

G.I. Joe Team

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{tab=Part 1}

G.I. JOE (j j) n. An enlisted soldier in the U.S. Army, esp. in World War II.*

The term "G.I. Joe" was popularized during America's involvement in the Second World War. Combining the abbreviation of "government issue" with the term for the American every man, the name was applied to the thousands of average American soldiers fighting for freedom against Nazi Germany and its allies. Two decades later, President John F. Kennedy (himself a WWII veteran) and his military advisors created a new special forces unit that would answer directly to the White House. Shortly before his death in 1963, Kennedy placed the Army's highly decorated Lieutenant Joseph Colton in charge of the elite team of soldiers. Colton had served with distinction in the earliest years of the Vietnam conflict. A year later, the team went into operation under the name "G.I. Joe". The name kept the team anonymous and elusive, and became the unofficial code name for Colton. The team was involved in missions all over the world, assisting other units and participating in covert operations throughout the 1960s. In the early 1970s, the team was dissolved and Colton took a well deserved sabbatical, occasionally working with a civilian group known as the Adventure Team.

The Team Reborn

As the 1970s came to a close, terrorism was becoming a threat to the world. Seeing the need for an elite unit to combat this threat, the Secretary of Defense ordered the formation of a anti-terrorist team. Officially named Special Counter-terrorist Group Delta, the team was nicknamed G.I. Joe in honor of the legendary team from years before. The team was placed under the direct command of General Lawrence J. Flagg, who was advised by General "Iron-Butt" Austin. Flagg chose Colonel Clayton "Hawk" Abernathy as the team's field commander. Specialist Lonzo "Stalker" Wilkinson became the first member of Hawk's team, and helped the Colonel recruit the retired Vietnam commando, Snake-Eyes, for the team. The remainder of the team consisted of Specialist James "Grand Slam" Barney, Cpl. Eric "Short-Fuze" Freistadt, Cpl. Anthony "Flash" Gambello, Specialist Robert "Grunt" Graves, Pfc. Alvin "Breaker" Kibbey, Cpl. Craig "Rock & Roll" McConnel, Cpl. Rafael "Zap" Melendez, Sgt. Shana "Scarlett" O'Hara, Lt. Ralph "Steeler" Pulaski and Cpl. Lance "Clutch" Steinberg. The team was headquartered in a secret underground base -- The Pit -- beneath the Motor Pool of the Army Chaplains' Assistants School in Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, New York. It was hoped that no one would ever suspect the team to be based at the most innocent of Army facilities.

The new Joe team used the latest in advanced military hardware in its many missions in hot spots around the world. The young team was often unorthodox, but effective. It was in the early 1980s that the Joes would face their greatest enemy, the terrorist organization Cobra Command. One of their earliest missions was rescuing American scientist Dr. Adele Burkhart from Cobra's island hideout. While the Joes continued to fight various enemies, Cobra -- led by the enigmatic Cobra Commander and the terrorist known as the Baroness -- became their primary adversary. They also struggled with the October Guard, the Soviets' answer to the G.I. Joe team. Cobra used the Cold War of the 1980s to their advantage, and often played the two teams against each other for their own purposes. Cobra's forces nearly defeated both teams in the Hindu Kush mountains before they teamed up to beat Cobra. The enormity of Cobra's threat was becoming apparent to the military as the Joes began to fight the terrorists almost exclusively. In 1983, the Joes discovered that Cobra's secret base was somewhere in the United States, in the decidedly generic town of Springfield. In response to Cobra's growing threat, the military expanded the team to include new members from the nation's other armed forces. Cobra, too, began to expand when Cobra Commander brought Scottish weapons manufacturer James McCullen Destro into the fold.

