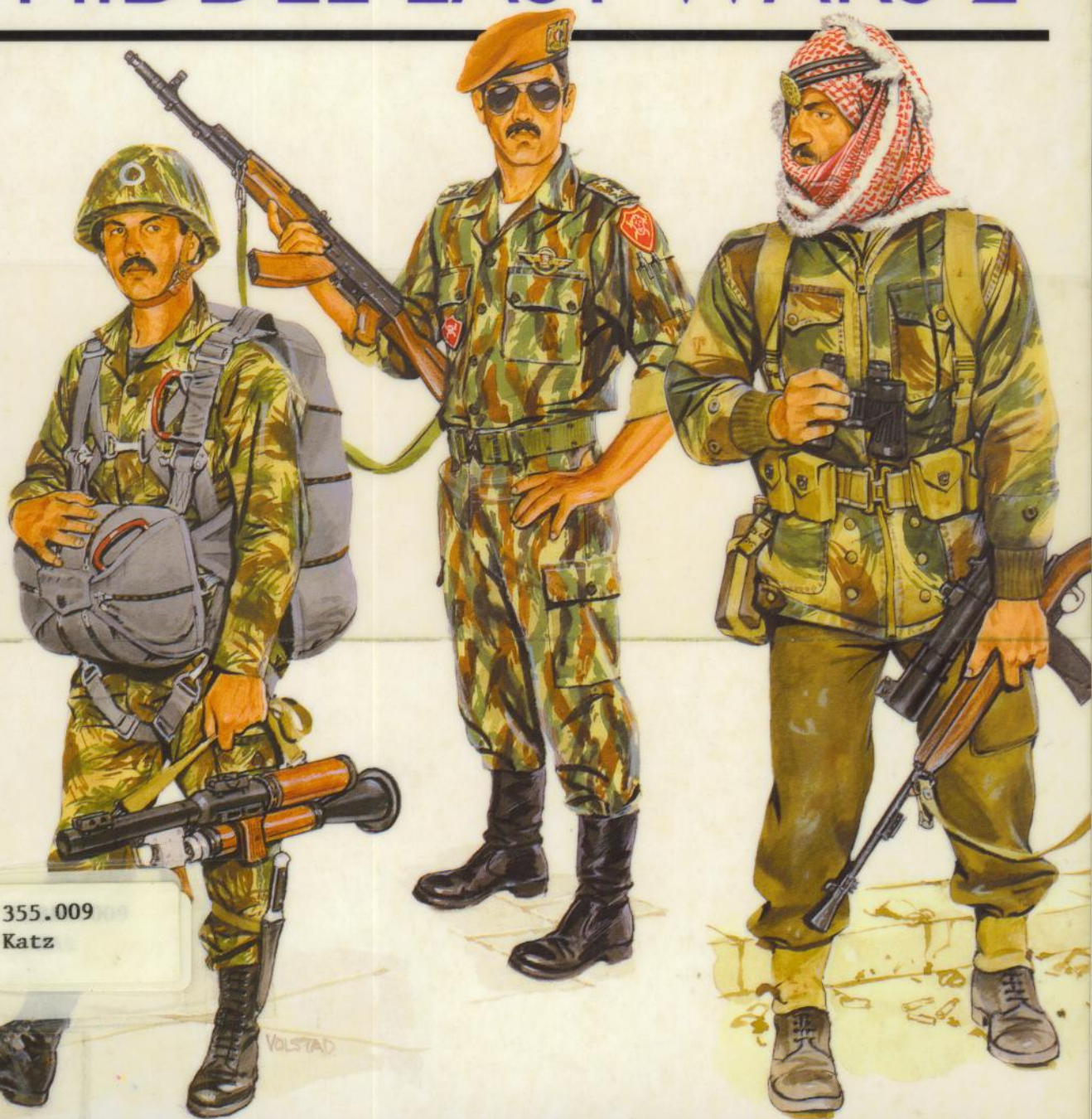


ARAB ARMIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST WARS 2



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SAMUEL M KATZ RON VOLSTAD

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ARAB ARMIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST WARS 2

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Arab Armies of the Middle East Wars (2)

Introduction

This book examines the results of the 1967 and 1973 Wars which have led to the development and present deployments of the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the Palestinian guerrilla and terrorist groups, and the more important of the Lebanese militias. Rather than dwelling on the much-described wars with Israel, the author hopes to provide a thorough background survey of the post-1973 development of the Arab forces; the special military and political rôles of their élite units; and the inter-Arab struggles. For reasons of space only the most important events, countries and units are included here.

* * *

On 11 June 1967 three Arab armies lay in ruin. The Six-Day War drastically altered the political and military complexion of the Middle East. Prior to the war, Israel was regarded as a nuisance, easily removed should the need and opportunity arise. After the war Israel achieved permanent regional superpower status. Although Egypt had lost the Sinai, Jordan, the West Bank and Jerusalem, Syria and the strategic Golan Heights, the real losers were the Palestinians. Their hunger for a national homeland increasingly manifested itself in a campaign of terrorism, manipulated by Arab regimes concerned mainly with their own national interests.

The Arab response to defeat was a thirst for revenge; and the aftermath of 1967—the process of regrouping leading to the launching, and almost to the winning, of the 1973 War—was the nearest the Arab world would come to true unity. When the tide turned in Israel's favour in 1973, the Arabs turned against one another.

Egypt regained her pride on the battlefield in 1973, and four years later in the subsequent peace



An Egyptian Air Defence *Aqid* (colonel) as seen in his 'Class A' uniform, in a photograph taken on 1 October 1973, one week before the outbreak of the 1973 War. Rank insignia consists of two bronze stars and an eagle, worn on a dark khaki shoulder board. The medals worn above the left breast pocket are for service during the War of Attrition. (Author's collection)

talks. Jordan's anguish over her defeat in 1967 was compounded by a bloody internal struggle against a Palestinian guerrilla pseudo-state on her territory: she sent only token forces to aid Syria in 1973—ironically, since Syria had invaded Jordan in support of the Palestinians during 'Black September', 1970. After 1973 Syria developed into the dominant Arab military power, the manipulator of events in Lebanon, and the sponsor of international terrorism. The Palestinians emerged desperate and

confused; they have dedicated their military potential and determination more to battles with other Arab forces than against Israel, contributing to the destruction of Lebanon, and serving as proxies for left-wing terrorist causes.

The Battle for Honour; Egypt 1967-73

The 1967 War never ended for Egypt. Her forces devastated, her pride as leader of the Arab world humbled, she proclaimed at the Khartoum summit of August 1967 Nasser's infamous 'three no' policy: no peace, no negotiations, no recognition of Israel. On 21 October 1967 Egypt inaugurated the 'War of Attrition' in spectacular fashion when the destroyer INS *Eilat*, patrolling inside Egyptian waters off Port Said, was sunk by three Styx missiles launched from two Russian-built Osa fast attack craft, with the loss of 41 Israeli dead and 91 wounded. (This was the

first time in naval history that a warship had been sunk by surface-to-surface missiles.) Indiscriminate shelling by both sides had gone on since the end of the Six-Day War, but the loss of the *Eilat* ushered in an escalated scale of hostilities; on 22 October the IDF shelled and set alight oil refineries off Suez.

Egyptian strategy was to rebuild her forces with immediate and generous Soviet aid, while preventing the Israelis from consolidating their positions in the Sinai. By 1968 limited operations against IDF positions on the east bank of the Suez Canal began. On 8 September, in just one of many large-scale bombardments, more than 150 Egyptian heavy artillery batteries fired some 10,000 shells across the canal. Egyptian 'Special Forces' were used in small but harassing raids against IDF rear areas and the 'Bar-Lev Line' fortifications along the east bank; they caused only moderate damage, but tied down

Egyptian soldiers trapped in Sinai prior to the disengagement pose smiling by the skeleton of an IAF Skyhawk, 29 January 1974. The uniforms worn are standard issue, and representative of the Egyptian soldier in 1973. Note sweater with hole in shoulder for fatigue shirt shoulder strap. (United Nations/Y. Nagata)





large numbers of IDF troops. The commander of the Special Forces at this time was Gen. Sa'ad Es-Din Sha'azli, an innovative leader who as Army Chief of Staff in 1973 would command during the greatest moment in modern Egyptian history—the crossing of the Suez Canal.

In mid-1970 the Soviets bowed to pressure for direct intervention, providing SAM missiles and crews as well as a MiG-21 squadron and four MiG-25s to operate against the IDF. As a result, Israeli Air Force bombings ceased, as did the War of Attrition.

Plans for the re-crossing had been in preparation since June 1967; but the Egyptian Army had to be totally rebuilt, and Operation 'Granite Two'¹ was meticulously prepared to avoid the over-confidence, negligent planning and qualitative inferiority which had led to defeat in 1967. Officers studied Hebrew and Israeli topics at university, and the education and skill level of the average soldier was markedly improved. Portable anti-tank and

Egyptian commandos from one of the 26 commando battalions in Egyptian service in 1973 redeploy in Sinai. One photograph offers an excellent view of the battle-vest issued to most assault forces; and the Egyptian method for carrying personal gear. Note AK-47 carried by lead soldier wrapped in tan cloth for camouflage. (United Nations/Y. Nagata)

anti-aircraft missiles such as the RPG-7, SAGGER and SA-7 STRELLA were issued to front line troops in great numbers. Though appeals for united Arab military support brought little response, training and preparation continued at a feverish pace; and equipment for two armies was brought forward to the Canal.

At 1345 hrs. on 6 October 1973 the Egyptians launched their attack; and 15 minutes later, chanting '*Allah'u Akbar!*', the first of 30,000 Egyptian troops were crossing the Canal to recapture the national pride of which they had been robbed six years before.

The use of élite forces was an integral part of Sha'azli's plan. As founding father of Egypt's paratroops in 1956, he had later been instrumental in achieving a high professional standard among paratroop, naval and *As-Sai'qa* ('lightning' or

¹ Renamed Operation 'Badr' in September 1973.



An Egyptian T-62 tank commander smiles after completing an excellent performance on the firing range, August 1977. He wears the black standard Soviet tank commander's helmet, and sage green fatigues, which began to enter service following the 1973 War. (DAVA)



Two Egyptian Military Policemen near the Libyan border, June 1979. Note their rather distinctive British appearance, with pale royal blue fatigues, and red caps. Unlike those of other Arab countries, the Egyptian Military Police do not fulfil a political rôle. (DAVA)

special forces) units. These had seen action in Yemen during the 1960s; and naval commandos had successfully raided IDF/Navy targets during the War of Attrition, even blowing up a vessel in Eilat port in 1970. By 1973 Egypt could field two paratroop brigades (140th and 182nd), two heli-assault brigades, three commando groups, and the 130th Marine Amphibious Brigade. Naval commandos were to cross early on D-Day to neutralise the oil pipeline which was to 'set the Canal alight' in the event of a crossing attempt; in fact the pipes had been so neglected as to make their activation impossible.

Commandos paddled across the Canal once the initial blitz began, and established positions—setting up anti-tank mines and defences against counter-attacking IDF armour. A second commando group advanced close to the 30-odd Bar-Lev Line MAOZIM (fortifications) to act as tank-killer teams, armed with huge numbers of RPG-7s and SAGGER AT-3s.

Initial Egyptian successes took even Sha'azli's HQ by surprise; IDF positions were falling quickly, despite savage fighting for some of the MAOZIM, particularly 'Budapest' and 'Quay'—it took a week, and assaults by suicide flame-throwers to force 'Quay's' surrender. But the expected 30 per cent Egyptian casualties never materialised, with only 300 soldiers dying on the first day. Commando tank-killer teams enjoyed great success throughout the first week, destroying hundreds of tanks and crippling IDF counter-attack capabilities; the commandos were so rich in these weapons that accuracy gave way to massed firepower.

Elsewhere, however, commando operations were less successful. Attempts to heli-lift 30-man groups by Mi-8 deep into Sinai failed, particularly near Ras-Sudr, where IAF warplanes intercepted a battalion-sized lift and shot down 14 Mi-8s: more than 250 men were killed, wounded or captured.

The 130th Amphib.Bde.'s task in 1973 was to support commando units in interdicting IDF lines

Egypt since 1973

of communication and harassing rear positions and airfields, with the secondary mission of mending the gap formed between Egyptian 2nd and 3rd Armies by the crossing. The brigade's crossing of Little Bitter Lake was largely successful; this was the first amphibious assault operation by any of the Middle Eastern powers, and the first ever conducted entirely on the basis of Soviet equipment, doctrine and tactics. The crossing began at 1335 hrs. on 6 October, with 37 PT-76 tanks, 74 BTR-50PK/PU APCs, and 18 PTRK-'Malyutkas'. Once on the east bank the brigade headed for the Giddi Pass but ran into Col. Dan Shomron's IDF 401st Armd.Bde., and was forced to withdraw with heavy losses after an hour-long battle.

As the Sinai front stabilised and the IDF regrouped, counter-attacked, and took the initiative, the rôle of Egypt's Special Forces decreased. Commando tank-killer teams were countered by IDF deployment of mechanised infantry alongside the armour. As the IDF crossed the Canal and invaded Egypt, commando units were withdrawn for the bitter defensive struggle. In Isma'aliya the 182nd Para Bde. fought the IDF to a standstill, inflicting heavy losses; in Suez the Egyptian 140th and IDF 247th Para Bdes. fought each other in savage, close-quarter combat. The professionalism and courage of the Egyptian paras and commandos earned the respect of the IDF; and their deployment illustrated the Egyptian General Staff's understanding that the strength of special forces lies in their speed, not their staying-power.

