



DECLASSIFIED

ISSUE 8

OLDER LOOK
TO HEAVY GUNNER

THE **DECLASSIFIED** REPORT

LAMETHPOWER

* GUNNER
* EXO-SUIT
* IMPROVED OF PROTECTION
* COMBAT (EXO-SUIT) HEAD

ARTIFICIAL
LIMS

IMPROVED
OF DESTRUCTION



~~TOP SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

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Introduction By Chris "Werecat" Chung

By Chris "Werecat" Chung

Welcome to the latest edition of *The Declassified Report* magazine. Before I begin, it is with sad tidings that I must tell you of the passing of one of our friends and colleagues, Gary "Gyre-Viper" Head. I personally didn't know Gary very well, as he was only promoted to our Media Director for a short time before he passed away. But I can say (unbeknownst to me at the time), he was a more tremendous asset to the Joe Declassified mission statement both behind-the-scenes and in the spotlight than most would realize. Gary was a singularity. He was a pocket universe that was so perfectly positioned for his role because he had the perfect synchronization of time, enthusiasm, and energy. Someone with his skill sets are exceedingly rare--- maybe one in a million. Going through his work for this magazine was difficult. It was like hearing the voice of a ghost in my mind, or sneaking a peek in someone's diary. The most painful thing to read was how excited he was about his upcoming plans. True, we must also not forget the others in our community that have also passed away. But for today, this one is for Gary. Therefore it is only fitting we start out with blurb from him detailing the focus of this issue: "**Deth of teh line!!!!**"

"In 1993, the Mega Marines and Mega Monsters, alongside Ninja Force, Dino Hunters, Star Brigade, Street Fighter, and Battle Corps sought to keep the G.I. Joe brand relevant and the *Real American Hero* line intact. In fact, as 1994 approached, the Joe design team was seemingly ready to balance the energy of evolving, with what honestly was shaping up to be a bit of return-to-form for the brand. They seemed willing to move forward with the past in mind but with an edge towards the future; both in design approach and in theme. There was Sgt. Savage, a new 4.5" concept from the combined minds and efforts of Hasbro designers and comics legend, Joe Kubert, about a defrosted soldier from the past who was inserted into the future. Then there was to be a continuation of the 3 3/4" *Real American Hero* line; the Battle Corp Rangers, who were to be the first responders to new threat of Manimals and the Replicators, as Mega Marines were to the Mega Monsters. The Battle Corp Rangers were shaping up to be more like the G.I. Joe of old, while fighting an enemy more like the villains of new. Battle Corp Rangers was set to blend of the things that carried G.I. Joe this far, and that which would hopefully carry it into the future. And then as it happened, G.I. Joe was canceled. It was the "deth of teh line" and neither the heroes of Sgt. Savage and his Screaming Eagles, nor the mighty Battle Corp Rangers, could save it..."

That's right folks, that panicked, misspelled catch phrase has become a meme in this community, and probably every message board has threads that carry that that infamous subject title. While most of it was unfounded, there have been times in the line's history that this was a real, credible concern with fans and that's the focus of this issue: The various deaths and rebirths of G.I. Joe directly after ARAH was cancelled. Roger Taft details the state of the hobby in 1995 with Hasbro acquiring Kenner, and the awkward convention experience it was when it seemed as if the franchise has begun a downward spiral that could not be saved.

Chris Murray pulls double detail by chronicling the cancelled wave of Mega Marines, as well as the planned Battle Corps Rangers that were supposed to get the line back its more military roots, but which was axed before it was released.

Patrick Stewart details the short-lived continuation to the *A Real American Hero* line: Sgt. Savage and his Screaming Eagles.

In his *X-Soldiers* article, Dan Klingensmith sheds some light on a lesser known aspect of the G.I. Joe world: the proposition of a new line to make G.I. Joe a more competitive force akin to superhero titles like *X-Men*

In one of his last articles before he passed away, Gary Head adds commentary and anecdotes about the line for everything else that doesn't fit into the prior categories. A big thanks to Jared Bunnell for helping to complete the article.

The focus of our Collector Spotlight will be Justin Bell---one of the faces of our hobby and a man who needs no introduction!

Next, the fine folks at Joelanta are the featured club for our Community Profile.

We conclude with Sam Damon's touching eulogy to honor Gary Head.

Finally, a special and sincere thanks goes out to Gary's girlfriend, Elizabeth Maria Capua. Without her help getting emails and photos, much of this would not be possible.

THE HOBBY: 1995

By Roger "Goofateer" Taft

JOE
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As the classic saying goes, *"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times..."*

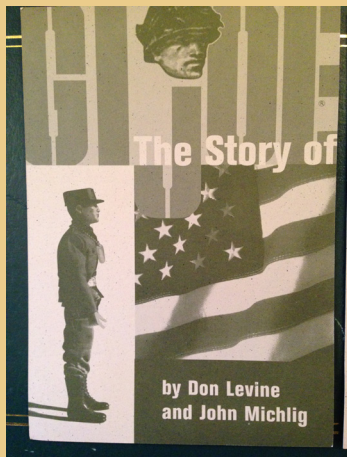
Twenty years ago, I attended my very first G.I. Joe Convention in Chicago, 1995.

This was a threshold event for me. It was the point when I was no longer an isolated collector buying what I could at retail and garage sales, I was now part of a larger community of collectors.

The mid 1990's were not exactly a time when it was considered "cool" to collect toys as an adult. My entire G.I. Joe world revolved around Walmart and a few toy magazines. Locally it was hard to find any other fans that shared my interests, but the magazines of the time had already shown me that G.I. Joe was all over the world. I had already added a few foreign figures and some prototypes to my collection, but it was always a very solitary pursuit up until my first convention. But then there were people! LOTS of other people, with more G.I. Joe toys all in one place than I could possibly have imagined!

All of that, though, was secondary to my true goal for that convention. In 1995 I was already working towards an art degree, and I was an avid action figure customizer. My dream at the time was to work for Hasbro and actually have a hand in producing the G.I. Joe toys I loved so much. This was my first chance to actually meet and talk to real Hasbro sculptors face to face. I came fully prepared with a selection of my best custom figures, several small sculptures, delusions of grandeur, and my portfolio. When I wasn't spending my meager \$300 budget on Action Force and Japanese Joes, I was spending most of my time talking with any Hasbro employee that would listen to me. I found myself balanced on the knife's edge of excitement and utter frustration, but at the time, I couldn't quite figure out why.

Hasbro/Kenner was showing the public G.I. Joe Extreme for the first time. There was an excitement about the new product line, but it seemed like excitement that had been paid for. Much like the people giving out free samples at the grocery store, they wanted you to buy the product for sure, but you could tell that they would be just as excited for cooking spray as they would be for potato chips. There was no passion for what they were hocking, only practiced presentation. At the time I was too young to pick up on the difference. Besides, I was far too excited to be holding the actual wax sculpt of Freight to notice the dark cloud hovering over the Hasbro booth.



I didn't arrive at the convention expecting to be hired by Hasbro on the spot. I knew I wasn't ready for the big leagues just yet. But I did want some direction. I wanted to know where I stood, and what I needed to improve on to be good enough to get Hasbro's attention down the road. I finally got one Hasbro employee to take a look at my work. I wasn't expecting praise and adulation for my sculpting prowess. By that time I was at the top of my classes, and had already exhibited a piece in an art museum, but I still had at least two more years of school to get through, plus some practical employment to get under my belt. Bottom line, there was a lot of room for improvement. The results of the conversation I had with that particular employee were dream crushing. He had almost nothing positive to say about my work. He seemed unimpressed and well, downright depressed as it was. Needless to say, I was crushed.

What I didn't know at the time, was what was going on behind the scenes. In 1991, Hasbro had acquired Kenner when they bought Tonka. Through about 1994 Hasbro basically let Kenner run its own ship--- business as usual. But by the 1995 Convention, the hatchet was just about to drop, and the employees knew it. The Hasbro Boys Toys division was just starting to merge with Kenner, and a lot of people were just about to lose their jobs. The first casualty was the *Real American Hero* line, followed very shortly by Sgt. Savage, while Extreme was being produced in a much more Kenner style. The shift to a Kenner-centric Boys Toys division had clearly begun. Long time co-workers had probably already been let go, and more were sure to follow. So the idea of giving some young kid advice on how to get a job with Hasbro was probably the last thing any Hasbro or Kenner sculptor wanted to dole out.

In retrospect, the 1995 G.I. Joe Convention was one of the most enjoyable weekends of my life. I got to meet people from all over the world that shared my passion for G.I. Joe, I was able to add very rare and unusual items to my ever expanding collection---things I didn't have even a remote chance of finding locally, and I saw things I never even knew existed before that weekend. But it was also a major setback for my dreams of being a toy sculptor. While I did eventually finish my art degree, and I did get a job as a sculptor, it was never quite what I wanted. I have no regrets in attending that show, but I certainly wish I had a better understanding of what was really happening at the time.

MEGA MARINES

By: Chris "TOPSON" Murray
and Gary "Gyre-Viper" Head

PROLOGUE:

Locked, loaded, and ready to battle, Mega Marines hit shelves in 1993 pitted against the bio-mechanical forces of Dr. Mindbender's hulking and twisted Mega Monster creations. The result was, according to former Hasbro product manager Kirk Bozigian, a fifteen-million dollar revenue burst for the G.I. Joe brand. Coming off its second most successful year in the history of the line (1992), *A Real American Hero* seemed to be entering a renaissance, or at the very least, holding its own in the new decade. The 1990's Real American Hero began with glowing with new trends, new technology, and as with the start of every decade, a new generation of kids.



THE COMMERCIAL:

The 1993 commercial for Mega Marines opens with an actor dressed in a giant Bio-Viper costume, emerging from a smoky, curdling, neon green lagoon of bio-hazardous mutagen at the center of a top secret Cobra laboratory. The commercial swaps back and forth between live action shots with actors, costumes, and sets, and kids playing with the toys in a scaled diorama, replicating with the action figures, what the actors are doing, respectively.

The use of live actors portraying actual characters in G.I. Joe commercials goes all the way back to the mid 80's, when Hasbro introduced a celebrity Infantry/Drill Instructor to the G.I. Joe ranks. Previously, child actors were used in commercials acting out situations with the actual toys, hand-in-hand with accompanying Sunbow animation, sought to dictate the playability of any given year's action figure and vehicle assortment.

Terry Dizard of YoJoe.com explains, "Live action brings a sense of realism, especially to a child. Hasbro started using real people in their marketing since the first TV commercials for G.I. Joe in the 1960's, but they always featured children playing with the toys."

As for actors actually being tucked into costumes and essentially becoming G.I. Joe characters, Terry says: "To make characters seem more real, the first "real person" to be on the G.I. Joe Team was celebrity wrestler Sgt. Slaughter. But the Sarge acted more of a spokesman while doing much of the same. In 1991, Griffen/Bacal (the marketing firm that consulted on the 1980's and 90's G.I. Joe) worked with Sunbow Studios to produce a series of fully live-action commercials, featuring the characters of the brand and stringing together a semi-coherent plot leading up to "Cobra's Ultimate Weapon" in late 1993. These commercials ceased after the beginning of 1994 and the advertising went back to Marvel/Sunbow animation."

The Mega Marines commercial definitely sought to trap the attention of a new generation of children to get them on board with the new sub-line of over-sized, play-feature-heavy monstrosities and funky colored, monster-blasting recruits.

