

Published in 1985 by
Osprey Publishing Ltd
12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP
Member company of the
George Philip Group
Copyright 1985 John Lafrin

This book is copyrighted under the Berne Convention. All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, 1956, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to the Publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Laffin, John
The War of Desperation: Lebanon
1982-85
1. Lebanon—History—Israeli
intervention, 1982I. Title
956.92'044 DS87.53

ISBN 0 85045 603 7

Editor: Martin Windrow

Filmset and printed in Great Britain

Contents

| | Author's Note 6 Introduction 7 |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | The Roots of War 9 The Combatants and the Arena 28 Another Six-Day War 53 The Siege 89 Post Mortem 109 Testimony 131 The Media War 148 Reluctant Peace-Keepers, Eager Martyrs 167 And it Came to Pass 191 |
| | Appendices: 1: Palestinian Military and Para-Military Forces 205 2: The Scout Remote-Piloted Vehicle 207 3: The Merkava 209 Index 214 |

Author's Note

I must acknowledge my wife's assistance in the preparation of this book. She has known Lebanon for many years, and she observed 'the war of desperation' as I did, on the ground and from both sides. She went to a war at an age when most women do not wish to move far from five-star comfort. Her trained memory was helpful at times when it was not possible to take notes; and she was able to do what no man could: talk to Arab women. Apart from all that, she typed and retyped this book - as she has my nearly 100 other titles.

I am grateful to several people and organisations for permission to reproduce photographs: Hirsh Goodman, the *Jerusalem Post*, the Israel Defence Forces, the US Marine Corps Division of Public Affairs, the Service d'Information et de Relations Publiques des Armées, the Military Attache's office of the Italian Embassy in London, and the British Army's Lebanese Force HQ. Where photographs are not attributed the photographer is not known, or does not wish to be identified. I am also grateful to Dennis Baldry, Will Fowler, Christopher Foss, Sam Katz and Steven Zaloga for their help with some aspects of the book.

My thanks to David Sharvit for his superb driving in Lebanon, where motoring has more risks than in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Istanbul and Tel Aviv combined. On one occasion, within a mile, he drove coolly past levelled rifles at checkpoints manned respectively by Israeli soldiers, Lebanese Forces (Phalangists), Amal Muslims and unidentified patrols.

John Laffin

Introduction

In the summer of 1982 Israel fought a war in southern Lebanon against the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and in eastern Lebanon against the PLO and its military allies, the Syrians. Initially called Operation 'Peace for Galilee', this conflict became one of the most momentous and most controversial of modern times. While it was simple enough in its causes, strategy, tactics and consequences, the fact that it took place in Lebanon made it appear confusing to people not familiar with the Byzantine politics of that unhappy country.

A small army of correspondents covered the war for the world's press, radio and television; but too often - for reasons which I give in this book - I believe that some of them succeeded only in compounding the confusion. This book is an attempt to clarify that war by describing the tensions which produced it, the campaign as a military event, and its regional and international consequences.

My sources are many and varied - Israeli, Syrian and PLO included and I have leant heavily on my own close-up observation of several phases and aspects of the war. I know the region of combat well, in contrast to many reporters who were seeing it for the first time. I encountered at Tyre an American television crew who were making a film of what they told me was 'damage caused by shelling from Israeli warships'. In fact, the 'wrecked buildings' they were filming were early Roman ruins. A major aspect of the war was the media's ignorance about Lebanon, historically and currently. In Nabatiye, south-east Lebanon, my wife and I were in the company of a reporter from Illinois. As usual, the crowded streets of that Arab city were choked with cars and every driver, also as usual, was continually blasting his horn. 'My God!' said the wide-eyed Illinois man, 'this sure is a major political demonstration. What are they angry about?'

'They're not angry at all,' we told him. 'They always drive this way. It's normal.' Nevertheless, he proposed to report the din as a protest, against what or whom we never did find out.

Wars are always tragic, so lighter episodes tend to stand out in the memory. One day we were driving through a mountain village near Jezzine and were slowed down by traffic; the weather was hot and our windows were wound down. From the window of a car passing slowly in the opposite direction something was thrown at us, and for an instant we expected a grenade. Then a bright red rose landed on my wife's lap, and we saw the occupants of the other car smiling at us and making hand-clapping motions. The car we were using carried an Israeli number-plate; the Lebanese had taken us for Israelis, and were welcoming us.

There are grimmer personal memories. At Damour, near the great tunnels in which the PLO had stored vast quantities of munitions, we came across the remains of a uniformed PLO fighter. He had been dead for a long time, since long before this particular war, killed perhaps in some inter-PLO feud or shot by a vengeful Christian or Shi'a Muslim. The point that struck us forcibly was not that he had been killed, but that he had lain so long unburied. Death had become so commonplace in Lebanon since 1975 that corpses roused little interest.

Heaps of human bones, the telltale remains of massacres, can be found among the rocks in the stony hills. We found such a heap, bleached by the hot sun, in the Shouf Mountains south of Beirut. Each skull had a bullet hole in the back, evidence of 'execution'. One skeleton still wore a Christian cross on a silver chain around the neck.

Another day, lost somewhere east of Beirut, I approached an Israeli tank largely concealed among rocks with its gun pointing towards PLO positions. All was quiet that day, and as I approached to ask the way I saw the crew sprawled on the ground in the deep sleep which follows combat. One soldier, the sentry, sat against the tank with his Uzi submachine gun across his thighs. His eyes were bloodshot with exhaustion as he squinted at me in the bright sun and said something in Hebrew.

'Where's the war?' I said.

'I'm the bloody war,' he replied, switching to English spoken with a Canadian accent. 'Come back again next year - I'll *still* be the bloody war. How do we get the bloody bastards to leave us alone? I mean, what do we have to do?'

And he fell asleep. Just like that.

How the exhausted Israeli soldier came to be leaning against his tank near Beirut, why the mummified PLO fighter lay unburied at Damour, and what the red rose signified makes quite a story.

1 The Roots of War

OPERATION 'Peace for Galilee' in 1982 was the direct result of Jordan's war against the PLO in 1970. King Hussein used his Bedouin army to drive out the PLO when its terrorist activities threatened his crown. Because Egypt and Syria had already imposed restrictions on terrorist activity from their territory, it became vital for the PLO's leaders to establish an independent base in Lebanon, where many Palestinians already lived.

In fact, the PLO had begun to set up bases there in 1968. The government, urged by other Arab states, agreed to allow the PLO to operate within a defined area of southern Lebanon close to the Israeli border. Within weeks the PLO broke its agreements, and clashes with the Lebanese Army ensued. Backing the PLO, Syria closed its border with Lebanon and infiltrated terrorists and arms across it; Iraq imposed economic sanctions against Lebanon; and President Nasser of Egypt coerced the Lebanese into signing the Cairo Agreement of 1969. This granted the PLO extra-territorial rights within the Palestinian refugee camps, and freedom to conduct operations against Israel from Lebanese territory.

As the armed PLO presence grew in the Lebanese towns and villages so harassment of the local population increased. The government tried to limit the PLO's activities, and further clashes with the Lebanese Army resulted. Syria sent its own units of the Saiqa terrorist faction into Lebanon, and the Lebanese government was forced to back down. By giving a semblance of legitimacy to the expansion of the PLO's extraterritorial rights, the agreements developed the PLO 'state-within-a-state'.

The PLO created an extensive network of relationships among the local communities - primarily with leftist groups - resulting in the establishment, in 1972, of the 'Arab Resistance Front' headed by Kamal Jumblatt. Concurrently, the PLO formed local leftist groups of its own to serve as front organisations. Such local support enhanced the status

of the PLO in Lebanon. This PLO-leftist coalition upset the delicate balance of power by increasing the influence of the Left and radicalising the Muslim population. At the same time the PLO began training and arming local leftist groups. Segments of the Muslim community saw the PLO as potential allies against the Christians in an attempt to end Christian dominance and to concentrate all authority in the hands of a Muslim-PLO coalition.

The Christian community felt its existence threatened by increasing Muslim-leftist power and militancy, the expansion of PLO control over Lebanese territory, and the growing impotence of the Lebanese government.

In May 1973 Arab pressure forced the government to sign the Melkart Agreement, giving the PLO even greater freedom than that granted by the Cairo Agreement of 1969. Alarmed by this development, the Christian community organised its own armed militia.

On 13 April 1975 the veteran Christian leader Pierre Gemayel and his bodyguards were attacked in East Beirut; four of his entourage were killed. Gemayel's supporters retaliated, killing 22 PLO members. Sporadic violence grew into a civil war in which 80,000 people were killed during the following year and a half. The Christian forces, which at first fought the PLO and its allies alone, were later joined by units of the Lebanese Army. The PLO remained the dominant element in the PLO-leftist alliance throughout the fighting, and gradually expanded the borders of its 'state', which encroached upon the Christian heartland. The plight of the Christians became desperate, and the danger of their complete subjugation became increasingly imminent. Syria had been backing the PLO, but subsequently realised that its own interests would be endangered if the PLO were to dominate Lebanon. This led to the entry of Syrian troops into Lebanon in June 1976, and to bloody clashes between them and the PLO. By this invasion Syria was

PLO guerrillas go over an obstacle course in a Lebanese training camp; the left-hand man carries the launcher of the RPG-7, the ubiquitous Soviet-made rocket-propelled grenade which is widely used as 'shoulder artillery' by all sides in the Middle East wars. His instructor, right background, wears a local copy of Egyptian paratrooper's uniform; the shots from his Kalashnikov assault rifle, and the smoke of burning tyres, are supposed to add realism to the training. Undisciplined use of live ammunition causes very frequent casualties in these training camps.



advancing a long-standing ambition of extending its hegemony over Lebanon, which it has always considered (with some historical justification) to be a part of 'Greater Syria'.

When the fighting ended - temporarily - in the autumn of 1976, Lebanon had ceased to exist as a unified national entity. The PLO had gained control over most of southern Lebanon, and even larger areas were dominated by the Syrians. Conditions in Lebanon were described by the Lebanese Ambassador to the United Nations, Edouard Ghorra, when he protested to the UN General Assembly on 14 October 1976 that the Palestinians had:

. . . transformed most - if not all - of the refugee camps into military bastions around our major cities. . . . Moreover, common-law criminals fleeing from Lebanese justice found shelter and protection in the camps. . . . Palestinian elements belonging to various splinter organisations resorted to kidnapping Lebanese, and sometimes foreigners; holding them prisoners, questioning them, and even sometimes killing them.. . . They committed all sorts of crimes in Lebanon, and also escaped Lebanese justice in the protection of the camps. They smuggled goods into Lebanon, and openly sold them on our streets. They went so far as to demand protection money from many individuals and owners of buildings and factories situated in the vicinity of their camps.

Fighting never really ceased. Rival Arab and Muslim groups used devastated Lebanon as the arena for their private wars. Iraqi- and Syrian-backed militias traded bombings, assassinations and street attacks in Tripoli, Beirut and southern Lebanon. In 1980, during the months preceding the Iran-Iraq war, about 200 people were killed in street fighting between those two countries' proxy groups in Lebanon. Frightened members of all the religious groups armed themselves, and hundreds of thousands fled their homes. The main beneficiaries of the resulting chaos were Syria and the PLO.

