





**'HEROIC THINGS':
AIR FORCE
SPECIAL TACTICS PERSONNEL
AT MOGADISHU,
OCTOBER 3-4, 1993**

Forrest L. Marion

(Overleaf) Aerial view, right side profile, of a US Marine UH-1N "Huey" helicopter as it flies over a Mogadishu residential area on a patrol mission to look for signs of hostilities. This mission is in direct support of Operation Restore Hope.

AT THE END OF 1990,... MOGADISHU REVERTED FROM A ONCE-MODEST CITY TO A REPRESSIVE THIRD WORLD CAPITAL... SUFFERING FROM FOOD AND FUEL SHORTAGES AND THE BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER

In 1969 Somalia's president was assassinated and replaced by a military dictator whose rule became increasingly repressive after a disastrous war with neighboring Ethiopia. At the end of 1990, in the face of clan-based civil warfare, the government collapsed. Mogadishu reverted from a once-modest city to a repressive Third World capital lacking electricity and suffering from food and fuel shortages and the breakdown of law and order. Food was traditionally a source of power in Somalia; competing clans fought over the control of food supplies and storehouses. A drought exacerbated the suffering. Private relief organizations could not prevent food theft by armed militias and the use of food as a political weapon. In 1990–91, an estimated 300,000 Somalis died from starvation.¹

In April 1992, UN-approved relief operations began in Somalia. United Nations peacekeepers deployed and tried to oversee the distribution of food to those Somalis in dire need. In response to a worsening situation, in August the United States began airlifting food supplies from neighboring Kenya to remote airstrips in Somalia in hopes of avoiding supply "bottlenecks" in Mogadishu's port as well as clan militias and unscrupulous food convoy guards. Problems with food distribution continued, however, with lawless gangs stealing and hoarding.²

In December 1992, the United States (not the UN) began Operation Restore Hope under the direction of a U.S. Marine Corps-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF). Twenty-three countries contributed a total of 38,000 soldiers for the humanitarian operation. On December 9, U.S. Marine and Navy elements moved into Mogadishu unopposed. Within an hour of arrival, conventional USAF combat controllers began providing air traffic control and ground services at Mogadishu's all-but-abandoned airport. The UNITAF's mission was strictly to facilitate the delivery of food, not to disarm the traditionally heavily-armed Somali factions. Leading Somali warlords decided to cooperate, at least initially, with the UNITAF in establishing a relatively secure environment that facilitated relief efforts. The warlords included Gen. Muhammed Farah Aideded, a major figure in the former Somali government.³

Influenced perhaps by the presence of massive U.S. firepower and the leadership of Ambassador Robert B. Oakley, the U.S. envoy, Aideded and a rival warlord accepted a sort of cease-fire. By the end of 1992, U.S. special operations and allied elements began moving into the countryside outside

Mogadishu and the major cities to facilitate food deliveries and to garner intelligence for the UNITAF on potentially hostile clan militias. From February to May 1993, the mission proceeded without a major incident and succeeded in halting mass starvation in the country. Local markets returned to life, increasingly Somalis felt safe enough to travel, and initial efforts at restoring the Somali national police appeared favorable.⁴

In May 1993, the four-month-old William J. Clinton administration terminated Restore Hope and turned the Somalia mission over to the UN. Quickly, the situation deteriorated. The United States supported the UN operation with some 2,600 logistics personnel, 1,100 members of a quick reaction force (QRF), and a small special operations element. Retired U.S. Navy Admiral Jonathan Howe became the new U.S. envoy to Somalia.⁵

On June 5, in one of several coordinated attacks against UN/U.S. forces in Mogadishu, Aideded's militia ambushed and attacked a Pakistani unit, killing twenty-four. The next day the UN Security Council called for additional troops and equipment from member nations. The Pentagon's Joint Staff approved a U.S. Air Force deployment of four AC-130 gunships. Deploying on June 7 to an airport in neighboring Djibouti, then onward to Mogadishu, that month the gunships destroyed several weapons storage facilities and vehicle compounds of Aideded's and neutralized Radio Mogadishu. The AC-130s redeployed on July 14. Meanwhile, Admiral Howe inadvertently provided "folk hero" status to Aideded by declaring him an outlaw, naming him responsible for the recent attacks, and issuing a warrant (with reward) for his arrest.⁶

As violence mounted, the UN/U.S. focus shifted to one man, Aideded, leader of the largest of Somalia's major clans. A U.S. aviation task force comprised of various helicopters, snipers, and a scout platoon conducted continuous surveillance of Aideded, hoping to "snatch" him as his convoy passed through the city, but the warlord lowered his profile and was rarely seen. In August, U.S. defense secretary Les Aspin directed a joint special operations task force (JSOTF) to deploy to Somalia. "Task Force Ranger" (TF Ranger) was composed of U.S. Army Rangers from the 3d Battalion (75th Ranger Regiment), 10th Mountain Division soldiers, and a battalion from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (160 SOAR), and special mission unit personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. A handful of Special Tactics men from the 24th Special Tactics Squadron (24 STS), pararescuemen

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Abandoned Mogadishu Street known as the "Green Line". The street was the dividing line between North and South Mogadishu, and the warring clans. This mission is in direct support of Operation Restore Hope.



and combat controllers, comprised the USAF element. United States Army Maj. Gen. William F. Garrison commanded Task Force Ranger. The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) commanding officer, General Garrison had served two tours in Southeast Asia, commanded "Delta Force," and was considered by several USAF special operators "the finest general officer I ever worked for." The majority of TF Ranger arrived in Mogadishu by August 28, its mission to capture Aideed and his key subordinates. That same day, 24 STS combat controller Dan Schilling participated in the first patrol in Mogadishu by TF Ranger personnel.⁷

The city's elevation was higher than the Mogadishu airfield complex, so the enemy enjoyed an excellent view of the airfield. Because the movement of aircraft and personnel could not be hidden, Garrison directed his crews to launch up to ten sorties a day, conditioning the Somalis to frequent flights. The Somalis would not know when an operational mission launched. Moreover, to keep the enemy off-balance Garrison ordered his men, accustomed to fighting only at night, to perform some raids by day, employing both helicopters and ground vehicles. The typical mission involved a special mission unit deploying by helicopter onto (or near) a target building in the city while other helicopters dropped Rangers to establish blocking forces at nearby positions that surrounded the target building, in some cases "kind of like a square." The special mission unit handled everything *inside* the square while the Rangers blocked anyone from entering from the outside. Back at the airfield, a Ranger QRF awaited, if needed. On September 21, TF Ranger captured one of Aideed's closest advisors, but, for the first time, U.S. forces encountered massed rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire from the Somalis.⁸