Egypt emerged from the 1973 War not only more powerful than ever, and with renewed national morale, but also as an increasingly pro-Western power in the region. Even as Egyptian and IDF soldiers faced each other during the disengagement talks of 1974, goodwill seemed apparent. In 1977 Egypt's genuine effort for peace was crowned by President Anwar es-Sadat's historic pilgrimage to Jerusalem; but peace would have its price.

In 1978 the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine murdered, in Cyprus, a leading pro-peace Egyptian newspaper editor, and hijacked a Cyprus Airways jetliner in an escape attempt. Sadat sent a company of his élite *As-Sa'iqqa* commandos to Nicosia to attempt an Entebbe-style rescue, but the Egyptians failed to secure agreement with the Cypriot authorities, and 15 of the commandos died in an 80-minute gun battle with the Cypriot National Guard. From the demonstrable need for a specifically anti-terrorist force, Unit 777 was born.

This highly-trained unit suffered a disastrous baptism of fire on 24 November 1985 when three members of the Abu Nidal faction hijacked Egyptair Flight 648 en route from 'terrorist

Peace . . . Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin lands at Cairo Airport for the first time following the signing of the Camp David Peace Accords, 1978. Greeting Mr. Begin is the Egyptian Republican Guard, fancied up in rather 'Germanic' dress uniforms, hardly typical for a desert climate. Note SKS 7.62mm rifle with extended bayonet. (IDF Spokesman)





An Egyptian paratrooper relaxes during a 'Bright Star' exercise in 1983. He displays the 'leopard pattern' side of the reversible camouflage uniform issued to Egyptian paratroopers and commandos. (DAVA)

central'—Athens International Airport—to Cairo. An Egyptian security agent on board shot dead one hijacker but was himself wounded. The Boeing 737 (ironically, the same aircraft which had been forced to land in Sicily by US Navy F-14s only weeks before, while carrying the *Achille Lauro* hijackers) lost pressure, and landed at Malta's Luqa airport. After the murder of an American and an Israeli hostage, Egypt decided to act.

An Egyptian C-130 flew 80 Unit 777 commandos to Malta; President Mubarak obtained Maltese approval, and the black-uniformed commandos, wearing armoured vests and carrying FN FAL rifles, prepared their assault. At 2315 hrs. on the 25th, three two-man teams stormed the aircraft, one pair through the rear cargo hatch and the

others through the front and rear cabins. But the commandos' explosive charges and the terrorists' grenades started fierce fires, and 57 passengers died in the flames and in the storm of crossfire. Despite this second failure, however, Egypt's use of commandos to combat terrorism—a method she had once condoned and supported—should be seen as significant.

Sadat's break with the USSR in 1972 allowed the USA to step in as military supplier and sponsor. In 1980 the first annual 'Bright Star' exercises pitted US paratroopers and aircraft against their Egyptian counterparts; such exercises have improved Egypt's combat readiness, and send a clear message to Libya. Egypt today has a standing army of 300,000-plus (including 20,000 navy and 27,000 air force personnel); three-year conscription; and more than 345,000 reservists. Western weapons systems include the US M60 tank series, F-16 aircraft, and British-designed fast attack boats.

Jordan; 'Black September,' 1970

Following its 1967 defeat Jordan became the centre for Palestinian resistance to Israel. Guerrillas crossed the Jordan River at will; and Israel's retaliation for terrorist attacks took the form of damaging air and commando raids on Palestinian bases inside Jordan. These, following the trauma of 1967, caused a rift between the revolutionary Palestinian *fedayeen* and moderate Jordanians: a rift exacerbated by Palestinian over-confidence. Comporting themselves more as the rulers of sections of the country than as grateful guests, Palestinians openly carried weapons on the city streets; and the PLO and its more revolutionary left-wing offshoots made no secret of their goal to depose the pro-Western King Hussein and to turn Jordan into a surrogate Palestinian state.

Palestinian responsibility for several attempts on the king's life was no secret; but the breaking-point came on 6 September 1970, when men of Dr. George Habash's PFLP hijacked TWA and Swissair jetliners to remote Dawson's Field in the western Jordanian desert, where they were blown up several days later. Shortly thereafter the king, while inspecting a tank unit, noticed a brassiere flying from a turret aerial—symbolising the army's disgust at being forced to act 'like women' in the face of these provocations. On 17 September Hussein unleashed his incensed Bedouin army—traditionally hostile to the urban Palestinians—on the Palestinian guerrillas. 'Black September' had begun, and quickly turned into a full-scale civil war.

A member of the Royal Jordanian Desert Police Force in traditional garb, circa 1970. Following the 'Black September' expulsion of all armed Palestinian groups from Jordan the rôle of the Desert Police became critical to national security, and one which they carried out with the utmost professionalism. Note long khaki robe/overcoat for the bitter cold desert nights, and red checkered *kefiyeh*. (Jordan Information Office)



Hussein threw his entire army into what was foreseen as a 48-hour operation against three sectors: that around the capital, Amman, holding some 12,000 full-time and 10,000 second line *fedayeen*, was the first objective, after which Irbid-Ajlun (10,000 *fedayeen*, potentially supported by 10,000 Palestine Liberation Army regulars across the Syrian border) and Zarqa (3,000 *fedayeen*) would be cleared.

At 0500 hrs. on 17 September the 1st Inf.Div. (Brig.Gen. In'jadaat Sa'alim) moved on Amman south to north up the Aqaba highway, while the 4th Mech.Div. (Brig.Gen. Kasub Sufeig) attacked south-eastwards from the Es Salt direction. After initial progress both jaws of the pincer were checked by determined *fedayeen* resistance; amply supplied with Soviet weapons up to the level of mortars, and fighting house to house in congested urban

conditions, the PLO fighters proved skilful and fanatically brave. In areas such as the El-Hussein refugee complex the Jordanians only made progress by such expedients as using the 76mm main guns of Saladin Mk.2 armoured cars against sniper positions. Before the camp fell, revealing huge arms caches, even a company of the élite Special Services Group had suffered significant losses. The Palestinians still believed in victory, and fought for every yard; lost positions would be re-occupied by night, to resist anew at daybreak. By the 19th no end was in sight in Amman—and there were ominous developments in the north of the country, where Jordan's borders with Israel and Syria meet.

The *fedayeen* virtually controlled the whole Irbid sector, and an Iraqi armoured brigade—of uncertain intentions—was based at nearby Rihab. Night raids across the border by Syrian commandos on 18/19 September heralded a full-scale Syrian invasion in support of the Palestinians. Hussein was forced to redeploy his 40th Armd.Bde. and part of the 2nd Inf.Div. along the strategic 2,500 ft-high ridge from Zabda through Husn to Kitim and En

Jordanian intelligence officers from the élite 40th Armoured Brigade survey a field map of the Golan Heights, prior to helping save the Syrian 5th Infantry Division from destruction, 19 October 1973. The influence of American aid is clearly evident in the uniforms, consisting of OG-107 fatigues, and M-1 helmets. (IDF Archives)



Nueiyima, 15 miles back from the border. At 0500 hrs. on 20 September the reinforced Syrian 5th Inf.Div.—with 88th and 91st Tank Bdes., 67th Mech.Bde., a PLA brigade, and Syrian commando units—crossed the border at Ramtha with more than 200 T-55 tanks. Jordan faced her greatest test, and perhaps her finest hour.

Thrusting along the Ramtha-Jarash highway, the Syrians suffered heavy armour losses from the accurate 105mm Centurion tank guns of 40th Armd.Bde.; but though brave and skilful the greatly outnumbered Jordanians were forced back, and by nightfall the Syrians held the Ramtha-Jarash/Irbid-Mafraq crossroads. Only the battered armoured brigade and dispersed infantry units barred the road to Amman; and—ominously—RJAF aircraft had been fired upon by the Iraqis east of Mafraq. On the 21st Israel put her air force on full alert and began precautionary armoured deployments; but that day saw a major Jordanian success. King Hussein launched his ageing but reliable Hawker Hunters in all-out attacks on the Syrian armour. Hitting the tank columns in flights of eight aircraft at 30-minute intervals, the Hunters caused massive destruction and panic along the jammed roads. Next day the Syrians withdrew across the border, having suffered some 600 dead and wounded, and 62 tanks and 60 APCs destroyed.

Confident and determined, the Jordanian Bedouin troops turned once more to destroy the *fedayeen* once and for all. Resistance in Amman was bottled up in small areas more or less deserted by Jordanian civilians, and eliminated with some ruthlessness. The 2nd Inf.Div. took control of Irbid; and, despite a cease-fire imposed by the Cairo Agreement, the army simply mopped up at will. During the year that followed an armed Palestinian presence in Jordan ceased to exist.

The cost to Jordan was more than 600 dead and 1,500 wounded. Though some 5,000 troops proved unreliable, the great mass of the army had remained loyal. The Palestinians suffered close to 10,000 casualties; and significantly, many PLO fighters chose to cross into Israeli territory and surrender to the IDF rather than face Hussein's Bedouins. Jordan's place in the Arab world was never the same after 'Black September'. She became a target for Palestinian terrorism; and in 1973 sent only a



His Majesty King Hussein, 1985. He wears an olive 'Class A' shirt, a Pakistani version of the 'woolly pully', and eleven rows of medals below Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot's wings. Unlike many Third World monarchs, he has proved his right to both during a reign threatened by several attempts on his life. (Jordan Information Office)

token force to support Syria—ironically, the 40th Armd.Bde. was selected. Today Jordan exists in a state of *de facto* peace with Israel, her military power reserved for the defence of her borders and her king in an area fraught with complex political tensions.

The Jordanian Soldier

Qualitatively the élite of the Arab forces, the 70,000-strong army is mobile, well equipped with Western weapons, and made up largely of volunteers from Bedouin tribes fanatically loyal to the Hashemite dynasty for religious as well as patriotic reasons. Bedouin domination of all higher command levels and sensitive appointments is complete. Unit commanders are rated highly, and serve for many years in the same postings. Natural fighting qualities bred over centuries are harnessed by a military doctrine still deeply influenced by former links with Britain; and the increasing American influence which has accompanied major US equipment supplies in the past decade has also contributed to the development of an officer corps

whose highly capable, flexible qualities are extremely rare in the Arab world.

The élite of the armed forces are the three commando battalions of the 101st Special Forces, manned by volunteers—exclusively from the East Bank—selected for excellent physical resources and unquestionable loyalty to the crown. Six months of basic training and gruelling exercises are followed by instruction in living off the land in a combat environment, to which Bedouin naturally adapt with some ease; hand-to-hand combat; reconnaissance techniques; and parachuting. Successful completion of training brings the rank of *Jundi Awwal*—private first class—and posting to a commando or paratroop unit. The basic commando battalion structure is conventional, with three companies of three platoons each. Thoroughly proficient in both conventional and ‘guerrilla’ tactics, the troops’ favoured transport is the heavily-armed jeep or Land Rover.

From the birth of Jordanian Special Forces with

Syrian soldiers from the 5th Infantry Division surrender to an IDF paratrooper in the closing days of the 1973 War on the southern Golan Heights. The Syrian soldiers can just be seen to wear heavy brownish-green overcoats and Russian battle helmets; and carry their personal gear in khaki canvas ammunition bags worn over the shoulder. (IDF Archives)

the formation of the first paratroop company in 1963, their size and capabilities have expanded to meet Jordan’s increasingly sophisticated military needs. One crucial role is the counter-terrorist effort, and elements of the commandos regularly train in local and long-distance hostage rescue scenarios. In 1976 they successfully stormed Amman’s Inter-continental Hotel to free hostages held there.

The Syrian Army under Assad

The rise to power of Hafez El-Assad as President of Syria in the military coup of 23 November 1970 heralded an impressive increase in the size, capability, and national importance of the military. Under Assad, Syria has striven for—and in many respects achieved—pre-eminence as the leading Middle Eastern power, guardian of the torch of ‘Arab unity’, and to a large extent arbiter of events in Lebanon. Almost Israel’s military equal, and successful in the manipulation of terrorism on an





A Syrian BTR-152 on the street of Sa'ida, Lebanon, March 1978. The soldiers' uniforms consist of light khaki fatigues (indicating non-élite forces status), and US M-65 field jackets. Note netting placed around the Soviet battle helmet; and soldier riding up front wearing Syrian issue field cap.

international scale, Syria is the inescapable obstacle which Israel must confront over the battlefield or the conference table, depending upon the form of the next 'round' of the Arab-Israeli struggle.

Syria traces its military ties with the USSR to the arrival of the first Russian advisers in 1955. Adoption of Soviet ground forces doctrine became evident in 1958-67; yet, although Soviet advisers still 'observe' key units, Soviet 'technicians' operate SAM-5 batteries, and almost all weaponry is Soviet-made, nevertheless Syria is by no means a Soviet satellite. Syria will pursue Syrian goals, whatever the military and political cost. Syria's massive military build-up, reflecting her ambition to achieve strategic parity with Israel, has its origin in the bitter lessons learned in the field since 1973. The process by which the military has taken an almost total grip on Syrian society—a grip which they stand ready to maintain by ruthless suppression—is also inseparable from the external events of this period.

