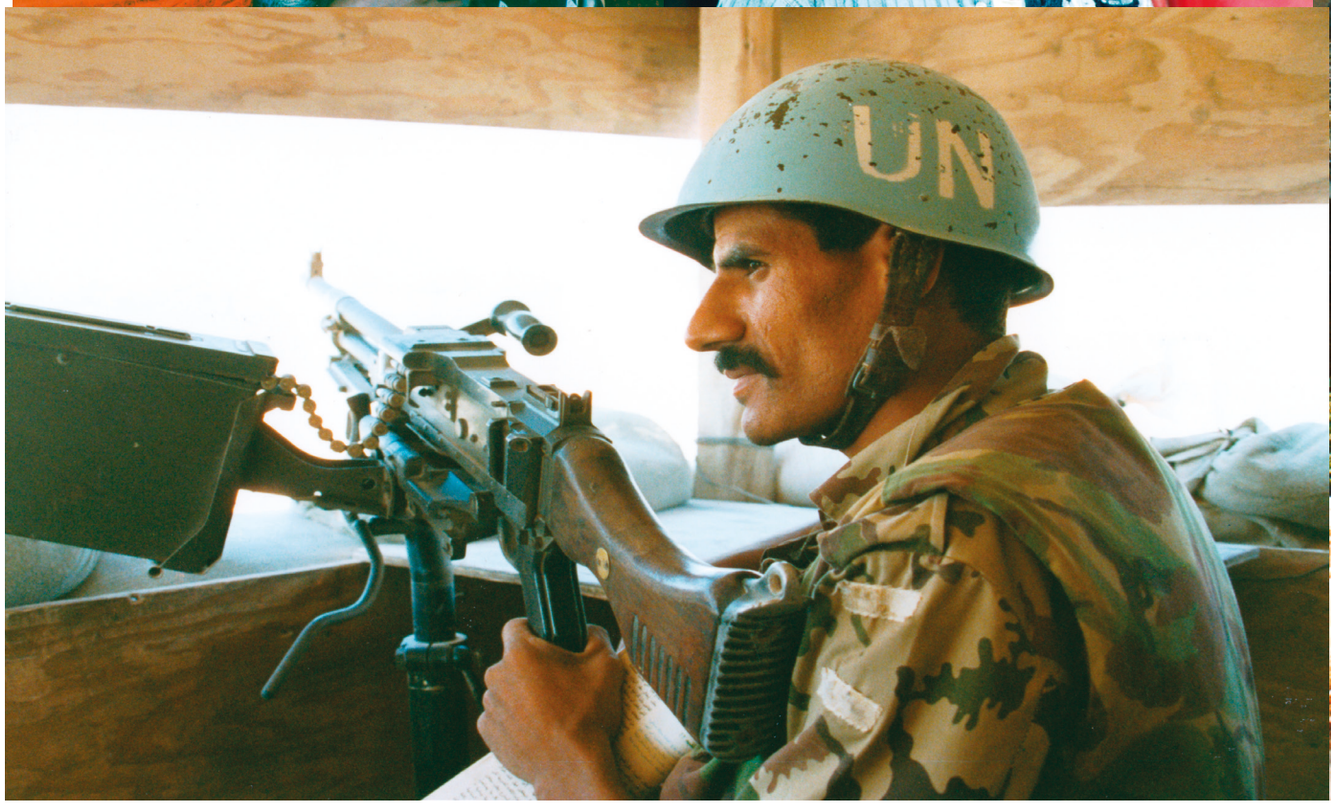
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TANIWHA HILL

NEW ZEALAND

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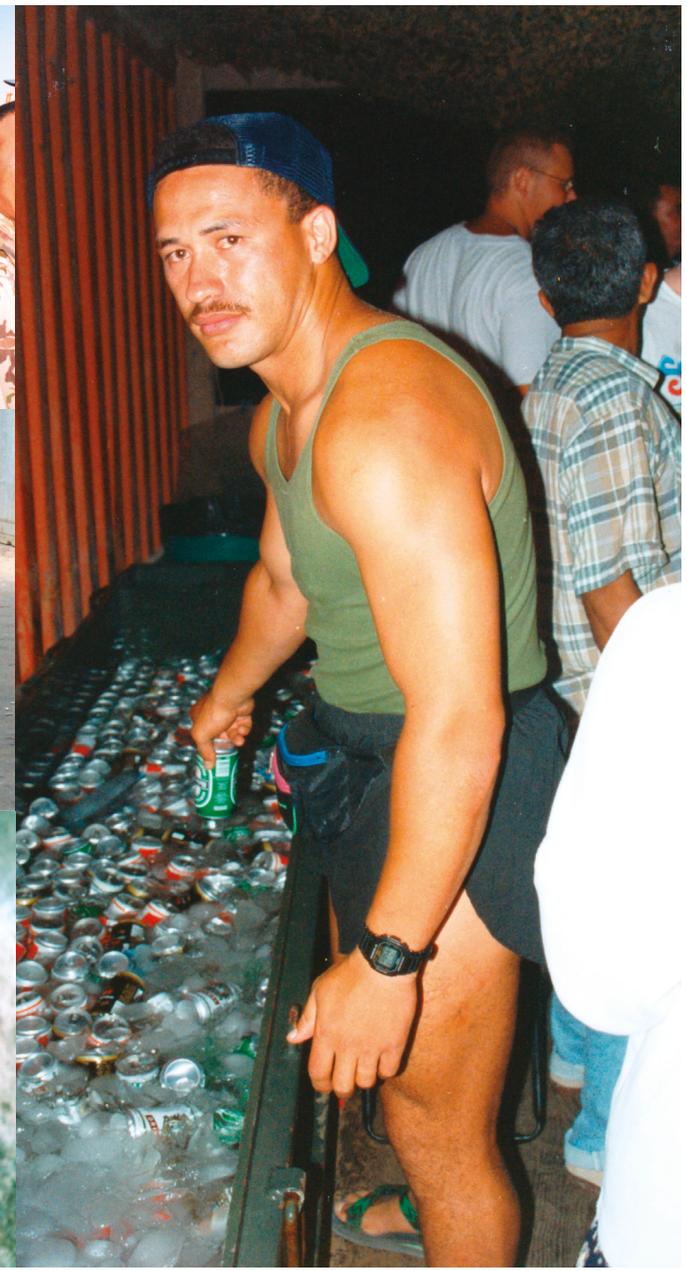


NZ SUPPLY PLATOON (JULY 93 TO JANUARY 94)

MAJ STEVE WAGNER

Well, this is interesting - looking back twenty years and comparing current operational practise to what we all experienced in 1993. For those of us who have been out of the service for some time, you will not have the benefit of our recent operational developments. I will attempt to contrast some of what we did then with what we do now:

S3: Operations. Today, it's a 24/7 world in HQ JFNZ (Trentham) with "watchkeepers" and instant comms. It directs, controls and co-ordinates current and ongoing NZDF operations, exercises and other activities by assigned forces on behalf of Commander Joint Forces New Zealand (COMJ) and the Component Commanders. Co-ordinates the operations of the (cross-branch) Joint Command Centre (JCC) encompassing key operations, intelligence, logistic operations, health operations and CIS operations functions. The JCC also includes the Joint Watch Centre (JWC), Joint Electronic Warfare Co-ordination Centre (JEWCC) and the Maritime Intelligence Co-ordination Centre (MICC), and the Joint Movements Operations Centre (JMOC) and Naval Control of Shipping Operations Centre (NCSOC) when activated. Back then in Somalia, it was a weekly SITREP and a dodgy satphone.

S4: Logistics. Today, it's a large Branch in HQ JFNZ that provides and co-ordinates integrated logistic support to enable the preparation, command, operations, sustainment, reconstitution and regeneration of assigned forces. It Exercises technical control of the joint movements function. J4 assists Joint Plans Branch (J5) with the logistic aspects of contingency planning. Sponsors the HQ JFNZ Joint Administrative Planning Group (JAPG). Back then it was Personal Service Issue (PSI) – pack, webbing, clothing and accessories and fall in on what you have already got in theatre.

I could go on as we also have S1 Personnel and Health, S2 Intelligence , S5 Plans, S6: CIS, S7: Training, S8: Continuous Improvement, S9: Finance and S09: Legal. You get the picture though that things have advanced quite a bit since we did our tour.

Back then we were asked what we wanted to do on our PDT, based on what the first deployment had done. Naturally we did lots of weapon handling and firing, first aid, rules of engagement and comms training as well as PT to try and get some kind of unit cohesion going, and then we were into it. Again, looking back it was very rushed, lacked a lot of structure and was really a quick launch into something that was bigger than anything we had ever experienced before.

How to command and lead this! Well if you haven't done it before and believe me when I say I hadn't, then you have no option, but to step up and give it your all.

I was happily playing at being the 2IC of 21 Fd Sup Coy/12 Fd Sup Coy in Mount Wellington Barracks in Auckland, all of which have long gone now, when I was rung up and asked what was I doing next Tuesday? Well there is really no answer to that sort of question in the military – you are about to be told! My telling was to get on the RNZAF Boeing 727 as it was leaving for Somalia and my job was going to be the new OC, so I needed to get up there for a recce. Wow, what a trip and what a challenge.

The recce involved travelling on the RNZAF B-727 via Diego Garcia – a little known British Indian Ocean Territory inhabited by the US Navy – and it was awesome. The taxiway we were diverted to land on was the old airstrip (our pilot told me later he queried this as he was not used to landing on taxiways!), the new airstrip allowed the USAF to base B-52's there from which they conducted missions into Iran. My most enduring memory of Mogadishu from the recce was walking back (why we didn't drive I can't recall) to base after a night visit – Maj Gen (Retired) Gardiner and I soon had that hair raised on your back feeling. Capt Mike Mendonca did a great job showing us around, as little did I realise that the actual change-over was to be a very rushed 24 hr's in comparison.

I returned home to NZ and headed down to Linton. The command team formed and training commenced. We did our best and deployed. The Brigadier's departing words were simple "Enjoy" he said, so that became my motto. Challenges were constant and responses from the HQ team of myself, Sheila, Sean and Vern all seemed to hit the mark.

It's been 20 years, and but for the movie Black Hawk Down, it would have been a long forgotten little war. Hollywood has been kind to us and everyone remembers that time. From a command perspective having one wise old head – Vern, with us was a real blessing, and he managed to keep me/us all pretty tight. Things I would do differently – less alcohol comes to mind as all major missions are now dry - but on the other hand the bar and the parties were pretty momentous. There wasn't a lot else going, apart from Kenya trips, the odd liaison, swims down at shark beach, driving as fast as we could either cross country or in town, doing PT, having lunch with the Paki Bn etc.

So, how do I rate our HQ effort – not bad. Would I do it all again – you bet. Would I do it with you lot – no way!

THE FIRST SITREP

1. The NZ Sup Pl advance party arrived in country on 3 July 93 and received a very warm welcome from the NZ Sup Det who saw this as confirmation that they would soon be home. The advance party spent the following 4 days coming to terms with the environment, work systems currently in place and finer details including road movement and points of contact. The advance party were treated to a stand to on their first night one of the Pakistani Battalions despatched three 106mm recoilless rifle rounds in response to sniper fire on the perimeter.
2. The Main Body arrived in good shape on the afternoon of 6 July 93. The Main Body also received an appropriate welcoming as two 60mm mortar rounds impacted on waste ground near by. The NZ Sup Det treated the new arrivals to a traditional Maori welcome and haka then moved quickly to their aircraft for departure. Lt Col Haynes (SNO) and Major Wagner provided introductory briefs and all personnel set about the priority of work (additional accommodation tentage and shell scrapes). For the first 10 days a work party remained on the position with the aim of improving its capacity for the extra 20 personnel that it now accommodates.
3. Headquarters personnel have been busy sorting through contingent administration which is invariably done in person at Force HQ within the old US Embassy compound. The pre-deployment brief we received on the operation of the UN proved to be very accurate. A civilian structure than runs in conjunction with a military one, a lack of effective systems and procedures and difficulties with communication all culminate as the UN struggles to contend with a force of almost 30,000 personnel. According to Lt Col Haynes Force HQ runs on crisis management. This provides NZ Sup Pl personnel with a new and interesting challenge.
4. Stores and Rations personnel have been very busy working long hours and managed to take one day off since arrival. For most, the day off included WO2 Pomana's PT session on the finer points of sandbagging. Infantry personnel are providing escort security for movement to the Embassy and to Ration Section as they travel to the port each day. Infantry personnel along with the rest of the platoon are enjoying the realism and have adopted a very professional approach to their work.
5. The harassment attack which occurred at approximately 2100 on Wed, 12 Jul was a very sobering experience for the platoon. The incident confirmed our confidence in our training/preparation and reminded us that we are involved in a very serious business. We experienced small arms and heavy MG gun fire overhead, mortars and RPG-7's all in the space of 20 minutes. We did not return fire due to lack of target identification, range and the location of friendly forces. In response to this incident we improved defences to include overhead protection and sandbagging of exposed accommodation and recreational areas.
6. The contingent enjoyed their first beer last night as everyone celebrated a belated RNZAOC Corps day. The arrival of the first mail bags, newspapers and the weekly six minute phone calls have added comfort and will no doubt become invaluable as time goes on. NZ Sup Pl personnel have maintained a positive attitude throughout the reporting period and have begun to work well as a team.

S.C. STEWART

Lieutenant

for Officer Commanding

Distribution List:

HQ LF COMD (Attn: Peacekeeping Cell)

For information:

HQ RRF

2 Log Regt

5 BLR

1 RNZIR

21 Fd Sup Coy

RRF Sig Sqn

2 Log Regt Catering

Burnham MTC

RNZAOC School

ATG SU

Note: 21FSC please distribute information copies to the above addresses.

LT SEAN STEWART

The mighty stores section aka the Kiwi Warehouse. The team back in 1993:

Lt Sean Stewart

SSgt Andy Canton

Sgt Neil Kearns

LCpl Alan Brill

LCpl Bernie Moore

LCpl John Knap

LCpl Mike Pole

Pte Andy Sixtus

Pte Darryn Irving

Pte Kimi Tuari

The Kiwi Warehouse as we were better known was responsible for storage and distribution of all general stores to the multi-national UN contingent. We basically supplied everyone apart from the US forces. When we arrived in Mogadishu early July 1993, we picked up where the Supply Det team left off and carried on the NZ Army's standard manual ledger card system that had been put in place. The stores and supply requirement for UNOSOM was on a massive growth curve and we soon realised that we'd need to put in a more advanced (for 1993) computer based stock management system. This was used alongside the manual ledger card system to provide some very rudimentary reporting on stock levels and demand.

Stocks were sent into the warehouse through procurement activities of UN staff and we had no idea what was turning up one day to the next. Once we got to know the UN procurement team it was clear that none of them had any real professional background in procurement and the whole thing operated on crisis management. Once we got to know our customer base we ended up sending them order recommendations to try to stem the flow of out of stocks. Communication was very difficult as there was no local telco infrastructure left in Mogadishu and the only line of direct communication was through a telephone line that worked some of the time. The main method of communication with this team became a lot of road trips and later Black Hawk taxi rides up to the Embassy to meet with the procurement team.

The Kiwi Warehouse operated seven days a week with the team working rotation on the weekend so that we got one day off each week. Our facility was a half share of an old adapted aircraft hangar situated right on the south apron of what had once been Mogadishu International Airport. There was no room to operate our kiwi four wheel drive forklifts within the limited pallet racking we had. They were large cumbersome beasts better suited to operating in a muddy field out the back of Waiouru than in a hangar in Mogadishu. For their size these forklifts had fairly limited lifting capacity but it didn't stop us unloading a good number of aircraft. This was a great experience for the team and Irvs considered himself move ops qualified by the end of the tour. Expect the professional move ops boys amongst us Brilly and Snappa might have had other thoughts on our collective abilities. We helped out other contingents with these forklifts and a couple of the team including Poley even deployed out into the interior of Somalia for a couple of days to assist where they needed a four wheel drive mechanical handling equipment capability. Apparently, the ride out in the MI26 Russian Helicopter was quite the experience with a vodka swilling Russian pilot.

With the lack of forklift access within the warehouse we adapted and conceded that virtually all stock movement into and out of the racking would be by hand. This small storage area would soon be operating at over capacity and we ended up having over 70 shipping containers stored next to our warehouse acting as waterproof overflow storage. We put in some long hours and worked hard as a small team to meet the distribute throughput in and out to the contingents. Some of our larger customers would turn up with four or five trucks and several soldiers to hand load stores onto their vehicles. Our biggest customers were the Indian, Pakistani and Egyptian Brigades. We also had the Turks, Malaysians the Romanians and every other nation you could think of as customers.

Some of our customers were extremely demanding and wouldn't take no for an answer when we tried to explain we were out of stock of something or that their battalion couldn't have 20,000 units of something, we needed to share it around. We adopted two main methods of dealing with this the first was to send in Diplomat no. 1 and/or no. 2 being senior NCOs Canton and Kearns respectively. This usually ended matters, however when they wanted to escalate "I want to be seeing your officer in charge..." we'd then send them in the direction of Private Kimi Tuari (now Grant). It was not hard to imagine that such creatures had difficulty being told no, especially by a female within their cultural framework. Kimi would sort them out and we'd all watch on for the entertainment value. To give you some examples of the throughput at the time our contingent Sitrep of October 1993 reported distribution through the Kiwi Warehouse over a ten day period of 57,000 toilet rolls and 72,000 bars of soap. Over

WANTED
DANCERS
'CLUB
SKINNY'
OPEN TILL 31 MAR '94

the same period we received and despatched 2.7 million sandbags to the US controlled Class 4 yard, receipted 21 shipping containers and distributed 3,500 flak jackets re-distributed to Somalia from Cambodia following the end of UN activities in that country.

A team of Somali's turned up under a tree outside our warehouse one day and over the following week or two we adopted them and when we realised they were on the UN payroll but had no one to report to we got them working for us. The Somali team of usually around 15 supplemented our numbers nicely and we could often be found forming a human chain to manually store stock into our multi-level racking. As you can imagine accessing the top racks required reasonable climbing skills or a lift up on a forklift hoisted pallet. The help from the Somalia porters extended out to sandbagging our our accommodation on Taniwha Hill as the security situation went from bad to worse.

In July, we had what was considered reliable intel that Somali militia had been seen moving artillery rounds into a compound that overlooked our position. At that point, we were already under fire most nights from mortar rounds and or rockets. The rockets were both RPG 7 and the longer range version that had been adapted onto the back of Somali Technical's from an old Russian Hind Attack Helicopter. Our Sitrep in mid-November 1993, reports that we'd filled an estimated 20,000 sandbags to reinforce our position on Taniwha Hill and expected another 8,000 would finish the job. A good portion of these were filled by the Somali porter team with construction carried out by us military personnel. A lot of the work was done after our day jobs had finished and a cold beer afterwards was the order of the day. Recognising the extra efforts here from the Somali porters we provided them with a good cooked lunch from our kitchen.

To help cope with the extra volumes of stock into Mogadishu we put together a paper for UNOSOM headquarters seeking a multi-million USD investment in a new distribution facility on the south ramp. We had fairly detailed plans and the recommendations we're presented to the hierarchy. The plan got immediate approval but with the withdrawal of troops within a 12 month period the plan never got to execution stage. I do recall LCpl Brill (Brilly) and Pte Irving (Irvs) visiting and measuring up the selected site for our new build project an old aircraft hanger that we'd need to have demolished. At the time it was occupied by several hundred Pakastani's who were effectively squatting there. The stench was incredible. They'd taken interest in us Kiwis walking around with our measuring tapes and as always were hospitable enough to approach with a freshly brewed cup of tea. A slight wobble of the head and a welcoming "would you be liking cup of tea?" was being offered to Brilly. I was watching on in horror as the cup had clearly not been washed in months and had at least 10 flies either walking around the rim of it or hovering over it. As quick witted as ever, Brilly ushered with hand movements the kind gift bearer straight past himself and in my direction with words to the effect of "Oh no sorry I don't take tea but the boss there, he loves a cuppa tea". So politely swiping flies off my cup in the interests of international relations I quietly consumed my cup of tea wondering whether I was going to die of the Plague (still present in Somalia believe it or not) or some other horrid disease and if I was going to live long enough to get some well-deserved pay back to Brilly.

We bonded with a lot of the contingents including the Malaysian Battalion next door who would systematically demolish us at volleyball despite our major height advantage. In our defence, virtually all of us had to play to make up the team while they had a couple of hundred volleyball mad soldiers to choose from. The Malaysians used to treat us to peanut snacks while watching us down a cold beer after each game. They'd entertain us by showing us disease ridden creatures they'd trapped like porcupines that were destined for the pot once sufficiently fattened up. We formed good friendships with the Egyptians also who said the Kiwis were better mates to them than all of their fellow Arab contingents located around them that didn't have anything to do with them. We supplied them with goods they supplied us with some good lunches if you liked Mediterranean food.

By mid-1993, the security situation in country had worsened significantly just as we arrived in country following the June ambush that killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. One morning we were delayed opening up the Kiwi Warehouse while we waited for the bomb squad to remove an unexploded RPG 7 rocket that had embedded in the window screen of a nearby MI-26 Russian Helicopter. Another morning we engaged services of the team to remove another unexploded RPG round that had lodged into the front door of the Kiwi Warehouse. Around the same time we needed to have our front door replaced and the team to picket the warehouse for security. Realising that we'd be in the thick of the nightly mortar bombings down there in the warehouse without the protection of our bunkers on Taniwha Hill we felt a little exposed. As always kiwi ingenuity came into play with several pallets of A4 photocopy paper that sat in our warehouse rejected due

to quality issues. It's difficult to return goods to suppliers that are not fit for purpose from a war zone so we used these boxes of reams of paper to construct a massive mortar bomb proof bunker in the warehouse. It must have been the rainy season when we were picketing that warehouse overnight as I've got a photo of John Knap looking like a drowned rat due to all the leaks in the roof, with mozzie nets and bedding set up between massive puddles of water on the warehouse floor. The threat of death and violence was ever present particularly between July and November 1993 and we were reminded of this again when 7 bloodied body caskets turned up outside our warehouse having done their job returning to Nigeria 7 UN soldiers who'd been killed in an ambush the week prior.

The entire Kiwi contingent on the second rotation faced the prospect of virtually nightly attacks on Mogadishu airport so a lot of disturbed sleep with good injections of adrenaline as we ran for our pits, sangars or bunkers ducking for cover from direct small arms fire and the shrapnel from random mortar rounds and or RPGs that generally fell well short of our position on the hill. To the teams credit they mostly brushed this aside and got on with the tasks each day around the camp, at rations or the general stores warehouse. We all worked hard and played hard. In the Kiwi Warehouse for the days following the nights we'd played too hard we had a couple of pallet bays set up mattresses aka the 'sick bay' to help ward off the fatigue of working in 40 degrees of high humidity with a hangover. It was used pretty sparingly to be honest but it was there if you needed it and there was an unwritten code within the team that it was acceptable for use when needed. The rest of the team would just work a little harder to make up for it and know it was there for the day they may need a little lie down. The key thing was that no one took advantage of this - a sign of respect and maturity within the team.

For the downtimes, slow days over the weekend we had indoor cricket and pallet jack jousting as some of the activities to help pass the time along with a primitive game of computer golf and beers on a Friday afternoon which sometimes turned into poker nights. The idea for pallet jack jousting came about when a large shipment of riot control gear turned up in the warehouse including riot shields, helmets and long batons. The idea was to don the gear and face off with a pallet jack coming from the opposite end of the warehouse. Each competitor then shot forward on their pallet jack towards the opposing member and attempted to slot a body or head shot into the competitor on the way past each other. Probably not an OSH approved activity, but a lot of fun. Once we'd practiced our skills at this new sport we invited the Aussie movement team in for Friday beers and a challenge at our new found sport. What a set up that was. They'd have wished they'd never agreed as from memory there was a solid defeat and a couple of injuries to the Aussie team. They didn't come back for a re-match.

When we realised the Somali truck drivers dropping off shipments and locally sourced goods to us were stealing from our warehouse and other contingents we started doing truck inspections prior to them leaving our premises. On one occasion the level of theft we discovered was fairly substantial and we took the truck crews into custody. A couple of the team stood over the six of them with Steyrs while we waited for our mate the Egyptian Major from the MPs to come down and take them away. I asked the Major a couple of weeks later what had happened to these guys and he told me words to the effect "I put them in jail for seven days, no food then let them go". On one occasion we'd confiscated from some Somali truck drivers obviously stolen contraband from the US forces that was stored in the back of their truck cabs. There were all sorts of board games including monopoly and a large amount of poker chips and cards. They were found with quite a stash and when we couldn't track down the owners we made good use of the poker chips and used all the rest as presents for the entire contingent's Christmas presents.

One other little story I recall from these days. We had a busy schedule of truck movements in and out on this particular day and two truckloads of paint turned up with Somali crews often three or four guys to a truck. I talked to the supervisor on one of the trucks and asked him to wait with his vehicles at the end of the warehouse for about 10 or 15 minutes while we cleared the yard of other trucks. A few minutes later I noticed the crews offloading their boxes of 4 x 4 litre paint tins onto the ground next to the warehouse. I quickly ran down to them about 50 metres off our main entrance and asked them to stop loading the goods onto the ground. I could just see us being left with two truckloads of heavy goods unloaded onto the ground and knew we'd be the mugs left cleaning it up. So I told them to stop immediately and I'd get some pallets to load onto. Less than a minute later as I returned carrying two large pallets but these guys had continued to unload onto the ground. The supervisor was a large arrogant man the only one that could speak English. He was telling me "I don't care, not my problem, not our job, we can't wait" etc. We'd been in theatre for the best part of six months at this stage and our patience for these regular antics and displays had worn thin. So as I engaged him with some further instructions for clarity and a couple chest pokes to make my point clear I noticed the crew had started to form a ring around me and two of the guys had picked up steel bars that were used as ratchets on the trucks and they hadn't been holding these a few seconds earlier. They were

looking pretty menacing and life was cheap in Somalia so realising my predicament and isolation from the rest of my team managing to back away out of the ring just in the nick of time and back off towards the warehouse entrance. At that moment John Knap came out of the main entrance about 50 metres away and I signalled to him I needed an armed back up. About 10 seconds later Snappa as we knew him came charging out of the warehouse with his Steyr now looking a lot more menacing than my new found Somali friends. I turned to the Somalis to watch and the change of expression on their faces was absolutely priceless. For full and unexpected added affect as Snappa got within about 10 metres of us all while looking completely focussed staring the chamber. At this point I heard one or two “No shoot, no shoot pleas from the supervisor who’d gained a new found respect for the Kiwi team. I used that as a prompt with a smile on my face to confiscate the iron bars and clearly outline that now was a good time for them to start reloading the now large pile of shippers on the ground onto the pallets provided. Snappa and I felt that from that point on we really bonded with that group of Somali truckies and had formed a great working relationship.

We’d been welcomed into the country by the first rotation with a customary haka so the Kiwi Warehouse team felt we should devise an appropriate performance and welcome for the advance party of the third rotation as they arrived in January 1994. We put our Somali porters to good use by setting up a large, noisy protest with banners with wording like “Kiwis Go Home” “We hate Kiwi” so when Simon Tregear and the team arrived on the North apron they were made to drive through an angry gang of 15 Somali’s staging a mock protest outside the Kiwi Warehouse. Speaking with Simon shortly afterwards, I casually mentioned that things had got pretty rough over the past few weeks with several death threats directed at the Kiwi team but he’d probably have nothing to worry about. From memory we played along on this for couple of days before telling them of the set up.

The Kiwi Warehouse team were second to none. For a team of people thrown together for a deployment like that we quickly established a strong sense of team and comradery. We worked hard, played hard and had each others backs. We had a lot of laughs along the way. I couldn’t have hoped for a better crew.

LCPL JOHN ‘SNAPPA’ KNAP

MOVOP: ABDI’S DESERT BOOTS

Prior to deploying we were meant to be issued two sets of Desert Boots, however, for whatever reason, we in the Stores Section didn’t receive a second pair and were assured that we would receive them in theatre.

Anyway, deep into the tour the boots were consigned to us but disappeared into the DHL ether in Nairobi. As the contingent Mov Op, Maj Wagner approached me at dinner one night and told me I’d have to go to Nairobi the following morning to track them down and that I should see Sharon for some $US dollars to pay for a hotel for two nights and associated expenses. I managed to keep a completely straight face and utter what I hoped were a few professional sounding Mov Opish terms with regards to track and trace, or something similar that I equally knew nothing about, all the while doing mental fist pumps while screaming ‘Yes, Yes there is a God!”

The next morning saw me bright and early down at the UN terminal clutching a big fist full of $US waiting for my flight to leave and hoping that Murphy wouldn’t front up and take away my trip.

After practically shouldering my way aboard I breathed a huge sigh of relief as we finally got airborne and headed toward Nairobi.

On arrival there was the usual Nairobi Customs cluster with only two counters open to process both the Friendship that I’d arrived on and the 747 that had landed shortly before us. An eternity later I was one person away from the counter and watched as a Kenyan business man handed over his passport, arrival card and $US20 arrival fee. The Customs official pocketed the $US20, scrutinised the guys passport and arrival card and politely said “that’ll be $US20 thank you”. The businessman tried to tell the official that he’d just seen him pocket the $US20, whereupon the Customs official asked him if he wanted to enter the country… or not. The businessman then handed over another $US20 and was allowed to go on his way. After preparing for the worst, I was quite surprised not to be asked for a bribe but was later told it would have been because I was a white man and as such was not to be messed with!

Moving on, the next morning I fronted up at DHL Nairobi and after spending almost an hour negotiating my way through a number of obstructive petty officials, I finally got to see the manager, but he may equally have been the cleaner for all I knew. What I did know was that he was wearing a pair of Kiwi Desert boots! However, I had to give him great credit for appearing to be very concerned at the loss of our boots somewhere in transit between New Zealand and Kenya and for remaining calm and collected as I pointed out that they were in fact, very similar to what he was currently wearing on his feet. This prompted his memory and he suddenly remembered that the boots had been uplifted a week or two earlier. With great fanfare he then produced a very old and worn ledger book and proceeded to show me that the boots had been uplifted a fortnight earlier by someone called Abdi and that because Abdi had dutifully signed for the consignment then all was above board and legitimate!

A couple of days later I stepped off the Friendship at the Mogadishu pax terminal, reported my findings to Maj Wagner, handed back a significantly smaller fist full of $US to Sharon and wandered back to the Warehouse to recount my Nairobi adventure to the rest of the team.

LCPL DEAN GROVES

STOREMEN DEPLOY TO MOGADISHU

In early June 1993, I was informed via the 2/1RNZIR Quartermaster store that I was deploying to Somalia. It was Friday morning and my last instructions were that I had to do a handover as the Battalion ammunition NCO, pack up and clear my room on Saturday and then catch a flight up to Palmerston North on Sunday. Pre-deployment training was for two weeks in Linton starting Monday. I would not return to Burnham for 8 months.

The first contingent (the Supply Detachment) didn't have a storeman appointment so, with the increase in size of the second contingent, two storemen were added. Private Sixtus and myself (both RNZAOC) were named as the platoon storemen and we were plucked out of the 1 RNZIR and 2/1 RNZIR QM Platoons respectively.

I soon learned that I was a reserve for the deployment and would under go training like everyone else, but wouldn't deploy unless someone was withdrawn. On the last week of training, the contingent spent a fair bit of time on the range, which is where my fortunes turned around in unusual circumstances. One of the NCO's was fooling around with a fig 20 target that he was holding during a shoot, which made it difficult and frustrating for the firer… anyway, after that shoot had finished the butts IC (Doggy) had all of the butts party doing press ups on this guy's behalf – fair enough I guess. However, the culprit was made to stand in front of us whilst we did a bunch of press-ups and wasn't remotely concerned about it and even said "do those press-ups properly". Hmmm.

The next incident occurred shortly after the first, we had moved up at the 300 mtr mound and admin areas where the next firers were to wait. The CSM (Vern Pomana) soon announced the next firers' names, which included myself, and he told us to move down and wait at the 300 mtr mound. One of the named firers, the same guy from the butts party incident, was reminded his name had been called. He replied "I am watching the league" which was on the TV in the admin area. The CSM kind of smiled and said again "Nah nah, you are on the range" and proceed to walk down the mound, but heard a voice say once again "No, I am watching the league". So, this was rather uncomfortable for all bystanders to hear this, but anyway, the CSM said "Ok, you stay there and watch the league". The next day, the culprit was off the trip and I was the replacement and on my first op deployment. Unbelievable, how the 1993 Kiwi's v Great Britain test series changed some people!

On arrival at Mogadishu, our contingent were welcomed by the outgoing crew with a ferocious haka (I though Mike Te Hau and Dion were going to eat us!) and the customary hand shake welcome and a quick 5 minute chat. The outgoing guys had a plane to catch and were obviously eager to get the hell out of dodge. As they were literally running out the door, I was handed 4 sets of keys, which was strange because we had 5 vehicles. I was told "one of them doesn't need a key, it's hot wired".

My job entailed looking after a few shipping containers of general consumables, spare weapons and clothing, a little bit of ammunition, the MD502 inventory record and procure items as required. I also had a shadow board of miscellaneous tools, but there were more shadows than tools, I guess that's because the contingent were busy every spare minute building cabinets, tables and even beds - the normal things you do when you're away. I am not sure where the containers came from, but one day I was tasked with painting over the serial numbers with blue paint.

My normal duties involved trying to get things through the UN log system or the informal network. A tray of beer at times did wonders for items we wanted off the Americans. I guess I had a hospitality account, which was authorised through the OC or CSM of course. The main items of high demand in the early part of the tour were sandbags… bails and bails of sandbags for force protection measures. I cannot recall how many bags we ordered or filled over the tour but it seemed like gazillions. Mind you, holding a sand bag or filling it to build a wall around the tents or digging a bunker for the hill provided many opportunities to chat to people about various topics in the heat and the Indian Ocean as the backdrop was special.

Demanding and receiving items from NZ was hit and miss and usually slow due to the distance. I preferred to call my work colleagues back at 2/1RNZIR or buddies at 3 Workshops on the SATphone and ask them to send things over in the post; such as waterproof light switches and 3 pin plugs. At times, consignments didn't make it through Kenyan customs, but we never really struggled for anything. But, towards the three quarter mark of the tour, potable water for showering wasn't being delivered. The American water truck drivers when asked about it said "You aren't on the new route" and they needed to get approval through the whole damn command chain, which seemed drawn out and might have almost reached the President himself. Flip! So, a few juicy water melons given to the drivers and "we'll get some water now won't we?" did the trick and Taniwha Hill was back on the daily route.

I got on well with the ARQMS from Task Force Ranger.

He (Victor) came up to our camp the day they arrived in country and introduced himself and asked what we needed. From that point on I struck up a good rapport with Victor (Sgt E6) and the Rangers, who kept Taniwha Hill well stocked with enough disposable plates and KFS to sink a battle ship. For Victor, a cold beer (when off duty) was just the thing he needed on a hot day on the Horn of Africa.

Submitting a general stores request through UN was a funny experience. First step was to visit our Kiwi team at the UN stores warehouse, wander through the shelves and racking to see what was there and make a shopping list. Good so far. Then I would jump on a shuttle, which was mostly a Black Hawk helicopter ride from over the runway at the 101st Airborne Div to the Embassy compound. On one occasion, I had a nerve racking ride in a Pakistani APC shuttle from ODC to the Embassy, which on route stopped at a main intersection on 21 October Road, then the back door opened for what seemed an eternity, Somalis walked past stopped and peered inside curiously. At the embassy was the worst part, the negotiation with the S4 who was a Major from Pakistan. Well, my nicely hand written stores list and his list did not match, so all I got back was a couple of ticks next to a few items that I could have and a lot of red pen ruled through everything else. The S4's master list was gospel and my list of items that were actually on the shelf in store, was not. I questioned (in my head) whether the mission had a dues-in and dues-out system… or maybe there was another system? This sort of occurrence was very frustrating and quite difficult for a Lance Corporal to keep his cool. Oh well, at least I could think about it on the return journey in the APC. Lol?

Other than filling loads of sand bags' the work load for two storemen was slow. So, to stop me bugging the hell out of Andy, he was re-assigned to work in the UNOSOM Stores Warehouse down on the airfield, which he seemed to enjoy.

The experience of learning how to network and get stuff for the contingent in a unique; sometimes frustrating and hostile environment, was invaluable for my own development and served me well 18 years later in Kabul, Afghan. I really enjoyed meeting the Log people in the other nations in Mogadishu, especially the Americans who in the main were only too happy to help. I was also very fortunate to have worked under a good man and soldier "Sergeant Major Sandbags" (Vern).

BLACK HAWK DOWN – THROUGH KIWI EYE'S

For members of the New Zealand Supply Platoon and Kiwi Embassy staff in Mogadishu, October 3 and 4 1993 will be remembered for the Battle of Mogadishu between Task Force Ranger elements and Somali gunmen.

When the dust settled in the afternoon of 4 October, 18 Rangers, 2 Malaysian QRF and hundreds of Somalis had been killed. The finer details of this battle can be read in several books, a couple being Mogadishu: Heroism and Tragedy or The Battle of Mogadishu.

The following are accounts contributed by Kiwis that witnessed a series of events on these days whether they were on Taniwha Hill or the Port or the Embassy compound.

FROM TANIWHA HILL

Allan Brill writes. The arrival of the US special forces (consisting of Delta Force, 3rd Ranger Battalion and specialist Navy Seal operators) was not very clandestine, as a large number of C5 Galaxy airplanes rocked into Mogadishu with all of their gear over a couple of days and we watched them come on to the airfield and occupy a position on our left flank. They set up inside the large hangar on the South Ramp.

I remember we were restricted with our movement around the airfield to staying put on Taniwha Hill. I recall watching one of the longest running "Firework" displays of my life time, once things had gone wrong.

The aftermath saw a few of us visit our Malaysian mates who had lost guys during the Operation, very sad. The Malay's were very good neighbours on the airfield and we felt their loss deeply.

After a while an Iroquois was seen to circle the "Mog" playing AC/DC tunes through loud speakers and encouraging Mike Durant not to give up and that the US forces were coming to get him. That continued until he was released.

Grover writes. I had returned from leave in Mombasa that morning (October 3rd) with Ray, Clem, Moses and Wardy. We were getting our leave gear sorted and resting up as it was a Sunday from memory (a day off), when all of a sudden you could hear the noise of the Ranger helicopters coming our way... As you do, we all walked out from our tents for a gork. It looked like every Ranger helo was in the air, with their legs dangling out of the Super Hawks. There were dozens of helo's as portrayed in the movie – a swarm of angry little machines. Impressive. We couldn't of imagined what was about to unfold, so after they left the airport we went back to what we were doing – not much. Not too long after they had left the airport, you started to hear the muffled sound of gun fire, again, not too much interest until minutes became 15 mins of noise being long bursts of mini gun fire and then, we started to take an interest and a longer look from Taniwha Hill. I think there were about 15 Kiwi's standing at various points on the hill looking in towards the city (a North Westerly direction) about 2 kilometres away.

The noise of the helicopter gun fire lasted all afternoon and during that time the Ranger helo's (Black Hawks and "little birds") return back to the airport in groups of three or four to a replen point established by the beach where they would re-bomb with fuel and ammunition before heading back into the battle.

I cannot recall if the helicopters test fired their machine guns during the day, but at night, they did and it happened just off the coast as they flew in, which was about parallel to our camp. At first, it gave you goose bumps as you knew this was no ordinary day, the battle had been going for approx 4 hours. You could sense something serious was happening.

I must say during the night was the scariest time of the battle. I do recall some Somali Illumination rounds were being fired into the sky lighting up the general area as the Militia were looking for helicopter targets. I even recall that night some mortars or RPG's were fired at the UN MI-26 helicopters on the North Ramp apron.

As we slept, we (well me anyway) were woken quiet frequently to the Ranger helo's test firing their mini-guns as they roared along the coast. My rifle, helmet and flak jacket were even closer to my bed that night. I also thought that there could have been Somali bandits in boats which could have fired RPG's at the airport, so a bit of confusion was on my mind at the time.

The next morning after sun rise the battle was still going and you could hear the Rangers and some of the non-Ranger helo's (the Cobra gunships) still firing.

It was later that morning when we turned on the TV in the recreation tent and watched CNN that we heard 16 Rangers had been killed and 2 were missing. We also heard that 2 Malaysian QRF had been killed whilst attempting to rescue dismounted Ranger ground forces.

Sean Stewart writes. The night of the Black Hawk down incident I remember sitting up on the sand dune outside my tent with others watching the events unfold, but not knowing what was going on. Smoking large cigars brought through the American PX kept me awake into the early hours and I recall watching the Rangers 'Little Birds" occasionally strafing the tops of buildings. It was an unusual sight to see the darkness of the night interrupted with long bursts of tracer coming from mid-air angling down into the streets of Mogadishu. There was no immediate communication between contingents at the Airport so there was no way of knowing what was going on. When we found out the next day what had gone on and that the Rangers had been scrambling everyone including their cooks and clerks to get out on the rescue mission I remember feeling absolutely gutted that we had not been given the chance to assist or be involved. One of the main issues the guys on the rescue mission faced is they had no armoured vehicles to assist in the extraction. The next day we were over at the north apron and watched as Bradley APC's and Abram tanks rolled off the back of C5 Galaxy transport aircraft. The American's didn't muck about when it came to positioning what they needed in less than 24 hours. That morning, I was catching a flight up to the old US Embassy compound and had hitched a ride on a CIA chopper with the Airfield Commander a good bloke who had a strong Texan drawl. As we waited clearance for take-off a big old C5 Galaxy came rumbling down the runway having a hard time stopping in a hurry. The Airfield Commander leaned across to me and said "see that there C5, its got some big killing machines on it". I was glad we had the US forces on our side.

FROM THE PORT

It is believed that a couple of Kiwi Rations Section personnel were at the Port doing the rostered security duty. The Port was a little closer the Ranger mission area and as such one of the New Zealanders has video footage filmed that night of the Ranger Black Hawks manoeuvring back into the city after an assumed replen at the airport. There is also footage of an American Medivac helo which appears to be taking a casualty from the port to a nearby hospital. The last piece of footage is filmed on the morning of 4 October, where a Cobra gunship hovering near the Port suddenly opens fire on a target making for real-time combat operations as seen by Kiwis at the Port.

FROM OUT OF THEATRE

Ian Fenwick writes. Mark Honeybone & I were on R&R down in Mombasa sucking back a few cold ones watching the drama unfold on CNN. When we flew back into Mogadishu a few days later, guess what our mode of transport from the airport to the embassy compound? Imagine our reluctance to get onboard (& we had been hanging out for a flight on a Blackhawk up till then). The pilot definitely did not spend any time mucking around and very little time was spent in a hover on the short journey across the city.

The Rangers withdrew from Somalia shortly after the Battle of Mogadishu.

MAJ STEVE WAGNER

I have just taken a stroll down memory lane courtesy of the NZ SUP PL Journal and was able to relive a number of memorable occurrences. The Journal was put together for just such strolls and 20 years later it is doing its job well as memories fade and other operations have come and gone. The monthly SITREPS we put together with their various paragraph headings of "Situation, Transport, Defence, Rations, Stores, Morale, Transport and Administration" bring back the operational challenges we all faced for the first time.

I recall the first night "stand-too" with incoming small arms and mortars of various calibres. Good training produced good responses, but nothing really prepared me for some of the smaller things: First "stand-to" at night in shorts, sandals and webbing, a pistol that refused to cock having come into contact with what was to become our ever constant irritant – the sand, trying to secure a perimeter that was large and meandering, and then on stand-down not being able to get to sleep – can't think why not.

RATIONS. This section worked and worked and achieved terrific results with a Section Leader second to none – Capt Sheila Black. Her work, play and fun ethic kept her section sane and committed under the most exhausting conditions. I have a life image of Sheila with both fists on her hips, shoulders back, head forward giving her Pakistani opposites both barrels on her thoughts (or WTF!) when it came to sorting out issues with their ration issue; this is one image that will never dim with time!

STORES. This section inherited a warehouse that you would normally only see in a disaster movie. It had variously been mortared, abandoned, pillaged and flooded. I recall Sean and his staff working with their flak jackets on as the locals decided to practise how inaccurate they could be with their AK-47s by constantly spraying the area with small arms fire.

TRANSPORT. A favourite tactic from those who wanted us out was to spray a full mag of AK-47 rounds into UNOSOM vehicles and then scarper. This was difficult to counter – but we did by looking aggressive and having our barrels visible to all – the locals did not like you looking at them through the scope site of the Steyr as they believed you were looking into their souls, or even capturing their soul. Other unprotected UN staff were not so fortunate with some vehicles getting brassed up with loss of life.

DEFENCE. We had to fill sandbags – thousands of the buggers. What made this worse was that UN supplied the cheapest ones possible - nylon ones that were not UV treated and if not concreted quickly perished under that unrelenting North African sun. Other thoughts – how do you defend an internal perimeter when the external perimeter can't be secured – our Egyptian Bn given this task were all show and bluster to us, but being Egyptian and having built the pyramids over 2000 years ago, they were still recovering (subsequent postings to the Sinai confirmed that they are still in the recovery phase) - this was challenging, however, once again our training and discipline proved up to the task.

ADMINISTRATION. Pay in $US was a novelty at first, and leave was a great place to spend it but more on that later. We had a system back then called EHA – Extra Hazardous Allowance and I would spend many hours writing up incidents whereby I attempted to convey the facts in such a manner that qualified for the allowance but did not go overboard – how do you really write up being shot at or mortared or shelled to earn a few more $$ - well all I know is that we all enjoyed spending those dollars on leave. Not a good system.

MORALE. Books could be written on the goings on of what was achieved after hours. The liberal use of alcohol as the only welfare tool in theatre back then led to the normal over-use syndrome which was managed, or mis-managed, by the command element depending on your point of view (read rank, age and maturity). We did have good times and the odd social function at Candys – watching the nightly tracer show from a different and closer perspective was a highlight. The SUP PL BBQ for civilians down on the beach was another highlight. I will leave it for others to embellish this particular area with their own highlights. The same goes for leave in Kenya – Nairobi nightclub handshakes comes to mind!

