



**DECLASSIFIED**

**STAR**

**BRIGADE**



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SECRET

Copy 6 of 1 copies each  
of 3 pages series 1

# THE DECLASSIFIED REPORT

## Introduction

By Chris "Werecat" Chung

Hello everyone,

Wow, what can I say? Tempus fugit! Ten months ago we were just finishing up our Brazilian issue, and here we are again! Welcome to our seventh issue of The Declassified Report magazine. Yup, you read that correctly. Magazine. While we may still colloquially call this our "newsletter", that term no longer does justice to all the fine folks who worked very hard to get this to you.

Now that the G.I. Joe Retaliation film has finally hit after its unexpected hiatus; and now that we're in the full swing of the convention, we can turn our attention to the focus of this issue: Star Brigade! Star Brigade is perhaps the most controversial branch of the G.I. Joe tree in terms of in-fiction mythology (with Cobra-La being a close second), as it explored a whole new universe (no pun intended) of the line that was for the most part, previously untouched in the classic A Real American Hero toy line. From articulation changes, presentation and aesthetic variances, and hostile aliens, seemingly everything was fair game to explore, and everything was a departure from the norm. Love it or a loathe it; no one can say it wasn't a bold attempt in terms of evolving the franchise. Ultimately it wasn't the success Hasbro had wanted, but it has left behind a fascinating legacy of information that we'll explore.

- Sam Damon leads us off with the production run of Star Brigade, and a handy checklist that will help you keep track of what you have, and what you still need.

- Legendary Hasbro insider extraordinaire; the original G.I. Joe product manager; and later the former Vice President of Hasbro's Boys Toys, Kurt Bozigan, sheds some light on the thought process, creation, and design of the Star Brigade line and how it fit within the ever-changing and increasingly difficult dynamics of a very fluid toy market in the 1990's.

- Dan Klingensmith takes us into the intriguing world of the shapeshifting Manimals, and showcases what was planned for these monstrous alien invaders, and what eventually came to be.

- Chris Murry picks up where Kurt and Dan leave off and chronicles more of the unproduced world of Star Brigade, including the cancelled Replicators, as well as non-toy items that carried the Star Brigade license. Chris also pulls double duty as the focus of our Collector Spotlight.

- Mike Taber profiles and reviews the second Star Brigade version of Duke, and articulates the pros and cons of the figure, and even explains why it still has a lasting appeal even though one might not care for the general theme of Star Brigade.

- Roger Taft showcases the spiritual pre-cursors to Star Brigade in space-themed Halloween costumes, lunchboxes, and dog tags that set the stage and later carried forward ideas that ultimately materialized into the line.

- And last but not least, Don Maue begins the first of our new Community Club profile, introducing the Indiana COIL Club and all of the affiliates.

As usual a huge round of thanks goes out to all our contributors, donors, and sponsors. For those of you new to The Declassified Report and JoeDeclassified.com, you should know that everything we do is a happy Pro bono labor of love for the community, and the fruits of our labor are always yours to enjoy for free. The only funds we accept are those from volunteers who want to help us with printing costs. I would also like to thank our booth volunteers, website, and podcast staff. This magazine is merely one part of or a greater whole, and that whole is not complete without the other components.

For those interested in contributing an article or pics; becoming a focus of our Collector Spotlight; or if you would like to have your group featured in our Community Club profile, please contact us at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

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## STAR BRIGADE IN PRODUCTION

By Sam "Nomad" Damon

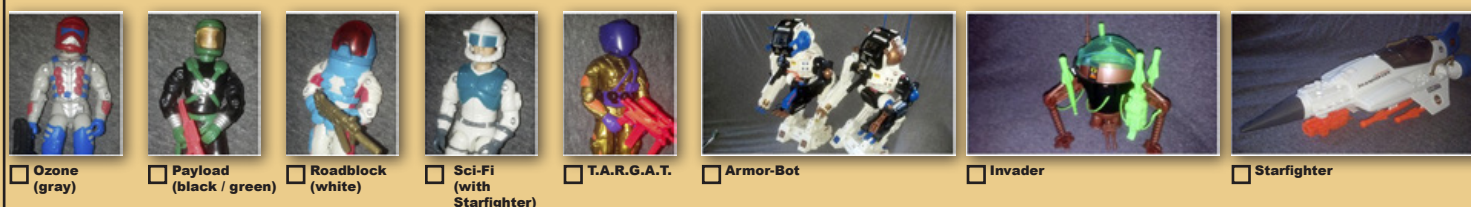
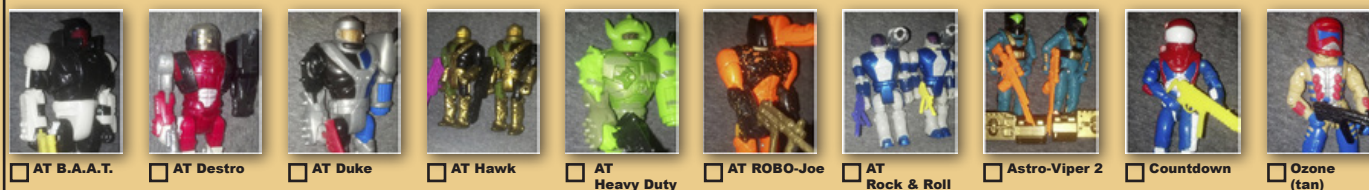
...What, *Star Brigade*?!

Yes, to many G.I. Joe collectors, *Star Brigade* (1993 - 1994) is the untouchable. It's the dark horse of the A Real American Hero line; the last-ditch exhalation that most would swear single-handedly carried with it the doom of the G.I. Joe franchise for years to follow. So why discuss it?

Love it or hate it, *Star Brigade* is part of the history of the Joe line. As Joe archeologists and historians, the more obscure and undiscussed (at least in polite circles), the more appealing it is to the JoeDeclassified staff to try to unearth and bring to the forth more information. That said, no good discussion of the topic can come without starting with what is known: the produced pieces of the *Star Brigade* line-up. So, without further ado...

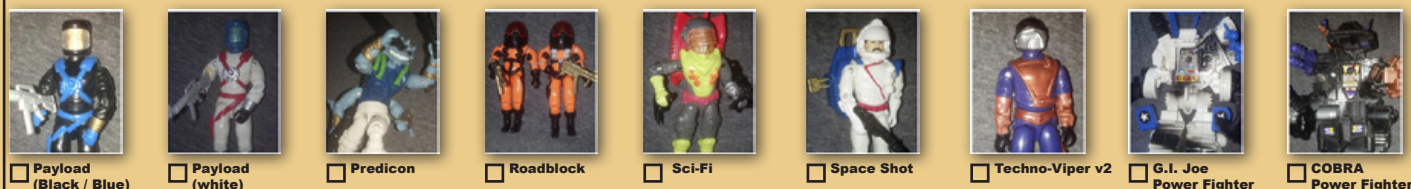
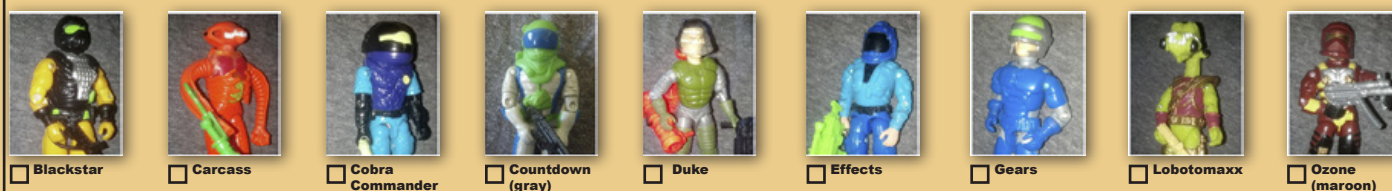
### 1993:

The year 1993 featured an onslaught of G.I. Joe sub-brands; Mega-Marines, Dino-Hunters, Battle Corps, Ninja Force, Street Fighter, and *Star Brigade* (for the "why?" see Kirk Bozgian's article in this magazine). In total, 13 carded figures were released (with one significant paint variation), two vehicles with pilots, and one stand-alone vehicle.



### 1994:

In 1994 the line saw the continuation of Joe in space, as well as other areas. Battle Corps and Ninja Force (with the Shadow Ninjas) were present as well, but *Star Brigade* largely carried the line. All-in-all 14 carded figures and two piloted vehicles saw release under the *Star Brigade* banner.