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{tab=Part 2} The War Against Cobra

After preventing Cobra from poisoning the Alaskan oil pipeline, the Joes stumbled upon evidence of a major operation Cobra was planning. Clues led them to the small Central American nation of Sierra Gordo. Cobra had been secretly operating there for years when a small team of Joes arrived and found the Cobra scientist Dr. Venom, along with the Baroness and the mysterious courier named Scar-face. A short skirmish sparked a chase around the world to uncover Cobra's plan before it was too late. As the Joes had no idea that Cobra was also in the midst of a power struggle in their high command. The Commander, fearing Destro's growing influence hired the mercenary Major Bludd to kill him. It meant little to the Joes, who discovered that Cobra intended to poison the people of the United States by adding a toxin to all newly printed money. A battle in Washington, DC soon followed as the Joes tracked Cobra to the U.S. Treasury. Their plan was foiled, but the enemy escaped after Cobra Commander shot Hawk in the back and Major Bludd and the Baroness were nearly killed when the Baroness tried to stop Bludd from killing Destro. Hawk recovered and Bludd and the Baroness became prisoners of the Joes. The team then tracked Scar-face from Coney Island to Tripoli. After a brief battle in the desert, the Joes captured Scar-face. Back at the Pit, Scar-face -- realizing that his employers cared little whether he lived or died, revealed that he was Cobra's "Trojan Horse" and was carrying the toxin in his own bloodstream.

His plan, however, was not to infect the Joes but to cause highly visible quarantine procedures to be implemented, allowing Cobra to discover the location of the Joes' hidden base. The Joes used the information and constructed a pre-fab fortress to make Cobra believe the Pit was only above ground. In the battle that followed, General Flagg was killed by Major Bludd, and Dr. Venom and the Eskimo mercenary Kwinn killed each other. Bludd then escaped with the comatose Baroness and left Scar-face for dead in the exploding fortress. The Joes had won the battle but lost their commander, and the Pit was severely damaged.

As the Pit was rebuilt and Flagg was mourned, the Joes added new members to their team, including Duke, their new first sergeant. Duke led a mission to track down Bludd and the Baroness in Europe. Bludd brought the Baroness to Bern, Switzerland where she was healed by the world's finest reconstructive surgeons. Bludd blackmailed Cobra Commander, threatening to tell Destro that the Commander wanted him dead. When the Commander arrived in Switzerland, the Joes captured him. He hadn't been in their custody long when his new bodyguard, the ninja Storm Shadow helped him escape. Storm Shadow was captured for a time but again, the Joes lost their prisoner. While Snake-Eyes tracked down Storm Shadow after learning he had been an old friend in whose ninja clan the commando trained, the Joes followed evidence of a Cobra operation in the Florida Everglades. In the swamps, they found the lair of Zartan, the master of disguise now working for Cobra Commander. A battle involving much of Cobra's high command followed on land, sea and air. A short time afterward, the Joes fought off Cobra's attack on McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

{tab=Part 3} The Nation of Cobra

The Joe team completed the renovation of the Pit only to discover that General Austin had ordered that several of the original members of the Joe team were to be taken off active duty and placed in charge of the Pit. Duke replaced Hawk as the Joes' commander in the field, leaving the Colonel behind a desk at Joe HQ. New team members were added, including Lady Jaye, Ripcord and Flint. After battling Cobra's newly formed Crimson Guard at the Arbco Bros Circus, the Joes found evidence linking the Crimson Guard to a home in Staten Island. The Joes raided the house and discovered that the home had in fact belonged to a Siegie (C.G.) named Professor Appel whose daughter, Candy, was Ripcord's girlfriend. As a small team of Joes again rescued Dr. Burkhart -- this time from Sierra Gordo -- the Joes analyzed the evidence found in Appel's home and interrogated his daughter. The information led them to an unknown Cobra operation in the Gulf of Mexico. The team set up a portable air-sea base to keep close watch on the Gulf. Cobra hydrofoils arrived and attacked the base. Meanwhile, an underground bunker built by Cobra started sending out sonic waves which began to kill off marine life in the Gulf. With orders from the Pentagon, fighters from the U.S.S. Flagg bombed the bunker and destroyed it. But that was Cobra's plan all along. The bunker sat atop a fault line, and the bombs aggravated it, causing a tremendous chunk of the ocean floor to rise out of the water, creating an island that Cobra now occupied. Cobra's lawyers and ambassadors were already at the embassies of the nations bordering the Gulf. They worked to gain sovereign nation status, while a large team of Joes staged an assault on the island, led by Duke, hoping to push Cobra off of the island. The Joes had forced Cobra's troops into retreat when the call came down from the Pentagon: Cobra had been granted status as a nation and Cobra Island was off limits. It was a major defeat for the G.I. Joe team. Now, according to international law, Cobra had a legal right to be headquartered just miles off the coast of the United States. In the aftermath of the defeat, a very stressed out General Austin had a heart attack. Though Austin would recover, he was forced to retire from the Army. His final act was to promote Hawk to Brigadier General and place him in command of the entire G.I. Joe operation.