But where did the idea to take G.I. Joe in this direction come from?



MEGA-JOES:

According to YoJoe.com, 1993 was "... the largest year of the original toy line's run." And says that *A Real American Hero* was now compounded "solely of sub-lines, as the heretofore main toy line is rebranded the "Battle Corps" subset. Mega Marines, Ninja Force, and Star Brigade all have their own selection of figures."

Kirk Bozigian reveals that Mega Marines was the result of he and his team "monitoring trends in other areas of pop culture." He says that it was an RPG game called *Space Marines* that basically lit the fuse of inspiration for them. "We loved the idea," Kirk says, "and thus Mega Marines was born."



Kirk admits, "We weren't proud. We stole from everywhere." And who could blame them? The 1990s was a decade of absolute chaos for the toy industry. In 1993, the notion of "sink or swim" very much hinged on what the other guy was doing. The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers had unexpectedly plowed onto the scene with the multi-faceted combination of martial arts, aliens, robots, high school, and monsters; all mixed into one colorful clump of financial triumph. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles would subsequently release a third film for the franchise, further solidifying their lucrative "seat at the table" ever since the toy line launched in 1988. From their beginning, TMNT was in direct competition with *A Real American Hero's* most profitable year, which was 1987.

As if G.I. Joe didn't have enough competition, just two years prior to the release of Mega Marines in 1993, Hasbro had acquired its arch-nemesis, Kenner, adding its own competitor into the Hasbro family. G.I. Joe's competition at retail had gone from civil war to sibling rivalry.

So when the Mega Marines came into being, they needed something to make them stand apart from everything else on the shelves. New characters like Mirage and Blast-Off would join new versions of seasoned Joe team members like Gung-Ho and Clutch, on the proverbial "bug-hunt," to combat the oozing, abominable menace of Cobra's Mega Monster threat. Each character (and their vehicle) was numbered individually, 1 through 7, both on the figures themselves and prominently (for the most part, the exception being Mirage) on their packaging art. The numbers are team identification numbers, according to Kirk. Gung-Ho, their commander is of course number 1, Clutch the mechanic is 2, Blast-Off the flame-thrower is 3, and Mirage the proverbial bio-artillery expert, is numbered with a 4. Their vehicle, the Monster Blaster APC, has a big "7" painted/stickered on its hull. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7. So what happened to 5 and 6?

Like with any toy line, some concepts make it through, others not so much. Mega Marines was no different. In pre-production the Mega Marine ranks incipiently included a version of Duke (pictured) and Frostbite (also pictured), plus concept sketch of a Barbecue (concept art pictured).

The packaging art for the unproduced Mega Marines Duke depicts the character with a "6" on his armor, and the art for the would-be Frostbite character, has a "7" on it. That doesn't really explain where #5 went, nor why Frostbite shares a number with the APC vehicle. It is possible Barbecue was planned as "5", but since his art doesn't depict a number, we can't say for sure. But the missing concepts do answer some questions in regards to the gaps between 4 and 7, or Mirage and the Monster Blaster, respectively. Mega Marines Duke; while never actually released, did manage to make an appearance on some 90's gift wrapping paper (pictured).

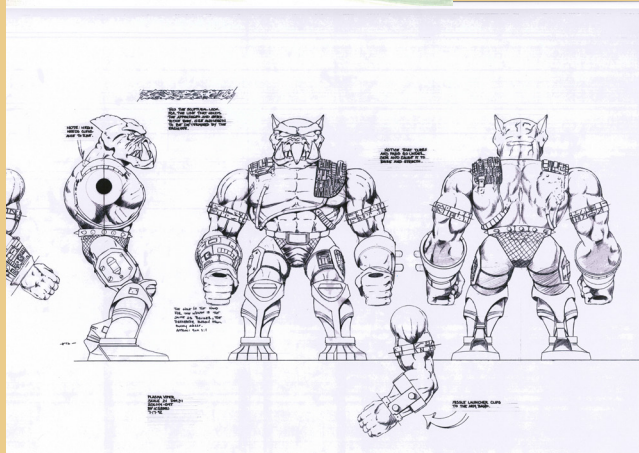
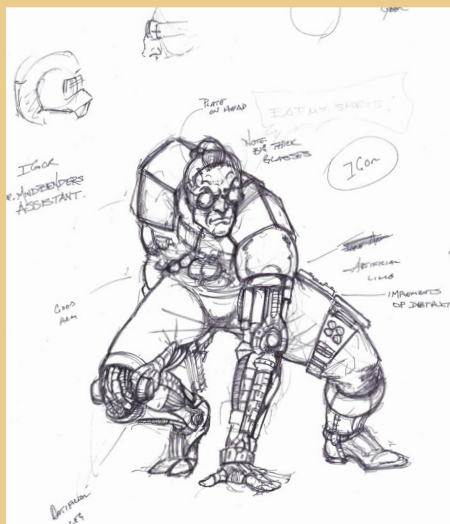
As for the Mega Marines as a whole, they didn't look like any Joes that had come before. Instead, they were thick with bright or neon protective outfits and armed with advanced weaponry. They also had an extremely unique play feature previously unseen in the G.I. Joe line: "moldable bio-armor."

"Since we were trying to get younger kids involved with G.I. Joe, and since we had recently purchased Kenner, we thought molding armor from Play-Doh would be a pretty neat idea," reminisces Bozigian.

These Mega Marines would need that bio-Play Doh armor, too, as Cobra had now unleashed.... the MEGA MONSTERS!!!



MEGA-COBRAS:



"You Cobra Monsters are pretty tough, but I'm Gung-Ho," shouts an actor at the end of the 1993 commercial for Mega Marines, fully sheathed in bulky, futuristic armor as he throws someone dressed in a Bio-Viper costume off of a rocky ledge, presumably back into the pool of bubbling, glowing liquid from whence it came. While monsters in the G.I. Joe universe weren't exactly something new, considering the introduction of the subterranean beings of Cobra-La scroll as far back as 1987, and the Fatal Fluffies in the 1985 mini-series Sunbow cartoon episode, "Pyramid of Darkness" aren't easily forgotten, the concept of Mega Monsters was definitely unlike anything G.I. Joe had gone up against before---and by all means unlike anything that had appeared in toy form in the line, up till that point.

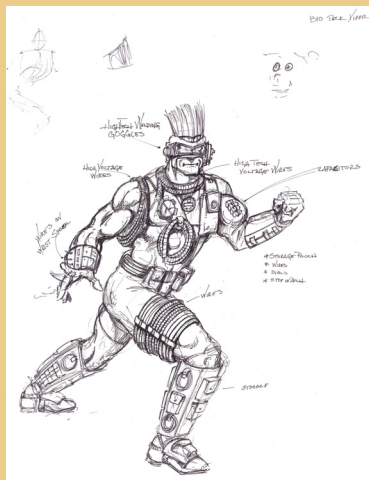
Well sort of. You see, the Mega Monster Monstro-Vipers, according to their file card, were actually Range-Vipers who had "volunteered" to let Dr. Mindbender have his way with them. Genetically. So, technically, they have fought the Joes before, just not like this. Monstro-Vipers are bio-technically controlled werewolf-grizzly-bear-"Big Foot"-Range-Viper hybrids, bred specifically for sniffing out Joes in the wilderness and then, if not maiming the Joes with their brute strength and animalistic features, assaulting them, according to their file card, with "exploding gut bombs." As if that wasn't enough, they also have "trauma-trance bat eyes." These are just a handful of the attributes, prescribed to the Monstro-Viper physiology, however.

Bio-Vipers, similarly, used to be Cobra Eels! Instead of amalgamating Cobra Vipers with the woodsy wildlife contained within the Monstro-Viper however, Mindbender welded the deadliest traits of the deadliest sea creatures to the DNA of these former Cobra Eels. The bite of the piranha, the hide of the shark, and the "strength and tentacles of giant squid" (as per their file card), is the recipe for the gruesome and formidable Bio-Viper. They uh.... even have uh... the feet of a platypus.

Both the Monstro-Vipers and Bio-Vipers are controlled via cerebral implant. It is the only way to harness and wield their otherwise wild and monstrous warped minds and bodies. In order to maintain this cybernetic authority over his creations, Dr. Mindbender created the Cyber-Vipers and the Mega-Vipers. The Cyber-Vipers are human/robot hybrids, concocted to supervise, herd, and essentially command the Mega Monsters both in the laboratory and essentially during combat. The Mega-Vipers, who add to the overall peril on the battlefield themselves, fight alongside the giant werewolf-Sasquatch-former-Range-Vipers and lumbering, slimy aquatic bipedal former-Eel shark-squids. Mega-Vipers are (as hard as it might be to believe)

the Mega Monsters' auxiliaries in battle, as well as their trainers and handlers. There's nothing the Mega Monsters will do that the Mega-Vipers won't do. While the combination of Cyber, Mega, Monstro, and Bio Vipers sounds like a lot for the Joes to handle, at one point the potato was going to be much hotter. Originally a third Mega Monster was designed for the sub-line; the Plasma-Viper, but the concept was scrapped due to unforeseen engineering and cost issues.

Whereas Monstro-Vipers had their spring-action bionic-hand for launching "gut bombs" and Bio-



precursors to the Mega Monster line. Before there was Plasma-Viper, before there was Monstro-Viper, and even before there was Bio-Viper himself, there were: The Bio-Vipers!!Plural.

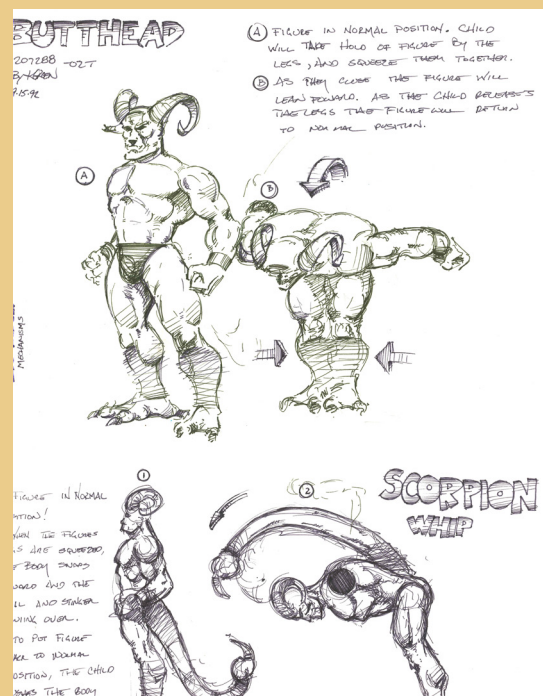
BIO-VIPERS:

You're not imagining things, although after you see these dangerous and sometimes decrepit creatures, you might wish you were. In the early 90's, former Hasbro designer Kurt Groen brainstormed some concepts for a line called "Bio-Vipers." These Bio-Vipers were still the mad genius results of an insane Dr. Mindbender, and still pitched with monster-y play features in mind, but they were far more numerous in number, and quite arguably, even stranger and more far-out than the Mega Monsters could ever hope to be.

With prototype names like Scorpion Whip, Butthead, and Twister, the Bio-Vipers were set to cause quite a diverse set of problems and frights for the Joes.