## STAR BRIGADE IN PRODUCTION

By Sam "Nomad" Damon

### 2001:

In 2001 Kay-Bee stores saw the return of Star Brigade, albeit in a very limited sense. While there were no Star Brigade logos on the packaging, three figures originally planned but cancelled for the Star Brigade line were released as Kay-Bee exclusives. Although different in paint scheme from the originals, the packaging and accessories remained largely the same:



☐ Iguanas



☐ Slythor



☐ War-Wolf

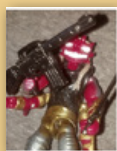
### Foreign:

Star Brigade is one of the select domestic sub-sets of the G.I. Joe line to have seen released as a sub-set in another country. While Tiger Force, Eco Warriors, Sky Patrol, and Python Patrol all saw limited release in some foreign countries, Star Brigade was the only sub-set released in Mexico. Additionally, many of the figures saw release as main-line items in India under the Funskool banner, although without the Star Brigade title on the cards:

### Mexico:



☐ Lobotomaxx



☐ Predicon



☐ Carcass

### Salesman samples:

American Salesman samples exist of the three Mexican figures on U.S. carding, but are in no way different from the Mexican final releases other than Spanish-language stickers applied to the packages.



☐ Lobotomaxx



☐ Predicon

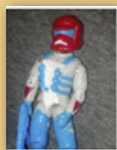


☐ Carcass

### Funskool:



☐ Countdown



☐ Ozone



☐ Sci-Fi



☐ T.A.R.G.A.T.

### Notable Figure Variations:

- Armor-Tech Hawk (packaged with Armor-Bot vehicle; available with either a pink or black gun)
- Armor-Tech Rock & Roll (available with yellow or purple accessory trees)
- Astro-Viper v2 (the missile launcher is available both with/without tie points for string)
- Ozone (tan)
- Ozone (gray)
- Payload (black/green)
- Roadblock (white)
- Sci-Fi (packaged with G.I. Joe Starfighter vehicle)
- Countdown (gray)
- Gears (packaged with G.I. Joe Power Fighter)
- Ozone (maroon)
- Payload (black/blue)
- Payload (white)
- Roadblock (with either silver or black painted grenades)
- Techno-Viper v2 (packaged with Cobra Power Fighter)

### Notable Vehicle Variations:

- Armor-Bot (came in two reversed-color variations; on each, the gold and blue plastics are 100% reversed from the other)
- Power Fighter – Cobra (available either with or without silver over-spray)



## Star Brigade: Declassified!

By Kurt Bozigian

The era of G.I. Joe from 1990 to 1994 is the most dynamic in Joe's history. I consider it to be the "golden age" of the G.I. Joe brand because it is a time marked by creative energy, innovation, and teamwork. It was also a time of internal corporate drama. For collectors and fans it is probably the most controversial period in G.I. Joe's long history. This is a behind-the-scenes look at one of those unique Special Forces and how it came to be. This is the Declassified backstory of G.I. Joe Star Brigade! In order to understand how Star Brigade was launched, it is important to examine the economic, cultural, and competitive battlefields surrounding the G.I. Joe brand from 1990 through 1994.



### The Economic Battlefield:

Total G.I. Joe sales peaked in 1986, four years after the brand was re-introduced in 1982. This is highly unusual. G.I. Joe had already out-lived the usual "one and done" product life cycle of most other boys action figure brands. G.I. Joe was always Hasbro's most visible product line both inside the walls of Hasbro and externally in the retail marketplace. Although Transformers was a much bigger revenue generator, G.I. Joe delivered more pre-tax profits. It was an internally created brand with no outside inventor royalties attached to it. Those profit dollars were put to work acquiring competitors and creating new opportunities for Hasbro in games, girls' toys, preschool, and activity toys.

So, when sales started to slide by 1990, G. I. Joe was under even more scrutiny from Hasbro's senior management than ever before. Questions about Joe's future were being asked; Is G.I. Joe over? Can we reverse its sales slide? Should we retire G.I. Joe now, rest the brand for a few years, and bring Joe back sometime in the future?

### The Competitive Battlefield:

G.I. Joe's super power status in boys' action was being challenged by boys looking for fresh new playthings and a toy industry that saw action figures as a way to quickly generate sales revenue. Action figures were the largest segment of the toy industry generating over \$1 billion yearly. So, every year more and more product lines were created by competitors and bought by retailers who added these new concepts to their aisles. There was no formula for success. Success depended upon the fickleness of 6 year old boys. The hope was maybe one or two would catch on. The others would be closed out and quickly become land fill. New brands like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and later Mighty Morphin Power Rangers appealed to younger fans with zany character designs and outrageous storylines and quickly dominated the marketplace outselling both G.I. Joe and Transformers.

By Toy Fair 1993 the action figure category exploded with 56 new or continuing action figure lines being presented to retail toy buyers. Seventeen actually made it to store shelves. Every one of them from Aladdin to Mighty Max to Crash Dummies were designed to appeal to younger boys with cartoony character designs, bright neon colored plastic, and another necessary piece of the arsenal some form of entertainment, either movies or TV.

The target market for boys' action was being driven younger to boys starting at 3 and 4 years old then moving up to the traditional target market of six to 12. G.I. Joe had a broad range of play appeal from boys 6 to 12. However, our hard corps target market, or sweet spot, was boys 8 to 12. Suddenly, G.I. Joe found itself being attacked on its flanks. It was losing market share on the younger end of the scale to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and later Mighty Morphin Power Rangers; and on the upper end to the new Super Nintendo Entertainment System when it was introduced in 1991. This was the volatile and turbulent marketplace I returned to when I assumed command of G.I. Joe and all of Hasbro's boys' toys during 1990.

### The Cultural Battlefield:

Marketing professionals seek a sustainable competitive advantage for brands they work on. This is a unique selling proposition that separates your brand from all others. In the case of G.I. Joe, our advantage or USP always was "When you play army, you play G.I. Joe!" We built the brand around this theme and drove it home in product, packaging, promotions, and TV programming. Suddenly, the marketplace was shifting. Times were changing and the worst thing we could do was ignore what was happening around us. Marketing professionals call it marketing myopia. We needed to change our strategy, employ new tactics, and go on the attack.



## Star Brigade: Declassified!

By Kurt Bozigian

Brands travel through a natural product life cycle from introduction, growth, maturity, and decline. This life cycle is accelerated in the toy business. It is the job of toy marketing experts to recognize the product life cycle stage your brand is in, then search and develop ways to re-invent yourself and send your brand off in new stages of the product life cycle.

This was the challenging and dynamic battleground the G.I. Joe team of marketing, R&D, sales and engineers found ourselves fighting on. Our strategy was simple and bold. According to our 1993 marketing plan, it was time to grow G.I. Joe into a mega-brand. A toy icon. A force to be reckoned with by our competitors. It was time to "Attack! Attack! Attack!"

The objective was to fight on many fronts with what we were calling a "Divide and Conquer" strategy by creating new sub-segments. G.I. Joe would be a unique language that would enable us to create anything related to boys' action toys.

Each sub-segment would include figures and unique vehicles that would all ship together at one time so they could be merchandized in stores as a total unit. These new forces would be released every quarter in an effort to drive kids into stores on a regular basis looking for new items in the G.I. Joe line. Why would toy retailers need to buy any new line when they could simply buy G.I. Joe?

In military terms we were employing an encirclement strategy. Dominate the battlefield by surrounding it with new forces and re-enforcements. Our goal: capture more retail shelf space and destroy competition before they had a chance to gain a beachhead.

### Special Weapons and Tactics:

Tactically, we did a number of other things designed to help re-grow the brand. First, we "toyized" the product line. We added spring-fired missiles and designed every G.I. Joe vehicle to be a unique with some toy feature. The objective was to have both great looking vehicles and fun toys!

We added a graphic explosion to every figure and vehicle package that we called a "burstable" feature and screamed on the package what play feature each figure or toy included. "Weapons Really Shoot!" became our battle cry.

Next we put all weapons and accessories on runner frames and molded them in bright neon colors to appeal to younger fans. This made the accessories appear larger on the blister card and gave the consumer the impression of more value. I would later learn at every JoeCon how controversial some of these decisions were. Older Joe fans hated the neon colors, larger weapons, and even some our Special Forces. We put G.I. Joe back on TV with new shows produced by DIC. I don't apologize. We gave our sales force exciting news to take to their retail customers and we reversed the sales slide over the next several years.

**G.I. JOE STAR BRIGADE**

G.I. Joe's STAR BRIGADE rockets into the homes of millions of kids throughout the universe, thanks to blockbuster advertising for '93 that's hotter than the sun!