Before Hawk could appreciate his new rank, he learned that Ripcord -- flying aboard Ace's Skystriker during high-altitude reconnaissance -- bailed out over Cobra Island against orders. He intended to look for Candy, who had escaped Joe custody with Buzzer the Dreadnok. What Ripcord didn't know was that Candy had died a short time before. Ripcord was stopped by Zartan, who switched places with the soldier, hoping to gain access to Joe headquarters. The Joes staged a rescue mission but rescued the unconscious Zartan, who disguised himself as Ripcord. The real Ripcord was brought back to Cobra's headquarters by Prof. Appel, who believed the Joe to be Zartan. Their was a brief battle on the island, after which Ripcord and Zartan arrived at their respective enemy's home bases -- Zartan in the Pit and Ripcord in Springfield. After a complicated series of events, Ripcord reported the location of Springfield to the Joes and the nearly the entire team staged an invasion of the small town. As the Joes arrived, Cobra's Dr. Mindbender was performing an incredible experiment. With the help of Destro and the Baroness and Cobra's backing, he planned to use the stolen genetic material of history's greatest soldiers and conquerors to create the perfect soldier for Cobra. Serpentor was born during the Battle of Springfield. Cobra was losing ground and decided to evacuate the town, but needed to stall the Joes in order to escape. Reluctantly, Destro placed Serpentor in command of the troops to fight a holding action against the Joes. Serpentor rallied the troops and held off the Joes until the residents of Springfield could evacuate the town. When the smoke cleared, the Joes were left with a burnt out town and nothing to show for it. The Pentagon even questioned the validity of the attack and placed the Joe team on suspension, sealed off the Pit and quartered the Joes with the Chaplains' Assistants at Fort Wadsworth. A group of high-ranking officers joined Hawk in the Pit during their investigation. Back on Cobra Island, a power struggle began between Cobra Commander and Serpentor. The perfect soldier had turned out to be a great leader and set out to usurp the Commander's leadership. Both men led an attack on the newly rediscovered Pit, but the Commander and Destro led a group of Cobra soldiers into Joe headquarters. Hawk and the officers fought as long as they could while the Joes tried to organize a counter-attack. They were too late. Hawk decided to destroy the Pit rather than let Cobra have it, and hoped to take the Commander and Destro with it. A series of explosions destroyed the Pit, Serpentor and the other Cobras fled Fort Wadsworth, and Destro and the Commander were presumed dead. The Joes were taken off suspension by General Hollingsworth and were a nomad unit for months

before established a new Pit in the Utah desert.

With Serpentor in command of Cobra, the Joes had to contend with their move into the business of selling weapons to any nation that would pay their price. They emphasized the sale of their Terror-Drome launch bases, which gave them a foothold in some unstable regions of the world. The Joes fought the terrorist organization's attempt to set up bases in Sierra Gordo, Colonel Sharif's Emirate and Frusenland. At this time, a more personal crisis affected the team. A small team of Joes were sent into the Soviet bloc nation of Borovia to rescue an American journalist. Stalker, Quick Kick, Snow Job and Outback staged a rescue mission into the communist nation's security building only to find that the journalist was longer being held there. Outback escaped, but the rest of the team were placed under arrest and thrown into a Borovian gulag. Despite the Joes' desire to rescue their teammates, the Pentagon ordered them not to. The U.S. was to deny any knowledge of the rescue mission, and therefore abandon the captured Joes. After five months in the brutal prison camp, Snake-Eyes, Scarlett and their ninja friends staged an illegal rescue and brought the three prisoners home. Back on Cobra Island, it appeared that Cobra Commander had returned to lead. In reality, it was a Crimson Guardsman named Fred VII who was posing as Cobra Commander. The Baroness learned Fred's identity, but kept it a secret in return for becoming Fred's partner in retaking Cobra. As Cobra's power struggles began anew, Destro had resurfaced. He raised his own army of Iron Grenadiers and began to work independently from Cobra. He became involved in Sierra Gordo by saving the Joes and the revolutionary leader El Jefe in exchange for a part in the impending government.