Official Lebanese statistics published in *An-Nahar* (4 January 1982) show 1,498 killed in 1981. On 2 June 1982 the same newspaper reported that 155 people had been killed during May 1982 alone. Given the Lebanese government's lack of access to most parts of the country, it is reasonable to suppose that the real figures were even higher.

Syria began its occupation in Lebanon by fighting the PLO, but relations between the two improved as the Egyptian-Israeli peace process progressed from 1978 onwards. The 'threat' of peace, which would deprive the PLO of its *raison d'etre*, brought the PLO and the

Syrians together in a rejectionist alliance. From that time, Syria abandoned its efforts to reduce PLO control over Lebanon and helped that organisation to entrench itself even further. When Syria withdrew in January 1980 from the coastal strip between Beirut and Sidon, it transferred control to the PLO rather than to the Lebanese Army. It supplied the PLO with dozens of tanks and, in April 1982, entered into a co-operation agreement with the Fatah, that faction of the PLO directly controlled by Yasser Arafat.

The *defacto* PLO state extended from West Beirut in the north to the Tyre bulge in the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Syrian border in the east. Within this area the PLO operated as a sovereign power, disregarding the Lebanese authorities and rejecting Lebanese jurisdiction. Its independent control was demonstrated in many ways.

The PLO maintained in Lebanon a well-organised force of 15,000 men, heavily armed with a variety of weapons - including tanks and

Girl members of the PLO receive instruction, on the beach at Beirut, in the use of the RPD; this is the standard Soviet bloc squad light machine gun, with an optimum effective range of 350—400 yards, and very popular among the PLO. For this particular session, the students' families and friends were invited to a demonstration of the progress they were making.



artillery - which it received mainly from the Soviet Union, Syria and Libya. Its chief source of financial support was Saudi Arabia.

Within its area of occupation the PLO replaced the existing legal system with its own network of courts. On 28 June 1980 Reuters reported that a 'convicted' man had been publicly executed in southern Lebanon 'as a warning and an example' for 'inflicting harm on the masses'.

The PLO turned United Nations refugee operations in Lebanon into bases for terrorist activity. It operated a radio station in West Beirut which reported on its activities, and regularly broadcast coded messages to its members in the field. The PLO also established in West Beirut which served as the 'capital' of the *de facto* state - numerous headquarters where it produced its publications, held meetings and issued official directives and statements.

The old Russian nickname 'Katyusha' is now used generically for several different versions of these devastating high-explosive, longrange salvo rockets. This particular batch, found at Nabatiye, are North Korean-made 122 mm rockets of the type fired from the 'long Katyusha' launcher. (IDF)



The PLO invited individuals and groups into Lebanon without clearance from the Lebanese government. In April 1980, for example, a delegation of 40 parliamentarians from Brazil was invited by the PLO in contravention of government directives. Similarly, in January 1980, the PLO helped Ayatollah Muhammad Montezari and a group of Iranian volunteers to circumvent the barriers set up by the Lebanese authorities to prevent their entry into the country, despite widespread public opposition to their visit. The PLO also turned its domain in southern Lebanon into a centre of international terror, training members of subversive groups from all over the world.

In inter-Arab forums, the PLO conducted itself as if it were the legitimate ruler of southern Lebanon. On 6 September Radio Beirut reported that the Lebanese government had submitted a protest to the Arab League against a PLO initiative to convene a meeting of the Arab Defence Council to discuss the situation in southern Lebanon.

With Syrian assistance, the PLO controlled most news reports from Beirut, the communications centre for international media coverage of the Arab world. A favourable portrayal of the PLO image abroad by resident and visiting correspondents was achieved by providing tours to newsworthy sites guided by PLO spokesmen, and PLO 'protection' from intimidation and assassination. For example, early in 1981 five American newsmen - two New York Times staff journalists, one from The Washington Post, another from Newsweek and an AP photographer - were abducted and held by gunmen belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (a component of the PLO). They were released after threats to their lives, and only on condition that their employers did not report their kidnappings - which for six months they did not. In July 1981, a London Observer correspondent (as reported in the London Daily Telegraph, 15 July 1981), a journalist from the Lebanese newspaper A'Liwa'a (AP, 30 July 1981), and Sean Toolan - an ABC-TV staff correspondent who had helped prepare a special broadcast on PLO terrorism - were murdered in Beirut. These killings followed the earlier assassinations of Salim A-Luzi, of the London-based Lebanese newspaper Al-Hawadeth, and Riyadh Taha, chairman of the Lebanese Journalists' Association.

By isolating the Christian community and distorting its image and goals, the PLO overcame Christian threats to its status in Lebanon.



Damage caused to children's quarters during a terrorist attack in April 1980 on kibbutz Misgav Am in northern Israel. Despite the ceasefire negotiated with the PLO over the Lebanese border by Philip Habib in late July 1981, the next ten months saw 290 separate attacks on Israel, Israelis abroad, the West Bank, and Mai. Haddad's enclaves. Given that these caused 29 deaths and 271 injuries, mostly to helpless civilians, Israeli public opinion increasingly demanded a military response.

The Christians were branded as isolationists, traitors, rightists, fascists, anti-Arab and Israeli collaborators.

The PLO for years suppressed opposition from the Lebanese Muslim population by bribery, blackmail, threats and violence. Among the Sunni Muslims opposition was frequently expressed through strikes and calls for a return of Lebanese authority. Armed Sunni groups clashed with pro-Syrian leftist groups in Tripoli, resulting in scores of dead and wounded.

The Shi'a community - the largest Muslim group in Lebanon, which had suffered the most under the PLO occupation - moved earlier than the Sunnis from passive to active resistance. They strengthened their Amal military organisation, and clashes with the PLO became a daily occurrence. The shift to active resistance among the Shi'as was prompted by the Khomeini take-over in Iran, which gave them greater

pride and self-confidence. Attempts to enlist the active support of Iran against the PLO failed, however, because of Iran's wish to preserve its close ties with the PLO, one of its few allies in the Arab world.

During the 1970s about 300,000 Shi'as were forced by PLO action to fee their homes and jobs in southern Lebanon. They crowded into the Muslim areas of Beirut, where they were once more subjected to harassment and intimidation by gunmen operating from PLO strongholds in the capital. Shi'a leaders pleaded with the PLO not to use their towns and villages for attacks against Israel, with whom they had no quarrel.

In the autumn of 1981, fighting between the two groups intensified right across southern Lebanon. Shi'a disillusionment was profound, and Kamal As'ad, Shi'a Speaker of the Lebanese parliament, told Lebanese Television on 16 February 1982 that there was no longer any justification for continued adherence to the 1969 Cairo Agreement; the PLO's military presence in the south had to be ended.

Strife continued, and on 16 May 1982, according to a 21 May report by AP correspondent Nicholas Tatro, a single battle in Sidon resulted in the destruction of 57 shops and the damaging of 30 others, totalling S20 million in property damage. Late in May 1982 the PLO-Amal clashes spread to Beirut. In the worst fighting seen in the city for a year, according to an 18 May report by *The New York Times* correspondent John Kifner, 'a night of artillery and rocket barrages left some 50 people dead'

Meanwhile, a former Lebanese Army officer, Major Sa'ad Haddad, had formed a militia which he called Army for Liberation of the South, later known as the Free Lebanese Army. The purpose of this 'army' - it had only a few thousand members - was to protect the towns and villages of southern Lebanon against PLO attacks. It has been described as a Christian army, but in fact a large number of its soldiers were Shi'a Muslims. Supported and supplied by Israel, Haddad also tried to stop PLO terrorist attacks into Israel; but his units, being widely scattered, were not entirely successful.

In May 1970 nine Israeli children and three of their teachers were murdered in a school bus near Kibbutz Bar'am. The attacks and infiltration attempts multiplied in the years that followed, especially with the lull in the Lebanese internal conflict towards the end of 1976, which enabled the PLO to turn its full attention back to the Israeli

border. Intensified Israeli border patrols thwarted most of these efforts, but the small number that succeeded took a heavy toll, including the Ma'alot attack of May 1974, in which 24 civilians -mostly pupils in the local school - were killed and 19 wounded, and the coastal road massacre early in 1978, in which 35 civilians died.

Terrorist attacks grew in intensity, and in March 1978 the government of Israel mounted Operation 'Litani' - a military expedition into the south of Lebanon. Its aim was to wipe out the PLO bases in that area and to restore security and normal life to Israel's northern district.

Following this operation, the UN Security Council decided on 19 March 1978 to set up the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This force had a three-fold mandate:

- 1 'Of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon.'
- 2 'Of restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.'
- 3 'To ensure that its (UNIFIL's) area of operation is not utilised for hostile activities of any kind.'

Only the first goal was achieved. Israel, which had no territorial designs on Lebanon, withdrew in June 1978. When Israel handed over to UNIFIL, the area in southern Lebanon from which its forces had withdrawn was clear of PLO terrorists. Israel believed that they would not be permitted to return, and that UNIFIL would prevent hostile activities against Israel from this borderland.

Reality fell short of expectations. The terrorists soon re-established themselves in the area, and UNIFIL was powerless to cope with them. On 3 May 1978, an armed clash occurred between PLO terrorists and UNIFIL's French contingent near the port city of Tyre. Three UNIFIL soldiers were killed and ten wounded, including the commander of the French battalion. After this show of PLO strength UNIFIL stayed out of the Tyre area, which remained under PLO control.

PLO terrorists gradually infiltrated the area nominally controlled by UNIFIL, taking advantage of its reluctance to become involved in armed clashes. Once established, the terrorists' presence was

sanctioned by retro-active agreement with UNIFIL. More than 700 terrorists were deployed throughout the UNIFIL zone; UNIFIL soldiers were barred from approaching within 500 metres of some PLO posts, and even provided escorts for PLO supply convoys arriving in the zone from the north. PLO bands passed through the UNIFIL zone to pursue their terror operations against Israel. The most tragic of such incidents occurred in April 1980, with the attack on the children's home in Kibbutz Misgav Am, on the Lebanese border; three children, including a baby, were killed. (The PLO claimed responsibility for this attack in its own newspaper on 29 April 1980.)

Scores of other attempts were foiled by the IDF or by Major Haddad's forces. Armed terrorist squads were often intercepted by UNIFIL guards - about 30 a month, according to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim - but when this happened they were simply disarmed, escorted out of the UNIFIL zone and released. Their arms were later handed over to the PLO 'liaison officer' in Tyre. Between June and December 1980 alone there were 69 successful infiltrations by terrorists through the UNIFIL zone.