**New!**  
**6195 STAR BRIGADE™ FIGHTERS ASST.**  
Ages: 5 & Up

- Battle-astronaut troopers take the action into space!
- With specialized deep-space battle suits and helmets!
- Fully poseable figures with spring-fired weapons!

PK: 24

**New!**  
**6124 STAR BRIGADE™ ARMOR-TECH™ FIGHTERS ASST.**  
Ages: 5 & Up

- High-tech figures in techno-future styled robotic battle armor!
- Built-in body armor and spring-fired weapons.
- Fully poseable figures and exciting accessories!

PK: 24

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## Star Brigade: Declassified!

By Kurt Bozigian

### Behind the Scenes:

A pivotal year for us was 1991 for several reasons. First, Operation Desert Storm, threw Hasbro senior management into a panic. It was erroneously believed that a war would hurt the sales of G.I. Joe. Management bought into the long-held myth that the Vietnam War adversely affected sales of the original 12" G.I. Joe. However, all my research showed that G.I. Joe sales had consistently grown throughout the 1960's and actually peaked in 1972 during the Vietnam War.

What really hurt 12" sales was the OPEC oil embargo and the rise of plastic prices which made molding 12" figures and vehicles cost prohibitive. It was probably also a lack of exciting product and an unwillingness to change. But that's a story for another time. So, Hasbro senior management suggested we adopt a more fantasy approach to G. I. Joe. The Joe team resisted as best we could and that explains why sub-brands like Streetfighter II, Mortal Kombat, D.E.F., Mega-Marines, etc. were created, developed, and successfully added to the line.

This year is also important in the history of G.I. Joe for another reason. Hasbro acquired the Kenner, Parker, Tonka Corporation. Almost immediately, senior management pitted the two boys' toys groups and their different approaches to the product development processes against each other.

Hasbro's staff of talented marketing, R&D designers, and engineers spent over 10 years working closely with our advertising agency Griffin-Bacal and its animation studio, Sunbow Productions to create and develop some of the most iconic toy lines and kids television programming like: G.I. Joe, Transformers, My Little Pony, Jem and the Holograms, etc.

Our expertise was in creating intellectual properties and building them into brands which Hasbro could own, control, and use to generate both toy revenue and licensing income. We owned and controlled the destiny of our own intellectual properties.

Kenner built its boys business by licensing potential Hollywood blockbuster movies and produced replicas of movie characters and playsets. Their expertise was in working with Hollywood studios, copying figure designs from movies and using old tools to simulate vehicles from those movies. Of course, the Hasbro way became expensive to do for every brand and eventually the bean counters looked at how Kenner did business and decided that was a cheaper more efficient way to develop toys. It was a management orientation of "no risk . . . all reward!" What they never understood was that you were at the mercy of a movie's box office success and your shelf life was about 6 weeks. You did not control your own destiny! (Think G.I. Joe: Retaliation!)

Early in 1992, we learned the Kenner team was planning on re-introducing their successful Star Wars toy line. G.I. Joe was not going to let that happen without a fight. Game On! We rocketed into action by creating our own version of space wars – G.I. Joe Star Brigade!

### 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 G.I. Joe Star Brigade Launches

The backstory was quite simple. Cobra forces had built a scientific and military command and control base on the dark side of the moon. G.I. Joe forces were called into action to battle the forces of evil and regain control of the high frontier from Cobra.

"High-tech astronauts take the battle action into the darkened depths of space to protect the universe from Cobra invaders, with specialized deep-space battle suits and shooting weapons, this cosmic clash is hotter than the sun." G.I. Joe package copy.

The first year line was quickly pulled together and featured uniquely sculpted figures along with repaints. Old tooling was used to add vehicles like the Cobra Invader (POGO) and the G.I. Joe Star Fighter (Cobra Invader) to which we added spring-fired rocket launchers. The Armor-Bot was a newly tooled vehicle that was originally going to be the key item in the G.I. Joe Battle Corps line. However, its futuristic look was a perfect fit for a battle on the lunar surface so it was recruited to be the lead item in the line.



## Star Brigade: Declassified!

By Kurt Bozigian

Armor Tech Star Brigade figures were battle armored warriors with futuristically styled built-in robo- armor and spring-fired missiles. They are the ugliest, weirdest looking G.I. Joe humanoid figures ever created and are my least favorite designs. I still cannot believe we produced them.

In addition to a spectacular TV commercial the line was launched with a Star Brigade card promotion. We on-packed FREE into 2 million figures an assortment of 20 different collector cards of live action shots from our commercials.

The 1994 Star Brigade line included the Lunartix, galactic bounty hunters with names like Predacon, Carcass, and Lobotomaxx and Power Fighter robotic space suits. These characters are some of the best examples of creativity from our designers and it was this level of imagination and creativity that kept the G.I. Joe brand alive and growing despite a changing and evolving marketplace.

Now you know and knowing is half the battle!

**New!**  
**6284**  
**COBRA™ INVADER™**  
Ages: 5 & Up  
• Cobra's one-man planetary attack pod!  
• Three lunar-modified landing legs!  
• Opening, atmospheric command canopy!  
• Spring-fired rocket launching weapon!  
PK: 12

**New!**  
**6948**  
**G.I. JOE® STARFIGHTER™**  
Ages: 5 & Up  
• Super-sonic space jet with phaser-tech fire power!  
• Positionable tail fin for vertical blastoff!  
• Spring-action launcher really shoots!  
• Includes Sci-Fi™ fighter pilot!  
PK: 12

**New!**  
**6166**  
**G.I. JOE® STAR BRIGADE™ ARMOR-BOT™**  
Ages: 5 & Up  
• The biggest American hero ever!  
• The ultimate robot warrior vehicle!  
• Features realistic robot voice and electronic lights and sound!  
• Spring-fired weapons and action moves!  
• Includes Hawk™ figure.  
PK: 4




Kirk Bozigian was the original product manager on G.I. Joe A Real American Hero from its creation in 1980 through its introduction in 1982 up to 1986. From 1986 until 1988 he ran the G.I. Joe Flag Points direct marketing program. He returned to boys toys in 1988 and in 1990 became Vice president of Hasbro Boys Toys until 1994. In 1996 he left Hasbro to form his own marketing and inventing company, HKB Ideas. Today he is an adjunct marketing instructor at Providence College. He continues to invent and consult with his business partners and friends, Steve D'Aguanno and Fred Vuono who he worked with at Hasbro. You can reach him at [hkbideas@aol.com](mailto:hkbideas@aol.com) or friend him at [www.facebook.com/hkirk.bozigian](http://www.facebook.com/hkirk.bozigian).

## Manimals

by Dan Klingensmith

As stated in an earlier article in this publication, in the early 1990s, Hasbro made the decision to take the battle between G.I. Joe and COBRA into space. One thing neither side expected was to be battling a new, ruthless enemy... the Lunartix Empire! Not much is known about the Lunartix Empire other than they were mean, ugly, and didn't care for each other, let alone humans.

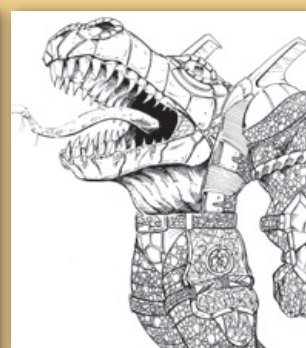
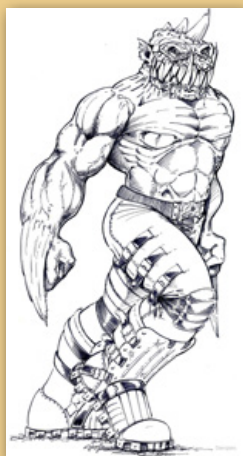
After the release of Predacon, Carcass, and Lobotomaxx in early 1994, a subset series called Manimals were also planned to be released in late 1994 as part of the Lunartix Empire. This subset was to include six alien characters under the names: Warwolf, Slythor, Vortex, Iguanus, Spasma, and Zig Zag. The concept for the Manimals derived from The Real Ghostbusters toy line. In 1988, those toys had the function of different body parts protruding out when squeezed, dubbed "Fright Features." The unique feature of the Manimals was that each figure had a transformational feature that required hand operation to facilitate the gruesome reveal from a humanoid character into an enraged alien. The Manimals were considerably brawnier than the typical G.I. Joe figure at the time. A large part of the scale difference was due to the size of the buck (or standard figure model) that was created by engineers who were unfamiliar with or unable to put these type of mechanisms into a 3 3/4" figure. Although it would have been interesting to see where Hasbro would have taken G.I. Joe with the addition of an alien force, it was not to be. The company moved the G.I. Joe design team from Pawtucket, Rhode Island to Cincinnati, Ohio, resulting in the cancellation of this segment of the G.I. Joe line. Undaunted, Hasbro designers were working on developing the toy line. There was a plan for another series of Manimals that were expected to be released soon after the first set. This series was at the model stage when the announcement came of G.I. Joe line being cancelled altogether. Some of the working names for these characters were Eyeclops, Mantizoid, Slaver, Vax, Tarantulus, and Arachnoid.