Butthead's conceptual play feature was going to be butting his head. Scorpion Whip's would have been to whip his scorpion tail, and Twister... well. These types of play features were not unique to toys in general obviously, but they would be unique to G.I. Joe at the time. G.I. Joe was a toy line that survived for a long time, pacing out the evolution of its playability. Even with Raptor's winged cape in '87, or Incinerator's projectile launching catapult in 1991, Joe figures had still relied on their articulation, story, vehicles, and scale to maintain appeal. It was only a matter of time before these figures would have to resort to having legs squeezed together to execute an attack.

As precursors to what would later become the Mega Monsters, you can see some of what was essentially carried over to what was eventually released. A lot of the armor/gear and even some of the implied action features are similar to what Monstro-Viper and Bio-Viper would end up with as final product.



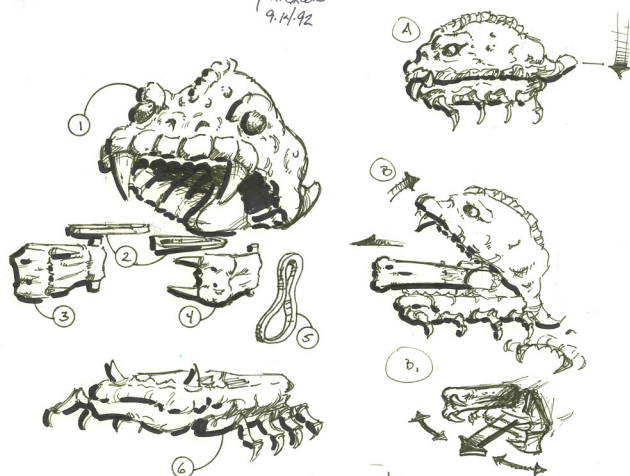


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SNAP MOUTH

207288-01T
By K. Green
9.14.92

BIOVIPER
MECHANISM



PIECES

- 1 HEAD
- 2 GUMS
- 3 INNER MOUTH (L)
- 4 INNER MOUTH (R)
- 5 RUBBER BAND/SPRING
- 6 BODY

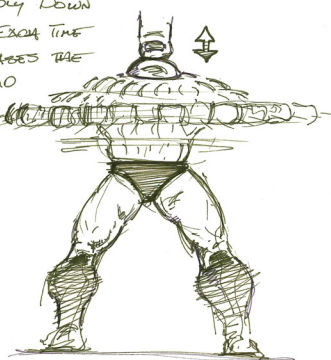
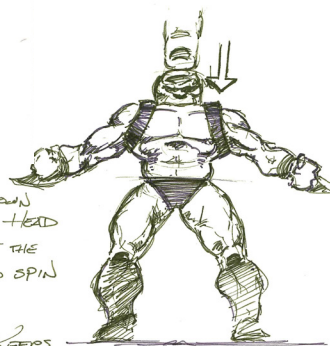
A. PUSH DOWN ON THE TAIL OF THE CREATURE CAUSING THE MOUTH TO OPEN!
B. AS THE MOUTH OPENS THE INNER LIPS ~~WILL~~ EXTEND OUT AND SPREAD. THEY SPREAD WIDE ENOUGH TO GRASP A JOE FIGURE. THE INNER LIPS WILL AUTOMATICALLY

• CHILD PUSHES DOWN ON THE FIGURE'S HEAD WHICH CAUSES THE UPPER BODY TO SPIN AROUND.

• AS THE CHILD KEEPS PUSHING REPEATELY DOWN ON THE HEAD. EXAM TIME THE CHILD RELEASES THE HEAD, THE HEAD RETURNS TO ITS NORMAL POSITION.

TAZMAIN DEVIL

MECHANISM
207288-05T
By K. Green
9.14.92



Amongst the Bio-Vipers was a concept that looks a LOT like Ghengis Rex from the *Dinosaucers* cartoon. (The Dinosaur theme would also be carried over to G.I. Joe team's short-lived one-off sub-team, Dino Hunters.) This Bio-Viper has the head of a T-rex and a giant rock-like fist (possibly an early hint at using Play-Doh for Bio-Armor). This rock-like fist suggests a clobbering mechanism, not unlike Monstro-Viper's attack feature. Scorpion Whip and Butthead are pretty demonic in nature. One concept seems to be a giant draconian creature with wings and a long neck. The others include a zombie of sorts---a wild brute, and something that is very, very reminiscent of the D'Compose character from Hasbro's Inhumanoids line. There is one other Bio-Viper who was later repurposed as an alien for the Star Brigade line but was eventually canceled. The multi-armed Star Brigade alien "Thrasher" was originally slated to be one of the Bio-Vipers, but even though he went through the presentation and pre-production gauntlet a second time, he was still canceled, again.

Overall, it's hard to say of course, what sort of impact the Bio-Vipers might have had on the G.I. Joe brand if they'd been produced. Would they have drawn more attention to the line from kids? Had they been successful, would they have further changed the aesthetic landscape of *A Real American Hero*? Or would they have been too extreme for even the most die-hard G.I. Joe fans?



BATTLE CORPS RANGERS

By: Chris "TOPSON" Murray



The tail end of 1994 and 1995 would have been an exciting time for the G.I. Joe brand if Hasbro had not cancelled it mid-1994. Space exploration would have continued in earnest with new alien species interacting with the Joe universe (visit JoeDeclassified.com to read more details on the space race in the 2013 *The Declassified Report* magazine). Also, here on earth, ninjas would have made an appearance with the new Ninja Commandos, while the main brand of G.I. Joe would have returned to its military roots with the introduction of the Battle Corps Rangers (BCR). Not much is known about the Battle Corps Rangers back-story or evolution from the Battle Corps. BCR, during the design stages had the name "Secret Soldiers." The BCR name was debuted in the 1994 Action Figure News & Toy Review Official GI Joe Convention issue. The article "Now you see 'em, now you don't" discussed the line and shows mock-up packaging for three vehicles with modified Battle Corps logos. Hasbro used a mix of existing molds,

shelved concepts from past years, and new designs to create the BCR figures. To date, six vehicles, two robotic animals, and nine figures have been confirmed to have been part of the line.

Six vehicles would have been labeled under the BCR banner. Two were re-released vehicles, the Sea Wolf (Killer W.H.A.L.E.) and the battle station (Transportable Tactical Battle Platform) repaint, with four new concept vehicles scheduled for release. The new vehicles would have been:

Sea Wolf: This vehicle was the 1984 Killer W.H.A.L.E. with the upper half molded in white plastic. This "arctic" version of the hovercraft would have come with a repainted Version-4 Duke. Instead of the desert camo pattern on the figure, it would have come with a green jungle camo pattern. The hand painted figure can be seen in the file card on the proof sheet for Sea Wolf and concept art for the Duke figure can be found on the 1994 G.I. Joe Gift Wrapping paper. The Sea Wolf was planned to be released as an unknown retailer exclusive.



The name "Conrad S. Hauser" does not identify any known living person





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The Battle Station: This vehicle was the Transportable Tactical Battle Platform remolded in white plastic, instead of the grey from the 1985 release. This "artic" version of the battle station would have come with two figures. The Joe figure would have been a repainted Version-1 Big Ben and the Cobra figure would have been a repainted Version-2 Snow Serpent. The Battle Station was planned to be released as an unknown retailer exclusive.

Striker XS-1: This was a new concept off-road vehicle for G.I. Joe. The single figure jeep came with a unique play feature that was the first of its kind for G.I. Joe, a net launcher. The catapult weapon; similar to that used on the Parasite, would launch a folded net to capture Cobras.

Vortex XS-2: is a Vertical Take Off & Landing (V.T.O.L.) flying craft. Its sleek design featured a flying blade spinner/launcher weapon similar to that found on the 1992 released Cobra R.A.T. vehicle.

The Cobra Eel: (not to be confused with the Eel troopers) would have been the newest boat in Cobra's Navy. The double hauled speed boat design would have included a disk launcher weapon similar to the mine launcher found on the 1990 G.I. Joe Avalanche vehicle.





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BATTLE CORPS RANGERS

By: Chris "TOPSON" Murray



Phantom X5-3 Stealth Tank: The tank was released under the Sgt. Savage line as the I.R.O.N. Panter tank in 1995. This new concept G.I. Joe vehicle would have been released in all black with a missile firing tank turret and break away panels to reveal the inside. The tank would have been packaged with a re-painted Version-1 Hit & Run as the stealth tank driver. To see an image of the unproduced Hit-n-Run, visit Tim Finn's Blog "A Real American book".

The nine characters were going to be five carded figures (the Baroness, Dr. Mindbender, Frostbite, Flint, and Footloose) and four vehicle drivers (Duke, Hit & Run, Big Ben, and Snow Serpent). Hasbro was going to continue to use the same figure mold twice with different paint applications similar to what they have done since 1992. Another cost saving process would have been the re-use of already used figure molds and mix-n-match of body parts to create new figures. Each of the BCR figures were going to be repainted or were repaints from earlier years. Cobra would have debuted 2 new sculpt figures and 1 vehicle pack in figure.



Baroness was a completely new sculpt for the 1995 line. No re-used parts from other earlier figures and her hair was going to be molded separately and then glued into place, similar to Dress Blues Gung-Ho's hat. Her most unique feature is that she would have had small repeating Cobra logos woven into the lace of her top. Typically a feature like this would have been cost reduced out in final production, but the 2-ups and 1:1 scale resins that have been found have the Cobra logos sculpted onto the figure. Her uniform would have had a snake head on her belt buckle and on each of her knee pads. The Baroness would have been armed to kill with a spring loaded snake cannon that shot Cobra snake missiles. The obviously non-aerodynamic missile looked like a king cobra ready to strike as it flew towards you. A new feature that Hasbro seemed to introduce with the Battle Corps Rangers line was accessories children could wear or use. Baroness was going to be released with a dog tag that children could wear. She would have been released in two color patterns, first would have been black and maroon while the second wave release would have been almost all black with the snake heads on her costume painted red.