Meanwhile, on September 8, Somali militia attacked U.S. and Pakistani soldiers as they cleared roadblocks. The well-armed Somalis employed small arms, 106-mm. recoilless rifles, and RPGs and were suppressed only by extensive U.S./allied fire from ground and air assets. In the next two weeks,

two other roadblock-clearing teams were attacked. In one of the incidents, a Pakistani armored personnel carrier (APC) was lost; two soldiers died. On September 25, a U.S. Army H-60 Blackhawk helicopter was shot down by an RPG, killing three soldiers. A week later the same basic scenario occurred again. And on that occasion, the attack became part of the longest sustained firefight involving U.S. forces since Southeast Asia.⁹

The roughly 440-member task force included eleven members of the 24 STS: three pararescuemen, MSgt. Scotty Fales, SMSgt. Rusty Tanner, and TSgt. (later, MSgt.) Timothy A. "Tim" Wilkinson; and eight combat controllers, Ray Benjamin, Jeff Bray, John McGarry, Jack McMullen, Bob Rankin, Pat Rogers, Dan Schilling, and Dave Schnoor. The last-named, Master Sergeant Schnoor, participated in the first three raids in Mogadishu just after TF Ranger's deployment. Sent home for a family emergency, he was replaced by another combat controller, SSgt. Jeff Bray, only twenty-six.¹⁰

Bray became the highest-decorated combat controller in the battle of Mogadishu, earning the Silver Star. However, one pararescueman, Scotty Fales, thirty-five, also earned the Silver Star, the third-highest award for valor in combat. Fales' partner in Somalia, Tim (aka Wilky) Wilkinson, was a month older than his team leader. Wilkinson earned the Air Force Cross, the second-highest award for valor in combat.

On October 3, 1993, Fales, the PJ team leader, and Wilkinson were the primary pararescuemen supporting TF Ranger. A third 24 STS pararescueman, Rusty Tanner, was the senior enlisted man among the eleven deployed squadron members. He expected to work the casualty collection point in the event of wounded personnel, but the level of concern was not high; the Somalis "rarely hit anything." The missions so far had been "a piece of cake." Three of the six had been conducted in daylight, "without a hitch."¹¹

In any case, Scotty Fales and, no doubt, others in TF Ranger wanted to "mix it up with the bad

BECAUSE THE MOVEMENT OF AIRCRAFT AND PERSONNEL COULD NOT BE HIDDEN, GARRISON DIRECTED HIS CREWS TO LAUNCH UP TO TEN SORTIES A DAY, CONDITIONING THE SOMALIS TO FREQUENT FLIGHTS

AT 1532 LOCAL TIME, A HELICOPTER-BORNE TEAM... DEPARTED THE AIRPORT AND THREE MINUTES LATER SWOOPED INTO THE AREA OF HAWLWADIG ROAD AND FAST-ROPE TO THE GROUND. JEFF BRAY WAS THE LONE COMBAT CONTROLLER, AND THE ONLY USAF MEMBER

guys.” On the morning of October 3, Fales went around the airfield on a self-imposed rucksack march for some physical training. Around midday, teammates retrieved Fales from his march when alerted to a possible mission involving a Humvee vehicle that struck a land mine in downtown Mogadishu, but another unit responded, and the mission was scrubbed. Disappointed, Fales, Wilkinson, Bray, and other task force members expected another long, boring afternoon. However, at 1350 local time, General Garrison received timely intelligence on the location of two of Aideed’s lieutenants on the “wanted” list. He approved a “snatch-and-grab” mission for mid-afternoon. The target location was a compound in the so-called “Black Sea” district of downtown Mogadishu. Because the Black Sea was the center of Aideed’s power base, a mission there represented, as *Black Hawk Down* author Mark Bowden wrote, “a thumb in the warlord’s eye.”¹²

At 1532 local time, a helicopter-borne team of U.S. Army special mission unit members accompanied by Rangers, SEALs, and 24 STS personnel departed the airport and three minutes later swooped into the area of Hawlwadig Road and fast-roped to the ground. Jeff Bray was the lone combat controller, and the only USAF member, with the main assault force. Fellow combat controller John McGarry accompanied the Rangers’ blocking force. Ray Benjamin flew on the command-and-control helicopter in a kind of communications-liaison role. Dan Schilling served as the combat controller for the exfiltration convoy that departed from the airfield at 1535 local. The convoy consisted of six or seven “Kevlar [armored] Humvees,” two unarmored Humvees, and three flatbed five-ton trucks. The plan called for the blocking force to secure the perimeter around the compound where Aideed’s men stayed, while the assault team entered the structure, located, identified, and secured the warlord’s lieutenants. After the “hit,” all U.S. personnel and the Somalis would be transported back to the airport in the convoy’s vehicles. Schilling recalled that very shortly after the blocking-and-assault force’s lift-off, the convoy departed for its destination next to the seven-story Olympic Hotel on Hawlwadig Road. Only minutes later, however, TF Ranger began taking fire from the Somalis. In fact, the fire was heavier than on previous missions, and it quickly grew worse. Even prior to its arrival at the target building, the exfiltration convoy experienced heavy fire, too. While parked outside the target building, an RPG disabled one of the five-ton flatbed trucks.¹³