When former Air Force Commander Maj.Gen. Hafez El-Assad took power in November 1970 he quickly purged his political rivals from the forces. He developed close ties with the Soviets, who began a major re-equipment and re-organisation involv-

ing Soviet advisers at battalion level and Cuban advisers at army level. A professional soldier brought up through the ranks, Assad knew the importance of both the education and the political direction of the troops. Minorities were actively recruited, particularly Assad's own Alawite sect, who had long been strong in the service but now assumed a dominant rôle. The army increased to five divisions (the 1st and 3rd Armoured Divisions, and 5th, 7th and 9th Infantry Divisions), plus ten independent brigades, an artillery rocket brigade (the 69th), and a reinforced brigade variously termed the 70th Armoured Brigade or the Assad Republican Guard. It is today known as the Armoured Defence Force; as Assad's praetorian guard it is stationed in and around Damascus, and subordinate to the *Saraya ad-Difa* (Defence Companies, 'Defenders of the Regime') under the command of Assad's brother Rifa'at.

Although now taking into service such weapons systems as the T-62 tank, FROG-7 SSM and SAM-6,



A Syrian T-62 of the 3rd Armour Division shells the Christian town of Zahle, March 1981. The tankers wear the M-65 field jacket and Soviet tanker's helmet. (Lebanese Research & Information Center)

the army did not at once return dividends for Assad's reform programme. The border fighting against Israel on the Golan Heights in the winter of 1972 did not give grounds for satisfaction. The invasion of Jordan on 20 September 1973 by the 5th Inf.Div., structured along standard Syrian lines, was a disaster. Not only were they mauled by a smaller force—the failure of their T-55 crews against Jordan's Centurions providing an ominous indication of their probable showing in future fighting against the IDF—but their standing in the Arab world slumped dramatically as a result. Despite efforts to improve their command structures, the 'Black September' battles demonstrated continued deficiencies in tactical leadership.

It was hoped that the co-ordinated surprise attack on 6 October 1973 in concert with the Egyptians would restore Syrian military honour,

and regain the Golan Heights in a lightning 24-hour campaign; and in the event the Syrians came close to achieving their objectives. This operation demonstrated a distinct improvement in the skill and ability of the Syrian soldier. Although command structures remained rigid, the troops fought extremely well. Engineers showed real heroism in repairing under heavy fire MTU-55 bridge-layers damaged in the IDF 7th Armd.Bde.'s killing-ground, enabling Syrian armour to continue flooding over almost all the Israeli positions on the Golan Heights. Air defence forces successfully disrupted IAF operations, hindering the Israeli ground support effort. Commando units ambushed IDF armour, wreaking havoc in the Israeli rear—one such ambush killed the commander and second-in-command of the 188th 'Barak' Armd.Bde. Some 25 FROG-7s were fired against airfields and other targets throughout northern Israel, though they caused insignificant military damage (two went off course and landed in Jordan). The capture of Mt. Hermon by heli-borne

paratroops was another demonstration of Syria's new-found capabilities.

Among Syrian setbacks in this campaign were the death of 7th Inf.Div. commander Brig.Gen. Omar Abrash, and a hesitation in exploiting unexpected success which allowed the IDF to regroup and counter-attack effectively. Although the end of the war found Syria once again the losers on the battlefield, and Damascus within IDF artillery range, the fruits of Assad's reforms were undeniably impressive.

During the year-long War of Attrition on the Golan Heights which followed the nominal ceasefire of 24 October 1973 major foreign involvement was noted: over 200 Cubans fought with the 47th Armd.Bde. as an independent battalion, and both North Korean and North Vietnamese SAM specialists helped defend Syrian skies.

Lebanon 1976

Re-organisation continued apace, and Assad emphasised the qualitative improvement of his units, increasing mobility and manoeuvre skills. Notable among newly-formed units was a second commando brigade. Education and training were improved, and new weapons systems included the SS-1C SCUD SSM, deployed late in 1975.

Syria has long considered Lebanon as an extension of 'Greater Syria'; direct military intervention occurred when Christian forces seemed unable to hold out against a take-over of the whole country by Palestinian/leftist Muslim

Syrian soldiers in basic infantry training exit a BMP IFV under the eye of an instructor. The soldiers wear the tan double-button fatigue shirt and tan trousers and carry AKM assault rifles. The instructor wears the olive fatigue variant, with field cap; and rank insignia of one gold eagle on a green shoulder strap slide, indicating *Ra'id*, or major. (Author's collection)



Israel was unavoidable. It was a war in which the Syrians fought impressively well.

Their armour displayed skill and tenacity, extracting a price for every mile the IDF advanced. Their air force proved no match for the IAF, losing 92 aircraft and a massive IAF airstrike mounted with the aid of sophisticated electronic techniques destroyed all the missile sites installed in 1981. But two aspects of the 1982 fighting were of particular note: the Syrian use of commandos, and of anti-tank helicopters.

In the armoured battles in the Beka'a the commandos destroyed more IDF tanks than did Syrian armour; at Ain Zhalta, Ain Dara and Sultan Yakoub they inflicted severe losses on IDF armour, and at Jebel Barouk they closed a ring of destruction around a major armoured task force. Their reputation was so threatening that the mention of their presence caused some IDF tank crews to fire wildly into the surrounding countryside.

Syrian Palestine Liberation Army units evacuate Beirut down the Damascus Highway, September 1982. As a part of the Syrian Army, they wear the dark olive Syrian issue fatigues together with 'ChiCom' pouches and Soviet steel helmets. Note ubiquitous photograph of President Assad adorning rear vehicle. (IDF Spokesman)

The 1982 battles saw the Syrians introducing the attack helicopter with advantage; the range of the Gazelle and Mi-24 was greater than that of tank-mounted anti-aircraft machine guns, and they destroyed dozens of tanks and APCs.

Although militarily defeated in 1982, and forced temporarily to withdraw, Syria under Assad's cool leadership has maintained its grip as arbiter of events in the region; and today is once more militarily installed in Beirut, this time with the grudging acquiescence of Western powers exasperated by the bloody anarchy which forced both Israelis and Americans to withdraw after suffering politically unacceptable losses.

The Syrian Army Today

The Syrian Army of 1987 consists of over 800,000 men (including reservists) and 4,000 tanks. Among its most modern equipment are the T-72M tank and the MiG-29 FULCRUM fighter; and the recently enlarged missile forces include Soviet-manned SAM-5 batteries and the largest SSM force in the Middle East. Syria is the only non-Warsaw Pact nation to boast SS-21s, based around Damascus and Palmyra, and fear of possible Israeli am-



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A Syrian Air Force pilot cadet salutes at a commissioning ceremony at the Aleppo Air Academy, January 1984; note rather extravagant dress uniform. A former commander of the Syrian Air Force, President Assad takes a keen interest in the equipment, living conditions, and ceremony of the Air Force. (Author's collection)

prevent IDF reserves from reaching the front. They have recently been referred to as the 'Rapid Deployment Force'. The Special Forces are an all-Alawite, all-volunteer organisation whose members are impressively fit and combat-trained, and completely loyal to the Assad regime.

The Syrian Soldier

All males between 19 and 20 are required to serve in the forces unless physically or mentally deficient. Service lasts for 30 months, plus an undefined 'extended tour of duty' dependent upon the individual's service record: the better, the shorter. A year prior to induction each young man undergoes examinations whose result determines his subsequent assignment. Most conscripts are labelled 'uneducated', and have almost no possibility of

Israel was unavoidable. It was a war in which the Syrians fought impressively well.

Their armour displayed skill and tenacity, extracting a price for every mile the IDF advanced. Their air force proved no match for the IAF, losing 92 aircraft and a massive IAF airstrike mounted with the aid of sophisticated electronic techniques destroyed all the missile sites installed in 1981. But two aspects of the 1982 fighting were of particular note: the Syrian use of commandos, and of anti-tank helicopters.

In the armoured battles in the Beka'a the commandos destroyed more IDF tanks than did Syrian armour; at Ain Zhalta, Ain Dara and Sultan Yakoub they inflicted severe losses on IDF armour, and at Jebel Barouk they closed a ring of destruction around a major armoured task force. Their reputation was so threatening that the mention of their presence caused some IDF tank crews to fire wildly into the surrounding countryside.

Syrian Palestine Liberation Army units evacuate Beirut down the Damascus Highway, September 1982. As a part of the Syrian Army, they wear the dark olive Syrian issue fatigues together with 'ChiCom' pouches and Soviet steel helmets. Note ubiquitous photograph of President Assad adorning rear vehicle. (IDF Spokesman)



The 1982 battles saw the Syrians introducing the attack helicopter with advantage; the range of the Gazelle and Mi-24 was greater than that of tank-mounted anti-aircraft machine guns, and they destroyed dozens of tanks and APCs.

Although militarily defeated in 1982, and forced temporarily to withdraw, Syria under Assad's cool leadership has maintained its grip as arbiter of events in the region; and today is once more militarily installed in Beirut, this time with the grudging acquiescence of Western powers exasperated by the bloody anarchy which forced both Israelis and Americans to withdraw after suffering politically unacceptable losses.

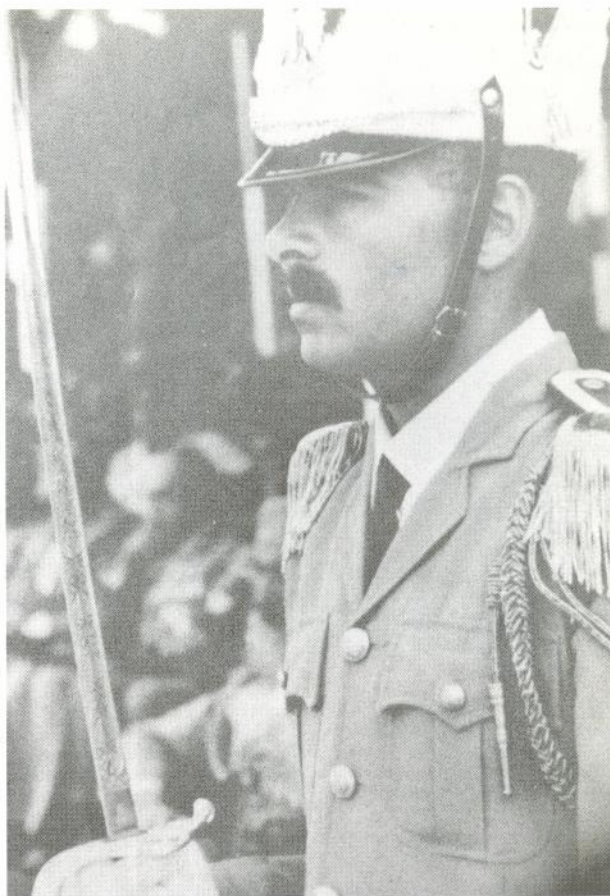
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The Palestinian Guerrilla Movements 1948-87



Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian Army, President Hafez el-Assad, photographed near the Israeli border, July 1985. He wears a black beret with general officer's beret badge, and white rank insignia on royal blue Air Force shoulder strap slides. Note light olive fatigue shirt with double-button breast pockets. (IDF)

advancement; prospects are generally poorer for Sunnis. While Alawites enjoy special opportunities, members of the Druze and Christian minorities have also made marked headway in the military under Assad. The army provides no education facilities, but considerable indoctrination through unit 'Politruk' officers: the line is complete loyalty to the Ba'ath Party, and hatred for Zionists—and for Iraqis, Egyptians, and pro-Arafat Palestinians—in recent indoctrination campaigns. Intelligence and political personnel are infiltrated among units at all rank levels.

A marked improvement in the quality of the Syrian soldier has been noted over the past decade. More officers are now being commissioned and promoted according to merit rather than according to family, party and government connections—though such arrangements will always be integral to Arab military practice to some extent. Recently even women have begun to take an active military rôle; they are not conscripted, but volunteer academics, and graduates from the Assad Academy for Military Engineering, are being given commissions.

The Arab-Israeli War of 1948 created 1¼ million Palestinian refugees. The educated largely dispersed abroad quite quickly, leaving the poor—angry, vengeful, and frustrated—living in squalor in camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Political radicals organised armed groups, and in 1952 alone there were 3,742 illegal border crossings into Israel.

In 1955 President Nasser of Egypt began to arm, pay and organise Palestinians living under Egyptian control in the Gaza Strip; manipulated by Egyptian military intelligence, these desperate fighters were perfect pawns in his struggle against Israel, and the *fedayeen*—'Men of Sacrifice'—were born. Most early operations were launched from the Gaza Strip, though from March 1956 King Hussein allowed raids from Jordanian territory. After the 1956 War the presence of UN forces in Sinai, and new restraints imposed by their host countries, led to a scaling-down of Palestinian activity.

In 1959 a young Palestinian engineer named Yasir Arafat founded *el-Fatah*. (The full title of the organisation was *Ha'arakat Tahrir Falastin*, 'Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine'; but since its initials *Hataf* mean 'death' in Arabic, the acronym *Fatah* was preferred, meaning 'conquest'.) Its military arm, *Kuwat al-Asifa* or 'storm troops' (later simply *Asifa*) was originally made up to some extent of mercenaries and criminals, but subsequently expanded to include most of the *fedayeen* cross-border raiding groups. Emerging as an influential political and military organisation, *el-Fatah* was courted in Arab capitals—notably in 1963 in Ba'athist Syria, which used *el-Fatah* in its struggle against Nasser.