My recollections are mine, yours will be unique to you, but I will treasure the memories of working with

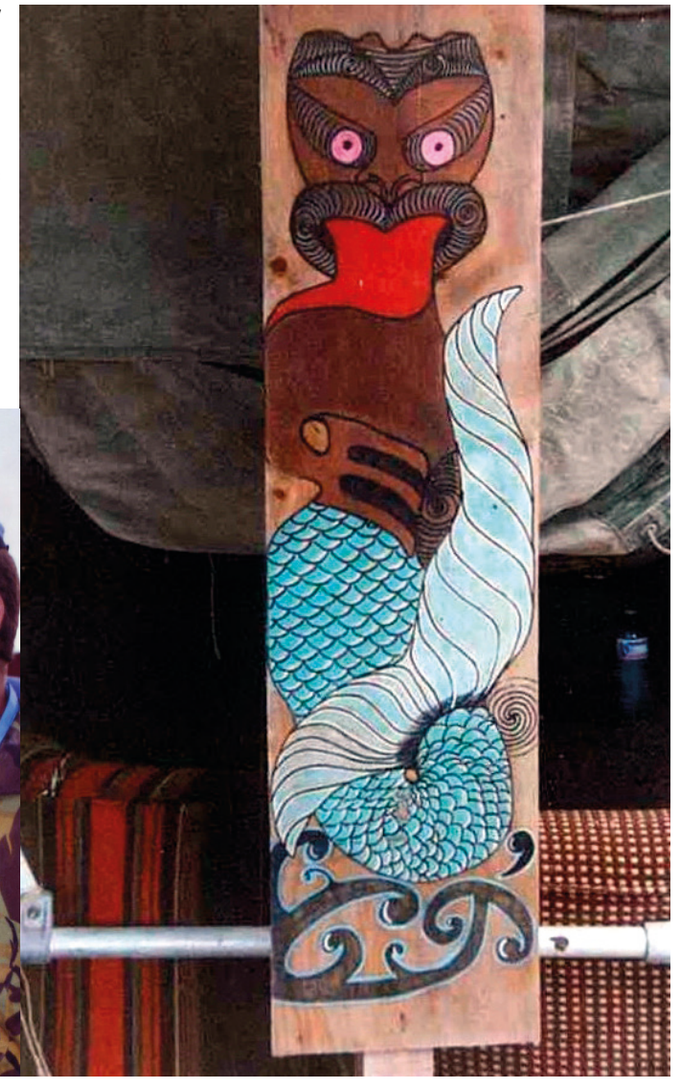
fellow NZers in a foreign, inhospitable and dangerous environment. As NZers we worked and played well together. We learnt quickly and as a result we both developed large external networks on the ground, but also bonded together, to get through what were trying times. I am proud of what we did and how we did it, and of all of those that served with the NZ SUP PL Rotation Two.

CONCLUSION

Will we ever go back and was it worth it? We can go back whenever we want as our memories allow. Would I ever go back there physically? – I don't think so as from what I read the country now exists in a very volatile condition with any attempt at introducing the rule of law constantly being shot down. I am ever hopeful, though, that one day it will stabilise and that a government will form that can benefit the people of Somalia, but probably not in my lifetime.

Was it worth it? I am certain it was for the people of Somalia as it gave them a period of hope while the world focussed on their plight. From a personal perspective I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I think I, and all of the NZ Sup Pl Rotation II personal, did as well.

I believe that the NZ Sup Pl Rotation II did all that was asked of us and more, achieving a high level of professional satisfaction in supporting UNOSOM, and setting and maintaining NZDF standards that continue to see us being sought out to contribute to future missions.



NZ SUPPLY PLATOON (JULY 1993 TO JANUARY 1994)

MAJ S.A. WAGNER,
CAPT S.M. BLACK,
LT S.C. STEWART,
WO2 V.L. POMANA,
SSGT S.M. GRAY,
SGT N.J. KEARNS,
SSGT A.M. CANTON,
PTE K.A. ANDERSON,
LCPL S.C. ARNOLD,
LCPL S.B. BOYCE,
LCPL A.E. BRILL,
CPL S.L.F. HADFIELD,
PTE S.J. MUSCHAMP,
PTE W.T. PETERS,
CPL M.D. POLL,
SGT A.B. PULLEN,
CPL S.W. IRAIA,
CPL M.N. GREER,
PTE D.K.B. ELLERY,
PTE A.C. SIXTUS,
PTE D.J. IRVING,
LCPL R.T. KAREKO,
CPL P.R. KENYON,
LCPL J.A. KNAP,
PTE A.W. LANGRIDGE,
PTE P.M. LEIATAUA,
PTE S.K. CARBERRY,
CPL W. SMITH,
PTE C.M. DEWES,
LCPL D.A. GROVES,
PTE C.P. GRANT,
PTE K.A.N. TUARI,
LCPL C.W. HENRY,
PTE A.J. HENRY,
PTE L.J. MANUEL,
LCPL B.M.R. MOORE,
PTE K.A. RICHARDS,
CPL T.J. TE HIKO,
LCPL T. THOMSON,
CPL D.M. WALKER,
PTE A.M. WARD,
CPL L.J. WINDLEBURN,
LCPL S.W. ANDERSON.

LCPL ALAN BRILL

SOMALIA REFLECTIONS 20 YEARS ON

"It was twenty years ago today Sgt Pepper taught the Band to play", go the lyrics to that old song. Well it was twenty years ago that the NZ Supply Platoon for the UNOSOMII mission got together and deployed to the "Dish". The memories fade as time marches on, but the friendships forged at that trip remain firm.

The Somalia experience was for most of us the first taste of deploying to a war zone to do what we had joined the Army to do. If you have had time since that baptism of fire to reflect back, whilst deploying on the multitude of missions that followed, you will recall that a lot changed because of our one. We gathered at Linton and went into issues of equipment and some pre-deployment stuff. I say stuff because upon reflection and comparing it to more recent deployments, it felt like the plan was made up on the back of a cigarette packet! The NZ Army hadn't gone far since Vietnam.

LCpl's Knap and Brill of the mighty 5th Movements Squadron, then in Hobsonville Auckland came into the bosom of the RNZAOC in Linton to a hearty welcome and the organise chaos of a contingent getting ready to go on operations in Africa. If you remember the two of us back then, we were both quite professional young JNCO's ready for anything and a little shy amongst you raucous devil may care Suppliers! In fact we were clean cut and a little overwhelmed by the boisterous, hard living Ordinance group we encountered. We had a quick OGp, Snappa laid down the Law and the way ahead (He is senior to me) and then we were put in with the "Stores Section" under the steely gaze of LT Sean Stewart.

Little did our intrepid young Movers know what they had got themselves into! Staff Canton was all business, but a little abrasive. Sgt Kearns was down right rude, and the LT let them be exactly like that to us. Whew surely "Da Boyz" would be cool? Cpl Poll was the quite professional JNCO, Bernie was OK, and Sexy hung out with us a bit and was he Sexy!

Then there was Tweeky! Little wee "butter wouldn't melt in her mouth" Kimi Tuari to be correct. Wow, what a Dynamo (eh Clint), full of energy, vim and vigar and a little bit of Bourbon too. Lastly there was Irv's, a brash young fulla who would be my roomy for the duration of our little adventure. Many were called to the Stores outfit but few survived for the duration, and we didn't get any infantry fullas to help out either Rations, so there!

These people became our family for the duration of our deployment to the Mohg. Sean Stewart our Boss was a young thrusting LT who tried to keep us focussed, tuned into task and towing the line. Fail, epic fail, shambles even! He had no chance really with Death Valley raised by Canton and Kearns becoming our temple for prayer and a continuing stream of incidents and experiences which would have tested even Buddha's serenity. What with the huge fire fight 10 days into the trip, all of the UN thinking they could clean out our little warehouse when ever they felt like it and cobblers to everyone else, and the daily grind no body could have held us together. Sean did his best, and hopefully enjoyed himself too!

We were shot at, mortared, shelled, spat at and abused, but that was just the Aussies! We hosted many people in our time on Taniwha Hill. The General came from NZ, had a ball and had a heart attack when he left (I blame Canton and Kearns). The VIP's came and went with a hangi most times, a haka and a song of welcome, but none of them filled a sand bag! The Aussie shark

Hunters were with us longer than most, and these elder Gents found a real home amongst the Death Valley residents and patrons. Then we got the Aussie Air Traffic Controllers staying, well hell things went to custard then. They had Sheila's (No not our Sheila) and this proved too much for some. Not Irv's and I though, we continued to

watch our Arcs and turn up to work looking professional each day.

The medals presentation up at Aussie House, when we left the security of the Hill (when no one else were going anywhere) to run the gauntlet for medals and tea! Leave, when we got it (unlike Sheila who got away to do the recce whilst we still slogged away) was another African adventure. “Hey Chas and Brilly can you come shopping with us girls, because the locals are stalking us?” yep the big fella and I had to go shot gun in Mombasa for our ladies whilst they went shopping. There was Tuska, when the sun went down and Tuska when it came up, especially ole Dino at the Reef hotel.

Well what have we learned 20 years on? I’ll tell you all. Even as memories fade of actual events, issues and occurrences, friendships forged on the tour remain to this day and I sure well into the future. Our thoughts turn to those no longer with us. We think of Linda and Thommo who left us earlier than they should have. As we gather this year to reminisce and enjoy each other’s company, let us raise a glass to absent friends who are with us in spirit still.

SUA TELA TONANTI NIL SINE LABORE

LCPL STEPHEN ARNOLD

Well its twenty years on, and how things have changed.

Deano can watch Shortland Street from his cell phone, or on demand or on a TV screen the size of a wall, rather than the clunky old VHS tapes he had sent from New Zealand.

I had a sudden flash as we were about to descend into Somalia in our Herc, I told everyone “keep your left over cut lunches…we don’t know if there is any food there…”, which seemed a bit silly at the time, but when we got into our new home we could only find some bread, a small wicker basket with eggs (rotten), and some chilli powder, which was crawling with maggots.

Lucky, we had 10 Man Compo ration packs. The things we would scoff at back in NZ were now quite nice.

The first night brought strong wind and rain, and our accommodation tried to fly back to NZ. After a few frantic moments, everything was under control.

It was interesting to see the tents changing over our time, from floors, wardrobes, sand bagged walkways, recliner chairs, ponds with ferns, wooden patios etc etc.

Good old kiwi ingenuity at its best. We ended up with an aircraft tyre in Hard Rock Alley (technical support), we were chuffed with our new drinking table, until one of the US chaps got in a flap and made us get rid of it as it was a ticking time bomb, the day we parted with it was sad but we decided hey if it is going to blow up then lets make sure it does. It was rolled off the bluff at the back of the camp and onto the sharp rocks below. We expected it to explode into smithereens, instead it hit the rocks and bounced way out to sea, of course the tide brought it back in and it and it was smashed round by the waves forever more, so we never really got rid of it.

The food was all we needed to survive, there was not much to go round, we did our best to disguise things to make them look more interesting and edible. Meat was in short supply, and the daily allowance was not what a Kiwi is used to. Our Ration Runs to the Sea Port usually involved a shady blind siding of our kiwi mates and while their attention was diverted we would throw as much as we could into the truck.

I don’t know how many tins of peas, beans, and carrots we went through, these were fairly stable diet, along with rice. Speaking of rice, we quickly learned it was easier to pick the weevils out once it was cooked rather than try and chase them around alive. The boys would put down a hangi when we had the goods for one.

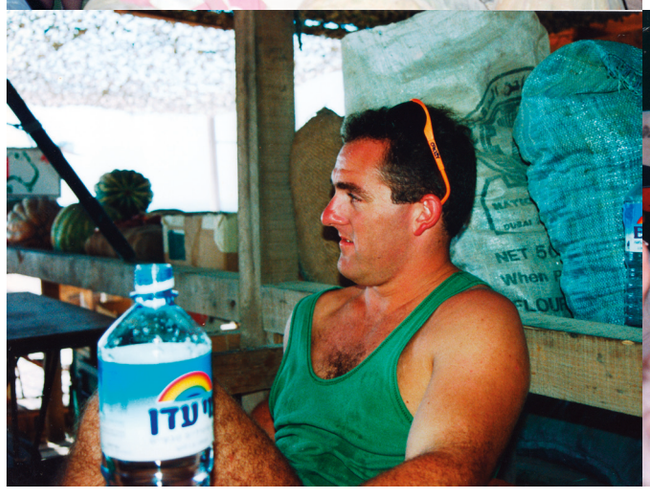
Deano and I did shifts similar to back home, which gave us a bit of down time to fix our tent, and fill sandbags. We were stuck at camp most of the time so we were able to chip in with bunkers, and building, and of course camp chores.

I remember a contingent OGp in the mess tent one afternoon, the toilet drums were smoking away nicely nearby and one of the ladies went into the female toilets. The flap at the back of the toilet was up and the drums were gone… say no more.

I was working away in the kitchen one day and was approached by Soldiers from UAE, asking for food, I gave them a polite kiwi shuffle alone the lines of "sorry guys we aren’t feeding you, we hardly have enough for our guys" to which one of them replied "we have guns", then the angry kiwi came out of me and they were told on no uncertain terms where they could go looking for food.

Things went smoothly for us cooks, we got to get out at times and visit the sites in Mogadishu, and the odd flight to outlying areas. We had a fire in the kitchen one afternoon, fuel had leaked from one of the burners through the plywood floor into the sand below, this got the adrenaline going as it looked like the whole thing was going to go up.

Then there was the fact that we had beer in our camp, we quickly made friends with other nations, and had many a kiwi all nighter. Towards the end of our time, some of the "stand too's" involved us with a tray of drinks watching the gun fire going on, on the other side of the tarmac.



Wine was brewed in tuff boys, sugar, spuds, lemons, oranges, and raisins… After about a week in the heat it was just right! We could have probably run the generator on the stuff.

Being at camp was handy when the latest t-shirts would be brought round, we would be sporting the latest coolest UN Somalia shirt that night at dinner.

I got to know a couple of US Signallers quite well, they liked sneaking over for a quiet beer or three, they got sent back to the US after being caught in their connex with the radio gear covered in millions of droplets of cylume fluid. A certain Kiwi was asked to leave and suggested he did not come back again…

The yanks had a shocking lack of respect for the Somalia fighters, they would not fill sandbags to provide basic protection they told me "they wont shoot at us, coz if they do our country will turn theirs into a carpark", yep

well all the Kiwi's made it home safely, even one that had his own special flight and was waiting for us back in NZ.

We had a bloody good time, made awesome mates, and put on plenty of concerts for our guests. It was great to visit Mombasa, and have a look at the culture, I remember that bloody door to the kitchen of the pool bar, it made a loud bang, and it was easy to see the ones that had not been there long, and realised they didn't have to leap from their loungers as it wasn't a stand too.

It was a great day when our plane arrived to take us away, and what a feeling stepping of the flight in Ohakea and sucking in cool fresh air…welcome home!

Cheers

Steve

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TAT

LCPL CLEM HENRY

Kia Ora,

Well here we are 20 years on, the hair is slightly greyer and the face has a few more wrinkles…

Fortunately, the memories haven't been lost and some are still as vivid as if they occurred yesterday. A lot of things have happened over the last 20 years, I'm sure the same for all of us and I guess it's simply called "life". Happiness, sadness, good times, hard times and on it goes. For many reasons I feel fortunate to still be here and able to share some wonderful memories with old friends.

My father (Charlie) passed away a few years ago aged 82; he was ex NZ Sigs and served in Korea from 1951-1955. He was a K Force member and attended many of the reunions that were organized over the years. He really enjoyed them, catching up with his old mates and having a few beers, telling stories etc. It seems a little surreal now to be in a similar situation…

When I take myself back 20 years I can't help but smile; I have been very fortunate over the last 20 years, there are always things that could have been done differently but you take the learnings and move on. I can recall being envious of the first group being named and hoping that the mission would continue just so I could get over there at some stage. A little naïve and selfish in hindsight, but it was what it was. The good thing was that the positions the first contingent left behind would have to be backfilled, this meant I and a few others would be able to remain in Linton.

Well, time moved on and before we knew it the 2nd contingent was named and pre deployment training had begun. The list of members read well, most were familiar with each other but some were new as we had additional support from other Corps joining us, Infantry, Sigs, and Tpt etc.

As the deployment date drew nearer we were all sent home for leave; our final goodbyes to family and friends. We were told to wait for a phone call to coordinate our return to Linton and our onward flight via Ohakea.

The call eventually came and I met up with Grover at Auckland Airport for our return. The hardest thing for me was saying goodbye to the old man, everything else was easy. Dad was very quiet man and not one to make too much fuss about anything, but I think for him life had now done a full circle; instead of him saying goodbye to his parents it was now me saying goodbye to him. Suffice to

say it was hard to walk away from him, I made sure not to look back otherwise I don't think I would have ever got on the plane.

Once back in Linton, we all caught up and went through the final preparations to leave. From memory we had a bit of a "hoolie" the night before we left. I can't remember exactly but no doubt, London's and the New Royal would have been on the list finishing with a good feed from Golden takeaways. Notable memories…"anyone seen Dean Walker?" And some bloody mongrel and an incident with a caravan?

Final farewells in Ohakea and we were off; I can recall the RSM of Linton's final words to me, "don't come back with a haircut like that"…always on the job that man. We overnighted in Melbourne and enjoyed a few quiet drinks. The second overnight stop was Diego Garcia, a few more quiet drinks and then off to Mogadishu. (Plenty of things happened in both these locations, but best left for the reunion)

I'm going to summarize the next 6 months into a few bullet points; just a few things, places and names that bring back some great memories…

- Taniwha Hill, as magical as the name suggests
- Rations – picking and issuing the food breaks
- Moses imitations of the dance shows in Mombasa
- The Friday/Saturday hangi's
- ALL THE PARTIES
- Candy house
- Towing Ray after getting the 4WD stuck in a foot of sand?
- Doggie and I taking a shortcut and running past Mush like there was no tomorrow…doggies idea
- Replacing sandbags, some hard case discussions went on during this…
- Karl Brown
- Heineken (cheap as chips)
- Bourbon, no expressions
- Reef Hotel
- Nova House
- Tamarinds
- Carnivores
- Bora Bora
- Mamba Village
- Florida's
- International incident…part 1
- International incident…part 2
- Fulla who lost his underwear at the beach? (arguably International incident 3)
- Woody…
- Marieke…
- Victoria…
- Ms. Du Toit…
- Illegitimate…
- Some fulla called Parker Hale…
- Who forgot to check the drum was in the toilet

Some great memories there that's for sure…don't be mistaken there was plenty of mahi that went on with all that. The reality is that it's impossible to capture everything but that's a good start. What life experiences did I take away? Actually there was plenty of those too, hard to appreciate it all at the time but those experiences and learnings have helped me many times over the years.

We were fortunate to have a great team of people, each one contributing in some way to the memories I/we now have. I know life has changed for everyone in some shape or form and sadly a couple of our old mates are no longer with us, but I'm sure will remain in our memories.

I have been working abroad for the last 5 years and been fortunate to catch up with many old friends from that era, Dave Tairi, Chris Ratahi, Arch, Willie Epiha, Maaka and many others. The military experiences and memories always come back and provide a great foundation for a few beers.

Well what can I say…simply a huge thank you, to everyone for making that trip what it was; an amazing experience that I will never forget?

My best wishes to you and your families wherever you may be.

PTE KERRY ANDERSON

In the 23 years that I have served within the NZDF, I would have to say that our tour to Somalia in July 1993 was the best operation and memory that I have been part of to date.

When I first joined the Army on 1 May 1990, I knew that I had big shoes to try and fill given that my father was an Engineer during WWII. He had spent four of the five years as a prisoner of war with the Germans. All I ever wanted to be was an Infantryman hoping to experience some sort of overseas conflict as the rest of my Infantry brothers did. That's what we trained for and that's what we wanted to be part off.

However, in1993 I was currently posted within 2 Section, 4 Platoon, Victor Company as part of a highly skilled and well oiled, I must say, team that won the Battalion Skill at Arms (SAA). I clearly remember when our section members were told by the CO, Lieutenant Colonel Mateparae, "individually" that as a result of winning the SAA, we were deploying to Somalia in order to provide our Ordinance brothers protection so that they could carry out their duties due to the heightened threats and dangers that were present.

Prior to departing for Somalia, the contingent underwent a period of Pre Deployment Training (PDT). Over this period we meet with everyone on the deployment and the friendships and banter began.

Once we departed NZ in Air Force style, C130 Hercules, there was a couple of stop over's along our 37 hour flight with no on board entertainment. Keeping it short, an awesome time was had by all.

On arrival in Mogadishu if I remember correctly, we came under fire from Somali bandits (Skinnies) firing mortar rounds. Around that time, there was a lot of activity in and around the airport, so it kept us all on our toes and the excitement of it all was overwhelming.

I remember when we first arrived at our new location the work and effort that had to go into the place to give our new home for the next 6 months the protection it required. We were all located on a sandy hill that could be seen from no mans land, that in itself was a great tactical decision from someone (Yeah Right). I think the total in sandbags that we had filled over the whole tour came up to around 30,000 as you had to replace them regularly due to the UV conditions which made them rot.

The heat was simply amazing, we would go out and do 30 min work in the initial stages of the tour and then take an hour to replenish and rest. We had also made a couple of under ground bankers which was made up of sandbags and aircraft pallets that were, "just lying around". The camp had a walkway that was made up of ground platforms that were also "acquired".

During the tour, I assisted our two chiefs, Steve and Deano. In the early days of my career the battalion use to get catering support to conduct "Regi Cooks Courses" which I had done.

I would like to say that at the time it was a good idea but I only ended being volunteered to cook every Company BBQ which as we all know, any fool can cook a steak and sausage, or can they?

I offered what I had learnt to our two chiefs and they were more than pleased to have another set of hands around the kitchen. They both taught me a lot of new skills in preparation and cooking, how to use the facilities and in the end, I was able to cook for the contingent, by myself, in the weekend which would allow Steve and Deano to have a well deserved break. I must admit, I looked at a Corps change to catering but on my return to NZ I was offered another tour to Bosnia, which I kindly accepted. The Corps change to catering unfortunately did not eventuate.

After a couple of months providing security to our loggy brothers and sisters we (Infantry) were utilised within the ration section which I must admit, I enjoyed. I spent a lot of time making up ration lists, cleaning out containers that had spilt cooking oil in or moving items from one container to another as the refrigeration units would often break down. I also learnt, sort of, how to drive a forklift. During this exciting time I clearly remember Wayne Peters and I would goof of down to the rocks for a bit of sun bathing along with a couple of cans of coke and chocolate deserts. At the end of the day prior to departing back to the camp lines we would go up on the shipping containers and sit in the water bladders for about 20 min and once again accompanied with coke and deserts.

During the tour I would have to say there were many a good time had by all. Some of those good times cannot be discussed. I'm sure that we will be reflecting and laughing about some of those "good times" during the reunion.

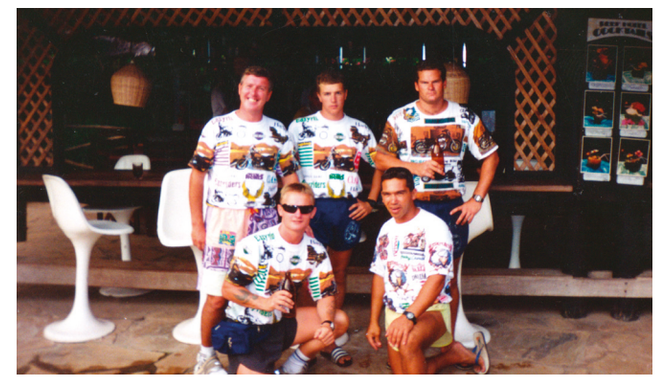
Some of the main events that I do remember were when Boycey and I were on guard duty down at the port when the car bomb (VBIED) went off. I clearly remember Boycey and I getting up thinking, "what the" and rushing outside to see what had occurred. A bomb had been placed by the Sea Port exterior wall on the main road slightly up the road to the North. The bomb blew a huge hole in the shipping containers that lined the area. Luckily security was there in a hurry and no militia had got in. It was in close proximity to the rations warehouse.

The contacts that we watched and wish that we could part of. The 120mm mortar round that decided to pay me a visit (Cheers you… Militia …!). The snipers operating out of a building over the other side of the runway, which ended up getting hammered by Cobra helicopter gunships. Witnessing the lifeguard towers on the beach (from a distance) being set alight by somebody. Don't think they were Kiwi's? I blame the Malaysians.

Now it comes down to our leave, which was totally awesome. During my time, like most, I had two leave periods. I cannot remember how long each leave period was but I never left Mombasa, for some strange reason.

Most of the time we were drinking excessively but I do remember going on a safari and conducting a PADI divers course with the OC Major Steve Wagner and a few other lads.

These are the memories that will be with me forever. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with everyone including Ray Kareko. I did eventually move onwards and upwards in 1996 and joined the top Corps of the NZ Army, The Royal New Zealand Military Police.



LCPL JOHN 'SNAPPA' KNAP

SOMALIA SOJOURN

Twenty years has gone by and because of that I guess Somalia can now be described as a 'back in the day' adventure, and what an adventure it was.

I remember as a LCpl at 5 Mov Sqn sometime in mid June 93, being called into my OC's office and being asked two questions, firstly was my life squared away and secondly did I want to go to Somalia for six months, obviously I answered was yes to both of them. The next day Brilly and I arrived at Linton to find ourselves TOD to a doubtful organisation of misfits and pirates that called itself 21 Field Supply Coy and the adventure had begun.

PDT was a blur of admin, jabs & stabs, shooting and first aid, one thing I do remember was the kit issue, being late additions to PDT, Brilly and I were some of the last to receive our issues. I remember the non deploying 21 Field Supply CQ bitching to us that because he had to issue us a UN cap and wide brimmed hat each, that he wouldn't have one for himself! I'm still waiting for my wide brimmed hat to arrive. Good on you Staff!

Anyway, skipping ahead a bit, after a long and eventful C130 flight via Perth and Diego Garcia, we touched down in Mogadishu. As we deplaned I remember a number of us hearing two explosions within the confines of the airfield and Poley telling us that they were incoming mortar rounds, of course Poley was ridiculed for saying this…I mean who would fire mortar rounds into Mogadishu airport?..if only we'd known!

The outgoing contingent only had time to welcome us with a haka and show us where the hangi was before they boarded a dubious Russian AN32 destined for Kenya and a connecting flight home.

The following morning, we, the Stores Section dutifully fronted up for work at the 'Kiwi Warehouse' on the side of the airfield. What a mess! It was full of dozens and dozens of brand new Xerox machines, under the inept control of a UN civilian, that had been sitting under a leaky roof and rained on for months and the general stores side wasn't much better! Anyway Andy Canton came up with a plan and we sorted it out.

I remember we'd only been there a few days when the Somalis decided to conduct an impromptu RPG and mortar fam for us one night. And they certainly had plenty of ammo to expend. It was a reality check for a few of us as we realised that Hey, we could get hurt over here. From memory it took about twenty minutes for the Gun ships to get airborne and shatter the Somalis illusions that they couldn't be seen in the dark. Anyway, that first attack was where the 'Prairie Dog' phrase came from, as a common theme amongst the Rations Section, was to pop up and down in their shell scrapes to see the incoming RPGs, and to watch both them and the incoming mortar rounds explode on the airfield!

Anyway, I was a bit older than most of the crew and was married so decided that I'd dig a 'DS' shell scrape in order to boost my chances of getting out of there in one piece. So I spent quite a few hours of my downtime creating a masterful shell scrape that ended up being four foot deep with corrugated iron sides and a beautifully sandbagged lip. I copped a bit of friendly stick while I built it, but it was worth it for the peace of mind from knowing that I'd be well protected next time the 'General' detailed a few of his boys to let loose in our direction. Being Mogadishu I didn't have to wait too long and a few nights later woke to the 'Crump, Crump, Crump' that we all came to know so well. So I grabbed my PPE and rifle and scuttled outside to my shell scrape…only to find that there were so many people in it that I couldn't get in… and had to lie in the old collapsed 2cm deep one that was beside my masterpiece!

We had a group of Somali Porters who worked for us in the Stores Section at the UN Warehouse, I use the term 'worked' loosely, as their main aim in life was to sleep on a piece of cardboard under a small tree behind the Warehouse, with the exception of their 'foreman' Mohamed whose main aim in life was to get one the hell out of Mogadishu and to emigrate to New Zealand. Anyway, Mohamed would work his way around our section dropping hints as to how and who would sponsor him to New Zealand. After a while you could see how the conversation was going to pan out and it became an SOP to tell him that I was only a LCpl and therefore unable to sponsor anyone to New Zealand until I became a Sgt and that as luck would have it, Neil Kearns was a Sgt and, as a matter of fact, was a bit of an immigration guru! So, Neil, that may explain why Mohamed pestered you about moving to New Zealand for a while until your diplomatic skills were able to convince him otherwise!

Every morning one of us would take 'Brown Thunder' to the Pakistani ECP to uplift our Porters, this was always a bit dicey to say the least as there would be a long line of Somalis trying to enter the airfield and a lot of them had AK47s. The Somali's with AK's would sign them over to the Pakistanis, go to work on the airfield, sign them back out at the end of the day, go home and shoot at us all night and then dutifully appear for work again the next morning. I will say that none of our guys brought weapons to the airfield with them though; they were far too cunning for that! Anyway the procedure was that they would be lined up in single file and you would stand

with a Pakistani guard and identify the Porter, who'd be searched and then you'd put him on the back of 'Brown Thunder' and repeat the process until you had everyone and then you'd drive them to work and return them to the ECP at the end of the day to go home.

So, I was out there one particular morning and had just identified the last of our guys and was waiting for him to be searched, when the guy behind him starts yelling and gesturing towards me. I was close enough to see that his eyes were bright red from Khat. I asked Mohamed what he was saying and was told he was claiming to be one of our Porters, which he wasn't. While Mohamed was telling me this, I noticed that he and the other Porters were doing their best to make themselves invisible at the front of Brown Thunder, ie behind the engine block. I told the Pakistani guard that this guy wasn't one of mine and then barely had time to think 'Beam me up friggen now Scotty' when the Somali fired eight rounds at me with his AK. I know it was eight rounds because I was able to count the empty brass while he bled out with a Pakistani 7.62 round through his chest. I'd never had much time for the Paki soldiers at the ECP, but I was pretty happy that this guy was on duty and super alert that particular day!

Once a semblance of order had been established at the Warehouse, word soon got around that, apart from dozens of water damaged Xerox machines, there was actually some useful kit up for grabs and as far as the Pakis and Indians were concerned, it was all destined for them! So…we were inundated with requests for 5000 suspension files and 3000 red pens and 6000 boxes of staples, all of it, we suspected, destined for a good home somewhere in Karachi or Mumbai! Anyway, much to the dismay of both of these contingents, the Stores Section instigated the 'Q1 form' which was a stores request that allowed for a far fairer distribution of kit for all concerned, and, along with blatantly shutting the grill on the store at the first hint of an appearance by one of our cricket loving comrades, allowed some of the genuinely hard up contingents, such as the Zimbabweans, to get a fair go.

The Egyptians adopted a far more cunning approach to obtaining stores. They instigated a plan whereby they'd invite us around for lunch and the following day would turn up at the Warehouse with a Q1 for 200 cartons of Toilet Duck or 400 dust pans or something similar! From memory the Supply Platoon and Stores Section HQ elements were the first recipients of an Egyptian lunch invitation and after quickly realising how dodgy it all was they rapidly downgraded all future participants to JNCO and below! I well remember sitting next to Irvs and Kimi one lunchtime while surveying the dubious offerings in front of us, wondering how to limit the amount of bacteria we were about to ingest into our systems, when to top it all off, several greasy glasses of a warm reddish tea like solution was placed in front of us. We didn't want to touch the glasses with our hands let alone let them anywhere near our mouths. So, after some desperate discussion, we realised that if you rolled your tongue into a straw, you could suck some of the fluid out of the glass without having to touch the sides with your mouth, our hosts were appeased as we'd partaken in some of their tea and Stores Section honour was maintained!

Another little gem that was reserved for LCpl and below was that of rostered daily fatigues. The highlight (not) of this was the ritual burning of the boggers, whereby you'd drag the drums out of the outhouse and summarily burn the contents. The official recipe called for 5 litres of diesel and 5 litres of petrol to be stirred into the mess with a broken 11 x 11 pole before flicking in a lighted match and waiting for everything to turn to ash. That was the theory but in reality 5 litres of petrol and diesel did bugger all and took a long time to turn anything into ash. The system obviously needed revising, so one day I decided to tweak the mixture a bit and added 20 litres of diesel and 20 litres of petrol, reasoning that I had better things to do then sit around all day and watch shit burning. Anyway after giving the mixture a good stir I decided that discretion being the better part of valour,

I'd stand back and hiff a lighted hexi into the drum rather than stand close and risk it with a match. The resultant 'whooompfta' and accompanying mushroom cloud must have been very close to having the QRF Blackhawks launched to see who'd attacked Taniwha Hill! I know that the CSM came running over to see what was happening with a …what the Snappa… look on his face!

This experience also taught me another valuable lesson with regards to burning the boggers…the broken 11 x 11 pole was obviously hollow…and like water, shit expands when it gets hot and, I guess, takes the least line of resistance…being straight up the inside of the pole and out the other end like a geyser! I crimped the end quick smart after that life changing event!

One night towards the end of one of our social functions in the rec tent, I decided it was getting a bit late and that I'd head off to bed. I'd only just got back to my tent when I heard a strange fluttering sound coming my way through the night sky in double quick time. I'd barely had time to mutter "oh shivers" to myself when it impacted on the side of the track behind me. Luckily for me it was a blind, otherwise there would have been a less than positive ending to this little story. A few minutes later the CSM and Sam came over and asked me where I thought it had landed and I pointed to where I thought it was and sure enough, there it was just ten metres behind me, a nice little 120mm HE round. So, we put a few sand bags around it and it stayed there until sometime the next day when EOD came over to destroy it in place. It was building up to be quite an event and we started work a bit later in order to be able to watch the show.

Mike Greer videoed the entire thing and we were all a bit disappointed at the lack of bang following the "Fire in the hole" call from the Yanks. When Mike replayed the video in slow time we were able to see that the charge hadn't detonated the mortar round at all, but had simply blown it out into the Indian Ocean. Feeling very much ripped off by the lack of a suitable bang we piled on to the back of Brown Thunder and headed off to work.

We had our good days and our bad days in Somalia but as this next story will demonstrate, there were days when it was blindingly obvious that the Gods were definitely on our side. I was standing by the back door to the Warehouse one afternoon when a large American truck pulled up and the Sgt behind the wheel asked me if she was at Mogadishu airport. I had a quick look around at the runway and numerous C130s, MI26s, Blackhawks, Cobras and various other aircraft parked on the apron or in the throes of taking off and I was able to confirm for her that yes, she certainly was at Mogadishu airport.

She then asked if I could unload a couple of pallets that she had on the back of her truck, of course I said yes and as an aside asked what was on the pallets. When she replied "Soda" my interest multiplied twofold. I'll just point out that by now I was a fully indoctrinated honorary Ordnance Corp Pirate, open to any opportunity that was in the offing. I then asked her who the Soda was for and when she replied that she didn't know, my interest multiplied tenfold. By now I had the pallets off the truck and with a straight face and feigning disinterest, asked if

she had any documentation that might identify who the Soda belonged to, and where it had to go. When she replied “Nuh, I wuz jest told tih tage id tih tha earport”, or something similar in whatever southern swamp language she spoke, I realised that an opportunity like this comes but once in a Somalia deployment and after solemnly assuring her that yes we would do our utmost to discover who the consignment belonged to, called out to Andy Canton to bring him up to play on what was going on. Under Andy’s direction, the speed at which the pallets of Soda were forked into the Warehouse and hidden behind tarps and various general stores would have put the Thunderbirds to shame! Shortly after we were ecstatic to discover that the pallets were coke and fizzy grape. Needless to say we toasted that American Sgt with coke and fizzy grape for several months afterwards!

I guess I’ll finish with another humorous Stores Section anecdote. To set the scene it was the morning after a night when we’d had to “Stand To’ on three occasions and the sleep deprivation and stress had left us all shattered. To top it off we’d received a Q1 from the Indians the previous afternoon in which they’d annotated that they wanted something like a shipping container of toilet rolls, 3000 erasers and another 5000 suspension files and we all knew we were in for a hard hour or two of counting in the hot morning sun. Generally we arrived at the Warehouse at 0745ish and this allowed us to gather our thoughts, figure out what planet we were on and get briefed by Sean and Andy as to what the day held for us.

Anyway…I’d had to do some personal admin and arrived 5 minutes after the others, who were sitting in the locked Warehouse enjoying what was left of the peace and quiet prior to having to commence a long and tedious battle of wits with the Indians. So, I sneaked around to the front of the Warehouse and banged on the door. I received a good natured “We’re not open for another ten minutes” from Poley. I then bang louder on the door and got a slightly curt “Come back at 8 o’clock” from Brilly. I then banged again and in my best Nargi voice loudly yelled “But I am having the Q1 for 40,000 pairs of shoe laces” and got a loud… you know the rest from Irvs. I then beat the hell out of the door and yelled “Be opening this door at once you Kiwi mongrels, I am having the signed Q1 from the director of UN administration and I am demanding satisfaction from you lazy pants!” From inside the Warehouse I heard little Kimi fire up and she stormed over to the door and just about ripped it off its hinges in her haste to have a go at the Indian Officer who’d been standing outside ruining their calm before the storm. The look on her face when she saw it was me was absolutely priceless!

When we finally got back to New Zealand we had a day or two doing post deployment leave in Linton prior to being released to our home units. My wife had come down from Hobsonville to meet me and was staying in a local motel as you do, and was going to fly back to Auckland with me when we were released, as you also do.

Prior to being released from 21 Field Supply Coy, the Chief Clerk briefed all of us not from Linton on our RTU travel arrangements and handed out our tickets. To say I was surprised to receive a train ticket from Palmerston North to Auckland would be an understatement! When I queried why I was the only non Auckland based soldier not flying back to my unit I was told that there wasn’t the budget for me to do so. When I asked if I could pay the difference between the train and plane fare I was again told that there wasn’t the budget to do so. So, I purchased my own plane ticket and flew back to Auckland with my wife and the other Auckland based soldiers. I’ve met some absolute dropkicks in my time in the Army Staff…but you’re right up there with the worst of them!

POLEY'S HOWITZER

For a few short days in late 93,Taniwha Hill almost became Fire Support Base Taniwha,courtesy of a homeless Howitzer that Poley found and adopted.

It's a bit of a long tale and goes like this: Unfortunately the Stores Section possessed two Leesander RT 25 Rough Terrain Fork Lifts, these had accompanied us out from New Zealand courtesy of the RNZAF and were probably the only working RTFLs in the Mog.

I say unfortunately, because when the Indian contingent realised what they were, they were always after a Leesander c/w driver to do all manner of tasks for them. The majority of these tasks started off as genuine enough, but soon degenerated into the realms of the ridiculous, as the stereotypical short fat Indian Cpl Storeman invented ever more ludicrous forklift tasks in order to impress his watching half platoon of lackeys. Impressing the lackeys involved much windmilling of arms and yelling in the general direction of our hapless RT25 operator, while not to be out done, his entire half platoon also screamed and yelled and provided general assistance to our operator, via a bewildering array of less than helpful hand signals!

One night while having a couple of beers, the few of us who got dealt the short hands, with regards to these forklift tasks, decided that we needed a suitable SOP to employ when things inevitably got out of hand. After much consideration, the brains trust decided that at the

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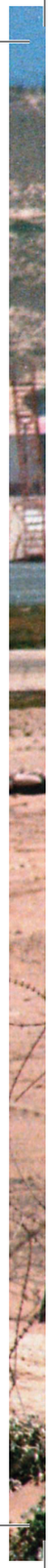


first sign of a windmilling Cpl, we'd windmill back, jabber something unintelligible, point in the general direction of the Warehouse and disappear in a large cloud of diesel exhaust!

Anyway, these tasks were okay as long as they were on the airfield as you could always bail, and it provided a source of amusing stories for the rest of the Section at smoko.

However, at an O Group one evening we were informed that the Indians had requested one of our RT25s c/w operator for a task at one of their FOBs somewhere in the wops. The task would involve flying there in an MI26 doing the task, overnighting and returning the following day. Sean did his best to sell the task to us, but as expected, it went down like a lead balloon.

There was no point in asking for volunteers as we were all desperately looking `for the nearest piece of rusty iron to impale ourselves on, or the nearest toilet seat to lick, as we all knew that Tetanus or Typhoid was far preferable to what would await the hapless chosen one!

Sean told us he'd think it over and inform the unlucky winner at the following mornings O Group. Prior to the O Group there was much nervous small talk and staring at the Warehouse ceiling and avoiding of eye contact with Sean in general!

In due course Poley was the chosen one and the rest of us gave huge sighs of relief and made sympathetic comments while all the while thinking "Thank Christ its' you and not me mate!" Came the Appointed hour and Poley trundled his Leesander onto the Helo and amidst the micro storm that only MI26 rotor blades can create, Poley and his forklift slowly gained altitude and headed off towards their date with destiny.

I'll just add here that prior to him departing we all shook his hand solemnly, again gave him our condolences, regaled him with urban myths as to what happened to the last white boy who deployed to this particular FOB, told him to avoid any dodgy vindaloo, to leave the goats alone and to sleep with his back to the wall. We were just showing our genuine concern for a Mate about undertake a dodgy task in support of the Indians!

The last we saw of him was a forlorn face at a window as we hooted with laughter and told each other" thank God it wasn't me"!

The following afternoon the MI26 returned with Poley and the forklift and we all sat outside the Warehouse to see if he could walk off unaided or if overnight he'd developed an unfortunate limp. However he was fine. To our amazement however, in addition to the Leesander, he'd acquired an old Italian Howitzer and proceeded to tow it to a place of prominence at Taniwha Hill!

This was all well and good and was worth much kudos for gumption and the ability to talk the howitzer onto the Helo, however where it was positioned, it was silhouetted on the Taniwha Hill horizon like the dogs proverbial, and we were a bit concerned that the General might take offence and add it to his range card and we didn't need that!

A few days later Poley towed it to a place (previous page) of far less prominence and we all breathed a sigh of relief!

And that, is the story of how Taniwha Hill almost became Fire Support Base Taniwha!

NEW YEARS EVE 1993/94

We were on reduced manning at the Warehouse during the day of New Years Eve 93/94 and only Sean, Bernie and myself were working. We'd also stood our Somali Porters down for a couple of days.

As a bit of background, in the weeks prior to Christmas, a number of Somali truck drivers had been found with various items of contraband hidden in their trucks when leaving the airfield. As part of an on going security operation, Stores Section was asked to check the Somali convoys for contraband on their arrival at the Warehouse to uplift various general stores.

Of course we took up the challenge and over a period of weeks found all sorts of items hidden on Somali trucks that arrived at the Warehouse in order to uplift stores. Some of the items were cunningly hidden and some were less so. I'd suggest that a rag full of 7.62 x 39 rounds sitting in an open glovebox would probably fall into the latter category!

Anyway, the Somalis often got a bit aggro when we discovered and confiscated their ill gotten gains, but when the Stores Section was there in force, nothing happened that we couldn't handle, we had each others backs and woe betide the Somali who tried it on.

Anyway, back to the main story, there were only the three of us at work, it was mid afternoon and we were looking forward to closing up early and joining the rest of the team for some pre- dinner drinks.

We were gutted when a convoy of Somali trucks arrived simultaneously with a Romanian Officer who wanted some Flak Jackets as we could see our anticipated early knock off evaporating before our very eyes.

Bernie took the Romanian Officer to the row of containers at the rear of the Warehouse to sort out his flak jackets and Sean and I went out front to see what the

Somalis had been tasked to uplift. We decided to have a quick check for contraband and when we both found items hidden under the tarps on two different trucks the situation rapidly got out of hand.

Most people imagine Somalis to be small skinny people, however in reality they're quite tall and wirey and this, combined with their predilection for chewing khat and their volatile nature can make them quite a handful when they're riled up.

So...there were ten Somalis in the 5-6 vehicle convoy, and, they started to nut off when they realised we'd found their contraband and that they wouldn't be selling it on the black market later on that day.

One in particular was a pretty large bloke and was obviously in charge and he began nutting off at Sean big time. When he pulled a large tyre iron out of somewhere and tried to hit Sean in the head with it they all lost the plot and all of a sudden we were extras in 'Romper Stomper 2'. It was chaos, there were 5-6 trying to do the business to Sean and I had my hands full with a couple as well. I remember thinking "Don't bleed on us, we don't want aids" Now Sean was a big strong guy and was doing the business exceptionally well and after 5 months in Somalia I was in fairly good shape as well, but the pure weight of numbers was starting to wear us down. I remember being in mid kick when Sean called out to me and motioned to me to get a rifle quick smart. I finished my drop kick, roared into the Warehouse, grabbed my Steyr and raced back outside.

I was hoping that the presence of a Steyr would end things pretty quickly, but no such luck. Two of them even decided to have a go at me even then, so I shouted at them to stop. They took no notice, so I actioned my rifle and even this didn't stop them.

By now I'd had enough, so I thought "stuff you" flicked off the safety and aimed it directly at one of them. In a country that understood little except violence, this had the desired effect and they all stopped.

Shortly after this Chas Dewes and some of the Security Section called in on their way back from the port. I have to admit to being really pleased to see them and thinking how good it would have been if they'd arrived ten minutes earlier.

Anyway, to wrap this one up, we won, they lost, the contraband was confiscated and this particular entrepreneurial group weren't allowed back onto the airfield again.

CPL TERRY TE HIKO

MECHANIC: THE SMALL THINGS IN MOGADISHU

The one day a week that everyone let their let their hair down more often than not, tended to be a Sunday, but unfortunately from time to time the six day week turned into a seven day week. Due to someone forgetting to let Aideed's followers know, that was the day of rest.