Inside the compound, the assault team discovered and captured not two, but twenty-four, Somalis, stunning, handcuffing, and blindfolding them in preparation for transport. Thirty minutes after the start of the operation, the mission still appeared manageable despite several casualties and the disabled truck. One Ranger had fallen out of his helicopter and was badly injured. He and several other casualties expected to be evacuated to the airport by three of the convoy’s Humvees. Assault

team members were busy loading the Somalis into the remaining convoy vehicles when an RPG slammed into one of the H-60s overhead, call sign “Super 61.” Out of control, Super 61 crashed three blocks to the east of the target building, killing both pilots. Mark Bowden described the helicopter coming “to rest in a narrow alley on its side against a stone wall in a cloud of dust.” The operators and crew chiefs in the cabin, however, survived the impact. Ray Benjamin called Bray from the command-and-control helicopter and directed him to move to the crash site. In the confusion that followed, Bray and the assault team maintained adequate communications with only one of the four groups of Rangers in the blocking positions, John McGarry’s group. The UHF radio frequency used may have contributed to the confusion. The frequency was 242.6, only 400 megahertz from the international emergency frequency of 243.0. In any case the static was terrible. Soon, Bray’s and McGarry’s teams joined together while they moved under fire toward Super 61’s location several blocks away. They intended to assist the CSAR team in securing the site and in rescuing or recovering their downed teammates. Many of the men, including Bray, soon regretted they had brought fewer than one-half the normal number of thirty-round clips for their weapons. The Rangers and assaulters sustained more casualties during the movement to Super 61. Meanwhile, the convoy was instructed to move to “61’s” site, but lacking clear directions—the location was several blocks north and east—it had great difficulty doing so in the developing urban chaos.¹⁴

Combat controller Dan Schilling rose to the occasion. The ground reaction force lacked a pararescueman, so Schilling served as both the ground-air communicator for the ground force as well as its unofficial medic. As casualties mounted from Somali small arms fire, Schilling treated a number of wounded including his ground force commander among several other Rangers. Schilling was himself cut by flying glass and sustained a minor foot injury. More significant, however, he took the initiative to keep the convoy moving toward Super 61’s site when his commander appeared temporarily dazed and slow to respond. Making matters worse, at about that time the second Black Hawk, Super 64, was shot down less than a mile to the south of Super 61’s location. Finally, frustrated by the inability to obtain clear instructions on which direction to move, and with communications breaking down, Schilling switched to a different frequency to talk with the helos. Receiving vectors from one of the helos overhead, Schilling realized too late that the instructions were taking the convoy to the *second* crash site, not the first: he had not specified *which crash site* in his request. Realizing the error, Schilling, now temporarily leading the convoy, recovered and redirected the convoy to Super 61’s site. But with the combination of mounting casualties from intense Somali fire, winding streets and narrow alleys, and damage to the convoy’s vehicles, they never made it. Soon, the ground



Michael Durant's helicopter over Mogadishu. Mike Goodale rode on this one.

WHILE THE PJS WERE STILL ON THE ROPES, PERHAPS FORTY FEET ABOVE GROUND, THEIR HELICOPTER, SUPER 68, TOOK AN RPG HIT

force commander reassumed control of the convoy and headed for the airfield. Schilling's Humvee brought up the rear of the convoy which, carrying most of the dead and wounded, limped back to the airfield by about 1810.¹⁵

Meanwhile, aboard the CSAR Black Hawk flying over the city, PJs Scotty Fales and Tim Wilkinson and combat controller Pat Rogers were part of the rescue team tightly packed in the helo's cabin. At 1620 local, Fales witnessed the crash of the first helicopter, Super 61. He recalled, "I saw it hit in a big huge plume of dust and it hit the ground and came up. I knew right away . . . that we were going to get committed here shortly."¹⁶

He was right. Mike Durant, the pilot of Super 64 (the second H-60 downed by the Somalis twenty minutes after the first loss), wrote, "In those few seconds, everything changed. The radios, which up till now had hissed the occasional code word or updates, went crazy. . . . we'd all prepared for the possibility of a bird going down, but the timing and location were about as bad as they could be." Momentarily, Dan Jollata, the pilot of the CSAR bird, Super 68, came on the radio and announced, as Fales remembered, "Hey, they are calling us in and it's going to be a fast rope, fellas. Does everybody have their fast rope gloves on . . . [is everyone] buckled and ready to go?"¹⁷

The one-minute call came, then about fifteen seconds later the call for ropes. Fales noted the helicopter came into a hover in the middle of the street and short of the wrecked Super 61, preventing him from seeing it. The Rangers began their fast rope exit from the Black Hawk's left and right sides. Then "Tim chucked out the . . . big CSAR bags and then . . . Tim and I hit the ropes and down we went," Fales recounted. While the PJs were still on the ropes, perhaps forty feet above ground, their helicopter, Super 68, took an RPG hit. Seeing the aircraft's parts flying, Fales "darn near let go of the rope because I wanted to get from underneath" the helo in case it came down. Bowden described the moments that followed:

[The pilot, Dan] Jollata could hear his rotor blades whistling. Shrapnel from the blast had peppered

*them with holes. The aircraft slobbered from side to side. . . . Instinct and training both dictated that he move out, fast, but Jollata eased the Black Hawk back down to a hover for the remaining seconds Wilkinson and Fales needed to finish sliding down the ropes.*¹⁸

With superb airmanship, Jollata nursed Super 68 to a safe landing near the airport.¹⁹

Once on the ground, the men were in a "brownout" from the helicopter's rotor wash which prior missions taught them to expect. "You could hardly see your hands in front of your face," said Fales. When Super 68 pulled power, staggering back to the airfield, the dust began to clear. The helicopter had aligned with the road, facing north, for the team's fast rope insertion. By the time several men, including Fales, entered a courtyard on the left side of the street and exchanged some gunfire, the brownout dissipated. Other CSAR team members were on the right side of the street, and both groups began working their way north, looking for the wreckage of Super 61. Shortly they came to an alley on their left and spotted the helicopter. Fales thought "it looked like a giant boulder," all balled up. Alerting their teammates on the intrateam radios, Fales' group entered the alley and started setting up a security perimeter around what remained of the aircraft. They were the first Americans on the scene besides the downed Black Hawk crewmembers. A survivor, dazed, tried unsuccessfully to pull one of the pilots out of the cockpit. Unfortunately, the pilot, Cliff Wolcott, had expired. Fales moved to the front of the helicopter to see if anyone was there and was starting to come around the other side when he was struck by a bullet in the back of his left leg. Immediately, he "rolled back behind a pile of rocks and tried to shield" himself. Seconds later, Tim Wilkinson and his group came into view. For most of the next fourteen hours, he and Fales remained within earshot and eyesight of one another as they did their best to care for wounded comrades while fighting for their lives.²⁰

Fales' wound was "an all-muscle hit" for which he "did just a quick bandage job pushing some 'meat' back in, and I got up by myself." Wilkinson came over without realizing his team leader was hit, though he saw him limping. Fales and a Special Forces medic moved to the tail of the helicopter and there set up the "choke point." Fales described, "At that point it was a shoot-out . . . it was getting the guys out of the wreck and finding the guys that [they thought] were missing." Meanwhile, Wilkinson and an Army medic went back inside the wreckage and managed to pull out the crew chief from the cabin. In the course of rescuing the crew chief, the rescuers took shrapnel hits, Wilkinson in the face and lower arm, the Army medic in the hand. Discovering shortly that no one was missing, they "hunkered down" to assess the situation.²¹

Basically, there were two parts to the operation taking place simultaneously in the vicinity of Super 61, each of which had its own intrateam radio net. The outer perimeter (security) element managed



Pararescueman MSgt. Scotty Fales.