In 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organisation was founded as the representative organisation of Palestinian political and military movements dedicated to the recovery of Palestine from the Israelis, and was largely controlled by Nasser. In July 1964 the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) was created as its military arm, consisting of small,

conventional military units stationed in Egypt's Gaza Strip; but PLA units were soon afterwards formed in Jordan and Syria as well.

Meanwhile *el-Fatah* expanded, forming *Jihad al-Rasd*, the intelligence and command section, which years later would oversee much of the planning and execution of terrorist activity world-wide. 1965 saw the first operation against Israel's National Water Carrier. Raids continued until the war of June 1967; although the Arab defeat was hardly encouraging, the new expansion of Israel's frontiers offered fertile new occupied Arab populations, and a million new refugees burning for revenge. *Asifa* had begun to infiltrate the West Bank from Jordan as early as August 1967, and a 'popular revolution' was anticipated. It never materialised.

The *fedayeen's* potential zone of guerrilla operations was relatively small, and the terrain inhospitable. Israel had captured Jordanian police and intelligence files on known organisers. Arafat in fact favoured hit-and-run tactics; but increased Syrian domination of his organisation proved a hindrance to his freedom, and consequently most training and operational bases were moved to Jordan, where an increasing flood of recruits for the

'struggle' acquired its own momentum. Numerous bases sprang up along the border.

One such was at Karameh, two miles from the Israeli border, which 2,000 Palestinian guerrillas used as a launch-pad for numerous raids. On 23 March 1968 the IDF attacked in force with paratroop, tank and mechanised infantry elements. Though most of the *fedayeen* escaped into the surrounding hills, a serious fire-fight developed between the Israelis and Jordanian forces in the area. A 15-hour battle involved Jordanian heavy artillery, and the IDF was finally obliged to withdraw having killed 232 *fedayeen* and Jordanians, captured 132 *fedayeen* and destroyed 30 tanks, for a loss of 29 dead and 90 wounded. This was widely hailed as a decisive Arab victory, and even King Hussein—already deeply concerned by *fedayeen* activity—gave his open moral support. Karameh engendered a wave of enthusiasm, and

A *fedayun* shot dead by IDF paratroopers before he had a chance to throw the Russian F-1 grenade he clutches in his right fist. The *fedayeen* made massive infiltration attempts into Israel from Jordan between 1967-70, and a serious military campaign between the guerrillas and the IDF ensued. Note 'ChiCom' pouches with press-stud closures, typical of Palestinian guerrillas to this day. (IDF Archives)





El-Fatah Asifa guerrillas patrol near the Israeli border. February 1978. They wear plain tan and olive fatigues and keffiyehs. The soldier in front has carved the word 'Palestine' on his rifle stock. (Courtesy Fatina Husseini)

the formation of many new Palestinian groups.

Formed on 7 December 1967, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) received new recruits after Karamah. It was founded by two Christian-born but devoutly Marxist Palestinians, Dr George Habash and Dr Wadi Hadad, who recruited, indoctrinated and controlled fighters dedicated to a pan-Arab Marxist revolution: needless to say, this programme caused great concern in Arab capitals. Not content with propaganda and token military gestures, the PFLP knew that their revolution required widespread publicity and funding. On 23 July 1968 they hijacked an *El Al* jet to Algiers; and later that year a *Lufthansa* jet was hijacked for a \$5 million ransom. 'Terror International' was born.

The increased radicalism of the *fedayeen* led to 'Black September' 1970 in Jordan, and their serious losses in men and matériel, and ejection from Jordan, radicalised them still further. Since Syria refused to allow *fedayeen* raids from her territory,

Lebanon was chosen as the new base of operations and camps and facilities multiplied throughout southern Lebanon and in Beirut. Impatient with the lack of results from cross-border raids, the PFLP resorted to outright terrorism in Israel, and against Israeli and Israeli-allied targets in Europe. The 'Black September Organisation' was formed as an *el-Fatah* international terrorist arm targeted against Israeli, Jordanian and Western interests worldwide. (Arafat had been opposed to terrorism outside Israel, and the 'Black September' connection with *el-Fatah* was therefore maintained under great secrecy.)

The peak of terrorist activity occurred between 1972 and 1978. At Israel's Lod Airport on 30 May 1972 the PFLP, using the services of the Japanese Red Army group, staged a bloody and indiscriminate massacre which left 29 Christian pilgrims dead. On 5 September 1972 'Black September' horrified the world by cold-bloodedly murdering Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. Other attacks which showed similar disdain for overseas opinion included the DFLP massacre of Israeli students at Ma'alot in May 1974.

Militarily speaking, the *fedayeen* existed only on



paper; though uniformed and trained with military equipment in their Lebanese and Syrian facilities, they did not conduct military-style operations. The opportunity to practise such operations came with the 1975–76 Lebanese Civil War, in which they took the field with the Muslim leftist factions against capable Christian and Syrian forces. Following this campaign, they made numerous attacks across the Israeli border by land and sea, including a spectacular *el-Fatah* amphibious landing on Israel's Mediterranean coast on 13 March 1978 which left 33 Israelis dead, and which provoked Israel's 'mini-invasion' of Lebanon, Operation 'Litani'.

PLO Chairman Arafat realised that conventional military forces were needed to counter such IDF incursions. Three conventional 'brigades' were formed—the *Yarmouk*, *Karameh*, and *Kastel*—with equipment including T-34, T-54 and T-55 tanks, 130mm and 155mm artillery, and *Katyusha* rocket-launchers. In all, there were some 14,000 Palestinian fighters under joint PLO command by the time of the IDF invasion of Lebanon on 6 June 1982.

Although Israel's *blitzkrieg* proved too much for the Palestinians, and IDF units were pushing fast

As-Sa'iqa troops prepare to evacuate Beirut, September 1982. The guerrillas wear full Syrian kit, as *as-Sa'iqa* receives all its supplies from the Syrian forces. Note posters of Arafat, the Assad brothers, and Che Guevara. (IDF Spokesman)

towards Beirut inside a week, some Palestinian resistance was determined to the point of suicidal desperation, notably in the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp outside Sidon. (It was noted that a number of senior commanders fled as fast as they could, however.) The PLO was forced to evacuate Lebanon, its fighters partly disarmed and dispersed throughout Middle Eastern countries wary of repeating Jordan's experience. (They would be re-infiltrated into Lebanon fairly quickly, however; and by 1987, Christian militiamen had set up a highly profitable ferry service to bring Palestinian fighters back via Cyprus—an indication of the Byzantine complexity of Middle Eastern politics.)

Generally speaking, inter-faction rivalries have prevented a successful re-establishment of PLO forces in Lebanon. A rebellion against Arafat's faction in 1983, led by Col. Abu Musa with Syrian encouragement, led to 4,000 pro-Arafat loyalists being expelled from Tripoli by sea after bitter fighting. Recently the PLO has stepped up its

attempts at bold military operations; a recent seaborne attempt to land 28 suicide commandos in Israel with the ultimate aim of seizing the Israeli Ministry of Defence was foiled when their craft was sunk by an IDF/Navy missile boat. The frustration caused by such failures, and the misery aggravated in the camps by those with grandiose military and revolutionary goals, can only guarantee that acts of war and random terror will continue.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation

The PLO umbrella organisation is made up of the following groups:

El-Fatah The largest and most important group, commanded by Chairman Arafat under his *nom de guerre* 'Abu Amar'. Most closely identified with the

Palestinian desire for a national homeland, it has traditionally opposed Syrian attempts to dominate the Palestinian effort for Syrian ends. The chief structures are:

I: Political

(A) The Central Committee—the decision-making political body.

(B) The Revolutionary Council—the miniature 'parliament in exile'.

II: Security & Terrorism

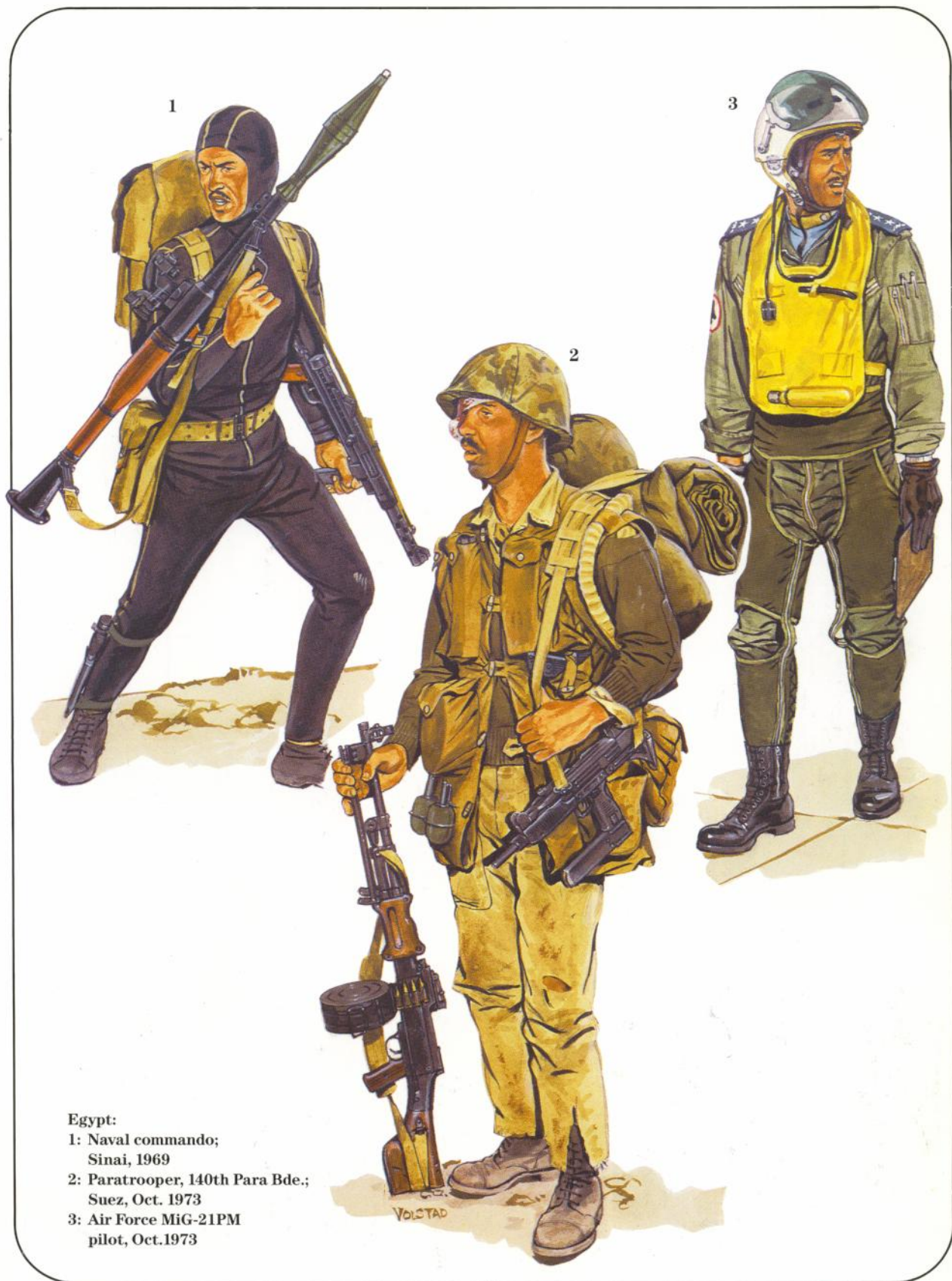
(A) The Western Sector—led by 'Abu Jihad'; deals mainly with targets in the West Bank, and inside Israel proper.

(B) United Security—led by 'Abu Iyad'; the offensive operations branch.

(C) Security and Information—led by 'Abu al-Houl'; responsible for internal security and

PFLP guerrillas train at a camp near the Jordanian town of Irbid, February 1970. They wear Syrian-produced 'lizard' camouflage fatigues and caps and are armed with the ubiquitous AKs. Second from right wears his 'ChiCom' chest pouch rig at the waist instead; third from right has the standard Warsaw Pact-style large magazine pouch, produced in khaki fabric in many camp workshops. (IDF Archives)





Egypt:

1: Naval commando;
Sinai, 1969

2: Paratrooper, 140th Para Bde.;
Suez, Oct. 1973

3: Air Force MiG-21PM
pilot, Oct. 1973

Egypt:

- 1: As-Sa'iqa commando; Nicosia, 1978
- 2: Paratrooper, 140th Para Bde., 1982
- 3: Tank officer, 1983
- 4: Air Force lieutenant-general, 1981



Jordan:

1: Commando, Special Services Gp., 1970

2: Sergeant, paratroops, 1980s

3: Captain, Special Forces, 1987



Syria:

1: Sergeant, infantry; Mt. Hermon, 1974

2: Chief WO, paratroops; Sidon, 1976

3: Commando, Defence Co., Hama, 1981



Syria:

1: 1st Lt., Defence Co.; Damascus, 1987

2: Paratrooper, jump kit, 1987

3: Commando, Lebanon, 1982



Palestinians:

- 1: El-Fatah guerrilla; Jordan Valley, 1969
- 2: PFLP 'commando'; Amman, 1970
- 3: PFLP 'commando'; Sidon, 1976
- 4: ALF instructor; Beirut, 1981



- 1: El-Fatah Force 17
'commando'; Beirut, 1981
- 2: As-Sa'iqa 'commando';
Kfar Sil, 1982
- 3: Amal militiaman;
Beirut 1986
- 4: Shi'ite woman;
Beirut, 1987
- 5: Druze militiaman;
Aley, 1985





Lebanese Forces:

- 1: 'Commando'; Zahle, 1981
- 2: 'MP', Beirut, 1982
- 3: Officer, 'Force Sadem'; Junieh, 1985
- 4: Marine, Damour, 1985

intelligence. *Force 17*, Arafat's elite personal bodyguard, is part of this branch.