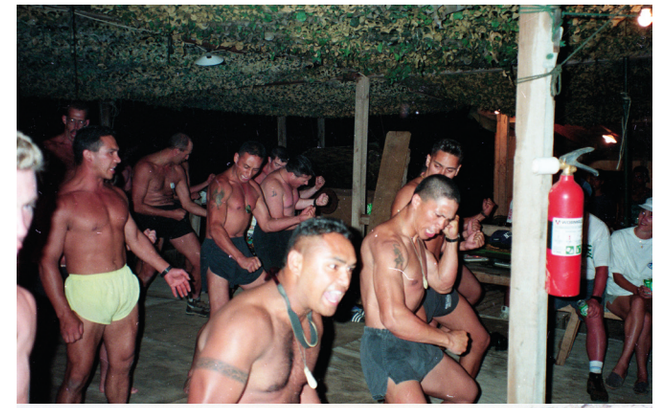
Kiwi's being Kiwis are renowned for their ingenuity and resourcefulness in times of need, and the Somali contingents proved to live up to this reputation in a number of ways, from blocking up water bladder leaks with paper, to acquiring air force pallets for roofing of bunkers and walkways.

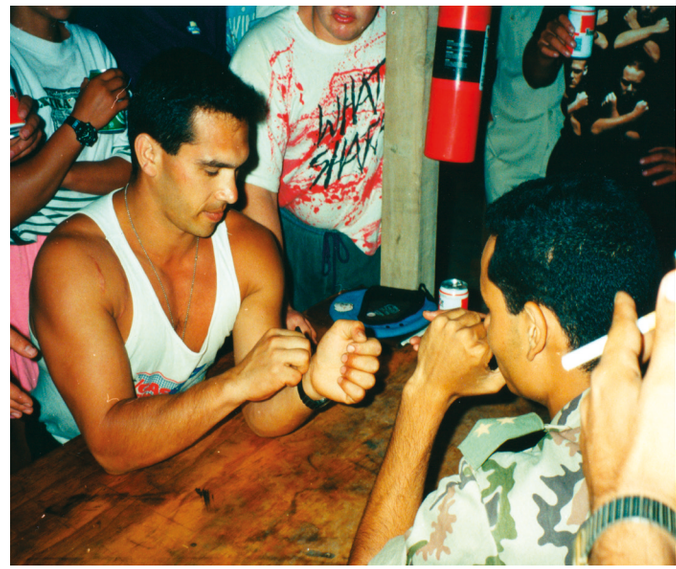
One of the many things associated with being a Kiwi, is not only the haka but also the infamous hangi. As anyone will know who has put down a hangi, one of the essential characteristics you need is to have a good seal when putting the dirt on top of the soaked sheets over the food and white hot stones. Unfortunately sand doesn't seal steam in to well, so the wheel had to be reinvented. We had to come up with an alternative way of putting down a hangi.

You got it a hangi drum. I'm sure everybody thought that the keg hangi's were first on the scene but I think the 210 litre drums may have marginally beaten them. Unfortunately I can't take the credit for this as someone in the first contingent came up with the idea, probably Mike Te Hau. Bloody genius if you ask me. Although the distinct taste of the charred wood flavouring wasn't present, it still provided a great substitute, not only for us but also for many of our guests.

There are so many memorable moments of the time in Somalia that it is easy to talk about the feeling of anxiety during the moments of being under attack or to talk about the near misses, which I'm sure if you asked anyone they will only be too happy to share their memories about. I felt that it was the small things that made this time special and memorable for example, electrocuting Phil Kenyon when I thought he said "Turn the power on" when he said "turn if OFF", easy mistake since they sound similar. To swimming in one of the most amazing local beaches, which was only a couple of minutes' walk away, which just so happened to be shark infested, a minor technicality.

It's the small things which made the time more enjoyable and memorable from the hangi's put together by Steve and Dino, or the burning of the toilet drums, to the PT sessions down at the beach with the Blackhawk and Cobra choppers flying overhead, which all add to the atmosphere and unforgettable memories.





PTE BILLY ELLERY

THE SPIDER

How I remember the big as spider.

The couch in front of the TV at Taniwha Hill had a spider the same size as a cow come out from the end of it one day. I can't remember who had the courage to approach the spider, but never the less a spray can of Mortein's best was directed at the spider. All it did was make it angry and flair up. After a while, it slowed down a bit and fled under the other couch in our recreation tent.

No one ever saw the spider dead and no one ever looked or sat on the couch again… except a couple of unsuspecting American soldiers. Being the good people that we are, we chose to observe that cough and what was going to happen if the spider re-emerged.

Every now and then, one of us looked at the other with a look that could only say "you tell them" followed by another look that said "I know bro, but lets just see what will happen". Giggles all round. Funny times.

THE MONKEY

My monkeys name was Jeremiah, like the bull frog. He was a quirky one that I saved from a building he was tied to by some UAE fatties. He lived with us or a brief time and was fun to have but, ultimately, he had to go. I asked a Somali to find some other monkey's and release him back to the wild. I believe that was what was done and it cost me about $50. The reality is he was probably eaten, re sold at best. It turns out monkeys are very tribal animals and they would have beaten him to death as he wasn't part of their gang. Poor monkey.

LCPL DEAN GROVES

LIGHT AMONGST THE SHADE

My time in Somalia is still to this day, the most rewarding period of my 23 year military career.

The day before I left NZ, I visited my father to say "cherry-o". As I was about to jump into my car and leave we shook hands and hugged and as we did that I noticed he was tearing up, which I had never seen him do before. It took me by surprise…

I left NZ a fairly sheltered 23 year old and came back 6 months later with lot's of different experiences from in-theatre in Somalia and from the leave breaks in Kenya and one in London.

We arrived in Mogadishu in the afternoon of 6 July 1993, and waited on the North Ramp apron as our two RNZAF C130's were being uploaded, when all of a sudden two explosions were heard around the Northern end of the airport. I thought there must be a grenade range inside the airport, but no, we had been welcomed with mortars. The RNZAF certainly didn't stick around, can't blame them.

After every work day morning meeting CSM Vern Pomana would always say (without fail) "Have a nice day".

Digging holes for bunkers and filling a gazillion sand bags will be firmly etched in my memory banks, plus the many functions we hosted.

Having a satellite phone to call home was great, although the 6 minute weekly allocation per person was tight. I had to hang up on my dear grandmother the first time I called her as she began to tell me at length, about her pruning the roses. So, I hung up on her. Sorry Nanna, I just couldn't spare you all that precious phone time. Arrgghh!

You couldn't have chosen a better location for a camp than at Taniwha Hill purched on a sand dune overlooking the Indian Ocean with a constant gentle sea breeze blowing through. So, a big thanks to the founders of the Hill.

The area did look like a restaurant or could have been mistaken for a canteen? In saying that, I clearly remember the day a HUMVEE full of Kuwaiti's turned up requesting some food. Steve Arnold (our chef) said "No, we are a New Zealand Camp". One of the Kuwaiti guy then said "I have gun… cook food" Oh, this is awkward.

I was invited to the Italian Air Force camp for dinner one evening. During the dinner, the sound of gun fire could be heard from across the runway, traced streamed through the air. Immediately, all Italians present leapt to their feet, grabbed and cocked their weapons and fired randomly across the runway at buildings outside the airfield – it was a Wild West shoot out. I'm sure the US 101st Airborne who operated the helicopters didn't appreciate all the friendly force bullets whizzing over their machines and tent lines. The pistol firers would have been legends if they had hit their target 500 metres away?

One Sunday morning on the hill, a 'pop' sound was heard from the Italian water purifying detachment lines across the road. Suddenly, an Italian conscript franticly ran out of a tent hold his face in distress. He ran across the road up into Taniwha hill to the kitchen area. A small crowd of us gathered around him to see what was up. It looked like he had a burnt face. He ran over to our wash tub sink and turned on the tap. Unfortunately, the water was fairly warm from being in the sun exposed hose. This didn't achieve the desired result for the poor soul, so he ran off again yelling...

The CSM said to me the night before I went on leave for the first time. "So, Grover, you realize you are the only white fella going with Ray, Clem, Moses and Wardy". "Yes", I said rather perplexed. He then said "Well, you are the light amongst the shade… look after yourselves".

Who can forget October 3 and 4. I can honestly say it was a scary night, even when we knew we weren't involved in the battle itself. The Ranger Black Hawks and little bird helicopters would refuel and rearm at their FARP (a replen) established by the beach. After the replen, they would fly back into action and test fire their mini-guns as they flew past our camp off the coast. This happened all night, making for broken sleep as you jumped out of your skin each time this occurred – I did anyway. The next day after the battle, some US Mortuary staff drove by and asked us if we had any ice to help with the repatriation of all the deceased. We gave them everything we had.

A couple of days later, my pal Victor from the Rangers

visited the hill, he was a broken man. We sat down around the rec tent and heard his harrowing accounts of what happened that night over a beer, which he really needed. The OC (Steve) told me to go and grab the NZ flag from the flag pole. When Steve handed it over, Victor was obviously very emotional. I believe our flag is still on display in the Delta Hall of Fame in Fort Bragg, NC.

Moses and Wardy carried a half drum of toilet waste along the path on the hill, to be emptied outside the camp. Unfortunately, one of Wardy's jandals slipped, causing a motion wave in the drum resulting in some of the waste going onto Wardy's leg. All bye standers laughed as you would. I think Wardy showered for an hour afterwards…lol

I opened a box addressed to the NZ Supply Platoon thinking it was either a stores or Xmas goodies contingent. Halfway through inspection, I picked out a handful of envelopes and cards addressed to Sheila… I had opened a unit welfare parcel for Captain Sheila Black. Oh bugger, there was no where to run, nowhere to hide.

BULLET POINT FLASH BACKS:

- Steve and Deano's tent coming unlaced down the centre on the first night in country during a good down pour of rain.
- Trying to adjust to the heat.
- Our insufficient personal protection equipment – a far cry from today's soldiers PPE. A bullet versus a fragmentation jacket (left) was a bit of a joke.
- Reassuring to know soft skinned vehicles would be okay versus AK47s and RPGs?
- Haka's needed to be performed early in the evening when we were at our best.
- Steve Arnold tried to brew wine…
- The Somali rubbish men eating our hexi tablets out of the rubbish bags.
- The stand-to SOP during attacks on the airport - grab a tray of refreshments on the way to the bunker – if time permitted.
- Steve, Deano, Terry and Phil scored a huge aircraft wheel, getting it up and onto Taniwha Hill was a feat in itself.
- Need more SATphone time… 6 minutes isn't enough. Grrrrrrr.
- Our food was top class – we were very lucky in this regard and had great chefs!
- I couldn't get any tea towels for Deano Walker – sorry champ.
- Getting busted (I think twice?) as the duty per for raising the NZ ensign up around midnight, so I could stay up late and sleep-in the next morning.
- Chas stalking through the position (Taniwha Hill) with NVG looking for Billy.
- Standing on the Candy House balcony watching tracer streaming across the night sky. "Who's getting hammered tonight?" was asked. "Umm, the airport where we live" someone said.
- All of the 21st birthday celebrations were special and great fun.
- The Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) moved in with us on Taniwha Hill, the first person I met was Gary Wilson who had a badly infected shoulder from one of his jabs.
- The atmosphere improved that much more with the Aussies around.
- Ray, on our short flight to Mombasa for leave walking with shirt off up the aisle.
- The Reef Hotel, Nova House, Florida's, Momba Village, Hard Rock Café and Toys.
- Forgetting your room number whilst on leave when ordering on tab at the hotel.
- The Kenyan handshake.
- The Candy guys (Mark, Stuart and Mike), plus Neil Rhys-Evans.

- Karl Brown – enough said.
- Wardy and Moses leaping for their lives as a dead spider shell was put on their legs in Nova House in Mombasa.
- The white line painted on the hills footpath, so “Horse” Anderson could stay on track when walking to his tent at night.
- I missed the contingent medals parade, so receiving my gong later at Taniwha Hill with a hand shake from Charlie Lott (SNO) and a can of beer was tops.
- Andy Canton and Neil wearing white hoods to one of our functions (Silly Hat Night) attended by several unimpressed African American soldiers.
- The phantom egg thrower.
- No photo’s of the Ranger ‘Little Bird’ helicopters – Umm, okay. Click click click.
- Chaz going for his Sunday morning “Strolls in the Dish” pack walks with his number 2 Clint.
- Tiger sharks kill 4 people on our trip (2 Americans and 2 Russian pilots?).
- Wayne Peters must have drunk Coca Cola dry in 1993.
- The showers weren’t unisex. Come on Maam! Lol
- Over a few days, the power on the hill kept cutting out for no apparent reason. Upon investigation, it was learned that one of the ATC girls had a hair drier.
- The bunker sign that caused two bright red faces.
- Boxing Day or was it New Years Day at the beach? someone had to “defuse the situation”... (Sorry, you had to be there, it was a classic).
- Moses – the world’s loudest clapper. Sheila said on Xmas Day “Keep the noise down Moses!”
- Shark net established at the beach, unfortunately one harmless whale shark got tangled up and was put down by the Aussie shark net guys.
- On New Years Eve, one of the wooden Baywatch towers established at the beach was toppled over into the bonfire. Also, on the stroke of midnight, a group of American and Italian soldiers emptying their magazines into the ocean. The OC wasn’t impressed.
- A perimeter wall explosion at the seaport.
- The 155mm Howitzer Battery (pictured over the page) fire mission one night. The rounds were shooting over Taniwha Hill. Impressive.
- The electric slide dance shown to us by the American soldiers.
- Cpl’s to SNCO’s Mess function in the wooden hut.
- Losing Ray in London for a while the night before we were due to return to Nairobi.
- Ray, Thomo and I going to the Embassy with our American buddies for a basketball tournament. We were stranded there due to a fatal IED strike on an American MP HUMVEE.
- Freight contract changes to DHL, we couldn’t send cheap spirits home or receive Kiwi’s beers in the post. Nice one.
- Don’t worry about the SATphone log book… its going into the ocean before RTNZ.
- Mogadishu – a good comparison to the Wild West.
- On the return trip to NZ, Billy Ellery goes missing whilst in transit at RAAF Darwin. He beats our herc ride home, but doesn’t beat the AFDA. Mate!
- Post deployment brief. The officer who debriefed us was literally telling us all off for raising UN pay inconsistencies, a phone time allowance increase, medalic recognition issues, etc. Hmm, nice one, plus he had more medals than Field Marshall Montgomery!
- Coming home was a big anti-climax. All I wanted to do on leave was get back with the boys. I kept thinking about Somalia all the time for the first year.
- Kimi’s 21st party back in Chch was cool and served as an early reunion.

Thanks for an action packed 6 months.

LT SEAN STEWART

MEMORIES OF THE MOG

Looking back 20 years to our time in Mogadishu, I have plenty of fond memories. It was the absolute highlight of the seven years I spent as a Regular Force officer. These days, I have a family and work in supply chain for a multi-national pharmaceutical company. Things are certainly a lot quieter these days and an exciting, slightly dangerous day at the office occurs only when I spill coffee on myself. All my 'good work stories' are from back in 1993. Back then, I was a Lieutenant in my mid 20's and eager for action so a lot of what I remember from those days relates to the major actions we witnessed and experienced in the four months of July to October 1993. Things for our contingent certainly settled down on the action front after Blackhawk down in October 1993.

I was fortunately to be part of the advance party on UNOSOM 2 and accompanied WO2 Vern Pomana and Maj Steve Wagner on the flights into Africa. Leaving Auckland Airport at the beginning of July my mother was in tears but I have a photo of myself waving goodbye with a massive grin from ear to ear. I couldn't contain myself, the adventure was about to begin. We stopped in Harare, Zimbabwe for a night and Nairobi, Kenya on the way up to Somalia. The upside on commercial air travel was that we'd missed out on a long, noisey flight across on the Airforce C130 Hercules and the airlines served cold beers. The downside was that we were exposed to dodgy African commercial aircraft for our internal flights that were probably more dangerous than spending the next six months in a war zone. I don't recall much about being in the advance party only that the beer was cold and getting to Taniwha Hill that first night. We were well received by Tim Howard and the boys who seemed quite happy that relief had arrived and they were heading back to the real world after six months in Mogadishu. The lads had done a superb job of setting up the camp with great examples of kiwi ingenuity on display everywhere you looked. That first night we arrived just after dinner time a Somali sniper engaged Pak Bat probably two hundred metres to our north. Pak Bat responded soon after with the old trustee 106mm recoilless rifle after firing one or two spotter rounds they let rip with at least three anti-tank rounds. Pretty impressive watching theme fire across the runway into the sniper position and that seemed to quieten things down. The following morning we could see the remnants at least two rounds hitting the buildings wall where the sniper had been firing from. There was to be no shortage of action going forward.

One morning in July, a couple of weeks after we arrived, Brilly who'd been having a cup of tea out the front of Kiwi Warehouse told us to come outside to see the Cobras hovering overhead. Virtually straight above our warehouse entrance hovering a couple of hundred feet above us were US Cobra attack helicopters with a Kiowa spotter helicopter sitting above and behind them. A few seconds later they unleashed tow wire guided anti-tank rounds into targets in the city. We went up to the position that evening and were able to watch this take play again on CNN where they explained that the rockets had been unleashed on a meeting of senior clan members of the enemy. The rockets had been fired through selected windows of the building, guided by the laser from the Kiowa. Shortly afterward Delta and Ranger forces roped in to clear the building.

A couple of nights after the Cobra attack we received a major harassment attack on the Airport. I've got an accurate account of this from old letters I wrote home at the time. Mid July 93 - around 9pm I was walking through the position when we took a single mortar round just below our position. The loud crack of high explosive in close vicinity was a sound we'd become very familiar

with. I remember yelling “Stand to” and as I ran to my tent to get my rifle, flak jacket and helmet I remember thinking maybe I’d over-reacted it had only been a single mortar round. Just as I was thinking that heavy machine gun fire broke out from down in the vicinity of the Malaysian mechanised battalion just to our front. Our boss Steve Wagner was down in Kenya for a couple of days on business, so I headed for our main sangar that acted as our command post (it overlooked most of the airport area).

By the time I got to the sangar, there was a lot of automatic fire in close vicinity, rounds were zinging overhead. One of the infantry boys was on sentry at the sangar (sorry mate you know who you were) and we had a quick exchange, it wasn’t clear to us whether Somali’s had infiltrated the airport position and whether the automatic fire close by was all friendly or enemy. Certainly the rounds flying overhead and RPGs spiralling in towards us with their tracer tails were enemy. The sentry told me he’d also seen a dark figure creeping along, keeping low just a few metres to our left. Through the night scope the sentry confirmed that the figure was now lying next to the front perimeter of our wire about 10 metres away. We had to identify this as friendly or enemy and we’d had intel that Somali’s were expected to embark on suicide missions on our positions. We couldn’t identify and challenge this guy from the limited vision position we had from the sangar so it was decided that I’d go out and challenge him. I cocked my Steyr as I left the rear entrance of the sangar and flipped the safety off and made my way over towards where we thought the figure was keeping a low profile. It was pitch black and I couldn’t see a thing apart from the top of our wire and tracer overhead. Years prior as an officer cadet on an exercise at night in the bush of Kaitaia, I’d challenged an enemy probe on our sentry post who had responded with the wrong password then opened up at me with automatic fire. Funny how a training incident like that came straight back to me in the thick of the action that night. There was no communicated challenge procedure between contingents or passwords in orders, so I had to think of another way of challenging this potential intruder who appeared to be trying to get through our wire.

I got down on one knee to keep my profile low and once I thought I was within voice range considering the strong cross wind and yelled out “Identify yourself!”. There was an eerie silence in return. This made me feel rather uneasy keeping in mind my training experience of being unloaded on. So I got down onto my belly and flipped the safety to full-auto with my finger on the trigger I again challenged “Identify yourself!”. To my great relief back came the reply in an American accent “Sgt 1st class such and such Quartermasters Section”. It was like someone had released a pressure valve. I remember shouting back “you’re alright mate!” and leaving the guy there to ride out the storm while I made my way back to the strong post. I could only think how close I’d come to giving this a guy a burst on full auto. To this day he’ll never know how close he came. As I headed back into the sangar the barrage had intensified and at times we ducked our heads down for fear of taking a round in the face.

The exchanges of tracer criss-crossing back and forth were impressive along with the thud of mortars and RPGs landing with 50 calibre machine guns thumping away into the night air. It was like a massive Guy Fawkes display. The Malaysian’s in the vicinity of the Kiwi Warehouse seemed to be taking a real pounding, I watched as at least four RPG rounds landed right in the middle of their position. The RPG rounds could be seen coming in like larger than normal tracer rounds and often sparking just before they detonated, which meant they were either bouncing along the airfield tarmac or hitting tarps and tents prior to exploding.

There was no point in returning fire from our position as the range was about 800 to 900 metres where the enemy were engaging us with direct fire from the perimeter. It was a very low trajectory with many friendlies to our front including the Egyptian sentry towers dotted along the perimeter on about the same line as the enemy firing positions. So to engage enemy targets you risked taking out the Egyptian sentry towers in the process. None of this logic seemed to dawn on our Malaysian mates who were in rapid fire mode with the 50 calibre machine guns mounted on the tops of their armoured personnel carriers. The fact that no Eygptians were killed in the process or their sentry towers cut down by 50 calibre fire was a sheer miracle of Allah. The fact that no friendlies were reported killed during this heavy exchange which lasted about 20 minutes was also a miracle.

The next morning we had an hours delay in opening up the Kiwi Warehouse while the bomb disposal guys removed an unexploded mortar lying a few meters from our warehouse and an unexploded RPG was removed from just across the road lying amongst the large Mi 26 Russian helicopters. It was again a bit like Guy Fawkes when you see all the expended sky rockets littering the lawn the next morning. We had a brief chat to the Malaysians and they told us of a few close calls and some rapid undie changing.

This major attack in mid-July really was to set the scene

for the next four months we'd come under virtually nightly attacks from mortars, rockets and small arms fire with the occasional threat of artillery which was probably the scariest proposition of all. It really all started very gentlemanly as many of us discussed the nightly routine. Generally, not a lot of activity during the day, come home from working our day jobs, have a meal and orders group around 7pm. Pretty much from 7pm to 9pm was the allotted time for attacks. Sometime around then usually around 8pm we'd take a few mortar rounds, stand to while watching a bit of tracer go back and forth, stand down and hit the sack.

This routine went on for some weeks and seemed reasonably convenient to all parties. Then on 24 August at 10.50pm the bad guys decided to change the routine. I remember being shunted out of bed (two warehouse pallets with a mattress on top and mossie net surround) and onto the floor of my tent with mortar rounds incoming no more than a couple of hundred metres away. Pulling on my gear lying on my back on the floor of my tent I scrambled across the open ground towards our new sanger out on the left hand flank of the position. It was a good 30 to 40 metre dash across open ground and there were at least five shell scrapes between me and my sangar, in other words three foot deep pits with four rusty steel stakes protruding from each. As I got half way across there were two flashes in quick succession and the accompanying loud explosions impacting a couple of hundred metres to my front then not long afterwards a high pitched 'twang' straight past my head as a big bit of Russian shrapnel headed on by. A 3rd and then a 4th round hit and they seemed to be stepping in closer, at that point I hit the deck and got a face full of sand. I managed to crawl into a nearby shell scrape and lay in the bottom of it thinking how good it was to have made it there. Then my mind wandered back to a few weeks earlier the Malaysians had reported receiving some kind of airburst, so I jump out and ran the remaining metres to the Sangar.

The night of the Black Hawk down incident I remember sitting up on the sand dune outside my tent with others watching the events unfold, but not knowing what was going on. Smoking large cigars brought through the American PX kept me awake into the early hours and I recall watching the Rangers 'Little Birds" occasionally

strafing the tops of buildings. It was an unusual sight to see the darkness of the night interrupted with long bursts of tracer coming from mid-air angling down into the streets of Mogadishu. There was no immediate communication between contingents at the Airport so there was no way of knowing what was going on. When we found out the next day what had gone on and that the Rangers had been scrambling everyone including their cooks and clerks to get out on the rescue mission I remember feeling absolutely gutted that we had not been given the chance to assist or be involved. One of the main issues the guys on the rescue mission faced is they had no armoured vehicles to assist in the extraction. The next day we were over at the north apron and watched as Bradley APC's and Abram tanks rolled off the back of C5 Galaxy transport aircraft. The American's didn't muck about when it came to positioning what they needed in less than 24 hours. That morning, I was catching a flight up to the old US Embassy compound and had hitched a ride on a CIA chopper with the Airfield Commander a good bloke who had a strong Texan drawl. As we waited clearance for take-off a big old C5 Galaxy came rumbling down the runway having a hard time stopping in a hurry. The Airfield Commander leaned across to me and said "see that there C5, its got some big killing machines on it". I was glad we had the US forces on our side.

One night just after stand-down some of us witnessed what we thought was a para-flare going up on the south eastern side of the city. It was unusual as it appeared to travel across the prevailing wind rather than with it. We discovered in the morning that it had been a Blackhawk that had gone out to intercept the Somali mortar unit that had just unloaded on the airport. An RPG had hit the Blackhawk piercing the fuel tank taking the door gunners leg in the process. The 'flare' we'd seen had been the Blackhawk igniting and making a desperate bid to crash land at or close to the safe haven of the Sea Port. They'd fallen just short, crashing in a street not far from the Port. Fortunately, a ready reaction team based at the port had managed to secure the crash scene within minutes and conduct a fighting withdrawal back to the Port, reportedly with all crew accounted for.

One last little story probably worthy of mention saw us returning from a day of work probably a weekend and relaxing down at the Taniwha Hill bar with a beer late afternoon. A few of us were standing around a bar leaner looking out on our sea view across the Indian ocean when a mortar round flew about 50 metres overhead and landed just on the outside of the bank leading down to the water. The echo from the sea wall from high explosive igniting no more than 50 metres away was impressive.

We all raced out off the deck and into the nearby bunker. Within seconds were sitting side by side in the bottom of that bunker and not a drop of beer had been spilt. It was a nice way to finish off that well deserved beer with a few laughs.

There were a heap of stories like this that the UNOSOM 2 team can tell and I'm sure the other contingents as well. The incredible thing is we all made it out of there alive with a few good stories to tell, great memories of camaraderie, team spirit and mates for life.

PTE CLINT GRANT

AN INFANTRYMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Being part of the first New Zealand Infantry section deployed on an oversea's mission since Vietnam was a huge highlight in my career, but it was not an easy deployment to get onto or be part of.

I was employed as part of 2 Section, 4 Platoon, Victor Company, 1RNZIR along with Chas Dewes, Kerry Anderson, Shane Carberry and Alley Langridge.

Our section was choosen as we had won the 1st Battalion Skill at Arms in 1993. Many of us that won that Skill at Arms were ousted from the deployment by the strong competition that inevitably came forward when word of an overseas deployment got out. So, "V" Vasuveraki was replaced by Boycey as our Section 2IC, Shears was replaced by Mush and Roscoe; our then section commander was replaced by "Guts" Greer. At first, these changes took a little adjusting to get used to as the "new" guys came with their own mannerisms, but we soon jelled into a different, but still well-oiled section of infantry killers, ready for the deployment.

PDT was an interesting time, assisting with training the loggies where and when asked was interesting and for a young fella like I was at the time; it was an experience in itself.

I remember quite vividly getting a swift butt kicking when I didn't properly brace Kimi Tuari on Parsons Range during a C9 shoot. The result was about a 20 round burst of fire with the fall of shot starting 5 metres in front of her, travelling all the way through the target and up between the baffles on the 50 metre mound, how many of those rounds actually left the range template I have no idea, but I felt the wrath of the then Sgt Nelson for not doing my job properly.

37 Hours in a Hercules is about all I will say regarding the trip to Mogadishu, the rest is a hummmmmmmmm of boredom broken up by the haze of night out in Perth and then Diego Garcia.

The majority of the deployment its fair to say was not what we as an infantry section had bargained on.

Night 4 of our rotation saw the largest complex attack that the skinnies launched on the airfield during our entire deployment with indirect fire as well as small arms of just about every calibre being fired into the airfield. As I was the section gunner at the time I was pulled up onto the hill with the CSM (Vern Pomana) to man Taniwha Hills Sanger, which overlooked the rest of the airfield.

What a wake up that was for me, seeing RPG rounds arcing across the horizon along with the ping of small arms ammunition bouncing off the wire to my left and right and then looking up the hill to see the "Meer cats" all sitting up in their shellscrapes watching the show, I had to laugh and the name "Meer cats" stuck for the remainder of the deployment.

The other thing I remember from that particular attack was Shane Grey and Dave Pullen rolling out of their tent trying to get their PPE on, there was a shower of kit flying off each of them and a number of expletives being used, needless to say those of us watching were in stitches watching the show.

The first month or 2 saw the infantry section escorting between the airport and seaport which at the time involved a short drive through the city towards Bekara Market. This was what we were taken to Mogadishu for in support of our loggie brothers and sisters and we loved doing it as it was a stone cold infantry task. We sandbagged the floors of the van and Hilux vehicles we were using due to the mine threat but we were directed to remove them not long after. To the infantryman, this was a kick in the guts as we were doing only what we were sent there to do, protecting the rest of the team! I remember Guts getting a little frustrated that he was not being listened to when he tried to do things such as sandbagging the vehicles, but he soon learnt the meaning of that now well known saying "Hakuna Matata" and just went with the flow.

I think it was about the end of the second month (maybe the third month?) after we had arrived when the 2 kilometre long "back road" between the airport and seaport which had been under construction by the Indian engineers had finished. This made the dangerous trip into the city to transit between the two secure locations safer which we used. This of course made our role as an infantry security section next to void as the "back road" was supposedly secure. This started the next chapter in the sections Genesis, We became loggies!

We were sent to work within the rations section at the seaport for the remainder of the deployment much to Gut's disgust, but as infantrymen are fairly bright fella's (as you are all no doubt aware) we excelled in the rations section and became the best at what we were asked to do often showing up the logisticians at their own game (Yeah right, I can hear you saying but you've gotta admit that we weren't too bad for "Grunts" were we?).

Not only did we do well there but we were often tasked to "help" with a number of other jobs. Kerry Anderson for example became an accomplished cook and would often help Steve behind the stoves and on occasion run the whole kitchen when our cook friends wanted a break or the odd day off.

Other stories that spring to mind was the 120mm mortar that landed about 10 metres from Kerry Andersons tent whilst he was asleep in it, man were we lucky those dumb skinnies forgot to pull the pin otherwise we wouldn't have our mate Kerry here now (almost certainly along with a number of us who were in the rec tent having a couple of drinks that night).

Then there was the failed Molotov cocktail that was thrown onto the bonnet of our Hilux on a return trip from the candy house. Chas swears to this day that he could've dropped that old lady that threw it at us but as I sped up and fishtailed around the corner (almost throwing Ray who was in a happy state on the rear deck of the wagon out onto the street) he missed the opportunity.

Then there was the time Ray rolled down the hill and bumped into the shower block. What's so great about that you ask? He was asleep the whole time and we were still able to put him back on his stretcher and take him to the rec tent where he dreamt the night away while we partied. We took him back to his tent at the end of the night and the only thing that gave it away in the morning was the Moko that Tweekie had drawn on his face in vivid marker.

The midnight clearance of a Candy Logistic's AK-74 while waiting on the Hyster for the Candymen to unload a ship also comes to mind, there were some nervous moments following that (aye lads!).

Then there was the time we watched a Russian fella pull up to the beach for a swim. Whilst he took a dip a member of our contingent who shall remain anonymous knocked over the toilet in the sand dunes with the Russians borrowed UN wagon. The vehicle was left there next to the downed toilet while the unnamed per returned to our vantage point to watch the puzzled Russian return to his wagon. That same person a month earlier had helped Tony Thompson "defuse the situation" by getting ride of an object, man those were some unforgettable moments.

All in all it was an experience of a lifetime and I look back on it now with fond memories.

Not only did I come back from that deployment with a whole heap of operational experiences to draw on but a whole heap of new friends…Oh, I also found myself a lady who became my wife another 20 odd months after returning, but that's a whole other story.

SSGT CANTON AND SGT KEARNS

DEATH VALLEY, FADING MEMORIES.

The Herc's that brought us over came in low over the sea just before touching down in Mogadishu, they didn't hang around , they kicked us out and were gone (Possibly due to the welcoming mortar rounds that landed very close by). They didn't even bother to shut down the engines, told us to get out and were gone.

With the traditional Somali welcome over (The mortar rounds), we came out from behind some ATCCO pre-fab huts and headed up to the position. It seemed like ages before we got the all clear to actually come out of cover. Funny that, we didn't get any SOPs on what to do if you get incoming mortars while deplaning.

Up at Taniwha Hill it was quickly recognised that we needed more accommodation for our larger contingent, the birth of Death Valley was near. The name came about due to the fact that we were one of the few tents on the forward slope but in a little natural depression. Throughout the six months continuous improvements occurred right up until a few weeks prior to departure. We started with a part 14 x 14 tent (Found in Grover's Q store but not previously used as poles were missing) and ended up with a 14x14 tent complete with a hand made14x14 awning extension. This awning served as an excellent meeting place (Beer garden).

As building materials were not in abundance and we couldn't just rip down to the local ITM or Mitre 10 to pick up some supplies we became very adept at 'acquiring' things. Many a night Brown Thunder (Toyota LandCruiser) was used for a recce/acquiring mission. Wiring our area was sorted, not that it would have passed any NZ Regs. And we had had electricity for lighting (Complete with 2 way switches), our cold drinks (beer) fridge, bedside fans and the stereo. Chairs and a coffee table were made using the issued army pruning saw, recycling old bent nails and grabbing freight boxes as they came into the warehouse.

I remember one day Andy coming in with a huge grin saying that he'd heard the sound of a skillsaw and was off to find out who owned it. Turned out that it belonged to the Malaysians. Andy managed to loan this off them. At first they were reluctant and send an operator with it, but after the Malay engineers' first exhibition of using the saw like a plunge router (Scary stuff) Andy managed to talk them out of sending 'the helper'. The fools as I remember Andy just about burnt the motor out with all the work he put it through.

Due to OC not liking the thought of walking/running under the Death Valley sign (complete with hangman's noose) to get to his stand- to position, we were strongly encouraged by the Platoon Lt (Sean Stewart) to change the name. So after some serious thought (A few beers), the sign was changed to Delta Victor. I don't know why Sean and Steve thought that we (Andy and I) were smart arses…We had changed the sign as requested. Just because the new sign started with the same initials and had the same amount of letters…that was sheer coincidence! We just though it was now very apt in that we used the phonetic NATO alphabet.

We tried hard to get hold of a cow's skull complete with horns for our entry way but the locals never found one for us. Pity about that. However the building of the Death Valley Triangle (Possible future bar) I think made up for it. We managed to have 1 or 2 drinks there before returning to NZ.

Many a night was spent in Death Valley sorting out the

world's problems, but what could you expect from Mr Diplomat #1 (Andy), #2 (Neil), #3 (Irvs) and The Provider of Small Talk (Brilly). With the acquisition of a small fridge (Engle box), complements of the Aussie Movers we became quite a social area for Stores Sect members with a slight ANZAC flavour with the presence of the Aussie

Movers and Air Traffic Controllers who frequented the place. Not to mention the RAAF Group Capt or whatever rank he was (We just called him Clarey after he had his 1st half dozen!). I still wonder who got the film in his camera developed after the night he visited Death Valley. We shall never divulge whose privates were on that film.

There was one night when everyone had one too many and decided to pogo on top of the bunker nest to our tent. Then Brilly had had to take it further and pulled out a load hailer and proceeded to do his best imitation of the 'calling to prayers' that the Malays use to belt over their PA system. Very PC…Not!

The end of Death Valley came with the rotation and the incoming OC. The incoming CSM (Frog Fearon) decided to put the incoming OC (Simon Tregear) into OUR Death Valley and not into the accommodation of the out-going OC (Steve Wagner). Andy was very upset (Read: Very pissed off) with the fact that after six months of hard work developing the area for the next SNCOs to move into, the place had been given away to the new OC. Frogs reasoning was that it was tactically a superior position…Andy and I thought it was more along the lines of Frog getting dirty knees with the new OC (Read into that as you wish).

So to balance the equation we gave away much of the stuff we had made/accumulated over the six months. Strange how not more than 24 hours after we began 'donating' our hard earned stuff, that an order was given that we were not to remove anything from our accommodation areas. What's that about shutting the gate after the horse has bolted?

Yep, we had some good times and some bloody hard yakka times in The Mog. But I believe the good outweighed the bad. All the people and organisations we met, be it the annoying Pakistani Battalion staff that came into the warehouse or the very helpful 'Froggy' from the French PX, they all had a tale to tell and ended up as good friends.

Clearing out UN Containers in the 50 degree heat, seeing Sean deal with thieving Somali truck drivers and watching the 2 German dogs chase off the skinnies… good memories that will never be forgotten.

Andy Canton Mr Diplomat # 1

Neil Kearns Mr Diplomat # 2

PTE DARRYN IRVING

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

It started with a bang, literally a loud bang. As we unloaded the C130 on day one, we were welcomed by the sounds of mortar fire and small arms. It had been drummed into us that our Army was reputable and professional. That myth was quickly dispelled when we were ordered onto the back of an old truck that definitely didn't have a WOF. This was used to transport us to the Kiwi camp aptly named Taniwha Hill. All of this was done in full view of soldiers from other nations who were sporting real combat gear and better Kevlar. The shortcomings in our gear would continue to be a contentious issue during the Somalia mission and for many years after.

Bang also went my opinion of the senior management back home who clearly had no idea what Mogadishu was really about. In December 1992, a senior Officer was quoted in a local newspaper as saying "Our guys are going into a relatively safe environment". The premise that Somalia was reasonably secure was not factual as the fighting in the capital intensified from the moment our rotation landed.

In the most part, I found the local people to be approachable, but there was always a sense that they were holding something back. My impression was that they were quite willing and capable of doing whatever it took to get what they wanted or needed. If that meant shooting you, so be it. Life was cheap on the Horn of Africa and to this day, rightly or wrongly I still have trouble trusting Somalis.

Taniwha Hill was home for the next six months, no complaints there as the previous rotation had done a sterling job getting the place set-up. As our rotation was double the size of the previous group we did spend a lot of our "free time" building on the excellent foundation that had been prepared. After the attacks in July 1993 however, further defensive emplacements were built including bunkers to shelter personnel from the ever present threat of mortar and heavy calibre fire. We also built double depth sandbags walls around each tent. The outdoor showers were replaced with an ISO container which added a little more privacy and some more washing machines were found to cope with extra laundry. To be honest the dirt and grit never really left your clothing but it was better than nothing.

UNDER SUSTAINED FIRE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Shell scraps are no good against mortar rounds I remember this being mentioned or screamed by one of my basic instructors; so why did we have them? As the first rounds came in I remember running to my pit, narrowing missing the pickets left by the previous tenants. These were way too long and I am still surprised that no one was injured on them during the attack. I also remember someone yelling "they're in the wire". As it transpired some American soldiers were crawling up the hill in front of our positions which prompted the furious cocking of weapons. Not exactly hoards of screaming militia. I remember the officers yelling at everyone to keep their heads down thus encouraging certain troops to pop up for a better view. This earned the ration section accommodation area the dubious nickname of Mercat Alley. I won't mention who or why but some video footage would have been useful for the reunion. I remember the noise, the arching green and red tracer and the rounds hitting the wire and our tents. One newspaper back home even mentioned that firing was only 500 meters from our positions (NZ Herald). They were correct, that's was where the militia were firing from, we just happened to be where they were firing to. Let's be clear on this fact a Russian Dushka is a heavy machine gun with an effective range of 2000m, its rounds make a distinctive sound when passing overhead.

DANGEROUS TIMES

One night a stray mortar round landed behind the stores section accommodation area directly behind the 'Dew Drop Inn'. It was less than 8 metres away and the tents were well within the damage radius of the blast. Luckily it had failed to detonate and was later identified as a Russian made 120mm mortar which has the same effect as a 105mm artillery round. The device was promptly tagged, sandbagged and blown out to sea the following day. Orders came down soon after to complete Defensive sandbagging as quickly as possible.

Snipers; we all knew where they liked to hide so we were instructed to wear our frag vests, helmets and to carry our personal weapon when moving between the Kiwi Warehouse and MovCon Alpha. I wasn't sure if management really expected us to believe that the local snipers could hit a fast moving target such as a RT forklift. The answer to that query was no but that didn't stop them from having a go. I remember one particular incident where I had to cross the open ground of the northern apron to do a job for the Aussies. On the way over there were a couple shots but on the way back my path had been anticipated and the guy really let rip I will never forget the cracking sound as the rounds flew past. The sniper had been a bit of a problem most of the afternoon and I wasn't the only target either. Finally a call was made to deal with the problem and a Marine Corps super cobra took out the position a short while later.

Maybe it was the location but not long after that the next attempt on my life took place. On that occasion I was behind MovCon Alpha, happily engaged in getting some "fresh air" when an RPG round passed between me and one of my colleagues. It came through at chest height then impacted the bank directly behind us. As before there was no loud bang and once again the militia had been supplied with high quality Russian made munitions. The thing about Somalia is that the country is full of immeasurable suffering but equally full of the most unbelievable amount of blind luck. That was the second time ordnance had landed close to me and not gone off.

HAPPENINGS IN THE WAREHOUSE

Whoa Hadley

It is amazing what triggers memories, for me it is certain smells, warm wind and group

singing. One day at the warehouse a rusted out but highly stylised wreck of a Mercedes truck arrived. The truck was crammed full of the usual general stores and probably missing its fair share too. The porters clambered up on the deck and started throwing bags, boxes and loose items all over the show until Alan Brill stepped in and declared "that the unloading must done with bit of decorum and less of the chaos". Instructions were given to form a line much to the outrage of the locals who were definitely not used to being assisted by the hired help. They had to be calmed down by Diplomat #3 before a riot ensued. Within moments of the line forming the truck was being unloaded at pace and soon after one of the local work chants started up. It turns out they know one of our famous cricketers; whoa Hadley. Not sure that they were the words exactly but it did the trick and when the kiwis began to sing it truckachicken[sic] gave us a khat fuelled smile; meaning we were close enough.

By the way, troops stop hitting the ball through the potentially asbestos covered roof.

In the greatest traditions of warehouses the world over, the stores section had managed to procure a cricket bat and ball to fill in the time between whoa Hadley, stores distribution and the weekly stock checks. A suitably sized crate became the wickets, creases marked and a short run-up length paced; definitely suiting the spinners. One bounce to the far walls was a four and on the full a six. Points were also awarded for grace, style and cup adjustment. This became the norm for the down time and during one intensive match several well-played shots had gone through the roof. At some point someone thought that a check of the suspiciously asbestos looking roof material might be a good idea. To this day I have trouble believing that the deteriorating roof was not a cause for concern however, all sweeping activity slowed; a sure sign that something was not right at the Basin.

PROTECT THE WAREHOUSE AT ALL COSTS

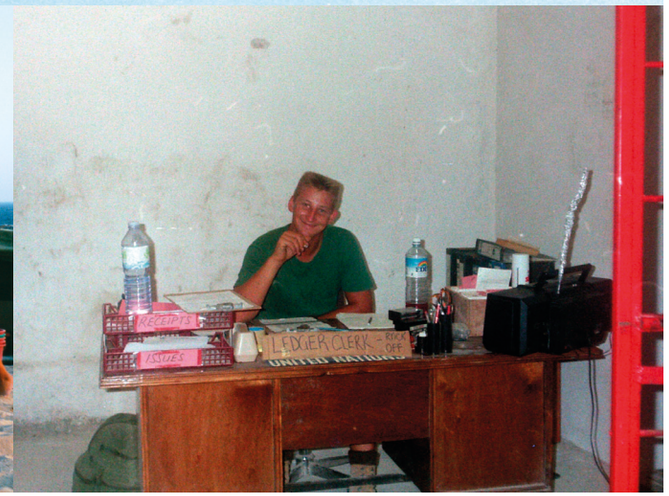
Security detail is the bane of every soldier's life and none more so when the task is to protect the store from roaming militia and foreign soldiers looking to better their lot. More of an annoyance was the driving skills of one of the stores staff that damaged the main door in the first place. This left a door that didn't quite close properly due to the damaged hinges. The solution was simple at last light close the door as best you could, park one of the RT's behind it (to stop ram raids obviously) and to tie the door to a forklift. Not a problem until we were told that everyone has to do a night of stag until the door is fixed. We complained to Diplomat #1 stating that repairs could take weeks if undertaken by local tradesman. The reply was typical of the boss who mentioned that it was not that much different from home and that we should all just toughen up. Even though we complained bitterly a promise of a decent night sleep was on offer. To get it all

what we had to do was get locked inside a shed that was well within range of small arms and mortar fire. As it turned out the local militia were not interested in obtaining cartons of 4ply toilet rolls or our prized pallet lifters, much to our relief. The morning after my shift I surmised that Mr Aideed's men could probably make more cash trading the computers and laser printers, left by the previous tenants. The cash in turn could fund the cost of munitions that actually went off when they hit the ground. This sparked yet another dumb idea best left buried in the past.

ENDNOTE

Twenty years on I still remember everyone from our tour and I always look back with smile. We have all gone our separate ways as time moved on but I will never forget just as others have chosen to forget. We were the first mission of any decent commitment and the one, in my opinion, that started it all. It was and always will be a defining moment in my life and I am proud to have served alongside you all.

To my tent buddy Lance Corporal Alan "Brilly" Brill, thanks for the fond memories, the copious amounts of laughter, beers and cigarettes. For allowing me to wreck our very uneven floor and replace it with a nice flat surface made of premium timber boards. To set the record straight these were obtained via a very legal and approved stores request. The naming of our space as the "Dew Drop Inn" was inspired genius. I am now and forever will be a Led Zeppelin fan but only at high volume from a cheap boom box which must come complete with flashing disco lights. And of course it must be sourced from a local black market stall at an equally dodgy Seaport. Whoop Plop Plop!



BON
VOYAGE
MARK

EMBASSY STAFF
LTCOL D.M.A. HAYNES

Notes on my time as New Zealand's Senior National Officer with the United Nations Operation in Somalia – April to October 1993

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

In early 1993, shortly after I had taken command of 1st Base Workshop, I was told by the Military Secretary (MS) that the United Nations had requested that New Zealand provide an RNZEME lieutenant colonel to serve on the force headquarters of the United Nations Operation in Somalia. MS told me that I was top of a short list of one. I was warned for overseas deployment.