Apart from the *Katyusha*, both the Syrian Army and the PLO also made use, for their bombardment of targets inside Israel and in the Christian areas of Lebanon, of the Soviet 130 mm gun. With a crew of around a dozen, this long-barrelled weapon can fire five or six times a minute, out to ranges of around 27 kilometres. (Author's photo)



The UNIFIL zone became a sanctuary from pursuit and IDF reactions. According to members of a terrorist squad captured on 15 December 1980 near the Israeli village of Zar'it on the Lebanese border, they had been instructed to surrender to UNIFIL personnel at the end of their mission so as to secure a safe retreat to their base. The PLO achieved an important victory when it managed to institutionalise its relations with UNIFIL, thus gaining the status of a legitimate party to the conflict in southern Lebanon. This enhanced the prestige of the PLO at the UN, and in those countries whose contingents comprised the UNIFIL force.

Frustrated by the difficulty of penetrating the Israeli border, the PLO directed more and more of its activities against the area under Major Haddad's control. The zone was a threat to the PLO because of its close ties with Israel and the harmonious relations between the Christian minority and the Shi'a majority.

Libya, Syria and the Soviet Union were sending heavy arms to the PLO, including long-range 130 mm guns; BM-21 mobile rocket launchers, capable of firing rapid salvoes of up to 40 'Katyusha' rockets at targets 20 km away; SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles, and tanks. As this build-up continued the Syrians were increasing their pressure on the Christians further north. On 21 April 1981 they and PLO gunners began a protracted shelling of Christian East Beirut; 400 people were killed within a few days. Syrian troops laid siege to the Greek Catholic city of Zahle in the Bekaa Valley, and moved SA-6 missiles into the area. On 15 May 1981 the PLO shelled Israeli villages and settlements along the northern border - 1,230 salvoes at 26 settlements. Considerable damage was done, six civilians were killed and 59 were wounded.

During the early part of July 1981 Israel fought what was generally known as the 'Two-Week War' against the PLO. This ended on 24 July when the US envoy, Philip Habib, arranged a truce along the border, though Israel still felt itself at risk. Two days later Yasser Arafat announced in an interview with ABC: 'The PLO has not undertaken to stop its attacks on the West Bank and in the Gaza strip; it accepted a ceasefire only across the Lebanese border.'

The Israeli Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon, visited the United States that month; and at a dinner in Washington on 22 May he announced that sooner or later Israel would have no choice but to 'take decisive military action' against the PLO in Lebanon. 'Nearly all

Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel begin in Lebanon,' he said, 'and the PLO and its various splinter groups are based there. That is where the operations are planned, and Israel will have to go to this source.'

Sharon had already been to 'the source', but he did not disclose this state secret at the Washington dinner. On 12 January 1982 he had made a secret visit to Jounieh to sound out Bashir Gemayel, the Phalangist leader, on the idea of a joint campaign against the PLO. He made it clear to Gemayel that Israel did not want to provoke the Syrians, and he even hoped that they might withdraw from Lebanon if the campaign which he had in mind succeeded in driving out the PLO. Gemayel's part in the campaign was to liberate Beirut with his 15,000-strong Phalangist militia, the 'Lebanese Forces' (no connection with the Lebanese Army). Israel did not want to commit its army to fighting in the Lebanese capital, but Sharon realised that Israeli troops would probably have to cut off Beirut and the coastal road from the Syrians, thus taking pressure off the Phalangists. He did not tell Gemayel this: he simply said, 'Beirut is your problem.'

The Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, and his cabinet faced a dilemma more serious than any which had confronted Israeli decision-makers since the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The decision before them was simple enough: to attack the PLO in Lebanon, or not to do so. But the factors involved in making the decision were complex. Proof of this is that four times already the Israeli Army had been readied for invasion, and each time had been pulled back.

In the first place, Israeli military casualties were bound to be heavy: the PLO units were well armed, in good defensive positions, and determined to fight. In the small, tightly-knit Israeli family community war casualties have a traumatic effect on the whole of society. Begin and Sharon had to balance the certainty of casualties against the possibility of finishing the PLO as a fighting force.

A major part of the campaign would be fought along the heavily populated coastal strip of Lebanon and through some large Palestinian refugee camps, such as Ein el-Hilwe. These contained known PLO training camps, but many civilians lived there as well. The civilians had to be given every chance to flee before the fighting started - but every moment allowed them was another minute for the PLO fighters to prepare their defences. The timing would have to be exact.

Yet another factor was the humanitarian obligation which the Israeli government felt towards the Lebanese, who were being maltreated by the occupying PLO. Information from refugees who had sought sanctuary in Israel showed that torture, rape, kidnapping and brutal execution, as well as blackmail and extortion, were commonplace. The vast majority of these people had in no way helped Israel, so the Israeli government had no direct obligation to come to their aid; but once the PLO had been driven out the Lebanese would become Israel's neighbours, and their goodwill was vital. In any case, there was genuine compassion in Israel for the Lebanese, and several unofficial groups had been set up to help them. 'Nobody abroad seemed sympathetic towards the Lebanese,' one of the organisers, the author Aharon Amir, told us in 1981; 'so it was up to Israelis to do something.'

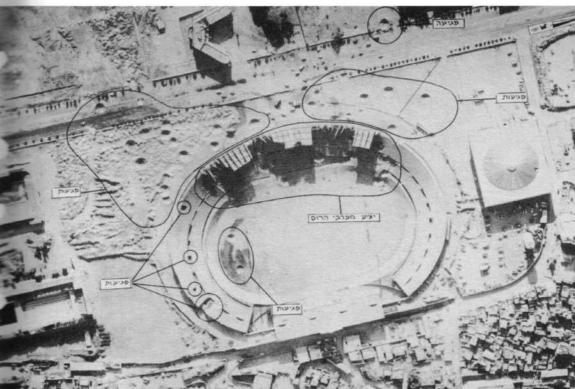
Then there was the problem of presenting to the world the Israeli reason for going to war against the PLO. As an army, the PLO was no threat to Israel because it was neither strong enough for open invasion nor organised for such an attack. Its units were trained for guerrilla actions, with the supplementary role of being ready to support any Arab national army which might attack Israel. Would the world, and particularly the USA, understand that the PLO posed a serious enough threat to warrant a war against it?

The Syrians, also, were not likely to invade Israel; they had no need to do so, since in the Bekaa Valley they had missiles capable of hitting Israeli targets. If the Syrians came to the aid of the PLO then Israel would be forced to fight them. Would the world then see the Israelis as the aggressors?

For the Israeli cabinet PLO provocation was intolerable. The PLO had interpreted the ceasefire agreement of 1981 as giving it a free hand to continue the armed struggle in all sectors, even across the Lebanese-Israeli border - though to a lesser extent than before. The

Israeli Intelligence had long suspected that the PLO were using Beirut's sports stadium as a base and an arms storage area. In the aftermath of the Argov shooting the Israeli Defence Force/Air Force raided the stadium with some precision. The western range of stands were more or less destroyed; the Hebrew word linked to the ringed areas is 'hits'. Note, by comparison, that the civilian buildings around the stadium have not been damaged. The Israelis have sophisticated photo interpretation techniques, which can even pinpoint the position of underground tunnels. (IDF)





significant factor was that the PLO was building up its military strength and perpetrating acts of terror without Israel being able to take preemptive action.

The people of the coastal resort town of Nahariya were always aware of the dangers. We once asked a local schoolboy the distance from the border. 'Forty-five seconds' missile time,' he said - or as the crow flies, five miles. Even infants in the kindergartens became adept in recognising different detonations. 'Katyusha,' we heard a five-year-old say upon hearing an explosion. 'No, it's just a plane breaking the sound barrier,' another child said. After an attack the drawings made by children in these schools were usually of victims and ruined buildings. Generally, increased PLO activity was quickly detected and sirens warned the public to go to the shelters.

On 4 June 1982 the cabinet studied terrorist statistics for the period since 24 July 1981. The PLO had made 290 attacks, attempted attacks, and firings along Israel's borders, within Israel proper, within the occupied West Bank, abroad, and against the population of Major Haddad's enclaves in Lebanon. Attacks had been made against Israeli and Jewish targets in Rome, Vienna, Paris, London, Athens, Antwerp, West Berlin, Istanbul and Limassol:

| In the West Bank and Gaza | no | incidents |
|---------------------------------|----|-----------|
| In the Lebanese sector. | 99 | incidents |
| In Israel | 57 | incidents |
| In the Jericho-Dead Sea sector. | 4 | incidents |
| Abroad | 20 | incidents |

In the course of these acts, 29 people died: four IDF soldiers; one border patrolman; one Israeli citizen; 11 residents of the West Bank and Gaza; two Jews residing abroad; four non-Jews abroad; three tourists; and three of Major Haddad's men. Another 271 had been injured: 16

The tragedy of Lebanon's internal hatreds could hardly be more eloquently illustrated than by this five-year-old boy photographed in Marjayoun during the civil war. His plaything is not unusual in the world in which he is being raised: a heavy, large-calibre military automatic pistol, powerful enough literally to blow his little playmate's head off. One clip is in position in the butt; and -chillingly - another fully loaded clip is carried ready in his chubby right hand. (Hirsh Goodman)



IDF soldiers; 25 Israeli citizens; 25 tourists in Israel; 37 residents of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; seven Jews residing abroad; 154 non-Jews abroad.

Despite their nagging doubts about the wisdom of going to war, the Israeli planners were clear on some points. They were not invading Lebanon as a sovereign state. It had ceased to exist as a state, in all but the formal sense, when it was *defacto* partitioned by the Syrians and the PLO, and it was now a country under occupation. There was also the consolation of knowing that the Lebanese Christians would welcome the Israeli attack against the PLO, as would many of the Shi'a population of the south. The Israelis were counting on the Phalange militia as active allies during the fighting.

Throughout the discussions one theme recurred: 'How much longer must we endure terrorist attacks? We have suffered from them since 1948 and their frequency and severity has increased year by year. Another massacre of Israeli civilians and foreign visitors is virtually inevitable.'

Public feeling over PLO terrorism was running high in 1982, especially in Galilee, the region most vulnerable to cross-border rockets and shells. As we found on several visits, the people here were most tense during the *quiet* periods; quiet was abnormal, and led to a suspicion that attacks against them were being prepared.

Tension increased dramatically in June 1982. On 3 June terrorists in London tried to murder the Israeli ambassador, Shlomo Argov. He was critically wounded and disabled for life. The following day Israeli planes, in a swift precision attack, destroyed the PLO training camp at Bourg el-Barajna, and in the Beirut sports stadium they bombed and blew up large quantities of ammunition stored underground¹.

Yasser Arafat himself indicated that an Israeli invasion was likely, but on 4 June he ordered a two-day artillery barrage against Israeli settlements. He did not consider that he was running any greater risk by doing this because he believed that the USA, in response to Saudi pressure, would prevent Israel from attacking. If the Israelis *did* attack, then Arafat believed that their campaign would be limited - 'restrained' was the word he used - in the way that the 1978 Operation 'Litani' had

Ironically, Argov's attackers were not members of the PLO proper, but of Abu Nidal's 'Rejectionist Front', a group which regarded Arafat's supporters as treacherously 'soft-line'.

been. All the PLO leaders clung to the fundamental belief that any major Middle East war would in the end bring about the PLO's main political objectives, even if Israel achieved military gains.