III: Military

(A) The Central Operations Room—led by 'Abu al-Ma'tassem'; co-ordinates military operations by *el-Fatah* units in the field. *Force 14*, the nucleus of a 'future Palestinian air force', is controlled by this branch; originally established with suicide air attacks in mind, it is mainly stationed in South Yemen, with over 20 aircraft including MiG-21s, Fokker transports, and French helicopters.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of

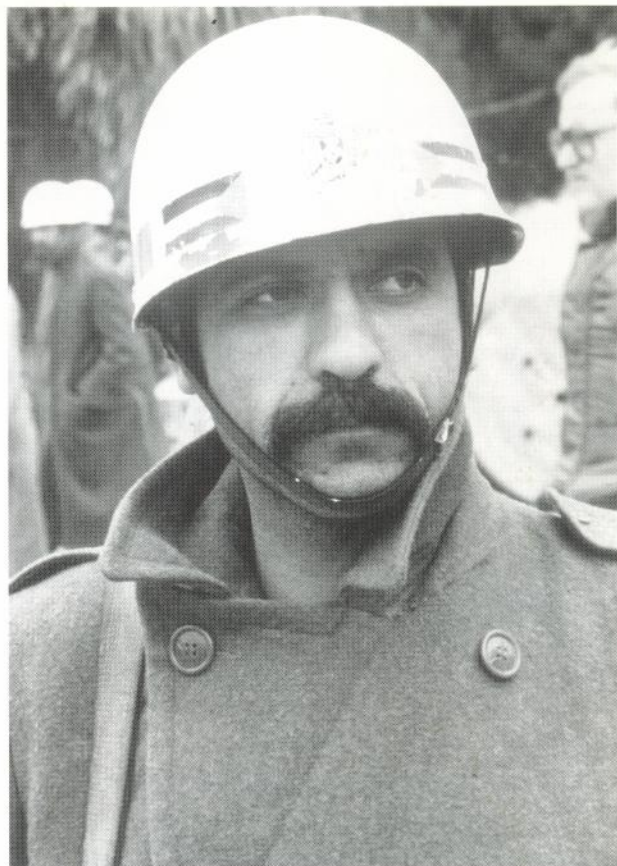
Palestine Commanded by Dr. George Habash, this pan-Arabist Marxist group is structured, like most Third World national liberation movements, along the lines of 'democratic centralism'. The second-ranking member of the Palestine National Council, it is vocally pro-Syrian. Most PFLP terrorist elements are stationed in Syria, while its military guerrilla forces (one artillery and five 'commando' battalions) are based in Lebanon. A special group known as 'Subjugated Lands' is responsible for *Katyusha* attacks on northern Israel.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of

Palestine Commanded by Nayif Hawatmeh, the DFLP, together with *el-Fatah* and the PFLP, belongs to the authentic core of the PLO—charter members prior to the Karameh battle. Marxist-inspired and fiercely independent, it has nevertheless mediated during rifts between various guerrilla factions. Military strength is estimated to be 1,000 fully-trained fighters, deployed as units throughout Lebanon. Training facilities mainly located in Syria. Operations sections include a 'Subjugated Lands' unit, central military intelligence, and a small 'Special Forces' unit.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestine—General Command. Together with *As-Sa'iqa*, the PFLP-GC acts as the most vocal supporter of Syrian policies within the PLO. Primarily military, the group enjoys little political or ideological support. Led by Ahmad Jibril, it numbers about 800 fighters. Its headquarters are in the Rehan district of Damascus, and it enjoys the use of many offices and training facilities throughout Syria, foremost among these being 'Camp 17th



An *el-Fatah* military policeman watches UNIFIL troops man a position at Sa'ida, Lebanon, March 1978. He wears a Russian overcoat and helmet, the latter painted white with stenciled Palestinian eagle badge and Palestinian flags. (United Nations/J. K. Isaac)

September' at Ein Saheb, which houses the PFLP-GC operational staff. Its military organisation is the single 'Sabra & Shatila Battalion', with supporting artillery, rocket and special forces units, including a frogman element.

As-Sa'iqa ('The lightning-bolt'), formed in 1968, is the terrorist arm of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, being an integral part of the Palestinian section of the Syrian Ba'ath. Led by Assam al-Qadhi, it has some 1,300 fighters, and serves as a loyal instrument of Syrian policy within the various Palestinian movements (though during the 1983 rebellion within *el-Fatah*, many *as-Sa'iqa* fighters joined the Arafat loyalists). Its organisational command is located in the Susa district of Damascus, and is responsible for five 'battalions' in Lebanon, mainly in the Beka'a Valley, northern Lebanon, and the Mount Lebanon region. There is a 'security

department' run in co-operation with the Syrian *Muchabarat*.

The Popular Struggle Front is a small Marxist group, numbering approximately 600 fighters, working in close co-operation with the PFLP-GC and *as-Sa'iq*a.

The Palestine Liberation Front is a small but innovative group, several hundred strong, led by Abu al-Abbass; it is politically split, allying itself with Arafat or the Syrians depending upon circumstances. It is most famous for several attempts to infiltrate Israel by air; an attempt by hot air balloon and another by hang-glider, both in 1981, met with failure. Its greatest claim to fame was the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, and the murder of an elderly man in a wheelchair. Flown out of Egypt under safe conduct, the terrorists were taken into custody after their airliner was forced to land in Sicily by US Navy F-14 Tomcats; Abu al-Abbass himself was on board, but escaped when Italian authorities bowed to pressure.

The Arab Liberation Front is commanded by Abd al-Rahim Ahmad; it was established by the Iraqi Ba'ath Party, and receives its orders from Baghdad. Its positions shift according to Iraqi policy; at the time of writing it sides with Arafat against the Syrians. Offices and training facilities for its 400 fighters are in Iraq, although it has substantial representation in Beirut and Tripoli. The group is mainly known for a vicious attack on Kibbutz Misgav-Am in February 1980, resulting in the death of an infant girl.

The Abu Nidal Faction (El-Fatah—Revolutionary Council) was founded at the end of 1973 by Sabri al-Bana ('Abu Nidal'); before 1981 it enjoyed full Iraqi patronage, though its infrastructure today lies in Syria, Iran and Libya. Its 500–800 fanatical terrorists are stationed throughout the world, mainly in Western Europe and in moderate Arab countries. It specialises in assassinating Palestinian officials whose indirect dealings with Israel brand them as 'traitors to the revolution'; and Sabri al-Bana has been under sentence of death by a PLO court for years. By

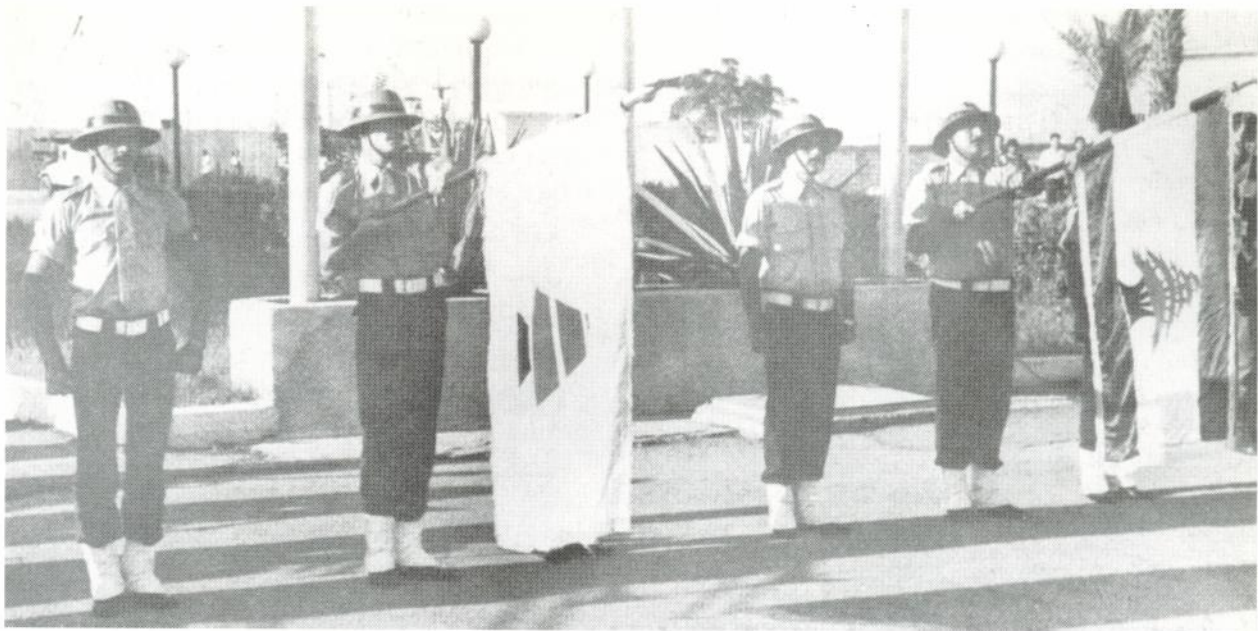
terrorist acts such as the attempted murder of Israel's UK ambassador (touching off the 1982 Lebanon War), the Rome and Vienna airport massacres of December 1985, and the hijacking of the Egyptian Boeing 737 to Malta, the Abu Nidal Faction has developed the reputation of the world's most dangerous and ruthless terror organisation.

The Naji Alush Faction (Popular Arab Liberation Movement) is a small group whose eponymous leader broke away from the Abu Nidal Faction in 1979. It consists of only 100 terrorists, but maintains excellent networks throughout Europe, providing weapons and explosives to European terror groups such as the Red Brigade and the IRA.

The Salim Abu-Salem Faction (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—Special Command) is another small, though internationally operational group, whose main bases of support lie with Iraq and South Yemen. They have been quite active in assassinating PLO leaders, though not in operations which might seem to advance the revolution.

Lebanon's Warring Factions

Many factors contributed to Lebanon's disintegration into full-scale factional civil war in April 1975. Though a Palestinian attack on Maronite Christian leader Pierre Gemayel was the direct spark, discontent, mistrust and hatred among the diversified population had been building up for many years. From the spring of 1975 onwards Christian fought Muslim, Muslim fought Muslim, Christian fought Christian, and Druze fought Palestinian. Over 50,000 Lebanese died in the civil war of 1975–76, and countless thousands more in the faction-fighting and invasions which have followed. The civil war set off a process which has led to the collapse of Lebanon as a unitary sovereign state, to an inescapable Syrian presence, to continued Israeli domination of parts of southern Lebanon, and to the military and religious



A Phalangist honour guard, the forebears to today's Lebanese Forces Military Police, show the flag at a parade in Zahle, June 1979. The French colonial influence on the uniform is quite

evident, as is the Phalangists' spit-and-polish style. (Lebanese Forces)



An intimidating group of Lebanese Forces militiamen pose for the cameras during the factional fighting of February 1983. The militiamen all wear Israeli issue olive fatigues, boots and

helmets. An interesting modification has been added to the Israeli Kevlar flak vest: a series of M-16 magazine pockets (seen on three soldiers, right). (Lebanese Forces)

polarisation of the Shi'ite majority. Space allows only the briefest notes on the various major military/political forces and private armies currently active: readers are recommended to MAA 165, *Armies in Lebanon 1982-84*, for fuller details.

The Lebanese Forces

Pierre Gemayel founded the *Kata'eb* or Phalangist Party in 1936, to some extent taking Franco's Spain as model. Until the 1970s the Phalangists and their para-military organisations played little part in Lebanon's internal affairs so long as the 'Gemayel empire' was left untouched. During the civil war they more or less united with other powerful Christian factions—the Frangieh family's *Marada*

A female Lebanese Forces fighter on a training exercise near Junieh, 1986. Many battle-hardened Israeli officers sent to Lebanon were shocked by the combat abilities—and brutality—displayed by pretty young Christian women in uniform. This fighter wears an Israeli olive fatigue blouse and three-pocket fatigue trousers, Israeli (male) issue black combat boots, and ubiquitous AK-47. (Author's collection)



militia in the north, and the 'Tigers' led by the son of former prime minister Camille Chamoun; but thereafter bitter rivalries split the Christian forces, from which the 'Lebanese Forces'—the Phalangists' military arm, led by Pierre's son Bashir Gemayel—emerged victorious.