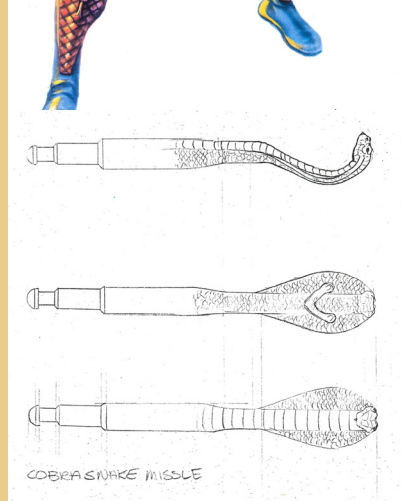
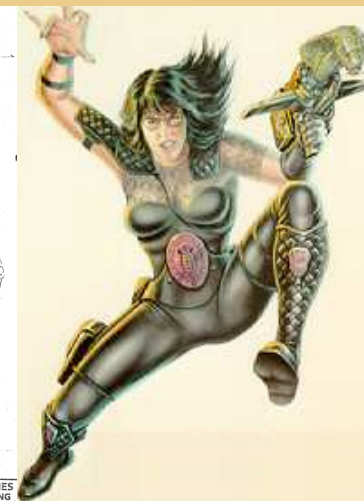
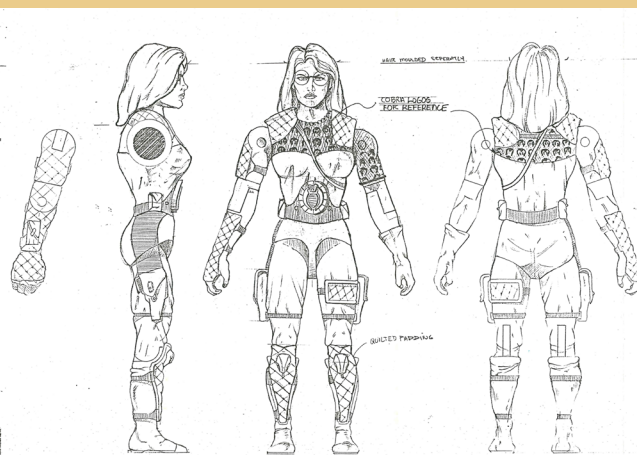


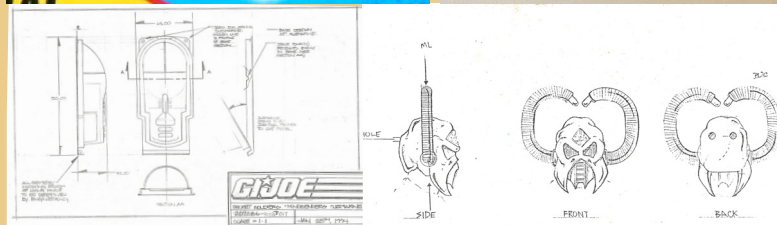
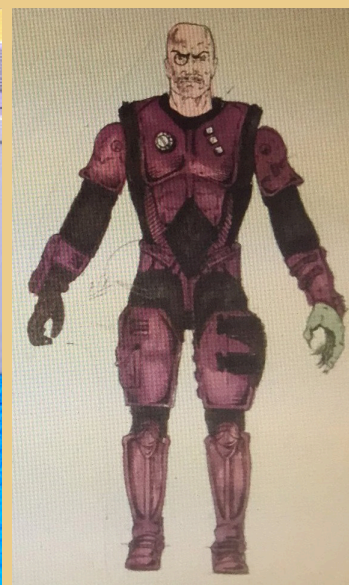
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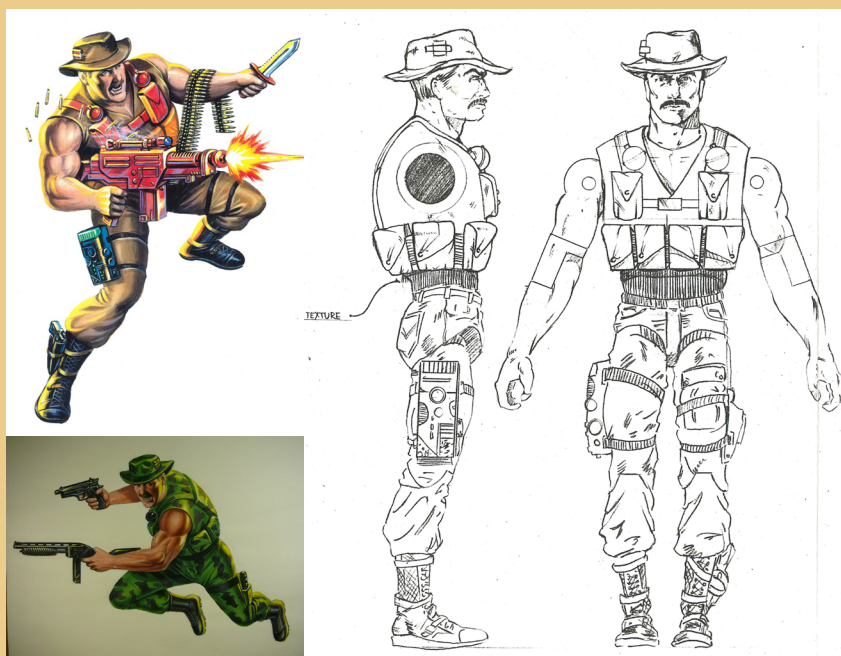
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					Baroness	Baroness	



Dr. Mindbender would have been one of the most interesting figures to come out that year. He was also a completely new sculpt for 1995. One of the most unique features on this figure was the webbed left hand. Nothing is known on the backstory for this version of Mindbender, but I like to think the web hand is a result of his experiments to create the Bio-vipers that fought G.I. Joe's Mega Marines. This version of Mindbender would have been an aquatic figure. He had the webbed hand, he was going to come with a helmet with air hoses, and he was going to come with an "invisible" sub, which was later issued with the cryo-freeze sgt savage. Also, the character is depicted on the Battle Station proof card climbing the ladder out of the water. The art shows an overly exaggerated version of Mindbenders helmet, but the body is the same and the details on the head are like those on the helmet. The two color patterns that the good doctor would have been released in were a black with purple accents and later he would have been released in black with maroon highlights. (For more details on the Dr. Mindbender figure, visit Joedclassified.com to read Mike Taber's article in Issue 0 of *The Declassified Report* magazine.)



The G.I. Joes would have had more figures than Cobra, with three new sculpt figures and the three vehicle drivers discussed above.



Footloose, as identified in the *Action Figure News* magazine and in preproduction paperwork, was originally going to be released as Shipwreck at the tail end of 1994 under the Battle Corps line. The 1994 style guide given to retailers shows a proof card of the figure as Shipwreck and an original wax 2-up head is also labeled Shipwreck. The head and torso for this figure was a new sculpt, and for cost cutting measures, Hasbro was going to use the arms from Heavy Duty with the legs and waist from Scoop. The Shipwreck color scheme was maroon and red. It is not known if the 1995 release of the mold in green as footloose was going to mean that the same mold would have been two different characters (similar to Spy Troops Chief Torpedo to DTC Low-light) or if the Footloose name was used for preproduction and would have been replaced with Shipwreck's after production. The Shipwreck/Footloose figure would have come with a rope climber, which was released with D-Day Version-2 from the Sgt. Savage line. He also would have had a grapple hook firing backpack. {For more information on this shipwreck figure, visit Kevin Watts article on YoJoe.com in the Figure Review section.}

A sculpt sheet for the **Flint** character, as identified in the *Action Figure News* magazine, has been found dated November 1992. There was no name on the art and the early date indicates the figure might have originally been intended to be released in 1994 as a battle corps figure. The same art was later reprinted with a date of February 11, 1994 and he had the name **Sure Shot** and was part of the Secret Soldiers line. It appears the "Flint" mold was first going to be used in 1994 as Sure Shot painted in yellow and blue, but Hasbro was going to reuse the arms, legs, and waist mold from Hardball to complete the figure. The 1995 release would have been released painted gray, as seen in the art shown above and labeled on a color chart for the figure. Similar to the Shipwreck figure, it is not known if the Sure Shot/Flint mold was going to be released as two different characters or if the "Flint" name was a placeholder that would have been replaced with Sure Shot. This figure was going to be released with a black motorcycle, which was released with Dynamite Version- 2 from the Sgt. Savage line. Also, it would have come with a ring that children could wear.



The **Frostbite** figure is an unproduced concept from the Mega Marines line. A painted example of the figure has been found and it matches the figure shown in both the Battle Station and Sea Wolf proof sheets. Nothing else is known about this figure.

Robot companion animals were another concept that was going to be released under the Battle Corps Rangers banner. The role these critters would have played in the Joe universe is not known. What is known is two animals (large cat and an alligator) were going to be packaged with a figure. The robotic animals were originally created for the 1990 Eco-Warriors line, but were canceled. Unfortunately no art has been seen by JoeDeclassified to help determine which characters were going to get robotic pets or what colors the animals would have come in. A 2-up wax sculpt of the cat is in collectors hands.



It is sad that the *Real American Hero* era of G.I. Joe ended in 1994. There were a lot of interesting projects planned for the line that we as collectors will never get as toy. Yet, a lot of these concepts have been uncovered by members of the Joe Declassified Staff and we will continue to share them with the community as we find them.

Outside references used to help write this article are Yojoe.com, Arealamericanbook blog, JoeDeclassified.com, and the 1994 Action Figure News & Toy Review, Official G.I. Joe Convention Issue. Please visit these resources for more information on the figures discussed above.

SGT. SAVAGE: REAWAKENING

By: Patrick "Notpicard" Stewart

In 1994 the Sgt. Savage collection made its debut on toy shelves. We are now more than twenty years removed from its introduction as well as its demise. As adult collectors, this affords some hindsight into the hidden treasures offered by this short-lived incarnation of G.I. Joe. While we find ourselves again in a period where the brand is not available at most retail outlets, we also find ourselves analyzing the brand's rich history; what makes it successful; and what qualities we consider distinctly characteristic of *G.I. Joe*.

Through the course of the yearly creation of the original run of 3 3/4" figures, the heavy World War II inspired uniforms of Cobra were slowly phased out in favor of more modern and science fiction based designs. The 1982 Cobra trooper and the 1986 Cobra Viper offer a perfect comparison where Cobra's standard trooper moved toward modern and futuristic gear. In many ways, Sgt. Savage's #1 enemy was a stylistic return to the enemy the G.I. Joe team faced in 1982. While not strictly military-based, the I.R.O.N. Army balances the sci-fi element of cybernetic soldiers with a clearly WWII inspired uniform. In fact, the earliest Cobra concept designs are similar to what was being created for the Sgt. Savage toy line. While Savage was reawakened in fiction, a familiar design plan was being revisited in reality.



As detailed in an earlier *The Declassified Report* article (Issue 2, April 2010), the new scale was not designed to replace the figures with the construction style that had been popular from 1982 through 1994. Instead, they were intended to complement one another with compatible vehicles and accessories. The Screaming Eagles were only called upon to carry the G.I. Joe torch when the 3 3/4" line was canceled.

Because they were designed after the 3 3/4" cancellation, the second wave of Savage figures offers fans of the *Real American Heroes* a lesser-known glimpse into what might have been. While a lot has been written about the unreleased 1994 and 1995 3 3/4" figures, what many do not realize, is, these figures would have included accessories far more unique than the sprue-and-launcher combination that was standard with 1993 and 1994's Battle Rangers. But while the figures were canceled, many of their accessories were released.

The details have thankfully been found, hidden across developmental design paperwork that still exists today. Battle Corps Rangers Dr. Mindbender was to be released with the chamber that appropriately found its way to retail with Cryo-Freeze Sgt. Savage. Keeping with the arctic theme, the catapult and whistle backpack included in the Arctic Stormtrooper package was originally to be released with Frostbite. Designs for Battle Corps Rangers Footloose reveal that he would have been released with the cliff climber that came with Jungle Camo D-Day. The black motorcycle that was included with Urban Attack Dynamite was an accessory that would have certainly boosted the popularity of Battle Corps Rangers Sure Shot. Because the art on a well-known sheet of wrapping paper depicts Duke flying with a burst of flame at his back, it is likely that the jet pack included with General Blitz was intended for Star Brigade Duke.

While the line did not have a long life at retail, the Sgt. Savage and His Screaming Eagles action figures continue to be a great source of G.I. Joe history and inspiration.



The second wave of Sgt. Savage action figures included accessories that were designed for canceled 3 3/4" figures



General Blitz 2-Up and released figure.