The Syrian government also believed that no Israeli invasion would get far before the USA intervened to stop it. They based this belief on signals which the Israeli government had sent them, through the Americans, to the effect that any attack which might be made was not aimed at Syria. The Syrians construed this to mean that the Israeli government was really *asking* the Americans to check the invasion. This assessment was erroneous.

On 5 June Israeli gunners fired return salvoes against PLO positions, and by noon a fierce artillery duel was in progress. Israeli aircraft methodically attacked PLO gun positions, ammunition dumps and supply routes. Gunfire increased steadily throughout the night of 5/6 June. The scene was set for war - an Israeli invasion of Lebanon against PLO occupation.

2 The Combatants and the Arena

The PLO

IN mid-1982 the PLO was in a transitional state. It had lost the flexibility which is properly part of a guerrilla-terrorist organisation; but it had not yet developed conventional military formations, though its training had improved and Fatah, the main component of the PLO, had units organised in battalions and brigades.

By building up a regular army the PLO planned to acquire three extra capabilities. First, within two years it would have a defensive strength that would make it much more difficult for Israel to destroy the PLO militarily in Lebanon. The strategy was for the PLO to slow down an Israeli attack, thus enabling other Arab forces to come to its aid, and allowing international pressures to build up against Israel. Second, regular forces would make the PLO stronger in relation to the armed Christian militias. Third, the PLO could play a real auxiliary role against Israel when Syria went on the offensive - as it planned to do within two years.

A stream of Intelligence reports reaching Israel Defence Forces Headquarters in Tel Aviv showed that the PLO was strengthening its bases to a startling extent. Large bunkers and tunnels had been dug and provided with massive concrete and steel protection that made them impervious to air attack. Ammunition was stockpiled with such strategic skill that the Israeli General Staff believed that Soviet specialists were directing the PLO. Artillery batteries were sited close to civilian centres - a tactic to deter the Israelis from firing on them - and command posts with excellent radio and telephone communications were established in Tyre, Sidon, Nabatiye, in Beaufort Castle on the mountains overlooking the Litani River, and in the refugee camps of Ein el-Hilwe and Rachidiye.

The PLO had about 15,000 men under arms; this force included 1,500 men in the Tyre region, 700 in the coastal district between the Litani and Zaharani Rivers, 1,500 in the Sidon sector, 1,500 in

Yasser Arafat presides over a press conference in 1982. During the Lebanon war he increasingly affected military fatigues rather than the checkered shemagh which had become his 'trademark' in the earlier years of PLO activity. This perhaps paralleled the assembly of PLO guerrillas into conventional 'brigades'.



'Fatahland' in south-east Lebanon, 1,000 in the Nabatiye region, 500 in the Achiye-Rihane district and 700 in the UNIFIL zone. These latter were deployed in 25 to 30 strongpoints which were a constant worry to UNIFIL commanders. The PLO troops in southern Lebanon were organised as the Kastel Brigade; those in 'Fatahland' as the Karameh Brigade; and those in the coastal area as the Yarmouk Brigade.

In addition, about 6,000 PLO men were in the Beirut-Damour area, and reinforcements could be brought from the PLO training camps in the north. PLO 'naval bases' were dotted along the coast from Tripoli

in the north to Tyre in the south; these were training centres, storage depots and entry ports for military supplies.

The PLO were no longer just a crowd of guerrillas armed with submachine guns and grenades. They could field a considerable armoury of heavy weapons, including about 60 old T-34 85 and about 20 more modern T-54 or T-55 tanks (mostly 'dug in' as static gun positions, where they represented more of a threat than if they had tried to meet Israel's highly trained tank crews in mobile combat). The PLO's formidable artillery included some 90 heavy guns of 130 mm and 155 mm calibre, and 80 'Katyusha' BM-21 multiple 122 mm rocket launchers, as well as some 200 heavy mortars of 120 mm and 160 mm. They had about 150 anti-tank guns of 57 mm and 85 mm, and perhaps 200 anti-tank missile launchers - mostly 'Sagger', but including some 'Milan'. Anti-aircraft firepower included some examples of the dangerous four-barrelled, radar-guided ZSU-4 mounted on vehicles; and larger numbers of towed or vehicle-mounted 37 mm cannon. They were liberally equipped with SA-7 'Strela' one-man shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile launchers; and had many hundreds of heavy machine guns.

Small arms were in lavish supply, including the latest types from both Western and Soviet bloc countries. Apart from the standard rifles, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and squad machine guns, they had many thousands of rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mainly the ubiquitous RPG-7.

In June 1982 all Palestinian military and para-military forces except the Abu Nidal faction were nominally subordinate to the Executive Committee of the PLO; the chairman of this committee was Yasser Arafat, who also headed Fatah, the largest constituent organisation. The PLO attempted to co-ordinate the activities of its member factions, but it lacked full operational control; the military forces of the different organisations were responsible, in practice, only to their own leadership.

Sometimes leaders of the various groups had fierce arguments over which of them had the 'rights' to a certain mountain pass, old crusader castle or natural ambush point. Not infrequently as many as three groups, each owing allegiance to a different chief, would take up positions at the same place, and often they obstructed one another's field of fire.

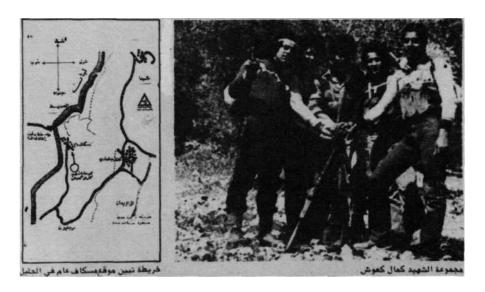
Palestinian forces fell naturally into four categories:

The regular Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). Quasi-regular units of the various organisations. Militias which occasionally supplemented the quasi-regular units. Terror squads.

Russian and Syrian advisers told Arafat that an Israeli attack was imminent, and stressed the need to inflict heavy casualties upon the Israelis. President Assad sent a senior officer to Beirut to advise Arafat that holding military positions was very much a minor priority; if their forces suffered heavy casualties, Arafat was told, the Israeli public would stop the war. It is doubtful if Arafat needed this lesson from Assad, but he duly passed it on to his principal subordinates at a meeting in Beirut on the night of 5 June.

Almost all of them saw the wisdom of this strategy, and several ideas were put forward. George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the

A PLO team photographed before setting off on a terrorist raid into Israel, and a sketch map showing their objective and route. They killed several Israelis before dying in a shoot-out with IDF soldiers. The Arabic caption reads: 'Map showing position of Misgav-Am' - a settlement near Metulla. The photo is captioned: 'From the Martyr Kamal Kaush Group' and it was taken in 1980.



Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said that 'in no circumstances' should PLO units attempt to hold a position. When Israeli fire became direct the men should creep away and take up another position, to cause further casualties by sniper fire and ambush.

In conversation with the author a person who was present at this meeting recalled that Issam Qadi, leader of the Syrian-supported Saiqa group, suggested greater use of the Ashbal - the young Palestinian boys who had been given commando training. Arafat retorted that he needed no advice on how to use the 'Lion Cubs'. This was true; they had been taught how to use rocket-propelled grenades against tanks and armoured personnel carriers, and much was expected from them. The thinking was that the Israelis would be reluctant to fire on children, even when they were aiming weapons.

The PLO small-unit leaders knew their battle areas thoroughly and had practised ambushes many times; for them the eve-of-battle instruction to cause casualties was superfluous.

The Syrians sent Arafat another late instruction: he should use small, mobile units to prevent the Christian Lebanese from linking with the Israelis. Again, open confrontation was to be avoided; Maronite militiamen probing forward through PLO positions in an attempt to make contact with the advancing Israelis should be shot from the rear. This would demoralise them, the Syrians advised - hardly a profound military insight.

Belatedly, Russian advisers in Syria urged the Syrian Chief-of-Staff, General Hikmat Shihabi, to instruct the PLO to adopt 'the living shield principle'. Shihabi took no action on this signal because he knew that the PLO leaders had been practising this principle for many years. It amounted to nothing more than firing from behind civilians, whether Palestinian or Lebanese. Anti-aircraft guns had long since been established on the upper floors of apartment blocks, and anti-tank guns on the ground floors. Arms, ammunition and petrol dumps were sited in refugee camps, hospitals and schools.

The Syrian and PLO planners both shared the conviction that if Israel could be prevented from winning a quick victory then it would not win at all. The Arab nations would be drawn into the conflict, with arms and money as well as diplomatic and economic pressure, and the superpowers would impose a peace which would be psychologically favourable to the PLO. 'Stop the Israelis from winning in six days,'

President Assad is said to have told Arafat in a telephone call on the morning of 6 June, 'and your prestige will be very high.' Arafat was delighted with the challenge, observers said later. In six days in June 1967 the Israelis had broken the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian forces; for the PLO to hold out longer would indeed be a victory.

The PLO had been fighting a terrorist war against Israel for many years; but this would be its first more or less conventional war, and the organisation's leaders needed to show their financial backers - notably the Saudis, Libyans, Algerians and Kuwaitis - that they were worthy of their investment.

The Syrians

The commander-in-chief of the Syrian Armed Forces was President Assad, and unlike many a uniformed president he was no mere nominal chief. A former Air Force general, Assad had considerable military knowledge; but quite apart from this, his regime viewed the armed forces as its greatest strength - and its greatest potential threat. He ensured the forces' loyalty by placing officers from his own sect, the Alawites, in key positions. In addition to Army, Air Force and government Intelligence bodies, a Ba'athist party-controlled security system kept all ranks under surveillance. A combat-ready armoured division commanded by the president's brother, Rifaat, was permanently stationed near Damascus to protect the regime against a possible coup.

Assad's deputy was the Minister of Defence, Mustafa Tlas, who had three deputy ministers - one for each of the services. The Chief-of-Staff, General Hikmat Shihabi, was responsible for co-ordinating the various branches and directorates of the General Staff, but he was subordinate to Assad. Also reporting direct to the president as commander-in-chief were the commanders of the Navy and Air Force. Even senior administrative and personnel officers reported not to the Chief-of-Staff but directly to Assad.

The Syrian Army had no formation above divisional level - this is, no corps or army groups. There were six divisions: four armoured and two mechanised. (The difference is mainly one of emphasis: both types of formation have tanks, armoured infantry carriers, artillery, etc. Armoured divisions have tank units as their main 'punch', with the best types of tank, while mechanised divisions are mainly composed of

THE WAR OF DESPERATION

armoured infantry with a smaller allocation of sometimes older tanks acting in support.) Specialist back-up units of anti-tank troops, commandos and so forth were allocated by the General Staff to individual divisions as required. The General Staff also directly controlled the ground-to-ground missile 'brigades'.