Four of us were to join the UNOSOM Force Headquarters; myself, WO2 Haines and two RNZAF Clerks, Cpls Honeybone and Fenwick. We undertook pre-deployment training at Narrow Neck on the North Shore, close to HQ Land Force Command in Takapuna. I remember being taught mine clearing on a sports field, having a psychologist talk to us and our wives about the stresses to come and being shown the biggest

first aid kit I had ever seen. It came in an 81mm mortar round box. The medic doing the training proceeded to go through the contents and explain to us how to use the scabies cream and other delightful stuff. Then he came to a packet of three condoms. He held it up and said 'you all know what these are for', then put it down and started to go on to the next item. I put my hand up and said that I didn't know what they were for because if they were for the usual purpose then three condoms for six months didn't seem like nearly enough. On the other hand as a happily married man I didn't need any condoms and giving me three was a complete waste. I was given a very old fashioned look and we went on to talk about something else.

As I was to be the NZ Senior National Officer (SNO) I was given a special briefing at HQ Land Force Command. Brig Bestic told me that his biggest concern with NZ Sup Det, who were already there, was accounting for pay and allowances in theatre. It seemed that financial accounting was a bit of a mess and I had to sort it out.

After pre-deployment training we returned to our units to be issued with our kit, get medically prepared and await deployment. I was at 1 Base Wksp and, even with 1 Base Sup Bn next door, getting some of the kit was difficult. The first flak jacket that I was issued was actually the bomb proof jacket used by ATOs. I had to point out that this didn't seem appropriate. Eventually they found a good bullet-proof jacket complete with a thick Kevlar plate front and back – a completely different jacket to everyone else's. The RNZAF clerks had an even harder time getting hold of the right kit. As the RNZAF had elected not to purchase the Sig Sauer pistol one of them deployed with an old Browning. 'So what' you might think. Well, the two weapons operate differently and if you are trained on one then it may be dangerous if you are given the other to use. I was unamused. To quote from my post tour report:

"The HQ Det which deployed to UNOSOM in April included two RNZAF Cpls. One of these was issued with an RNZAF Browning pistol rather than with a SIG Sauer. This meant that his weapon training during pre-deployment training was useless. It also means that one orphan weapon is now in Somalia. This is potentially dangerous as it may be used by someone who is unfamiliar with it. For the NZDF not to have standardized its non-specialist small arms is ridiculous. HQ NZDF should direct that:

1. RNZAF dispose of all Browning pistols, and
2. all future non-specialist small arms be standardized throughout the NZDF."

As it turned out, once in Somalia I got hold of a rifle as soon as I could. In a place like Mogadishu in 1993 one felt much more secure with a rifle.

After pre-deployment training we waited. On 26 February we were warned to be ready for deployment on or after 22 March. On 15 March we were placed on seven days notice to move from 15 March. The Deployment Directive 18/93 dated 16 March retained the 22 March ready to move date. Then, still waiting on 24 March, the notice to move was changed from seven days to 48 hours. Exactly one month later we left.

The United Nations had organized our travel. We flew out from Auckland to Bangkok. At Bangkok we had to pick up the tickets for our onwards travel; Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to Karachi, then another flight to Dubai and a final flight to Nairobi. We were travelling

with our pistols and ammunition, along with a significant amount of baggage. When we arrived in Bangkok we did not do immigration into Thailand, after all we weren't going to Thailand. Instead we looked for the PIA office. After some searching we could not find it, so we asked and were told that the only PIA office was the other side of immigration. We had to enter Thailand. That was easy, they didn't care about the weapons or ammunition and very quickly we were waiting for the PIA office to open, with our departure time approaching. The office opened, we got our tickets and headed off to catch our flight. That was when we found that it was a bit harder to leave Thailand than it was to enter it. Guns and ammunition was rather an issue, but we talked our way around that. The more difficult thing was the baggage. We each had a pack, two or three large bags and a medical kit in an ammunition box. Unsurprisingly we had to pay excess baggage, but we had no Thai money. No problem, I had been issued with an Army credit card. I'm sure that someone in the Army had thought that American Express was a very smart card to carry. Unfortunately the Bangkok airport authorities did not accept American Express. Fortunately I had been issued with a Visa card from the Army Central Welfare Fund. This was to be used for welfare purposes, not operational matters. I considered that the prospect of spending a protracted period in Bangkok with no funds could be considered a welfare issue, so I produced the card, we proceeded through customs and security and ran for the aircraft, which was about to leave. The plane was a 747 and it was 'free seating'. This did not mean that the seats were free, it meant that there was no seat allocation. The flight was fully booked and we were the last four people to board. Try finding the only four empty seats on a full 747. Things did not improve when we discovered that PIA was dry. Thus began the longest ANZAC day of our lives. We had a long wait for our connection in Karachi and I remember watching the dawn from the international transit area. At least we could see Pakistan; whilst waiting for our next connecting flight in Dubai I remember lots of luxury shops (not much use to us) but no windows. By the time we arrived in Nairobi the novelty of travel to exotic places had well and truly worn off. We had not slept for some time and a cold beer was needed. Fortunately, we were to spend a couple of nights in the Jacaranda Hotel in Nairobi, where Tusker beer was cold and good.

My first impression of the airport in Nairobi was that it was a seedy dump. When I next visited the airport after some time in Mogadishu my reaction was completely different. There were lights in normal light fittings that worked without a generator and taps that water came out of! It seemed like luxury.

When I finally arrived in Mogadishu and reported to the logistics staff I was asked not to run the EME cell but instead to be the Senior Staff Officer Logistics Operations and Plans (SSO Log Ops/Plans), a key position, and so I found myself responsible for the logistics planning for the entire force (which built to some 29,000 troops during my tour) spread across central and southern Somalia.

During my tour in Somalia I found that I was serving three masters; UNOSOM, NZ Land Force Command in Takapuna and Army General Staff in Wellington. As SNO I reported to Land Force Command and was responsible for the command and administration of the New Zealand contingent. Secondly I was UNOSOM's SSO Log Ops/Plans, a very full time job. Thirdly, as New Zealand had one of the rotating seats on the UN Security Council at the time, I had to provide regular situation reports to Army General Staff which would have contributed to the political briefing of 'our man on the Security Council'. During September and October this operational briefing became quite extensive as I was quizzed by Army GS about the rapidly deteriorating tactical and political situation.

LIFE AS THE SNO

Early in my time as SNO the system for administering pay and allowances was amongst the highest of my priorities.

Sometime in the 1980s the NZ Army ceased to pay soldiers in cash and that piece of administration, along with all its associated forms and procedures, became history. Before I went to Somalia the last pay parade that I had held had been in Waiouru in 1982. In Somalia the fact that individuals' pay went into a New Zealand bank account was no help to them. One could not go shopping in Mogadishu as the only functioning cash economy was in Somali Shillings, which were pretty much worthless, and walking around a marketplace in the city was a recipe for never being seen alive again. However, various of the other contingents that had troops in theatre ran shops for them, often based in shipping containers at the secure area around the airport. These stocked necessities like soap, toothpaste and shampoo as well as beer, chocolate and souvenir T shirts. EFTPOS and credit cards were useless and New Zealand cheques and currency were not accepted. To buy a can of beer and a T shirt you needed US dollars. Needless to say, the troops wanted some of their pay locally, in cash, in US dollars.

NZ Sup Det had overcome the need for cash by having a stock of US Dollars in a bank vault in Nairobi in Kenya

which they used to top up a cash box at their camp at the airport in Mogadishu. When someone needed some cash it was issued to them. However, there had been no reconciliation with the normal pay system and no deductions had been made from their New Zealand pay. Their families in New Zealand had continued spending money as normal and technically some soldiers owed the NZDF some hundreds of dollars. Actually how much they owed was hard to determine, partly because there had been no agreed exchange rate when the US Dollars were handed out and partly because of the payment of various allowances, which I shall come to shortly. When I was briefed before deployment, in-theatre pay was one of the things that Headquarters Land Force Command in Takapuna, who commanded NZ Army contingents on operations, had asked me to sort out. During my first month in Somalia I exchanged a flurry of faxes with the Overseas Pay Unit in Wellington who were, I think, quite bemused at how complicated life had become.

In 1993 the NZDF's system of allowances was not at all suited to activities in an operational theatre. The system had been developed to suit peacetime in New Zealand. Field allowance was paid to those in the field, usually on exercise, and was a small compensation for living uncomfortably and having no access to running water, toilets, showers and the like. Adverse working conditions allowance was paid to those working in unusually uncomfortable conditions. Exceptional hazard allowance was paid to people working in unusually dangerous conditions, the example given to me when the system was introduced was welding in a ship's fuel tank. These allowances were all open to interpretation in a place like Somalia in 1993. Those living under canvas on a sand dune by the airport should clearly receive field allowance, but should someone who had secured a bed in an airconditioned portacabin in the Embassy compound where the UN force headquarters was? Working in a hot, sweaty and uncomfortable warehouse at the port, where the supply people's work was based, was clearly working in adverse conditions, but I worked in an office. Were the conditions in the office 'adverse'? It was dirty and dusty because the building had been completely gutted and walls, floor and ceiling were ragged concrete and the windows just holes in the concrete. Was that 'adverse'? How about the smell from the dead rat that was decomposing in the walls? Did it become adverse when the temperature hit 42° C and my laptop died from the heat?

One could make sensible judgements about those things, but extra hazardous duty allowance could be described as extra hazardous to interpret. Whilst the other allowances were earned on a daily basis, extra hazardous duty allowance was based on a payment for each hazardous incident. Being shot at is clearly hazardous, but how inaccurate could the Somalis be for us still to be paid? If you were shot at twice in the same firefight did you get two payments or just one? If there was a firefight in the morning and another in the afternoon was that two payments or one? How hazardous was it the evening when a 120mm mortar round landed in the Kiwi camp at the airport? Luckily it didn't go off. If it had we would have suffered what UNOSOM were calling a 'mass casualty event'. Unfortunately 'mass casualty events' were quite common. As it was we didn't know if the fuze had malfunctioned, in which case the event had clearly been hazardous, or if the gunmen had forgotten to fit a fuze, in which case the hazard would have been having it land on your head, and it missed all of us.

Worrying about these allowances, none of which were worth much money, seems petty and silly if you are sitting safely in New Zealand, but for soldiers serving their country in a dangerous place such things become important well beyond their monetary worth. They become a measure of how much their Army and their country care about them, and the message seemed to be that no-one cared. To quote from my post tour report:

"NZDF conditions of service, and especially pay and allowances, do not bear comparison with most other first and second world countries. This is not a problem for the maintenance of morale during the conduct of operations provided that national administration is efficient and effective. However, it is a serious problem when the long term retention in the NZDF of skilled and qualified soldiers is considered. Whilst serving with UNOSOM it is easy for many NZDF personnel to develop the perception that they are 'selling themselves' to the NZDF for well below the market rate. Given this perceived disparity with other countries' armed forces the efficient administration of soldiers is essential if morale, and thus operational effectiveness, is to be maintained. Unfortunately I believe that solving problems of national administration was the single most important and pre-occupying task that I had."

As had been made clear to me during my pre-deployment briefing by Brigadier Bestic, this somewhat chaotic situation could not be allowed to continue. In consultation with staff in New Zealand I developed and documented a system that would work. It was in effect a re-creation of the old manual pay system. Once this had been put in place, and the circumstances under which

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various allowances would be paid had been agreed, pay and allowances ceased to be a major morale-sapping issue. If you are wondering about how exceptional hazard allowance was determined, it was decided that it would only be paid when there was “an immediate and direct threat to the service member's life” and that all payments would be authorised by the Commander, Land Force Command back in New Zealand.

Having had to document the system for pay and allowances I used these as the basis for a set of theatre standing orders which I wrote. It was gratifying to see that when the NZ Sup Pl arrived in theatre to replace NZ Sup Det they had all been issued with a set of these standing orders.

One of my tasks as SNO was to send regular Sitreps back to Army GS. The Sitreps were numbered following a system started by NZ Sup Det and my first was numbered 09/93 dated 2nd May 1993. I have selected excerpts from some to give you an idea of the scope and

content of this reporting. These are as extracted from my old floppy disks and are attached as an annex.

LIFE AS SSO LOG OPS/PLANS

The UNOSOM operation was conducted by a random collection of units and formations from many different countries, and the planning was conducted by staff officers who spoke a wide variety of languages and whose English was not necessarily fluent. This made even routine briefings and communication quite difficult. For example one morning the logistics staff and liaison officers from the various contingents were briefed on an upcoming operation by an American who spoke with a broad Texan accent, used US military jargon and spoke very fast. At the conclusion of the briefing he asked for questions. There were none, but as soon as he had left the room everyone turned to me and asked what he had been talking about. None of the people there had wanted to lose face by saying to the American that they hadn’t understood a word that he had said.

Different contingents had different capabilities and approaches to problems. I remember that on one occasion the Botswani contingent was being deployed to bring order to a remote township in the south, miles from anywhere else. We knew that once they were there we would be unable to resupply them for a long time so they were sent off with a month’s worth of rations and the promise that they would be resupplied in good time. Two weeks later the Botswani Liaison Officer arrived at my desk stating that we had to resupply the contingent urgently as they were running out of food. It turned out that the trouble in this remote township was being caused by unemployed youths with AK47s but no

other means of support. They were terrorizing the town and stealing what they needed to live. The Botswani’s recognized the real problem and recruited the youths as airport security guards; one day’s food for one day’s guarding the airport. The problem was solved, but the food stocks were dwindling. We all thought that the Botswani’s had been most resourceful but the UN civilian administration became most worked up when they heard. They were concerned that the youths were now technically UN civilian staff with all the rights associated with that, including a salary in US dollars and security of employment.

The UNOSOM media spokesman was a US Army officer and UNOSOM was keen to present a less American face. On one occasion I was asked to provide the daily UNOSOM press briefing. I wasn’t invited a second time as the script that I was given by the American dominated operations staff misrepresented the facts, and I changed it to being factually accurate before I read it. I remember how upset the American full colonel Chief of Operations

was – he couldn't even report me to my contingent commander!

When the US special forces arrived to hunt down Aideed they were commanded directly from US Central Command in Florida. They managed to attract attention to themselves by being so secret, putting up big signs saying 'No Photographs' around their camp, but without the legal ability to stop anyone in UNOSOM from photographing them. It became a bit of a sport. Their logistic support was also deemed to be very secret, so secret that only one person on the logistics staff was allowed to know about it. This was a US Air Force major with a sky-high security grading as his speciality was in nuclear ballistic missile targeting. Why he was posted to UNOSOM I have no idea, and neither did he, except that the end of the cold war had reduced the need for people with his specialization. Anyway, he was a bright individual who was willing to do anything to help. The downside was that he knew nothing about logistics. The special forces' logistics needs were passed to him and then he had to consult with the rest of us, without letting any senior Americans know, to find out how to do what was needed.

TOWARDS THE END

The 'Black Hawk Down' incident occurred on 3rd October 1993. That was the same day as German National Day. As the NZ SNO I had been invited to Belet Uen to attend the German celebrations. That afternoon I was flown back to Mogadishu and decided to spend the evening at Taniwha Hill. From the top of the sand dune there was a view across Mogadishu towards what I describe in my Sitrep 26/93 dated 5th October:

"The Ranger operation achieved its stated aim in so far as they detained the individuals that they expected to and some additional ones as well. Then it all went wrong. I was at the airfield at the time. From there we had a clear view of anti aircraft artillery fire of a sort that I have not seen in Mogadishu before. Ranger helicopters were shot down or disabled and a rescue mission had to be mounted by a combination of real QRF (not Rangers) and UNOSOM troops. The miracle, for UNOSOM, is that this unpreplanned combined rescue operation worked so well.

UNOSOM Sitrep 169 is fairly self-explanatory. The casualty figures are now out of date. CNN has reported more up to date figures. Suffice it to say that the Rangers have been decimated.

It is apparent from UNOSOM Sitrep 169, and from conversations with Americans here, that everyone is distancing themselves from the Rangers. Note particularly the QRF summary starting on page five of the sitrep. The recounting of the Ranger HMMWVS overtaking the Quick Reaction Company (QRC) and then being destroyed is interesting. The Americans do not usually advertise their national mistakes to anyone else. Also note the casualty estimates on page six. For the first time the american casualties have been split to show the Rangers as a clearly separate group. The '(est)' against the Ranger figure is because they were extremely reluctant to release any information to anyone else. Initially they refused to release any information to other Americans saying that they came directly under central command. I understand that their commander was summoned to Maj Gen Montgomery, the Senior US Army Officer in Somalia. The QRF report in the Sitrep makes it clear that the commander of the QRF does not want anyone to think that the Rangers are anything to do with him.

The feeling here is that the Rangers cannot stay here much longer. It may be, however, that the americans wish to reinforce failure and will reinforce them. I would say that, despite the people that they have detained, the net contribution of the Rangers to this operation has been distinctly negative. This is due to the casualties that they have suffered, the people that they have upset and the adverse PR that they have attracted. The Rangers are amazingly, and dangerously, arrogant. It has been reported to me that, in order to effect the rescue of their troops, they initially requested Malaysian APCs without commanders, radio operators or drivers. They would then have been operating unfamiliar vehicles equipped with unfamiliar radios. The Malaysians, of course, had much more sense than to let this happen.

I understand that the three damaged blackhawks reported by Capt McDavitt are beyond repair. I have heard that they were hit by 23mm anti aircraft fire... I saw two types of anti aircraft fire other than normal small arms; one caused individual isolated explosions and puffs of black smoke in the air, the other consisted of streams of tracer (bursts of about eight to ten rounds) all of which exploded in the air.

It is clear that the sna committed atrocities against American prisoners. You will have seen the dead bodies on cnn. They had had their hands tied. You do not need to do that if someone is already dead".

On 7 October, President Clinton announced that the usa would withdraw all its combat forces and the bulk of its logistics units. Being politically astute, on 9 October Aideed announced a unilateral ceasefire. In

my Sitrep 27/93 dated 17 October I stated:

"As you will be aware the americans are sending a Joint Task Force (JTF) to Somalia and intend to withdraw before 31 Mar 94. This will change the outlook for UNOSOM significantly. Currently the situation is very quiet. Aideed's unilaterally declared ceasefire has brought a surprising (for those used to being mortared and shot at) quiet to Mogadishu. There have been only a small number of incidents involving firearms. When one considers that this place is more heavily armed than Miami or New York, more incidents might be expected merely as a matter of routine. Every night now we hear the drone of the AC130 overhead, but nothing happens. Just the aircraft noise is a big deterrent. Also, every day aircraft from the USS Abraham Lincoln fly over the city. Next week representatives from the U-4 will visit UN New York to discuss the implications of american withdrawal next year. Because UNOSOM in its current form cannot survive without a replacement for the American logistic support troops, some innovative solutions to logistics will have to be found. Lt Col Lott will be a very busy little vegemite. In short, the operational situation here has been changed profoundly by a combination of; America's reaction to the resounding defeat of their Rangers, and Aideed's political initiatives in declaring a ceasefire and releasing the American and Nigerian prisoners. It will be interesting to see how things pan out."

It was time to go home.

POST TOUR

When I got back to New Zealand I had an interview at HQ NZ Land Force, but Brigadier Bestic was leaving, another interview with the DCGS because the CGS was away, and a third at HQ NZDF where I was sat in the centre of a semi-circle of chairs and was then just asked to talk about Somalia. I recommended withdrawal and things got a bit frosty after that. The guys at HQ NZLF told me that I was the best SNO that they had had, but on what basis of measurement I'm not sure. The most interest or recognition seemed to come from a number of Rotary Clubs who invited me to be an after-dinner speaker. It all seemed a bit of an anti-climax.

I endeavoured to condense my thoughts and learnings into a useful post-tour report. This report is attached for your amusement.

After my RTNZ the US continued their preparations to withdraw from Somalia, the violence against the US and UNOSOM subsided and the NZDF's focus shifted to preparing and deploying the infantry to Bosnia. I received no feedback on my post-tour report. Like most of you, I would imagine, my six months in Somalia had been very hard on my family. When the killing of Pakistani soldiers on 5 June was reported on the news my eight year old son old was watching television. He ran to the kitchen shouting 'mummy, mummy all the UN soldiers have been killed'. By the time my wife got to the television they were reporting something else. I left the Army in 1995. Somalia seemed forgotten – and it would take twenty years and the reunion organizers to stimulate me to document some of my experiences. Now that the memories have come back I realize that what you have read here is just a snippet.

ANNEX - EXCERPTS FROM LT COL HAYNES' SITREPS

SITREP 10/93 DATED 14TH MAY 1993:

SECURITY. The NZSUPDET camp by the airfield remains secure, however the level of security has declined as other troop camps in the area have moved or closed. There is no direct threat to the camp. However, perimeter security of the camp itself was not sufficient to prevent RNZCT pers from 42 Sqn Det sneaking in during the small hours to celebrate their Corps Day by draping toilet paper over the shower and spraying "RNZCT Rules" in a few prominent places.

SITREP 12/93 DATED 6TH JUNE 1993:

During 5 June 93, there were significant incidents in Mogadishu that are now receiving worldwide press coverage.

As at 061000c JUN 93 all NZDF personnel serving with UNOSOM II were safe, well and in secure locations.

UNOSOM II Forces conducted short notice inspections of weapon storage sites on the morning of 5 June. This was to follow up on reported discrepancies in quantities in the sites. These discrepancies were confirmed, but I have no details. In retaliation Somalis, believed to be Aideed's forces, conducted strikes against UNOSOM troops. These retaliatory strikes included at least one well planned ambush using anti-tank weapons and heavy machine guns. Somali planning and coordination exceeded anything experienced to date. Pakistani forces suffered heavy casualties, largely at two locations; feeding point 20 and on 21 October Road. Pakistani casualties reported as at 060700c June were:

a. Killed - 22,

b. Wounded - 54, many seriously;

c. Missing - 9;

d. Total - 85.

I understand that us have three wounded. There are unconfirmed reports of substantial somali casualties, but few have been delivered to UNOSOM medical facilities.

Sporadic shooting continued during the day and into the night. UNOSOM personnel are being concentrated into the Embassy compound and onto the airfield. Today, 6 June, starting at 0800 hours UNOSOM Forces will patrol aggressively throughout Mogadishu using APCs supported by Italian tanks and by helicopters for reconnaissance and fire support. The force commander is on leave out of theatre. The Deputy Force Commander, Maj Gen Montgomery (US) reports that UNHQ NY is "incensed". 'Decisive action' by UNOSOM is anticipated.

NZDF personnel remain secure. Lt Col Haynes and WO2 Haines are at the Embassy, the NZSUPDET is at the airfield, CPLs Honeybone and Fenwick continue to work with the Civil Military Operations Cell (CMOC). They were involved in a range of shooting and grenade incidents yesterday, but are unharmed and cheerful. When I spoke to Cpl Fenwick this morning I requested a detailed report of their activities which I will forward when it comes to hand. Last night the SUPDET were unloading aircraft. Incoming mortar rounds were reported, none close. They withdrew to their camp location. All basic principles of defence are being observed. They are adjacent to a sizeable Italian force with whom they have coordinated mutual support.

It is my assessment that UNOSOM wish to respond rapidly and with force. The extent of this may well be limited by unny direction to which I am not privy. I am aware that extra armoured vehicles and AC130s are being requested. I have no immediate concerns about the safety of NZDF personnel. I intend to monitor the employment of CPLs Honeybone and Fenwick closely.

'Arte et Marte' seems more appropriate today.

SITREP 13/93 DATED 7TH JUNE 1993 (THIS IS MOST OF THE SITREP):

1. This Sitrep is to comply with the reporting requirements detailed at paragraph 18.b to CGS's Directive to NZ SNO UNOSOM.

2. As at 071620 June 93 Sitrep 12/93 had not been able to be sent, however all NZDF personnel serving with UNOSOM II were safe, well and in secure locations.

3. Sporadic shooting has continued. UNOSOM personnel, with the exception of the Australian contingent, have been concentrated into the Embassy compound and onto the airfield. The Australians occupy a number of residences grouped around a central courtyard and consider that they and their equipment are safe there. They have refused to move. This caused some very strong exchanges between the Australian SNO, Lt Col Jones, and the Deputy Force Commander, Maj Gen Montgomery.

4. The Force Commander, Lt Gen Bir, returned from leave yesterday afternoon (6 May).

5. NZDF personnel remain secure. Lt Col Haynes and WO2 Haines remain at the Embassy, the NZSUPDET is at the airfield, Cpls Honeybone and Fenwick continue to work with the Civil Military Operations Cell (CMOC). I have had to approach the operations staff (U3) about CMOC procedures. Cpl Fenwick reported to me this morning that CMOC vehicles were moving about without escorts. In Mogadishu today this is a very dangerous practice. Sniping at UN vehicles appears commonplace. If U3 have not issued new Force Orders on vehicle escorts by last light today I shall contact the two Cpls and order them not to move anywhere without an escort. However, it is my hope that U3 will issue such orders.

6. Yesterday (6th) this headquarters organized a 'convoy' of vehicles, escorted by Turkish APCs, to go to residences to uplift personal effects (razors, changes of clothes and valuables). The convoy was an absolute shambles. There was no real plan, no effective orders were given and no one appeared to be in command. All this became apparent when it was too late to turn back. There are a lot of people here still learning their job. Every LCpl in the NZ Army could organize a better operation.

7. 1805 hours. Have just been watching the news on cnn and note that you are now getting information that is almost as up to date as mine!

8. 1835 hours. I can confirm that CMOC have now adopted sensible vehicle escort procedures. I have issued national orders to the effect that NZDF personnel are not to move in unescorted vehicles. This is consistent with U3's position.

9. This fax plus Sitrep 12/93 will now be passed safe hand by trustworthy Somali to NZSUPDET for transmission.

SITREP 15/93 DATED 26TH JUNE 1993:

NZSUPDET. NZSUPDET continues to provide supply support to UNOSOM II. Recent ship arrivals have generated a large amount of activity at the port. Ships have arrived badly stowed. Bottled water has leaked and caused cardboard boxes to disintegrate. Water was stowed above electrical equipment. Local Somali labourers are surprised when told not to urinate and defecate on top of bottles of drinking water in the hold of the ship. The NZSUPDET personnel have worked extremely hard and have acquitted themselves well in this area. Work is now well in hand to receive the new NZSUPPL.

Operational comment. The operational situation here has calmed somewhat over the last four or five days. Aideed is still at large but does not seem to be secure in the leadership of his faction. Around Mogadishu there are continual incidents of sniping (inaccurate) and occasional attacks with heavier weapons. UNOSOM does not seem able to react with active patrolling to dominate the city. The Pakistani Brigade in Mogadishu does not appear at all keen to venture out onto the streets. Aideed's men do, and will soon seize the initiative unless positive patrolling action is taken. Unfortunately the Pakistani Brigade is no longer held in high regard by other elements within UNOSOM. This is probably just what Aideed wants. Many new contingents arriving, or soon to arrive, in theatre are now being held in Mogadishu in order to secure and stabilize the city. This includes the Malaysian Mechanized Battalion, a Bangladesh Battalion and the complete 5,000 strong Indian Brigade.

ANZAC. The recent operational difficulties in Somalia have been eased for the New Zealand and Australian contingents through our mutual cooperation. Movement through the city is still difficult. The Australians who are working at the airport are now accommodated as guests at 'Taniwha Hill'. This hospitality is reciprocated for the Kiwis at the Embassy by the Australian contingent who have established a new 'Australia House' in a gutted building within the Embassy compound. Lt Col Haynes now sleeps there rather than on the floor of his office. Both contingents hold the other in high regard.

Sitrep 16/93 dated 8th July 1993 (you will note that by this point I was sending all faxes in upper case as the quality of communications was so poor that lower case was often too distorted to be legible):

Morale of the incoming contingent is high. They have already been introduced to Somalia. The airfield came under ineffective mortar fire whilst they were getting off their aircraft. Since they arrived there have been two ambushes of UNOSOM vehicles between the airfield and the Force Headquarters at the US Embassy. They are now working hard, both at their tasks at the Port and Airfield Warehouses and at improving their camp location. The screen around the shower has been raised from waist high to above head height.

Operational comment. I remain disillusioned at UNOSOM's ability to dominate the city of Mogadishu. It is my personal opinion that the troops being used, and the staffs controlling them, are not well trained for this type of warfare. The ambush that occurred yesterday was on a regularly used route at a point where vehicles have to slow down. I have never seen a foot patrol anywhere on that route, indeed patrols appear to be a rarity. Today's ambush occurred at the same place. I have raised the subject of patrolling with the U-3 staff, but they are not about to let a logistic officer tell them how to do their job. Some of the best troops here are from Zimbabwe, Botswana, Morocco and Nigeria. They are effective infantry soldiers. Many other contingents are less effective.

SITREP 20/93 DATED 23RD AUGUST 1993:

NZSUPPL. NZ Sup Pl continue to work in the two warehouses; one at the port and one at the airfield. Starting Friday 3 Sept the new PR Officer, Capt McDavitt, intends to spend every second Friday working with the NZ Sup Pl taking photos and writing stories suitable for use by the NZ media. These should also give you a better insight into everyday work in the NZ Sup Pl. The clerk and medic have been employed part time with the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer and the Swedish Hospital respectively. This has given them a better idea of how UN systems work here as well as giving them wider experience in their trades.

Cpls Honeybone and Fenwick still work for CMOC. This has been exercising my diplomatic skills. To get them relocated I have had to deal with the Chief Military Personnel Officer, a Pakistani Colonel who could not make a decision in a wet week and who believes that Lieutenant Colonels should do as he says because he outranks them. As he could not decide I raised the

matter with the Chief of Staff, a Pakistani Brigadier who was slightly surprised that I persisted when he said that there was not a problem. The two Cpls are on leave at the moment and I am hopeful that I will have had them relocated by the time they return at the end of the month. I have managed to remain calm, polite and respectful throughout all of this. It has not been easy.

NZ troop deployment. No progress has been made towards re-establishing an element in Nairobi. Various interest groups on the civilian side here do not see the need. At the moment they are protecting their position. If they did their jobs properly it could be that an NZ Supply presence in Nairobi would not be necessary.

Operational comment. Comments on current operations will be submitted separately. This may take a day or two as MI-17 helicopter flights to the airfield have been stopped. This is due to the increased anti-air threat. Travel by road remains dangerous due to continued ambushes and the use of command detonated mines. I am able to keep in touch with the NZ Sup Pl at the airfield by telephone, so am much less isolated from them than I was in June. It is still possible to safe hand some correspondence to them. Military vehicles and helicopters are still free to move about the city. More on all of this in the operational supplement.

LTCOL CHARLES LOTT

INCARCERATION AT THE EMBASSY COMPOUND THOUGHTS FROM DOWNTOWN MOGADISHU

I write this from memory – dangerous I know and there is a high likelihood that I will be shot down, laughed at or otherwise corrected by those members who served, like me at the Embassy Compound in the mid-1990s as part of New Zealand's commitment to UNOSOM II.

We arrived in 'The Mog' or 'The Dish' after a torturous business class flight from Auckland to Nairobi via Johannesburg from memory. Six of us were to be the HQ UNOSOM staff members for our tour of six months. There was no fanfare on departure and I think we were paid $10.73/day in allowances – these were taxed of course. We arrived in Nairobi to David Haynes' invitation to a gourmet dinner, tasting every known make and model of African meat known to the Africans – some delights were however not known to us. We were all so damned tired that we couldn't really do the meal justice – I do remember that.

The next day we took the infamous shuttle from Nairobi to Mogadishu, arriving shortly after the Blackhawk Down carnage. Shown to our quarters at ANZAC house, which the Australian's had graciously opened their doors for us, we then set about doing handovers, getting to know our home for the next six months, getting to know other contingent's living there and generally settling in. Who would have thought prior to arrival?

- Shards of glass atop the walls of the embassy compound together with barbed wire all over the place,
- Somali's walking out the gate with boxes of bottled water when it was costing UNOSOM $US18/bottle to get it into the hands of water drinkers.
- The sheer absurdity of gunfire going off all over the city, burning tyres and the smell of the dead cow on Dead Cow Road and then to see pretty little birds flying around as if nothing was going on.
- No useable infrastructure – copper telephone wires, gone. Power lines, gone, Roading – not exactly gone but not in good shape at all, people's homes, gone or at least gutted. Pipes, gone, glass, gone.
- Khat stalls, and the gradual demise of calmness as the khat became effective on imbibers towards late afternoon.
- Donkey's pulling wooden carts of every description.
- Before and after pictures of Mogadishu, before - a pretty city, with a significant Italian influence, after - an ugly city with a very warlike influence!
- Outside the compound – 400 odd Somalis milling around looking for work, kept at bay by Turkish soldiers manning the checkpoints into and out of the compound.
- The Israeli bar.
- The 'technical's' – masterpieces of engineering and more dangerous to the driver/firer than to the target.

We arrived around the time Tyson Morris was ambushed and killed and I remember my first task was assisting to repatriate his body to NZ through Harare – I'd been in country just on a week and trying to work out how to exfil the body from a State with no law, no police, no customs an immigration was a mission on its own. Tyson was shot because he had fired a group of Somali workers which just reminded us of how dangerous the place actually was, where the fighting was simply over 'loot'.

Then we had the incident where a New Zealander, Mr Pettit shot his mate in the backside for not helping to push a DC-3 – I recall he was arrested and was to be handed over to the 'Somali Authorities'. We went and inspected the facility that he was to be placed in pending whatever outcome and you wouldn't have put a pig in the place and expected it to come out alive. He was quietly shipped out of the country as a persona non-gratia.

We used to look forward to the 'battle run' between the Embassy and Taniwha Hill. Normally on pay day, you'd arm yourself with a Steyr jammed between the dashboard and the door, pistols jammed into the door handle, the really fit for purpose flak jacket, designed for frag rather than direct fire and the helmet plus webbing. You'd go out the main gate and basically floor the hell out of whatever wagon you were driving down the bypass and out towards the airport. If it wasn't so bloody dangerous it would have been fun – we'd go for the record – gate to gate. I seem to recall someone did it in 12 minutes. Then we got the directive 'no more single vehicles' travelling between the Embassy and the Airport – great. How the hell were we supposed to present ourselves to pay the team when we only had one vehicle and that had to be booked and borrowed? In the end we decided to seek forgiveness if we got caught rather than request permission. Then when bad stuff started going down there was the 'no more driving' directive and we had to use Blackhawk 'taxi's' to get from the compound to the airport. Great except for the 200m walk across the airport up to Taniwha Hill in the blazing heat. I have to admit, thinking back to that time when I was much younger; you just didn't think anything would happen to us Kiwis. The risks we took and the things we did would

doubtless be totally frowned on now.

The jobs in the Embassy weren't that fulfilling as I recall – we had the ladies doing clerk type stuff, the guys doing Int, PR and Log Ops work. Days tended to be quite mundane, responsibility and accountability were elevated to very high levels (normally US) but we all used to look forward to the evening beer/s at ANZAC House.

I remember really hanging out for the fortnightly (or was it monthly) pay nights over at Taniwha Hill. Listening to those coming back off leave with tales of daring do and just that chance to be with a group of Kiwi's on a mission was something to be treasured in a six day a week, 10 hour a day operation and in a living environment where there wasn't much to do.

Listening and watching the nightly Somali drumbeat as mortars, RPG's stones and other missiles were fired, hurled or otherwise projected through, in between and throughout "The Dish" is something that I've never forgotten. I also recall sitting outside cleaning weapons one night when whoosh – up the alley that was between ANZAC House and some excuse for a warehouse, someone fired something that sounded very much like an RPG. We all rushed out to see the likely ensuing carnage – nup nothing, nada. Pats on back, sighs of relief and back in behind the ANZAC House gate and go to bed in 40 degrees of heat.

One thing that does stick in my mind is the Sunday night BBQ, it was one bit of normality that really set the next week in focus…it was our one night off from Morris Catering who did their best to give us good food. I never really did work out how the Aussie ration plan actually worked but it did and I'm forever grateful that we had one night of the week when we had a bit of normality to the routine.

I remember the huge effort that went into getting UNOSOM II onto LOGCAP. Equipment to be handed over to the US contractor from the US government went onto a series of 'lists' The 'Delta List, the Lima List, The Papa List, were all funded differently and all subject to US State Department approvals.

A RARE BUT WELCOME SUNDAY BBQ TREAT

It was a massive effort to stock-take all the US government equipment, value it and get it onto a list and then get agreement as who was paying for it before it could be transferred to Brown & Root. All up I think we transferred $US500 million worth of equipment

I recall learning about a thing called 'demurrage'. We had these Russian fuel tankers delivering fuel to the fuel farm through the overland fuel transfer system. A rather large Russian tanker turned up in port at Mog, tied up and readied to discharge. Some Somali decided it would be fun to fire an RPG at a tanker carrying about 250,000 cubes of JP 5. We were talking to said tanker driver over a very convivial glass of Vodka when bang…clang. Said tanker driver sobered like you wouldn't believe, arced up the ship and legged it back to sea. We then had to negotiate this demurrage thing with UN New York paying about $US250, 000 a day. That tanker wasn't coming back I tell you. As I recall, he was out there for about 10 days and our fuel went into 'red'

I also remember the 'loose' treatment of foreign aid going to the Somali's or supposed to be. Flight's outbound for TCN's departing Mogadishu included donated wheat, Cobra Helicopter engines, and all sorts of other UN owned stuff that was not nailed down.

The day we left Mogadishu, someone entered the UN admin office and 'stole' $US6.0 million in cash that was the salary and wages. It had to be an inside job but the investigation was just starting as we left. I heard subsequently that a number of senior UN staffers were relieved of their positions including Doug Manson, the chief. The money was never recovered.

Personally, I think we did a good job and all learned

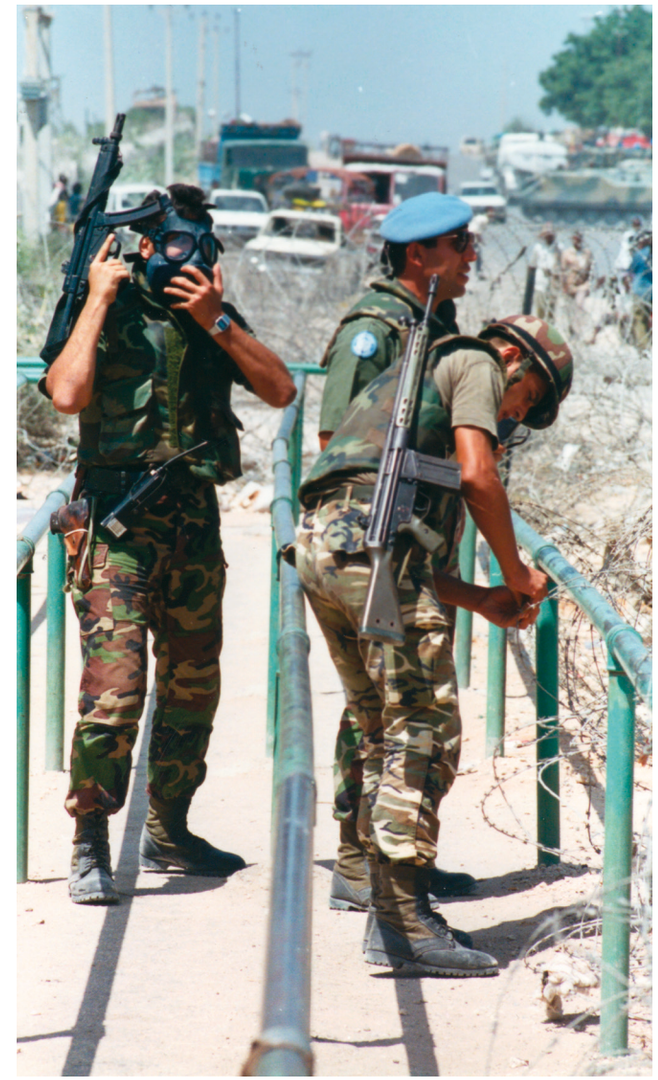
considerably. UNOSOM II was the Army's first foray into peacekeeping with little understanding that there was no peace to keep. Certainly we were lucky – the amount of hot lead flying through the streets of Mogadishu meant that someone should have been hurt. Good discipline in where we went and what we did probably prevented anyone from being a deliberate target but luck played a big part.

It is sad to reflect however that all of what we did came to naught as the country descended back into civil war when the UN left and really still is a basket case.

EMBASSY STAFF

SNO'S: MAJ K.I. JOHNSON, LTCOL D.M.A. HAYNES, LTCOL C.A.S. LOTT, LTCOL L.J. GARDINER.

WO2 W. EPIHA, MAJ T.P. MCDAVITT, MAJ R.G. MCDONALD, MAJ C.J. BUDGE, CPL I.R. FENWICK (RNZAF), CPL M.E. HONEYBONE (RNZAF), WO2 P.G.D. HAINES, CPL D.K. HALTON, CPL K.A. PALMER, WO2 G.A. SMITH, WO2 N.J. DAVIS, WO2 K.R. HARE, CPL B.J.M. DAWSON, CPL R.G. STRINGER, WO2 W.A. GORDON, WO2 P.E.M. JACKSON, LTCOL C.W. LILLEY.



CPL KAS SILK

I was at my desk when my boss approached me. “Kas, do you want to go to Somalia?’ It wasn’t something I had thought about. ‘Hmm, yeah, okay’ I replied after a couple of minutes. ‘Maybe you would like to think about it’. ‘No I’ll go’. Isn’t ignorance bliss! I didn’t even know where Somalia was, but it was only ‘peace keeping’ after all, and wasn’t this what we had trained for all these years. I wouldn’t dream of standing in the way of my fiancé going, so putting the wedding on hold, I jumped in feet first. Down to the medics for 2 jabs a day twice a week for the next two months for every vaccination under the sun.

Pre-deployment training came around quick enough in Oct where we learned Mogadishu was just above the equator, we were allocated 6 minute phone calls home a week and would be living with the Australian contingent! After watching footage on TV of the dead American airmen being dragged naked through the streets by chanting Somalis the same question was put to us again ‘Do you still want to go to Somalia?’ It’s anyone’s guess why we all still accepted.

IN THEATRE

One of our first tasks was the issue of our kevlar helmets, vests and Steyr rifle. It was a week later on the range I discovered I was carrying an unserviceable weapon. We are all acquainted with the Army’s fixation on maintenance of equipment and with kiwi ingenuity – well the combination of both these resulted in my Steyr firing pin being used to clean the weapon so much that the pin was now too short to strike the primer. Not the best time and place find this out. Oh by the way, ‘welcome to Mogadishu’

NAVIGATIONALLY CHALLENGED

For reasons I no longer recall, I had visited the Sea Port without the rest of my team. So a couple of days later, we decided we would all go to the Sea Port together. I was asked to lead the way – which wasn’t hard, after all, it was only a 5 minute drive from the airport.

Little did they know, I come from a tiny Pacific island that has two roads, one circumferencing the coastline and the inland road! We made our way through ‘no-man’s land’ and after 10 -15 minutes I said ‘Umm, things don’t look very familiar guys!’ We continued on a little further and found ourselves outside the front gates of the Seaport to the horrified look of the armed security forces manning the front gate. ‘Don’t you know you are supposed to travel in a convoy on this side of the gates?’ They could clearly see we weren’t Somalis (not sure what the giveaway was) so they were happy to let us in. Another ‘welcome to Mogadishu’.

DANCING WITH THE STARS

My next minor incident was our introduction to the Irish contingent – happy, jovial guys that they are. We partook in a few drinks, jokes and swapped stories. I took a shine to one of them (which couldn’t be helped - he certainly stood out with his red hair, red shorts and red face - having forgotten to apply sunscreen earlier that day!) We had a couple of drinks, the music started up, and we both decided it was a good idea to dance on top of the shipping container, naturally egged on by those around us.

Well, you never saw two people descend from a shipping container so fast. Only a couple of shots were fired, but I swear the bullets were, so close we both heard them

whistle past us. An involuntary emptying of my stomach contents sobered me up real fast. Not one of my better ideas and yep, another reality check and ‘welcome to Mogadishu’.

PAY RUN

The four of us coincided out first leave break with a pay run to Nairobi not long after our arrival. We did the usual sights and purchased the obligatory t-shirts, carvings and souvenirs to send home, but our main purpose was to uplift the pay for the 40 personnel on Taniwha Hill. We rocked up to the bank in our finest gear (shorts and jandals) and to the dismay of the bank manager proceeded to stuff thousands of dollars in US cash into a back-pack and walk out the door as in conspicuously as we could. We figured no one would suspect four under dressed white foreigners would be walking around with

so much money in a tattered old back-pack.

THE OFFICE

My first weeks were in the media office with a couple of Americans who were great fun, but I was on my own when our pre-fab building lifted off the ground as a massive explosion shook everything to its core. I vaguely heard some one shout ‘get down’ and promptly face planted the floor. After a couple of minutes – and no further explosions or gunfire – I went to see what was happening. I found the Swedish reprographics office emerging from under their desks and a few others were starting to appear. The guys returned from the media conference and said ‘Oh yeah, the American Battalion 5 kms down the road forgot to let us know they were doing a controlled detonation of all the ammunition they had confiscated!’

Must have been a need to know basis and yes, another warm ‘welcome to Mogadishu’.

ANZAC HOUSE

Life at Anzac House living with the Aussies was great as they welcomed us with open arms. They were always ready with a laugh and jokes and even played along with a mock wedding as two of us had put our weddings on hold.

There was constant noise with the choppers, vehicles and people and always a fine sprinkle of ‘acid rain’ (sand) in our hair, drinks, food, beds… from the nearby chopper pad so it was always a pleasure to spend time at Taniwha Hill with the fresh breeze off the Indian Ocean, Kiwi company and the most awesome meals (you did us proud - thanks guys!). Personally, I found the constant hum of the ‘night eyes’ flying over head each night a

great comfort and the sun sets amazing. The heat was just bearable under the weight of the Kevlar, the drives through road blocks and riots, loaded rifle always in arms reach, the confined living spaces, constant sweat, extra strength malaria pills, the long working hours, and ques for meals, showers and phone calls, the sand filled stretcher beds, the mortars and shots fired over head are now a distant memory.

