

BATTLE DIGEST™

Lessons for Today's Leaders

Volume 4 ★ Issue 10

Modern Wars:

Mogadishu

DATE:

Oct 3-4, 1993

LOCATION:

Southern Somalia

OPPOSING FORCES

United States and United Nations Forces: Initially, 160 men of Task Force Ranger (19 aircraft and 12 vehicles) took part in the battle. Task Force Ranger was composed of C Squadron 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, 3rd Battalion/75th Ranger Regiment, companies from the 1-160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, and members of the Air Force's 24th Special Tactics Squadron. TF Ranger was commanded by Maj. Gen. William Garrison.

Later, a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) convoy from the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division added 150 more men to the fight. Lt. Col. Bill David (commander, 2/14th Infantry, 10th Mountain) assembled a large rescue convoy, adding drivers and gunners from Pakistan and Malaysia, and brought the convoy into the city.

Somali Forces: Over 2,500 fighters and armed civilians took part in the battle, including around 1,500 militiamen of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) loyal to Mohamed Farrah Aidid and the Habr Gidr clan, along with 1,000 to 2,000 armed civilians, private militias, and other insurgents.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1993, as Somalia recovered from a devastating famine, the United Nations (UN) shifted its focus from humanitarian aid to disarming rival clans and restoring governance. Under this more aggressive mandate, the mission spiraled into armed conflict. Soon, UN forces were trying to capture a warlord named Mohamed Farrah Aidid - viewed as the primary obstacle to peace. The plans included a 3 Oct. raid by Task Force Ranger into Mogadishu to capture two of Aidid's top lieutenants. But what began as a routine raid turned into the bloodiest, most intense American battle fought since Vietnam. When morning came, eighteen Americans were dead, four helicopters had been shot down (two in the city), and images of the bodies of US soldiers being dragged through the streets by angry mobs played on news outlets around the world. The shock would reverberate through American foreign policy and military urban warfare tactics for



Task Force Ranger training prior to the mission.

STRATEGY & MANEUVER

Actions by the United Nations (UN) and United States (US) -

In 1991, the 22-year regime of President Mohamed Siad Barre collapsed, leaving Somalia as a failed state mired in a clan civil war. The following year, a historic drought piled misery on top of the chaos, creating widespread famine. But when international relief agencies sprang into action, the lawlessness and violence prevented food from reaching those in need.

In April of '92, the UN passed Resolution 751, creating the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) to secure the delivery of food. President George H.W. Bush supported the effort through Operation Provide Relief (15 Aug. - 9 Dec. 1992), airlifting food supplies from nearby Kenya. But without a functioning government to stop the looting, the humanitarian crisis continued. By December, the UN passed Resolution 794, creating a much larger US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) with 38,000 soldiers from 21 nations. Bush replaced Operation Provide Relief with Operation Restore Hope, sending 28,000 US Marines and soldiers.

UNITAF's mission also expanded to "create a secure environment, by all necessary means." This large force, under careful rules of engagement, effectively ended the famine. The UN then shifted to UNOSOM II (March '93 - March '95) for what it considered the logical next phase - disarming the militias and creating a central