Battle Corps Flint (1994) demonstrates how a 3 3/4" figure fits on the motorcycle that would have been included with Battle Corps Rangers Sure Shot

X-SOLDIERS

By: Dan Klingensmith



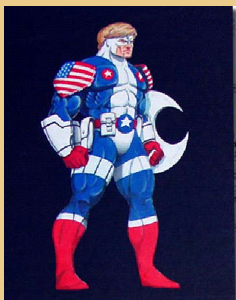
By the early 1990s, the Boy's Action Figure industry had gone from approximately six action figure lines in 1984 to over fifty action figure lines. With brands such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and the popular animated X-Men series, G.I. Joe was losing market share and shelf space in retail stores. To combat these new brands, the brand team decided that one way to gain back market share was to appeal to young boys with similar themes. For example, Ninja Force would compete against Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Eco Warriors against Captain Planet. To fight the popularity of X-Men, there was some discussion and little work done to take the G.I. Joe brand and give the characters Super Hero abilities. This new brand is now known as X-Soldiers or Super Joe!!

As stated, these X-Soldiers were designed to take G.I. Joe on an entirely different path. According to Dave Kunitz, the line of figures would be released concurrently as other Joe products such as Sgt. Savage. The idea was to put it in the marketplace and let the consumer, young kids, determine what they wanted from G.I. Joe. Depending on how you look at it, the decision not to move forward with the line was either seen as fortunate or unfortunate.

When discussing the designs of the X-Soldiers, Hasbro's Kurt Groen recalled that there was still a good versus evil concept and each character had a back story. One thing that Kurt enjoyed about the line was it allowed him to get back to his roots of what he learned at the Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art.

Each X-Soldier had a special feature or function to it. Within the next page or two, you will learn who these soldiers were and what features they were to display.

The Joes:



Character #1 (Capt America type): This was one of the earliest X-Soldiers created. Kurt shared that it is obvious who this character was inspired from and that he was originally supposed to be packaged with a video. The special feature on this character was a mechanism on his back that you could turn and it would make his shield spin.



Character #2: The concept of this character came from Hasbro's Dave Kunitz. Kurt explained that this character, CD-ROM, was supposed to be a computer tech specialist that would have the ability to hack into enemy computers and see what evil plans they had and give Intel to the Joes. To escape situations where he was discovered by the enemy, he had the ability to move quickly on his roller blade type of skates and utilize the discs on his other body parts to swiftly maneuver corners and turns.



Character #3 (Red outfit): This character was to represent someone with magnificent strength like the Incredible Hulk. He was to be molded in clear plastic and was supposed to represent a diamond type of material that would make him indestructible! His feature was to twist and would have a powerful punch when the mechanism was released.



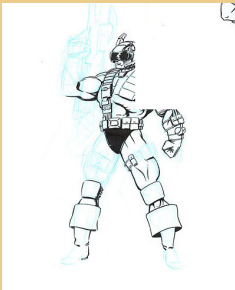
Character #4 (Superman type): This character was to have super strength and at one point Kurt shared that they were trying to have him fly. Although it never made it that far, one feature for the character was a speaker in the center of his chest that would state a variety of messages when pushed.



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X-SOLDIERS

By: Dan Klingensmith



Character #5: Kurt loosely based this character on the idea of having a Navy Seal amongst the team. To combat his enemies, Sting Ray he had a water squirting mechanism that went through his left arm



Character #6: Not much was known about this character in this rendering other than he was a Viking intended to be a G.I. Joe.

COBRA:



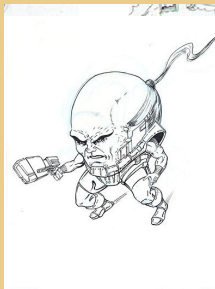
Character #1 Vulcano was the leader of "COBRA". Not only did his head have a light that made his head glow orange, but when you would add oil to his mouth and press the button on his back, smoke would raise and come out!



Character #2: Vendetta was the enforcer for the enemy! With super human strength, there was a gold cable that was battery operated and when attached to his back and head, his eyes would glow red. Using light piping, his massive sword also had the ability to light up when attaching the gold cable to his arm and sword.



Character #3 (?): Not much was known about this character except that he was a "Cobra" trooper that had the ability to throw plasma balls.



Character #4 (Egg Head): This character was responsible for creating all the weapons and enhanced powers for the troopers. Kurt described of a modern day Destro.



Character #5: This is an early rendering of a character that was supposed to represent a Super Sniper, most likely a "COBRA" trooper.



Character #6: When the two characters shown conjoined, they would become an indestructible force! Although when they were separated, they would lose their super powers and would not have a chance against others. This would have been a "COBRA" trooper.

*Special Thanks to both Kurt Groen and Dave Kunitz for their assistance.

A PRIMER ON G.I. JOE EXTREME -THE BEST G.I. JOE LINE EVER MADE*!

*so said by Kenner designers

By: John "DoctorKent" Kent



"EXTREME TIMES CALL FOR EXTREME HEROES! "

It was this call to action that framed the introduction of G.I. Joe Extreme, Hasbro's 1995 reimagining of the G.I. Joe franchise. G.I. Joe was back, in an all-new scale with all-new articulation and most importantly, an all-new attitude. But how did it happen? Why were the beloved 3 3/4" G.I. Joe figures canceled and replaced with these new super soldiers? And why did G.I. Joe Extreme die a horrible, painful death at retail? To answer this question requires a bit of background.

The book TOY WARS by G. Wayne Miller holds many of the answers regarding the development of G.I. Joe Extreme. Historically, G.I. Joe had been subject to varying levels of sales over the years since its introduction - during the first full year of sales in 1965, \$23 million; in 1986, \$85 million; and in 1992, over \$100 million. But in 1993, sales were down. A variety of different non-military concepts introduced in 1992 still hung on toy pegs across the U.S., and the 1993 offerings extending G.I. Joe into monster hunting (Mega Marines) and space (Star Brigade) were done to give a more broad appeal at retail. In focus groups with children, Hasbro discovered that kids "liked Batman more than G.I. Joe because he is bigger" and that "the X-Men are cooler than G.I. Joe because they have powers." Tremendous sales of superhero franchises such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the soon-to-launch Power Rangers had intensified the competition on the toy shelves. The G.I. Joe development team decided on a radical strategy to restore Joe to glory.

With a two-pronged approach, Hasbro would bring Joe back to its military core with the Sgt. Savage line, while introducing an all-new scale to the Joe universe that would bring the figures closer to the size of Batman and Wolverine. At the same time, a new subset of Joes with the early product codename of "X-Soldiers" would introduce mutant abilities to the Joe team. What the team at Hasbro did not know was that neither of these projects would see full realization. Hasbro had acquired Kenner Toy Group earlier in the decade, and Kenner still functioned as an independent division of Hasbro. Kenner was scoring successes with Jurassic Park and the various Batman lines, while G.I. Joe and Transformers were facing declining sales. Finally, Hasbro restructured their internal workings, creating an all-new G.I. Joe design team with former Kenner designers. If Kenner could make hits from so many movies, it was time for them to revitalize G.I. Joe and Transformers. Only one designer from the classic period of Joe carried over to the new development team.

The new G.I. Joe team at Kenner was formed by marketers who had toy experience, but were mostly from other fields. Their primary goal was to bring the brand to a new level of success and make the concept relevant to the public again. G.I. Joe needed a new attitude...the buzzword of EXTREME permeated the development, as that was the product catch-word of the 1990's. If kids wanted Youngblood, Spawn, X-Men, and Batman, G.I. Joe Extreme would be all of those things and more - with ATTITUDE. The new team leader, Lt. Stone, would have three figures in the first release, the clear face of the new G.I. Joe. He would battle Iron Klaw and the forces of S.K.A.R., a small group of super villains replacing the terrorist army that Cobra had become in later years.

G.I. Joe Extreme was given a full marketing push, including a comic book series from Dark Horse Comics (one of the hot comic companies of 1995) and a brand-new animated series. Most controversially to long-term Joe fans, the new characters of Joe Extreme were made over in the classic Kenner style: highly-detailed with increased decorations, accessories with play features in the weapons or figures themselves, reduced articulation, and - most importantly - a larger five-inch scale so there would be no more "looking down" on Joe from a child's Batman figures. It must be noted that this approach served Kenner well as their style evolved over multiple franchises from Star Wars to Jurassic Park.

The first reveal of the all-new G.I. Joe would occur in *Tomart's Action Figure Digest* issue #24, showing a colorized prototype of Sgt. Savage. The full Extreme line reveal was shown in issue #26, with a 1995 JoeCon report from issue #27 depicting their unveiling in-person to attendees of the convention. A robust assortment of seven basic figures, four deluxe figures, two missile platforms with figures, two small vehicles, and an ultimate battle two pack were shown off to cautious G.I. Joe fans. Toys 'R Us buyer Dave Brewi gave the line a "thumbs up", as mentioned in TOY WARS, indicating the backing of one of the largest toy retailers. The figures stormed store shelves in late 1995/early 1996.



A PRIMER ON G.I. JOE EXTREME -THE BEST G.I. JOE LINE EVER MADE*!

**so said by Kenner designers*

By: John "DoctorKent" Kent



At the 1996 Toy Fair in New York, hopes were still high for G.I. Joe Extreme. A line extension of six new basic figures, two deluxe figures, three accessory packs, two playsets, and two vehicles were shown, in addition to a carrying case, ammo refill pack, and one repaint four-pack. Two more basic figures shipped to retail, as well as two vehicles... and then the line was gone. The comic book lasted for one mini-series, and then an ongoing series of four more issues. The cartoon quickly vanished from the airwaves. There was no presence of G.I. Joe Extreme at all at the 1996 G.I. Joe Convention.

What exactly had happened to G.I. Joe Extreme? For one, it took an approach that immediately alienated most of the buyers who would have been interested in it - the fans of 3 3/4" G.I. Joe figures. No characters were carried over from the classic line, although sketches recently uncovered show that Duke was planned for a later assortment of Extreme. Throwing out the entire mythology of G.I. Joe was a mistake, as buyers might have sampled familiar characters and found the line to their liking. The scale change, and more importantly the articulation change, insured that many classic Joe fans were never going to support these new

figures. At the same time, the supposed "new audience" that focus groups indicated was looking for bigger Joes never materialized even with the support of a cartoon and a comic book. In fact, the G.I. Joe brand probably hurt the figures - if the characters were instead licensed from a popular comic of the time such as Youngblood, multiple years of success may have occurred. But the final nail in G.I. Joe Extreme was the loss of the patriotism of the 1980s. Without the Cold War influence that had helped Joe sell so many figures in the 80s, the new version of Joe was left without the strong "America" backing that has been integral to many of Joe's most successful periods.

G.I. Joe Extreme is a classic example of why focus groups and marketing majors will not guarantee you a hit in any business. If directly polled, a person cannot tell you necessarily WHY he loves Batman or Wolverine - and asking him to compare his or her love for those characters to something else may generate an answer that is based solely on the moment. G.I. Joe has never been intended to be adaptable to any genre; accelerator suits, Sigma 6, monsters, and Bulletman have never resulted in the incredible sales of military Joes. The brand's greatest success has come when there was a clear mission statement for the brand and a sentiment in the country that was not contrary to it. Chasing the hot pop culture buzz of "extreme" and MTV, pouches, pony tails, and near super-heroic physiques meant G.I. Joe Extreme served none of the audiences it was intended for.



The failure of G.I. Joe Extreme is a shame though, because it is, in reality, one of the ultimate (and final) realizations of the Kenner ideal. The sculpting is superb, taking into account the methods behind the madness - notably the influence of the Image artists and McFarlane Toys on the entire toy industry. Figures planned for future releases such as Mayday are among the most well-sculpted that Kenner ever created. The toys are fun - they are durable Kenner figures and vehicles - but their only sin being saddled with the G.I. Joe name. Imagine instead these characters as an extension of the Kenner ALIENS Marines - they could have been classics. How ironic that the team Hasbro put in charge of G.I. Joe immediately took it in the direction which would never be successful.

