

Cobra Command

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{tab=Part 1}

"I'm not going to be ground under the wheels of big government!... I'm going to create an underground organization that will bypass government restrictions, and garner power through terrorism and extortion!... I won't stop until my organization coils around the whole world like a giant cobra!" -- Cobra Commander, ca. 1978

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, a bitter man, warped by personal tragedy and his failed business, drove off into America, blaming all his miseries on big business and big government. He had become paranoid to the extreme and decided that if the system was against him, he would create his own system. Traveling the country, he lived in various towns, moving from one motel to another, finding people just like him who blamed their lives' failures on everyone but themselves. He got them involved in pyramid schemes, selling cleaning products and magazines. Using the profits from his shady businesses, he gained followers who agreed with everything he said. Soon, he wasn't just their boss, he was their leader. Finally he was a success, and he was in control. His power only served to feed his ego, making him believe he was as great as his followers thought he was. He had finally found a town that seemed to be made for him: Springfield. Springfield had been a nice little town, but its businesses were failing and its people were becoming disillusioned. The townpeople listened to this man's lies and he soon became the most powerful person in town. Soon, he corrupted the entire town and became their savior. In that small town somewhere in America, a secret organization was founded, its goal to wrap around the entire world like a giant Cobra. The organization became known as Cobra Command, and the man who founded it became known only as Cobra Commander.

By 1982, Cobra was an international organization. Cobra Commander recruited the terrorist known as the Baroness, who served as his lieutenant. Cobra agents spread through the Third World, using terrorism to subvert foreign governments. One of the G.I. Joe team's earliest missions was to free an American ambassador from Cobra agents working in the middle east. The little South American nation of Sierra Gordo was another of Cobra's earliest victims. Unstable governments became Cobra's playground. While G.I. Joe had once been an anti-terrorist organization, it almost exclusively fought Cobra as time went on. The two groups became bitter enemies. The Joes fought Cobra Commander's schemes to assassinate foreign ambassadors and subvert the government of the United States. Cobra used the confusion of the Cold War to its advantage, fighting not only America's G.I. Joe team, but also the Soviets' October Guard.

{tab=Part 2} Battling the Joes and Each Other

Over the years, Cobra's size had grown and more people were needed to control the organization. When Cobra Commander brought the Scottish arms dealer, Destro into Cobra he underestimated the man. He soon found Destro to be more intelligent and competent than he had realized. And when he discovered his most trusted lieutenant, the Baroness, had a past relationship with Destro, Cobra Commander's became extremely paranoid and fearful that Destro would take control of his organization. While keeping a close watch on Destro, the Commander launched an ambitious project with the help of the scientist Dr. Venom. The goal of the plan was to introduce a deadly poison into the United States. After the Joe team foiled their first attempt to use the Alaskan oil pipeline to deliver the toxins, Cobra forces then tried to poison the nation's money supply at its source, the U.S. Treasury. During a battle with the Joes in Washington, Cobra Commander ordered his hired assassin, Major Bludd to kill Destro. The attempt failed, but Cobra became embroiled in a constant power struggle. Cobra's plans were modified and the Joes chased Cobra agents around the world to discover what they were up to. The Cobra courier, Scar-face was allowed to be captured by the Joes. They soon learned that Scar-face had been infected with a virus that would force Joe HQ to be quarantined. The procedure would draw attention to the Joes' location. The Joes used this to their advantage and were ready for Cobra's attack. In the battle that followed, Dr. Venom and Scar-Face were killed and Major Bludd escaped with a comatose Baroness. Bludd attempted to blackmail the Commander, threatening to reveal his treachery to Destro. After the Commander was captured for a time, he fought for control of Cobra against Destro, the Baroness and Bludd. The Commander soon hired the mercenary Zartan, the ninja Storm Shadow and the reputed saboteur, Firefly. The power struggle merely continued with new players added to the game. Cobra Commander even survived an assassination attempt by his own estranged son, Billy, which was orchestrated by the Baroness and Bludd.

Around 1984, Cobra Commander commissioned a new group of elite Cobra soldiers, the Crimson Guard. The Guard was unquestionably loyal to the Commander and most served as deep cover agents, infiltrating America's cities and towns, posing as average citizens. Businessmen, lawyers and accountants, they helped Cobra gain financial assets all over the world. To prove their dedication to Cobra, many Guardsmen underwent plastic surgery and became part of identical "series" of C.G.s, including the well-known "Fred Series". The Crimson Guard commanders were the twin brothers, Tomax and Xamot.