Printed below is information on and the thought process behind some of the Manimals and images of both series. Enjoy!

Designed in the summer of 1993 by Kurt Groen, Iguanus's design was heavily influenced by Ancient Egypt. Not only did Iguanus have broad shoulders, but the shape of the helmet and the detail of a serpent represented the helmet of a Pharaoh. If you look closely at his legs, you can see two hands wrapped his calves. These hands symbolized the hands of Ra, god of the dead, dragging Iguanus to the underworld.

When designing, Kurt knew the function of the mechanism and liked the idea of an alligator head coming from Iguanus's chest when he transformed from a humanoid figure to an alien. At the time of drawing the alligator head, Kurt liked the idea of a large tongue projecting out from Iguanus's throat. Although he was unsure whether or not this could be done for production, the engineers were able to make it be a functional piece of the final product.

\*Iguanus's working name was Dragon Lord



Another design from the summer of 1993 by Kurt Groen was Slythor. One of Kurt's favorite Manimals, he based him on a rat type of creature who wore sunglasses. When looking at the spikes protruding from Slythor's hands, this was a direct reference of Marvel's Wolverine character.

When Slythor was not in his humanoid figure form, his chest would open and fold out to resemble a snake type of character. This mechanism function would also be used on an unknown character for the next series which will be shown below.

\*Although the sculpt sheet is labeled "Snake-Fig", Kurt recalled the working name to be Slythor throughout the entire design process.

## Manimals

by Dan Klingensmith

As mentioned earlier, one of the characters from the second series of Manimals was Eyeclops. The only thing Kurt recalled about this character was the fact that when he went from calm to angry, the chest would raise and a big mouth would appear.

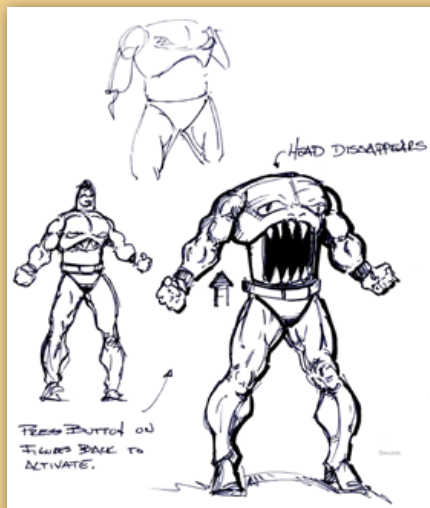
When looking at the image below, it almost resembles a werewolf type of character. In some ways, he looks as though he is a distant cousin of the Wookiees' from Star Wars.

The second rendering is of Eyeclops in his humanoid form. Looking at the symbolism on his armbands and the use of a feather on his head, there seems to be some references to the Native American culture. The face somewhat resembles the face of a gorilla.

The third image is of Eyeclops in alien mode. When comparing to the other designs, this piece has the eyeball drawn in the center of the chest and the giant mouth is revealed.



This design shows the functionality of Eyeclops. Notice Kurt's notes regarding how to activate the feature and what happens once the chest is raised.



Below is the design is for an unknown Manimal. From the elaborate helmet to the symbolism on his armbands, it looks as though this character also had some Ancient Egyptian influences. As you can tell from the chest, this character would turn into some type of bug-like creature. When you look at the transformation sketch, it looks as though it could loosely come from the centipede family.



*\*Special Thanks to both Vinnie D'Alleva and Kurt Groen for their assistance*

Dan Klingensmith grew up playing with G.I. Joe as a child and started collecting in the early 1990s. He is currently working on getting approval for a book that will showcase images, the designer's inspiration, and the creation process of making G.I. Joe one of the most recognizable toy lines ever! Dan can be reached at [Dansjoes.com@cox.net](mailto:Dansjoes.com@cox.net) or Dan Klingensmith Jr. on Facebook.

## The Unproduced, Secret World of Star Brigade

By Chris "Topson" Murray

Hasbro designers created quite a few interesting concepts for the Star Brigade line that were never used. A few three-dimensional prototypes and various art pieces have surfaced and have shown fans the potential G.I. Joe toys that could have been made in 1994 and 1995 if Hasbro had not canceled the brand.

Under the "Star Brigade" banner, the Armor Tech and Power Fighter sub-groups were released between 1993 and 1994, and would have led to the Manimals, Replicators, and Alien Encounter factions, which were planned to be released from the latter part of 1994 into 1995. The Manimals are discussed in greater detail in another article within this publication, while the rest of these sub-groups will be discussed below. All the information presented has been gathered from interviews with former Hasbro designers, prototypes, and concept art.

### Star Brigade

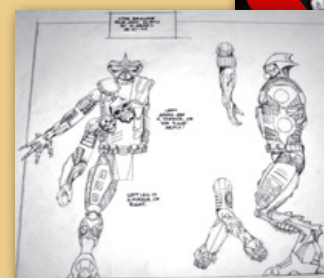
The G.I. Joe team would have welcomed at least two new members to Star Brigade, as prototypes of new versions of Falcon and Payload have surfaced. Falcon would have had new head, upper torso, and arm sculpt. The waist and legs would have been reused from molds of an existing character, but it is unknown what waist and legs would have been used. Falcon would not have had new legs because the 2-up (that's a 2:1 scaled sculpture of the figure) and all known 1:1 scale resin figures do not include a waist or legs. This suggests that said parts would have been previously used on other figures and not required 2-up models.) Payload, on the other hand would have been a completely new sculpt. This Payload would have looked more like his Version 1 mold, but less bulky and would have had a removable helmet.



Cobra would have added a new vehicle into its arsenal: the Interceptor, to battle G.I. Joe. This spacecraft would have been packaged with a new pilot. The vehicle would have carried one figure and would have come with an ejector seat. It also would have had working lights and spring-loaded missile launchers. It has been theorized that the vehicle would have come with a laser projection system similar to that used in the G.I. Joe Ghoststriker X-16, released in 1993. Another interesting feature would have been a handle in the rear between the two jet engines. This play feature would have allowed the child to better pretend flying the interceptor through space after G. I. Joe. There are two different versions of this vehicle known to exist, a long sleek nosed version and a shorter blunt nosed version; it is not known which design came first.



The Lunartix Empire would have added two new aliens, the likes of which the G. I. Joe brand had never seen before. These monstrosities were Thrasher and War Dog, and both figures would have been released in 1995. Thrasher was a six-armed alien and would have been in a larger scale than regular G.I. Joes, much like the other Manimals. A cost input drawing (a drawing that breaks down all the parts and paint applications to help determine final cost of a toy) shows that the figure would have come with fiber optic light pipes in the eyes sockets to give the figure the appearance of glowing eyes. The "Thrasher" name has nothing to do with the Dreadnoks' Thunder Machine driver. It is unknown as to how it was given to the multi-armed alien, and just coincidentally was the name rumored to be attached to this concept. Also, the alien Thrasher would have been the alien companion to a character



## The Unproduced, Secret World of Star Brigade

By Chris "Topson" Murray

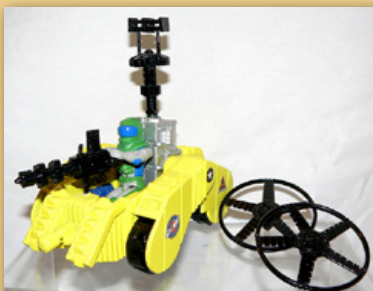
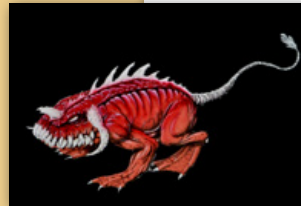
called "Shockwave the Human Gun," about whom very little is known. War Dog was a large dog-like alien with working pincers and a forked tail. Some of the alternate, working names for this character were "Hellhound" and "Big Mouth." Keep in mind that early concepts go through prototype names like Lobotomaxx probably goes through V-neck sweaters.