Would I do it all again? Yes, I believe I would.

WO2 GRAHAM SMITH

Casting my memory back to our tour is not easy as much has transpired since then and since the completion of my military career. Things are a little hazy these days. During my tour many things happened, some quite sad, but all in all made up what Somalia was all about. I have chosen four incidents below that quickly come to mind, and if they are not what you would see as fitting please let me and I will dig into the memory files a little deeper and see what I can find.

The first incident occurred when I had only just arrived in Somalia and turned up at work on day three. The area I worked in was run by an Italian and comprised a network of national representatives including Australians, Americans, Italians, Germans, Egyptians', Malaysians, French and Indians. On arrival at work one of the American officers approached me and asked if I would accompany him, an American Interrogator (who later became a very good friend and comrade) and Belgian driver to a meeting with a Somali gentleman who was working with the UN. I agreed and we left at about 0900 hrs and headed off into the Mogadishu labyrinth. We headed through the K4 checkpoint (I think this is right as my memory is a little hazy re numbers and names), a dangerous sector of town, bounced around a dead and swollen body in the middle of the road and off to our meeting. The expressions of those in the vehicle seemed to be "all in a days work" with conversation rolling on as if nothing was out of the ordinary. At this point however I was thinking "….." did these people not see that. But, being the new boy on the block I held my tongue and we carried on to our destination. We arrived at the meeting and all was well, the contact told us much about what was going on, some truth, some bullshit and other, well lets wait and see what pans out (maybe info). We then began our journey home, and "wholly …." I suddenly realized we were tracking back on the same route. At about his point I became very tense and being the new boy suddenly did not matter and I started to question our homeward route being "not good practice". As we rounded a tight S bend there they were, a hostile crowd gathering and yelling some shit in our direction. No weapons were visible, they just seemed pissed off about something. This, now that I think of it was a good thing because our total sum of protection consisted of; the driver was unarmed, the American Major had an old Thompson machinegun from the days of Al Capone (this is Somalia after all, you could get anything in the way of weaponry), the Interrogator had a Beretta M9 pistol and then myself with the only formidable fire power, a Steyr. As we slowed the crowd moved in on us and the situation quickly became very tense. It was then I noticed a particularly aggressive male on my side of the vehicle brandishing a cane. I pointed my rifle at him and said clearly "another step and I will kill you". Thank God he stopped, the people beside him stopped, the Major yelled "lets go", the driver hit the accelerator, we bounced up over the curb, drove along the footpath, and were gone in a flash. By this time everyone in the vehicle were all talking at once, not sure who was talking to who, but shucks I was glad to be moving and moving fast. We got back to the office at about 1400 hours and I went to sleep in my chair at about 1500 hrs. Welcome to Somalia.

On another occasion, at about the three week mark, Myself and our contingent commander, Lt Col Lott (a good man, good leader and tireless worker) were standing out the front of the HQ work building having a fag. The building was sandbagged for protection however the two of us were just outside the bagged area, when there was an almighty shockwave from an explosion. The story behind the explosion is a little vague now however went something like this:

- A cache of weaponry and munitions had been found some 5km away from the HQ by the Americans, who decided to blow the cache.
- This was then delayed due to an inhabited village close by. Ops was informed accordingly and everything stood-down.
- The village was evacuated and it was all go again.
- Ops was then informed of another delay and everything was stood-down again.

I am not sure how many times the delays occurred, however they finally blew the thing without any of us being informed. The explosion was that big it apparently flattened the village and the shock wave hit the HQ, 5km from ground zero, blowing some windows in and shrouding us in dust. Now back to me and the boss having a smoke.

We were standing there quietly talking and puffing away when suddenly woomf, glass breaking and dust everywhere. Instantly the boss yells "mortar!" his cigarette shot about six feet out of his mouth and he was gone in a flash. Me, well I was buckled in half pissing myself when I suddenly realized that, if it was a mortar, I needed to get into cover before another turns up. I scrambled into the building. The first thing I found was our Belgian guards huddled under a table, and the boss, well who knows where he went, he had vanished. One thing for sure is, if it was a mortar attack, the boss would have had a better chance of surviving than me, as his reaction was much

much faster.

Another event that comes to mind among the many is when I was on a small coral atoll where the Somali detainees of the Blackhawk Down operation were being held. I was working as the ops support for the interrogation team there. The security on the island was provided by Pakistani Special Forces and a Indian Military Police contingent to guard the detainees. Not a good mix I know however it was the way it was. It was right on dark and we had just sat down to eat a curry goat dinner with the atoll security forces when all of a sudden all hell broke loose. Someone or something had bumped the perimeter and set off trip flares. There was shouting and movement going in all directed and we were suddenly hustled into the centre of the camp for our so called protection. We did not know what was going on, no one communicated with us and the tension began to grow among our group comprising Americans, Myself and an Ozzy. In the end I said "bugger this I going to have a look" and an American chimed in and said "hell yeah lets go".

We moved out to the command post and they gave us permission to continue up onto the wire. We had to follow a footpath of single sandbags because walking directly on the coral meant twisted ankles and slashed boots. I was walking at the front with my American friend right behind me. As we approached the wire a heavily accented voice ahead of me said "halt - password". I froze instantly and as my eyes adjusted in the dark I could see a machinegun pointing straight at me. It was then I realized I did not know the password and almost shit myself. I slowly and quietly turned my head over my right should and said to the American "what's the pass word". A heavy southern drawl came back out of the darkness stating "damned if I know man", my American mate at this stage was almost lying flat on the sandbags right behind my heels. My mind has never raced so fast in all my days. Without to much sound thought I said in a loud precise voice "it is Warrant Officer Smith and Mason from HQ UNOSOM". There was silence for a few seconds, then a reply "no speak English". I thought I'm going to die. Then another voice "advance". My legs had got a bit wobbly by now, and I turned slowly and said to my colleague, "we need to move forward", the reply "you move", my response "flip". I then moved up towards the gun position and suddenly there was this flash of white teeth in the dark and this voice said "hello". I could have wacked him but my relief was overpowering and I simply sat down. My mate quietly filed in and also gave me a relieved grin as he passed by. At this point an American Sig had got hold of the AC130 patrolling Mogadishu up the coast a little and had informed the AC130 that we had a problem. The aircraft was on site within approximately 20 minutes and scanned the area for any intruders with their infrared technology. For me this was amazing as we had starlight devices which picked up the infrared and displayed it as a green beam. It was like looking at something from sum futuristic space movie, this big green beam coming down out of the clouds and searching the ground, incredible. The AC130 advised they could not pick any threat up however had decided to "light the zone up guys". Wholly hell, they opened up with the 105 cannon and, with pinpoint accuracy, shelled our entire frontage.

I have never seen anything like it in my life and remember quietly thinking "thank God you are on our side". The situation then calmed down for the remainder of the night with nothing further happening until the next day (which is another story). Despite my feeling really fatigued following the whole event, that night I could not stop thinking about the machinegun incident. How the hell did we get ourselves outside of the perimeter to have walked into one of the gun pits. So the next morning myself and my American friend retraced our steps and guess what, the gun pit was being reconfigured each night to cover the Indian contingent inside the perimeter. This then became its own issue resulting in some rather heated discussion between us, the Pakistani's and the Indians.

To cut a long story short, the matter was finally resolved by a direct order to change the guns position by a senior American Officer stationed on the atoll, much to our relief. From that point on each day myself and the American friend made sure we new each days passwords.

UN

MAJ TIM MCDAVITT

MAIL CALL

I have a large cardboard box tucked away in the back of one of the cupboards in my garage. It doesn't have a label, or any markings to indicate what is inside it. Mind you, I'm the only one who ever goes searching for it anyway (normally after I've had a couple of drinks with an old mate or two). The box holds the tangible reminders of a 20 year Army career. The usual stuff; photos, newspaper clippings, reports (good and bad), an Army Golf pocket, various ID cards, magazines, old copies of the Army News that will come in handy one day, yearbooks and journals, VCR tapes (yes really!!), several diaries, a couple of CDs and yet more photos. There is also another smaller box in there, about the size of a large shoe box, and this one does have a label. Somalia. That's the box I dragged out to get some inspiration for this short article about my time in Mogadishu, "something to trigger the memories" as Doon puts it.

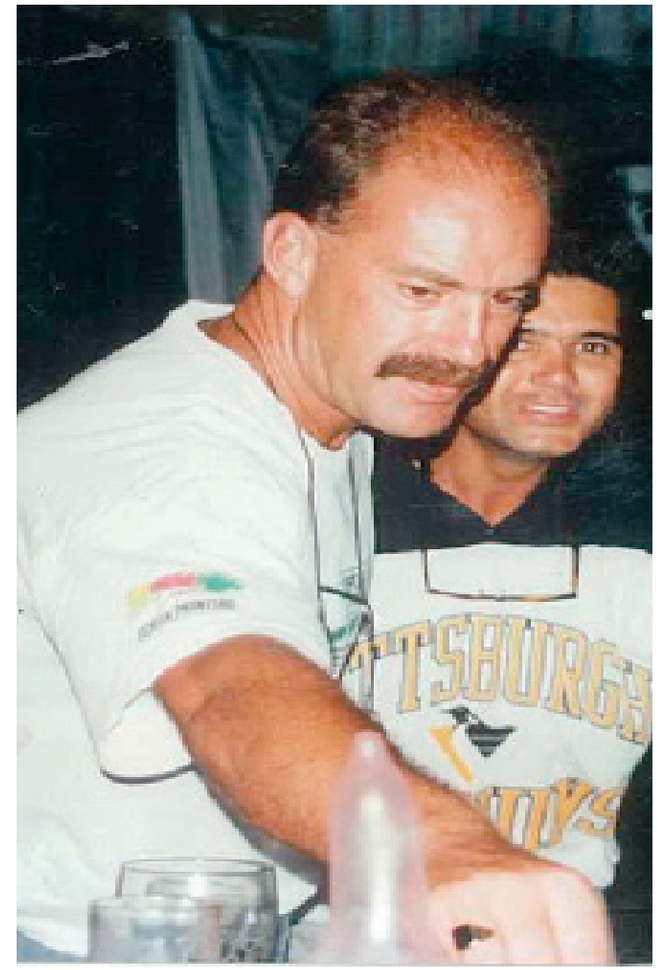
When I opened the box, I was immediately struck by the contents. It wasn't so much a matter of memories being triggered – the memories were all there. The box is full of letters! Six months worth. Every letter I received while in Somalia was in there, many from people I haven't heard from in years, and some of the letters were from people I didn't even know. Christmas cards, post cards, come home safely cards. They're all there. There is one letter from a 13 year old girl that I didn't even know, who wrote to me as part of her class Christmas project – 'support our troops overseas'.

There is a separate bundle of letters tied with ribbon, clearly not my handiwork! My wife kept every letter I wrote to her while I was away, dozens of them preserved intact in their original envelopes, hidden away in my Somalia shoe box, waiting for the day that one of us would stumble upon them and read them again. I didn't read them, but I was instantly transported back in time 20 years ago when I had written them. I remember clearly the joy of receiving mail of any description, and learned pretty quickly that the more letters you sent, the more you got back in return. (Getting mail from people who didn't even know you was an unexpected bonus!).

The regular 'mail call' ritual was eagerly anticipated by all of us. The letters provided a link to friends and family back home, and allowed us the opportunity to sit quietly in groups, or individually and reflect on the words, pictures and sentiments enclosed in those envelopes. Photos were passed around, stories shared, and we all learned a little bit more about each other. If nothing else, it gave us pause for reflection as to why we were here, what we hoped to achieve by being here, and the impact it had on those that were waiting for us at home. It gave personal value and meaning to our deployment. Mail call was both uplifting and enriching, and on many occasions provided balance and perspective, when none was immediately obvious.

The art of writing letters and sending cards is almost gone, now that we live in an age of email, instant messaging, skype, video conferencing, global roaming smart phones and pxting. I don't regret the convenience of modern technology, but I can't help feeling that the current generation of 'veterans' is missing out on something. Call me old fashioned, but there was something very valuable in receiving (and sending) mail while on deployment. Letters and photos get folded away into various pockets, to be dragged out when the time is right, regardless of mobile coverage, battery strength and global roaming plan.

And when it's all over, all you need is the right sized shoe box and the memories are locked away forever – or at least until the next reunion comes around.



MAJOR CHRIS BUDGE, RNZMP

CHIEF MILITARY SPOKESMAN

1994 for me was a complete change to do a job I had never done before in a country far far away but thankfully at least it was hot, not like some of our peers who were in Northern Europe. The preparation for the mission from a military standpoint I felt was efficient, complete and practiced. However from a job preparation, I had a half day at TVNZ in Auckland with the majority of the time being outside the Lion Brewery in South Auckland where it underwent a substantial remodelling, by fire!

So, the question, "How does one manage and control the Media?" The British Military prepared the world for concurrent and live military operations during the Falklands war. The US military learned lessons on battlefield relations with the media during Desert Storm through controlled groups and nearly transparent reporting. They thought that was how the future wars would be regarding media relations. They were wrong? In Saudi Arabia, the military controlled the media's access to troops and the battlefield. Reporters without media access were at considerable risk. In Somalia the opposite was true. In Mogadishu, reporters were able to go anywhere; the military was controlled by circumstances. The military's dilemma was to maintain credibility. For example, on 14 June 1993, a Cobra helicopter destroyed a BM-21 near the SNA enclave with a TOW missile. There were two problems with the engagement from a media point of view.

First, the unit insisted until late that night that only one TOW missile had been fired. Reporters were there, coincidently, and captured the whole event on videotape. There were clearly two missiles fired, and one went astray that hit a tea shop and killed a woman and girl. Admitting the next day that two missiles were fired helped to retain credibility.

Second, the BM-21 was a rusted hulk that reporters walked by frequently and that kids in the neighbourhood used as a playground equipment. Reporters accepted the explanation that the military, in most circumstances in Mogadishu, can only view these targets from a distance, that in was a threat and that by killing it, the BM-21 was no longer a threat.

The lesson is that reporters can go where we cannot. We can't control the military's lack of freedom in the future or the journalist's abundance of freedom. Instead, we cannot retain credibility with a media that can examine and scrutinise our operations in detail by adapting a practice of maximum disclosure with minimum delay. Assume that reporters already know one side of the facts and present all of the military's side of the facts quickly and accurately.

As a summary I learned in Somalia that the three legs of UNOSOM are viewed differently by the civilian side: The political unit = good news; the humanitarian unit = good news; the military unit = bad news.

My experience was mainly in the University Compound. The UNOSOM Troop strength was 25,934 on day one and 18,840 day last, even after the US withdrawal by 31 March 94. Force Commanders Lieutenant General Cevik Bir (provided naming rights to the Australian contingents "Bir Garden') and subsequently Lt Gen Datuk Aboo Samah Bin ABoo Bakar were 'in-charge'.

Being accommodated with and by the Australians with like minded professionals who enjoyed their lifestyle, the SAS team who thankfully assisted me when a case of heat stoke hit (yes not drinking enough water – my fault) and the same guys who help my soon-to-be-wife's (well the one at that time) brother when he went to Perth for a life saving operation to relieve a brain clog to insert a tube from his thigh to his brain. Thank you, he is still alive and well, but the wife has been returned to the Q Store for reissue!

My daily routine was to be quoted in major global newspapers, in radio pieces and television documentaries' and articles. Dealing with the media is really a game but it did take a while to realise but when there, started to enjoy myself. There is a global attitude they needed to know. We may have information they want but needed someone to confirm what had happened. I say 'we may' as quite often a reporter from the New York Times, BBC, one of the French Daily's or Christian Science Monitor would ask about a shooting or where some soldiers were doing something wrong. They would let me listen to the recording of the incident and then ask for comment. What was one meant to do when faced with that level of fact which had not made its way through from the international Operations HQ. Bugger...

The serious side of the mission was the work completed by the World Food Programme (WFP). From 1993 and beyond, as part of the UN's World Food Programme mandate, they provided food commodities as an essential contribution to the emergency relief operation, as well as rehabilitation and reconstruction with Somalia. Until the end of January 1994, a total of 44,000 metric tonnes of food commodities was distributed from Mogadishu to various destinations within the central and Southern regions and transported 111 convoys by UN Owned trucks. Unfortunately, the UN troops protecting those WFP convoys were challenged with their mission which "retarded the planned and expected take off

for the regions". I do not think that situation was ever resolved.

Being Military Police, I observed with interest the manner in which the UNOSOM Force Provost Marshal operated. I was able to retain some reporters from the period I was there and despite the operational incidents which occurred outside the walls of with the airport, University compound or the restive bases, the law must be maintained:

13 Nov 93 – Shooting Incident Involving Two Morris Catering Employees against Each Other on 27 Oct 93. Mr James Whitwell an Australian and Mr Brian Pettit, a New Zealander both civilians and employees of Morris Catering shot and injured each other at Mogadishu Seaport on 27 Oct 93.

All as a result of Pettit not assisting in push starting a vehicle controlled by Whitwell.

Apparently the New Zealander returned his weapon, but the Aussie did not...

16 May 1994 – Issue to Traffic Violations. A vehicle parked in the wrong place may attract a warning. Any subsequent violation may be followed by a withdrawal of UNOSOM drivers licence or Access ticket or both.

Good luck on exercising that on a tank driver as he picked up pizza from within the University Compound.

22 March 1994 – Somali Shop theft inside the University Compound. .....owner of the Somalia shop near BMS building inside the Embassy compound, lodged a complaint that her shop had been stolen last night.

Did anyone check the US vehicles who departed on the fleet within the week.

And of course there we numerous theft by the Brown and Root employees and the millions stolen and left in the sand to recover later?

A number of highlights (both good and bad) during my time:

- The first time the safety came off with the intent to exercise the 'enemy' Rules of Engagement.
- The Malaysian soldier who shot outside my office by a stray bullet that came from a Somali faction gun battle on the nearby streets of the city. The resulting dash in our vehicle to the medics with first aid being administered by Corporal Stringer (NZ). Plus, the thank you dinner received the next week by the Quick Response Group at the Malaysian Battalion.
- Donatella Lorch, a New York Times reporter with palatial accommodation in Nairobi where I enjoyed a very relaxing Sunday lunch after 90 days without a day off.
- The boredom was alleviated by hamburgers and pizza stalls (which disappeared with the US Forces) and the predominantly Israeli run outdoor bar/movie theatre in the centre of the Embassy compound.
- Loved the media visits to the US warships especially round their departure late March 94. The visit to the USNS Antares (T-AKR 294) and USS Portland (LSD-37) as they served fresh and creamy ice cream. Nothing like eating ice-cream moored off the coast of Somalia on a hot day.
- Dinner with the Indian Battalion in Baidoa and the Canadian Radio station whilst being the DJ for an evening four hour stint (virtually explaining and easiest way of arriving in NZ as a tourist and riding in a bus from North Cape to Bluff), I had 'Delhi Belly' from lunch and had to find a long running song so I could make a dash to the portaloos, but still came back to dead air time after a change in trousers.
- The hosting of the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Honourable Gareth Evans, QC. A truly momentous event especially the meal and drink provided.
- Assistance to the Associated Press and US Embassy in the release Tina Susman where news organisations all over the world agreed not to report the kidnapping during a 20-day captivity. The only time I was aware of their considered silence. "AP Foreign Editor Tom Kent said the wire service worked with the U.S. government, Somali intermediaries and representatives from three other countries he declined to identify."
- The first, and subsequent announcement about crocodile attacks and shark sightings.
- The Aussies who deployed to Rwanda to deliver their APC's of the genocide, and
- The NZ Colonel who woke us every morning by his substantially and auditable grunting as he completed his weight training.

And of course I cannot ignore the visit by Trisha Stratford, 60 Minutes (Independent TVNZ Reporter). In her book 'blood money - the incredible true story of David Morris and the tragedy of Somalia'. She and her cameraman Vaughan arrived without notice and the US Marines wanted her out. On page 40 she correctly states "Luckily Kiwi Major Chris Budge, had been appointed Deputy to the head of military public relations and he authenticated our story". I prevented the US Marines kicking her out,

until I did.

On page 83 she starts the story after witnessing and filming an incident at K4 where the US military wanted her film, but she refused. She highlights the US military briefing that day did not advise it even occurred. “From the moment David Morris knocked on my door at six o’clock the next morning, I know the tide had turned.... Our position was precarious; we were in the middle of a war zone, dealing with a brainwashed military who certainly took themselves and the situation seriously. In the warehouse office seated behind the desk was Major Chris Budge. The onerous task of disciplining me had fallen on the Kiwi’s shoulders. The session was swift if not just. Without any preliminaries, Budge read me my rights, which basically told me I didn’t have any. Budge further informed me that as I was caught filming anywhere in Mogadishu or attempted to leave the Morris compound without a US escort, I would be arrested and sent packing on the first plane out. That was it. The case was closed with no discussion or chance for a defence.” She flew out to Marka the next day courtesy of David Morris but she finishes the section “On the desk in the warehouse Chris Budge had purposely left a military press release for me to read. UNOSOM deeply regretted the loss of life from the unfortunate K4 incident and expressed their condolences to the bereaved families.”

ANZAC DAY 1994
ASC3
THIRD AUSTRALIAN SERVICE CONTINGENT
SOMALIA
MEMORANDUM
TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION LIST
FROM: COMASC/COMNZC
DATE: APRIL 1994
SUBJECT: ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE - 25 APRIL 1994
KENNARD
NEW ZEALAND

WO2 KEN HARE

U3 BRANCH, HQ UNOSOM AT THE US EMBASSY COMPOUND.

My time in the U3 Branch, HQ UNOSOM in 1994 was many things, exciting, exhilarating, frightening, rewarding, frustrating and in hindsight one hell of an experience. Never in my 36 year military career have I been so involved in so many intelligence related disciplines all at the same time. Developing a collection plan trying to figure out what was actually going on, who was involved, when and where it was likely to happen, and how it would be done. All at a time when the UN operation was effectively closing down and not many people were willing to leave their bases to get the information. Having said that, there were those who's enthusiasm ensured the battle for information was maintained. The Joint Operation Centre (JOC) provided a running log of events over many areas of Somalia which allowed for assessment and analysis. Whilst my main focus was Mogadishu, reported information from Baido, Balad, Marka, Afgoy and Out of Area (OOA) would often impact local events. Each day I spent a little time marking the talc over the Mogadishu map in my office with the reported incidents which helped in identify which group was controlling various areas of town. I produced INTREPS on a daily basis and confirmed with the USLO and others the reporting process. I also transmitted those INTREPS daily direct to UNHQ New York (a great bunch of senior officers at the New York end supported my efforts). When the UNOSOM Commander became upset and ordered me not to provide New York with a copy (they the officers requested I still send them a copy). Locally, I employed some Marine Corps personnel to assist in identifying the true number technicals around town by simply using (dentology, rustology and the fitted weapon systems). Once identified each one would be given a code name so that its movements could be tracked. I took on the role of interrogator travelling with my Somali interpreter locally and in other areas of operation. Notable was 22/23 August 94 when we travelled by light plane to the airstrip in Baladogle home of the Indian Bde. Our task to interrogate 4 prisoners captured after the killing of 9 Indian soldiers in an ambush on a Brown and Root Convoy. Air reconnaissance became part of my role after several sightings of a BM21 multiple rocket launcher during an attack on the Zimbabwe Coy in Belet-uen and again after the town of Hxar close to the Ethiopian border was attacked. A BM21 would have posed a catastrophic threat to UN personnel in Mogadishu. It proved to be one of the longest chopper rides my 3 SAS minders and I had ever done. Liaison was another string to the bow, discussing and sharing information with good old Jim at SIOC, Andy at CISE, Col Steel the USLO, and some CIA and DIA personnel who provided me some great background stuff. Many more of course, but time has affected the memory banks.

One funny episode was being introduced to the Pakistanis as Sergeant Major Hare, the Pakistanis missed the Sergeant bit and I was known as "Major Hare" and invited to their officers mess for dinner. My habit was never to wear rank, which proved helpful when I was captured after the Ambush on 18 July 1994. To get a feel for what was happening outside the HQ and meet the players I spent a great deal of time out on the ground. For the most part Mogadishu following the drawdown of troops was like the wild west . Most of the city was a no go area, which proved my undoing on 18 July 94 when my boss the CMIO railed against my advice, which was to result in our 12 man 3 vehicle patrol suffering 2 KIA and 7 WIA (still angry about that one). Resistance to interrogation techniques proved valuable in my subsequent capture. I also discovered the value of adrenalin. However, the trauma was to take its toll and only great support provided by Lt Col Clive Lilly and the folks at ANZAC house helped me get back in the saddle. Clive noted I lost weight for a few days and reacted badly to noise (he nearly had to scrape me off the ceiling when a B10 was fired alongside the Embassy wall) so I had a chat with the Doc. Clive was even more concerned when 5 days after the ambush I went back on the road. Honestly, it's not what I wanted to do, but I still had a job to do. However, Clive did get me to take 4 days R&R in Mombasa, I remember drinking a lot in that period (it did not help but was good fun). Which reminds me, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Recreation for me was running round the Embassy compound early in the morning and drinking a bottle of Scotch with Capt Rick one night a week. I also discovered the US Embassy staff bar and weaved my way to bed several times.

In the end, what the Somalis failed to achieve in their ambush… a bloody hole in the road at the Embassy achieved snapping my ankle (the SAS guys I was running with carried me back). The XRay identified I would need surgery, and Clive came to my assistance again as he did not want the Pakistanis to operate (to many post op infections). A back slab was applied whilst Clive and the Doc plotted to get me to healthier care. Everything was against us, even the doctors in Nairobi were on strike. Finally, it was decided to MEDIVAC me back to NZ. Before leaving I had many visits from well wishers and was given a number of gifts. With a pocketful of pain killers I was give some royal treatment, a chopper

ride to the airport, a Learjet ride to Nairobi then business class all the way to Auckland (beats travelling in a C130). The air hostess kept my glass full (did not need the pain killers). Looking back it was a blast, for all we were up the creek without a paddle the ANZACS demonstrated what it was to be a professional. In adversity, everyone no matter what they thought got on with the job.

In the wash up it transpires that the UN had spent $4 Billion Dollars in Somalia. As a mission it was a qualified success on the humanitarian front. However, its military mission was a failure and its political aim of bringing law and order and stable government to Somalia was a complete disaster. History is always our judge.

Ken

LTCOL CLIVE LILLEY

I arrived into Somalia in March 1994 to assume the Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence appointment and take over from Charlie Lott as the NZ SNO. Having flown up from Mombasa courtesy of the Russians, Charlie met me at Mogadishu Airport and I still recall the wrecked Somalia MIGs at the northern end of the runway.

During my eight month tour the NZ Sup Pl repatriated, the NZ HQ UNOSOM II Detachment personnel rotated and then the Detachment presence was reduced, HQ UNOSOM II moved from the University Compound out to the Airport for a short period, and on 16 November 1994 Rick McDonald, Lou Gardiner and myself departed (again courtesy of the Russians) bringing to an end NZ's contribution to UNOSOM II.

UNOSOM II was a Chapter Seven 'Peace Making' operation and operated in a country where neither a government nor duly elected national leaders existed. This made UNOSOM II unique when compared to other UN missions of the time. The fundamental difference between UNOSOM II in 1993 and UNOSOM II in 1994 was the Mandate. The 1993 UNOSOM II had the authority to produce a military solution and openly conducted military operations against militia forces. The 1994 UNOSOM II military forces were only authorised to conduct military operations in support of humanitarian operations.

Sadly more UN peacekeepers were killed and wounded in UNOSOM II than any other UN mission apart from the Korean War. As at 15 November 1994 the UNOSOM II figures for WIA (combat and non-combat) was 321, with KIA (combat and non-combat) totalling 120. Of these figures Pakistan suffered the most with 132 casualties. The US Rangers lost 18 KIA and 57 WIA operating alongside UNOSOM II.

While I did not attend the HQ LF Comd pre-deployment training those Detachment staff that did reported the weekend as being comprehensive and well conducted. So at least they knew what they were heading into.

The HQ UNOSOM II Detachment consisted of seven appointments as follows:

Deputy Chief, Military Information (Intelligence) Branch

Deputy Chief, Logistics Branch

Public Affairs Adviser (Military Spokesman) to the Force Commander

SNCO Analyst, Military Information (intelligence) Branch

WO Clerk, Personnel Branch

Cpl Clerk for the Public Affairs Adviser, and

Cpl Clerk in the Logistics Branch.

HQ UNOSOM II made its first attempt to reduce troops in the mission area in September 1994. On the HQ the last three appointments above were not replaced on repatriation at the end of individual tours.

On arrival I found the Sup Pl to be in very good heart and punching well above its weight. Contributing to the success was the well balanced mix of specialist personnel within the Pl and the provision of an infantry section also significantly increased the Pl's flexibility.

As Charlie Lott records, it was good to get out of the University Compound and spend time at Taniwha Hill to enjoy the company of those there and of course the food!

Another real challenge at the time of the Sup Pl's departure was to identify with NZ what items of equipment and stores needed to be returned and what was to be handed over to the UN. I thought Sup Pl staff, through the various rotations, would have kept accurate records. Wrong. We tried our best to get it sorted but in the end … who knows? I think there may be a water treatment machine with various supporting stores, all stamped 'NZDF' still chugging away somewhere in Somalia. Or maybe it is rusting in the sand being lapped by the Indian Ocean?

I remember the following key 'issues' with soldiers in the Sup Pl and the HQ Detachment:

The time taken to get answers from NZ around pay concerns

The time it took DHL to get the mail to Somalia

The peacetime EHA allowance being applied in a UN Chapter Seven mission and how it was to be applied.

Fragmentation vests arriving on the June C130 when ballistic vests were requested.

The NZ communications systems available to call home to family

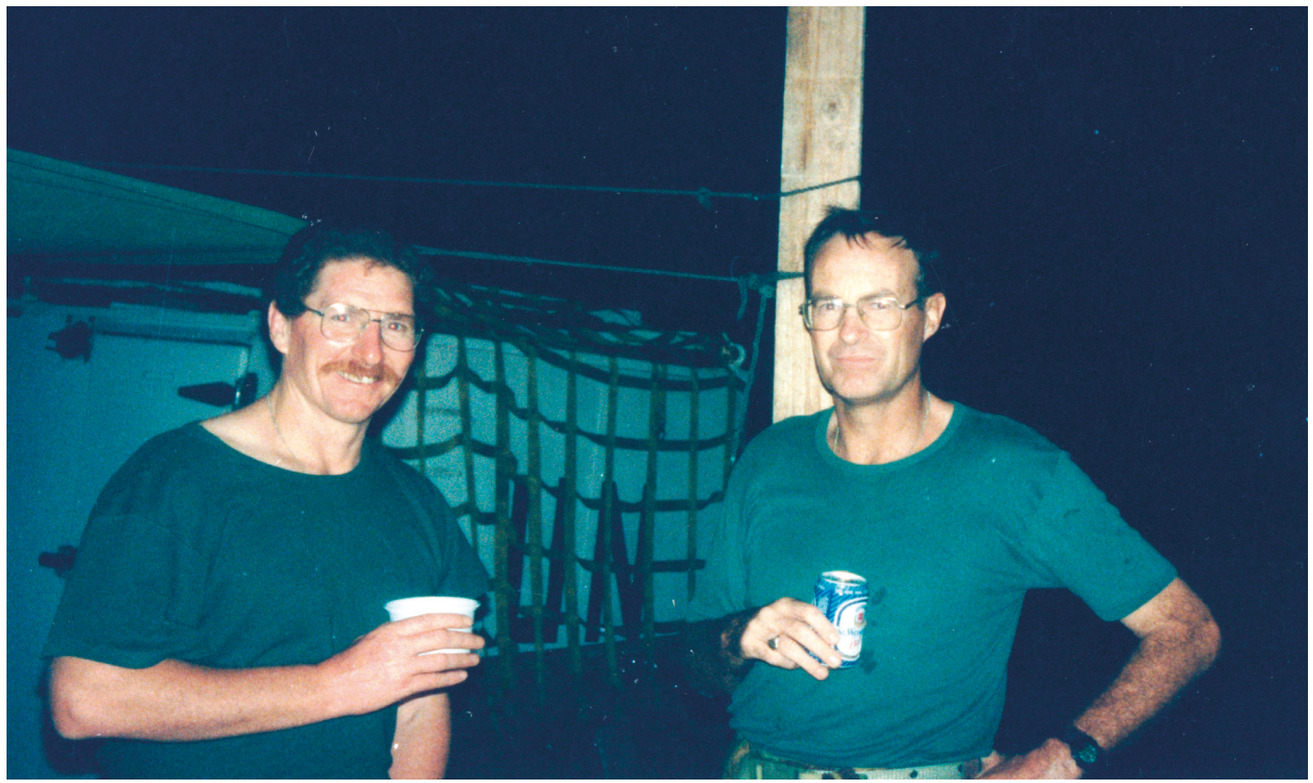
THE UNIVERSITY COMPOUND.

While the HQ 'Kiwis' continued to live in ANZAC House, Lou Gardiner and myself were required to live inside the 'inner' compound and alongside the military HQ building. We journeyed to ANZAC house daily for a variety of reasons including our daily PT and the Sunday night dinner. In fact PT was keenly looked forward to and the two of us spent many hours running around the Compound perimeter. And try as he might, Lou always came home in the Number 2 position. We tried to get Cpl Russell Stringer to run with us but no, his PT was the lat

pull down weights – and very good he was at it too.

On one particular day there had been some shooting around and about for most of the day and as we walked the 400 metres or so from the Inner compound to ANZAC House we remarked how empty the roads were. When we arrived at ANZAC we meet Australians and Kiwis in full battle order and 'hunkered' down while rounds passed over and around ANZAC House. Such was the PT competition!

Charlie Lott passed over to me a US Humvee that he had somehow 'acquired'. What a treat! Road travel to and from the Airport had now to be in a packet of three vehicles with at least one automatic weapon. The Humvee was well and truly 'tested' on these runs. And being a wide vehicle and me just coming to grips with travelling at speed through a Pakistani checkpoint chicane, and I recall clearly the 44 gallon drum 'clipped' by the Humvee and last seen travelling like a rocket three foot off the ground and heading towards a Pakistani soldier. As the security situation deteriorated the use of vehicles to do the trip was curtailed and helicopter 'shuttles' took over.



As HQ UNOSOM II staff numbers wound down and the small skeleton staff of the military HQ moved across to the Airport to take up short-term operations from there, the problem was what to do with the Humvee? There was talk of the last remaining vehicles being driven off the cliffs into the Indian Ocean below, or draining the engine oil out and seizing the engine. We even talked about getting it into a container somehow and just getting it out of Somalia in the first instance and then work out how to get it back to NZ. In the end it was it was left in the University Compound in a useless state. It deserved a better end.

The day in September when the US pulled out all their remaining staff and military from UNOSOM II, was something like General McArthur returning to the Philippines during World War II. It was an amphibious operation and the landing took place at the southern end of the airport. An interesting spectacle.

Rick McDonald, the Public Affairs spokesman, had time in his day to 'pontificate' and write poetry. A highlight of each evening was catch-up with the day's prose effort.

All Kiwis in the Mission were held in high regard by the Force Commander of the time, Gen Aboo. Our years of exercising in the State of Johore and with the Malaysians in NZ made for an enjoyable professional relationship. Lou and I were reasonably fortunate to travel with Gen Aboo around the Area of Operations and we saw first-hand the challenges he faced with tasking various contingents in order to achieve the military aspects of

the mandate. He was a capable Force Commander who faced significant operational impediments. We both enjoyed working with and for him.

The Hare Incident. A task of the Military Information (Intelligence) Branch was to conduct 'intelligence patrols' in and around Mogadishu City and the surrounding areas escorted by security vehicles. This was completed by well-armed road patrols going to specific locations on certain days. I went on a number of these patrols and as well as being as well armed as one could be, security for them was a responsibility shared between the Malaysian Battalion, the Australian Special Air Service and our own infantry section lead by Corporal Douglas.

On 18 July 1994 WO2 Ken Hare, NZIC, also working in the Military Information (Intelligence) Branch was on such a patrol in Northern Mogadishu that was commanded by the Chief of the Branch. The patrol was ambushed and WO2 Hare, along with others on the patrol, were captured. The fire fight that WO2 Hare survived killed two UNOSOM colleagues and wounded four others. He and the surviving others were held for approximately 11 hours.

An upshot of the ambush was I took over as the Chief, Military Information (Intelligence) Branch as the resulting UN ambush inquiry had my boss sent back to his country.

As mentioned earlier, in early November HQ UNOSOM II vacated the University Compound and the remaining staff moved to accommodation of the eastern side of the airport reasonably close to Taniwha Hill. The accommodation was not that pleasant for a variety of reasons and the three of us left were keen to get out of the area.

We were scheduled to leave on 17 November followed a few days later by the remaining Australians. The very small HQ component left, including Gen Aboo were scheduled to leave a few days after this. In short, in the space of 2-3 weeks the UN Mission of UNOSOM II limped out of Somalia with the world essentially turning its back on the country.

I wonder if other NZ military personnel who served in Somalia, from those first involved in November 1992, who gave of their best and saw the tremendous effort and resources offered and given by the international community, think like me of the wasted opportunity for Somalia. Anyway those were my thoughts as I climbed the aircraft stairs as the last UNOSOM II Kiwi to leave.

Clive

THE AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

LTCOL GARY CONQUEST

FINANCIAL ADVISOR ASC UNOSOM MOGADISHU SOMALIA 1993

It is my great pleasure to write a few words on the involvement of the spirit of friendship that existed between the Australian and New Zealand contingents serving in Mogadishu.

The spirit of cooperation could have been described the same as that of the Anzac spirit that dates back to WW1. I was part of the Australian contingent responsible for Movement Control of all resources that moved by land, sea and air. I arrived with the main ASC body on 7 January 1993 together with a NZ Supply Company at Mogadishu airport. The UN chartered DC3 took all of us including our Kiwi friends to Mogadishu from NZ to Sydney to Oman to Mogadishu with a very short stopover at night at Oman where we were limited to the Airport Café area.

On arrival we quickly evacuated ourselves to two sites within the Airport boundary. The NZ Supply Company set themselves up on a large sand dune with a beautiful sea view and called their location "Taniwha Hill". Not far from the Hill we were given a patch of ground surrounded by Italians, Norwegians and Turks.

Many a BBQ ensued between both camps whilst the Aussies were stationed within the Airport. In the initial stages Tent City was very meagre until we found out the pros and cons of survival in a UN environment. Things improved dramatically with a washing machine, electric stove and a very well-constructed BBQ. Once we set ourselves up reciprocal BBQs' cemented our friendships in such a tragic part of the world.

Anzac Day provided us all a respite on work and after the ceremony more celebrations took up most of the day. After we tried to feed the Pakistani soldiers with bacon and eggs I returned to Tent City to be the sole Duty Officer. I ended up the only sober one and sore heads were everywhere. A few were overtaken with the donkey race on a full stomach. We never did find out where the 2 donkeys came from. The next Aussie/Kiwi get together on any scale was the farewell to the Advance party of ASC 1 who had arrived in Mog in November 1992. The local Somali population would have been totally mystified when the Advance party were provided with a Haka by guests. A great night on 3 June 1993 that further cemented the friendship between us.

Around March 1993 we had moved camp to this large residence surrounded by locals and not far from Aideed's area but about a 5 minute drive from the US Embassy where we eventually resited ourselves due to the residence being targeted by Somali locals. This occurred in late June 1993.

It was not long after our newly established home in a motor mechanic building, that we had the company of LTCOL Charlie Lott, WO2 Graham Smith, WO2 Nicki Davis (née Abernathy), CPL Kas Silk (nee Palmer) and CPL Delanie Halton staying with us as their duties were involved within the US Embassy compound.

Down at the airport our Movement Control people began living on "Taniwha Hill", a unique arrangement that worked well as due to the hostilities, safe daily passage to and from the airport was tenuous at the best of times. The Aussie visitor numbers grew some more when the Australian Air Traffic Controllers arrived to organise the safe movement of all air traffic with the UN, US and NGO organisations. It was an Aussie invasion to "Taniwha Hill" to say the least.

On a regular basis we all got together mainly over a BBQ. "Taniwha Hill" was now likened to an Aussie takeover with the number of Aussies living on the hill. At Anzac House the Kiwi's staying there were just as welcomed into the group. Many a shout (Beers) occurred prior to and after dinner reminiscing over the dramas of the day.

Things heated up at Anzac House when a 60mm Mortar hit the roof on 13/9/93 at around 10.30am. Pieces of the mortar were collected and mounted onto a timber backing plate; its current location is unknown.

Interaction between Kiwis and Aussies took on various forms of entertainment including a wedding of sorts.

Poor Nicky did not know what was happening. If Nicky was back in NZ on this day it would have been her actual wedding day. So as to not let the day go unrecognised, a celebrant was procured (our CO) a stand-in husband of sorts was acquired (Fred Williamson) as well as a best man and a maid of honour. So a very entertaining, very illegal wedding took place with a gallery of fellow contingent members. I do not know what Nicky thought of the impromptu wedding but everyone else thought it was a great event for a very well revered member in true Anzac spirit.

Australia House/Anzac House began in a mechanic's workshop within the US Embassy and not far from the US Special Forces home. This became our 'home' when activities around our temporary local compound became heated and safety of the Contingent was compromised around June 1993. The HQ NZ group of around 5 soldiers (Lt Col, WO1, WO2 and 2 Cpls) joined us becoming a part of our team within the House. Everyone got along with each other very well with everyone assisting in the maintenance of the surroundings such

as cooking, cleaning and drinking and drinking all medicinally of course.

In essence, we all looked after and assisted each other whilst in such a hostile environment. I personally enjoyed my 2 tours of Mogadishu as Financial Advisor, Postmaster, and Interflora representative as well as many other non-descript jobs that came along. From January to July 1993 I was with the 1st ASC contingent that saw command of current and future contingents being elevated from Major to Lieutenant Colonel. After the mortar round hitting the roof, my replacement was medivac back to Australia and I was asked to return to complete his tour in early October not long after the Battle of Mogadishu (Blackhawk Down) where 18 US Rangers lost their lives. Within a week of getting the call from COMASC Lieutenant Colonel Jones, I was again briefed on the situation in Mogadishu and off I went in a Qantas flight to Harare arriving in Mogadishu 2 days after leaving my home in Canberra. On my arrival in Mog I was greeted by COMASC and RSM Pete Evans both shaking their heads saying why made you accept coming back for a second tour which would end in December 1993; a smile in reply was all they received.

In summary, I will never forget the Aussie and Kiwi members that I had the pleasure of meeting and serving with in such a desolate country. I believe it made me a different person by the experience as it probably changed a lot of other people's perspective on life. But I was richly rewarded by serving with some very fine people who shared a similar experience of a lifetime.

CPO MICHAEL APPERLEY

My potted history of the month I spent on Taniwha Hill.

My tenure at Taniwha Hill was over the period of the Black Hawk Down battle and the search for Mike Durrant incidents in late September - mid October 1993. I was working at the Mog airfield with the Aussie Movement Control Unit looking after personnel and freight distribution utilising the UN aviation assets.

Suffice to say, as with all AUS/NZ overseas deployments, the time and the memories I have of this period were ones highlighted by friendship and the professionalism displayed by the Kiwi's.

The vivid memories that I have over this period were many but the ones that seem to stick in my mind were those associated with long days working in and around the air and sea ports loading and unloading UN aircraft. The nights (in addition to the fine Kiwi hospitality (food and beverages)) were often punctuated with constant mortar attacks on the airfield and spending regular (almost nightly) periods of time in the palatial bunkers of Taniwha Hill. Each night we spent time in the bunkers I was privileged to meet new and interesting characters from the Kiwi detachment, it was so dark you often had no idea who you were talking to in the bunkers but it didn't matter, as we were all in the same boat so to speak. My boss at the time was Navy Lieutenant Richard "Dallas" Donnelly and he some how each night made his way to the Command bunker during these periods to link up with the Kiwi Major (who's name escapes me) to provide updates on what was happening and let us know when it was all clear. When Durrant had been captured I recall hearing from my tent on Taniwha Hill, circling helo's of the US Army telling him (through speakers) that they were not going to leave him behind and were also playing

music to him to keep his spirits up.

For many of us (Navy and RAAF) Taniwha Hill was the first time we had come under direct fire and slept under canvas - the sand, wind and the occasional haka (for birthdays) were a great experience. With all of the above activities going on we never seemed to get much sleep as I recall. It was definitely not all smooth sailing and from our position on the Hill, we also witnessed many fallen comrades from the various contingents leaving in the back of national and UN aircraft to be repatriated to their countries of origin.

I hope that this may evoke some memories for some.

Good luck with the reunion I hope it is a raging success.

AUSTRALIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS GARY WILSON AND STEW MURPHY

RAAF ATC UNOSOM II – OCTOBER 1993 TO OCTOBER 1994

From October 1993 to October 1994, the RAAF deployed two contingents of Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) in support of UNISOM II. The RAAF Controllers provided Air Traffic Control Services at Mogadishu International Airport, Somalia, where ATC services were provided in an environment made immensely complex by the extensive traffic, austere conditions and heightened ground threat. The deployment was undertaken during a period of very high aviation activity with up to 1000 aircraft movements daily during the first six months and continuing with busy traffic throughout the 12-month deployment. Up to 27 countries were flying aircraft in support of the United Nations mission in Somalia, with the full range of aircraft types including military helicopters (H60, CH53, CH47,CH46, AH1,H500, UH1 Iroquois, LYNX, PUMA, Gazelle, Alouette, OH58, OH58D, A-129 Mangusta), UN helicopters (Mi-17, Mi 26 & B212), light/medium/heavy military/UN transports (C12, G222, P3, C130, DC10, L-1011, L-100, C5A, C141, IL76, AN32, AN124, B747), AC130 Gun Ships, light/medium/heavy RPT jets & UN Charter (B200, C208, DC9, TU134, TU154, B707, B757, B767), and carrier aircraft (FA18 Hornet, F-14 Tomcat & AV-8B Harrier Jump Jet). The ATC services consisted of both an Aerodrome & Approach Procedural Control Service, which at times was also linked to a RADAR Control Service being provided by the US Navy off the coast – Initially USS Abraham Lincoln then USS America.