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the fight with the Somalis, “a nose-to-nose kind of a gun battle,” as Fales put it. The CSAR element handled the inner perimeter to include getting everyone out of the wreckage and treating the casualties. Fales worked both radio nets. The pararescueman noted that whereas the tactical doctrine for such a situation was to seize a nearby building to provide some cover, a place to shelter casualties, and a command post, the ten-foot high stone walls surrounding the alley made that option less practicable. Although they could have moved from the alley back out into the street, which was actually just a wide dirt path, “we had bad guys all around us, so moving out into the street was just not an option at that time. The best thing for us to do was defend the crash [site] right where we were.” The PJs grabbed Kevlar pads from inside the cabin and set them up to provide some cover.²²

While treating casualties by the tail of the aircraft, Fales heard a call for a medic from across the street in the courtyard where Bray’s group was situated. Wounded and in no condition to respond himself, he glanced at his fellow PJ and said, “They need a medic, Wilky.” *Airman* magazine described what happened next:

Wilkinson grabbed his medical ruck sack, waited for the Rangers to lay down cover fire, then dashed up the narrow alley. A hail of bullets, shrapnel and RPGs greeted Wilkinson as he raced some 45 meters across the open intersection. ‘I felt like I was moving in slow motion,’ he said. . . . ‘these boots weigh a thousand pounds’ [he thought]. Safely across the deadly intersection, Wilkinson caught his breath, then assisted in dragging the wounded off Freedom Road. Inside the ‘safe’ confines of the casualty collection point, Wilkinson assessed the medical situation. Four wounded, one critical.²³

Realizing he needed additional medical gear, he called to Fales on his intrateam radio and confirmed the supplies were available. Running back across the street, Wilkinson collected the gear and then returned, crossing the opening for a third time. Later, an Army Ranger credited Wilkinson with “repeated acts of heroism [that] saved the lives of at least four soldiers.” In his self-deprecating way, Wilkinson joked that probably the reason he wasn’t hit was that the Somalis ‘led’ him too much, being deceived by his exaggerated arm-swing and not realizing *just how slow* a runner he was!²⁴

Surprisingly, there were humorous moments in the midst of the grave situation. At one point, Fales and Wilkinson were sitting behind the tail rotor section of the crashed H-60 while bullets repeatedly struck the tail section. Fales recalled, “It sounds like a hammer hitting a big piece of metal . . . bink, bink, bink. . . . I am looking at these holes opening up in this aluminum and Tim looks at me and [recalling Steve Martin in the movie, “The Jerk”] goes, ‘*It’s the cans, man, it’s the cans. Get away from the cans!*’” Although many scenes in war films are not much like the real thing, thanks to Tim Wilkinson, the humor of “the cans” from *The Jerk* found its way into the battle of Mogadishu. Reflecting on his experience, Wilkinson remarked on the practice of “gallows humor,” saying, “It’s funny what comes to your mind at times, it truly is. . . . I guess people really do talk like that in critical situations, who would have thought?”²⁵

Although the Somalis enjoyed the advantages of numbers, familiarity with the urban terrain, and a sort of moral strength from believing—erroneously from the American perspective—they were defending their homes against foreign invaders, their fire was mostly poorly executed. Fales observed one of the “dynamics” in the fight was that “the Somalis at that point are nose-to-nose with probably the most trained, fire-disciplined, accurate-shooting group of American fighters that you could ever go up against. So if a bad guy stuck his head up, he would generally get it blown off.” So the Somalis mostly remained hidden, spraying their fire inaccurately. In some cases, though, Somalis found good sniping positions, especially on the roofs of buildings. To a degree, the urban melee in Mogadishu, Somalia, was reminiscent of Arnhem, Holland, in September 1944. As Cornelius Ryan described in his classic work, *A Bridge Too Far*, “This strange, deadly battle now devastating the outskirts of the city barely two miles from the Arnhem bridge seemed to have no plan or strategy. Like all street fighting, it had become one massive, fierce, man-to-man encounter in a checkerboard of streets.” Although in Mogadishu the Americans’ adversary was far from a professional force and the scale of the fighting was miniscule in comparison, nonetheless, the urban battle in 1993 was perhaps the closest parallel to Arnhem in 1944 that U.S. forces had experienced since World War II.²⁶

The fighting continued uninterrupted until dark. When Super 61 crashed, it brought down with it a portion of a mud-and-stone wall that offered an



Pararescueman TSgt.
Timothy A. "Tim"
Wilkinson.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE CALM DEMEANOR AND PROFESSIONALISM [BRAY] SHOWED OVER THE RADIO EVEN AS I HEARD BULLETS HITTING VERY NEAR HIS POSITION

opening into a building. During daylight, several Rangers were wounded trying to get through the hole and into the building for cover. But once it was dark, the CSAR team moved into the building. Fales sensed they were in one of the city's middle-class neighborhoods, definitely a better area than the "tin-shanty hovels" of the Black Sea district. Also by that time, Fales' injured leg had gone from hurting "real bad" to numbness, and he anticipated an amputation if he survived the ongoing ordeal. Thankfully, the bullet had not hit bone, only muscle. His teammates wanted him to lie down on a stretcher and rest. Fales refused, responding, "Oh, no . . . I am running on that baby all night tonight!"²⁷