### Armor Tech

The Armor Tech figures released in 1994 were different than the figures pictured in a prominent 1993 catalog. The figures were black silhouettes of the Transformers Action Masters line and were listed as including "Electronic Lights and Sounds" that were body activated. It is theorized that lifting the arms would have caused the actions to activate. The Heavy Duty figure has a receptacle on its chest that could have carried an LED light. In 1995, the Armor Tech subset would have continued with the introduction of Techno-Walkers. These figures would have been a deluxe Armor Tech figure with an interesting play feature. Each figure would have been able to walk on its own! The feet of the figures would have been "C" shaped for stability and it is theorized that inside the figure would have been a wind-up gear system that moved the legs. The first wave of this new group would have consisted of General Hawk, Firefly, an unnamed Cobra robot, and an unnamed G.I. Joe robot. 7,8

### Power Fighters

The Power Fighter Subset debuted in a 1993 catalog as ground vehicles rather than the mech suits that were produced in 1994. Cobra and G.I. Joe would have each had a vehicle that was going to be powered by a removable backpack. The backpack when placed in the one-man vehicle would have powered it into battle. When the figure with the backpack was removed from the vehicle, the play features would have been similar to that of the Action Packs released in 1987 and 1988. The difference was that the attachments could be removed to turn the backpack into a helicopter, gun station, radar system, etc. These vehicles would have been driven by the Gears and Techno-Viper figures that were released with the mech suits in 1994. In 1995, the Power Fighter subset would have continued with similar mech suits.



## The Unproduced, Secret World of Star Brigade

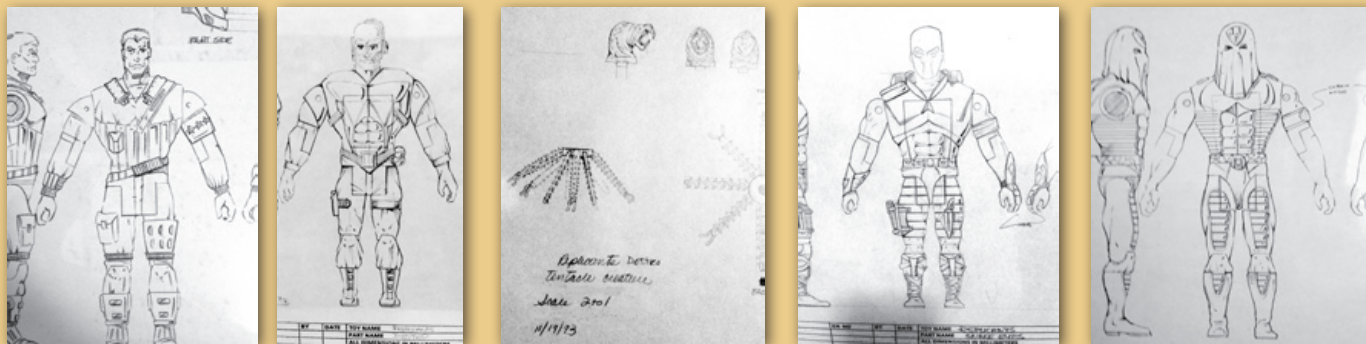
By Chris "Topson" Murray

### Replicators

The Replicators would have also been released in 1995 and the concept is one of the most bizarre ideas for G. I. Joe yet. The idea for the Replicators line came from the desire of Hasbro designers to capitalize on the popularity of Kenner's Aliens line. The basis of the concept is that aliens from the Lunartix Empire were attempting to conquer Earth. Rather than a direct assault, the aliens would use subterfuge to infiltrate key positions in world government and positions of power. The aliens would kidnap a person and create a clone of that person that they would manipulate from the inside. The aliens would have created havoc and discourse throughout the world so that the eventual invasion would be easier. The story would have explained that the aliens would want to infiltrate the world's most powerful fighting force: G.I. Joe; as that was the only team that could possibly stop the invasion. The aliens would also infiltrate the world's most powerful force of evil: Cobra; which would allow the aliens to easily wreak said havoc and weaken world powers. The first wave of characters would have consisted of Duke, Gung-Ho, Hawk, Snake-Eyes, Destro, and Cobra Commander. These toys would have had a different construction than the O-ring style used at the time; they would have no head or waist articulation due to a hollow torso/molded-on backpack piece that served as the middle of the figure. The alien would have been placed in the hollow space and could be accessed by tilting the human host characters head back and pulling down the chest plate like a drawbridge. This play feature was inspired by the "chest-bursters" from Aliens.



There would have been two different types of alien play features with the Replicator line. Duke, Hawk, and Gung-Ho would have opened up to reveal a latex membrane across the chest. The membrane would have been slightly opaque with blood vessels molded into the latex. The alien would be behind the membrane and when a push-button in the back of the figure was pressed, it would appear to be bursting from the chest of the figure. The latex would show a highly detailed alien face underneath. Snake-Eyes, Cobra Commander, and Destro would not have had the latex play feature, but would have come with removable aliens. These aliens would have had multiple rubber arms---basically ugly space octopi. The aliens for Snake-Eyes and Cobra Commander would have had four tentacles, and the alien for Destro would have had eight.

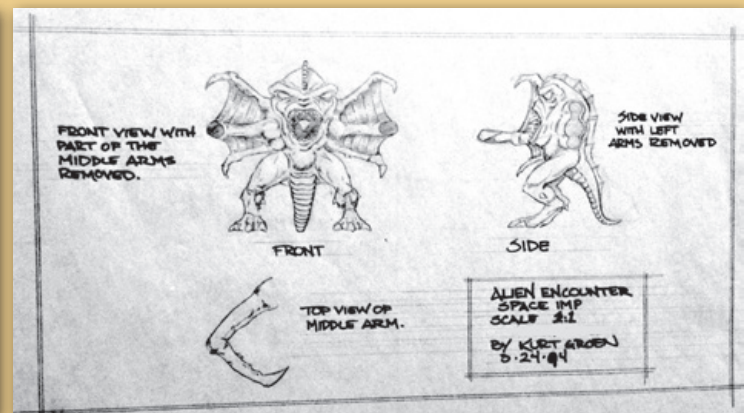
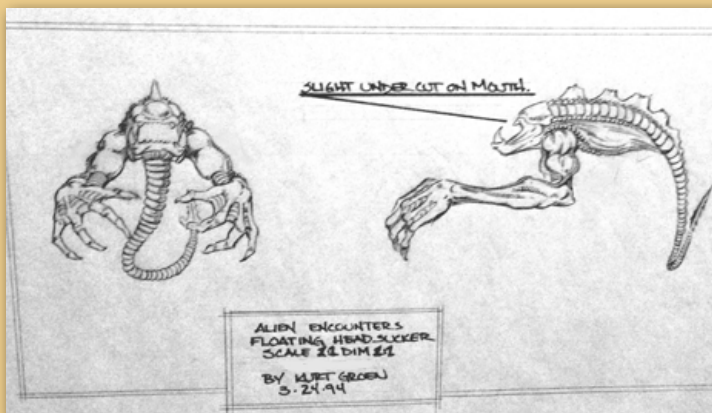


## The Unproduced, Secret World of Star Brigade

By Chris "Topson" Murray

### Alien Encounter

Alien Encounter (or Manimal Encounter) figures were slated for 1995 as a two-pack that included an alien and a human. Very little is known about this concept other than some presentation art, a prototype hardcopy of "Space Imp", and an image of a mock-up carded figure which shows the art for techno-walker Hawk with a repainted Armor Tech Heavy Duty packaged with an egg that would have contained a small alien. The mock-up packaging labels the toys as "Manimal Encounter", but presentation art for the two different aliens are labeled as "Alien Encounter". One alien would have been a hovering sucker---which is shown with the mock-up packaging header, and the other would have been the "Space Imp." 25,26,27



Star Brigade items are still being unearthed and will be presented in future JoeDeclassified articles and podcasts.

Special thanks to "Dryhawk37," Gary Head, Dan Klingensmith, Patrick Stewart, Jeff Thongvichit, Kevin Watts, and the staffs from JoeDeclassified.com, JoeIntel.com, and Yojoe.com for help with this article and sharing images. For more information about this article or the pre-production process for G.I. Joe toys, please contact the author through the JoeDeclassified website.



## Character Profile: Star Brigade Duke

By Mike "Mike T." Taber

There is no denying that Duke is one of the most important characters in the G.I. Joe mythos. He was iconic in the comic and cartoon and as the line progressed, he became more prominent in the toy line as well. By the end of the line, Duke was ubiquitous; he had releases in 1992, 1993, 1994, and was planned for different releases in 1995. The character had grown and was becoming increasingly more important to the G.I. Joe brand. In 1993, Hasbro added Duke to Star Brigade in the ill-fated Armor Tech subset. In 1994, they kept Duke in the astronaut theme. The result is a decent rendition of the famous first Sergeant, even if he is a bit out of his element.