{tab=Part 3} The Nation of Cobra

Amidst the plotting and backstabbing amongst its agents, Cobra went ahead with its most ambitious project to date. Planting evidence for the G.I. Joe team to find, Cobra lured them to the Gulf of Mexico. The Joes were tricked into aggravating a faultline beneath the ocean. The resulting quakes thrust a large piece of the ocean floor above the surface of the Gulf. Cobra already had a freighter in place to occupy the new landmass. The Joes tried to push them off the

island, but with help from Cobra's lawyers and agents within various governments, Cobra Island was declared a sovereign state. This was a tremendous victory for Cobra and a tremendous defeat for G.I. Joe. Now Cobra had a legal right to an installation just miles off the coast of the United States.

Cobra Island was developed rapidly, with an airfield, marina and a new launch base prototype known as a Terror-Drome. Meanwhile, the scientist Dr. Mindbender joined Cobra, bringing with him his Battle Android Troopers. He also proposed an ambitious experiment to Cobra Commander. Using advanced cloning technology, he would combine DNA from the remains of history's greatest warriors to create the ultimate Cobra soldier. Cobra Commander greenlighted the project and gave Mindbender access to Cobra's vast resources. While the project came to fruition in Springfield, G.I. Joe discovered the location of the Cobra-controlled town and launched an invasion. As the Joes fought Cobra troops, Mindbender's creation came to life. He was dubbed Serpentor and was immediately ready for battle. Destro reluctantly put Serpentor in command of the troops while he evacuated the town. Serpentor held the Joes off until the citizens of Springfield left for Cobra Island. The massive airlift was a success, and the Joes were left with an empty, half-destroyed town and no hard evidence that Cobra was there. On Cobra Island, word reached the Commander that Serpentor gained the love of the troops. He realized that the greatest soldiers of history were also ruthless and ambitious leaders and ordered Serpentor's assassination. Once on the island, Serpentor avoided his assassins and proved that if anything happened to him, the "citizens" of Cobra Island would revolt. The two leaders staged an assault on Joe headquarters, eventually leading to the destruction of the base. In the wake of the battle, Cobra Commander and Destro were missing and presumed dead, though they had survived and were trapped deep underground. With his biggest rivals now gone, Serpentor wasted no time in taking control of Cobra. He stepped up Cobra's arms sales and began to sell Terror-Dromes to any nation that would pay their price.

{tab=Part 4} The New Leadership

After escaping the Pit Cobra Commander discovered his comatose son, Billy and vowed to be a better father to him. Destro, meanwhile returned to Scotland and cut all ties to Cobra. Cobra Commander brought Billy to an undercover Crimson Guardsman known as Fred VII. Fred was a mechanical genius and designed prototypes of new Cobra weapons. The Commander asked Fred to make a prosthetic leg for Billy to replace his old one. After doing this, Fred showed Cobra Commander a newly designed suit of battle armor that the commander tested out. With the help of Raptor and the new Cobra Pogo attack vehicle, the Commander intended to return to Cobra and destroy G.I. Joe forever. Billy, however, wanted no part of it and again walked out on his father. The Commander was determined to be a father to Billy and vowed to give up Cobra. Fred was furious. He had given his whole life to Cobra. He wouldn't let the commander just walk away. Fred pulled out his pistol and shouting "You owe me!", he fired a bullet into Cobra Commander's back. Standing over his leader's lifeless body, he picked up the helmet to Cobra Commander's battle armor, noting, "Funny thing about this helmet...Could be anybody inside..." He and Raptor buried the commander's body and Fred left for Cobra Island. There, he claimed to be the true Cobra Commander. When he was forced to remove his helmet and the Baroness found out his true identity, Fred thought his scam had failed, and he wouldn't live for much longer. Instead, the Baroness became Fred's "silent partner," finally getting her chance to rule Cobra, albeit from behind the scenes. Serpentor was outraged, but the troops believed the Commander had returned, and he was forced to accept him.

In the tiny nation of Frusenland, a new prime minister, Volff, was elected and decided to change his predecessor's policy of buying Cobra Terror-Dromes for defense. Several were already in place, but Cobra was not willing to give up one of their best "customers". While still in Frusenland, Baroness, Fred VII and Dr. Mindbender activated the secret device hardwired into every launch base. The paranoia-inducing low frequency radio waves that the bases transmitted created civil unrest among the normally peaceful citizens. Volff had no choice but accept Cobra's help to keep the rioters in check. Before long, the Joes arrived and learned the secret of the Terror-Dromes. They exposed the truth and Cobra was forced to leave the nation in defeat. "Cobra Commander's" failure only served to strengthen Serpentor's position of leadership.