{tab=Part 4} Civil War and Reconstruction

The Joes were taken by surprise when the cybernetically enhanced Star Viper infiltrated the Pit and escaped with a highly classified "black box" filled with classified military electronics. Hawk and a small team of Joes headed to the U.S.S. Flagg to stage a recon mission onto Cobra Island. What they found was an island in the midst of civil war, split into factions siding with either Fred VII (still posing as Cobra Commander) or Serpentor. The Joes eventually entered the war on the side of Serpentor after Dr. Mindbender made a deal with the state department in exchange for returning the black box. They decided that the Commander represented a military dictatorship, while Serpentor represented a constitutional monarchy. The battle was the Joes' biggest operation yet, with most of the team participating. Destro eventually joined the fray with his own Army, hoping to test out his new hardware as well as bring the Baroness back with him. After days of fighting, the Joes were heading toward victory until the civil war ended abruptly when Zartan killed Serpentor with an arrow. Mindbender immediately came to an agreement with Fred and Destro. Leaving the Joes disgusted and defeated. In the wake of the conflict, the Generals of the oversight committee that watched over the Joes refused to accept the blame of the lost operation that they authorized. Led by the corrupt General Malthus, the "Jugglers" ordered the arrest of the Joe team and took Hawk, General Hollingsworth and Roadblock into custody when they came before them in the Pentagon. Malthus told the press that the Joes had acted on their own and placed Hawk and Hollingsworth in a psychiatric hospital for observation. Roadblock escaped and rounded up the Joes that had yet to be arrested. They all went underground and with the help of Dr. Adele Burkhart, the Joes stormed the hospital, now staffed by Malthus' Domestic Operations Agency. A fire fight erupted as the Joes rescued their wrongly accused commanders. The fight ended after television cameras showed up at the scene. Disgusted by Malthus' lack of honor, Destro arrived and in front of a live television audience handed Malthus his receipt for weapons he bought from Destro to finance the Cobra Island operation. Malthus was finished and the Joes were cleared of all charges.

Over the next few months, the Joes recovered from the civil war and engaged in various skirmishes, while Cobra created a new American town to call their own in Broca Beach, New Jersey from where the Dreadnoks fought the Joes several times. A renewed threat emerged when after Destro's castle was attacked by Cobra forces still under Fred VII. The battle ended in a stalemate, but Destro could have wiped out the invaders, and instead offered Cobra its own survival in exchange for a merger with the Iron Grenadiers. The new Cobra was soon embroiled in a power struggle, with nearly everyone chafing under the leadership of Destro. Soon after, the Baroness began a personal vendetta against Snake-Eyes -- whom she believed killed her brother years ago. She tracked him to the Bern Institute of Reconstructive Surgery where he was undergoing an operation. She shot Scarlett in the head, leaving her comatose and captured Snake-Eyes. She tried to hold him at the Cobra Consulate in New York, but the situation spiraled out of control as Snake-Eyes escaped and caused chaos inside, while Stalker, Storm Shadow and other Joes staged a rescue mission from the outside. The Joes saved their comrades, and saw the last of Destro and the Baroness for months to come.

{tab=Part 5} Back with a Vengeance

As the 90s began, Cobra became an even greater threat when the one, true Cobra Commander returned to reclaim his organization. His first act was to throw some of his most hated enemies into Cobra Island's landlocked freighter and bury it under a volcano. The Commander enslaved the town of Millville with the Brain-wave Scanner, nearly being stopped by Spirit, Mutt and Junkyard before hiding the town's true nature and left those Joes to be arrested. Meanwhile, Snake-Eyes' grief over Scarlett's failing health was too much for him to bear, so Storm Shadow placed him in a ninja fighting trance and saw to it that he was given a new mission. He forced the Jugglers, now led by General Thurston Crowther, to give his old friend a dangerous mission into Borovia. Back home, Crowther placed the Joes under investigation, hoping to disband them. Thanks to Hawk, Crowther was ousted and the Joes were again saved from their supposed leaders.