In materiel, the Syrian forces had improved tremendously since the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

The armoured divisions had an available total of about 2,650 tanks, compared with about 1,260 in 1973; they were now the dominant factor in the ground forces rather than a support echelon for the infantry. The T-72 had replaced the T-62 as the spearhead main battle tank, giving better firepower and mobility, although only about 250 of the new tank were available. Some 900 T-62S remained in service, providing the bulk of the tank strength of the armoured and mechanised units. Some 1,500

Soldiers of the Palestine Liberation Army under instruction in the use of the mortar. The PLA had two brigades and some smaller units in Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon. These are regular troops, for all practical purposes part of the Syrian Army, and are not available to the PLO for operations independent of Syria.



of the more elderly T-54 and T-55 series were in reserve, together with between 200 and 300 of the ancient T-34/85 and PT-76 (though the latter designs were not to be taken seriously on a modern battlefield). Thousands of tank-ramps and dug-in positions had been prepared in advance, in deep lines of defence. The tank ammunition stocks built up by the Syrians in 1982 contained a high proportion of armour-piercing anti-tank shells at the expense of general purpose high explosive rounds. The armoured units were now supported by self-propelled, as opposed to towed or truck-mounted artillery, giving better mobility and the potential for more effective close support for the tanks.

The Syrian infantry within these divisions had been equipped with the BMP-1 fully tracked armoured personnel carrier - or more properly, 'mechanised infantry combat vehicle', since it was designed to allow the infantry squad it carries to fight on the move. It mounts its own 73 mm gun, as well as a 'Sagger' anti-tank missile launcher. Indeed, this provision of anti-tank weapons down to infantry squad level was among the most significant of the improvements enjoyed by the Syrians; the 'Saggers' mounted on their armoured carriers were backed up by Milan, HOT and 'Swatter' missile systems. In all, the Syrians could field about 1,600 armoured personnel carriers¹.

Syrian artillery had become more mobile and flexible, with an improvement in the standard of gunnery largely due to the acquisition of Western fire control computers. The mechanised divisions had larger allocations of the BM-21 multiple rocket launcher. The number of commando units had grown sevenfold since 1973, and the 34 battalions now in service could call upon 100 Mi-8 troop-carrying helicopters.

The Air Force had enjoyed a general up-grading and modernisation of its equipment. Of about 650 combat aircraft, some 130 were advanced MiG-23 and Sukhoi Su-22 fighter-bombers; and another 300, the older but still serviceable MiG-21s and Sukhoi Su-7s. The number of assault helicopters had doubled in the past two years, with emphasis on attack and anti-tank types such as the French Gazelle and Soviet Mi-24 'Hind'. Scores of these anti-tank helicopters were in service, and they posed a serious threat to Israeli armour; this is a branch of military technology to which all the major powers are

¹According to Soviet sources, the Syrians lost confidence in the BMP-1 after the 1982 war revealed its indifferent protective capability.

currently paying close attention¹. There had been a large increase in the number of anti-aircraft missile batteries, from 34 to more than 100, including some 30 batteries of the formidable SA-6 with its tracked, self-propelled triple launcher.

The Navy had tripled its fleet, and had improved its maintenance by the acquisition of a Polish-made floating dock. Coastal defence had been improved by the addition of gun batteries and modern radar installations.

Since 1976 Syrian forces equivalent to a division had been based in Lebanon; but in the weeks immediately before 6 June 1982, infantry and armoured brigades, commando units, artillery regiments and SAM batteries were all pushed into the Bekaa Valley. The total Syrian strength inside Lebanon at the outbreak of war was about 30,000 men and 712 tanks, divided between two main areas of deployment. The major formation in the Bekaa Valley was the 1st Armoured Division, comprising the 91st and 76th Tank Brigades (with 160 tanks each), and the 58th Mechanised Brigade (40 tanks). Also in this area was the 62nd Independent Brigade, which included 32 tanks in its order of battle. Around Beirut, in the Shouf Mountains and along the Beirut to Damascus highway were the 68th Tank Brigade (160 tanks); the 85th (Mechanised or Infantry - sources differ) Brigade with 32 tanks; and one other unidentified brigade, basically infantry, with 32 tanks. The forces in the Bekaa included ten commando battalions; those along the Beirut-Damascus axis, 20 commando battalions. The pattern of permanent deployment of formations within Syria enabled the Syrian command to use all its offensive or defensive strength against Israel within two days at most.

Israel also used anti-tank helicopters in 1982, notably the Hughes Defender, fitted with TOW guided weapons. The Defender's quiet engine allowed highly trained Israeli pilots to make 'stealth' attacks on unsuspecting Syrian armour dispersed in rocky terrain; many enemy tanks were destroyed in this way. Infantry units co-operated closely with the helicopters; on one occasion a helicopter captured a Syrian tank and its crew without firing a shot, then summoned an army team to collect them.

In the event, Syrian commanders seem to have been reluctant to commit the formidable 'Hind' to combat, and it appeared only intermittently.

¹In 1982 Syria had 45 French-built Gazelle helicopters, mainly fitted for the anti-tank role with up to six HOT guided weapons, two pods of 36 mm rockets and two machine guns. They saw action for the first time in Lebanon, and destroyed a number of Israeli tanks; but the French believe that they would have been more effective if the Syrian pilots had flown lower. It seems that the officers of the commando units, in conjunction with which they operated, did not always understand the tactical use of such helicopters. Several were shot down, and others captured on the ground.

Syrian doctrine was based upon Russian principles without following them dogmatically. Defence was based on massive firepower, with a profusion of anti-tank units and weapons, and intensive fortification in great depth. Continuous defence systems made use of natural obstacles, and reached back from the front for up to 30 or 40 kilometres. In the attack, Syria proposed to use a multi-echelon assault force commanding great firepower, and combined arms operations. Whether in attack or defence, the Syrians believed that the answer to Israeli tactics was saturation air defence of the combat zone by SAMs, anti-aircraft artillery and interceptor aircraft.

The Syrians did not intend to heed Israel's warning that they should stay out of the impending conflict; and they were confident that they could destroy many Israeli aircraft and tanks.

The Israelis

Against the combined force of the PLO, strong in its training, weapons and positions, and the Syrians, with their massive and advanced weaponry, Israel fielded a basically militia-type army, though the Air Force and Navy were almost entirely manned by regular full-time personnel.

Under the Israeli system the Chief-of-Staff is subordinate to the Defence Minister; but the minister's authority is not an operational or command authority, even in wartime. The Chief-of-Staff is the senior military officer, and air and naval chiefs report to him. There is no separate ground forces command, and the General Staff functions as headquarters for the Army, as well as for the general service corps such as pioneer and medical troops. The General Staff has five branches - the general staff branch itself, manpower, quartermaster, Intelligence, and planning - the training department has only slightly less status than a branch.

Once partial or full mobilisation is declared the IDF is capable of deploying the bulk of its combat forces on the battlefield within 48 hours; some reserve units can join the battle in 16 hours. The basic unit in the Israeli system is the *ugda* (division), an independent mixed-arms formation designed to achieve tactical battlefield objectives. The division has its own fire support, engineering and maintenance units, and if these are at any time inadequate, reinforcing units are released by regional commands.

Israel's combat doctrine has been tested through many wars, and in June 1982 it was based on these principles:

- 1 Multiple roles for all units and formations in all forms of combat.
- 2 Flexibility and adaptability through rapid grouping and regrouping of units at all levels.
- 3 High mobility and willingness to cross the most difficult terrain.
- 4 Rapid concentration of force in key sectors.
- 5 Readiness to take risks by simply 'holding' secondary sectors.
- 6 Instant shift from defence to offence to decide a battle.
- 7 Attacking the enemy in the rear as a major priority at an early stage of any action.
- 8 Deep penetration into enemy defences even at the risk of bypassing some forward strongholds.
- 9 Use of airpower to decide the land battle.
- 10 In built-up areas armour must first surround, isolate, fire upon and besiege the enemy before the breakthrough.

For the campaign against the PLO points 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 were expected to be the most important.

The Chief-of-Staff has great authority and influence in the Israeli system and a forceful officer can make the Army 'his own'. Apart from Moshe Dayan, 'Raful' Eitan was Israel's longest-serving Chief-of-Staff, and he had made his mark on the Army by 1982. His first initiatives had led to some amusement in the ranks - for instance, he had ordered soldiers to wear berets and hats at all times in public. Women soldiers were told to cut their hair and not to wear lipstick. Eitan expected his orders to be obeyed: in one period of 24 hours in 1979 no fewer than 509 soldiers were arrested and charged with being improperly dressed. Eitan himself made headlines. Spotting a recruit without a hat in the street, he yelled at him to put it on, and when the startled soldier ran away Eitan chased him and slammed the hat on to his head.

Eitan was decisive, in the Montgomery tradition. After a training accident at Sharm el-Sheikh he sacked the commander of the Army's elite frogman unit - though the officer himself was on leave at the time. By such determined methods Eitan reduced training accidents by 40 per cent. He took away from colonels and more senior ranks a private beach which they had enjoyed for a long time, and handed it back to the public. Eitan's fundamental demand was for discipline: though not, he stressed, at the expense of loss of initiative. He wanted an efficient,



President Assad of Syria (second from left) is briefed by one of his officers in a reserve trench. The bemedalled general next to him is the Defence Minister, Mustafa Tlas; next to Tlas is Rifaat Assad, the president's brother, who commanded Syria's 1st Armoured Division at that time.

physically tough army. He maintained that any kind of waste was soft and inefficient, so commanders were required to account for every cent.

Regarded by some people as anti-intellectual or boorish, Eitan was certainly a man of great personal courage, and the men respected him. When a particular brigade lost its morale during the battle for Beirut (to the extent that, according to some Israeli defence correspondents, it was on the verge of Israel's first mutiny) Eitan turned up in person, climbed on to a tank and talked calmly to the men. His basic message was that they had the personal right to political dissent, but not in the Army. A group of men arguing about the acceptability of their orders were no longer soldiers, but a collection of individuals without trust in one another. The unit buckled down to the job in hand - the taking of West Beirut - even though they disapproved of it.

Under Eitan the IDF had learned lessons from the 1973 war, and in Lebanon it produced some surprises - including 'reactive' armour for its Centurion and M60 tanks¹, a new round for the 105 mm tank gun, and the combat debut of the Merkava tank. Tank crews were equipped with fire-retardant coveralls which all but eliminated burns of the kind that posed the most serious threat to their lives in 1967 and 1973.

The Lebanese Christians

The Syrians and the PLO had each other for allies, but Israel had no real war ally. The Lebanese Army had virtually ceased to exist after the civil war of 1975-76; but the Israelis were counting on some help from the 'Lebanese Front' - also known as 'Lebanese Forces' - which was based mainly on the Maronite Christian sect and the Kataeb (or Phalange) led by the Gemayel family. The National Liberal Party's fighters (the 'Tigers'), those of the 'Guardians of the Cedars' and of other groups were linked with the Kataeb. Maronite fighting men numbered about 8,000 and those fielded by other groups about 7,000.