The conflict between Fred and Serpentor soon reached the breaking point, and a heated argument turned into a civil war on Cobra Island. The divided Cobra forces fought for days and soon, Serpentor used a secret electronic "black box" stolen from Joe headquarters to make a deal with the United States. The Joe team entered the war on Serpentor's side, considering him a chosen monarch and the Commander (Fred) a military dictator. After a few more days of fighting, Fred's forces were about to be overrun when Zartan fired an arrow at Serpentor, killing him. In moments, Dr. Mindbender -- who had been supporting Serpentor -- made a deal with Fred right on the battlefield and ended the civil war. The Joes were forced to leave the island, defeated.

Under the leadership of Fred VII, Cobra established a new, secret, legitimate town in the United States. Located on the New Jersey shore, Broca Beach was meant to be the new Springfield. Meanwhile, Fred proved to be just as paranoid as the original Commander and staged an assault on Destro's castle, seeing the arms dealer as a threat to Cobra. Destro gained the upper hand in the battle and decided to take control of Cobra, rather than wipe them out. He restructured the entire organization, hoping to end the childish squabbling that had plagued the organization in the past. Eventually, Destro again grew tired of Cobra, and along with the Baroness returned to Scotland and went into semi-retirement.

{tab=Part 5} Back with a Vengeance

In Destro's absence, those who remained in charge of Cobra were shocked when the true Cobra Commander returned,

revealing that Fred's shot had not been fatal. The Commander's Crimson Guard recovered his comatose body and treated his wound. After years of building a new financial empire the Commander decided to reclaim his organization. He took Fred and many other "traitors" including Zartan, Dr. Mindbender, Billy and Firefly and locked them in Cobra Island's landlocked freighter. Using explosives, he then buried the freighter under the rubble of the island's volcano.

After that, Cobra Commander retook Cobra and started a new plan. He took over the town of Millville by brainwashing the town's population, turning it into another Springfield filled with virtual slaves, building Cobra vehicles and weapons. Soon afterward, Cobra entered into a pact with the Emir of Benzheen, an oil-rich country in the Middle East. He backed Benzheen in a war which led to the deaths of many members of the G.I. Joe team. After the Battle of Benzheen, Cobra Commander planned an assault on Destro's castle in Scotland. Though Destro had gone into semi-retirement, Cobra Commander wanted to "put that uppity foreigner in his place." Just before the attack, he learned that Billy and Zartan had escaped the freighter. They both ended up rescuing Destro during the attack, and later assisting the Joes and Destro in saving the Baroness. While many of his schemes failed, the commander committed Cobra to many operations. Over the next few years, Cobra attacked Destro's new castle in Trans-Carpathia, fought the Joes in Millville and even assaulted the Joes' headquarters in Utah. Eventually, Cobra turned to the chaotic, former-Soviet nation of Borovia. There, he supported the new president, Metz and personally executed two Borovian freedom fighters, Magda and the White Clown, both of whom had been involved with the Joe team. Using the brain-wave scanner, the Commander brain-washed Destro, the Baroness, Zartan, Storm Shadow and even Billy. They had all broken their ties with Cobra long ago, but by controlling their minds Cobra Commander had re-formed Cobra's "high command." After the Joes rescue attempts failed, they were forced to return to the United States. Shortly afterward, the military disbanded the G.I. Joe team. This would have been wonderful news to Cobra, but soon afterward, Cobra forces in Europe fell to a unified attack by military forces. In the wake of this conflict, most of Cobra's high command disappeared, and Cobra Commander himself became an international fugitive.

{tab=Part 6} Resurrection

In the first seven years after Cobra's defeat, Cobra Commander was spotted in the Middle East, Europe and South America. He started to rebuild his organization, recruiting people with grudges against America and the western world, and disillusioned soldiers from around the world. Some reports of Cobra's activities were considered rumor and speculation until Cobra Commander was spotted in the Florida Everglades, at the headquarters of the Dreadnoks, now a national biker gang reclaimed by Zartan and turned into a far more military operation. Despite Cobra Commander's progress in reestablishing Cobra, he decided he needed the support of this new Dreadnoks organization. In 2001, he tracked down many of his former agents and invited them to a meeting reluctantly hosted by Zartan. Also in attendance were Destro, the Baroness, Major Bludd, Dr. Mindbender, Tomax and Xamot.

The Commander's newest scheme was to use nano-mites -- programable microscopic machines -- to "infect" computer systems and people around the world and allow Cobra to control them or destroy them. From the moment Destro arrived the years-old conflict between the two men continued. Within days, Destro had infected the Commander with nano-mites that affected his mind. He locked the raving, babbling Commander in a padded cell and proceeded to take control of Cobra. He revealed to the other Cobra agents that he had infected them as well, threatening to activate them if they did not follow his orders. Many considered Destro's actions to be out of character for the arms dealer, but they were forced to follow his orders. As Destro began to carry out the Commander's plans, the U.S. military reinstated the G.I. Joe team, reigniting a conflict that began two decades ago.

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