ATC duties in this hot and humid region, with the constant threat of attacks on and around the airport perimeter, provided significant challenges for the Controllers on a daily basis. Additionally, with the daily RPG and SAM threat to departing and arriving aircraft, controllers were required to be extremely flexible in the services they provided. Quick reaction deployments by H60 Blackhawk , AH1 and Medical helicopters were a daily occurrence requiring careful but immediate action by controllers to afford priority to the military operation. RAAF ATC provided air traffic control services on a daily basis between 6am to 6pm. Outside these hours the airport was closed to flying operations other than airborne protection elements.

The mission/task assigned to the first ATC contingent was to take over daytime ATC operations from the US Army and work with an International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) sponsored program to re-train Somali nationals who had been working as controllers but became displaced from ATC operations during the

civil war. Additionally, the RAAF would also assist ICAO and the UN to resurrect the airways/air-route system in order for Somalia collect revenue again from flights arriving, departing or transiting through Somalia airspace.

The US Army had been providing control services for a period of time prior to the arrival of the RAAF and therefore ATC practices and procedures had already been implemented at Mogadishu International Airport. These procedures were largely in accordance with ICAO, however, RAAF ATC reviewed the US system and made some necessary amendments in order to improve operational efficiency and aviation safety. The first ATC team of 10 controllers was accommodated at the New Zealand camp at Taniwha Hill and the second contingent from April 1994 at an Australian camp constructed on the site of a vacated US State Department facility.

The original airport Control Tower was seriously damaged through inter-clan fighting on and around the airfield causing major damage to the airport terminal building infrastructure. Prior to the arrival of first ATC contingent, a temporary Control Tower was erected utilising several shipping containers and located to the north west of the main south ramp. After approximately one month a second Control Tower was installed 200m from the old Tower and consisted of a portable Control Tower in a trailer that was lifted and placed on top of shipping containers. Although the second Tower was configured with more radios and specific ATC equipment, the controllers experienced frequent maintenance/ serviceability issues with the communications system requiring frequent maintenance support from the US Army. The UN had also called for a suitable tender to build a new Airport Control Tower at the rear of the main aircraft apron within the airport terminal building which was also being repaired/rebuilt. Israel won the tender and the new Control Tower was constructed over a five-month period and commissioned for use in April 1994. The second Tower was then decommissioned and returned to the UN.

With the increase in inter-clan fighting close to the airport boundary, the new Control Tower had been hit with 50 Cal rounds on two occasions, however, no injuries occurred. Additionally, the airfield was constantly under threat and attack by mortars landing in various areas around the airfield. However, with the daily threat and constraints associated with small arms fire, random mortar attacks, combined with the high level of aircraft activity, aviation safety was never greatly compromised. At the end of the RAAF deployment, the RAAF controllers earned great respect from the full spectrum of civilian and military pilots supporting UN operations in Somalia, including the UN Commander and ICAO.

AUSTRALIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

GARY WILSON AND FLEUR JAMES

THE RAAF ATC CONTINGENT & LIVING WITH OUR ANZAC MATES - THE KIWIS

The first of two RAAF Air Traffic Control (ATC) contingents departed Australia on 7 October 1993 for their six-month deployment in Mogadishu, Somalia. Stopping off for a couple of nights in Nairobi to acclimatize and overcome jetlag, the team departed Nairobi on 11 October on a UN chartered Russian AN32 direct to Mogadishu where the arrival was something that the team will long remember.

The officer in charge of the Australian Services Contingent was LTCOL Trevor Jones (Army Avn), and he was most impressed when the aircraft ramp opened to reveal ten RAAF individuals fully kitted up, looking battle ready and somewhat enthusiastic to be arriving in a fully operational military environment.

The extent of military hardware and personnel located at Mogadishu airport on arrival was an awesome sight indeed. Military personal ranged from US Special Forces to other countries supporting UNOSOM II. Aircraft on the main southern tarmac ranged from AC130 Gunships, to both civilian and military transport aircraft such as C130 Hercules, C141 Starlifter, Boeing 747, Antonov 124 & C5A Galaxy. The USS Abraham Lincoln was also positioned just of the coast with F14 & F18s operating overhead Mogadishu. Another 18,000 US troops had also recently arrived due to the recent escalation in the conflict between the UN protection forces and Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. The tension and hostility from the horrific 2 day battle of Bakara Market could still be felt. Additionally, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant was still being held captive after his Blackhawk was shot down during the US led operation to capture General Aideed and his senior leaders resulting in 18 US Rangers being killed and 85 wounded in the enduring two day battle. It was also reported that between 1500-3000 Somali's were also killed.

Consequently, the threat of attack was still very real and after an initial situation briefing, the team was immediately shuffled into soft-skin UN vehicles with armoured vehicles (APC & HUMV) taking up the front and rear of the convoy. LTCOL Jones directed the team to have weapons at the ready and visible through the windows, to look mean, and to be ready to shoot in self-defence.

The weather conditions on arrival were quite hot and humid and much sweat was pouring out of the group along with their minds running at a million miles an hour as the convoy departed the airport. The route would be through the streets of Mogadishu city to the Australian & New Zealand Contingents' Headquarters (initially known as Australia House then later ANZAC House) which was located in the UN Compound at the top end of Mogadishu city. The route itself was known to be quite dangerous and the 40-minute drive from the airport provided good cause for concern given the significant escalation of the conflict one week prior and the Battle of Mogadishu being in headlines around the world.

The team arrived safely at ANZAC House and everyone enjoyed a few very cold drinks with the 50 or so other Australian Defence Force personnel who were deployed to provide a range of operations, movements, and transport support to the UN mission. It was a great opportunity to meet the rest of the Aussies in Mogadishu, however the ATC team would be based on the airport so it was just an overnighter in ANZAC House then back to the airport on 12 October.

The RAAF ATCs were accommodated with the New Zealand contingent who seemed very happy to have us as we were warmly welcomed to Taniwha Hill with the traditional haka ceremony. Our Kiwi mates had already established a marquee liberated from the US Rangers for the guys, and there was a 14x14 tent for the two girls. The only job left was to protect the site against possible small arms fire and mortar attack so the team set to the task of sandbagging; a sweaty task which took several days. Next up was to build a bunker that could accommodate the team in the event of mortar attacks. The double-walls and double-roof saw the creation affectionately, and proudly, referred to as 'The Super Bunker', the RAAFies quite pleased with their group's achievement.

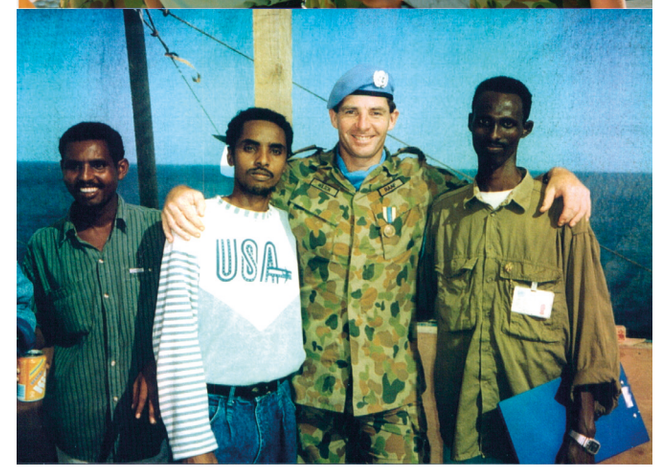
Other creations evolved over the first few days/weeks with creative minds hard at work to think of ways to make life a little more comfortable. The team borrowed one of the Kiwi vehicles and collected all sorts of stuff that eventually turned into the infamous 'Roo Bar'. Immediately becoming the 'stuff of legends', the Roo Bar was a focal point for fun at Mogadishu Airport with visitors from other camps coming to Taniwha Hill to relax and socialise. Much fun was had and many lasting friendships were made. A notable event was when some of the ATCs joined in with the Kiwi soccer team for the UN soccer match. Described as an awesome day out and in the great ANZAC spirit - Stewy Murphy even carried the New Zealand team sign! Although he did confirm it was just for that occasion only as he will always be cheering for the Ozzies in the Rugby World Cup!!

The famed ANZAC spirit was palpable, with such great Kiwi hosts the Aussies always felt welcome in Taniwha Hill. Catering was well looked after and the friendly Kiwi cooks provided fantastic fresh cooked meals every day.

It was also great to see everyone pitch in to lay hangis on special occasions such as Christmas and Waitangi Day. We really were treated to some unique customs and traditions and felt honored to be included.

Part way through our six-month tour there was a changeover of Kiwi contingents, we were now the old guard but again we were made to feel more than welcome by our new hosts. Throughout our tour our Kiwi hosts did all the other odd camp jobs, and whilst we did feel somewhat coddled, we are thankful that we didn't have to burn off the toilet waste! In about February 1994, with the withdrawal of the US forces, the defensive posture within the camp was increased. Fences were rebuilt or reinforced, a guard picquet established, and a curfew introduced. Perhaps they had little faith in the infantry skills of the RAAFies, as the Kiwi team provided camp security while we slept safely in our tents. This did enable us to concentrate on our Air Traffic Control duties though, and given the complexities of controlling at Mogadishu Airport this was a Godsend.

Every member of the Aussie ATC team can attest that Mogadishu was the busiest airport that any of them had ever had the challenge of controlling. With everything from helicopters H500, Blackhawk, AH1, Mangusta, CH47, Mi17, Mi26, CH53 & CH46, to light/medium fixed wing Cessna Caravan, G222, C130 through to heavy lift transports AN124, IL76, B747 & C5, the traffic was at times complex and hectic. Squeezing over 1000 moves into a 12-hour period with only one runway, on a daily basis, is an achievement of which the team will forever be very proud; and it really justified the UN's request for Australia to provide the specialist RAAF ATC skills the team possessed.



The ATC team picked up the additional and quite unrelated responsibility to support the UN forces by managing a shark net at the cove. A number of UN personnel from various contributing nations were killed by sharks while enjoying some down time at the beach,

so the UN put out a tender to get shark nets installed across the 'beach head'. The Queensland Department of Fisheries won the contract and the three-man team was accommodated at Taniwha Hill. They installed the shark net, trained up some Somali fisherman to replenish the baits and maintain the net, and handed over the management of the Somalis, their boat, and equipment to the ATC team. Reversing a boat trailer wasn't a strong point for some of the team members…

The first Aussie ATC contingent were due to head home in late April 1994 and, as their replacements were also bringing an airfield management team and force protection section, the decision was made to establish a separate Australian camp. Fortunately, the US State Department personnel were just about to withdraw and would be leaving their nearby camp as it stood. With airconditioned caravans and tents, demountable ablution blocks, and flushing toilets, it was too good an offer to pass up, so the ATC team took over tenancy rights and secured the camp for the second rotation. Holding this ground however, required occupancy, and it's testament to the hospitality of our Kiwi hosts that the ATC team didn't want to move. Instead we established a picquet, and only stayed overnight when we were rostered to do so.

The final two weeks of the ATC team's tour saw a marked escalation in hostile activity. 50 cal machine gun rounds frequently tore through the camp, and mortars were landing on the beach and in the water. Aircraft movements were disrupted due to the risks of operating in such conditions. On our final day we sat in the Roo Bar waiting patiently until it was time to head down to the north ramp to board the aircraft which would take us out of Mogadishu for the final time. We were sitting on the ground behind the protection of our sandbag wall when Stewy Murphy, invoking Murphy's Law said, "geez we'd be unlucky if a round ricocheted off those poles" (the cross beams forming the roof of the Roo Bar). Not two minutes later that is exactly what happened! "That's it! We're going!" exclaimed Brocky, and we weaved our way, keeping a low profile below the sandbag walls, to the low end of the NZ camp and then down to the north ramp where we eventually boarded a C130 to depart the MOG. That was it, we were gone.

Taniwha Hill, 'the Kiwi Camp' was our home and a safe haven for six months; the first rotation of Royal Australian Air Force Air Traffic Controllers will always be grateful to our Kiwi mates for their kind hearts and willing support during our tour in The MOG. We each hold many fond memories of our time together and we wish our Kiwi mates the very best for the 20-year reunion and many happy and healthy times ahead.

SQNLDR IAN BROKENSHIRE (OIC),
FLTLT TREVOR KERRY (2IC/TEAM LEADER),
FLTLT GARY WILSON (TEAM LEADER),
FLTLT FLEUR JAMES (TEAM LEADER),
FLGOFF STEW MURPHY,
FLGOFF CARLTON SARGEANT,
FLGOFF JIM WILSON,
FLGOFF JOHN MEREDITH,
FLGOFF PETER GREENACRE,
FLGOFF FELICITY WRIGHT.

UNITED STATES ARMY

NZ SUPPLY PLATOON (JANUARY TO JUNE 1994)

WO2 ROSS FEARON

For Ordnance Soldiers prior to 1993 there was limited opportunity to serve overseas. In 1993 that changed when the UN aid agencies had difficulty getting aid through to the thousands that were starving in Somalia. When New Zealand was called upon to assist with a platoon size grouping of predominantly Ordnance personnel to provide supply support, that all changed. For the 3rd rotation it was a long wait for the call up. It was questionable if the call would come, but it did and the main body deployed in January 1994.

It followed the well documented and now well highlighted Black Hawk Down battle in October 1993, where the Americans tried to seize the Clan leader General Aideed. With the pictures of dead Task Force Ranger members being dragged through the streets it was difficult to convince families that it was just another training exercise and reminded us all of the dangers. To those deploying it was a matter of finally doing what we had been trained to do. For me it was what I wanted to do which was difficult for others to understand – at a function prior to departure it was likened to being taught how to bake a cake and never getting to put it in the oven to see if it would rise.

In 1993 I was running the Warrant Officers Course and training SSGTs for such operations where our lessons were taken from ex Vietnam Warrant Officers. At the time I thought these were stories from the past and wondered how relevant they would be.

Major Simon Tregear and Captain Wendy Field lead the team; they were both very experienced and spoke their minds never leaving you in any doubt of what they thought. The introduction of a Transport Officer (Lt Tim Wheeler) was a surprise given the number of young capable officers the Corps had at the time. The team comprised of 43 in total. Included were the following support staff:

Capt Telford – Nurse,

Cpl Groenendal – Clerk,

Cpl Amorangi and Dvr Collins – Cooks,

Cpl Tumataiki and LCpl Martin – Movements,

CPL Eagle – Signals,

LCpl Pulley – RNZEME and

Cpl Douglas and a section of Infantry from 1 RNZIR

The team came together well and began working together. As the Infantry section's area of expertise was not always required, they were at times utilised elsewhere. We can appreciate this would have been hard for those soldiers from 1 RNZIR.

Maj Tregear, Lt Wheeler and I arrived a week before the main body. It was great to catch up with friends that had left New Zealand six months prior, but it was very noticeable that what they had experienced had changed them which we discussed as part of the lessons learnt during handover. Prior to the main body arriving we discussed the changes we wanted to make to the current routine, and with the knowledge that in three months the Americans would be leaving we knew we had to be ready for the change to the level of threat that would ensue.

After the arrival of the main body and the handover was complete and we watched everyone leave and wondered what we didn't know. The Infantry section was split up between the stores and ration section with the exception

construction of the defensive position. We know that once the Americans had departed there was a risk of the airfield being overrun so we had three months to develop the camp to a point where we could defend ourselves before help could arrive from off shore. Tasks included:

- enlarging and re-enforcing underground bunkers
- building an observation post (photo below)
- building fitting pits to the front of the position
- re-alignment of the perimeter security
- reinforcing and enhancement of the wire surrounding the perimeter
- building a command post at the front of the position
- In the later stages constructing a vehicle check point.

Everyone assisted in the building of the defensive position with personnel being allocated daily to assist. Time off was limited to ensure that it was completed in time. At the same time everyone had to ensure that the blast walls around their accommodation was maintained. When we arrived these were made of sand bags which deteriorated in sunlight in about 4 weeks. Overtime we replaced them with a framework of corrugated iron supported by waratahs so that unlike sandbags, it only needed to be done once.

With the rain season approaching it was decided to put a roof over the main mess area. No resource consent required however with all the construction we were doing and for what we had planned, it was mission impossible trying to get stores out of the Class IV yard. A visit was required to the UN HQ Class IV office where three signatures were required to get approval for stores.

After LtCol Lott informed me that defence stores were in abundance, I had no issue in convincing the powers that be that 1 meter was actually 1 plank (3-4 meters). Instead of 1 truck we required 3 to get the stores back to camp, it was a hell of a trip providing security to the vehicles as some Somalis had climbed aboard the vehicles and were throwing the timber off the vehicle. Meanwhile the drivers of the Somali vehicles were trying to rid the additional passengers with some abrasive driving.

The Class IV office was one of the most frustrating places to visit at the UN HQ. I don't think Major Tregear quite believed the difficulty until one day when I took him in to assist in getting some timber to make beds (to get the troops off the stretchers and onto mattresses) and he found himself having to draw the bed and before the approving authority could understand what he had drawn he had to draw a stick man on the bed! After gaining only two of the three signatures required we left. Needless to say, I don't think he visited again.

As the defensive construction took place there were some that seemed to take pleasure by laughing at us (civilian expats earning some good money) as it did mean that the team worked very hard to meet the required deadline. We did offer to provide advice on how they could fortify their areas but only one of the UN support agencies took our offer. It was interesting when a few months later when the Airfield was receiving fire, mainly from a battle between Clans over the front of the airfield, that these individuals ran to us demanding protection. We didn't have sufficient overhead protection, but provided them with shelter and food for two days. It reminded me of the story of "the 3 little pigs!" When the danger was over they were asked to leave and initially refused, Lt Wheeler was given the task of giving them a stronger word but forgot that he should have translated the OC's words for something a little more diplomatic. We nearly made the "Homes Show"!

The Stores Section worked from a Warehouse on the Airfield and the Rations Section worked from a Warehouse at the Port. Both travelled to and from by vehicle. Daily routine started with breakfast, followed by a briefing, cleaning of weapons and then off to work, generally everyone would return for lunch, after work would consist of PT, working on the defensive plan or personal areas, dinner and some personal time. The OC and I would visit the UN HQ in the centre of Mogadishu 2-3 times a week. We would normally drive but at times flew if the roads were closed. The roads were dangerous and we always travelled with a minimum of 2 vehicles and at high speed in order to make ourselves less of a target. It was always best to be off the road by 1pm as the Somali's use to get high on khat. We even had SOPs written for how we would pass through a Somali road block after some British security friends entered into one and lost their vehicles, weapons and clothes.

We had Kapa Haka nights once a week with an open invitation for visitors to come and join in or just sit and watch. People I believe were in awe of our culture and it was great to be able to learn about the culture of those that attended also.

Drinking was part of the UN Culture in Somalia and beer was even obtainable through the food entitlement. Given the danger of the mission there was no particular time when you could let your guard down. Our stance was that it was an individual responsibility to enjoy a beer, however when that got out of hand that right was removed. Part of my role was the inspection and clearance of the food being purchased by the Company Morris Catering for the Mission. Sgt Hay and I were inspecting a container of produce late one night that had come up from Mombasa when upon walking into a refrigerated container, taking a breath and then noticing that the refrigeration had clearly broken down. The produce was covered in mould and after inhaling the air we were about to empty our stomachs. Stepping out of the container, I was reminded that if I threw up I would have to put myself on the dry.

The Warehouse on the Air Field that our troops operated out of was broken into twice. A hole was punched through the brick wall on the side of the building, the door was opened and then a vehicle was backed in and stores loaded. All this occurred without the knowledge of an airfield security post only 50 metres away. Our integrity was coming into question so a plan was derived to capture the said thieves'. Thanks to the OC and his knowledge of booby traps the external lights to the building were tripped to go out on the opening of the door. We couldn't actually see the lights however our Aussie neighbours could and they would inform us when the light went out so we could dispatch a ready reaction force. From memory, it only took a couple of nights before the plan was tested. The Somali's were caught and then handed over to those responsible for airfield security. We reported what happened the next morning to LtCol Gardiner the SNO who I understand attended a meeting at the UN HQ where the commander of the Airfield security reported that they had caught the Somali's breaking into the Kiwi Warehouse. There are a few stories about the reaction to this of LtCol Gardiner, we'll need to check with him on that.

Range Shoot - It took a while before we were able to zero our weapons. We secured some ground South of Mogadishu and placed targets in the ground that we had made. It was a bizarre experience clearing weapons after shooting then loading again and facing outwards to provide external security. Before leaving New Zealand, we wanted to provide everyone with the experience of shooting from a moving vehicle. We weren't able to and took this as the opportunity to do so. We learnt a number of valuable lessons including how to sit in the vehicle in order to cover arcs of fire, that the collars of our flak jackets provided a great funnel for catching hot ejected shell casings and lastly that we didn't have a hope in hell of hitting anything with accuracy travelling across Somali roads.

Waitangi Day was a great time to remember home and at the same time to showcase to all the other Nations the beauty of New Zealand and who we were, assisted by large photos of New Zealand. We started with a flag ceremony with half of the team in uniform and in an on-guard parade position and the other half challenging them with the Haka. That followed with a breaking of the flag and the singing of the National Anthem, all filmed by CNN. It was preceded with a speech from the OC giving the history and meaning of the day. Of particular note were the words "The difference between Australia and

New Zealand is that the British came to New Zealand with pounds in their pockets rather than on their wrists and ankles" the ANZAC spirit was again tested that day. Everyone that visited was treated to a drum hangi and a few beers.

The American Marines left the Airfield with similar hype as to when they arrived in late 1992. I had just returned from the UN HQ to see the final handshake and the lift off of all the helo's and the fly past. There was an extremely large number of Somalis on the airfield that had gained access and a young Somali girl attempted to run out wanting to pass on a farewell gift. With the fear of her getting shot as the Americans were telling her to go back Lt Wheeler ran out and saved her – which was all captured on film by CNN. When returning back to Taniwha Hill we noticed a Somali vehicle filling up at the UN Petrol Point. We stopped to investigate and ended up securing the three individuals involved. On having the curse of Allah thrown upon me and being told that his bullet would kill me I informed him it was quite the opposite. To cut a long story short he informed me Allah would protect him. I asked him how and he proceeded to show me four entry and exit wounds on his body. I asked him for an introduction to Allah.

The first contingent had secured some portable tarmac planks used to create helo pads/aircraft aprons, which they had used to create pathways over the sand around the camp. With the Americans leaving we were asked to palletise it up ready for uplift. We had 2½ pallets ready to go but after a sandstorm the night prior to uplift only ½ a pallet was visible to those that did the collection. Needless to say this was only discovered after they had left so it was only fair to again put them to good use again.

By the time the Americans left we had completed what needed to be done for the defence of Taniwha Hill. Not only did we have a sentry roster for each night but we also maintained a plan for the allocation of personnel to fighting pits. This always had to be updated due to people going on leave and the fighting pits were maintained with stocks of ammunition and grenades. We had then two responses to any threat. For indirect personnel went to the bungers with the overhead protection with which we had MATEL communication with the OC and me in a forward bunker. If the threat changed to a more direct, everyone would man their allocated pit. The Australians had moved in next to us and the OC and I were discussing with our counterparts the tie in between our defensive positions when we heard an explosion and some small arms fire. I went to the OP to investigate and saw the small arms tracer fire over towards the Aussie camp. On looking through the night bino's I saw two individuals run into their sentry bunker followed by another explosion. After varying SITREPS over the radio, and to cut a long story short, the two Aussies doing a perimeter patrol were safe but no thanks to the Airfield security unit that attacked them thinking they were Somalis.

ANZAC Day – Dawn Service and Medal Ceremony. There is something special about spending an ANZAC Day overseas and even more so when you are on a Mission. Given our strong allies the Australians were now next door neighbours it was fitting we took the time to remember it together and to show the other Nations present what it meant to us ANZACs. We created a cenotaph (proud to see a picture of it in the army museum some years later). We scavenged to assemble it with the draw strings coming from the morgue of all places. We assembled a firing party made up of both Kiwi's and the Australians and were planning to fire tracer out to sea at dawn. This was however vetoed by the Airport Security. It was fitting that the operational medals were also awarded that day. I'm sure everyone was proud of themselves, testimony to the number of photos taken.

Pte Wise drew the picture for the cover of the booklet and did a great job.

Working with both LtCol Lott and LtCol Gardner was a memorable experience. It was great to see two New Zealand officers in senior roles in the UN Mission and doing a fantastic job. I remember the call from LtCol Lott informing us to prep for the loading of food supplies to go down to Rwanda and at the same time asking if we would assemble some M113s left behind by the Americans. Apparently the Armoured unit we had in country couldn't do it so that left us. We took on the challenge, recruited the assistance of my counter-part from the Aussies who was Armoured and we set about fitting the radios, guns and a first line of ammo

NZ SUPPLY PLATOON (JANUARY TO JUNE 1994)

to the vehicles. The team enjoyed the challenge and responded really well, it was great seeing that kiwi can do attitude in operation. I really enjoyed seeing the smile on Pte Moke's face as she drove the M113 onto Taniwha Hill.

What was apparent as time went by was how flippant people became with danger as it appeared everyone became an Adrenaline Junky, including me. Everyone I'm sure remembers that shot of adrenaline as the first round goes past, but its not the same the second time and so the closer you get or the bigger it has to be in order to receive that natural high. I remember having to remove some individuals admiring the tracer fire in the night sky but not noting that it was getting closer to them. An NCO asked me if it was alright to quit clearing rubbish from the wire perimeter as there were rounds landing around them. Having the 12.7mm rounds go overhead was always a guarantee of a good shot! I remember a conversation with an American civilian worker from Brown and Root an ex-Vietnam Vet with a belief that there wasn't a bullet with his name on it. Out working on his dozer while a battle raged outside of the airfield and bullets were flying all around. Having been shot twice in Vietnam he now believed he was untouchable. More stupidity I think!

In New Zealand life is cherished. In Somalia life was very cheap. Carrying a gun becomes second nature and being in a place where the moral beliefs and soldier-skills are a lot lower than the ones you arrive with creates the challenge of maintaining those that you arrived with and also those of the people around you. It was very noticeable the difference in a number of Nations both civilian and military on how they conducted themselves and how people changed. The saying "treat others how you would like to be treated" is something Kiwis well believe in and testament to the fact that kids on the street would wave at us yet throw stones at others.

We ended up handing our accommodation over to the Pakistani contingent. It was the end of Taniwha Hill and a New Zealand occupation of 18 months. It was difficult handing it over due to all the work that had gone into its development, but that said everyone was keen to return home. Returning home with everyone safe was a great relief. Waiting for the HERC on the tarmac which couldn't land as we were taking fire seemed a life time. When clearance was given for it to land, it was the quickest turn around I've seen. Engines were never wound down and once the aircraft was loaded we were off. There was silence on the aircraft until everyone was sure that we were out of range and then the smiles of relief began to appear.

The experience gave me a great appreciation for life and what we have in New Zealand. As the CSM, I was able to connect with what the ex CSM Vietnam Vets were saying and could relate a lot of it to an operation on the other side of the world. I still enjoy the discussions with the Somali taxi drivers that I seem to get from time to time.

MAJ S.J. TREGEAR,
CAPT W.J. FIELD,
LT T.J. WHEELER,
CAPT J.A. TELFORD,
WO2 R.C. FEARON,
CPL T.L. AMORANGI,
PTE P.A. COOK,
LCPL P.Q. GRIFFITHS,
CPL M.F. GROENENDAL,
CPL R.N. MCKIE,
CPL W.K. MILLER,
CPL A.P. MURRAY,
PTE B.M. COTTON,
SSGT J.W. COLEMAN,
SGT I.W. HAY,
LCP C.J. HUGHES,
PTE M.T. HURIA,
LCPL R.L. HUTCHINS,
DVR S. COLLINS,
CPL C.J. DOUGLAS,
LCPL R.D. DRUMMOND,
LCPL A.C. EAGLE,
LCPL D.J. HILL,
PTE N.J. FULCHER,
PTE K.M. CRAIG,
CPL N.P. GIBSON,
PTE D.G. CUNNINGHAM,
PTE G.A. BOUTEREY,
PTE D.R. MANDENO,
LCPL C.M. PAENUI,
PTE I.D. ROBBINS,
PTE O.M.A. MOKE,
PTE D.J. ROBERTSON,
PTE G.C. PALMER,
CPL A.W. PULLEY,
CPL B.A. KAREKO,
PTE W.M. LEOTA,
LCPL K.D.M. MARTIN,
PTE P.A. TIOKE,
CPL D.J. TUMATAIKI,
PTE E.M. WILKINSON,
PTE J.V. WISE,
PTE A.J. WOOD,

LCPL C.J. HUGHES (HUGGY)

AN AMMO TECH'S PERSPECTIVE

My Father gave me a diary to keep of my travels to the ends of the earth. The first and only entry I made in this diary reads as follows:

"Tuesday 11 Jan 1994 – Woke up at 0430hrs, breakfast out to Ohakea – final goodbye to Mum and Dad."

MY MEMORIES

In nervous anticipation, I packed my pack and bags in preparation for my imminent deployment to the horn of Africa. What does one take to the back of beyond where the unknown awaits? Myself and Randall had volunteered to be part of the second push of – UNOSOM II. Our pre-deployment consisted of jabs and stab's some haka training and a bit of weapon and situational briefs and kit issues. Now the date was upon us. We all hopped onto the bus for the first leg of our journey to Africa. I can remember lingering round at Air movements RNZAF Ohakea with my family whom had gathered to see me off.

It was with somewhat of a relief that we were called forward to conduct the haka prior to our embarkation onto the RNZAF C130 for our three day pilgrimage. At least now we were under way.

Our first stop was Darwin on 11 Jan into Tin City and the following morning it was off on our next leg to Diego Garcia, a tiny atoll between Western Australia and the horn of Africa, in the middle of the Indian Ocean. To make it to Diego Garcia I can remember stopping off at the Keeling Islands which is a speck of land off the coast of Western Australia so the aircraft could take on more fuel. It was a real quick stop, just enough to stretch the legs. Diego Garcia although a British colony, is home to an American Naval Support Facility. Didn't see much of the atoll, but found it a new experience to pay cash at the US mess for breakfast.

Anyway by my reckoning we must have arrived in the Mog about 14 Jan 1994 after surviving 13000Km, packed like sardines with ear plugs in constantly on our luxurious para seats, eating our gourmet cut lunches on board an RNZAF C130. No 757's with in-flight entertainment and flight stewards for us!

I remember clambering out of the C130 and this wall of blazing light, a wave of noise, heat and dust hitting me as I stumbled onto the tarmac. I can remember looking around at the smashed city, which even in the strong sunlight seemed like a morbid depressing place. I watched the constant patrolling of the Cobra helicopters and constant roaming of military vehicles on the peripheries of the runway. I wondered what the next six months held in store for me.

We were taken to Taniwha Hill and greeting with a rousing haka from the first UNOSOM II team after which we were gathered up and shown to our accommodation we would be sharing with the first push until their departure in a few days. There was a real sense of excitement around the camp as half our number were looking forward to seeing loved ones again, and the other half full of nervous anticipation of what was to come. The days that followed were a blur to me whilst we were shown the ropes of life at the Mog.

RATION FOOD INSPECTOR

The amount of food that a UN mission can consume is astounding. And here was I not able to boil water inspecting the dry product for quality and quantity… what's a weevil? The Cambodian people who were hired by the Kiwi Company supplying the food for the mission, I found to be very polite and hard working.

Going to work with a Rifle, Kevlar Helmet and the old green flak jacket was definitely a new experience for me. Even the route we had to take to work each day was an experience. Travelling past the piled up remains of the Somali Air Force with their Somali stars emblazoned on their bodies.

The route to the port took us through a maze of twists and turns using the coast route until arriving at the Port which was set up as a strong point with stacked up containers forming the main perimeter defences. These containers stopped the snipers firing on us, and other port workers.

Inside our warehouse it was an oasis of calm and practicality. Piles of herbs, spices, flour cooking oil and a myriad of cooking supplies lined the floors and walls ready for distribution to the various units of the deployment. Whilst at the port I remember going into the NGO warehouses and looking at the tons and tons of American aid supplies all stacked up ready for distribution to the starving multitudes as part of missions Resort Hope and later Continue Hope. I can also remember watching the US Navy stevedores loading a large supply ship with plastic wrapped helicopters, Humvees and many other types of equipment as the US military wound down their commitment so that by March 1994 the US presence in Somalia was minimal. The most notable remnants I remember, being the US Marine and Naval units sailing up and down the coast line, to be used in an emergency by the UN if it all turned pear shaped.

UN AMMUNITION POINT

It was shortly after the US scale down that the OC

pulled Randall and I aside and told us we were taking over control of the UNOSOM II's ammunition which was situated at the southern end of Mogadishu's Air Port. Fortunately we had come from Mako Mako and were used to running Brigade Ammunition Points so we had quite a bit of experience to draw on between us. The Egyptian Contingent had responsibility for the security of the ammunition. Randall and I had to manage the storing, issuing and stock taking of the ammunition. Basically the Ammo Point had been built with a Bulldozer mounding up dirt around a few shipping containers with a few strong points placed in strategic positions around the perimeter. Being at the end of the run way when aircraft were landing or taking off I felt I could reach out and touch them. The ammunition we had to look after was the standard array of light infantry and police anti-riot munitions. We also had to look after a few containers of recovered Somali Warlords weapons and ammunition.

Every morning we would open all the containers up to try to reduce the temperature inside. They made a great place to stay dry in the periodic down pours we used to get. It was pretty safe at the ammunition point, I think from memory we only heard the clattering of machine gun fire a couple of times and this was from far away. At some point we had a chat to some guys from a Pakistani Armoured unit who showed Randall and me over an M60 tank, they even let us have a drive of one. Nowhere near as awesome as the M1A1 Abrams that the US military were sporting, but still fun to have a go on.

HELPING THE AMERICANS

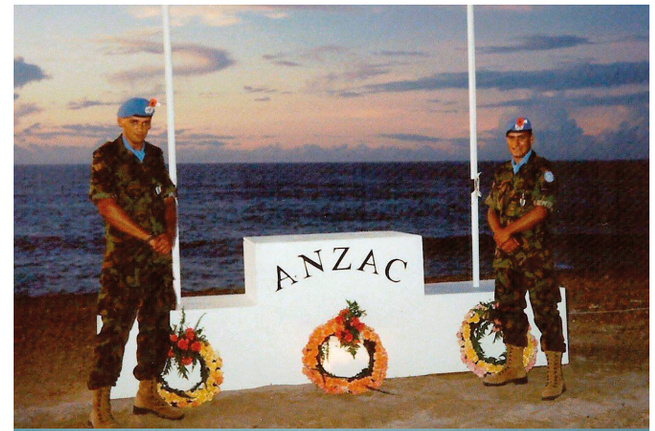
Another task we had was to inventory over ten thousand brand new weapons and millions of rounds for the American Contingent Logistic Control Centre. These weapons and ammunition were to be donated to the Somali Police Force.

For this work Randall and I were awarded a certificate of achievement from the American Department of the Army. After about a month of us running the ammunition point a US Marine EOD unit moved in and set up camp in some unused buildings in the Ammunition Point. They were there to dispose of the US surplus and unserviceable ammunition that was not leaving the theatre. Of course Randall and I could not resist the opportunity to blow stuff up so we got approval to tag along and help the EOD boys dispose of a heap of stuff and it gave us the opportunity for us to get rid of some of our more unsafe explosive ordnance. We helped load the American Vehicles then were escorted by several Bradley APC's and Humvee loads of marines, with overhead Cobra protection we headed out into the desert and conducted the demolition. The main thing we were disposing of was reactive armour plates. It's the first time I have used C4. Always heard about it but never used it.

Working at the Ammunition Point was a great experience and we met a lot of people from all nationalities. One in particular was an Egyptian Lieutenant who was in charge of the security. We used to swap stories about our countries and what it was like serving in our respective Armies. We used to give each other heaps of friendly jip. I can remember playing a trick on the Lieutenant, in that we had some anti-riot ammo that was cracked and leaking CS gas compound. What I did was sprinkle some CS compound into an empty match box, and because I was used to pepper spray I could handle quite a bit before flinching. I took a big sniff and asked if he wanted a sniff. He did and I can still remember him taking a huge sniff. He recoiled like a rifle and with tears running down his face. In between dry reaching he said he was going to kill me in his Egyptian accent. I watched my back after that.

We were pretty much left to our own devices so we just got on and did it.

I guess our most scary moment of the whole tour was



when Randall and I were going to work one day and whilst we were driving down the edge of the runway we saw bullet splashes following our vehicle down the road. It's the only time in my life I have asked Randall to drive faster!! We got behind cover and went straight back to base and had a beer!! No work that day for us.

MEMORIES OF TANIWHA HILL

After a while life took on a regular pattern of getting up, ablutions, breakfast, duties, a morning brief, then off to work. Back for lunch, and dinner, then chilling out in the recreation tent followed by bed and a stint on sentry.

Through the lenses of CNN cameramen we watched the Rwanda genocide unfolding, learnt what Aidid was up to and kept up to date with all news of the day.

I remember our weapons needed to be constantly maintained due to the saline environment we were in. They seemed to rust at a drop of a hat. I remember one of the guys having a CRC can in their tent, the next day he woke up to find the can empty and a bullet in the can. It was quite eerie listening to the booms coming from the city of Mogadishu at night. Whilst on sentry I can remember watching tracer bullets flying through the air as rival factions' battled for control of the city.

Sand bagging, barbed wire replacement was the bane of everyone's life. Very necessary though as the sandbags disintegrated and the barbed wire corroded away. Randall is the only one of us who won a purple heart for being wounded, he got sliced up replacing I line of barbed wire and needed to get stitched up at the field hospital.

The food was absolutely fantastic, Travis and his team worked miracles. Everyone looked forward to dinner to see what culinary delights would greet us.

The worst job would have to be burning the toilet waste. It was terrible… I used to gag every time.

Our accommodation was, I guess functional and that was about all.

ANZAC DAY 1994 - SOMALIA

We paraded at dawn with the Aussies, in our best uniforms for an ANZAC day service. After which we all received our UN medals. It was a special time for us all paying our respects to those whom had gone before.

At some point our guys took over control of a warehouse at the end of the runway. There were repeated break-ins, so our infantry guys set up an OP to catch the thieves, which they duly did.

Another notable incident was when the locals started stealing equipment from one of the empty camp sites at the airport. I can remember getting told to grab my rifle and race down to stop the thieves.

It was not all work though. We all got a stint of leave mid-way through our tour. Most people went to Kenya, braving the UN charter flights to get out of Somalia. For one of my leave blocks I chose to go to the UK. Going from Mogadishu to London in a couple of days was a real culture shock. The other leave I had I spent in Mombasa eating exotic foods at Carnivores and getting chased around the local night clubs by the other forms of wild life. We also had a few good blow outs on camp as well, and we were one of the few units that had wet camps. Much to my great embarrassment, I had the dubious honour of being the first person placed on the dry in our contingent.

DHL provided a mail service for us and it was always a good day when the mail came in. The only other contact with home was our allotted 6 minutes of the satellite phone per week.

As the date that we were to re-deploy back to New Zealand grew closer, an air of excitement started to build. We started all the prepping, stocktaking and MAF cleaning. Basically we were going to leave pretty much everything to the unit taking over our camp, which I think was to be a Pakistani unit. We had a big farewell function and then I think it was the next day we were scheduled to depart the Mog.

On about the 1st of July 1994 we flew out of Somalia for our return to New Zealand. We all wore big grins all the way back to Diego Garcia for our overnight stop, which ended up being a two night lay over due to RNZAF crew sickness, finally arriving back in Darwin on 3rd July, and eventually Ohakea in the middle of the night approximately the 6th of July. It was good to be home but was great to have experienced it.

CAPT JUDE TELFORD

I joined the NZ contingent at short notice on pre deployment training to provide a higher level of health care to the final rotation of UNOSOM. My initial and primary role was to provide primary health care and emergency medicine to the main body based at airport, Mogadishu. I was soon given a position at the UN headquarters (embassy building) as the “Humanitarian Liaison Officer” trying to assess the local health professionals’ qualification and ability to work with UNOSOM to set up independent practices or work within a UNOSOM military health facility. With no Somali health structure and many having no documented evidence of their qualification, this was a challenging role.

The withdrawal of the American Military and later the Canadians saw a major health deficiency in that of the Aeromedical Evacuation capability. Given my flight nursing qualifications I was asked to set up a replacement for what had been provided by the Americans. I had no stores, no vehicle, and no finances... but I did have a very hard working flight nurse from Canada (Lea Anne Quinn). We set to working along the Canadian Helicopters, a civilian company that won the contract to provide helo support throughout Somalia. We acquired vehicle and many stores that were being left by the departing militaries. We visited and trained UNOSOM health professionals in Mogadishu, Birdera, Kismayo, Bidoa and anywhere we had UN health facilities. Aside the delivery of medical stores and blood to outer regions we provided the AME retrievals to the greater area in Mogadishu. It was a very challenging but rewarding role. The loss of the Canadians meant the loss of my one and only other flight nurse.

OUT AND ABOUT WITH LITTLE PROTECTION

This Aeromedical evacuation was a result of the Red Cross organisation in Bidoa, requesting a Somali patient be transferred to Mogadishu for further care after receiving a gunshot wound.

At this stage in our tour “Canadian Helicopters” had been contracted to provide the Helicopter support to UNOSOM. This was a civilian company that did not provide security nor were they armed so it was routine for military medical staff to deploy in pairs to provide some protection. On this particular day we deployed with 2 flight nurses, myself and Capt Lee Anne Quinn from Canada and a Australian medical officer who was on short term visit.

The flight to Bidoa was uneventful, as was the handover of the patient on the “grass” air strip where we landed. Soon after take-off we lost the number two engine and thus we circled and landed back on our departure point. The Red Cross had seen us circle and return, so preceded back to the airstrip. They took the 2 pilots and Dr with them to their base some 20mins away so as to contact Mogadishu for a new Helicopter and parts, leaving myself and Lee Anne to tend to the patient and guard the helicopter. This was supposed to be a 30-40min turn around however given another helicopter was going to be deployed to our location (2 hour flight) all three gentlemen decided to stay on the Red Cross base and leave Lee Anne and myself with no food, only 3 bottles of water and no communication.

So, for the next two hours Lee Anne and I watched as three flights (light fixed wing aircraft) landed, unloaded their cargo and left. Note there was no buildings just dirt, sand and tussock. As each aircraft approached and landed Somali’s appeared from nowhere to pick up the cargo which we suspect was “khat “ the drug they chewed to get a high. After the first flight the Somali’s notice Lee Anne and I and the helicopter so in the second and third flights they approached us and wanted water. They then realised we had an injured Somali on board and were keen to “see their brother”. Needless to say us two flight nurses had to stand our ground and “point our Weapons” from each side of the aircraft to ensure they did not approach too closely. It was the longest two and a half hours we ever had to endure and it would be fair to say we were not impressed when our two pilots and one Dr arrived well feed and watered and boasting about the swim they had in the Red Cross pool.

As our NZ tour came to a close again the same deficiency was identified in AME as there was no one tasked to carry on this AME role. Finally, the Australians agreed to provide a flight surgeon but he could not start his tour until three weeks after our tour ended. I agreed to remain in Mogadishu to complete the handover. It was the hardest day ever to see the NZ contingent, the family I had worked with and cared for, leave for home without me. I was proud however to have served with these people and part of a team that ensured we all returned to NZ safe and healthy.

LCPL PAUL COOK

SOMALIA 1994 (what I can remember)

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to our veterans and friends that are no longer with us, RIP soldiers.

Being posted to Burnham Supply Centre (BSC) and working out at Glentunnel Ammunition Depot, deploying to Somalia having been in the Army for just over two years was not really expected. In mid to late 1993, myself, Nicky Fulcher and a few others from Burnham were conducting exercise Soldiers at Sea, which saw Army personnel conduct training on naval vessels including exercising with the Royal Australian Navy off the coast of Australia. On one night in Kings Cross whilst on shore leave we were approached by a Navy lad asking us if we were certain people (us being "…Cook and Fulcher…") and if we were, then we had to go home because we are going to Somalia. We headed back to the HMNZS Waikato to pack our gears and then promptly fell asleep on the flight deck. Awoken, we were driven to the RAAF base where we boarded an Andover for home.

PDT started with the usual RFL, drug tests and what seemed like hundreds of injections and carried on with the normal briefs and drills, albeit a lot shorter than the East Timor and Afghanistan PDT we would conduct later in our careers.

We boarded our luxury travel (RNZAF Herc) ready for our long journey to Mogadishu. First overnight stop was in Darwin where we stayed in tin city. Next day, a quick refuel at Cocos Islands and onto Diego Garcia for the second overnight stop. We managed to keep ourselves occupied in flight with games of star euchre for press-ups. Thanks Destry.

We were divided into our respective work areas and conducted hand over's before rotation two boarded the plane for their homeward journey. I was placed in the stores team under the command of Lt Tim Wheeler (a bit controversial with him being a transport officer and not a supplier, but we got over it. Lol). SSgt John Coleman was the 2IC. Working in the store was not too dissimilar to back at home, the customer would arrive with a stores demand (or a loaf of bread in some instances) and we would give the stuff if we had it. A couple of memorable moments include being rescued by the Aussie SAS when the airfield came under attack and the warehouse got hit by an RPG or similar, being slingshot with stones by kids out the back by the containers and peppering the little raskel's.

The occasional trip to the US Embassy was exciting, locked and loaded with the OC driving like the Stig and would have put many a rally champion to shame. Unfortunately, after the Americans went home and took their Blackhawks with them the ability to fly into the Embassy stopped.

The remainder of the trip ticked along nicely, however here are a few highlights (that I can remember).