In their fight for survival against the leftist Muslims, the Druze, the Palestinians and later the Syrians, the Lebanese Forces turned to Israel for help. IDF representatives sent to Lebanon in 1975 were shocked by the Lebanese Forces' lack of training, military discipline, or restraint: an indication of their savagery was the proud display of ears freshly cut from dead Palestinians by lovely Maronite girl fighters. IDF Military Intelligence warned against a relationship with the unreliable and un-military Phalangists; nevertheless, Israel decided to base her entire Lebanon policy upon the Lebanese Forces. Militiamen were sent to Israel for training, in some cases including paratroop courses.

The expected active military rôle of the Lebanese Forces in the June 1982 IDF invasion never materialised. Instead of combining with the Israelis to push the PLO out of Beirut, the Lebanese Forces carried out only one minor 'mopping up' operation; and, after the assassination of President-Elect Bashir Gemayel on 14 September, massacred nearly 1,000 Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in a display of barbarism which, justly or unjustly, reflected upon Israel in the international community.

In the years which followed a new civil war engulfed Lebanon, one in which the Christian forces were obliged to rely upon their own military capabilities. With a force of some 15,000 regular fighters, the Lebanese Forces were able to ensure the survival of their communities, though not without setbacks and factional quarrels.

Among élite units formed within the Lebanese Forces are '101 Parachute Company', a force whose members have carried out jump-training in Israel and elsewhere abroad, formed as a ranger unit in 1984; 'Force Sadem', a company-strength covert and counter-terrorist unit; and a small but highly capable IDF-trained Marine force expert in seaborne infiltration, ranger operations, and reconnaissance. Christian military capabilities appear impressive, but judgement must await a major test against conventional forces.



The South Lebanese Army

Originally formed in 1978 by renegade Lebanese Army Maj. Sa'ad Haddad to help guard southern Lebanon from Palestinian infiltration, this mainly Christian but partly Shi'ite militia has never exceeded 2,000 men. Well trained and equipped by the IDF, its military capability remains questionable, though on occasion it has fought well against PLO and Shi'ite guerrilla attacks.

The Druze

Militarily, the Druze in Lebanon have always been at odds with the Christians, and acts of barbarism on both sides have bedevilled their ability to co-exist for centuries past. Their power base lies in the Shouf Mountains overlooking Beirut, where their militias protect the Druze populace. Numbering some 10,000 fighters, the Druze militias—the best of them being that of the Druze Progressive Socialist Party, led by the Jumblatt family—hold the key to the strategic Shouf. Amiable to whoever controls the region at any given time, the Druze have been pragmatic in their dealings with Israelis, Americans and Syrians alike: they have centuries of experience in maintaining a small, hardy community sur-

Two Druze militiamen stand guard near Aley, March 1984. The bearded militiaman wears an ex-Syrian Army M-65 field jacket, 'ChiCom' ammunition pouches, and Pakistani-pattern camouflage fatigue trousers. His younger brother wears more traditional Druze clothing, though cradling an AK-47 with its safety open. (IDF Spokesman/Herzl Kunesari)

rounded by a sea of potential enemies, and are savage fighters.

The Syrian Socialist National Party

A small, radical, highly militant party committed to merging Lebanon with Syria, this group is, needless to say, under the control of the Syrian secret service. It numbers only a few hard-core fighters; but has been responsible for some of the more spectacular acts of violence in Lebanon, including the assassination of Bashir Gemayel and several suicide car-bombings against the Israelis.

Amal, Hizballah, and Jihad al-Islami

The religious zeal of the Shi'ite revolution in Iran, together with the power vacuum in the Lebanon, has polarised Lebanon's Shi'ites, the majority ethnic group long exploited by the wealthier Sunni community. Proud, independent and militant, the Shi'ites first embraced the invading Israelis as



Christian militiamen of the South Lebanon Army train for urban combat, Marjayoun, May 1986. Since the SLA is completely supplied by the Israelis, these soldiers show a very Israeli appearance, including new issue IDF web gear and AN/PRC-25 radio. Although they are trained by the IDF, their combat record so far has not been too impressive. (IDF Spokesman)

saviours from harsh PLO occupation, but later turned against the Israelis and Americans for their support of the Christians. Their struggle against the IDF in southern Lebanon developed into a three-year guerrilla war which cost Israel almost 400 dead. Shi'ite fanaticism—expressed in three successful car-bombings which killed over 350 people, including 241 US Marines—forced American withdrawal from Lebanon. Today they are the most powerful military force within Lebanon and, led by Nabih Berri's *Amal* militia, are battling to prevent a renewed PLO build-up in the refugee camps.

The ultra-militant *Hizballah* ('Party of God') and *Jihad al-Islami* ('Islamic Holy War') groups are closely tied to the Iranian Shi'ites, and the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranian Revolutionary Guards train their members for terrorist missions at their Ba'albek headquarters near the Syrian border.

The exact strength and structure of these groups remain clouded, however, due to extreme secrecy, deliberate disinformation, and a degree of spurious identification with them sometimes claimed by quite different elements in Lebanon's murderous chaos of competing gangs.

The Plates

A1: Egyptian Navy commando; Israeli-occupied Sinai, 1969

Small-scale raids across the Canal during the 1967–70 War of Attrition were limited to reconnaissance, sabotage, and the killing of the occasional sentry, but caused serious Israeli concern and tied down large numbers of troops. This naval commando wears a Soviet-made black neoprene wet-suit, sneakers, a sand-khaki canvas AK magazine pouch and RPG projectile pack. He is armed with both an RPG-7 and the Egyptian 'Port Said' version of the 9mm Carl Gustav SMG.

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A: Paratrooper, Egyptian 140th Parachute Brigade; Suez City, October 1973

committed to one of the fiercest close-quarter battles of the war, this paratrooper carries a captured UZI, Russian RGD-5 anti-personnel grenades and a Tokarev TT-33 7.62mm pistol in addition to his main armament. The olive sweater and sand-khaki fatigues are standard issue. The mustard-khaki battle-vest¹ was devised for this campaign; ingenious and convenient, it allowed modification of the basic shell to incorporate different pouches for e.g. 'Port Said' SMG magazines, AK 'banana' magazines, or, as here, MP drum magazines; this machine gunner has added a pistol holster. A folded bedroll is carried on the back.

B: Egyptian Air Force MiG-21PM pilot, October 1973
The Egyptian Air Force's better performance in 1973 was due as much to improved pilot skill as to SAM batteries which kept the IAF at a distance. As well as attempting to win air superiority, they carried out successful ground-attack missions. Prior to the war pilots practised so hard and long that any crashes and fatalities were attributed to the intensity of training. This *Aqid* (colonel)—his rank indicated by two stars and an eagle on Air Force

¹ See also MAA 128, *Arab Armies of the Middle East Wars 1948-73*.

Shi'ite Amal militiamen fire at Palestinian positions from a commandeered, newly camouflaged ex-Lebanese Army M113. (IDF Spokesman)

blue shoulder slides—wears standard Soviet-issue olive flight suit, an olive G-suit and a Soviet survival vest; note unidentified squadron patch on right sleeve.

B1: Egyptian As-Sa'iqa commando; Nicosia airport, 1978

On the ill-fated Nicosia mission the *As-Sa'iqa* company wore uniforms and equipment standard among Egyptian Special Forces personnel: reversible brown-on-tan camouflage fatigues, with black boots, and the commandos' black beret with the usual national eagle badge. The rank of *Mulazim* (2nd lieutenant) is indicated by the white star embroidered on a khaki slide. Special Forces often improvise their personal equipment, from adding pockets to fatigues to developing unique packs and web gear; this officer has a 'home-made' bandolier for his Dragunov SVD sniper rifle magazines. He would also carry a Beretta M1951S 9mm automatic in a khaki holster.

B2: Paratrooper, Egyptian 140th Parachute Brigade; Operation 'Bright Star', 1982

This participant in the joint US/Egyptian exercises displays the green-on-tan side of the reversible



B3: Posing with a friendly UN officer, Egyptian soldiers of the trapped 3rd Army enjoy the peace the disengagement talks brought about in Sinai. Of note are the Military Police armbands worn by two of the soldiers; as well as the sand-coloured laces for the black combat boots. Also note olive/khaki pullovers; and life-vest worn by soldier (kneeling), probably assisting the ferrying of supplies from across the Canal. (United Nations/Y. Nagata)

camouflage fatigues peculiar to Egyptian élite units. The light green cloth-covered padded jump helmet is standard issue to Egyptian airborne personnel; the sand-khaki webbing gear has an added Warsaw Pact camouflaged ammunition pouch. The ubiquitous AKM 7.62mm assault rifle is carried, with its bayonet scabbarded on the belt. Note work gloves worn for helicopter abseiling; and 1st Class Parachutist wings on the left breast.

B4: Egyptian tank officer; Libyan border, 1983

This *Mulazim* wears the green fatigues issued to Egyptian armour crews in place of the earlier sand-khaki since the 1973 war; but the Soviet influence is still seen in the black tank helmet, and in the Tokarev pistols and AKM assault rifles still carried as personal weapons.

C1: Egyptian Air Force Lt.Gen. Hosni Mubarak, 6 October 1981

On the day of the annual parade celebrating Egypt's crossing of the Canal in 1973 Vice-President Mubarak, commander of the Air Force, sat next to President Anwar es-Sadat—who was to die that day, assassinated by Muslim fundamentalists dressed as soldiers; 18 other victims also died in the storm of fire which raked the reviewing stand. Mubarak wore Air Force general officer's full dress blue-grey uniform, his rank of *Fariq* indicated on the shoulder boards and general officer grade on the collar patches. Pilot's wings are worn on the left breast above the rows of medals marking Mubarak's long and distinguished career.

C1: Jordanian Special Services Group commando; El-Hussein camp, 18 September 1970

The SSG, the forerunner of today's Jordanian Special Forces, were prominent in the savage urban fighting against well-entrenched Palestinian guerillas during 'Black September'. The uniform reflects the strong continuing British influence: the

locally-made battledress uniform resembled the British BD of the 1940s, and elite units of the 1970s wore the British Denison parachute smock. The webbing is a mix of British 1937 pattern and locally-made ammunition pouches for the American small arms then standard issue—the Garand M1 rifle and the M1 series carbine, here with 30-round ‘banana’ clip, and the sniper scope identifying it as the M3 version. The Army’s standard red and white *shemagh*, black goathair *agal* and cap badge are worn here.

C2: Sergeant, Jordanian paratroops, 1980s

Though apparently suffering from a low rate of training jumps, Jordan’s small but effective paratroop force enjoy a high reputation for military professionalism. The US woodland pattern camouflage fatigues, ALICE web gear, M1 helmet, and M-16 rifle all reflect the recent heavy American

Egyptian paratroopers parade for inspection in the desert near Luxor. All carry AK-47s, and wear the Egyptian ‘leopard-pattern’ camouflage uniform, Egyptian designed web gear (note AK ammunition pouch hanging from belt). All wear their parachute wings, even on the field uniform. (DAVA)



investment in the Jordanian armed forces; the Dragon ATGW has also been completely incorporated into infantry and paratroop units as the main platoon-level anti-tank weapon. The only Jordanian features visible here are the British-style rank chevrons of *Na'ib*.

C3: Captain, Jordanian Special Forces, 1987

The basic Jordanian shirtsleeve parade and walking-out uniform is worn here, with the maroon beret shared by Special Forces and paratroops. This *Naqib* wears his rank on stiffened shoulder boards, above the 'Army' title; Master Parachutist wings on the left breast, and qualification and course badges (including US wings) on his right, above a plastic name-tag; and the Special Forces shoulder patch, unchanged from that of the SSG. The parade belt is worn here, but this officer's function at some parade

A Syrian infantryman in Beirut, 1980. He wears the battledress 'Class A' uniform, with light olive shirt and dark olive tie. The red beret displays the Syrian military eagle beret badge, worn by all personnel. The red beret is usually worn by paratroops, but many Syrian soldiers in Beirut wore them to impress the local women! (Courtesy Fatina Hussein)



or reception is security: he carries the Italian 70/223 5.56mm SAR, standard issue among the Special Forces, and a Browning HP automatic would typically be carried tucked into the waistband as a back-up weapon.

D1: Sergeant, Syrian infantry; Mt. Hermon, January 1974

This sniper, enduring the cold of winter on the Golan Heights during the limited but deadly campaign of attrition which followed the 1973 War, wears typical Syrian winter kit: a coarse khaki-brown greatcoat and a personally improvised hood, over the standard Syrian 'vertical lizard' camouflage fatigues. Gloves were officially forbidden by a high command directive, though officers wore fur-lined leather ones. The rank of *Raqib* is displayed on the coat sleeves. The rifle is the Soviet SVD, though French equivalents were also widely used.

D2: Chief Warrant Officer, Syrian paratroops; Ein el-Hilweh camp, Sidon, 1976

Syrian troops committed to the Lebanese fighting from June 1976 found themselves facing Palestinian guerrillas whom they had armed and trained themselves; no quarter was offered, however, and the fighting was extremely savage—particularly in the main Sidon camp complex, which held up the Syrians for no less than 40 days.

A good deal of diversification in uniform and kit was allowed to élite units. A black 'woolly pully' is worn here over Pakistani-pattern camouflage fatigues, with a maroon paratroops' beret bearing the national eagle cap badge. The standard gold-on-green sleeve rank patch is that of *Musa'id Awwal*; the basic parachutist's wings are worn on the left breast, and attached to them is a blue lanyard—this is unidentified, but probably indicates either instructor or Ba'ath Party status of some kind. Green fabric 'ChiCom'-style pouch rigs are standard issue to Syrian infantry branches. The Soviet AKMS assault rifle is carried, as is an East German Modelle 1001-0 7.65mm automatic pistol, here in a personally acquired holster.