The Front had its own artillery, including some French 155 mm guns, but mainly relied upon heavy mortars. It also possessed about 60 elderly T-54 and ancient Sherman tanks, and a few APCs, either seized from the Lebanese Army or supplied by Israel. Nevertheless, it relied mainly on small arms, from the 5.56 mm M16 A1 rifle to the 12.5 mm (0.5 in.) Browning M2 heavy machine gun. These weapons always looked well cared for in Lebanese hands.

The Israeli Defence Minister might have urged Bashir Gemayel to induce his men to fight in their own defence, but IDF officers who knew them well were sceptical about their willingness and ability. (Several had told the author over a period of years that the Christians expected the Israelis 'to take all the risks and make all the sacrifices'.)

In fact, the Lebanese Front had sufficient will and strength to protect the Christian enclaves, but they had proved incapable of bringing about a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon or of winning an all-out fight against the PLO. They were as desperate about internal PLO terrorism as Israel was about cross-border raids, and in this mood they were prepared to promise the Israelis anything.

¹The 'Blazer' system involves the mounting of special explosive slabs on the outside of hull and turret armour. These detonate when struck by a 'shaped charge' anti-tank projectile or RPG, destroying it before the armour is penetrated. There are disadvantages to this system, but it seems to have proved valuable in 1982.



Israel has some 310,000 reservists in addition to about 130,000 regular soldiers and conscripts serving their three-year military service. Some reserve units can be on the battlefield within 16 hours of receiving their mobilisation orders; the bulk of the IDF can be assembled, equipped and in action within 48 hours of the call. As is obvious from this photograph of a rather grizzled APC crewman, the reserve commitment lasts many years: first-line reservists are between 21 and 39, second-line between 39 and 44, and in emergencies the upper age limit rises to 55. Reservists report for one month's service - *active* service - each year. (Author's photo)

The Arena

The Lebanese arena, much fought over throughout history, is one of rocky hills and steep gorges. It has given problems to military commanders since ancient times, and all have found that it is much easier to hold than to capture; every natural advantage lies with the defenders.

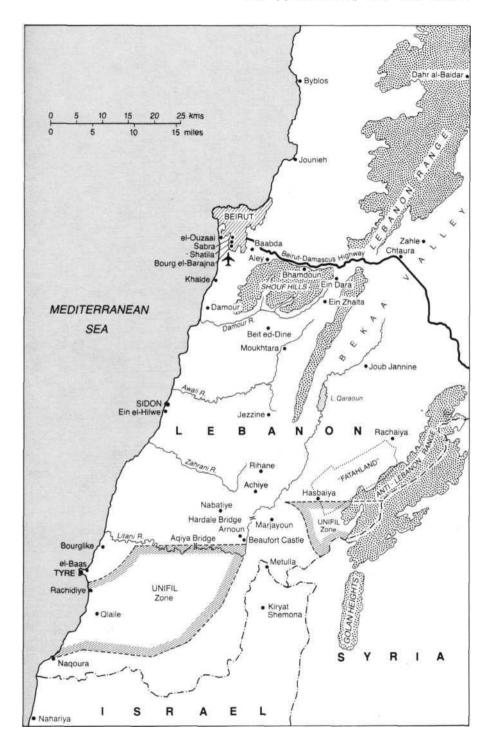
The difficult terrain presented serious problems for Israel's high command staff officers. There are two north-south mountain chains - the Lebanon Range, reaching a height of 2,046 metres south of Beirut;

and the Anti-Lebanon, which reaches 2,814 metres at Mount Hermon. These ranges divide the west-to-east width of the country naturally into four parallel zones - the coastal plain, the Lebanon ridge, the Bekaa Valley and the Anti-Lebanon ridge. Because of these separated zones assault operations were difficult to co-ordinate, while the mountains gave the PLO excellent positions for defence, and imposed serious limitations on Israeli deployment and on use of armour. The PLO could easily block the coastal route from flanking positions all along the western slopes of the mountains.

For military purposes the theatre of operations was divided into three sectors. The first - the territory in which UNIFIL and Major Haddad's militia were based - lies immediately across the Israeli border, and has a low, rugged, hilly terrain with its main features in layers from east to west. Only a few paved roads lead north, and most secondary routes run east-west to link with the coastal road running from Naqoura to Beirut. The most important feature of the region is the Litani River, which has its source in the Bekaa Valley to the east; it makes a sharp turn a few kilometres north of Metulla on the Israeli border and flows through a gorge to the Mediterranean, just north of Tyre. The Litani is a formidable military obstacle along its entire length.

North of the Litani is the second region, where the coastal plain alternately narrows and widens according to the river beds as they lead to the sea. Just north of Naqoura the rocky hills reach right to the beach, but the plain widens out near Tyre and along the Litani estuary, to narrow again closer to Beirut; here the hills close in again on the coastal road. In the wider spaces orange and banana groves restrict movement off the road and provide excellent hiding places for defenders.

The third region is the most difficult. The low hills, covered with olive trees, climb up to a rugged mountain plateau reaching heights of more than 2,000 metres. On the east side of the Lebanon crest the mountains fall sharply into a wide valley - the Bekaa, a continuation of the Hule and Jordan Valleys along the 'Asia-African Rift'. East of the valley is the Hermon complex of mountains, towering almost 3,000 metres over the Bekaa, with the Syrian capital, Damascus, just over the other side. To the north, along the mountain ridges, is the Beirut-Damascus highway and an old railway line, the only major communication between the two capitals. South of this road narrow



mountain roads are dominated by hilltops which make military movement dangerous.

The Bekaa Valley is widest near the town of Zahle, where the main road winds steeply up the mountain towards Beirut; the valley then descends to the artificial Lake Qaraoun, and narrows north of Marjayoun as the two mountain ridges converge to leave only a steep, narrow passage for the Litani River.

The rugged mountains and hillside villages make splendid defensive positions with long-range observation. The coastal strip and its townships, with their narrow streets and high buildings, make street fighting difficult for the attacker. The rambling refugee camps, much favoured by the PLO as strongpoints, are also hazardous for an advancing army worried about the presence of unarmed civilians and not wishing to cause casualties among them.

The Count-down

The count-down to Operation 'Peace for Galilee' began on 5 June, a Saturday - the Jewish *shabbat* - when Israel was at rest. Sabbath violation is rare in Israel, so the people knew that something serious was happening when army trucks called very early at suburban homes to collect the citizen soldiers who lived there. In one Jerusalem street the plumber, the supermarket manager and the sons of many immigrant families were all called up.

A housewife, Mrs Helen Davis, told the author how she comforted her Moroccan cleaning lady, Sara, whose two sons and four brothers had been drafted. 'It was her fifth war,' Mrs Davis said, 'and she dreads each news broadcast. But a heroine of sorts is this mother who cannot read or write. "Pray for my sons," she asked Mrs Davis, "but not only for them. For all our sons; we are one family."' (All Sara's menfolk survived the war.)

Many personal decisions had to be made: like that faced by Yitzhak, a young American at the end of a five-year course which combines Army training with religious instruction. Called to his tank unit, he wondered whether to tell his elderly parents that he was going to war. His five sisters insisted that he did so, even though he felt that he could be back home before they even noticed that he had gone.

On Sunday 6 June, a normal working day in Israel, children arrived at school to find that some of their teachers were absent. Banks' clients



One transitional response to the threat of anti-tank weapons such as the man-portable 'Sagger', which did such execution in 1973, is the 'Blazer' reactive armour system of externally-mounted explosive blocks, as fitted to this IDF M60 tank. A drawback to reactive armour systems is the threat they pose to exposed turret crew members and nearby friendly infantry. (Christopher Foss)

found that familiar faces among the cashiers had disappeared. Many a wife was left without the family car in which her husband had driven to the assembly point.

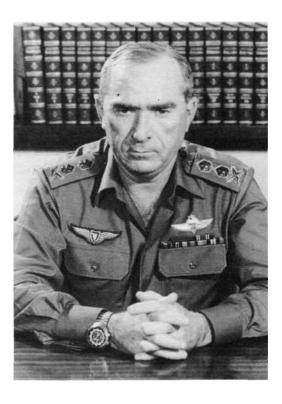
Israel has only small regular forces backed by young men doing their three years of compulsory military service; in time of crisis the 'real Army' comes into being as the reservists gather. The mobilisation process is so efficient that within a few days a large, combat-ready force is in being. They report from kibbutzim and moshavim, from the boulevards of cosmopolitan Tel Aviv and the almost cloistered communities of Orthodox religious folk, from desert farms and city apartments alike.

Some of the reservists do not look much like soldiers to European eyes, and wear their olive drab fatigues awkwardly; but at some time they have all had a full three years' training sharpened by a month's refresher course each year, and they remain liable for military service

until the age of 55. The month's annual service might well be spent in the Jordan Valley patrolling against terrorist incursion or on the dangerous northern border, so it is virtually war service. Israeli reservists do not go to war unprepared: this is Israel, reluctantly at war since 1948, and *nobody* is unprepared. An army Chief-of-Staff is said to have commented, 'Every Israeli citizen is a soldier on 11 months leave a year.'

But war is not regarded as an adventure. Most Israelis reacted to the news of imminent conflict on 6 June with, 'Oh God, not again!' Those who had lived through the strains of the 1960s and 1970s sighed and said, 'Well, it was inevitable. The situation is desperate. Sooner or later we had to fight the PLO, if only to protect all those people living in northern Israel.'

The exact timing of the invasion was a well-kept secret. Lieutenant-General William Callaghan, the Irish commander of UNIFIL, was astonished (as he later told the author) when he walked into the forward headquarters of the Israeli Northern Command in Zefat on Sunday



Lt.Gen. 'Raful' Eitan, Chief-of-Staff of the IDF during the 1982 campaign, exerted his powerful, if somewhat dour personality at all levels in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War. His uniform tells the story of his lifelong service in Israel's wars. His paratrooper's wings are worn on the red backing recalling the combat jump at Mitla Pass in 1956. His ribbons are the Ot Haoz, Israel's second highest gallantry decoration, and the campaign ribbons of the 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars. (IDF)

morning, 6 June. He had come to discuss a UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to the PLO-Israeli barrages across the border; but in the HQ he unexpectedly encountered General Eitan, who looked at his watch and said, 'We will invade Lebanon against the PLO in 28 minutes.'

The operation began at 11 am on Sunday 6 June with a combined land and sea assault. It was 15 years to the day since the Six-Day War had begun in 1967; and it was 41 years since an Australian-British-Free French expedition travelled the same roads on 7 June 1941 to liberate Lebanon and Syria from the troops of Vichy France.

There was an epic quality about the procession across the 63-mile-long frontier: huge Centurion tanks, M113 armoured personnel carriers, jeeps armed with machine guns, all displaying red cloth panels to identify them as 'friendlies' to Israeli aircraft. Just a little to the rear of the spearhead fighting troops came the combat engineers with Gillois motorised bridges, tank-towed bridges, M60 AVLB and MTU-55 bridging tanks. They would be much needed in the rugged ravine country ahead.