Star Brigade as a concept is still difficult for many G.I. Joe fans to accept, especially as it branched off into armor-wearing cyborgs and space aliens. However, Star Brigade is a logical progression for the line. In 1987, the G.I. Joe Defiant space shuttle and launch complex (and the 1989 Crusader shuttle) had established a space presence, and as early as 1982 with original laser troopers Flash and Grandslam with the H.A.L., G.I. Joe had a science-fiction element that was melded with the traditional military ones. Because of this, I haven't had any issues accepting Star Brigade into the Joe mythos. (Honestly, I'm more forgiving of Star Brigade than I am of Ninja Force if only for the reason that the Ninja Force figures don't follow the standard vintage Joe construction standards, whereas some Star Brigade toys by necessity, had to go a different route in construction and style when it could be argued it was superfluous for Ninja Force.) Taken at face value, many of the Star Brigade molds are well done. They may be a bit "out there" in some cases, but many of the "realistic" Joes are a bit "out there" in terms of what the military would have allowed its members to wear.



The Star Brigade group did make an appearance at the tail end of the G.I. Joe Marvel comic run. Here, a group of Joes had to battle Soviet robots that were directing an asteroid towards earth. This storyline was a few years before the "asteroid hits earth" disaster movies of the late 1990's, so, it was either ahead of its time; prescient; or a faster to market rip-off by someone who had access to movies in development in Hollywood at the time. Regardless, the comic's story was fairly straightforward. But, it does feature an odd twist. The Oktober Guard aid the Joes in their mission. Among the Guard at the time was Dragonsky. So maybe the choice of a Star Brigade figure to create the convention Dragonsky was more than kismet. It is something to note, at any rate.

The 1994 Star Brigade series was split into two parts: Series 1 and Series 2. Series 1 featured Duke, Roadblock, Sci-Fi, Payload, Space Shot, Cobra Blackstar and Cobra Commander. Of these, Roadblock and Payload were straight repaints while the rest of the figures featured either all or mostly new parts. (It should be noted there are two Payload variants in the first series, which takes it to eight total figures, but the Payloads are distinct variants rather than individual figures.) Series 2 featured Countdown, Ozone, Effects and the three Lunartix aliens: Predacon, Lobotomaxx and Carcass. Interspersed were the Star Brigade Power Fighter mechs with the V-2 Techno Viper and Gears. This leaves a total of 15 unique figures in the line, with a 16th major variant. The reality, though, is that none of the 1994 Star Brigade series were shipped in large quantities. By 1995, these figures were all but gone from retail. The aliens sold out even quicker as the budding action figure resale market of the time hoped to cash in on their unique nature and low production run. The result is that the entirety of the 1994 Star Brigade is rather difficult to find. Many of them were consumed by collectors at the time and never opened. For many years in the late 1990's and early 2000's, it was virtually unheard of to find loose, complete specimens on the market. Most collectors had to resort to opening carded versions of the figures if they wanted to complete their loose collections.

The mold for fully articulated Star Brigade Duke is actually quite well done. However, it suffers from a flaw common to many of the figures from 1994: there are basically no paint details. The only paint on the figure's body are the green legs and gloves painted over the silver plastic. There are no details highlighted with any splash of color. This leaves the figure rather washed out since there is no depth to the mold. Looking at the chest, it is chock-full of little details that, if painted, would have



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## **Character Profile: Star Brigade Duke**

*By Mike "Mike T." Taber*

made the mold really shine. Unfortunately the lack of paint applications really causes the mold to suffer. The true gem of the mold is the head, as in a twist of irony, the final years of the line really featured some amazing head sculpts. The design process had progressed to the point where the faces could show more detail and expression. This Duke had hair texture, a lined forehead, and a grim expression of a career soldier. It is light-years (no pun intended) ahead of the original Duke head sculpt and is a perfect example of the year-to-year progression in sculpting and design techniques that were employed in the vintage line. The changes are subtle, but over time, one can see how greatly certain aspects of the design process improved. This figure is a perfect showcase of those progressions...even if they are obscured by lack of paint accentuation.

Duke's accessories are interesting. His helmet is all new. Here, Hasbro didn't skimp on the paint applications and used black details to obscure some of the faceplate to add realism. Rather than affix directly to Duke's head, the helmet attaches to the backpack and then fits over the figure's head. His backpack and helmet combination are all new. It was a different approach for an astronaut to have his helmet attached to his pack. (Which would, ostensibly, hold his life support gear.) The idea didn't really work however, as the result is that the pegs on the pack are very brittle and prone to breakage, and the helmet doesn't fit onto the head all that well. It also leaves his bare neck exposed to the vacuum of space, so it was counterproductive for a space trooper. The launcher on the other hand, was well engineered both aesthetically and functionally. Aside from fitting into the rest of the pack, it could be rotated to be fired from the hip, or stowed in a vertical position when not in use. Its design also allows the modern collector to remove that piece should they want to, thus it's a feature that is relatively uncommon from the spring-launcher era. Duke's gun is the horrid 1987 Battleforce 2000 Blaster weapon. While it fits with the sci-fi theme, it isn't anything that is visually interesting and doesn't really add much to the figure.

This Duke mold was typical of the era. He featured the waist and legs from an existing figure (the 1991 Skycreeper) but also featured newly molded parts for the head, arms and chest. This was a common cost cutting move that was featured on many 1994 figures and would have extended into 1995. After the figure's lone release in 1994, the mold did not appear again for 11 years. In 2005, Master Collector used the torso on the under-appreciated and really quite impressive Dragon-sky figure, but that was the end of it. It is likely that more figures could have been squeezed out of the mold, but leaving it at just two basic figures helps keep the original mold somewhat relevant rather than be overused into oblivion.

Moving on, this Duke is somewhat problematic from a use standpoint. The only way to put him into space combat is with his bright orange pack. Without it, he has no helmet---even though as mentioned, it has some flaws. He does work as a crew member of the Defiant or Crusader shuttles, but that is about it. Despite the realistic green and silver color palette, the figure's design doesn't really work as a repurposed figure for earth bound missions. He could be incorporated into the Eco Warriors or Mega Marines (Duke would later be planned as a Mega Marine, but this was cancelled), but again, the lack of helmet without the pack holds him back. As a display piece, the figure meshes perfectly with the other 1994 Star Brigade figures. However, that is about the extent of his uses. As such, you rarely see the figure showcased in any online photos or dioramas, and when it is used, the figure tends to stand out.

One of the things that has always kept my collecting attention with the 1994 Star Brigade series is the variety of colors used to create them. While there are bright figures like Payload and Roadblock, even they use the color appropriately. As such, the series isn't a visual nightmare like the 1993 series can be. Instead, it is a blend of colors that, when displayed together, mesh well without being overly redundant. The same is true of the carded figures. The 1994 Star Brigade cards are some of my favorites in the line. They feature subtle colors that showcase the artwork and allow the figure to still be a focal point of the overall display. It is this aesthetic that makes these figures some of my favorites in my entire collection. The fact that they are the bookend to the line just adds a more importance to them as well.

The 1994 Star Brigade figures have gotten more popular in the past few years. Collectors have come to appreciate the coloring a bit. Many collectors are now realizing how difficult it can be to track down a complete set. As such, prices on these figures have risen steadily in recent years. Carded figures will run \$25.00 or so, and loose figures are typically selling around half that amount. While it can be lot to pay for a figure like this---especially when brand new figures that are plentiful and not rare hit the scalping market at higher prices, it's never-the-less within acceptable limits when you consider the figure's rarity. The head sculpt is worth tracking down, even if it's only for customs. But the general obscurity of the figure, combined with the importance of the character, creates a juxtaposition that is worth the price.

## Collector Spotlight: Chris "Topson" Murray

### Who are you?

My name is Chris "Topson" Murray.

### Please tell us a little about yourself.

I am 40-years old and live in Texas with my fiancé. I am an archaeologist and work for an environmental consulting company. Besides G.I. Joe and archaeology, I like to go caving. I come from a collecting family and have collected many things through out my life.