Inside the building, Fales and a Ranger considered their options. The room they were in was small. They had casualties, including several dead, with them. Ultimately, the team wanted to find another access point to the street. The Ranger carried a demolition load of "C4." Agreeing on a likely spot to cut a hole in the wall, he arranged the C4 on one of the walls and pulled the igniter, blowing away "a beautiful archway door," as Fales described. Unfortunately, it ran out into another courtyard which offered no better access than what they already had. Trying another wall, his partner blew a second hole. This time, the opening led into another house that, in turn, opened to the street. Relocating to that house, the Americans encountered a frightened Somali family all of whom they flex-cuffed and put down in a corner. Fales recalled it was perhaps 2100 or 2200 by then and that for about an hour things settled down because the Somalis couldn't tell the whereabouts of the Americans. The team had radio contact with the U.S./UN-manned relief convoy that was then forming. Encountering several delays, the convoy, including combat controller Dan Schilling, did not depart the new port facility just east of the airport until after 2300.²⁸

The convoy's arrival came not a moment too soon. For a time, the Somalis fired RPGs into the

building. The firing eventually quieted down, relatively speaking, no doubt due in part to a complete lack of night vision devices on the Somali side. Not that most U.S. personnel had anything better. None had expected the mission to continue after dark, so task force members left their personal night vision goggles (NVGs) behind. Scotty Fales recalled, though, that the helicopters generally carried NVGs. Operators retrieved them from Super 61 and distributed them among the Rangers on the outer security perimeter. In his after-action report, Fales emphasized, "Always take your goggles, always." In addition to not having NVGs, combat controller Jeff Bray noted that by the time darkness set in they were "really in trouble," out of water and low on ammo.²⁹

In any case, the downturn in the fighting allowed Fales and several others to tend to the wounded. But, at one point the Somalis emplaced a 12.7-mm. machine gun across the street and began shooting into the room where some of the Americans were sheltered. Bray called in a "Danger Close" AH-6 Little Bird gunship strike that took out the machine gun. "That missile hit ten yards from us," said Fales, commenting on the "phenomenal job" done by Bray and fellow combat controller Pat Rogers. Bray was so close that spent shell casings from the helicopter gunship rained down on him, burning the back of his neck. An Army Chief Warrant Officer, CW2 Paul White, agreed with Fales' assessment, recalling, "I will always remember the calm demeanor and professionalism [Bray] showed over the radio even as I heard bullets hitting very near his position each time he keyed his radio microphone." Even so, there was at least one moment when Jeff needed some reassurance. Because Wilkinson established the triage site in Bray's area, the two of them saw a lot of each other that night. "It was always good to see Tim's face because we could always make each other laugh a little bit," recalled Bray. But as Bray prepared for one (of at least two) Danger Close air strikes, sensing that his friend needed a lift, Tim came over, patted Jeff on the back and offered a word of encouragement. Bray remembered, "Then he went back in and started treating people." Soon, the sounds of helicopter minigun rounds hitting their targets told Bray what he needed to know. He contacted the gunships and called, "Cleared hot for rockets." The helicopters' rockets nearly took down an entire wall on their next pass.³⁰

Jeff Bray was the only USAF member among the main assault force. Without his combat controller's expertise, the task force members caught in the Black Sea almost certainly would have suffered greater casualties at the hands of the Somalis. The Americans might not have made it out alive. Using the call sign, "Kilo 64 Charlie," Bray remained in contact with helicopter gunships throughout the night, coordinating their strikes against targets, in some cases, only yards away from the "friendlies." After some time of attempting to follow the established formal procedures for calling in strikes, Bray finally decided to improvise. In an urban environ-

A HUGE CHALLENGE WAS HOW TO TALK THE HELICOPTERS... ONTO THE TARGETS WHILE MINIMIZING THE RISK OF A [FRATRICIDE] INCIDENT

ment, “That stuff wasn’t working and so finally I said, ‘Hey, listen, let’s just talk like I am talking to you on the telephone. You tell me what you need to know and that is what I am going to tell you . . . we won’t worry about this formal stuff anymore because it just wasn’t working.’” Formal or informal, the bottom line on Bray’s work that night was what one Air Force author described as talking “steel onto the targets.”³¹

Bray experienced particular stress, no doubt, when after having talked with one helicopter flight for an hour to get them oriented to the exact locations of the Americans and Somalis, the aircraft were forced to depart for fuel. Thankfully, the next flight was monitoring the conversation and didn’t take long to become familiar with the urban battlefield below. It helped that another helicopter conducted an airdrop at Bray’s location, delivering two kit bags full of ammo, NVGs, and medical gear. Flying “right off the deck” to ensure an accurate delivery, the helicopter was badly damaged by Somali ground fire and barely made it to an emergency landing site. Now Bray had the NVGs allowing him to see what the gunships he was talking to saw.³²

A huge challenge was how to talk the helicopters, mainly AH-6 Little Bird gunships, onto the targets while minimizing the risk of a “blue-on-blue” (i.e., fratricide) incident. Bray devised a system that was simple, creative, and effective. During the daylight he had drawn a simple dirt map on the ground to keep track of the four groups of soldiers in his vicinity. No one had moved. After dark, he came up with the idea of placing infrared (IR) strobe lights—most of the operators carried them on their helmets or persons—on the rooftop where each group was located: one strobe with group 1, two strobes with group 2, and so on. It took over an hour for Bray to collect the needed strobes, get them to each of the four groups, and ensure they were properly placed on the rooftops where the helicopter pilots could see them. Then turning on the IR laser beam sighted to his weapon, he pointed it straight up into the air and asked one of the helicopter crews if it was visible. It was. Better yet, it stood out clearly when viewed from the air. With the locations of the four groups of Americans marked by IR strobes, Bray could point his weapon’s laser at a target and call for fire with strong assurance that the gunships could see exactly where the four groups of Americans were positioned, avoiding a blue-on-blue incident.³³

As Bray later described, of eight total gunships two Little Birds were on-scene at a time. One conducted a run-in while the other provided security “overwatch.” Then the two swapped roles. At the same time, two other AH-6s refueled, two rearmed, and two were enroute to the battle area. Bray estimated the helicopter gunships expended close to seventy rockets, and tens of thousands of minigun rounds, just in his immediate vicinity.³⁴