As such, G.I. Joe Extreme stranded a lot of its best work on the scrapheap of unproduced toys. Black Dragon and Harpoon made it to retail in very small quantities, but basic figures Mayday, Wreckage, Rampage, and Quick Stryke never saw production beyond samples. Deluxe Wreckage and Deluxe Freight (with a much-toned down physique from the first version) were also planned but never made. Vehicles such as the Thunderin' Fury tank and the Tigerhawk helicopter were not made under the Joe Extreme banner, nor the accessory packs or playsets (one of which was retooled into a Batman playset). Figures from future assortments which were never offered to retail buyers included the Silencer; a villain from the Extreme cartoon, Tracker and Grey Ghost, and additional versions of Sgt. Savage and Iron Klaw.

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A PRIMER ON G.I. JOE EXTREME

Today, G.I. Joe Extreme is a footnote in the history of G.I. Joe relegated to a bunch of potential characters for inclusion in the current product line but not truly demanded or missed by many fans. It will forever serve as an example that even with the full support of Hasbro - much like Sigma 6, the Rise of Cobra, and Renegades after it - that G.I. Joe will not succeed regardless of the work put into it if the public is not interested.

G.I. Joe Extreme Fun Facts:

The working name for Harpoon was Shark; Rampage was known as Rage; and Inferno was known as Scorch.

Ballistic was intended to be renamed "Eagle Eye" if the line had continued (as shown in the second Dark Horse series).

The Tigerhawk eventually saw release as part of the Funskool line, with no parts changed, for their 3 3/4" G.I. Joe line. As such, the figures loosely slide around in the cockpit of this vehicle designed for a five-inch figure.

The body of the Thunderin' Fury was reused for the Small Soldiers Buzzsaw Tank.

The unreleased playset Ice Station Zero made an appearance as the Ice Fortress in the Batman and Robin movie line.

A modified version of Mayday's all-terrain ski-backpack was used in the Batman Crime Squad line for Ski Blast Robin.

Other characters with no known toy releases planned that appeared in the comic series and/or cartoon include:

Joes: Tall Sally, Short Fuse, Mr. Clancy

SKAR Members: Steel Raven

Other characters: Red Scream, Sawsad, Bandito, and Oselo

This article was prepared using facts from TOY WARS by G. Wayne Miller (Random House/Times Books/February 1998).



G.I. JOE EXTREME CHECKLIST

Extreme Series 1

- ☐ Ballistic
- ☐ Freight
- ☐ Inferno
- ☐ Iron Klaw
- ☐ Lt. Stone
- ☐ Metalhead
- ☐ Sgt. Savage

- ☐ Deluxe Ballistic
- ☐ Deluxe Iron Klaw
- ☐ Deluxe Lt. Stone
- ☐ Deluxe Metalhead

- ☐ Ultimate Battle Lt. Stone
- ☐ Ultimate Battle Iron Klaw

- ☐ Bone Splitter
- ☐ Detonator Combat Cannon w/ Sgt. Savage (short gun)
- ☐ Detonator Combat Cannon w/ Sgt. Savage (long gun)
- ☐ Road Bullet
- ☐ Sand Striker
- ☐ Sky Stalker
- ☐ Spitfire Battering Platform w/ Inferno

Extreme Series 2

- ☐ Black Dragon
- ☐ Harpoon

- ☐ Extreme comic by Dark Horse
- ☐ Mini series #1 Ashcan edition
- ☐ Mini series #1 Red, White, Blue logo
- ☐ Mini series #1 Red logo
- ☐ Mini series #1 White logo
- ☐ Mini series #1 Blue logo
- ☐ Mini series #2
- ☐ Mini series #3
- ☐ Mini series #4
- ☐ Ongoing series 1-4

Extreme Other

- ☐ MicroVerse: G.I. Joe Battle Battalion Assortment #1
- ☐ G.I. Joe: Riding a Dark Horse promo poster
- ☐ Dark Horse Frank Miller mini promo poster 11"x17"
- ☐ Dark Horse Frank Miller promo poster (3 sheets) 34"x66"
- ☐ G.I. Joe Extreme promo button
- ☐ G.I. Joe Extreme promo hat
- ☐ G.I. Joe Extreme promo licence plate
- ☐ G.I. Joe Extreme promo shirt
- ☐ G.I. Joe Extreme 4-pack diecast High-Tech Vehicles
- ☐ Diecast Bone Splitter
- ☐ Diecast Sand Striker

- ☐ Diecast Sky Stalker
- ☐ Diecast Tiger Hawk

- ☐ Super Soaker G.I. Joe Extreme Water Blaster
- ☐ Wrapping paper
- ☐ Funskool Tigerhawk
- ☐ Funskool Sky Stalker

Extreme Unreleased

- ☐ Mayday
- ☐ Quick Stryke
- ☐ Rampage
- ☐ Wreckage
- ☐ Deluxe Freight
- ☐ Deluxe Wreckage
- ☐ Urban 4-pack
- ☐ Tracker
- ☐ Grey Ghost
- ☐ The Silencer
- ☐ Additional versions of Iron Klaw and Sgt. Savage

- ☐ Ice Station Zero
- ☐ Counter Attack Tech Base
- ☐ Thunderin' Fury Tank w/ Freight
- ☐ Tiger Hawk

- ☐ Alpine Enforcer Action Pack
- ☐ Cybernetic Exo-Armor Action Pack
- ☐ Shadow Stealth Defender Action Pack

- ☐ Carrying case
- ☐ Combat Communicator
- ☐ Nerf Ammo Pack

Extreme toys Released in other toy lines

- ☐ Ice Station Zero - Batman & Robin Ice Fortress
- ☐ Mayday's all-terrain ski-backpack - Robins backpack
- ☐ Spitfire Battering Platform re-released as 12" G.I. Joe Artillery Assault w/ Big Brawler
- ☐ Thunderin' Fury - Small Soliders Buzzsaw Tank

G.I. Joe Extreme Bootlegs

- ☐ Ballistic
- ☐ Freight
- ☐ Inferno
- ☐ Iron Klaw
- ☐ Lt. Stone
- ☐ Metalhead
- ☐ Sgt. Savage
- ☐ bootleg mini Bone Splitter
- ☐ bootleg mini Sky Stalker
- ☐ bootleg mini Tiger Hawk

EVERYTHING ELSE

By: Gary "Gyre-Viper" Head &
Jared "Jaimanstone" Bunnell

with special thanks to Patrick "Notpicard" Stewart

What do you do when you've tried everything you can think of and your brand is still dying? You try everything else.

The battlefield for retail domination in the nineties is recalled by Hasbro's Kirk Bozigian as "war." Regardless of the debasement imposed by collectors decades later for the blinding radiance of certain G.I. Joe sub-team color choices and "gimmicks," Kirk and his team knew exactly what they were doing. Eco-Warriors, Star Brigade, Mega Marines, as a whole these sub-lines were a response to all the action figure and film-to-toy related trends at the time, but it was Playmates' Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, with its glowing, mutated kaleidoscope of multi-colored heroes and villains that Kirk says lead him to insist on going the neon route with G.I. Joe's

In no uncertain terms, by 1989, G.I. Joe was "Under attack." The brand's sales peaked in 1986 and by 1989, G.I. Joe's sales volume had been slashed in half by vicious competition.

"The two brands that really, really crippled G.I. Joe in the late eighties and early nineties were Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers. It showed that the action figure business was getting younger and younger and G.I. Joe's demographics were older. We had the oldest demographics of any action figure brand at the time."

"You can't build a brand if all you do is sell to adult collectors, you've got to build a brand by selling to kids."

A new battle plan was in order.

"My staff and I prepared a competitive information file, which we did every year, and counted fifty-five action figures from eleven different toy companies. The Toys 'R Us boy's buyer told me only eight would ever make it to his shelves. Also, the marketplace was changing. More retail consolidation meant even less chance a new idea would make it to market." It was evolve or die in an action figure market worth \$1.6 billion dollars; it was time to make G.I. Joe into a mega brand once more.

Kirk says it was this new, youthful consumer base and competition from Playmates,

which lead to him "insisting on neon colors." Kirk says, "We were attacked on all fronts; totally surrounded. But I always felt we had the enemy right where we wanted them. By the balls!" The goal, he says, was to find a way to develop the brand for older collectors as well as develop new sub-brands aimed at kids.

But, how to do this?

In an oft-related story, Kirk tells of taking his four-year-old son to the toy aisle to let him pick out a toy. He handed the boy a G.I. Joe action figure and his son looked up at him and asked him, "What does it do?" "That cut me to the core; that said to me, 'we have to do something to resurrect this brand.'"

Kirk says that the concepts for the 1991 - 1992 years was to have toys that DID SOMETHING. He says that he reached out aggressively to the inventor community for ideas about how to "toy-ize" the G.I. Joe product line. This birthed action features such as the flying battle copters, shooting missiles and even the Ghostskriker's ability to project enemy jets on a child's bedroom wall. "Now this was cool technology for kids," says Kirk. Kirk also aimed to "create worlds" and themes within which kids could create a narrative of play. This led to the creation of the sub teams that have been so often maligned: D.E.F., Mega Marines, Eco Warriors, Sonic Fighters and Mega Monsters. Each sub-set came with a built-in story for kids to take and run with. And they did. Sales of G.I. Joe improved greatly, and while never returning to the 1986 numbers, it had established G.I. Joe as a mega brand once more during the early nineties.

Another contender in the market for the almighty kid's dollar was Nintendo. Kirk observed his son playing Street Fighter 2 on the Super Nintendo and was especially impressed with Guile. Here was a character in the most popular video game of the day that looked like a G.I. Joe. Kirk approached Capcom and a licensing deal was struck; the first ever of its kind, a sort of INCEPTION style deal having a license inside of a license. Both Kirk and Capcom saw the value in the cross promotion. Kids who loved the video game could now act out their adventures with action figures, but not just ANY action figures, G.I. Joe action figures. It was another shot across the bow of Playmates and other competitors.

Later, came Sgt. Savage. A re-imagining of G.I. Joe in a very Captain America sort of way; a World War II soldier is unfrozen to fight a Nazi-like super enemy. This Savage line was intended to supplement the 3 3/4" Joes. With the average size of action figures increasing, Bozigian noted that some kids were passing by G.I. Joe because he looked too small in comparison. Sgt. Savage would have offered a figure of a larger size while still being compatible with the accessories of his smaller counterpart. On shelves together, Sgt. Savage and the Battle Corps Rangers would have offered kids the best of both worlds. But when the 3 3/4" line was cancelled, it was up to Sgt. Savage and his Screaming Eagles to continue on and be the next reiteration of the G.I. Joe line. But it was not to last. Hasbro acquired Kenner and as happens in corporate mergers, jobs were eliminated and employees reassigned. The Kenner division was assigned G.I. Joe and they took him to Extreme.

This left a great deal of concepts and characters on the table forever; unproduced and lost to myth and legend.

The mid-90's will most likely always be remembered by fans and venerated by pre-production collectors, as the most significant era of unproduced G.I. Joe designs. These unrealized, often mythicized concepts have become iconic in their own right, as they not only tell the story of what could have been, but are a constant reminder of G.I. Joe's fragile and chaotic continuity. It is said that the brand can never truly die; that it simply hibernates between resurgences. In 1981, Hasbro's C.E.O., Stephen Hassenfeld, told his employees, after months of debate, that they had but two weeks in which to convince him that G.I. Joe should be resurrected, and if they failed, that he never wanted to hear anything about G.I. Joe again.