Bojo and Destry's midnight karaoke sessions (put on the dry), Butch Hay being sick near LtCol Charlie (put on the dry), star euchre for 6 packs of Castle or Emu Lager, watching Gonzo nearly drown at the beach after Waitangi day celebrations (mind you we were a bit far away from the beach on our rubber tubes and never mind the sharks), Moks playing demolition derby and subsequently filling lots of sandbags, Moks again driving madly around or above our workers on the RT25, Aubs eating two plates of dinner for every meal and managing to go six months without actually doing any work, the arrival of the flushing toilets, so no more burning the poop, doing PT while a round landed in the water behind us, games of "no expressions" when on leave in Mombasa and Nairobi, the nightclub mad dash to the toilets before getting molested by the local aunties, Griff getting stung by a scorpion, Delboy and his hot rations girlfriend, Cookie, Bud Jase and Griff going to the Kuwaiti compound for a function (was supposed to be the OC but hey, he wasn't there). There are many more, but a lot of them have faded from memory over time.

The trip came to an end and we awaited the arrival of the herc to take us home. Stopped in Diego Garcia on the way home for some shopping, unfortunately the PX was closed that day. Luckily, one of the flight crew developed an ear infection and couldn't fly, so we remained there until the PX was open and we could get our fill of cheap goods. Back to Darwin and then the long flight back to NZ and a well earned rest.

The six months in Somalia are easily the highlight of a 21 year career.

CPL CLIVE DOUGLAS

SOMALIA UNOSOM II INFANTRY RIFLE SECTION COMMANDER'S ONWARD

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I will provide an insight to the day and life of a Junior Commander from the infantry section attached to the New Zealand Supply Platoon from January to June 1994. I will firstly, describe the background, and operational environment. Secondly, describe my role, my challenge and finally my highlights during the tour. I will conclude with how my experience on operations as a Junior Commander attached to the New Zealand Supply Platoon proved to be a positive influence.

BACKGROUND

In the later part of 1993, my Platoon Commander LT Cliff TeAmo informed me my infantry rifle section would be deploying to Somalia in early Jan 1994, to replace the current infantry rifle section attached to the New Zealand Supply Platoon. My first reaction was one of excitement for the section members and personal satisfaction of the performance of the soldiers within the section at the time, which enabled our selection to deploy.

Next, was how would I explain this situation to my partner. I decided not to tell her for about a week, this was not a great course of action in hindsight. Actually, my partner knew before I told her, she had found out at netball practice a few days before I gathered the courage to tell her. I commanded the section but only one person commanded the home environment.

A rifle section commanded by CPL Mike Geer was already deployed to Somalia as part of the New Zealand Supply Platoon. They deployed in July 93 and were from Victor Company, 1 RNZIR. They had the honour of being

the first infantry callsign to be deployed from 1 RNZIR on operations since Vietnam. The infantry's role would be different from anything that the section might have trained for in 1993, but applying the basics right would not be any different. The section's role would evolve during the tour.

The infantry section's role was to provide a security element within the Supply Platoon's organization given the security threat in theatre and to assist the platoon to achieve tasks given. These roles would prove to be diverse and challenging but the experience of my section, and our training together over three years prior to deploying provided the necessary balance to be successful. Most of the section had been together for all my command time since being posted into three section, three platoon, Alpha Company. The time the section had trained and worked together provided a solid firm base of shared experiences and understanding. The amount of time training together I believe is a key element in being successful on operations. As a commander and soldier, you get to know the enemy; that is you know each other and built over time is trust. Within the section were many characters with their own strengths and weakness, on balance I had a strong section. The key strengths of the section demonstrated on tour were their

discipline, initiative, and ability to work as a team within New Zealand Supply Platoon environment as leaders. Overall, during the tour, I am extremely proud of the professionalism and skill level developed by all soldiers within the section. Their commitment made my role easier. By the end of the tour, soldiers within the section had come of age and were ready for their next challenge on RTNZ. Unfortunately, the section was split up on RTNZ and given new internal postings within 1 RNZIR.

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

To describe the operational environment during the UNOSOM II deployment, I will focus my observations with regards to the strategic and tactical levels. I will summarise key points in terms of why a New Zealand Supply Platoon deployed and the equipment used in theatre. Firstly, to summarise the strategic reasons why a New Zealand Supply Platoon deployed to Somalia; the New Zealand Government had deployed a New Zealand Supply Platoon to assist in establishing and supporting the humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia under a UN mandate. Secondly, New Zealand occupied a seat on the UN Security Council in 1993 and 1994. These formed the main reasons for New Zealand to commit troops to Somalia.

From a tactical level, I reflect on the equipment used 20 years ago while deployed as part of the New Zealand Supply Platoon, although NZDF now have some of the best equipment available for soldiers performing on operations within the current contemporary environment, in Somalia 1994 lessons can be learnt. In this part of the article, I reflect on 20 years of memory making comment on equipment, maintenance, weapons, vehicles and force protection measures.

EQUIPMENT

On reflection over the years, individual equipment was not world class compared to what was available to other military nations. Individual equipment like our personal flak jacket would not have saved your life from an engagement from small arms fire. The flak jacket provided protection as a windbreaker and could have held your body together if seriously wounded. I acknowledge the flak jacket is not designed as body armour. I am glad times have changed with personal protection equipment within NZDF, the equipment provided to soldiers now is world class now compared to the deployment to Somalia. The harsh environment in country proved to be challenging at times, soldiers had to maintain their personal equipment regularly.

MAINTENANCE

Having a sandy and dry environment meant soldiers had to complete their morning routine, which included cleaning weapons, maintaining magazines and ammunition. Personal weapons Steyr, LSW C9 and 9mm Sig Sauer pistol worked well if maintained daily. Other personal equipment acquired in country included pepper spray, short wooden batons and smoke screen generators.

WEAPONS

The section had carbine Steyr's as their primary weapons, which were a great weapon for vehicle patrols given the short barrel. The section had to make do with the only machine guns in theatre, the LSW C9 5.56mm. A capable weapon when maintained by the operator. During the tour, the section developed SOPs for carriage of ammunition in vehicles and maintained weapons skills by completing dry and live firing when operations permitted. On reflection, a bigger calibre machine gun would have been nice to have in theatre in addition to other small arms weapon systems. This would provide more range and hitting power from bunkers and vehicle mounted weapons systems. During patrols, PTE's Wood and Bouterey did a great job in maintaining their weapon skills and maintaining readiness when required.

VEHICLES

During the tour, the contingent mainly travelled in Toyota 4 x 4 vehicles and later in the tour, the contingent acquired two M998 Humvees from UAE. The contingent quickly repainted these M998 Humvees to UN colours and the 'kiwi' placed in a tactical area to reinforce the fact these were New Zealand vehicles not US vehicles. Regular vehicle patrols to the US Embassy site and ANZAC House were completed weekly sometimes more often. The route taken involved travelling along dirt roads secured at key points by other UN partnered nations, obstacles appeared without notice on some

parts of the route. These obstacles at times proved to be possible choke points for militia to fire onto slowing vehicles. Ambush is always a threat. Our vehicles carried additional ammunition and grenades to counter any possible threat. Communications consisted of handheld radios between vehicles and individuals. The handheld radios were not the best form of radios, but that is what was available at the time.

Remember this vehicle? The contingent duty person had this vehicle to complete daily tasks. This included refuelling the generator, sweeping out the recreational tent, burning the shitters, supervising the Somali cleaners, ensuring the water tank was filled regularly and any other maintenance task required to be completed. The duty vehicle was the ex-RNZAF Toyota Hilux known as 'Kiwi Thunder". The contingent mechanic had repaired this vehicle after arriving in theatre.

FORCE PROTECTION

During the tour, the contingent applied the following force protection measures; all vehicles leaving Mogadishu Airport had to be part of a convoy patrol. Conducted before any patrol all infantry section members executed rehearsals and orders. All contingent members leaving the FOB Taniwha Hill ensured each other were wearing their helmet, flak jacket, carrying their individual weapon including a minimum of shorts, T-shirt, boots worn. Outside the Mogadishu Airport perimeter, all personnel had to wear full uniform with identifying UN and kiwi patches.

Inside the FOB Taniwha Hill, a number of bunkers and a sentry tower provided observation and secured the perimeter by day and night. Bunkers constructed as part of the security plan, ended up being part of the FOB daily tasks for a good part of the first three months in theatre. These bunkers enhanced personal protection to counter threats on Mogadishu Airport and beyond. Taniwha Hill battlespace also increased once the US Forces departed in March 1994, particularly the southern part of the hill. As part of the maintenance plan for Taniwha Hill replacement of all wire obstacles became part of the tasks for the FOB tasking group.

TANIWHA HILL DEFENCES

MY ROLE

My experience to this date in my career had mostly been shaped through two years of jungle training in South East Asia, exercises overseas and infantry trade courses, I was confident in my own ability as a Junior Commander. As a Junior Commander in an environment, which I was unfamiliar with in terms of not being in a traditional rifle platoon environment meant, there were going to be challenges. I was the only infantry commander, but I had confidence in the Supply Platoon leadership, which I believe was the key to our success on operations. On arriving in theatre the CSM WO2 Ross Fearon explained what my role would be, I was fairly happy with the situation, I would be leading the Taniwha Hill security development as the US forces would be withdrawing from theatre on 31 March 1994. This was only three months away and a bit of work was required on Taniwha Hill to enhance the FOB defenses. My first day on operations involved filling a large number of sand bags by hand. This ended up being a typical day on the Hill! I was glad that the CSM had a plan to involve all in the contingent, as he assigned to me daily work party from Monday's to Saturday's who helped with FOB tasks.

Another key role I had was providing when required a security detail for the OC MAJ Tregear when he was required to visit ANZAC House, which was located at the US Embassy. Employed in a primary role, infantry section members always joined these patrols, which provided good opportunities for the infantry section members to display their skills.

Another key task given to me involved being the PMC for the contingent mess. CPL A.P. Murray the bar manager, proved to be an excellent choice, with his experience provided and his advice provided on stock management and activities for the contingent to conduct during the tour. The appointment of PMC helped develop excellent working relationships with other members of the contingent. The contingent fund developed into a healthy sum because of good management practices and many social activities, which included a weekly happy hour, cooking competitions, games nights and other social activities when operations allowed.

For my section soldiers, the tour began split between the seaport rations and airport general stores elements. This provided another opportunity for them to deliver outputs in an integrated manner with the other soldiers of the New Zealand Supply Platoon.

MY CHALLENGE

Not a regular part of the logistic environment took some adjustment, as an enabler capability to the New Zealand Supply Platoon. In a regular infantry platoon, a Section Commander has other networks and peer support to fall back on. However, in the environment the section faced, this network did not exist. As a Junior Commander, the experience gained up to this point prior to deploying and the skill level of the individual members of the section made the transition to working in a logistic dominated environment easier to handle. The OC Maj Tregear and CSM WO2 Fearon provided excellent guidance and advice as required. Their leadership helped me to transition with little difficultly.

MY HIGHLIGHTS

Arrival in Theatre. The contingent arrived in Mogadishu on 13 January 1994. On arriving in theatre by C130 after three days, I remember feeling the strong sun heat bearing down on the contingent, and taking a truck up to Taniwha Hill, then receiving an awesome welcome by the outgoing contingent being held on arrival at the entrance to Taniwha Hill; wow our contingent was in theatre! It was good to see familiar faces of our infantry brothers who had been in theatre for six months already. Many stories exchanged over night and quick handovers completed as rotation II departed Mogadishu Airport on Saturday 15 January 1994, for New Zealand. Now the contingent concentrated on getting into a routine and the early months in theatre remained quiet.

The first month in Mogadishu and February were quiet, with minimal clan activity and on runs to the US Embassy, few weapons and no technicals were seen. Although maintenance and progressive upgrading of FOB Taniwha Hill defenses were ongoing tasks until RTNZ, much of the work done during this initial quiet period was in anticipation of the US withdrawal in March 1994. The work completed included; camp facilities were rebuilt and relocated, wire obstacles were shifted and replaced, observation points and fighting pits were constructed.

WELFARE

In 1994, the differences in welfare experienced in Somalia compared to other recent operations within the contemporary environment, is very different. Internet did not exist. Contact with family back home involved mainly letter writing or phone calls home. If not calling home then mail is an important part of maintaining moral. Every time the mailbags arrived in theatre proved a great day for those that received something from home. Some soldiers commented on the DHL service, which delivered the mail into theatre as standing for “Definitely Hopelessly Late”. Delays in mail arriving into theatre often occurred. In terms of phone calls home, the Army provided a six minute call every month that did not prove to be enough for some, luckily at the seaport a phone booth provided access to make further calls home. Getting to the seaport at times was a challenge pending the operational situation at the time. Most soldiers did their calls on Sundays, an easy day for most at FOB Taniwha Hill.

PATROLLING INTO US EMBASSY AND ANZAC HOUSE

These patrols proved to be regular during the tour as the OC had to travel into ANZAC House on numerous occasions to complete his tasks. The upshot for the infantry section members meant being able to conduct their core role, providing security as part a vehicle convoy. Travelling along the route proved interesting

most days, I remember the first time going to the US Embassy compound, seeing in front our vehicle, Somali kids opening the rear door of a UN 4 x 4 vehicle, taking whatever they could grasp. Jungle tip for the return trip to Taniwha Hill, ensure all doors are locked, windows up! There were always crowds gathered at key points along the route, particularly at entrance points to compounds.

VEHICLE PATROLS

SECURITY OF FOB TANIWHA HILL

Shaping the defensive security of FOB Taniwha Hill in conjunction with the New Zealand Supply Platoon HQ Staff proved to be a key task during the tour. With the US Forces withdrawing from theatre on 31 March 1994, security became a main concern for the contingent. Utilising the ground to position bunkers to protect the perimeter and FOB Taniwha Hill provided ongoing work for the FOB tasking group. With some kiwi initiative and interpretation of the rules for gaining UN building materials, the contingent gained enough materials to construct a number of bunkers. Prior to the US Forces withdrawing, the contingent commenced regular night sentry. As a result, one night on sentry PTE Mandeno and LCPL Griffiths captured two Somali's outside the FOB in the carpark area.

Building Bunkers and Sand Bagging, enhance defensive measures on Taniwha Hill

SECURITY PATROLS WITH LT COL C. LILLY INTO MOGADISHU CITY

In the later part of the tour, the section conducted security patrols with LT COL C. Lilly into parts of Mogadishu City. This provided good opportunities for the section to work together, experience training with the Australian SAS, and observe the Somalia militia clans technical vehicles first hand (pictured page 192). Wearing vest webbing in mounted patrols provided mobility, easier access to magazines, simpler storage and access to other personal equipment than wearing the traditional issued belt webbing.

RANGE SHOOTS FOR THE CONTINGENT

Shooting is a core skill as a soldier. Being able to practice, these skills live at the local improvised range provided an opportunity for all contingent members to maintain their weapon skill level. Shooting from a mobile platform and zeroing weapons became a priority soon after arriving in theatre.

Theft by Somali civilians was a constant problem throughout the tour. After investigating, a break in into the Supply Store on Mogadishu Airport where the New Zealand Platoon operated a QRF and a security light system began operating to defeat this threat. Foot prints located outside the store were found and tracked to inside the Q Store through a window opening. As the store, location was some distance from FOB Taniwha Hill a security light system placed on the roof of the building provided early warning to the Australian sentry point, which would alert the Kiwi QRF to deploy. The security light system involved placing tin foil around likely entrance points into the store building and connecting this to a light source, powered by a generator. When the security light went out, this meant someone unauthorised had gained access to the store building. There were a couple of false alarms in deploying the QRF, but on 19 June 1994 at night, the QRF from FOB Taniwha Hill commanded by CPL Bojo Kareko were able to successfully secure the outside of the building and clearing the rooms to capture a Somali thief hiding inside. PTE Huria with his experience from his pioneer platoon days provided the necessary knowledge to design a security light system with few resources available. This is another example of the New Zealand soldier character and can do attitude.

VISUAL TRACKING SKILLS

Having trained trackers on this deployment added further capability to the New Zealand Supply Platoon. Having trained in South East Asia and New Zealand members of the section utilised this skill to determine numbers, age and direction by locating, pursuing and interpreting target sign to determine security issues around FOB Taniwha Hill and Mogadishu Airport UN Supply Store. Trackers can be used to gain information for a commander to help make decisions when an incident occurs or counter threats in the operation environment. Captured on 6 April 1994, three Somalis attempted to steal a vehicle outside FOB Taniwha Hill, tracking skills were used to determine the direction, numbers and age of the target sign from the point captured. This information helped in maintaining security.

ANZAC DAY

For many in the contingent the commemoration of ANZAC Day in theatre remains a major highlight. Unfortunately, the contingent did not conduct a firing party at the dawn service due to security issues but having the Australian contingent join the commemorative service and day's activities made a memorable day. A combined ANZAC catafalque party formed part of the dawn service on the day. The day also marked the presentation of the UN Medal to contingent members.

US MILITARY DEPARTS SOMALIA

Observing the US Military withdraw at Mogadishu Airport on 31 March 1994, saw Marine forces land via sea and air on mass. The sight remains a distant memory of sea, air and land power, nothing compared to any NZDF capability of the day. Observing Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion's arrive on mass on Mogadishu Airport was an impressive sight. Landing from sea to the south of Mogadishu Airport the amphibious capability of the Marine Corps joined the securing force. In a matter of minutes, US Forces secured Mogadishu Airport to enable a smooth final withdraw of all US Forces from Somalia. By the end of the day, no US Forces remained. For the remaining UN Forces in theatre the air space would now be a lonely place to be, no creditable air cover provided by Cobra helicopters or C130 Spectre's existed.

UNPREDICTABILITY OF MOGADISHU

In March 1994, before the withdrawal, two large calibre rounds came in from the other side of the airfield, over FOB Taniwha Hill and impacted out to sea. The nature or type of rounds was never determined but it was believed that the rounds may have been ranging shots aimed at the US Navy Fleet anchored offshore. Speculation on weapon type ranged from direct lay mortars or some form of anti-armour weapon to SA-7s that some clans were thought to have access to.

At the end of March 1994, US Forces withdrew, along with troops from other nation partners including Germany, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saudi Ababia, Tunisia, Turkey and the UAE, This reduced the total UN Force in Somalia from over 30,000 to just under 20,000 troops. Following this, FOB Taniwha Hill perimeter was extended to include Hill 22 itself as this was considered vital ground for Taniwha Hill. Previously, this ground had been occupied by an Amercian mortar locating radar unit and troop of Abrams, Bradleys or AAV7s. Two observation posts were constructed on feature Hill 22, one covering toward the sea, the other covering overlooking the airport. Later a VCP and strong point were constructed on the access road to Taniwha Hill to deny any access to hostile forces which might penetrate the airfield perimeter.

Armed Somalis became a common sight after the beginning of April 1994, especially around the US Embassy. These were generally irregular militia protecting their clans from their opponents. There was also a steady increase in the amount of small arms fire around the city. In the late afternoon of 17 April 1994, small arms and RPG fire began coming over Taniwha Hill from the other side of the airfield. This fire was not directed at UN troops, but were merely rounds over-shooting from the clan buildings by the southern end of the airfield where two sub-clans of the Hawiye clan were fighting. Extra fresh food, water, and fuel were brought into Taniwha Hill, in case the increased hostilities forced the contingent to remain on FOB Taniwha Hill for an extended period. This activity continued until 22 April 1994, with the worst day being the 21 April 1994 when RPG rounds landed on the runway and the North Ramp.

At this time, a minimum of two observation points were kept manned throughout, monitoring for any possible intrusions onto the airfield. The UN's fear at the time appeared to be if local Somalis would break into the airfield. At times kiwis could observe technicals driving around the outside perimeter. Normal routine continued for the kiwis throughout except for the 21 April 1994, when the stores section were deployed back to FOB Taniwha Hill. After the 22 April 1994, all clan activity calmed down although sporadic firing and sometime explosions could be heard regularly around the city.

There was a steady increase in the number of incidents involving UN vehicles and personnel. On 16 May 1994, a UNOSOM vehicle was attacked, resulting in five Nepalese soldiers dead and one wounded. In the last month and half of the tour, the UN theatre command changed the policy for vehicle convoys to at least two vehicles per patrol. Attacks, involving the UN were usually a case of UN Forces being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or being caught in the crossfire between rival factions.

Over the period 25 to 26 Jun 1994, small arms fire was again received over FOB Taniwha Hill. By this time,

the US Embassy was also coming under fire, although fighting was still between rival clans and not directed specifically against UN Forces. On 29 Jun 1994, the contingent conducted a last patrol to US Embassy and sighted a number of technicals in the vicinity of checkpoint seven.

CONTINGENT MAORI CULTURE GROUP

Being part of this group proved to be a great outlet to connect with New Zealand while deployed. The group performed on Waitangi Day to partner nations and guests. Another aspect of being part of this group is to support each other while deployed and maintain relationships.

SECTION TRAINING

When operations permitted, normal section training was conducted to maintain basic soldier skills and enhance infantry minor tactics. Although section members were split between the Mogadishu seaport and stores section on the Mogadishu airport this training proved essential to maintain standards. All soldiers of the section were able to provide some sort of input into this training, which ranged from developing range shooting, battle cards, observation stands, first aid, fire control orders, target indication, section battle drills, BCDs, close protection drills and vehicle, aircraft, weapon recognition (PTE Wood is an expert in this area).

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships with other partner military nations and civilian contractors working for the United Nations is an important part of gaining information, support, and resources. During the tour soldiers of the rifle section established and strengthened these relationships with

key players who occupied the Mogadishu Airport during our tour. PTE Leota, PTE Huria, and PTE Mandeno's character and interpersonal skills came to the forefront during the tour as they made contacts to gain resources. This initiative helped in preparing and building defensive obstacles and bunkers for Taniwha Hill. Seeing soldiers actively use their initiative for the benefit of the contingent highlighted the resilience and 'can do' attitude of the kiwi soldier on operations.

RETURNING HOME

The contingent departed Mogadishu Airport on 30 June 1994, touching down at Ohakea on 4 July 1994 after a 24-hour delay in Diego Garcia. On landing, our contingent had to wait on the tarmac for one of my soldiers to be escorted off first by the 1 RNZIR Regiment Police (another story that is best left in Somalia) as he would complete a couple of weeks at SCE.

It was pleasing to see familiar faces, family and members

from our unit. The Commanding Officer LT COL P. Gibbons and RSM WO1 B.J. Smith both were new into the job, but were well aware of what the contingent had faced overseas. If I remember rightly, after giving some rank to the RSM quietly, Hutch my section 2IC received new rank promoted to CPL by the CO at Ohakea. Hutch was an extremely good leader and deserved this promotion. Without his support during the tour, my job would be made more difficult. Everyone once passed through customs were free to go on leave.

CONCLUSION

The experience of being deployed as part of the New Zealand Supply Platoon to Somalia as a Section Commander on reflection had a positive effect on my leadership, developing and strengthening command relationships, maintaining a positive outlook and gaining operational experience as a Junior Commander. The section experienced how to integrate into a combat support services unit and how to conduct operations in a United Nations coalition environment. Neither is smooth, in fact it is difficult for some soldiers to adjust, but the key is to maintain routine, maintain discipline and team work by building good team dynamics. Nothing replaces training together for an extended period and knowing your soldiers.

During the tour, many members of the New Zealand Supply Platoon experienced engagements of enemy fire directly or were involved indirectly with Somalia warlord or militia groups firing small arms, mortars, and RPGs. There were some hairy moments. I am grateful that everyone came home safely to his or her families at the end of the tour. The tour was demanding and the environment challenging, but the New Zealand soldier demonstrates their strong warrior character when faced with these challenges.

To my section, I will always be grateful for their comradeship, professionalism and support during not only the tour, but also the many hours of training experienced collectively. To be part of the New Zealand Supply Platoon on operations will always be a highlight in my career and the friendships developed during the tour with the logistic warriors remain strong. To all officers, soldiers, airman, and sailors of New Zealand, Australia and our partner nations who served during this conflict in Somalia, I salute you all and I thank you all for your service within your respective nations military, thank you for serving.

ONWARD

To these soldiers and civilians that made the ultimate sacrifice.

Lest we forget

MAJ SIMON TREGEAR

REFLECTIONS FROM THE OC OF THE 3RD CONTINGENT

As is probably true for all the rotations of the New Zealand Supply Detachment to UNOSOM, ours was very different from the other two.

Firstly, the two earlier contingents had done the hard yards of establishing the New Zealand camp at Taniwha Hill, and also of establishing the communication and coordination procedures with Headquarters Land Force Command back in New Zealand. Secondly, the mission dynamic had changed: whereas the initial efforts had been focused on humanitarian assistance, over time the rebels had rearmed and were less receptive to the UN's presence in Somalia. The other significant change was the loss of support for the mission from the international community with the drawdown and withdrawal of troops from European countries, many of which had left or were in the process of leaving as we arrived, and in particular the withdrawal of the US troops, which would take place midway through our deployment.

In response to the changing security situation the composition of our contingent was different from our predecessors. Our security was strengthened with the addition of an Infantry section from 1 RNZIR, our self-sufficiency was enhanced with paramedic trained nursing officer and we also had three Ammo-Techs.

The contingent was not formed from an existing unit but was a group of selected individuals from a broad range of units, predominantly RNZAOC for the supply related tasks, RNZIR for security, and RNZSigs, RNZEME, RNZCT and RNZNC for other support and administrative functions.

From my recollection, some of the significant achievements during our deployment were:

- The Stores Section successfully relocated. The planning had commenced with the previous contingent and was completed and undertaken during our deployment.
- Following the decision by the Security Council to intervene in Rwanda, the Rations Section was tasked to provide support to the initial deployment. The task was substantial and completed without any loss of support to the primary dependency – and this wasn't that they simply had residual capacity – they worked harder, longer, and were supported by the remainder of the unit.
- The deployment was never expected to have responsibility for any ammunition storage, but with the withdrawal of the US we were the only unit with any qualified personnel in theatre. Huggy and Randall did an outstanding job.
- Demolitions of captured Somali ammunition – including the inadvertent CS gassing of a Pakistani VCP when the cloud of smoke from one demolition wafted and hung over the VCP.
- The contribution of Jude Telford again in an area that had not been contemplated. With the withdrawal of the US, Jude was one of the few (only?) personnel qualified to provide aeromedical support. Notwithstanding, she put the contingent's health first and was there when needed.
- Cpl Douglas and his Infantry Section possibly wondered what they had got themselves into on finding themselves in a Logistic Sub-Unit deployed in Africa. Our style of doing business was very different to that of an Infantry Battalion. Allowing some time for 'norming', the elements integrated well. The Infantry section provided useful advice with placement of OPs and fighting pits (which we established because of the changing nature of the security environment) and also provided personal protection to then Lt Col Clive Lilley who was the head of the UN U2 Military Intelligence Cell when he went out to meet local tribal leaders.

Although the deployment was not without incident, I was thankful that we all came home safe and unscathed. Our deployment did not have the prominence that some of the more recent ones have had, but it is important to remember that it was 1994 and before the high operational tempo that the Army has seen since the late 90s through until today. Many of the problems that we encountered with equipment, communication with New Zealand, welfare and pay and administration directly led to improvements that have subsequently enjoyed by those who deployed to Bosnia, Timor Leste and the more recent deployments.

SOME OF MY STRONGEST MEMORIES ARE:

- having the privilege of playing 'Mail Man' as I picked up the mail from the Embassy (the old US Embassy which was the UN HQ) and then passing it out to personnel.
- being "number 2 rifleman" to Dino as "number 1 rifleman" capturing 3 Somalis trying to steal vehicles, and then rescuing the would be vehicle thieves from the UN security element (another African nation) who took them into custody and then promptly started to dust them up to say the least. A complaint was lodged through UN channels.
- being sniped at hanging out my washing – although

they were some 600m away and the accuracy was marginal at best, but a hit would still be a hit.

- the rat that was so greedy that it squeezed itself into the toaster to get at the crumbs only to push the bar down which started the element, so that we had toasted rat in the toaster for breakfast.
- the Americans realising that our walkways were the ‘clip-together’ helo pad that had been ‘mislaid’ 12 months earlier – which we had to return with profuse apologies.
- having two Canadian UH1Hs (Iroquois) in the car park with the Fore Runners when things became intensive.
- having to confront two contingent commanders about the habit of their troops of gathering on mass outside our perimeter to ogle the women as they went to and from the showers after PT.
- the Stores Section jury rigging a burglar alarm and mounting an RRF to capture that thieves who had been breaking into the store on a nightly basis despite it being only 20m from a perimeter OP that was manned 24/7.

The final chapter in our deployment was the Out-Survey process in which we handed the camp over to the Pakistani contingent. The process involved forming a comprehensive inventory of every item that would be handed over, and for which New Zealand would be reimbursed. The process was laborious and fraught with differences in culture and tension between what the Pakistani contingent wanted, and what we did not want to return to New Zealand. The process was concluded with less than 24 hours before departure and served as a lasting memory of UN administration.

Oops – elite troops raid wrong building

MOGADISHU

IN A highly co-ordinated lightning strike, elite American troops dropped from helicopters on ropes before dawn yesterday on — oops! — a building housing United Nations personnel.

Three foreign United Nations workers and five Somali employees were briefly detained in what the United Nations chief military spokesman, Major David Stockwell, nevertheless described as "a successful operation".

The building's entrance is marked by a sign identifying it as a project office of the United Nations Development Programme, one of many United Nations agencies operating in Somalia. Major Stockwell said the building was in an "unauthorised area".

"I think it possible that the soldiers conducting this search were not aware of the identity of the people in the building since it was in an unauthorised area," he said.

"They were searching a place they had every reason to believe was hostile and they acted appropriately till they determined otherwise."

Major Stockwell declined to characterise the objective of the mission, which involved more than a dozen helicopters, United States Rangers and soldiers from the army's Quick Reaction Force.

Asked if he would categorically say the objective was not the capture of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farrah Aideed, Major Stockwell replied: "No, what I'm saying is ... I will not go into detail on the purpose of our operation." — AP

3/8/93

Bloodied chopper pilot shown on video

NEW YORK, Oct 4. — Cable News Network broadcast a videotape of a dishevelled and bloodied US helicopter pilot in captivity in Somalia today.

The videotape, which the network said was taken by a freelance Somali cameraman, showed Chief Warrant Officer Mike Duran identifying himself as the pilot of a US Blackhawk helicopter.

Prompted by his captors to say more, Duran said: "US Army, I'm a Blackhawk pilot ... Blackhawk pilot." Asked what he thought of the operation: Duran said: "I'm a soldier, I do what I'm told."

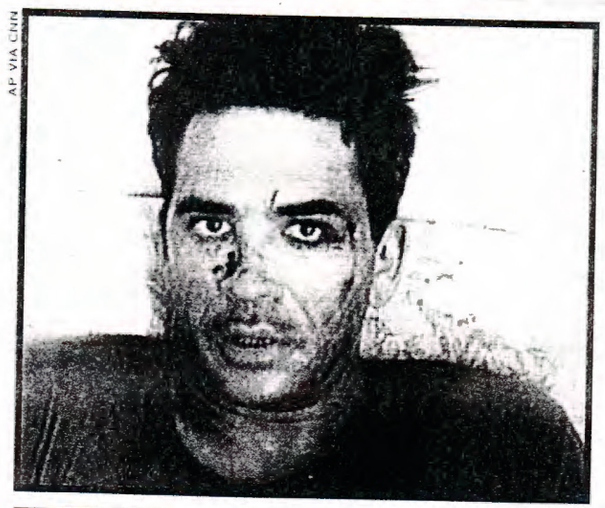
Asked if he killed innocent people, Duran, looking into the camera said, "Innocent people being killed is not good."

Minutes after the videotape was braodcast on CNN, Defence Secretary Les Aspin opened a Pentagon news conference by referring to the footage.

In the videotape the soldier, dressed in a khaki T-shirt, appeared to have several cuts on his head and his face was caked with blood. His legs were covered by a blanket from which his bare feet protruded.

Duran's helicopter was one of two shot down in Somalia yesterday. — Reuter

PAUL WATSON—TORONTO STAR—SYGMA



AP VIA CNN

MOGADISHU In October, the body of an American soldier is dragged through the streets of the Somali capital, after battles in which 18 U.S. troops were killed, top; earlier in the year, a Marine mourned the death of his best friend in a fire fight, right; captured U.S.

Explosions end lull in fighting in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU, Oct 9. — Volleys of explosions boomed out in Mogadishu late yesterday, orange flashes lit up the horizon and tracer fire directed at patrolling helicopters arced through the sky.

The shooting started at about 9.40pm (7.40am Saturday NZ time), ending several days of quiet in the city. The United Nations command could not be reached for comment.

Faint blasts could be heard in the distance, perhaps at the UN-controlled airport. About 30 minutes later a swarm of helicopters swooped overhead and tracer bullets apparently fired by Somali guerrillas tracked them through the night sky.

At least two dozen explosions were heard inland from the Sahafi Hotel where most journalists stay. The horizon flashed several times. Small arms fire crackled in short bursts.

The throb of a large plane could be heard landing at the airport — possibly one of the two AC-130 gunships sent to reinforce US troops after a battle on Sunday in which at least 13 Americans were killed. The AC-130s were used to blitz militia positions in June when UN forces began hunting warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed.

Most of last night's explosions appeared to be coming from the area of the October 21st Road along which Aideed's gunmen have often ambushed UN forces. The city has been generally quiet since mortar shells killed a US soldier and wounded 12 on Monday night. — Reuter

Kiwi troops undaunted by high casualty list in Somalia

By MARTYN GOSLING

THE New Zealand Army is staying in Somalia, undaunted by United States casualties and calls in the United States senate to bring home the marines.

The United Nations casualty list has grown to 75 with the death this week of 12 United States soldiers, the capture of six others, and the downing of two Blackhawk helicopter gunships.

New Zealand has 48 service personnel in Mogadishu, mainly operating between the port and the airport and supplying the 28,000 United Nations soldiers protecting relief operations in Somalia.

Those relief operations have been successful. A year ago, 3000 children were dying of hunger each week in Somalia while so-called warlords and their gunmen pillaged United Nations relief planes as soon as they landed.

That strife ended when the United Nations moved in troops, and today Somalia and most of Mogadishu is peaceful.

The only real problem, according to army deputy chief of staff for operations Brigadier Stuart Jameson, is the southern side of the city adjacent to the airport now being targeted by a new United Nations operation against Mohamed Farah Aideed.

General Aideed has been hiding since the killing of 24 Pakistani troops in June. The only faction leader not supporting the United Nations, he is now becoming a folk hero among his supporters, and the original relief operation has developed into anti-guerrilla warfare.

Two French relief groups called for military operations to stop, saying the United Nations was striking blindly and hospitals were overwhelmed.

Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Razak said the United Nations was putting "too much emphasis on military action — like it was an obsession".

In the United States, there is mounting anger and doubt about the operation, after a captured Blackhawk pilot was paraded on Somali television, and dead American soldiers were dragged through Mogadishu streets by General Aideed's jubilant supporters.

But the New Zealand troops would be staying, Brigadier Jameson said.

"The people being hit are combat troops actively seeking to confront bandit groups and to gain control of a city area. Our people are suppliers, and it is highly unlikely anyone could directly fire into the area where they are based," he said.

☐ Elusive Aideed P5

AFRICA FIRST, RUGBY SECOND

Private Tim Kareko (20), with family pet Jazz, contemplates the place he gave up on a rugby tour to Britain for the chance of a tour of duty in Somalia.

Picked as halfback for the New Zealand Combined Services team, he was given the choice of destinations and chose Africa.

"It's my job. Rugby's just a game. It comes second when you're in the army," he says.

But delays with the UN charter plane mean the flight will now not leave until Wednesday and had Kareko known he could have done both tours.

The rugby tour of Britain left at the beginning of November and returned in late December.

Kareko says despite having up to 15 vaccinations for various exotic bugs, he understands starvation is still the main health risk in Somalia. Those on the trip have been issued with water purification and first aid kits.

His family was at first unhappy with his choice.

US helicopters return fire on Somali crowd

MOGADISHU, Sept 9. — US helicopter gunships with canons blazing attacked crowds of Somalis including women and children in Mogadishu today, inflicting heavy casualties after Pakistani and US troops came under attack.

A UN military spokesman said casualties among the Somalis were sizeable and may have included women and children.

The spokesman said the women and children were acting as a "human shield" for a large force of Somali gunmen who ambushed United Nations peacekeeping troops on Mogadishu's notorious October 21st Road.

Somali residents said well over 100 Somalis were killed or wounded in the fighting, which lasted for three hours. This casualty estimate could not be confirmed.

UN officials said a Pakistani soldier was killed and five Pakistanis and three US soldiers wounded in the ambush, in which a force of 135 US and Pakistani troops was attacked by scores of gunmen.

Two Cobra attack helicopters flew in to relieve them. The force was trying to remove barricades from October 21st Road.

UN officials said one armoured vehicle in the UN column of four and a bulldozer were hit and destroyed by a 106mm cannon shell fired by militiamen loyal to Mohammed Farah Aideed.

UN military spokesman Major David Stockwell said women and children swarming around the soldiers' vehicles were regarded by the US helicopters "armed or not, as being combatants and posing an imminent threat against our soldiers".

Armed youths attacking the UN column were moving among the civilians, a tactic they have been accused of employing in past attacks, Stockwell said.

"It was apparent from the air what their intentions were," he told reporters.

"I understand it was a sizeable militia force and casualties on the Somali side, among the militias, were sizeable as well," he added. "It's entirely possible women and children could have been killed."

The incident was the worst since seven Nigerian UN troops were killed in the same district last Sunday by militiamen believed to be supporters of Aideed.

UN officials said the Cobras fired cannon at targets on the ground around a derelict cigarette factory where 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed on June 5 in a massacre that put Aideed on the UN's wanted list for murder.

The violence erupted about 3.30pm when the UN troops moved into the area, from which Italian units are due to withdraw tomorrow to positions north of the city. — Reuter

Two Pakistani soldiers killed in UN-Somali gunbattle 22/9/93

MOGADISHU

TWO Pakistani United Nations troops died in an early morning gunbattle with Somali militias in Mogadishu yesterday, unofficial United Nations military sources said.

Seven Pakistani troops were wounded and a United Nations armoured vehicle was destroyed in the battle, they said.

Fighting erupted when Pakistani troops tried to destroy a barricade thrown up by Somalis to show their defiance of the world body, United Nations military spokesman Tim McDavitt said.

Gunfights were still raging as up to 16 United States Blackhawk and Cobra helicopters flew over the city to back up reinforcements sent in to the battle area, witnesses said.

The Pakistanis came under fire just after dawn near Benadir Hospital hundreds of metres from the massive United Nations compound. Three of the seven wounded were in serious condition.

The charred remains of the two Pakistanis were left at the scene of the shooting near Benadir Hospital, witnesses said.

The area is a stronghold for supporters of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, who the United Nations wants to try for the June 5 killings of 24 Pakistani soldiers.

Elite United States troops captured General Aideed's main financial backer in a raid on a cluster of Mogadishu houses, the United Nations said yesterday.

Osman Hassan is not formally wantedfor the June massacre, but a statement described him as a "principal adviser and financier to Aideed and his militia". — Reuter

US troops storm building, arrest 17

MOGADISHU

ELITE United States troops, backed up by a dozen helicopters, stormed a building in south Mogadishu yesterday and arrested 17 Somali militiamen after a brief gunfight, a United Nations military spokesman said.

"We believe two Somalis were wounded but they fled and two US Army Rangers were slightly wounded," Major David Stockwell said. He said they had been discharged from hospital.

Major Stockwell said the building was a "suspected command and control facility" of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, wanted by the United Nations for the killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers in June.

Major Stockwell said about 50 Rangers, from the 400-strong elite unit that flew into Mogadishu two weeks ago, moved on the building about 2.30am (11.30am NZ time).

About 12 helicopters, including big Blackhawks used to carry troops and small Vietnam-style observation helicopters, hovered above in formation.

It was the second such operation by the Rangers. In an operation last week, the Rangers mistakenly attacked an aid compound and arrested eight United Nations workers. — Reuter

Somalis fire on Kiwi soldiers

16/7/93

By CORINNE AMBLER

NEW ZEALAND soldiers came under attack by Somalis at Mogadishu airport yesterday, but were not injured.

Information officer Major Bruce Morrison said it was not clear what had happened, but the senior New Zealand officer in Somalia, Colonel David Haines, had said there had been firing at, or close to, the New Zealand camp.

Forty-three New Zealanders are in an army supply camp near the airport and four are at the UN headquarters in the old American embassy in another part of the city.

Cable News Network said the Somalis had launched 20-minute attacks against all UN forces in Somalia.

Major Morrison said it was unclear whether the New Zealand camp was targeted or it was a random attack. He said if the New Zealanders were in danger the UN commander in Mogadishu would make the decision to move them.

UN copters swoop over Somali capital

MOGADISHU

UNITED NATIONS helicopters swooped over the Somali capital Mogadishu early yesterday in a show of force around positions of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed.

A United Nations spokesman said there were more Somali attacks on United Nations targets late on Monday and early yesterday. He said militia believed to belong to General Aideed's faction fired at Turkish and Pakistani peacekeepers but no casualties were reported.

Reporters heard at least two explosions but these were not in the immediate area of operation by the helicopters.

"It was a most noisy night. The helicopters remained in the sky through the early hours of morning," a witness said.

"They did not raid any buildings, just showed their might out there," the witness said.

The spokesman, at a morning news briefing, did not offer any explanation for the night activity, which followed a bungled attempt to grab suspected Aideed aides. — Reuter

A handful of the air force team on peace making duties in Somalia returned to New Zealand this week. They told Ian Stuart, of NZPA, what it was like surviving in the country God walked away from three years ago.

On board an air force Hercules loaded with spares and essential equipment which left Auckland late last month for Somalia, was enough pork and lamb for a traditional Kiwi hangi for 100 people.

But one of the problems at the Mogadishu base camp in the Somalian desert was not finding enough rocks of the right size and shape, it was finding rocks at all.

When a search of the desert yielded nothing but dust as fine as talcum powder, the resourceful New Zealand contingent scouted around and found some abandoned tank traps. Enough large bits of iron were salvaged from the tracks, thrown in the hole and the Waitangi Day hangi went off without a hitch, the commander of the Auckland air base, Group Captain Bruce Ferguson reported.

Mr Ferguson returned on Thursday with the Hercules sent to Africa carrying extra supplies for the 66 New Zealand air force personnel and three Andover aircraft sent to Somalia at the beginning of the year.

They went there as New Zealand's contribution to the United States-initiated armed peace-making force. The force re-opened supply routes to the hundreds of thousands of Somalians who risked starvation as rebels and tribal factions fought over the country's limited resouces, controlled the food and attacked supply convoys.

The only thing the New Zealanders did not take with them was fresh water. That is supplied from huge desalination plants built by the United States and rationed to one bucket a day per person.

"You quickly get to know which is the largest bucket," said one of the contingent, the air force's environmental health officer, Flight Lieutenant Sally Frew.

The camp is on the outskirts of Mogadishu and when Mr Ferguson says it has been trashed, he is at pains to point out that he means trashed in the literal sense.

There was no water, sewerage system or electricity. Very few of the houses had doors and even fewer had roofs. The larger buildings had holes in the concrete walls where copper wiring and plumbing had been ripped out. There was no monetary system operating and negotiating the narrow rubble strewn streets was difficult.

Yet the ravaged city was still home to an estimated 1.5 million people, many of whom still belonged to the fighting clans and sub clans and engaged in fierce fire fights. Sporadic gunfire and tracer peppered the dark sky every night.

Squadron leader Paul Harrison who has also been to the ruined city said one impression that could never be adequately described was the stench from the sewage and decaying corpses.

"There are huge burial pits, but people are usually buried where they drop. There is no medical system operating and no one to bury the dead," he said.

Morale high

Mr Ferguson said although the conditions were as bad as anyone could imagine, the morale of the New Zealand contingent was high.

"God in whatever form he or she takes, walked away from this country three years ago and hasn't looked back," he said.

"But in typical Kiwi fashion the contingent have established themselves particularly well and made the most of adverse conditions with very basic equipment.

"In fact they are the envy of most other forces on Mogadishu Airport," he said.

The three Andovers and the 66 personnel will be in Somalia until the end of June. The Government has yet to decide if the tour of duty was to be extended but Mr Ferguson said one of the Andovers would be replaced and some of the personnel would be relieved.

Flt Lt Liev Bjerga, a senior navigating officer with No 42 Squadron who also returned on Thursday, said the desert dust was hard to cope with.

"Conditions are hard to describe. If you can imagine four tonnes of dust dropped on you throughout a 24-hour period you can imagine what it is like.

"The winds are constant and every 90 minutes in the first night there was a C5 Galaxy (a large American transport aircraft) taking off 50 metres from our tents. We got very little sleep in the first few weeks."

Although they had little to do with either the refugees or the rebels, they were always aware of small arms fire. On the low runs when they dropped leaflets warning villagers not to interfere with the supply convoys, the Andover crews all wore flak jackets and helmets in the 30C heat.

Mr Bjerga believes it would be many years before Somalia returned to normal and could sustain itself without foreign aid.

"Twelve months down the track we will see the end of the starving of hundreds of thousands of people. But as for any infrastructure, that is up to the Somalis themselves to stop bickering and get on and solve their problems."

Somali gunmen attack UN compound, airport

MOGADISHU, July 14. — Somali gunmen attacked the UN-controlled airport and the United Nations compound in Mogadishu last night.

A fierce gun battle broke out between gunmen around the lifeline airport and was followed by a firefight at the UN compound on the city outskirts, residents said.

US helicopters took off to patrol around the airport after sustained automatic weapons fire followed by what sounded like several salvos from anti-tank weapons.

Tracer bullets and flares lit up the night sky around the airport, where the US Quick Reaction Force in Somalia keeps scores of helicopters.

The heavy shooting stopped after about 30 minutes although occasional rounds of small arms fire were heard on the edge of the airport.

The shooting around the UN compound, where at least 4000 troops and thousands more relief and support staff are barracked, involved small arms fire, the residents said.

The 20,000-strong UN peacekeeping force has come under nightly attack since it launched a crackdown on warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed in retaliation for the killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. The UN wants to try him for war crimes. Aideed's followers say the UN wants to recolonise the country and remove him first because he is an obstacle to their plans.

Thirty-five UN peacekeepers and at least 120 Somalis have been killed in the past five weeks.