Meanwhile, shortly before midnight, a mile-long multinational relief convoy set out from the new port facility at the east end of the airfield. Led by four Pakistani tanks and including twenty-eight Malaysian APCs, U.S. Humvees, and perhaps other

vehicles, mainly the 10th Mountain Division’s soldiers manned the convoy. Helicopters provided security overhead. In the darkness and confusion, two Malaysian APCs took a wrong turn and were ambushed but, later, rescued. Finally, after a series of “fits and starts,” at 0155 local part of the convoy reached the first Black Hawk crash site (Super 61’s, the northern site). The convoy remained together until reaching a road intersection situated between the two crash sites. There, some of the APCs turned north to the first crash site, while some headed south to the second crash site. Combat controller Dan Schilling remained with a third convoy element that secured the intersection itself. To the Rangers and assault team members at the northern site who survived the hours of darkness on their own, the sight of the vehicles was “an awesome relief, to look up and see your guys coming to get you,” as Jeff Bray recalled. However, while still under sporadic fire, the force remained in place for more than three hours as the Rangers, true to their creed, labored to extract the body of pilot Cliff Wolcott. Following extraction of Wolcott’s remains and setting destructive charges on the aircraft wreckage, the northern crash site convoy element—their wounded riding in APCs—departed to link up with the rest of the convoy at the intersection a short distance away.³⁵

When the now-rejoined convoy, including the survivors of the task force’s original vehicles, began to move, Schilling’s vehicle was the last in line. The convoy proceeded to the Pakistani stadium, arriving at 0630 local time. Although the stadium was in the opposite direction from the airport, it provided a closer area of relative security where casualties could be treated. The location was also suitable for evacuation by helicopter. The decision to direct the convoy to the stadium seemed tactically shrewd, as undoubtedly some of the Somalis still interested in fighting expected the convoy to return along the same route, that is, back to the airfield. While most personnel rode to the stadium in the APCs, about fifteen, including Bray, walked out. Continuing to control air strikes conducted by several Army helicopters as he moved, Bray walked and at times ran backwards behind the last vehicle while directing the Little Birds. The gunships flew directly overhead at low altitude, covering the movement to the soccer stadium, which was perhaps six blocks away. Shortly after 0800 local time, task force helicopters began transporting the survivors from the stadium to the airport. Later that day, Bray and the pilots he controlled during the battle met in person in an emotional gathering.³⁶

Fales’ group remained in place until the arrival of the relief convoy. As casualties were loaded into the APCs shortly after daylight on October 4, Fales boarded one on his own strength. But with the effects of adrenaline finally wearing off, he gave in to shock, fatigue, and dehydration. Teammates administered IVs and morphine to Fales prior to his evacuation.³⁷

On October 3 and 4, Somali fighters killed eighteen U.S. troops and wounded at least seventy-nine.



Combat controller, SSgt. Jeff Bray.

THE MOGADISHU BATTLE INCLUDED NUMEROUS ACTS OF HEROISM... [TWO SOLDIERS] EARNED THE MEDAL OF HONOR (POSTHUMOUSLY)

Allied losses included two Malaysian soldiers killed and seven wounded, and two Pakistanis wounded. Estimates of Somali casualties ranged between 500 and up to three times that number. The days following the battle were a mix of pain and relief. On October 6, a Somali-fired mortar struck the hangar area at the airport, killing one and wounding twelve.³⁸

On October 14, eleven days after the battle, warlord Aideed released Mike Durant, the 160 SOAR pilot who survived the crash of Super 64. Despite his grievous injuries, in time he recuperated and returned to flying helicopters. One week later, Task Force Ranger redeployed stateside. The Clinton administration decided to withdraw from Somalia. Although the impact was impossible to quantify, the U.S. public's shock and revulsion at seeing dead U.S. soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu contributed to the decision in Washington. Undoubtedly, many special operators shared the feelings of a twenty-two year-old Ranger who wrote, "We had a job to do, but we were pulled out."³⁹

Meanwhile, the administration took heavy criticism for defense secretary Aspin's decision in late September to deny the U.S. Central Command's request for M-1 Abrams tanks and M-2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs). Congressional testimony by senior officers made it clear the requested tanks and IFVs likely would have resulted in fewer casualties in Mogadishu than the number suffered. Lacking the U.S. vehicles, the relief convoys relied on Pakistani tanks and Malaysian armored personnel carriers. In mid-December, President Clinton announced that Secretary Aspin would be stepping down from the

Pentagon. In February 1994, an *Air Force Times* editorial expressed the desire of many U.S. citizens to withdraw from Somalia. In a piece entitled, "No reason to be in Somalia," Fred Reed wrote, "The original mission has been accomplished in Somalia. Starvation has ceased. But now what?" By the end of March 1994, most U.S. troops departed Somalia, although several hundred Marines remained offshore in case an evacuation of U.S. citizens should be required. By early March 1995, all remaining UN/U.S. personnel left the country, which reverted to warlordism and chaos.⁴⁰

As noted in various accounts, the Mogadishu battle included numerous acts of heroism. Two Special Forces' soldiers, Gary Gordon and Randall Shughart, who defended the wounded Mike Durant at the site of his crashed helicopter at the cost of their own lives, earned the Medal of Honor (posthumous). However, the small contingent from the 24th Special Tactics Squadron also garnered recognition. TSgt. Tim Wilkinson earned the Air Force Cross, the nation's second-highest medal for valor. Wilkinson commented, "Everybody was doing heroic things. Nobody quit. Nobody whined. Nobody shirked their duty." Wilky's team leader, MSgt. Scotty Fales, and combat controller SSgt. Jeff Bray, earned Silver Stars for gallantry. Three other combat controllers, MSgt. Jack McMullen, Sgt. Pat Rogers, and SSgt. Dan Schilling, received the Bronze Star with Valor.⁴¹

After the Grenada operation in 1983, the Military Airlift Command/Twenty-Third Air Force's leadership merged PJ and CCT specialties with the expectation of achieving synergies on the battlefield, particularly respecting the treatment of battlefield trauma sustained by special operators. In short, Mogadishu vindicated that vision to a degree even greater than in Panama in 1989. In 1995, a *Joint Forces Quarterly* article analyzing recent doctrinal issues pointed out that "Somalia reveals that many institutional mistakes are corrected (when the chips really *are* down) only through extraordinary efforts by junior officers, NCOs, and most of all by individual soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen." The performance of Special Tactics Airmen in the battle of Mogadishu was "extraordinary," indeed. In the U.S. military's longest continuous firefight since Southeast Asia two decades earlier, both the concept of Special Tactics, and its men, had been tested and proven under excruciating stresses.⁴² ■

NOTES

1. [Richard W. Stewart], *The United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, [2002]), pp 5-6; at <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Somalia/Somalia.htm> (Oct 19, 2010). For background on Somalia, see I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali, Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2002 [1965]).
2. *United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994*, pp 7-8;

at www.history.army.mil/brochures/Somalia/Somalia.htm (Oct 19, 2010); Frederick H. Fleitz, Jr., *Peacekeeping Fiascoes of the 1990s: Causes, Solutions, and U.S. Interests* (Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 2002), pp 130-31. This initial effort became known as UNOSOM I (United Nations Operations in Somalia) to distinguish it from its successor, UNOSOM II. Soldiers from Fort Campbell's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG-A) accompanied many of the relief

flights and began gathering intelligence on the areas they observed.

3. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 9-10; Timothy P. Barela, "Home is Where the Havoc Is," *Airman*, Mar 1993, pp 6-8; Fleitz, *Peacekeeping Fiascoes*, p 131. Aware that the contingency would be left for his successor to wrap-up, President Bush sought and obtained the support of President-elect William J. Clinton prior to the start of Operation Restore Hope.

4. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 10-13.

5. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 14-16. In March 1993, the UN passed a resolution authorizing military forces to conduct peace enforcement or peace-making in Somalia (under Chapter VII of its charter) rather than peacekeeping (under Chapter VI)—an important distinction.

6. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 16; Walter S. Poole, *The Effort to Save Somalia, August 1992-March 1994* (Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, 2005), pp 41-45; Fleitz, *Peacekeeping Fiascoes*, pp 131-33; Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down, A Story of Modern War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), p 94; History, Air Force Special Operations Command [AFSOC], Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, pp 113-22, under AFHRA call no. K317.01. The two U.S. government publications above listed the number of Pakistani soldiers killed in the ambush as twenty-four, while Fleitz listed twenty-five. Regarding the four AC-130 gunships supporting United Nations/U.S. operations in Somalia, AFSOC's documentation indicated the aircraft flew from either Djibouti or Mogadishu at various times. Apparently, between July 14 and early October 1993, however, there were no gunships in the area for supporting the operations in Mogadishu (at least one request in September was turned down by Secretary of Defense Aspin). Following the Mogadishu battle on October 3-4, a total of four gunships deployed within days. Also on the 17th, in a "search and arrest mission" armed Somalis killed five Moroccan soldiers and wounded thirty-nine.

7. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 16-18; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, pp 44-45; John T. Carney, Jr. and Benjamin F. Schemmer, *No Room for Error: The Covert Operations of America's Special Tactics Units from Iran to Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), pp 245-48; Matt Eversmann and Dan Schilling, eds, *The Battle of Mogadishu: Firsthand Accounts from the Men of Task Force Ranger* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), pp 161, 165-66; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 23-24; author's discussions with several USAF members of TF Ranger. Garrison's JSOTF reported directly to the U.S. Central Command rather than to UNOSOM II; see *United States Army in Somalia*, p 18. Following one poorly-coordinated operation in which an unlisted UN compound was hit and some workers temporarily detained, General Garrison began coordinating TF Ranger's activities with UNOSOM II despite not being under UNOSOM's command-and-control structure.

8. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 18; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, p 56; Intvw, F. L. Marion, oral historian, AFHRA, with MSgt Scott C. Fales (USAF, Ret), Jul 13, 2007; Intvw, F. L. Marion, oral historian, AFHRA, with Mr. Jeffrey W. Bray (former SSgt., USAF, separated), Jul 12, 2007.

9. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 18-19; Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 245.

10. Carney, *No Room for Error*, pp 247-49, 259. Different sources listed the number of TF Ranger's personnel between 440 and 450. Bowden stated 450 men

were in the task force; see his *Black Hawk Down*, p 96. Approximately two hundred members participated in the action on October 3-4, 1993; see Philip F. Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," *Airman*, May 1994, p 24.

11. Intvw, F. L. Marion, oral historian, AFHRA, with MSgt Timothy A. Wilkinson (USAF, Ret), Mar 6, 2007; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 21, 38.

12. Fales intvw; Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 249; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," pp 23-24; block quote from Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p 33; see also p 21. The time of 1350 local was contained in excerpted material from Memo, "After Action Report for TASK FORCE RANGER Operations in Support of UNOSOM II; 22 August - 25 October 1993 (U)," Jan 5, 1994.

13. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 19; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, p 56; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 171, 173 [Dan Schilling recalled seven Kevlar Humvees]; Fales intvw (information used is Unclassified); Bray intvw; Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 249; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 21, 99-100; History, AFSOC, Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, p 125. MG William F. Garrison (USA, Ret), Task Force Ranger's Commanding Officer, indicated that to the best of his recollection all the helicopters (including the CSAR helo, Super-68) launched at the same time (telecon, MG William F. Garrison (USA, Ret) with Marion, Oct 19, 2010. Garrison's recollection was supported by Sgt. John Belman, a Ranger who served as part of the CSAR team. Belman wrote, "We knew CSAR would be going up in the air along with the other Black Hawks and Little Birds, all in squadron formation" (Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 108). Note that the AFSOC history listed an incorrect time for the start of the mission, stating that Bray began the mission (with the assaulters) at approximately 1500 local (p 125). Actual time was 1532 local. However, the AFSOC history was much closer when it stated that Wilkinson (and Super-68's team, including Fales) responded to the first downed Black Hawk (Super-61) at 1620 hours (p 123). Actual time was most likely 1628 to 1630 local - the crash of Super-61 occurred at 1620. The times of 1532, 1535, and 1620 local were contained in excerpted material from Memo, "After Action Report for TASK FORCE RANGER Operations in Support of UNOSOM II; 22 August - 25 October 1993 (U)," Jan 5, 1994.

14. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 19; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, p 56; Fales intvw; Bray intvw; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 83, 100; Michael J. Durant with Steven Hartov, *In the Company of Heroes* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2003), pp 18-19; History, AFSOC, Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, p 125. On October 3, 1993, the CSAR package was cut from between fifteen and seventeen Rangers to about twelve. PJs were cut from three to two, plus one combat controller (see Fales interview). Bray normally carried eight to ten clips, but on October 3 he carried only about four. An after-action item emphasized the lesson: never go "light" on ammunition, a maxim that combat controller Dan Schilling also emphasized (see Bray interview; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 181, 194).

15. Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 175-92; quote on pp 185-86; *United States Army in Somalia*, p 21; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 122-25. For fuller accounts of the convoys, see Bowden's *Black Hawk Down* and Eversmann and Schilling's *Battle of Mogadishu*.

16. Fales intvw. My evidence indicated the CSAR helo, Super-68, launched at the same time as the assault-

and blocking-force-helicopters; telecon, MG William F. Garrison (USA, Ret) with Marion, Oct 19, 2010; Sgt. John Belman's comments in Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 108.

17. Durant, *In the Company of Heroes*, pp 19-20; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p 101; Fales intvw. Durant survived his aircraft's shoot-down and was held captive by the Somalis until released on October 14.

18. Fales intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," pp 25-26; block quote in Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p 139. Rhodes indicated Fales' watch read 1539 hours at the one-minute call prior to his fast-roping to the ground. Based on other primary sources, however, this time appeared erroneous. The time of 1620 local for Super-61's shootdown was contained in excerpted material from Memo, "After Action Report for TASK FORCE RANGER Operations in Support of UNOSOM II; 22 August - 25 October 1993 (U)," Jan 5, 1994. According to Wilkinson's account, the insertion of the CSAR team took place some eight to ten minutes after Super-61's shootdown, arguing for insertion between 1628 and 1630 local (Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 133-35).

19. Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 136; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, p 139.

20. Fales intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," pp 26-28. In his article, Rhodes stated that Fales egressed the helicopter on the right side, Wilkinson on the left. In his interview with me, however, Fales stated the opposite; he egressed on the left, Wilkinson on the right. Wilkinson agreed with that statement; see Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 136. That fact helped explain the above narrative regarding Fales' actions and position in the street.

21. Fales intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 28.

22. Fales intvw; Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 252; History, AFSOC, Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, p 127.

23. Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 29.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Fales intvw; Wilkinson intvw; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 144.

26. Fales intvw; Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p 342.

27. Fales intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 28. Fales' numbness, he learned later, was probably due to a major nerve in his leg that had been cut. His leg was saved.

28. Fales intvw; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 195-96; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, p 57.

29. Fales intvw; Bray intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," pp 28-29.

30. Fales intvw; Bray intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," pp 28-31; Carney, *No Room for Error*, pp 255-56. "Danger Close" was a specific term used by CCTs that alerted one's own forces to the heightened threat of supporting fire intentionally directed within a few yards of friendly forces.

31. Bray intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 29; also quoted in Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 255.

32. Bray intvw.

33. Bray intvw; Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 255; History, AFSOC, Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, p 125. This history referred to "an ingenious perimeter marking system" but did not provide details.

34. Bray intvw; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 30.

35. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 22-23; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 196-98; Bray intvw; Fales intvw. Sources differed on

the relief convoy's arrival time at the first crash site (Super-61, Cliff Wolcott). The above U.S. Army publication stated the convoy arrived at 0155 local and spent several hours attempting to extract the body of the pilot of Super-61. The other element in the relief convoy proceeded to the second (southern) crash site, Mike Durant's Super-64; it was secured at 0227 local. The TF Ranger After Action Report stated the "lead elements of the QRF linked up with the assault force at the northern crash site at 0155C." I have elected to follow this report; Memo, "After Action Report for TASK FORCE RANGER Operations in Support of UNOSOM II; 22 August - 25 October 1993," Jan 5, 1994. Bowden stated the convoy consisted of "almost a hundred vehicles and was nearly two miles long." Given the number of vehicles and their length, and the spacing between vehicles to provide mutual support, this was almost certainly an overstatement. For example, generously assuming a convoy of ninety vehicles and allowing an average length of twenty feet per vehicle and a spacing of sixty feet between vehicles, the total length of the convoy calculates to 7,140 feet, or approximately 1.4 miles. Of course, if the number of vehicles was less than ninety or the spacing less than sixty feet, the total length could have been considerably less than 1.4 miles. Indeed, two U.S. Army studies listed the convoy as "sixty-plus" vehicles; see *United States Army in Somalia*, p 22; *United States Forces, Somalia, After Action Report and Historical Overview: The United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2003), p 12.

36. *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 22-23; Rhodes, "No Time For Fear," p 31; Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, pp 263-64; Bray intvw; Carney, *No Room for Error*, pp 256-59; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, p 197; Memo, "After Action Report for TASK FORCE RANGER Operations in Support of UNOSOM II; 22 August - 25 October 1993," Jan 5, 1994. The time of 0630 local was contained in excerpted material from the above memo.

37. Fales intvw; *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 22-23; History, AFSOC, Jan-Dec 1993, vol 1, pp 127-28.

38. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 23; Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, pp 56-57; Andrew Compart, "Everyone 'was doing heroic things'," *Air Force Times*, Feb 14, 1994; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 202-204; Bray intvw. Poole listed 84 Americans wounded, 312 Somalis killed, and 814 wounded.

39. Durant, *In the Company of Heroes*, pp 349, 357; *United States Army in Somalia*, p 24; Eversmann and Schilling, *Battle of Mogadishu*, pp 55, 205. The Ranger quoted above was Sgt Raleigh Cash.

40. Poole, *Effort to Save Somalia*, pp 57-67; Fred Reed, "No reason to be in Somalia," *Air Force Times*, Feb 7, 1994, p 55; *United States Army in Somalia*, pp 24-25.

41. *United States Army in Somalia*, p 21; Carney, *No Room for Error*, pp 247, 259; Compart, "Everyone 'was doing heroic things';" Philip F. Rhodes, "Pope airmen save lives, earn medals," *Tiger Times*, Feb 11, 1994, p 3; Wilkinson intvw; Bray intvw.

42. Carney, *No Room for Error*, p 249; C. Kenneth Allard, "Lessons Unlearned: Somalia and Joint Doctrine," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1995, p 109 [emphasis in original]. For the Special Tactics role in Panama, see Forrest L. Marion, "First Fight: The U.S. Air Force's Special Tactics Group in Panama, December 1989," *Air Power History* vol. 59, no. 4 (Winter 2012), pp. 28-37.