Behind these fighting vehicles came communications vans, supply trucks and ambulances, and then the giant 175 mm guns which would pound targets 23 miles ahead of the war caravan. Some infantry plodded along the border roads on foot but at this point most were in trucks. Overhead chattered scout helicopters and the heavier attack helicopters, Cobras and Defenders. The cavalcade was still rolling long after dark.

At several places close to the border car parks were established in the shade of trees, where soldiers reporting to their units could leave their private vehicles. Near Kiryat Shemona the author saw one such warduty car park packed with about 300 cars. Many a wife accompanied her husband to his border assembly point, and then drove home alone with her thoughts.

Everybody involved understood the overall aim of the operation as stated in the government's directive: '. . . to put all settlements in Galilee out of reach of terrorist artillery . . . positioned in Lebanon'. The government declared that the army would proceed no further than 40 or 50 kilometres from the border; but this distance was manifestly *not* sufficient to protect Galilee from modern enemy artillery and missiles.

The Chief-of-Staff had formed three separate task forces of armour, mobile infantry and supporting units: total strengths of anything



Throughout the years of PLO occupation of southern Lebanon, and even during the 1982 war, the American Christian radio station *The Voice of Hope* broadcast regularly from its transmitter in 'Fatahland'. Announcers, such as Selma Jones, were often threatened, and even fired upon - one was killed - but never abandoned their post. (David Rubinger)

between 60,000 and 78,000 men have been mentioned, but the discrepancy probably stems from imprecise definition - i.e., which figure includes only ground troops, and which includes the air and naval personnel mobilised in support.

Task Force West (Major-General Yekutiel Adam) would drive north up the Mediterranean coast; it was based upon Brigadier-General Yitzhak Mordechai's Division 91. Task Force Centre (Lieutenant-General Amir Drori), which would move along the ridge and upper



Bassam Nairn, aged 13, had already been serving in one of the Lebanese Christian militias against the PLO for two years when he was photographed returning from a patrol on the Tel Shreifa in an M113 armoured personnel carrier. (Hirsh Goodman)

western slopes of the Lebanon Range, was built around Divisions 36 and 162. Task Force East (Major-General Avigdor Ben Gal) was responsible for taking the Bekaa Valley and the slopes of the Hermon Range. In this sector it would be vital to make swift progress to prevent Syrian reinforcement of their deployments in Lebanon; in addition to Divisions 90 and 252, this task force included two major *ad hoc* formations: 'Vardi Force', led by Brigadier-General Danni Vardi, and the 'Special Manoeuvre Force' led by Brigadier-General Yossi Peled.

This last was made up of two brigades of paratroopers and infantry specially configured for anti-tank fighting, and its task was to cut the road from Damascus. In all, the Israeli forces fielded some 1,240 tanks and 1,500 armoured personnel carriers, in a group of formations roughly equivalent to six and a half divisions. Other forces were held back, particularly in the Golan Heights area, to deter any Syrian strike at the base of the Israeli advance.

(To put these forces into perspective, it may be useful to add an estimate of Israel's total ground resources. These amount to approximately 130,000 regular soldiers and three-year national servicemen, and another 310,000 reservists. The Army could field 11 armoured divisions, 15 independent infantry brigades and five airborne brigades. Israel's massive armour inventory includes some 1,300 Patton tanks of M60, M60A1 and M60A3 models; about 1,100 Centurions; about 600 M48A5 Pattons; and some 200 Merkavas. In addition, they had about 150 T-62S and 250 T-55S captured from Arab armies in previous wars and adapted for Israeli use. As well as this impressive total of some 3,600 tanks, the IDF has about 8,000 armoured personnel carriers and armoured engineer vehicles. The forces committed to the Lebanon invasion thus represented roughly half of Israel's first-line combat potential.)

Eitan wanted a swift advance in depth, with the separated columns cutting off all the PLO forces and bases from their Lebanese and Syrian rear; pockets of resistance would be bypassed, regardless of the threat they posed, and dealt with later. As the columns reached their objectives, they would converge. This simple but brilliant tactic would produce a continuous front, and prevent PLO reinforcements sent from northern Lebanon from infiltrating between the columns. The convergence would also form a net to prevent retreating PLO fighters and Syrians from escaping into the north. Importantly, the link-up meant that any one part of the force could quickly be reinforced from another part.

(Until the Anglo-Australian invasion of 1941 no campaign in Lebanon had been conducted on two or more lines. Even General Wilson, the commander in 1941, did not attempt a convergence of forces between his three columns; and his third column was used not in Lebanon itself, but far off on the Kuneitra-Damascus line.)

A crucial advantage of war denied to General Eitan in Operation

'Peace for Galilee' was surprise in timing and in the general directions of advance. The PLO and the Syrians knew that the Israelis were coming. They also knew the routes by which they must come; Lebanon's terrain dictated those routes.

Any surprise therefore had to be achieved by method. This was accomplished by development of means to knock out the missiles which were the basis of the enemy's air defence, and by skills which enabled armour to move in terrain considered impassable for tanks.

The IDF had long since evolved a close-knit system of air support for integrated armour and infantry teams. In battle the success of the system depended on rapid flexibility and on superior firepower. On the ground, a mixed combat team acting as a holding force would pin down the defenders of any strongly held position while another combat team worked its way around the enemy's flank, possibly to his rear. There was

Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, the enthusiastic architect of Operation 'Peace for Galilee', briefs journalists near Gesher Haziv kibbutz in northern Israel. His audacious attack across the Suez Canal helped turn disaster into victory in the 1973 war, and he enjoys great political support among an important section of Israeli society. In 1982 he had the trust and loyalty of Prime Minister Menachem Begin; and despite all that has happened since, he is still a major force in Israeli public life.



nothing new in this classic tactic; but the composition of the flanking team gave it a new dimension.

An important part of this force was the combat engineer unit, equipped with heavy, armoured equipment; it was the job of the combat engineers to break tracks and roads into territory otherwise not negotiable by armoured and wheeled vehicles. The PLO and Syrians had assumed that the ravines, wadis and river beds on which they based their defences would be uncrossable. To their surprise the Israeli vehicles both crossed them and moved along them as the combat engineers erected their special bridging equipment.

The system of combat teams backed up at short notice by heliborne infantry, combat engineers and artillery could not have worked without good communications - and this the Signal Corps provided. Radio equipment was of high standard, and the network procedure so well devised that time was rarely wasted in making contact. As the task forces entered built-up areas and ventured along the winding mountain tracks control tended to be more and more difficult; short-range FM radios were masked by buildings and steep cliffs, but these technical problems were rapidly solved. Senior commanders were at all times in touch with their units and could call in supporting fire from air, artillery and naval units.

Junior commanders on the spot had authority to call for close air support from fighter-bombers and combat helicopters. There was no instance where a small unit called for help in vain.

General Eitan, through his unit commanders, had issued two important supplementary orders. Soldiers in situations of close-quarter fighting - e.g. as in built-up areas - were to take risks rather than injure innocent civilians; and all possible precautions had to be taken against needlessly tearing up tobacco fields, vineyards, banana plantations, orchards and olive trees. Such areas were taken into account by the staff in movement planning, and field commanders told their men that wilful damage would be punished.

3 Another Six-Day War

Day One - 6 June

AS the operation opened at 11 am along a 63-mile front, three brigades of Mordechai's *Ugda* 91 led the way across the border on the western coastal sector. Preceded by supporting air and artillery strikes, the Centurion tanks and paratroopers riding in M113 'Zelda' APCs pushed northwards as fast as possible. Limited to a single road, however, the units of Task Force West were hampered both by traffic jams, and by determined, though unco-ordinated resistance from PLO fighters making use of thick cover in the roadside olive groves.

Although there was some heavy fighting on the outskirts of Tyre, where one Israeli unit took significant casualties in a PLO ambush, the leading Brigade 211 succeeded in isolating the city and its nearby el-Baas and Rachidiye refugee camps after just nine hours. At nightfall, half-way between Tyre and Sidon, the spearhead of Task Force West went into 'laager' for all-round defence. As they snatched what rest they could, other Israeli paratroopers and armour crewmen were passing them in the darkness to the west - several miles out to sea. The IDF were about to make their largest ever amphibious landing: the Israeli Navy had been training for such an operation for years, but had never carried it out in war.

The mixed landing brigade from *Ugda* 96 was built around the 50th Paratroop Battalion from 35th Parachute Brigade. Commanded by Brigadier-General Amos Yaron, the head of the IDF's Paratroop and Infantry Branch, the brigade also included armoured combat vehicles and their support and ammunition vehicles - some 400 vehicles in all.

The early stages of the voyage had had something of a Mediterranean cruise atmosphere; but hours later, as patrol boats, missile boats and landing craft turned towards the dark enemy shore, this gave way to pre-battle tension. The landing was carried out at about 11 pm on 6 June, over beaches previously reconnoitred by Navy frogmen in the estuary of the Awali River three miles north of Sidon, with its major

PLO strongholds. The first party, in amphibious APCs, reached the beach unseen, set up a forward command post, and prepared ambushes for any PLO forces who might investigate. The noise of the landing craft engines alerted the PLO, and Katyusha rockets whooshed seawards; but this was unaimed fire, and none of the blacked-out vessels were hit.

One para platoon took the bridges over the Awali River, and another scrambled to the ridges overlooking Sidon. On 7 June the landing force would break out of its beachhead, linking up with the Israeli ground columns converging on Sidon from south and south-east. PLO resistance was brave and determined at several points, but noticeably unco-ordinated. The commander of the PLO's Karameh Brigade, responsible for this coastal sector, fled to Syrian lines in the Bekaa Valley, with the command's safe, in an ambulance; on his arrival he reported his unit's destruction by the US Sixth Fleet. . . . Many other officers seem to have abandoned their men, leaving them to perish in small, hopeless battles. Others, shocked by the surprise of the seaborne attack, surrendered without resistance.

The Israeli Navy also landed commandos at Qasmiya near the mouth of the Litani, and these troops moved on Tyre from the north. PLO strongholds at Qlaile, Ras el-Ain, Rachidiye, Ein el-Kantar and Bourghlike were partly captured, partly bypassed.

In the central sector, paratroopers and a mobile force took the Aqiya bridge over the deep Litani gorge, while infantry stormed the Arnoun Heights and reached the Nabatiye area. Two companies of the Golani Brigade¹ were rushed east to assault Beaufort Castle. Infantry in armoured carriers captured the Hardale bridge, the only other bridge across the Litani south of Lake Qaraoun, bypassed the Achiye positions and started an advance along the mountain road.

Task Force East, with M60 Patton tanks leading mechanised infantry, left from Metulla and struck into 'Fatahland'. East of Marjayoun the passages between the steep hills become narrow gorges, easily defended from the heights. Operating along winding mountain tracks, the task force moved slowly and cautiously, first because of harassing PLO fire and later because of heavy Syrian artillery and anti-

¹The battalions of the Golani Brigade are the only IDF infantry units which are neither airborne nor assigned to armoured formations.

tank fire. This encouraged small PLO tank-killer teams to attack with rocket-propelled grenades and light mortars.