The Joes biggest and most tragic operation yet began when Cobra Commander began building Terror-Drome launch bases in the small desert nation of Trucial Abysmia. A Joe assault team led by Falcon and Duke was sent in for a simple hit-and-run mission, but discovered far more than they bargained for. Cobra troops were there in force, led by Tomax and

Xamot. The team of Joes was overwhelmed by Cobra and they were all captured. Cobra was preparing to invade the nearby oil-rich nation of Benzheen. Not wanting to complicate things, Cobra Commander ordered the twins to "get rid of" the Joes. While he just wanted them dropped off at the border, the twins misunderstood and ordered a merciless SAW Viper to kill the Joes. Being held by Cobra in a shallow ditch, the Joes were horrified when the SAW Viper opened fire on the trapped, unarmed Joes. Doc was the first to die, followed by Crankcase, Heavy Metal and Thunder. One of the surviving Joes had a concealed knife and threw it at the SAW Viper, stopping his attack. The remaining Joes had little time to mourn their friends and escaped in a stolen Cobra Rage assault vehicle. They radioed for help from the Pit, but the pursuing Cobras scored a direct hit and the Rage exploded. When the smoke cleared, Breaker, Crazy Legs and Quick Kick were dead. Only Duke, Falcon and Cross Country survived. In response to these casualties and to Cobra's invasion of Benzheen, Hawk led the Joes in their biggest operation ever, as well as their first non-covert operation. The Battle of Benzheen was fought throughout the cities of the nation, while Hawk tried to appease the spoiled, unreasonable Emir of Benzheen. During the long battle, seven more Joes lost their lives, including all but one member of Battle Force 2000. The conflict came to an abrupt, unsatisfying conclusion when the Emir came to an agreement with Cobra Commander while at gunpoint.

Over the next few years, Cobra continued to strike around the world, with the Joes there to stop them. After the Joes helped to protect Destro from the bounty placed in his head by Cobra Commander, Destro and the Baroness became occasional allies of the Joes. At the same time, Billy and Zartan were revealed to be alive. Zartan, too, turned his back on Cobra. The Joes were then involved in a number of conflicts between Cobra and Destro at the Silent Castle in the tiny eastern European country of Trans-Carpathia. New groups -- Ninja Force, the Eco-Warriors and the Drug Elimination Force -- became part of the team and fought Cobra in various parts of the world. Cobra Commander became more ambitious than ever and backed Borovian rebels led by Metz, a dangerous man encountered by the Joes in the past. The Commander essentially conquered the small nation and set his sights on neighboring countries. Using various forms of mind control, he forced Destro, the Baroness, Zartan, Storm Shadow and Billy to join Cobra. With the added threat of Dr. Mindbender -- resurrected by the same technology that created Serpentor -- the Commander became as dangerous as he ever was. After the Joes' Star Brigade headed joined forces with the October Guard to stop an asteroid from colliding with Earth, they turned their attention back to Cobra. Hawk, Stalker, Snake-Eyes, Flint and Lady Jaye were advising the leader of a nation threatened by Cobra. They attempted to rescue Cobra Commander's brainwashed pawns, but were forced to retreat and failed to release the Cobras from their Commander's control. A short time later, the Joes were sent back home. Feeling that Cobra's activities were now limited to eastern Europe, certain members of the military decided to disband the G.I. Joe team after its years of service. Some time later, a unified attack of regular military groups attacked and defeated Cobra forces. In the aftermath of the conflict, much of Cobra's high command scattered and disappeared.

{tab=Part 6}New Beginnings

In 2001, seven years after the shutdown of the Joes and the defeat of Cobra, intelligence agents found new evidence of Cobra activities in the Middle East, Europe and South America, some of which were being led by Cobra Commander himself. Additional reports claim that Destro and the Baroness had returned to regain control of Destro's weapons manufacturing business. In the United States, an organized national gang of militarized bikers led by Zartan and the original Dreadnoks had emerged. Surveillance photos taken by a ninja named Kamakura -- a student of Snake-Eyes -- showed that Cobra Commander arrived at Zartan's headquarters in the Florida Everglades and hosted meeting of many former members of Cobra's high command. It was also learned that Cobra created microscopic machines called nanomites that can be used to "infect" both computer systems and people. The military acted quickly and reinstated the G.I. Joe team. In command of the new team was Hawk, now a member of the Jugglers. Hawk now serves an advisory role, with Duke in direct command of the team. Many of the original Joes are a part of the team and serve as field commanders, leading a new group of raw recruits. Once again, the G.I. Joe team is ready to defend the world against Cobra.

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