D3: Syrian 'Defence Company' commando; Hama, February 1981

Items peculiar to the ultra-loyal *Saraya ad-Difa* are



thought to include this indigenous pattern of camouflage fatigues and a reddish web belt, which might typically support a Czech M50 pistol and dagger. He wears a brown-dyed ex-US Army M-65 field jacket, and an East German helmet with camouflage cover; an indication of the savage close-quarter tactics employed at Hama is the Russian LPO-50 flame-thrower carried. Note also the Soviet gas mask.

E1: 1st Lieutenant, Syrian 'Defence Companies'; Damascus 1987

As the ultimate guarantors of President Assad's rule, the Defence Companies are given a fairly free hand not only in behaviour, but also in uniform—an important privilege, which they exploit to inspire fearful respect. This officer wears the bright orange beret of the *Saraya ad-Difa*; and special Defence Company-pattern parachute wings on the breast of the camouflage walking-out uniforms which identify Special Forces. These full dress camouflage fatigues have normally been in Syrian

Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass (centre) congratulates a new officer/pilot in the Syrian Air Force. Tlass wears the summer khaki dress uniform with *Fariq* (Lt.Gen.) rank insignia, and his entire torso is covered with military decorations. A most capable officer and defence minister, Tlass is largely responsible for the marked improvements noted over the years in the performance of the Syrian soldier. (Author's collection)

'vertical lizard' pattern, but recently some variations have been noted, including US-pattern desert BDUs. Rank insignia are worn on camouflage shoulder strap slides. Although the exact organisation of the categories of Special Forces is unclear, this Defence Company officer wears the left sleeve patch and metal right breast badge of a *Fa'uj* or Special Forces brigade. The AK74 is standard issue in the *Saraya ad-Difa*. Note the swaggering style of wearing Russian or East German-style long marching boots.

E2: Syrian paratroopers, 1987

The unique Syrian camouflage fatigues are interesting; they seem to vary in pattern and colour intensity from unit to unit, and may even indicate

the status of the unit. The main parachute is the Russian D-5, the reserve pack is the Z-5. The white circle painted on the camouflaged Soviet helmet indicates squad leader. The folding RPG-7 is now seen in all Syrian parachute units.

E3: Syrian commando; Ein Dara, 22 June 1982

Tank-killer teams of Syrian commandos armed with an array of RPGs, anti-tank grenades and missiles inflicted heavy IDF casualties by infiltrating armour convoys by night. The 1982 fighting introduced the Milan ATGW to combat; results were reported to be less impressive than with some other weapons systems, however. This commando wears a camouflaged Soviet helmet and standard Syrian 'horizontal lizard' camouflage fatigues; note also the white 'trainers'. Many commandos killed and captured in 1982 wore these, and some wore civilian track-suits.

F1: Palestinian guerrilla, el-Fatah; Jordan Valley, 1969

The *fedayeen* who sought to elude IDF paratroopers and reconnaissance units which limited their area of operations to the Jordan Valley desert in the

PFLP guerrillas in a training base in southern Lebanon line up for inspection, 1973. They wear the Egyptian 'leopard-pattern' camouflage uniform and red checkered kefiyehs, and carry AK-47 and SKS rifles. (IDF Archives)



1967-70 campaign, (known in Israel as 'the chases') were not yet the champions of the Arab world and were poorly funded. Among their motley range of clothing were Syrian 'vertical lizard' camouflage jackets and complete uniforms; weapons and explosives were from Egypt, or stolen from the Jordanian Army. The red and white *shemagh* (*kefiyeh*) headdress was used to hide the face when posing for publicity photographs, but was also worn on operations. This Warsaw Pact ammunition pouch was normal issue; the *fedayeen* were unable to carry large amounts of munitions, rations or water. The sheepskin tied to the boots was to fool the IDF's expert Bedouin and Druze trackers. The SKS was the standard weapon before the general issue of the AK series.

F2: PFLP 'commando'; El-Husseini camp, Amman, September 1970

The PFLP were the direct provokers of the 'Black September' crisis, and took the major part in fighting King Hussein's forces; their fate if killed or captured by the enraged Bedouin troops was consequently grisly, and the bodies of some commanders were dragged through the streets of the refugee camps behind Centurion tanks as a lesson to the Palestinians. This fighter wears Iraqi camouflage fatigues provided by the PFLP's then-

main sponsor; solid red headdress instead this normal red and white seems to have indicated some kind of élite status. As well as an N1891/30 Russian sniper rifle he carries a PK LMG, and F-1 grenades. The locally-made canvas and rubber patrol boots were initially a mark of élite guerrillas, but later became common.

F3: PFLP 'commando'; Ein el-Hilweh camp, Sidon 1976
Female PLO fighters are noted for their ruthlessness, and even Syrian soldiers who encountered them in 1975–76 were reportedly shocked by their cruelty. This may well be the result of their treatment during their indoctrination phase, when they are routinely abused by their male comrades, and suffer sexual ill-treatment: the rôle of women fighters contradicts deep-seated Muslim prejudices, and neither male nor female guerrillas seem able to reconcile their contradictory feelings. This woman fighting the Syrians wears an indigenous Palestinian three-colour camouflage pattern, with both black and white *kefiyeh* and a Palestinian flag bundled scarf-fashion around her neck. The PFLP

emblem decorates the pouches of her 'ChiCom'-style chest rig for RPK ammunition; note also patrol boots; and clip pouches for a Polish P-64 9mm pistol worn on the left in a personal black leather holster, hidden here.

F4: ALF weapons instructor; Sabra camp, Beirut, 1981
The Iraqi sponsorship of the Arab Liberation Front is clear in the appearance of this instructor demonstrating the Polish WZ-63 SMG. He wears Iraqi Special Forces camouflage fatigues, under an Iraqi-made 'woolly-pully' with breast pockets and shoulder straps. The ALF emblem is displayed on a left sleeve patch, and the Palestinian version of the eagle cap badge on a maroon beret.

A squad of *el-Fatah* commandos (the nucleus of what would develop into 'Force 17') pose for the camera before raiding the Israeli border town of Beit Shean, November 1968. They wear interesting home-made camouflage outfits like British forces' 'ghillie suits' to blend with the fertile mountainous terrain; at extreme left and right can be seen right breast badges of some sort, featuring the Palestinian eagle. Weapons are AK-47s, and the sniper version of the old Russian M1891/30 Moysin Nagant. (IDF Archives)



G1: El-Fatah Force 17 'commando'; Beirut, 1981

This élite 'commando' unit, which provides Arafat's personal bodyguard, is also widely trained in techniques including parachuting, SCUBA-diving and NBC warfare. Successful and bold in terrorist operations, their conventional skills leave something to be desired. (The typically Arab love of show prompted the wearing of NBC and SCUBA gear for a 1981 parade in Beirut's football stadium, during which many of the 'commandos' fainted after dehydrating in the brutal sunshine.) This is the Czechoslovakian Army issue NBC suit, worn with ChiCom pouches; the Hungarian version of the AK is specially fitted with 'scope and rifle grenade attachment.

G2: As-Sa'iqa 'commando'; Kfar Sil, June 1982

This Syrian-sponsored group, controlled by Syrian Air Force Intelligence, joined regular Syrian commandos and PLO Force 17 fighters in the battle for Kfar Sil, described by former IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.Gen. Eitan as the hardest fought action of the 1982 war. Highly trained and motivated, *as-Sa'iqa* are formidable guerrillas. This Palestinian-manufactured camouflage uniform is usually worn by fighters based around Tripoli in northern Lebanon: note two different colour combinations. His Soviet helmet bears a painted outline map of Palestine. The ubiquitous 'ChiCom' pouch rig is worn, with a canteen pouch holding an RPG-43 anti-tank grenade and an AKM bayonet slung on a pistol belt. His weapon is the Czechoslovak VZ-52 with added sniper scope.

G3: Amal militiamen; West Beirut, 1986

Having turned against the Israelis and Americans, and defeated the US-sponsored Lebanese Army, the Shi'ite Amal militia concentrated their considerable strength against their traditional enemies: the Palestinians. This *mujahadin* wears US BDU camouflage trousers, an Amal T-shirt, and a hood to hide his identity—in Lebanon, where massacres of whole families are common reprisals, anonymity is prized. The US M-60 machine gun and Lebanese-made chest pouches both suggest defection from the Lebanese Army. Note that he also carries a G-3 rifle and handcuffs, for meting out Islamic justice to fellow Muslims guilty of such acts as selling alcohol.

G4: Shi'ite woman fighter; West Beirut, 1987

Although heavily restricted in their daily lives by Muslim law, the women of Beirut's Shi'ite population did not only stay at home baking for the family during the desperate struggles of 1983-87: many actually fought in the streets.

G5: Druze militiaman; Aley, Lebanon, 1985

The Druze have at one time or another temporarily allied themselves with virtually every military and paramilitary force in Lebanon—except their traditional enemies the Maronites. This militia squad leader wears an IDF-issue winter parka and Italian paratrooper's camouflage trousers; his red beret and left sleeve brassard identify Walid Jumblatt's PSP militia; and he carries a Romanian AK-47 with forward pistol grip.

H1: Lebanese Forces 'commando'; Zahle, February 1981

A militiaman serving in one of the conventionally-structured special units formed within the Maronite militia with Israeli support. Fighting the Syrians at Zahle, a major Christian centre, he wears a civilian-made 'duck hunter' camouflage uniform typical of Lebanese Forces in that battle, and IDF load-bearing equipment; plus the special chest pouches for 40mm rounds for the M-16/M-203 rifle/grenade launcher combination. He also wears a holstered Browning HP pistol. The small Lebanese flag badge on the black beret is interesting: there is a good deal of improvisation in cap badges, although Lebanese Forces patterns exist.

H2: Lebanese Forces 'military policeman'; Beirut, September 1982

This Christian Phalangist militia 'MP', seen at Bashir Gemayel's funeral on 15 September 1982, wears olive IDF fatigues with (though hidden here) added Lebanese Forces name tape above the left breast pocket; and an Israeli-made Orlite kevlar infantry ballistic helmet painted to mark his status—as does the left sleeve brassard. The whitened pistol belt and holster, the boots and the webbing are also Israeli-made. The M-16 was standard among the Lebanese Forces. Less common were the Lebanese Forces parachute wings, worn above the breast pocket; though many militiamen trained in Israel, only those in élite or politically privileged units enjoyed the luxury of jump training.

H3: Officer, 'Force Sadem', Lebanese Forces; Junieh, 1985

An élite and clandestine unit, 'Force Sadem' are hand-picked at the highest level for their skills, loyalty and ruthlessness. With typical olive Israeli-made fatigues, including the paratroops/GOLANI Class A trousers, he wears items peculiar to 'Force Sadem': a red beret worn in the French manner, with special badge, and the unit patch on the right shoulder—all other Lebanese Forces patches are worn on the left. The metal parachute wings worn above the Lebanese Forces name tape are peculiar to officers. Note brown IDF paratrooper boots, another mark of élite status; and Walther PPK pistol.

H4: Lebanese Forces Marine; Damour, 1985

The Lebanese are a maritime people of ancient heritage, and the Lebanese Forces have over a dozen patrol craft, ranging from the Israeli DABUR class to small fishing craft armed with machine guns

and RPGs. The small but highly efficient Marine unit is used as a shock force. In 1985 they managed to sail undetected from Christian East Beirut to Damour, where remnants of the Lebanese Army were fighting Shi'ite and Druze elements. In two hours the Marines relieved the defeated Lebanese Army of their heavy weaponry, salvaging dozens of M113s and M-60 tanks before the Muslim enemy thought it safe to venture into the area. This uniform has an ominously direct Israeli character: ex-IDF/ex-US Army OG-107 Nomex blouse and trousers, Israeli kevlar flak vest, IDF web gear, and ex-IDF FN-MAG 7.62mm LMG; Israeli M-26 and M-5 grenades are worn on an IDF pistol belt. The light blue beret and Lebanese Forces Marines left sleeve patch are in fact the only Lebanese items displayed.

A Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party suicide truck bomber, photographed posing prior to his fatal assault on IDF forces in southern Lebanon, April 1986. He wears a Syrian copy of a Pakistani camouflage uniform, and a red beret with SSNP badge. (SSNP)



10/96

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1 Combinaison en néoprène de fabrication soviétique; sacs à munitions pour AK et RPG-7; veuillez noter la version locale dite 'Port Saïd' de la mitraillette Carl Gustav. **A2** Blouson de combat modifié pour porter les tambours chargeurs de la mitrailleuse RPD, pistolet Tokarev; il porte également un UZI pris à l'ennemi et des pantalons grenades russes en cas de violents corps-à-corps. Pullover, casque et pantalons réglementaires de l'armée égyptienne. **A3** Tenu de vol soviétique avec insigne de grade sur les pattes d'épaule et un écusson d'escadron qui n'est pas identifié sur la manche.