The entire UN operation, apart from scattered military bases, is confined to the UN compound. It has come under sniper fire and attempts to climb under its perimeter wire almost every night for the past three weeks. — Reuter

Next Somalia team to include infantry

By SIMON KILROY
Political Reporter

NEW ZEALAND'S next contingent joining United Nations forces in Somalia will include a "sprinkling" of infantry, the Government has confirmed.

It is the first time New Zealand has sent ordinary infantry combat troops to Somalia, though the personnel now there do carry weapons.

And yesterday Foreign Affairs Minister Don McKinnon defended the actions of United Nations troops in Somalia.

The Government announced last week it was expanding the main contingent in Somalia from 22 to 43.

A spokesman for Mr McKinnon stressed the troops were going solely to protect the New Zealand team there and were not intended for offensive operations.

Other United Nations forces in Somalia have begun attacking suspected militia arms dumps, incurring the wrath of Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed.

"We want to be as sure as we can that the team on the ground in Somalia will be safe."

He said the extra soldiers meant that for the first time some of the New Zealand contingent would have the protection job as their main task.

Previously other personnel have had to double in that role.

Army information officer Bruce Morrison could not provide an exact number for the infantry, but said it was not many.

As well as do protection work, they would be expected to carry out work like unloading ships, he said.

Besides the infantry, the next contingent includes cooks, a medic, vehicle mechanics and telecommunications operators.

The New Zealand team has the job of supplying food and other general supplies to United Nations limited capacity to do that, he said.

Major Morrison said the New Zealand force would become more self-supporting but it was not intended it would take over entire responsibility for its protection. Other United Nations combat forces had that responsibility.

The next New Zealand contingent is expected to leave early next month.

Meanwhile Mr McKinnon told Parliament the Government regretted the civilian deaths in Somalia caused by United Nations forces. But he said the Security Council had received reports indicating that General Aideed was using civilian crowds as human shields to screen attacks on United Nations guard posts, with shots being fired from the crowd.

Alliance Leader Jim Anderton said independent reports did not support the claim that shots had come from the crowd.

New Zealand had campaigned for its seat on the Security Council

Happy Somalis parade corpses of US soldiers

UN chief regrets deaths

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 4. — Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali deplored today the downing of two American helicopters in Somalia.

But the UN chief in a statement said the latest incident would not "deter the United Nations from implementing its mandate in Somalia as authorised by the Security Council" to promote political reconstruction in Somalia.

Boutros-Ghali said he deeply regretted the casualities and expressed his "deepest sympathies to the families of the brave soldiers who gave their lives in the cause of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in Somalia". — Reuter

MOGADISHU, Oct 4. — Somali militiamen killed at least 13 UN peacekeepers and wounded dozens in the heaviest battle in the capital Mogadishu since the multinational force deployed there, witnesses and officials said today.

What began yesterday as another attempt to capture aides of warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed ended with possibly 500 Somalis wounded, two helicopters shot down, and jubilant civilians parading the corpses of two US soldiers around the streets.

Seven US Army rangers were missing and may be held hostage by Aideed's guerrillas, NBC television reported in New York.

The United Nations said US soldiers had captured three principal aides to the fugitive Aideed in the initial operation.

"It was a successful operation . . . because we detained a large number of Aideed militia who included key individuals," UN spokesman Major David Stockwell said in Mogadishu.

But that success was overshadowed by the bloodiness of the battle and the uncertain fate of the captured soldiers.

Clashes erupted just before dusk yesterday as the peacekeepers started the search operation.

Two US Blackhawk helicopters were shot down by ground fire, the UN said. About 70 US Rangers sent to pick up wounded crewmen then came under fire from guerrillas.

A rescue force of US infantry and rangers, 24 Malaysian APCs, four Pakistani tanks and two APCs rushed to the scene.

At least 12 US soldiers were killed and 75 wounded, Defence officials in Washington said. A Malaysian was killed and nine wounded, the Defence Ministry in Kuala Lumpur said.

Stockwell said a full UN casualty toll would not be established until late today.

Three hospitals overflowed with at least 500 Somali wounded, the International Committee of the Red Cross said in Nairobi. It was impossible to say how many Somalis were killed.

"The operating tables are full right now. People are lying all over the floors in pools of blood," said Paul Watson of the Toronto Star newspaper.

"We've never seen an operation of this size before," said Watson, who has spent months covering the conflict.

Cheering crowds displayed the corpses of two US soldiers in Mogadishu this morning, foreign witnesses said. One was strapped to a barrow and wheeled about the streets.

They saw a second charred body which Somalis said had been burned by crowds before being put on display.

The battle raged around the Bakara market area — a hotbed of support for Aideed — until dawn. Debris lay scattered over several square kilometres, reporters said.

Crowds of looters picked over the burnt-out wreckage of the two helicopters and of at least seven vehicles, including four UN armoured personnel carriers (APCs), witnesses said.

A child danced on the wreckage of a vehicle, wearing a ripped jacket and a military helmet. — Reuter

NZ man gunned down in Somalia

By DAVID MORRIS and NZPA

A New Zealand civilian, working as a caterer for United Nations troops, has been shot dead in Somalia.

He was Tyson Morris, 21, and worked for his father's Brisbane-based catering firm.

Tyson's father, David Morris, is governing-director of Morris Catering Aust Pty Ltd, and was in Mogadishu at the time of the shooting. His mother Annette is believed to be in New Zealand.

Company managing director Robert McVicker said Mr Morris would bring his son's body back to Australia.

US military sources said Mr Morris was working on a catering contract for a logistics company helping the United Nations. He was killed near the port of the Somali capital about 8pm yesterday New Zealand time.

He was believed to have been travelling in a truck with a Kenyan man when he was forced to stop by the vehicle in front.

A man left the vehicle in front, walked to Mr Morris's truck and reportedly shot him dead.

New Zealand's Foreign Affairs Ministry was this morning trying to confirm the reports.

A spokeswoman confirmed the shot man was not a soldier, and that he was a New Zealander.

Morris Catering has only recently begun taking over some of the work of New Zealand's 48-member Army contingent in Mogadishu. Most of the New Zealand troops work at the city's airport and port providing rations for the rest of the UN military.

The New Zealand Army commander in Mogadishu, Lt Colonel David Haynes, told The Post that Morris Catering recently won a contract from the UN.

It had taken on responsibility for providing fresh food rations for UN forces.

Mr Haynes said the violence in Somalia had caused New Zealand troops to abandon travelling by road through the city. The UN military now routinely used helicopters to avoid the threat of ambushes, mobs and snipers.

No New Zealand troops have been wounded in Somalia, though there have been numerous close calls.

Before the ban on using vehicles, Kiwi soliders were stoned and threatened with weapons. In one incident a grenade was lobbed into a room two New Zealanders were in but it did not go off.

The New Zealand Army camp at the airport is also subject to mortar attacks.

Mogadishu seething after killing of Nigerians

MOGADISHU, Sept 6. — Angry Somali youths hurled stones and fired grenades at Italian UN peacekeepers today as unrest boiled in Mogadishu a day after seven Nigerian troops were gunned down by militias.

United Nations military officials said Italian troops shot dead two Somalis in the early hours of Monday in the vicinity of the ambush, blamed on fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed.

In Aideed's stronghold of south Mogadishu, Somalis threw up burning street barricades and demonstrated against the United Nations. Somalis claim 30 of their own were killed on Sunday.

Before dawn, helicopters using night vision sights fired automatic weapons and 2.75mm rockets at the gunmen in response to mortar attacks on the UN-run airport, officials said.

Reuters Television pictures from the scene of the ambush on Sunday showed Somali youths dancing a jig around the stripped bodies of the Nigerians, one of whom was burned to charcoal.

A Somali boy mockingly dangled a crucifix and ground his sandalled-foot into a Nigerian corpse's face as United Nations helicopters circled in the skies overhead.

But today the Italians were stoned at a checkpoint in the north of the city, which is under the control of the Abgal, an enemy clan of Aideed's which usually welcomes the 27-nation UN force.

Two grenades were fired at the Italians, but did not explode.

Efforts to secure the release of an eighth Nigerian taken hostage but later seen alive were going ahead, United Nations military officials said.

Sunday's ambush, the worst of its kind since the massacre of 24 Pakistanis in June which put a bounty on Aideed's head, has sparked a row among contingents of the 25,000-strong force.

Italy rejected allegations that its forces did not fire a single shot to help the Nigerian unit as it came under attack in the vicinity of a spaghetti factory where three Italian troops were killed on July 2.

"We didn't know the Nigerians were being ambushed — they didn't ask for any help," said Italian deputy chief of staff General Mario Buscemi.

He also denied his forces had entered into a secret accord with elders from Aideed's Habre Gedir clan and said Italians assisted the Nigerian survivors — seven of whom were wounded — when they stumbled across them on a routine patrol.

Buscemi spoke while attending a ceremony in which General Bruno Loi, chief of his country's 2800-strong contingent, handed over to his successor General Carmine Fiore in Balad, 40km north of Mogadishu, where Italian troops are to be deployed after withdrawing from the capital.

The withdrawal was scheduled to take place at midnight today after a row in June in which Loi was blamed for taking orders from Rome and not UN commanders.

Jonathan Howe, the retired American admiral who oversees the UN operation in Somalia, vowed the killing of the Nigerians "will not go unpunished" but Somalis scoff at the Western military might arrayed against them. — Reuter

NZ officer shocked by ruins of Mogadishu

Somalia is the harshest place to which New Zealand military personnel have been deployed in the past 50 years, according to a senior RNZAF officer who returned yesterday from Mogadishu.

The commander of Whenuapai air base, Group Captain Bruce Ferguson, described the Somalian capital as godforsaken.

"There's nothing there — no services, order, water, electricity, telephones, sewerage.

"Buildings don't have doors or roofs.

"I was quite shocked by the destruction to a city by its people."

He returned to the base on board a Hercules which had resupplied the more than 60 New Zealand military personnel, mainly RNZAF, with the multinational force overseeing United Nations relief operations.

Returning were three personnel no longer required.

Flight Lieutenant Sue Frew's priority was to have a long shower — "until the water runs cold." She and others at Mogadishu were rationed to a daily shower from a bucket.

The water comes from a nearby United States desalination plant and is heavily chlorinated.

But unlike the other forces, mainly combat troops, the New Zealanders have established a kitchen and taken their own cooks instead or relying on rations.

"We have had to stop people from the multinational force at the gate," Flight Lieutenant Frew said. "They would come visiting deliberately at meal times."

The detachment is in a tented camp alongside Mogadishu airport and is continually assailed by noise and the dust.

Leading Aircraftsman Mark Sloper said that as aircraft taxied the dust would be blown up into the air to fall like talcum powder.

Navigator Flight Lieutenant Leiv Bjerga was getting used to sleep in two-hour stretches. When the contingent first arrived large transport aircraft took off every 90 minutes about 50 metres from their tents.

They believe that their contribution, supporting the RNZAF Andover flights of personnel and equipment, is worthwhile even though their efforts are largely invisible.

"I hope we will see an end to the starving this year," Flight Lieutenant Bjerga said.

Kiwi troops to carry guns in Somalia

17/6/93

THE next batch of troops to Somalia will include the first New Zealand soldiers to carry guns for other than self-protection since Vietnam.

The Government is expanding the Somalia contingent from 22 to 43, and Foreign Affairs Minister Don McKinnon said the extra soldiers would include a "sprinkling" of infantry armed to protect the rest.

It is the first time New Zealand has sent ordinary infantry combat troops to Somalia. Though the forces already there — and in other United Nations missions such as Cambodia — carry weapons, they are solely for self-protection.

New Zealand soldiers in Cambodia returned Khmer Rouge fire when their house was attacked.

However, in Somalia security has been increased since 23 Pakistan peacekeepers were gunned down. The New Zealand forces mainly supplied food and general supplies from depots to other United Nations forces.

The new dozen or so troops, including medics, chefs, and truck drivers, will include a few infantrymen whose role will be to protect the convoys to other units.

Army spokesman Major Bruce Morrison said yesterday they would have only a defensive role, but the extra armed troops was a marked change in emphasis.

Commandos arrive in Mogadishu

27/8/93

MOGADISHU

THE first group of crack United States army rangers jetted into Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, yesterday to help United Nations peacekeepers combat mounting violence.

The Special Forces Ranger units are elite commandos. Rumours swept Mogadishu that the rangers' mission was to flush out fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, wanted by the United Nations for the killing on June 5 of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers.

Lieutenant Colonel Danny McKnight, leader of the force, said: "We have no idea what the mission is and no idea how long we shall stay. We have been trained for almost anything — but nothing special in Mogadishu."

The group of 65 rangers were the advance party in a team of 400 committed to serve in Somalia by United States President Bill Clinton's government last week. All the others were expected to arrive by tomorrow.

Their arrival follows three bombings of American trucks near Mogadishu this month, the first of which killed four

Emotions high as Andovers take off

There were emotional farewells at Whenuapai air base yesterday as family members said goodbye to the first Air Force crews to leave for Somalia.

They are part of New Zealand's contribution to the United Nations task force to restore peace in the troubled country.

Three Andover short-range to medium-range utility transport planes from No 42 Squadron took off within 30 seconds of each other at 8.35 am and immediately turned and headed for Australia for the first of their fuel stops.

They will be used to ferry food and supplies around Somalia, particularly to some of the smaller airfields that are too short to take the larger Hercules transport planes.

Maximum speed

The Andovers, which have a maximum speed of 460 km/h and a cruising speed of 385 km/h, are expected to take six days to reach Somalia with 12 refuelling stops.

The tonnes of spares and equipment for the detachment and the bulk of the 62 personnel will leave in a few days on three Hercules and on the Air Force's Boeing 727 and are all scheduled to arrive in Somalia about the same time as the Andovers, said an Air Force spokeswoman, Flight Lieutenant Diana Hales.

The Andovers left yesterday carrying nothing but fuel, light rations and the crew.

Long legs

"The Andovers are as light as they can possibly make them in order for them to make the long legs. They have the crew and a couple of technicians. There is virtually nothing else on board. It is the only way they can make the long legs," she said.

The three Andovers had been fitted with a new global positioning system, the first time New Zealand military planes had been fitted with the system, Flight Lieutenant Hales said.

"The global positioning system has been selected

PICTURE: GLENN JEFFREY

Corporal Brent Haami, of Wanganui, entertains some of the Army detachment travelling with him to Somalia.

Pep talk for aid troops

Soldiers who leave this morning for Somalia have been told that they will become part of African history, and can look forward to coming home in six months tanned and slimmer.

The commander of land forces, Brigadier Bret Bestic, farewelled the 22 in Auckland last night.

He said they were the first ordnance group to leave these shores since the Second World War.

In Somalia they will buy and distribute supplies for the United Nations force supporting relief efforts.

The group had family farewells at Linton Camp near Palmerston North yesterday, before travelling to Auckland where their gear — including tents, generators, satellite communications, water purification and recreational gear — was put aboard a United Nations-chartered DC-10 aircraft at Auckland International Airport.

They are the last of 28 soldiers headed for the Somali capital of Mogadishu to run a depot for the United Nations effort. Two will also be stationed at Nairobi and Mombasa in neighbouring Kenya, and in Djibouti.

Meanwhile, the Air Force detachment to the multinational force in Somalia will arrive in Mogadishu today with three Andover aircraft.

Kiwi death in Somalia 'example of anarchy'

By DAVID MORRIS

The shooting death of New Zealander Tyson Morris in Mogadishu last week was "cold-blooded assassination", says the former Army commander of Kiwi troops in Somalia, Lt Colonel David Haynes.

He left Somalia last week on the same aircraft as Tyson's grieving father David Morris. Tyson Morris died after being shot on Wednesday while riding as armed escort aboard a truck his family's catering business used to supply United Nations forces.

Mr Haynes, from Pinehaven, Upper Hutt, said: "The shooting was a real example of the anarchy on the streets.

"If the United Nations were ever to pull out of Somalia it would come bubbling up and resurface. I'm not sure how the shooting happened, but it was cold-blooded assassination."

The UN forces' role in Somalia was different from other peacekeeping missions. "The UN is effectively one of the protagonists in what is in effect a small war."

Mr Haynes said the Somali faction leader associated with much of the violence, Mohamed Farah Aideed, cleverly manipulated the situation. "I believe he is a very astute politician, by positioning himself to have a place in the future Somalia.

Lt Colonel David Haynes — different role for UN.

"He is just one Somali leader. Most others were happy to have the UN there. They were wanting to rebuild ... Now those people who are happy to co-operate with the UN are alarmed at the attention being given to Aideed."

Aideed had gained positive publicity for declaring a ceasefire, "but he's the chap who started shooting. A helicopter was shot down and the pilot captured, then he released him. But Aideed was the one who shot the helicopter down."

Mr Haynes said the UN aimed to use contractors like Mr Morris to replace some of the military in Somalia. Potentially all the tasks of the 41 New Zealand soldiers working on supplying the UN forces with rations could be done by civilians.

However, security was a problem. While they could live in villas protected by hired, armed Somalis, they had to be able to get to and from work in safety. And the UN had to be sure they would remain at work if fighting started nearby.

He said if more contractors were brought in the role of the New Zealand logistics troops would need to be reassessed. They were due to be replaced at the start of next year.

LAST TIKI TOUR AROUND MOGADISHU

WRITTEN BY DEAN GROVES

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VARIOUS VETERANS

To complete our look back on our time in Mogadishu in the 1990s, we will briefly look at some of the areas inside and outside the wire. The following is a mixture of various contributions, feedback and images from our veterans. Some are actual events that happened and others are unfounded and more urban myth, but it makes you wonder, and the images will take you back there for one last time.

For those who deployed into Mogadishu in early 1993, the opportunity to drive around Mogadishu was generally allowed, but was still deemed dangerous. Convoys with armed (if you had weapons) personnel was stipulated by command even for short trips – the risks were everywhere.

Some of the photographs are courtesy of RNZAF photographers who captured stunning images of the hustle and bustle of people and traffic, and the desperate plight of those trying to survive let alone make a living as best they could in a tragic and hopelessly futile environment.

Right, put your flak jacket and helmet on and let's roll…

THE AIRPORT

Mogadishu airport was one of the most heavily populated areas of the mission and certainly had an abundance of high value targets positioned on the ground. With thousands of gallons of fuel in fabric bladders to protect, UN and American troops galore were housed under tents with enough aircraft and military equipment to sink a battle ship. The airport was so crammed it offered the Somali militia an opportunity for greatness should they manage to destroy a bunch of helicopters… and boy did they have a go.

Firstly, Mogadishu airport was vast; the 3 kilometre long runway could accommodate any aircraft. Due to the ability of the militia to shoot at aircraft, all aircraft landed from the South, but that came with the added danger of cross-winds or landing with the wind. I am not an expert in aircraft landing, so I will leave it there. Suffice to say that a number of aircraft had second attempts at landing, with the C5 being the most spectacular. When a C5 would terminate a landing, it would bank right and rise over Taniwha Hill and the noise as it screamed over our tents was deafening. You got a complete view of the undercarriage– very impressive.

At the beginning of October, American fast jets roared into town and did Top Gun proud with their low-flying over the city, which was incredibly loud (almost window-shattering), impressive and arguably arrogant. This announced the arrival of a battle group off the coast of Mogadishu – the Marines were here. Hoah!

The airport had three aprons, one to the North, one to the South and an American apron for the 101st Airborne Div.

Our tour through the airport will start with the 101st and will move in an anti-clockwise direction up to the North ramp.

The 101st Airborne Division were located on the Western side of the airport, directly across the runway from Taniwha Hill. The American footprint in that area was impressive; with a vast area laid down with inter-connecting metal tarmac planks. When the threat levels were raised, every helicopter on the pad was surrounded

by sand bags. The Americans had the Kiowa recon helicopters, the Black Hawk and Cobra gunships. There weren't too many Cobras that didn't have live rounds and rockets pass through their barrels or launch tubes during their time in Mogadishu. Intelligence reports received in September 1993 said that the Warlord Aideed had placed a huge bounty on the destruction of American helicopters in the airport, hence the protection measures.

From time to time, you could book a ride on an American Black Hawk shuttle to and from the Embassy. From July to October 1993 driving on the roads was restricted, so the mode of travel around the city for most was a UN or American helicopter shuttle or a Pakistani APC shuttle.

The South Ramp apron accommodated mainly American aircraft like C5s and Boeings that were chartered to bring new contingents into Mogadishu and take the old ones out. It was not uncommon to see the occasional US

Learjet used for ViP visits.

When the American contingents arrived, their helicopters and/or trucks would transport them out to their various locations within Mogadishu and out of the city. The South Ramp was also where the international airport terminal was, but it was gutted into a ruin by years of Civil War. On the top of the terminal was another ruin, the unusable control tower. The tower would be rebuilt over the UNOSOM occupation.

The Southern gate was the main entrance to the airport. The South ramp gate was the busiest gate in the airport as this was where Somali porters (workers) reported for duty each morning. It was also where would-be workers queued in hope of landing employment. At this point, were Pakistani and Egyptian security mixed with hundreds of Somalis, the opportunities for conflict were rife. There was also a makeshift prison inside the gate. It was a shipping container with a couple of small air holes cut in the side.

In October 1993, after the battle of Mogadishu, American M18A1 Abrams tanks strengthened this area along with dozens of other tanks positioned around the numerous checkpoints within the city.

The Egyptians were responsible for most of the airport security. They had sentry towers positioned around the perimeter fence. There was always someone trying to breach the UN's security measures in whatever compound or location. The airport was no different and at times, Somalis did get inside the wire. They were also able to get through the main gates, which was a bit of a worry and showed the different abilities of the countries contributing to the UN effort.

Heading past the South gate you continued driving and soon came across a few small markets of local Somali traders on the perimeter fence. There wasn't a great deal of items on offer and sometimes the haggling was pointless and frustrating, but it was something to visit maybe once and that was that.

Next stop was the mission ammunition point located on the Southern tip of the airport. I visited this location only once and it was with a friend who looked after the little birds and Super Hawks of the Rangers. He was part of the 160th Special Aviation element. Some of the ammunition natures he showed me were nasty. I am glad I wasn't a militia man on October 3 and 4!

After the ammunition point, you rounded the runway and a sharp bend and headed North a bit before you saw an area where, in mid-1993, the UN Transport fraternity in all its wisdom decided to park dozens of ex-Cambodia CL vehicles (4x4 wagons and utes). I recall the vehicles remained parked up for months and months while the

salt water took its toll on the paint work and the heat of the sun cracked some of the dashboards. What a waste.

The second and most popular tourist attraction inside the airport was the beach. Located to the Southern end of the airport, this place was always packed on the weekend by every nation under the sun. From Ray Ban and gold chain-wearing UN Peacekeepers from an unnamed country in Europe, to the Americans and Kiwis and Aussies who all defied the “Beware of Sharks” signs.

The first mission fatality from a shark was a female French journalist, who was swimming a fair distance out from land when she was attacked and died from her wounds.

David Haynes writes. “Ah the beach! I managed to get there for a swim once before the first person was taken by a shark. After that the beach was put out of bounds and an armed guard was posted. That didn’t stop the swimming, further people died (from sharks, not the armed guard). I suppose that given the environment, where being shot at and mortared was routine, the sea could be seen to be relatively safe by comparison. Just think – if someone was taken by a shark in Wellington Harbour would anyone be swimming at Eastbourne or Oriental Bay. I think not”.

I said in a fax briefing Lt Col Lott on 4th September: “there have been no deaths due to man eating sharks since early July (actually that is only because the beach is out of bounds for swimming)”.

I found in my SITREP 27/93 dated 17th October:

“Shark nets. During November some Australian contractors will erect a shark net at the beach at the airport. Despite a ban on swimming three people have been attacked by sharks during my time here. The three Australian contractors will spend three weeks living at Taniwha Hill, which is close to the beach”.

Did those nets go in?

Yes they did! During the NZ Sup Pl 1993 era, three shark net specialists erected a shark net on the airport beach. Why? Sharks (Tiger sharks) killed swimmers. The American helicopter pilots said they always saw the sharks, which seemed to come from up North of the city where the camel meat works were located. The dumping

of waste meat straight into the ocean by the Somalis was common practice and probably the reason why sharks were often seen along this stretch of coast.

Past the beach heading towards Taniwha Hill were the American mortar radar guys who kept us up with the play on the number of mortar rounds detected during each attack. Not sure what the affects of constant exposure to the radar being operated will do to us Kiwis, but well see at the reunion…

We will skip Taniwha Hill as pretty much everything has

been said already.

Our neighbours were the Italians who had an Air Force and Commando element up on the hill. The Italian Air Force Chinooks, Agusta Mongoose gunships and the transport aircraft (looked like a smaller twin engine version of the C130) were positioned down on the airfield. The Italians also had their own water desalination plant

across the road from Taniwha Hill. The Italians were fairly friendly and we attended each others' functions when invited. I do recall an explosion occurred towards the end of 1993 and the story that ensued was that a fire extinguisher had exploded. Our neighbours' flag was at half mast the next day.

Up on the highest part of the airport sand dune was the American CIA or State Department.

Down from the hill was the Malaysian Mechanised Battalion. The Malaysians provided the UN with a QRF made up of Condor APC's. They also had an American SF (Green Beret) detachment attached to them. We got on very well with the Malaysians and many visits were made up and down the hill. The Stores crew were sacrificial lambs to the Malaysian sport afternoons. The Malaysians had pretty cool air conditioned tents.

The Malaysian camp was unfortunately in a bad spot when it rained because when it did rain it flooded. Unfortunately it also picked up the Italian's grey water and took it through the Malaysian camp.

Next to the Malaysians was the mortuary, which was run by the Americans and, as has been mentioned

previously, hundreds of deceased passed through this facility whether KIA or because of accidents or shark attacks.

After the mortuary was the German camp. The Germans were good value - the Stores Section can vouch for that.

The North ramp was close to where the RNZAF set up camp in early 1993. This apron was where the Operations Dispatch Centre (ODC) was based along with other UN or NGO aircraft tasks. If you were taking a UN chartered shuttle, this was the place to go. ODC

was also a place of great expectation as leave goers waited excitedly for their aircraft to whisk them away South to Kenya for leave. There was an aircraft refuelling detachment on the North ramp, which was American-manned. ODC was also the area were a number of Australian Movement Operators did their thing, preparing loads for air movement or unloading UN flights. Kiwis and Aussies mixed on many occasions in this area as the Kiwi Warehouse was also located on the apron.

Also near the North ramp were the wrecks of the former Somali Air Force. This was probably the best of only a couple of tourist attractions for UNOSOM soldiers and civilians. There was always someone standing by one of the old planes for a photo. Some people jumped inside the cockpits. But I do recall a story that, back in the early stages of the mission, the aircraft were stored inside a disused building and a Somali boy got inside one the planes and unknowingly pulled the ejector seat control, which sent him flying into the roof. The aircraft were moved outside after that and I assume that all aircraft were checked as I was one of the tourists who jumped into the cockpit.

Just past the ODC buildings, was an option to take a slightly safer route to the port. It was through the Pakistani Battalion HQ. This was done through a couple of Pakistani checkpoints, followed by a short and sharp dash across a few hundred meters of no-mans land to the UAE compound gate. You could say whatever you liked at the check points, not much was needed, but I did hear “Were going to Gisbourne bro!” once or twice. Cheeky Kiwis.

There were always kids waiting in no-mans land either saying “Hello Australia” when they knew we were Kiwis or “Hey Kiwi” or “Give Me Food, Give Me Water” with their thumbs up to the lips. I wonder what became of those kids…

THE PORT

A drive to the port (located approx 2 km North of the airport) like most movement around the city was always handled with caution as there were always crowds. Western instinct to keep our two-day-old bread and throw it in bags to the kids or people on the streets was initially common practice. However, we found at times that that gratitude could ignite into a full-on scrap between children from different families, to adults beating children for the bread “we” had given them.

The front gate to the port was arguably the most shot-up entrance in Mogadishu other than the US Embassy. The ports’ popularity for trouble was centred around the humanitarian relief effort aimed at distributing food aid. As with most World Programmes, there wasn’t a shortage of food coming in, it was plentiful. With warehouses piled with grain and rice like Aladdins’ Cave

major clan power struggles would stop food moving and the power and corruption and ensuing chaos would run its course.

With the Americans and UN moving into town, the clans

reluctantly blended back into the populous until the time was right to take back what was, in their option, theirs.

For the New Zealanders, the port was a place that they occupied for 18 months at the UNOSOM Ration Warehouse where they received, stored and issued tonnes of subsistence items to UN contingents. From the outset of arriving in theatre, the shear scale of their task was overwhelming. The numbers were staggering, when you think that a small number of people were supporting, at its peak, approximately 23,000 UN civilian and military personnel.

One of the New Zealanders' main problems was MHE availability and reliability. With thousand of tonnes of food arriving, more often than not unloading was done by hand lifting 50 to 70 kg bags until the job was done, which was literally back-breaking. But, they got on with it and did the job as soldiers do. During periods of adversity, our people kept their composure and maintained sound international relations with their customers.

It is recorded by the NZ Sup Pl in September 1993, that our Australian friends submitted a ration demand for their national dish. It arrived correctly, being signed and sealed etc, with all five pages of food demanded being ignored – an additional serial had been added:

Ser 27. "Four and Twenty Meat Pies" Qty 80

Due to the unavailability of this item, a nil return was regretfully submitted. This did nothing to enhance our customer satisfaction statistics.

Back to the front gate entrance. One story that hasn't been told goes back to October 1993, after the battle of Mogadishu, when a large number of American fighting vehicles were positioned around the city to establish strong points. A Bradley fighting vehicle was parked on raised platform so that its turret could manoeuvre and cover the entrance. On one particular day, a vehicle full of weapon-wielding thugs drove past the entrance and emptied a few magazines in the general area, sending security and bystanders ducking for cover. Unfortunately, for the learner bandits, the car stalled at the worst possible moment; not even running could help as the Bradley crewman woke up and leapt into action, aiming and squeezing the trigger. The end result was not good for the occupants of that car and their shot at manhood was not ever to be repeated.

There was also an occasion when two Kiwi troops were fishing during their lunch break at the port when they found themselves under sniper fire. They survived without injury but, unbelievably, their Extra Hazardous Claim was rejected because "they were not in the course of their duties". A classic for the time (1990s). Perhaps this story can be confirmed at the reunion?

THE EMBASSY

The Embassy was located in Mogadishu city and, due to the situation in the city, the Embassy attracted a lot of locals loitering outside day and night hoping to land a job. The Embassy also attracted the attention of the militia who, it is believed, used the large white painted water tower as a mortar reference point, so several camouflage nets were laced together and draped over it to break up the white surface.

There was a takeaway shop established that was frequented over a few months. At one Orders Group brief at Taniwha Hill on my tour, there was a message that the takeaway kiosk had closed indefinitely - there were tests conducted on the food by health inspectors and they found the levels of mercury in the meat were 5 times above the allowable levels.

Whenever there was a chance for the Kiwis at the airport to visit the Embassy, the opportunity was taken. One of the favourite places to visit was Anzac House. The hospitality was first rate and the Aussies always had Gatorade and we didn't.

During a rare visit to the Embassy, I made my way up onto the roof of one of the main buildings and checked out a sangar which had some Marine snipers all set up. They had a couple of guys on duty at the time, one of them was looking out onto the surrounding streets with binoculars. They had a .50 cal rifle ready to go and a 7.62 mm rifle nearby. On one of the wooden support posts was a tally of numbers. I asked "what's that for?". One of

the Marines (who looked about 17) replied, "The number of kills". There were 7 strokes notched up. Their rules of engagement were, if they saw a technical vehicle or a Somali with a rifle – it was to be engaged.

ON THE STREETS

It is believed that early on in 1993, driving around the streets of Mogadishu was permitted, although not encouraged. Some Kiwis were able to roll around with other nations' patrols, like the Canadians, and were therefore lucky to see some of the sites and scenes of Mogadishu City. By mid-July 1993, driving around was restricted to a few main roads, so ducking into the heart of the city, especially the Northern part, was a no no unless you had a death wish or owned a main battle tank.

Driving certainly got your adrenaline levels soaring with constant threat of (at the least) the "snatch and grab" missions on UN vehicles, mainly by teenagers. Any occasion on-route where a crowd of locals gathered around you made for high alert and constant scanning. Locking all doors was a must. However, for those travelling on the back of the open-backed ute (Kiwi Thunder), the sense of helplessness was ever present and the recommendation to be poised to either shoot, rifle butt, punch or kick was a necessity. In hindsight, the RNZAF 1300 Unimog remaining in theatre would have been a little safer than the Hilux and Landcruisers due to the height off the ground.

Breaking wing mirrors was a favourite, so some nations draped razor wire on the sides of their vehicles or rapped wire around the wing mirrors. I don't believe the Kiwis or the Australians did this.

It was obvious that, prior to the civil war, Mogadishu would have been a beautiful city. The architecture of the buildings and courtyard compounds prior to civil war would have been grand.

David Haynes writes, " In April 1993, the UN were driving mini-buses around the city. The route to and fro took us up 'Dead Cow Lane' so called because of the dead cow by the side of the road. No one ever took it away, it just became a bit more dried up every day. Fairly soon the Somalis found that they could rip off the wing mirrors without any repercussions, and soon no mini-buses had mirrors. Travel became more dicey. After the killing of 24 Pakistanis on 5 June at the K4 intersection, travel by road was deemed to be too dangerous, so a helicopter shuttle was established between the Embassy compound and the airport. In due course the anti-air threat made that too dangerous and a shuttle in Pakistani M113 APC's was established. Then that was too dangerous and we went back to helicopters. And so on. Finally, in October the American built ring road was opened and secured and travel by mini-bus became possible again – but not downtown!

As an aside, the Pakistanis didn't maintain their M113s too well. Every time I got into one I made straight for the bulkhead to the engine compartment and did up the clamps – The Pakistanis couldn't read the big stencilled warning about carbon monoxide poisoning. All this was very mysterious to Pakistani soldiers – it seemed as if they had never before seen an officer carrying a rifle, carrying his own bag and doing manual labour!"

Okay, that's the Tiki-Tour over folks. Our last look around the areas we knew so well back in the 1990s and the photographic drive through the streets of Mogadishu comes to an end. I hope that some of the many images used throughout the journal will help you recall a moment in time.

"TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US"

"WE WILL REMEMBER YOU"

THE REUNION

W/O CEDGE BLUNDELL, RNZAF

GOOD INTENTIONS

The idea of holding a Somalia reunion was first floated in 2003, when a group of serving Somalia vet's based in Trentham decided to hold a meeting. The initial plan was a reunion to mark 10 years since deployment for the three NZ Supply rotations.

At the end of the meeting a few tasks were set, the main task being establishing a contacts list. So, the job of tracking people down began and carried on for several months. 10 July 2004 was proposed as the date to get together at Trentham.

Unfortunately, due absences the reunion did not gain any traction and it was decided the reunion should be cancelled or postponed to a later date.

Since that time, small gatherings have been held at Anzac Days or farewells in the Palmerston North area and as a result, the idea of holding a reunion has remained simmering in the background.

PANORAMIC PRINT

In July 1993, shortly after arriving in theatre, Doon Groves (known as Grover back then) stood on the roof of a sand bag bunker on Taniwha Hill to take a photograph of the airfield area. He used his camera to take a number of well aimed free hand (no tripod) photo's of the airport. The intention was to make a panoramic type scene from the prints showing the numerous aircraft, vehicles and camps.

The image was a "poor mans" panoramic of Mogadishu Airport, a series of standard 6 x 4 photographs stuck onto white card with tape or blue-tac. The image was displayed at Doon's posting locations over the years and regularly sparked positive comments from passers bye.

In 2002, he attempted to modernise the print by teaming up with Richard Tyler (NZ Sup Det) who was interested in helping. This created a version 2 and the quality was adequate however the proposed cost was not worth it at the time and progress stalled.

In 2007, Doon approached the Photographic Unit at RNZAF Base Ohakea for help. Modern technology came to the fore and helped produce the current version (V3). V3 was printed in a few options; black and white and full colour. Black and white looked like it had snowed and was mistaken by non-Somalia vets for Bosnia, so was immediately discarded. However, the full colour option was stunning, it was so clear and the detail you could see was exactly what was wanted. Points of Interest were also added to help recognize the main areas we all came to know.

The first recipient of the V3 panoramic print was LtGen Lou Gardiner on his retirement from the Army in 2009. This followed a couple of other presentations a few years later to WO1 Clive Douglas and WO2 Michael Archer.

In 2011, orders were taken and 70 prints were produced and were all sold to our veterans and interested parties (messes and unit history rooms).

In 2013, in the lead up to the reunion, a couple of points of interest were rightfully added to the print (now Version 4), which was the Temporary Air Traffic Control Tower, the 42 Sqn RNZAF Camp and the Airport beach.

TIME FOR ACTION

With the failed reunion of 2004, we now fast forward to 2011 when Doon started the ball rolling once again. He had been one of the principle drivers for the successful Army Softball 60 year reunion in 2009 and it obviously didn't put him off…something he may have come to regret over the next 18 months or so.

Doon had passed the word around and had managed to somehow convince a couple of others that a 20 year reunion would be a good idea. The first 'committee meeting' was held on 25 July 2012 (3 attendees, Doon, Irvs and myself), and it was obvious that both he and Darryn 'Irvs' Irving were 'ideas men'. It was also evident from the first meeting that their passion and drive also meant that they were prepared and talented enough to convert ideas' into some reality.

What also quickly became obvious that we all had stories about our time in Somalia. Generally, the meetings were held in a corner of the W/O's and SNCO's bar at Trentham Military Camp, so after about an hours worth of general business there had also been one or two quiet ones slide past the lips. As you can imagine the size of the story was directly proportional to the number of quiets consumed, and once we got around to the Port tasting these stories were massive!! The importance of the stories was also one of the standouts for me.

It quickly became evident that after 20 years there needed to be a little prompting to drag some of these events back out of the deep dark depths of our memories. This could be due, in part at least, to the copious amounts of 'refined water' (aka Heinies, Fosters, Castle Lager etc.) that were consumed during R&R or possibly just a factor of age starting to creep up on some of us. Capturing those memories was crucial as this was probably the best and quite possibly the last opportunity to do so…do

it once, do it right is an apt catch cry, and this was going to be one of the biggest drains on us as a committee… getting others to realise the importance of capturing these memories and recording them, not only for all of us who deployed but for our respective units, services and the NZDF.

We had many discussions about the layout, timings and location of the weekend and it was always going to be difficult to keep everyone happy. Why Trentham? Why October? etc, etc. Logistically, it is central in NZ. There is plenty of accommodation in the local area (getting on-base/camp accom at any NZDF establishments these days' is not as easy as it once was), Wellington probably has the best public transport in NZ (we started organising pre Seddon/Wellington earthquake times!), Army had the largest number of personnel etc., but #1, Trentham was first choice simply because that is where we are.

Why October? We need a fair lead time, ticked that box. We checked for major NZDF commitments, all looking OK but #1 was the event portrayed in the movie Blackhawk Down which occurred October 1993. We (the RNZAF) had returned by the time of this significant event, but it was something that most of us will know about. If we hadn't actually driven through town, had at least one 'stand to' or experienced/heard a fire fight in the distance, or seen the general layout of the buildings and experienced the crowds at certain times of the day after a good 'khat session' in order to relate to the environment, most of us have probably watched the movie at least once. Accuracy and artistic license can always be argued, but it happened, NZDF were still in Mogadishu when it happened and it gave us an event to tie the reunion too. As an added bonus it provided an entertainment option for the reunion programme.

MEMORABILIA

The committee put their heads together lead by Darryn Irving and came up with a few ideas about a reunion logo. They tried to incorporate the various contingents and use a Somalia/UN theme. The first draft had a lot going on with UNITAF vs UN and Air Force vs Army requirements. After good discussions, it was decided the cut the logo down to a few simple graphics. In doing so, the current logo was chosen as it best represented all who deployed there and that was one task ticked off the list. The logo would also be used for the reunion tee shirts and polo shirts.

An idea of producing our own Port was considered and quickly approved. What we needed was a taste testing activity, which was included as part of one of the committee meetings. The end result was a

unanimous agreement towards one particular brand. “Port Mogadishu” was an apt label and was locked in. Next, we needed an appropriate graphic, so one of the photographs was used which was of a ship being unloaded at the Mogadishu Sea Port in 1993. Suffice to say, our veterans will have a drop of port that can be used at future veterans get-togethers.

A DVD collection of photographs and video footage was also thought to be appropriate. Our history has never been consolidated and this was an ideal opportunity. So, building towards the reunion and sparking interest in the deployment again would also hopefully unearth a bunch of images from our veteran’s private collections. Video tape footage was also in danger of perishing due to age, so both were requested by the committee to be handed in, scanned or converted to DVD.

Hand in hand with the DVD collection, and going back to the earlier thoughts about preserving the stories, was the idea of producing a journal. None of the rotations had their own journal except for the NZ Sup Pl 1993. So, a combined journal for all was considered necessary and would ensure the majority of NZDF memories from Somalia was preserved. Each rotation summary was coordinated by; Air Force – myself (Cedge), NZ Sup Det – Richard, NZ Sup Pl 1993 – Steve Wagner, Embassy – Charles Lott, NZ Sup Pl 1994 – Ross Fearon, Aussie Air Traffic Controllers (Gary Wilson and Fleur James) and various other contributions from veterans. Def Comms Group at Defence House provided the mural pages and front/back covers.

CONCLUSION

There were 6 committee members with Doon, Irvs, and myself being the ones who liked to attend the initial meetings more frequently – our excuse to taste port is probably in order here? The other committee members

Mogadishu Airpo
United Nations Operatio

included Richard, Travis and Randall (Gonz). Important input also came from the caterers at Trentham, or just our mates and personnel/contacts out on Bases and units who did their own chasing up on all of our behalves, whether it was for journal accounts, photos or just the odd memory jog for a name missing in from an image.

Irvs is into I.T, so one of his passions was setting up the registrations and the financial tracking system. Without these tools, keeping a handle on who was coming along, and who paid what/where, wouldn't have been managed as well as it has. As the media man he has slaved away collecting all of the images etc. to produce the DVD and also dabbled in design (the skills of the man) and the various logo's for shirts etc, are due to his efforts. Travis was IC function bookings with Richard involved in a little of everything and specifically merchandise handout. (My main role was port tasting!)

Last but not least, Doon. As mentioned he has form (as a reunion organiser), but most of all he has passion. He has maintained the vision of recognising and compiling the history of NZDFs' involvement in Somalia and hasn't swayed despite all the small roadblocks along the way. Two months out as I write this, we have no idea who is going to turn up, how many memories will be in the Journal, or the number of photos, DVDs, shirts and bottles of Port purchased but if the reunion isn't a success it won't be due to a lack of effort and drive from Doon and the team. We hope you all enjoy the weekend!

Cheers

Cedge Blundell

irport, July 1993
ation Somalia (UNOSOM)

Photograph taken by:
LCpl D A Groves, RNZAOC

THE FINAL ATTACK

BY DEAN GROVES

Well veterans, we are at the end of our trip down memory lane, revisiting some of the achievements and memories that unfolded 20 years ago on the Horn of Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those people who gave up their time and energy in making the reunion and this journal a reality. To the committee, this reunion would not have been possible without you. I want to personally thank you for your time and commitment. I would also like to thank those people who drafted articles, supplied photographs and put up with me hounding you. Cheers. To Ewan Conaghan, Bruce Fraser and the Trentham CIS, thank you for your outstanding help and not just telling me to take a hike.

There has been a great deal of material dredged up after such a long time. Many of our vets had initial reservations when they were approached about contributing or commented “I can’t remember back that far”. However, for those who thought about it and wrote about the time they set foot into the chaotic melting pot of Mogadishu, the memories in most cases came flooding back.

Going on operations to Somalia early in our careers, gave us something to fall back on in later life whether we continued to serve in the military or out on civilian street.

To be honest, with the hostile nature of the Somali’s, those crazy khat fuelled days, gun fire whizzing all around from friend and foe and the numerous other nationalities operating at will, we were extremely lucky not to have casualties – lady luck was certainly on our side over there.

We have looked back on how the Supply Detachment and 42 Sqn contingents transformed their bare piece of sand dune or ground and made themselves a place that they could call home. Living in hot and dusty conditions was not a hardship for us; we made the most of it and in doing so, it brought out the ingenuity and talents within the contingent to make our living conditions that much better.

Our commanders demanded we worked hard and gave us the freedom to relax when it was time to do so. We were also exposed to many different nationalities and cultures and on several occasions we brought other nationals into our camps and welcomed them in true Kiwi style. Some rotations were also fortunate to share the experience of living with our Trans-Tasman comrades. The Anzac Spirit was once again fostered and continues to remain firmly fixed today with service personnel whether it is in training or on operations.

We should also take this time to highlight and record the four Somalia veterans from New Zealand who were recognised with awards for their outstanding service on the Horn of Africa. Captain Mike Mendonca was awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE), WO2 Tony Harding, WO2 Ross Fearon and Sergeant Richard Tyler were all awarded British Empire Medals (BEM). All four were members of the Royal New Zealand Army Ordnance Corps.

Over the years since our time in Somalia, veterans have kept in contact with each other and on occasion, have got together and fostered their friendships and inevitably conversation has ended up talking about the good old days in Mogadishu. These get-togethers reinforced the necessity for a reunion to occur and on a large scale.

The Somalia Veterans Reunion that is being held in Trentham over 4 and 5 October 2103, is well overdue. It will reunite old friends and work colleagues who shared a unique experience in Somalia. One veteran is flying back to New Zealand from Scotland especially to attend the reunion. So, we will all gather around the bar leaners in Trentham and share those exaggerated war stories from “the Mog”, which will be corrected again back into more believable tales.

The New Zealand veterans of Somalia and some of our dear Australian mates now have a journal that preserves our achievements, stories and photographs. We can now age even more gracefully and let the journal do all the thinking for us when recalling those Wild West days in Mogadishu.

Please keep in contact with the Somalia veterans you normally associate or correspond with on social media sites, and if a spark to do something occurs, then please feel free to lead the next veterans get together when the time suits. It will be well worth it.

VON DESIR