### How long have you been collecting?

I started collecting toys in 1997. At the time I was playing Magic the Gathering and I traded a few cards to a friend for his childhood Ripcord figure. From there I started going to flea markets and garage sales looking for 1980's and 1990's toys. After I found out about eBay, I began to collect foreign figures. In 2005 I bought my first prototype, and that completely changed my collecting focus of G.I. Joe. Eventually I sold my vintage Star Wars, Transformers, and Exo-Squad collections to focus on G.I. Joe. I do have a few non-Joe pieces in my collections---most of them were toys I had as a kid.

### What's your favorite piece in your collection?

That depends on which focus of my collection we are talking about. My MISB "gold-head" Steel Brigade mail-in figure with original mailer box is my favorite domestic piece, and my complete set of U.K. Action Force vehicle drivers (Jammer, Hunter, etc.) mint in bubble are my favorite foreign pieces. The prototype collection is really hard to pick just one piece or run, but if I could only save one piece from a fire, I would save my 1981 hand painted resin of straight-arm Breaker.



## Collector Spotlight: Chris "Topson" Murray

### What was your first Joe figure?

I know it was not my first, but my earliest memory of buying a Joe is 1983 Airborne.

### What kind of Joe items do you collect?

I only collect A Real American Hero era (1982 to 1995) toys and preproduction items. I stay away from the non-toy items like lunchboxes and sleeping bags. I still collect foreign Joe toys, but I do not actively search it out anymore.

### What's your primary focus of your collection?

The preproduction process and history of G. I. Joe is my primary focus. I actively look for paperwork, art, and 3-D pieces that help explain the creation process behind the toys we love so much.

### Which piece was the hardest to acquire?

Nothing in my domestic or foreign collection were really that hard to acquire, as it basically took just patience and money. Something out of my preproduction collection would have to be my hardest to acquire, but most of it was just luck---usually I found it on eBay, or I found a former Hasbro employee who had something they were willing to sell. The problem with prototype collecting is that you do not really get to choose exactly what you want to collect or focus on. Basically, you get what comes along and you hope to get something for a character or vehicle that you love. For me, the hardest piece to acquire was the 1995 Battle Corps Ranger Baroness 2-up hardcopy, because I had to coordinate a 3-way trade that took half a year to come together.



## Collector Spotlight: Chris "Topson" Murray

### What is your favorite Joe related memory?

As a child, it would be playing in the woods in 1983 with a bunch of the kids from the apartment complex. We would pool our Joes together and have huge battle scenarios where Joes would fight Star Wars. The Joes always won, because they had machine guns and they could bend their arms and legs! As an adult, it was my first JoeCon in Atlanta. I finally got to meet my friends from the forums, and hang out with like-minded people. It was a great experience and I have not missed a convention since.



## Pretending To Go Where No Joe Has Gone Before

By Roger "Goofateer" Taft

(Or, the history of space based G.I. Joe Halloween costumes.)

I'd like to say that when it comes to Halloween costumes, G.I. Joe has enjoyed a long and varied career. But he hasn't. There are many more G.I. Joe costumes over the decades than most collectors realize, but very few of them have ever allowed an intrepid young G.I. Joe to venture into the Final Frontier.

Space based G.I. Joe Halloween costumes did however start early, as one might expect, with the Space Race, though it's hard to confirm a date on early G.I. Joe Halloween costumes. As of yet, no retailer catalogs have surfaced on the collectors' market to confirm which years early costumes were released. It's a pretty safe bet that little Joe's were Trick or Treating around 1966 or 1967 give or take a year. The first G.I. Joe costumes were produced by Halco. Initially, it appears they produced one costume for each branch of the military---the very same way Hasbro started with the Action Figure line. This of course included the Pilot; who while not quite an Astronaut, was still a good step in the right direction. Presumably Halco expanded the line next year to include other outfits, and of course the Astronaut was at the forefront. Both the Pilot, and the Astronaut seem to have shared the same rayon outfit. I have yet to see a single Astronaut costume that wasn't simply the "Official G.I. Joe Pilot" outfit with an Astronaut mask. That doesn't mean there isn't an Astronaut outfit out there, but I doubt there is.

It would be another decade before G.I. Joe would leave the confines of Earth's gravity again. At least in this case, the catalogs are out there, so we know what was produced, and when. In 1978 Collegeville Costumes released three costumes under the "Super Joe" banner. This time, G.I. Joe himself wouldn't even be among the Space Men. In the shadow of Star Wars, the line consisted of costumes of three aliens from the line: Gor, The Shield, and Darkon. The three costumes are among the rarest G.I. Joe Halloween costumes ever released. The Halco Astronaut is very hard to find, but the Super Joe costumes boarder on impossible to find. Very few examples are even known to be in collector hands.

Both The Shield and Darkon had single color, metallic masks giving them a chromed look. This was perfect for The Shield whose figure already had that look, but Darkon's figure wore a black helmet. Perhaps Collegeville simply thought a plain black mask wouldn't appeal to kid's of the psychedelic era, but it's more likely that the mask was changed for safety reasons. On the other hand "flower power" is the only explanation for the rest of the costume. The normally dark clad Darkon was now "DayGlo" pink and standing knee deep in a crater on a neon green moon. Imagine what that image must look like under a black light!

The remaining two outfits for Gor and The Shield have to date, eluded my collection. But catalog pictures that can be found on-line show them to be somewhat more subdued tones than the Darkon costume. While the colors are still fairly wild, they are much more inline with the actual characters. The Shield, normally blue and silver, is now white and red. Not a huge departure. Gor is still green, though like the art on most Super Joe packages, he's highlighted with some garish yellows. As of yet these few costumes comprise all the more sci-fi G.I. Joe Halloween costumes known to exist. But never assume everything has been found, or at least identified. You never know what might be lurking behind the next asteroid!



## Breakfast On Pluto, Or Was It Lunch?

By Roger "Goofater" Taft

Lunchboxes.

Little Astronauts needed to eat just like everyone else. Fortunately they were able to pack their meals in style with G.I. Joe lunchboxes.

The first space themed lunchbox didn't appear until 1987. The Defiant space shuttle was the big ticket G.I. Joe toy for year, and it was plastered on all sorts of licensed items including a plastic lunchbox from Aladdin. The artwork was the same image that appeared on the toy insert for the year, and of course, the lunchbox included a thermos with similar art work.

Two years later the Crusader space shuttle got the same treatment. Again it appeared on the annual toy insert catalog, and again the artwork was used for the 1989 Aladdin lunchbox. The thermos in this set had its own artwork focusing on Snake Eyes, but several other characters including the astronaut Countdown had headshots in circles around the thermos.

In 1998 a rather unusual set of 2/3rd scale "reproduction" 1960's metal lunchboxes were released by a company called A.S.C. They were unusual in the fact that they were "reproductions" of lunchboxes that didn't previously exist. Back in the 1960's there was indeed a metal G.I. Joe lunchbox, but it was just the one box. The reproductions had no less than five boxes, each with its own unique artwork which was based on vintage package art. And you guessed it, one of them was based on the original 12" G.I. Joe Astronaut.

(As a side note, I'd like to briefly mention dog tags. On the first weekend of October 1996, the 3rd Annual G.I. Joe International Collectors Convention took place near the Space Coast of Florida. As was the norm for the early conventions, the convention tags were literal dog tags. The ones featured that year featured the original 12" G.I. Joe logo with the Astronaut head dotting the "I". Several tags of different colors were released for the show. Each color represented a different level of access to the convention such as staff, dealer, and general attendance. Most tags focused on the logo, but some---like the black tags, also included the Space Shuttle. The convention also featured an Astronaut themed embroidered patch, and a pin.)





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## Community Profile: COIL Club

By Don "Sgt Humpty" Maues

If you take the time to ask around, you'll find that a lot of longtime collectors will agree that one of the best things about their chosen hobby is the sense of community that develops when they meet and bond with other collectors. Whether it's a passion for coins, stamps, vintage trains, die-cast cars or G.I. Joe toys, collectors have a knack for finding each other and forming close friendships. An excellent example of this within the G.I. Joe collector community is the COIL.

Based in Dayton, Ohio, the COIL is a regional G.I. Joe collectors group, primarily serving the Midwest, but with members spread all across the United States and beyond.

The club started as a loosely organized group of friends that met somewhat regularly from 2004 to 2008. On September 19th, 2008, the COIL was officially born during a meeting at Jon Cremeans' restaurant. In attendance were Jon and Michele Cremeans, Jay "Smokescreen" Hunger, Mike "Beachhead" Irizarry, Gary "cmderinchief" and Debbie Godsoe, James "KuuKuuSon" Kavanaugh, Kirsin "Dune Echo" Koch and Daniel Hartzler.