B1 Treillis de camouflage réversible des forces spéciales porté du côté brun sur couleur sable, béret noir des commandos de *Al-Sa'ïga*, écusson national sur la casquette, étoile de grade Mulazim sur la patte d'épaule; le SVD, fusil soviétique de tireur embusqué. **B2** Modèle de treillis de camouflage réversible porté du côté du motif dit 'léopard', vert sur fond brun; casque rembourré, recouvert en vert et lourds gants utilisés pendant l'entraînement par ex. pour le rappel d'hélicoptères; 'wings' de parachutiste de 1ère Classe sur la poitrine; fusil AKM. **B3** Depuis 1973 des uniformes verts remplacent ceux en brun pour les équipages des chars, mais l'on utilise toujours le casque et les armes soviétiques. **B4** Tenu complète de général de corps d'armée de l'air, telle que Mubarak la portait le 6 octobre 1981.

C1 L'on retrouve ici une forte influence britannique; seules les troupes d'élite portaient le Dennison smock; veuillez noter le mélange des pièces de brellage de fabrication britannique et locale et la carabine M3. **C2** Uniforme et équipement entièrement américains, les chevrons de grade de style britannique étant la seule caractéristique jordanienne que l'on peut noter. **C3** En tenue estivale de rassemblement et de sortie avec ceinture de rassemblement, mais étant en service de garde, cet officier portait ici un fusil italien 70/223 de 5,56 mm. Le grade est marqué sur les pattes d'épaule; écusson des forces spéciales sur le haut des manches; insigne jordanien de maître parachutiste du côté gauche de la poitrine et insigne de parachutiste américain du côté droit; béret marron pourpré porté également par les unités de parachutistes.

D1 Equipement caractéristique d'hiver, avec capuche improvisée; seuls les officiers peuvent porter des gants... **D2** Béret marron pourpré de parachutiste avec écusson national; par-dessus les pantalons de camouflage dont l'imprimé est pakistanaï, un 'woolly pully' noir; insigne de grade réglementaire de *Musa'id Awwal*; cordon bleu fixé aux 'wings' de parachutiste, sans explication sûre mais indique peut-être qu'il s'agit d'un instructeur ou un rang du Parti Ba'ath; fusil AKMS. **D3** Ce modèle local de treillis de camouflage et la veste M-65 de l'armée américaine, teinte en brun semblent être spécifiques aux Compagnies de Défense; notez le casque d'Allemagne de l'est et le lance-flammes soviétique LPO-50.

E1 Seules les Compagnies de Défense, les Compagnies de Combat et d'autres corps d'élite portent ces uniformes de camouflage pour les rassemblements et en tenue de sortie, les premières avec des bérets orange vif; insigne de grade au-dessus du camouflage des pattes d'épaules; et insigne de *Fa'uj* ou de brigade des forces spéciales sur la poche et l'épaule. Notez le style, avec des bottes soviétiques ou d'Allemagne de l'est. **E2** Un autre uniforme de camouflage intéressant; le cercle blanc sur le casque indique certainement qu'il s'agit d'un chef de peloton; notez les parachutes soviétiques D5 et Z-5 (réserve) et le RPG-65 de l'armée. **E3** Uniforme de camouflage réglementaire, au motif de 'lézard'; lance-missiles Milan; et notez les chaussures de sport blanches de civil, étrangement de nombreux membres de ce commando tués lors de cette campagne les portaient et certains étaient même vêtus de survêtements civils.

F1 Caractéristiques des premiers groupes de guérilla: des vêtements syriens, un sac à munitions de modèle soviétique, le *keffiyeh* (coiffure des bédouins) et un fusil SKS. De la peau de mouton fixée sur les bottes pour tromper ceux qui suivent leur trace. **F2** Uniforme de camouflage donné par les sponsors irakiens de ce groupe; mitrailleuse PK, fusil de tireur embusqué M1891/30, grenades F-1. **F3** Vêtement tricolore de camouflage fabriqué par les Palestiniens, avec le *keffiyeh* et le drapeau palestinien noué autour de cou en guise d'écharpe; notez l'emblème du PFLP (Front populaire de libération de la Palestine) sur les sacs à munitions et la mitrailleuse RPK. **F4** Autre modèle de camouflage irakien, celui-ci de style 'forces spéciales', porté avec un pullover de fabrication irakienne sur la manche duquel se trouve l'écusson du FLA (Front de libération arabe). Notez la mitraillette polonaise WX-63.

G1 Les gardes du corps d'Arafat sont entraînés à de nombreuses techniques, parmi lesquelles l'emploi de ces combinaisons tchécoslovaques de protection contre les armes nucléaires/biologiques/chimiques. Cet AK-47 de fabrication hongroise est équipé d'un indicateur de visée et d'un lance-grenades. **G2** De formidables combattants parrainés par les services de renseignements de l'armée de l'air syrienne; cet uniforme de camouflage de fabrication palestinienne (nous présentons deux combinaisons différentes de couleurs ici) est tenu pour être caractéristique des troupes de guérilla autour de Tripoli, au nord du Liban. Notez la carte de la Palestine peinte sur le casque; grenade anti-char RPG-43 dans le sac à gourde; VZ-52 équipé d'un indicateur de visée. **G3** C'est certainement un déserteur de l'armée libanaise, il porte des pantalons de camouflage américains BDU, un tee-shirt Amal et en toute prudence un masque pour se cacher le visage; ses armes sont une mitrailleuse M-60 et un fusil G-3; et notez les menottes. **G4** Des femmes Shi'ite ont même pris part aux combats de rue. **G5** Les alliances pragmatiques des Druze se voient sur le parka israélien de ce combattant, les pantalons de parachutistes italiens et le AK roumain; les hommes du PSP (Parti socialiste progressiste) de Joubblatt portent le béret et le brassard.

H1 Tenu de camouflage de confection civile, type 'chasseur de canard'; brellage israélien avec sacoches sur la poitrine pour transporter des grenades de 40 mm pour le fusil M-16/M-203; béret noir avec écusson des couleurs du Liban. **H2** Ce policier Phalangiste porte un équipement principalement israélien pour les unités de Bashir Gemayel. **H3** L'unité Force Sadem, des tueurs triés sur le volet, ont un écusson spécial sur leur béret et un autre porté uniquement sur la

manche droite. **H4** Les unités de marine phalangiste, petites mais très efficaces, portent tout l'équipement israélien avec ce béret et cet écusson sur la manche.

Farbtafeln

A1 Neopren-Schwimmanzug sowjetischer Herkunft; Taschen sowjetischer Art für AK- und RPG-Munition; siehe lokale 'Port Saïd'-Version der Carl Gustav-Maschinenpistole. **A2** Feldweste, modifiziert zur Aufnahme von Trommelmagazinen für RPD-Maschinengewehr und Tokarev-Pistole; im harten Kampf Mann gegen Mann trägt er auch eine erbeutete UZI und sowjetische Handgranaten. Sweater, Helm und Hose sind ägyptische Standarduniform. **A3** Sowjetischer Fliegeranzug mit Rangabzeichen an Achselklappe; unbekanntes Schwadronabzeichen am Ärmel.

B1 Sandbraune Seite der Taruniform für Spezialeinheiten, schwarze Stiefel, schwarze Mütze mit Nationalabzeichen; Rangstern als Mulazim auf Achselklappe; sowjetisches SVD-Scharfschützengewehr. **B2** Grünbraunes 'Leopardenmuster' der auf beiden Seiten tragbaren Taruniform; grünüberzogener, gepolsterter Helm und schwere Handschuhe für Trainingszwecke wie Abweilen vom Hubschrauber; Schwingen auf der Brust zeigen Fallschirmjäger 1. Klasse; AKM-Gewehr. **B3** Grüne Uniformen haben seit 1973 die braunen für Panzermansschaften ersetzt, sowjetischer Helm und Waffen sind aber geblieben. **B4** Volle Galauniform eines Luftwaffen-Generalleutnants, Mubarak.

C1 Starker britischer Einfluss ist hier sichtbar; der Denison Smock wurde nur von Elitetruppen getragen; die Mischung von britischem und lokalem Riemenzug; M3-Karabine. **C2** Rein amerikanische Uniform und Ausrüstung—britische Rangabzeichen als einzig erkennbares Merkmal für jordanische Uniform. **C3** In sommerlicher Parade- und Ausgarnung mit Paradegürtel, hier auf Wachdienst, trägt dieser Offizier ein italienisches 70/223 5,56mm-Gewehr. Rangabzeichen auf Achselklappe; Abzeichen für Spezialeinheiten auf oberem Ärmel; jordanische Schwingen des Fallschirmjägeroffiziers auf der linken, US-Schwingen auf der rechten Brustseite; Mütze, auch von Fallschirmjägern getragen.

D1 Typische Winterausrüstung, mit improvisierter Kaputze; Handschuhe dürfen nur Offiziere tragen. **D2** Braune Fallschirmjägermütze mit Nationalabzeichen; schwarzer 'Woolly pully' über Trainingshosen mit Pakistani-Muster; Rangabzeichen für Musa'id Awwal; Fallschirmjägerschlinge mit blauer Schnur—nicht erklärt, aber möglicherweise Anzeichen für Instruktor oder Rang in der Ba'ath-Partei; AKMS-Gewehr. **D3** Lokales Muster für Tarnanzüge, und braungefärbte US-Armeejacke M-65, dürften typisch für Verteidigungskompanien sein; siehe ostdeutschen Helm und sowjetischen Flammenwerfer LPO-50.

E1 Nur Verteidigungs- oder Einsatzkompanien und andere Elitetruppen tragen Tarnuniformen auch für Parade und Ausgang—erstere mit hellorange Kappe; Rangabzeichen auf verdeckter Achselklappe, und Taschen- und Schulterabzeichen der Fa'uj oder Spezialbrigade. Siehe das Tragen sowjetischer oder osteuropäischer Stiefel. **E2** Eine andere interessante Tarnuniform; weisser Ring am Helm zeigt wahrscheinlich Korporal an; siehe sowjetische Fallschirmanzug D-5 und Z-5 (Reserve), sowie faltbares RPG-7. **E3** Standard-Tarnuniform 'Eidechse', Raketenwerfer Milan; siehe weisse Zivil-Trainingschuhe; sie wurden seltsamerweise von vielen in diesem Feldzug getöteten Commandos getragen, manchmal zusammen mit zivilen Trainingsanzügen.

F1 Typische für frühe Guerrilla-Einheiten; syrische Anzüge, Munitionstasche sowjetischer Art, Kefiyeh und SKS-Gewehr. Um die Stiefel gebundene Schaffelle tauschten Fahrtsucher. **F2** Getarnte Uniformen der irakischen Sponsoren dieser Gruppe; PK-Maschinengewehr, M1891/30-Scharfschützengewehr, F-1-Granaten. **F3** Dreifarbige Trankleidung palästinensischer Herkunft, mit Kefiyeh und palästinensischer Flagge als Halstuch; siehe PFLP (Volksfront für die Befreiung Palästinas)-Abzeichen auf Taschen, und RPK-Maschinengewehr. **F4** Ein anderes irakisches Tarnmuster, hier für Spezialeinheiten, getragen zusammen mit irakischem Pullover mit ALF (Arabische Befreiungsfront)-Ärmelabzeichen. Siehe polnische Maschinenpistole WZ-63.

G1 Die Leibwache Arafats wird vielfach ausgebildet, darunter in der Verwendung dieser tschechoslowakischen Schutzanzüge gegen nukleare, biologische und chemische Kriegführung. Das ungarische AK-47 ist mit Scharfschützenteleskop und Granatwerfer ausgestattet. **G2** Hervorragende Kampfeinheit unter Sponsortum des syrischen Luftwaffenachrichtendienstes; diese palästinensische Tarnuniform (wir zeigen hier zwei verschiedenen Farbkombinationen) dürfte typisch für Guerrillas rund um Tripoli im Nordlibanon sein. Die palästinensische Landkarte ist auf den Helm gemalt; Anti-Panzergranate RPG-43 in Trinkwassertasche; VZ-52 mit Scharfschützenteleskop. **G3** Wahrscheinlich ein Deserteur der libanesischen Armee, mit US BDU-Tarnhosen, einem Amal T-Shirt und einer vorsichtigen Gesichtsmaske; M-60 Maschinengewehr und G-3 Gewehr; siehe Handschellen. **G4** Selbst einige schiitische Frauen kämpften auf den Strassen. **G5** Die pragmatischen Verbindungen der Druzen zeigen sich in der israelischen Parka dieses Kämpfers, seinen italienischen Fallschirmjägerhosen und dem rumänischen AK; Kappe und Armbinde werden von Walid Jumblatts PSP (Progressive Sozialistische Partei) getragen.

H1 Zivil hergestellter 'Entenjäger'-Tarnanzug; israelisches Riemenzug und Taschen, mit zusätzlicher Brusttasche für 40 mm Granaten für das Kombinationsgewehr M-16/M-203; schwarze Kappe mit libanesischer Flagge. **H2** Dieser Phalange-Polizist beim Begräbnis von Bashir Gemayel trägt hauptsächlich israelische Ausrüstung. **H3** Die ausgesuchten Killers der 'Force Sadam' haben eine Spezialkappe mit Abzeichen und tragen als einzige das Ärmelabzeichen rechts. **H4** Die Kline, aber höchst wirksame Marineinheit der Phalange ist durchwegs israelisch ausgerüstet, zusammen mit dieser Kappe und Ärmelabzeichen.