This, most likely, should have been the death of the line. So the fact that it went on to become one of the most influential, if not the most influential toy line of the 1980's, is a testament to the brand's underlying aptitude and underestimated perseverance, which decades later, despite countless trials of evolution and controversy, still marks the brand's genetic code to this day, as well as solidifies it as an iconic pop cultural phenomenon that still spans the entire world.

G.I. Joe is the brand that lived.

COLLECTOR SPOTLIGHT



JUSTIN “GENERAL HAWK” BELL

Let's start with an introduction Justin. Who are you, and where do you fit into the world of G.I. Joe collecting?

- Well when it comes to “collecting” I’m not entirely sure where I fit, to be honest. The line between “collector” and “fan” is always shifting, and I kind of think I fall more on the “fan” side of things these days. Granted, I’m always buying new stuff as it’s released, but that almost becomes more “consumer” and less “collector”. I always found the term collector more meaningful back in the day when it was a bit more work to fill those holes in your “collection”.

That being said, I certainly am a fan of the brand and have been for 30 years, though these days most of my focus is on news reporting, product reviews, and just trying to enjoy the online collaboration. There’s also the podcast recording and contributing to YoJoe.com.

Tell us a little about your web site, GeneralsJoes.com. How did it come about? How long have you been running it?

- It feels like almost forever that I’ve been running it, though not always in its current state. When I first stumbled upon the online G.I. Joe fandom, it was driven by newsletters and a few web sites here and there. I fell back into the fandom pretty hard, and thanks to The Bivouac (now known as JoeCustoms) I was drawn into the world of G.I. Joe customizing. I used Angelfire to start up my first website back in 1998/99 as a tool to showcase my customs.

Ironically in 2001, I was the first fan online to stumble upon the *Real American Hero* Collection 2-Packs at my local Toys “R” Us in Springfield, MA.. Because I managed to find them before anyone else, I decided to review them and share my thoughts, and from there on for the past 14 years, I’ve also used GeneralsJoes to post reviews and opinions, not to mention my dio-story comics.

The site made its final shift into a blog/news platform in 2009 and has been running that way since.

What’s your favorite aspect of running your own site?

- As someone who has worked alongside many other fans, I will say most of the G.I. Joe fandom and website administrators are the coolest folks to work with and really, whether I’m helping with other sites like JoeSightings, JoeBattleLines, YoJoe, or what have you, it’s felt pretty low pressure. That being said, it’s always nice to have final say over what goes on the site, and have an opportunity to share what I want to share.

Honestly, though, my favorite aspect is probably all of the positive feedback I get from folks who read. Anyone who takes a few minutes from their life to say thanks or send me news really adds to the value of the site.

You’re also well known in the community for being part of the Number 1 G.I. Joe pod cast: *What’s on JOE Mind?*. Could you tell us a little about the pod cast? How did you get involved?

COLLECTOR SPOTLIGHT

JUSTIN "GENERAL HAWK" BELL



- That's a funny story. I'd been on a few podcasts before, one with David Thornton from Quick Kicks' Theater, and a few episodes with Christopher, Matt, and Chad from the G.I. Joe Review podcast. But I'd never found the time nor energy to do it full time.

When Gary, Greg, and Chuck invited me to be interviewed on Episode 2 of What's on Joe Mind, everything just kind of clicked. It felt like we all had a great rapport, and I really enjoyed it...so I just kind of kept coming back. More or less I'm a guest that just never left!

It continues to be one of the best ways I've found to express ourselves with the fandom. There's a totally different energy from recording and vocalizing compared to writing and posting images. It's also given us the opportunity to speak with many folks involved with our favorite brand, from voice actors to comic artists, writers, and even *G.I. Joe: Retaliation* film director Jon Chu. It's been an amazing experience.

As a result of either your web site, or the pod cast, have you had any unusual, or funny run-ins with fans that you'd care to share?

- It's funny, for as long as I've been running the site, fans have been saying very nice things at every convention and every opportunity I have to interact with them. The podcast has opened a whole new level of great fan interaction, though. I think listeners probably feel like they "know" us better through our spoken word in comparison to the written, but it's been great.

It's always humbling when folks at JoeCon ask to have their picture taken with me, or just want to stop and talk. It would be tough to isolate any specific funny run-ins, though I'll say nearly every one of my close friendships in this hobby started with a funny run in. The Minneapolis Convention alone could fill a few of these newsletters...

Dio-Stories are a big part of you web site, and I'm sure a major draw for some collectors. What drew you to that aspect of the hobby, and when did you get started?

- For as long as I can remember I wanted to be a comic book artist. All through school I drew and drew and drew, and even majored in art when I first started at the University of Vermont, but ultimately I just couldn't get it together. So I shifted to writing, and switched to an English major, focusing my love of comics into plotting and writing rather than drawing or art.

The great things about dio-stories (at least to me) is that you can produce comics in a unique way that uses different skills (with photography) rather than drawn skills. Struggling with art for nearly 15 years I have the utmost respect for comic and toy artists.

As for my own dio-story, I was driven to do my own work by the great Tim Elf's work on Iconoclasts, which was posted through the Bivouac at the time. I thought what he did was really cool, and once again, when I found those 2000 era *Real American Hero* Collection figures, it drove me to use those figures to continue my own G.I. Joe universe. I had spent a lot of time working on my fanfiction, and the dio-story felt like the right way to continue work in that area.

Let's talk about your collection. Do you remember your very 1st G.I. Joe? What brought you back to G.I. Joe as an adult collector?

- Honestly I never really left. My first figure was the straight-arm Flash and Cobra back in 1982, and I have bought G.I. Joe toys every single year since with no stops. Sure, there were some gaps when figures weren't on shelves and I had not yet discovered the wonders of eBay, but I was still leveraging deals online with folks like Corey Stinson and Thomas Wheeler to buy 12" Classic Collection items and vintage items to fill in my collection. I believe the first vintage item I bought online was a loose G.I. Joe APC from Corey...not sure if he remembers that or not!

How do you collect? One of every figure? Just the ones you like? Army builder?

- From 1982 – 2007 I was a total completist, one of every figure and a small subset of army builders, but throughout the 25th Anniversary line I just couldn't do it. I'm one of those weird collectors who isn't devotedly nostalgic, so I can sometimes find it difficult to be impressed by new figures sharing a look with three decade old designs. That being said, the new figure format kept me interested, though not quite as interested as previously. Throughout Rise of Cobra I once again picked and chose (though ended up with about 95% of those figures), but for Pursuit of Cobra and forward I was "all in" again. At this point I'm getting one of everything and some troops, though I don't go too nuts with that any more.

COLLECTOR SPOTLIGHT

Justin "General Hawk" Bell

JOE
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Favorite character or figure?

- Ever since rewriting my own G.I. Joe universe in the late 80s I've had a fondness for Hit & Run. He is a fantastic figure with some great personality and a tragic story. I've focused a big part of my collection around him, and have been fortunate enough to be able to acquire some great Hit & Run pieces.

Any fond childhood memories you'd like to share?

- Probably too many to list. My Dad was a Vietnam Vet, and although he and my mom were divorced when I was only two years old, he tried really hard to continue being a part of my life. He was pretty thrilled when I showed interest in a military toyline, and even though he was unemployed at the time and really didn't have two nickels to rub together, he found a way to buy every single 1982 item and ship it cross country to me for Christmas. That was an amazing event in my young life, and I think that sparked my completism.

What have you gotten out of G.I. Joe that you probably would not have gotten out of anything else?

- That's a tough call, but ultimately I'd say relationships. I have a lot of great friends connected with the G.I. Joe fandom, and I think G.I. Joe as a property attracts certain types of people who I gel with really well. Like many others, I'm sure, toy collecting back in the 80s and 90s wasn't this cool "pop culture" fad that it is now, and it was something you kind of did in secret. Discovering this whole world full of like-minded people out there collecting the same thing I did and loving it like I did (and in many different ways at that) is by far the greatest thing I've pulled from the hobby. I know many collectors complain about the somewhat muted popularity of G.I. Joe these days, but I think it's created a much more tight-knit community, which is a great way to build relationships among the fandom.

Along with a tight knit fandom, the small G.I. Joe community also does a lot to encourage participation, which is great. Being able to produce content and talk about the brand with such a captive audience is great, and even people who don't have the largest collection can have some valuable things to contribute. That kind of stuff sometimes gets lost among the larger fandoms out there.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: JOELANTA

By: Roger "Goofateer" Taft

Roger: I am talking with Marten Jallad, Buddy Finethy, Brian Becker, E.J. White, and David Lane about Joelanta and the Great Atlanta Toy Convention. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this issue's Community Spotlight.

Let's start with the customary introduction. Tell us about Joelanta and the Great Atlanta Toy Convention. How did Joelanta get started?

Joelanta Guys: Joelanta started in 2001 by Atlanta G.I. Joe Club founders Buddy Finethy, Brian Becker, Lanny Lathem, and Jim Marianetti as a G.I. Joe collector's show for Georgia and the Southeast. It has grown from about 150 - 200 people at that first show to over 1,500 at the 2014 show. Lanny Lathem moved to Texas to work with the national Joe club in 2004 and it took two people to replace him! Marten and David joined in and have worked with the show since. (We still miss Lanny something terrible!)



The show has morphed over the years from those humble beginnings of G.I. Joe collectors to the largest 1:6 action figure show in the country. People come from all over the country and three or four foreign countries every year. The focus has kind of naturally broadened as a result of the inclusive spirit of the show to include every imaginable vintage and modern toy and pop culture memorabilia, hence the broadening of the name to Joelanta and the Great Atlanta Toy Convention. We want to be welcoming of all collectors but we will always keep a core focus on our hero, G.I. Joe.

In addition to the multitude of toys, we have special guests, pop culture cars, special tours on Thursday and Friday, discussion and presentation panels, cosplay contests, custom figure and diorama contests, and for the first time this year, an action figure/ toy photo exhibit and contest. For our Commanders Package attendees, we have a special limited edition action figure, the Friday evening "Lobby Swap" hosted by the World Famous Mr. EJ White, early entry to the show on Saturday and Sunday, Saturday evening trivia contest, Joelanta film festival, and a special Joelanta concert by Radio Cult. This year's concert featured the Possum Kingdom Ramblers, Radio Cults alter-ego band featuring the brand new genre they have created called WTF-Bluegrass.

For the past six years the show has been at the Century Center Marriott, 2000 Century Center Blvd, NE., Atlanta, GA., 30345. The show is typically the 2nd weekend in March, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Saturday, and 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Sunday. People start coming in on Wednesday and we host a get together and cookout on Wednesday evening and then the tours begin on Thursday. Commander packages available for \$99 come with the figure and all the additional Friday and Saturday activities except the bus tours. They are an additional cost.

Roger: Joelanta started out with a strong 12" G.I. Joe focus. Over the years that has changed. Can you tell us a bit about the change?

Joelanta guys: The focus on the artifact G.I. Joe has always been a bit deceptive. We really have always focused on the social experience for the collectors. The artifacts, i.e. Joe, action figures, etc., have naturally evolved because it's being about the collector versus the artifact. We are much more inclusive, and it turns out to be tons more fun. Our basic principle since the founding of our club has been to give everyone a social expression around our collecting interests. Our club is very active, meeting every Wednesday night rotating between member's houses, and we meet once a month for pizza on Sunday afternoon. There is a place for everyone and our ultimate goal is to convince everyone to move to Atlanta so we can all play together!