The Coil name predates the current Midwest Collectors Club and was originally used by The Chicago Coil, a group of collectors active in the mid-2000s, led by Sam "Nomad" Damon. Current COIL Secretary Mike Irizarry recalls meeting members of the Chicago Coil at Wizard World Chicago in 2005. Kevin "KrysymGard666" Watts and Scott "madmac41" McAllister were among those who, like Mike, had come in from out of town. This was Mike's first experience with meeting other G.I. Joe collectors and it left an indelible impression. Ultimately, most of the officers of the Chicago Coil moved out of the area around 2006, but the name has been carried on in their honor and with their blessing. As it is used by the current COIL, the name is an acronym for Commonwealth of Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, though the group has since grown far beyond the home states of its founding members.

The new COIL wasted little time extending its reach and soon had chapters in Dayton, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, and Fort Wayne. In order to better understand those early years, I contacted several members to ask them about their initial contact with the COIL.

Fort Wayne Chapter Lead Tom Mathias recalls meeting Jay Hunger and Gary Godsoe back in 2006. Through them, he had dealings with Jon Cremeans and eventually interacted most of the other key players in the group. Very soon after the club's inception, Tom was asked to head up the Fort Wayne Chapter. He jokes that this is very likely because at the time, he WAS the Fort Wayne Chapter!

Indianapolis Chapter member Cliff Bailey told me about meeting Hunger and Godsoe while wandering around lost at the 2008 BotCon in Cincinnati. "I followed them (to the COIL), and I've been annoying them ever since."

As the COIL was tightening its grip on the Midwest through the end of 2008, I found myself being pulled back into the G.I. Joe world, having been absent since 'growing up' and joining the military in the early 90's. It would be several months before I accidentally discovered the COIL. I joined the club's forum ([www.coilclub.com](http://www.coilclub.com)) in September of 2009, but wasn't particularly active for almost three years.

During 2010, the COIL organized a large meet in Kokomo, Indiana intended to bring together the members of the various chapters. Todd and Amber Jordan of Kokomo Toys volunteered their front lawn for this meet of approximately 50 people, which eventually became known as COIL Con.



## Community Profile: COIL Club

By Don "Sgt Humpty" Maues

Chicago area collector Gary "Gyre-Viper" Head attended the first COIL Con. It was the second G.I. Joe convention he'd ever been to, having met Godsoe and Kavanaugh at the 2010 JoeCon in Rhode Island. "This should tell you everything you need to know about COIL Con and the people involved; from the moment I stepped foot onto Todd's lawn, I felt welcome. When you attend a COIL Con, the sense of community is immediately upon you. It became pretty clear to me early on that COIL Con was plugging into the hobby's zeitgeist and I knew instantly that I wanted to be a part of it."

Word of the event spread and the following year, the attendance doubled. In 2011, the club's Vice President, Jay Hunger, produced an exclusive COIL action figure which was sold to help pay for the event. The COIL Con 2 exclusive figures were a huge success and became highly sought after amongst those who were not able to attend. At the COIL Con 3 in 2012, an exclusive boxed set was produced featuring two figures and two foam gliders modeled after the 1983 G.I. Joe Falcon Glider and Cobra Viper Glider. The set was a hit and it quickly sold out.

During the early part of 2012, the COIL added a Cleveland, Ohio Chapter led by the hosts of the popular StarJoes podcast, Charles Averitt and Ryan Drost. The two were first introduced to the club by Godsoe and Irizarry when they appeared as guests on the podcast. The COIL was mentioned during the recording and the idea greatly appealed to the two, who live in northeast Ohio and had been looking for a group of like-minded Joe collectors to share their love of the hobby with. Averitt says, "The next day I registered for the forum and as soon as my user name was approved, I was posting and interacting with other Joe collectors and fans. Unfortunately, a prior commitment kept me from COIL Con 3 in Kokomo last year, but I plan on attending this year."

It was after this that I decided to petition the COIL's Executive Board for permission to establish a Chapter in my own area. The process was simple and I sent off my request in July of 2012. Two months later, I attended COIL Con 3 and was absolutely floored by the friendly atmosphere. It felt less like what I expected a convention to be and more like a family barbecue. It quickly became apparent that although a shared passion for G.I. Joe had brought these people together, the group had become much more. During that weekend, COIL President Jon Cremeans informed me that my petition to establish a Chapter in Madison, Wisconsin had been approved.

In many ways, the COIL and COIL Con have forever changed collecting for me. Oh, I still enthusiastically collect and customize G.I. Joe toys - nothing has changed there. But the experience is now enriched beyond words due to the friends I've gained from my involvement with the COIL.

About now, some of you might be wondering how to go about joining the COIL. To be honest, it's as simple as registering at the COIL Club forums. Like many Internet forums, they are no longer very active, but by registering you communicate your intent to be a part of the COIL. The club also has a significant Facebook presence. There are no membership dues. No one will badger you to participate. But if you should choose to become actively involved, the opportunities are there and the reward is substantial, if not exactly tangible.

### For more information on the COIL and COIL Con:

[www.coilclub.com](http://www.coilclub.com)  
[www.coilcon.com](http://www.coilcon.com)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/coilclub/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/coilclub/)

### COIL Executive Council

**President:** Jon Cremeans  
**Vice President/Designer:** Jay Hunger  
**Secretary:** Mike Irizarry  
**Treasurer:** Debbie Godsoe  
**Warden:** Gary Godsoe  
**COILCon.com Webmaster:** Chris Brown

### COIL Chapter Leads

**Dayton, OH Chapter Lead:** Jon Cremeans  
**Cincinnati, OH Chapter Lead:** James Kavanaugh  
**Cleveland, OH Chapter Lead:** Charles Averitt / Ryan Drost  
**Indianapolis, IN Chapter Lead:** Jay Hunger  
**Ft Wayne, IN Chapter Lead:** Tom Mathias  
**Louisville, KY Chapter Lead:** Scott MacAllister  
**Chicago, IL Chapter Lead:** Chris Brown  
**Madison, WI Chapter Lead:** Don Maue

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# DECLASSIFIED

## In space, no one can hear you type...

This year marked a curious year for us here at Declassified. We're publishing an entire issue devoted to arguably the worst part of the Joe franchise (no, a Rise of Cobra issue isn't next). Our podcast is in full swing, we've littered the internet with early photos of awesome factory-produced customs, and we violated trespassing laws at a number of locations; The G.I. Joe Convention in New Orleans, the Sacramento Joe Show, Roll-Out, Roll Call in the U.K., The Kane County Toy Show in Chicago-land, The Canadian G.I. Joe Convention, Coil Con in Indiana, and Assembly Required in Iowa. I have yet to see a restraining order issued, so we'll just keep going with that plan into the next year.

We've also partnered with one of favorite web-sites in the community, Joe Customs, to launch one of the best custom contests to ever hit the Joe fanbase, in our humble opinion. Check out either website for the details, but the prizes are certainly nothing to be sneezed at. We couldn't be happier about our partners, either – Customs has always been a grassroots, for-the-community organization, and if we can leave half the legacy they have, I will consider everything we've done a success.

Speaking of community, we had a whole host of individuals come out of the woodwork this year to make the shows, site, and magazine possible. It would be remiss of me not to mention:

Kevin Baughn  
Justin Bell  
James Beutel  
Loc Bisping  
Eric David Bright

Mark Callison  
Danny Christian  
Sean Harker-Figel  
Scott Jennings  
Chris Neal

Thomas O'Mahony  
Chad Sylwester  
Benjamin Thomas  
Glenn Winkler  
Joel Ylvisaker

Special thanks go to our contributors this year:

Kirk "Bishop" Bozigian  
Dan "Frost" Klingensmith Jr.  
Dan "Timmy" Moore

Chris "Newt" Murray  
Mike "Spunkmeyer" Taber

This issue is dedicated to Brian "Nova" Kauffman. Yep, that Crystal Ball guy. Brian is, without a doubt, one of the souls of the G.I. Joe community. He's an amazing customizer, an unknown wealth of knowledge, and has never failed to remind me what this hobby is all about – fun. There are few hobbyists that have inspired me to contribute like Brian has, and in vast galaxy of ego-driven jerks (like myself), Brian is an unsung hero of all things Joe. Thanks, Brian!

## Joe Declassified Magazine Staff

**Editor-In-Chief:** Chris "Hudson" Chung  
**Associate Editor:** Mike "Apone" Irizarry  
**Layout and Design:** Todd "Gorman" Weinzierl  
**Printer:** James "Vasquez" Kavanaugh

Sam "Hicks" Damon  
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**Joe Declassified**

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