As we saw the show growing to encompass all kinds of toys, we decided to resurrect the Great Atlanta Toy Convention, a second show we did for a few years around 2005 - 2007. Instead of doing two separate shows; which can be a bit overwhelming, we decided to roll them together into one giant convention experience.

Roger: Just like JoeCon there tends to be a Joelanta exclusive figure. How do you guys approach the exclusive each year?

Joelanta guys: The ideas for the figures frequently come from show attendees, but some years the figure is based on

COMMUNITY PROFILE: JOELANTA

By: Roger "Goofateer" Taft



something our club is interested in. (The last four years our figures have had a steam punk emphasis with an alternative timeline. We plan to conclude that theme in 2015, and then we want to get back to an Adventure Team or Vintage Joe focus for 2016.)

As for the design process, well, we brainstorm, talk about ideas, wrestle with concepts, and create prototypes. Then we talk about *more* ideas, we wrestle with *more* concepts, then we finally narrow our ideas down. This usually takes about 10 months. Then, after much screaming and profanity, we make a final decision on a figure (usually with about two weeks to go), then we get busy. Being like a bunch of brothers, none of us takes it too seriously so all the stress only makes us stronger. We'll then swear next year we are not doing this again; that we are going to get ahead of the game. But when next year comes, we talk about ideas, brainstorm, wrestle with ideas... You get the picture!

Okay, so we might be exaggerating a bit, but actually that's not too far off reality. What we really do is a lot of the above, but we always want to have the idea finalized by September so we can start the fabrication process. Once we've finalized things, we work with wonderful local suppliers Kathy Ellis and Skip and Robin Are who help tremendously with uniform and outfit conceptualization and creation. Cotswold is indispensable every year, working tireless to the last minute on equipment and packaging needs. Bryan Tatum has been a rock star for the last couple of years with fabrication, painting, and weathering. Buddy Finethy and Mike Gardner do most of the art work for the logos and boxes, and we somehow pull it all together by the deadline every year. [i]Somehow[/i]! Last year we were up until about 3:30 AM on Thursday night/Friday morning finalizing everything to distribute on Friday. A bunch of attendee friends who shall remain nameless (Scott Beckman, Steve Charlton, Bill Williamson, Ralph Gaudiuso and we are sure we left out somebody and hurt their feelings terribly but you know we love you) pitched in and we knocked it out.

Roger: **I've got to ask: What's up with the 12" scale Hawaiian shirts? How did those come about?**

Joelanta guys: Oh, that came from David Lane!

David Lane: Yeah, I wear Hawaiian shirts all the time and my mini-me wanted one. Who am I to argue? He's the voice in my head. Sometimes you just gotta listen to the voices.

The response has been very positive and we see them on line in photos and Facebook nearly every day. It's become kind of a Joelanta trademark.

Roger: **Anyone who has ever attended a Joelanta event knows that the Cody Lane Foundation is a major part of it. Could you tell us little about how this organization got started and what its goals are?**

Joelanta guys: The Cody Lane Foundation is the bedrock of the current Joelanta show. When we started the show, life continued to happen and some serious things happened. One event that shook us all was a young member of our group passed away. Cody Lane, David's youngest son, died in 2007 after a long battle with a neurological disorder related to Lou Gehrig's disease. He had been a vibrant member of our club who loved Joes and loved the art of the diorama. After his passing the original founding members of the show gifted Joelanta to the Cody Lane Foundation in memory of Cody with the idea of starting a toy and diorama museum to preserve classic toys and foster imaginative and tactile play through the art of the diorama.

Roger: **How does the Cody Lane Foundation fit in with the amazing dioramas that are the center piece of every Joelanta event? Who works on them? How much time and effort usually goes into them?**

Joelanta guys: The idea is for the Cody Lane Foundation to preserve these amazing diorama works of art that otherwise would be taken apart and re-purposed or in some cases thrown away. We want to have a home to permanently display them so they exist as something other than photographs.

The original diorama concept for Joelanta was started by Steve Bugg and Eric Nettles. Albert Bruzella also contributed in the early days with some excellent figures and dios. Steve and Eric did the huge epic center pieces until Eric moved to Savannah in 2005. After that Mike Gardner took over the reins from Eric and he and Steve never missed a beat. Now Steve and Mike do separate large dioramas which are always jaw-dropping extravaganzas. Others such as Adam Hughes, Dave Matteson, the late Ed Olimpo, and others have pitched in over the years with outstanding figures and dioramas. A young upstart, Caleb Brown who was 12 when he started hanging out with us, is now a nationally award winning model maker at age 16. He has had superb dioramas that stole the show for the last three or four years.



Mike and Steve usually work steadily for three or four months leading up to the show. They put in hundreds of hours in the months prior to the show. By the time it's two weeks before the show, they are working 40-60 hours on the dios. That's after their normal work week. These guys can't be praised enough.

Roger: Even if you've only attended one Joelanta, it's pretty clear there is a core group of regulars that attend the event. Tell us about your local G.I. Joe club? What's the rest of the year like for this group of obviously close friends?

we only see them once or twice a year.

The local club started in 1997 and met once a month until 2007 when we started meeting weekly on Wednesday night for food and fun. Others use a 12-step program, but we use a 1-step: Meet with the Joe guys on Wednesday! There are about 16 of us who come nearly every Wednesday. Some miss occasionally but it's rare that we have less than ten on a Wednesday and once in a while we'll have 21 or 22 on a Wednesday Joe Fun meeting. We also meet for pizza on the second Sunday every month. There are about 30 people who come off and on to that monthly meeting. There are no dues for the club and we are open to everyone. We send an email out to 75 people, mostly locals, with info on Wednesday and Sunday meetings and other information as we have it. Like we said earlier, our goal is for all the Joe guys everywhere to move to Atlanta and hang out and play.



We are indeed a close group of friends. Many of us hang out with each other more than just once a week. We'll come out and play any time Momma will let us! It has become much much more than just a Joe group. A typical Wednesday is continuous laughter and 13 conversations going on at the same time with the 12 - 16 people. We haven't figured out how that works but we manage it somehow. We even have some folks from around the country who Skype in with us regularly. It's the place where all the cool kids hang out! Plus singing sometimes breaks out spontaneously. Mostly Elton John songs. Also there's always Oreos. We can't forget the Oreos, the jet fuel of Joelanta.

Roger: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the Joelanta community of collectors?

Joelanta guys: Bambi makes us mention cats every time we do an interview so C-A-T-S! Cats, Cats, Cats! There you go, Bambi. Just for you.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the show. Tell all your friends and tell them to tell all their friends! It's a big old family reunion. Come see us!

Roger: I think that just about wraps things up guys. Thank you for taking the time to answer some questions. One of the main goals of Joe Declassified is to encourage the Community aspect of G.I. Joe collecting. It's fantastic to see that spirit is alive and well in Atlanta!

If you've never attended a Joelanta, make it a point to get to one soon. It's certainly not just a 12" G.I. Joe show. There's always a great selection of 3 3/4" G.I. Joe figures, Transformers, Masters of the Universe, Best of the West, Star Wars, Mego, you name it. You can even find the likes of Action Force, Barbie, and Doctor Who. It really is a fantastic show, well organized, and a lot of fun.

If you'd like to know more, please visit their website: www.joelanta.org/



File Name: yojoe.com
G.I. Joe Collector Database

YO JOE!

YoJoe is the first and best resource for vintage and modern G.I. Joe action figures. A vast and thorough archive of all production figures as well as pre-production and unreleased items, YoJoe has a staff of committed G.I. Joe fans eager to uncover the latest mysteries of A Real American Hero!

Our deep archives of 3 3/4" figures are soon to be joined by their bigger brothers as the full 12" archive hits the site soon, joined by an exciting collection management initiative allowing G.I. Joe fans to list and manage their collections.

Since the mid 90s, YoJoe has been the driving force behind online G.I. Joe collection tracking, archives, and reference, and it only continues to grow. For the first time ever, we're adding a massive stockpile of 12" vintage entries to our database, and rolling out a brand new way to manage, organize, and share your collection to fans everywhere. Devoted fans are dedicated to accurate and relevant information gathering and action figure organization.

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This issue; and to a degree, every effort that follows, is dedicated to the late, great, Gary Head. My friend and confidant, Gary "Googles" Head, AKA Gyre-Viper, is now gone. There's a huge, gaping hole that he's supposed to be occupying, and it won't be filled.

For those unaware of our inner workings, Gary was a large contributor to what you've come to love and enjoy as Joe Declassified. Since joining us in 2011, Gary was the most prolific of our staff. He created the JDSO podcast, organized many of our public appearances, and was recently appointed as our Media Director – taking under his wings the panels and magazines that we produce. It was Gary that started up our give-away contests, and much of the money to fund those came from his own pocket. Gary was in fact the first "outsider" (not one of the original group of friends involved in Declassified from the beginning) that I brought on to the staff. His infectious enthusiasm and love for charity were big motivators in our burgeoning friendship. To many of you, Gary was the face of Declassified that you were most familiar with. He often liked to joke with me that it was "his organization," due to the misinterpretations of our public audience. Gary engaged the community on a much more personal level than I, and I loved him for it. We've been at this game for nine years now, and in his short time with us, I can honestly say that Gary contributed much of the drive and aggressiveness that has enabled us to do what we have done as of late. I don't think you'll truly realize what he brought to your lives. His impact here was immense.

Gary was a polarizing figure in our hobby – to those who weren't friends or fans, I can only say that you didn't "get the joke" in a sense. If you were one of those that didn't get Gary, I am truly sorry. He left an imprint for sure, and I encourage you to revisit his writings with a different set of eyes. It is a testament to the man, though, that when I first brought him on to the staff here at Declass, his preeminent concern was the effect that his polarizing reputation would have on the organization. I've never been one to dance around detractors, so as always buddy – fuck it – I'll take the hit. And I'll take any hits for Gary until I, too, am gone. The fact that so many consider him their "best friend" tells you what kind of love and energy he had for others. Gary was a giver, every step of the way.

I challenge every member of our hobby and community to pick up the gauntlet that Gary had thrown. I ask you to re-evaluate your role, your very place, in this community. What is it that you want out of your interaction with your fellow collectors? What can you do for them, and what can you do to better and expand our little corner of the world? I challenge you to leave the hobby a better place than you found it; to have an impact such that your absence would be so heartfelt.

Make us better.

We as human beings often tend to attribute "wants" to the departed, as if we suddenly were bequeathed a roadmap that they would have followed, if only their time here had not been cut short. In this specific instance, however, I have much of the roadmap, at least in regards to this hobby and our organization. In the last 12 months, Gary and I had many conversations specifically about Declassified's future direction, and I can think of no greater tribute to my friend than to ensure that each and every one of those goals sees fruition. Hold on to your seats.

Gary,
You left a huge wound, man.
Til Valhall

Respectfully,

Sam "Nomad" Damon
Owner/President/Mourner
Joe Declassified

This is an edited and updated version of the eulogy that first appeared on JoeDeclassified.com.

~~SECRET~~
~~TOP SECRET~~



GARY “GYRE-VIPER” HEAD

June 24, 1979 - February 7, 2015