By the end of Day One the Israeli pattern of attack was set - decisive encirclement where possible, night assaults by infantry in line, capture of vital points by armoured infantry before the tanks moved up. Artillery was used only to shell the PLO's forward lines; in the rocky hills even heavy bombardment could have no decisive effect. Instead, artillery was mainly used to pound lines of communication, dumps and depots in the more open country to the rear.

For the first time the IDF used the 160 mm LAR, a free-flight, finstabilised, ground-to-ground light artillery rocket. With a range of 30 km and a warhead of 50 kg, the LAR-160 can be brought into action very quickly - a battery with six launchers can saturate a target in 30

Column of IDF 'Zeldas' - M113 armoured personnel carriers - soon after crossing the Lebanese border in the central sector on 6 June. There was no danger of Syrian air attack at this stage, otherwise the vehicles would be much more widely dispersed. The IDF, with some 6,000 M113s in its total inventory, is the second largest user of the type after the USA. Israeli modifications include the fitting of external rear fuel tanks; in 1973 penetration of the original fuel tanks caused some catastrophic internal fires.



seconds. IDF artillery had another advantage in the M25 and M131 electronic proximity fuses. The M25 was fitted to 81 mm, 120 mm and 160 mm mortar bombs and the Mi31 to all shells from 76 mm to 203 mm. These fuses can be used to explode a bomb at a predetermined optimum height above the target, or can be set to burst near the surface.

Some of the actions fought during this phase were classic infantry operations reminiscent of battles of the Korean War, and they were certainly similar to those carried out by the Australians against the Vichy French on the same battlefield in 1941. One of the most notable was the attack on the PLO positions in Beaufort Castle, a 10th-century Crusader fortress at the eastern end of the Arnoun Ridge. Surrounded by steep rocky cliffs on every side but the north, Beaufort is 717 metres high; whoever holds it controls the roads to Damascus, Tyre and Sidon. Strategically, in 1982 it dominated the Christian enclave in southern Lebanon and the north-south strip of Israeli territory known as the Galilee Panhandle.

An Israeli M113 APC crew rest near Tyre; their bedrolls and kitbags almost cover the outside of the vehicle. Israeli doctrine does not call for APC-borne infantry to fire on the move, but to dismount to engage the enemy in classic fashion; so this heavy external stowage does not hamper efficiency, though it may lead to minor fires if the vehicle is hit.



The PLO used the time-worn remains of the castle as an advanced observation post; it faced towards Israeli territory and was a superb vantage point for artillery spotters directing fire against the Israeli settlements. In June 1982 it was held by about 75 Fatah men who were convinced of its impregnability. Air attacks could do little damage; a tank attack was out of the question unless the Israeli armour could somehow encircle the heights and attack from the rear; and infantry would have to scale sheer rock walls. In case attackers did manage to capture the old stone walls, the Fatah men had dug an internal trench system from which they could pick off the Israelis. Ancient cellars and dungeons had been made into fortified dugouts where immense stocks of ammunition were held. The walls sheltered a mobile communications centre from which the garrison could make contact with their Supreme Military HQ in Beirut.

Two companies of the elite Golani Brigade were detailed for the assault on Beaufort. Led (after the unit commander became a casualty) by 26-year-old Major Guni Harnick, the tough Golanis scaled the heights by night and took the positions in a fire-and-movement operation. The Fatah men fought fiercely, and Harnick was among the Israelis they killed¹. But the Palestinians had relied too heavily on their defences, and their trenches, dugouts and walls made regrouping and manoeuvre difficult in the darkness. The Golanis, adept at night-fighting, kept up their momentum of attack, and the Palestinians died in their trenches in hand-to-hand fighting. The final assault was made by men of the Golani reconnaissance squadron - Sayeret Golani.

The amount of broken personal equipment and the quantity of cartridge cases which the author found when he visited Beaufort indicated the fierceness of combat. Many rounds had been hit and exploded by other rounds, another sign of intense machine gun fire.

One of Guni Harnick's men said later, 'The capture of Beaufort was Guni's, there's no two ways about it. I just don't want to think of what would have happened after the unit commander got hit, without Guni. It was a mess. And the minute Guni came up everything tightened up. We knew there was someone to follow, and we did. He saved the situation.'

¹Guni Harnick was one of a class of 34 in high school; 32 became IDF officers, including three pilots. After eight years in the army, he would have retired on 9 June; he was killed on 6 June.



Fitted with a winch in the armoured recovery role, a 'Zelda' comes ashore from Israeli landing craft on the Lebanese coast north of Tyre. A powerful armoured/infantry force based on a battalion from the IDF's 35th Parachute Brigade, and led in person by Brig.Gen. Yaron, chief of the IDF Paratroop and Infantry Branch, landed at the mouth of the Awali River on the first night of the war, and later linked up with Task Force West troops fighting their way up the coastal road. (Author's photo)

Day Two - 7 June

On Day Two Israeli tanks and APC-borne infantry made their first contact with Syrian forces at Jezzine, where the Syrians were supporting a Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) brigade. The Israelis were under orders not to initiate fire, but when attacked by artillery and armour they quickly responded. The Syrians had the winding mountain roads ranged and they caused some casualties, but Task Force East HQ landed paratroops from helicopters to outflank Syrian guns and tanks. A series of deadly fights ensued, and many Syrians pulled out before they could be overrun.

On that day, too, the Syrians in the Bekaa fired missiles at Israeli warplanes, an action which the IDF saw as dangerous; any serious losses of Israeli planes could hinder the ground advance.

In the west on Day Two, the Israelis isolated Tyre. Before attacking the PLO positions they sent loudspeaker vans close to the city to warn civilians to leave and make for the beach where they would be safe. Skirmishing infantry captured the outskirts of Tyre, but progress was slow because the men were under orders not to use 'preventive' fire that is, they could not throw grenades into a building before storming it because noncombatants might be sheltering inside.

Further north the Navy landed more commandos, and gave them covering fire with their 76 mm guns for the advance on Sidon. By nightfall the troops from Kahalani's *Ugda* 36 on the central front, who had moved up the previous day from Aqiya bridge and from the Arnoun Heights through Doueir, had joined the force assembling to capture Sidon.

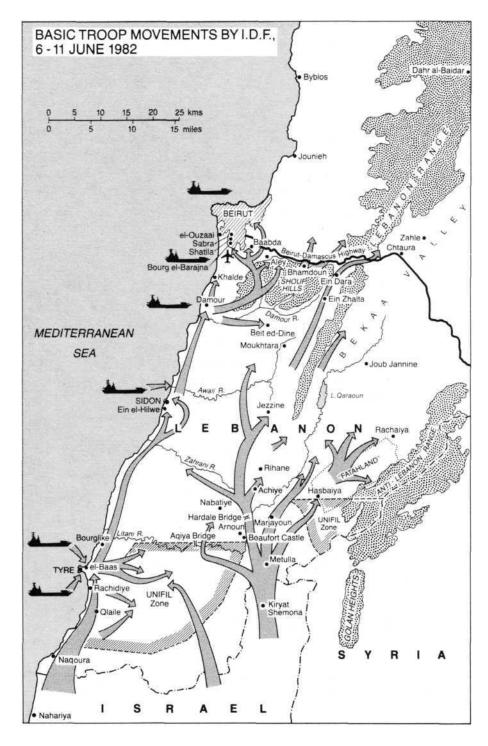
It was also on 7 June that the first Israeli troops entered the sprawling Ein el-Hilwe refugee camp and PLO stronghold outside Sidon. The Golanis made good progress by day, but were forced to withdraw at nightfall.

Day Three - 8 June

The Task Force East commander brought up reinforcements, including heavy armoured bulldozers, and pressed on into the mountains. The Syrians stayed to fight - and they fought well. Courageous PLO fighters, who knew the ground intimately, made many attacks and blew up some of the bridges. Other bridges, never designed to carry 60-ton tanks, fell to pieces. The gallant bulldozer drivers then went into action and pushed and rammed rocks, soil and trees into deviation roads.

Reaching plateau country, the advancing Israeli troops ran into Syrian T-62 tanks. Well dug in and concealed, they opened fire from short range. When Israeli tank commanders could not locate them they called in combat helicopters, a threat the Syrians met with their own anti-tank helicopters.

The mobile spearhead of Central Task Force, leaving the capture of the Jezzine sector to the combat teams, pressed on to the heights above the Damour es-Safa River, which formed the main southern and south-



eastern chain of the natural defence for Beirut and the Beirut-Damascus highway. Parts of the spearhead reached the edge of the towns of Beit ed-Dine and Ain Dara. This advance of more than 20 km was beginning to threaten from the flank the Syrians' hold over Beirut, as well as to endanger Syrian positions in the Lake Qaraoun area. At the same time their positions around Jezzine came under aerial and artillery attack. The Syrians therefore fell back from Jezzine and the Nabatiye area.

That day Major Sa'ad Haddad rode to Beaufort Castle from his native town of Marjayoun. Sitting behind the machine gun of an armoured personnel carrier, he waved to cheering local people in the streets of Kfar Tibnit; children and adults ran after his vehicle shouting his name. About 40 villagers jumped into cars and followed the Haddad entourage. At the castle he made a short speech in Arabic, and raised a large Free Lebanon flag beside the already-fluttering Star of David.

In the coastal sector that morning Israeli planes shot down two Syrian MiGs after a brief dogfight south-east of Beirut. Tyre was captured from the PLO street by street. Lebanese refugees reaching the Israeli lines reported that civilians were being forcibly held in PLO strongholds to deter the Israelis from opening fire. Small patrols were sent in to try to pick off the PLO fighters without harming their hostages - at some cost in Israeli casualties.

Sidon was now besieged, **and** Task Force West paused to consider Intelligence reports about PLO dispositions. Lebanese refugees said that the PLO had turned the main square into a 'fortress ambush'. Apparently the local PLO commander, Colonel Hajj Ismail, hoped to lure thousands of Israeli infantry into the square and then open fire with everything he had.

Fighting continued in Ein el-Hilwe camp, but the Israelis held back from making a general assault. A hard core of PLO fighters of the Kastel Brigade were solidly installed in the camp, and were clearly determined to sell their lives dearly, whatever the consequent cost in civilian lives.

The troops who had landed north of Sidon pushed on towards Damour, which had become a PLO stronghold after the terrorists had captured it from its Christian inhabitants in 1975. PLO sub-units had set up ambushes along the coastal road, but most were knocked out by naval gunfire. Throughout the coastal campaign the Army was never short of supplies, as the Navy repeatedly landed stores close behind the advancing troops.

Day Four - 9 June

As Tyre was being cleared of the PLO an advance Israeli relief column reached the town to restore the water supply, repair electricity lines and distribute food and medicine to the population. While this was going on, Sidon, further north, was the scene of heavy fighting. The Israeli troops had not walked into the PLO ambush in the town square, but engaged the enemy positions with medium-range fire before entering. The only major damage to buildings in Sidon occurred in the square. All arms had been given strict orders concerning avoiding damage to churches, and no mosque was hit.

Pinpoint attacks were made against gun emplacements. A PLO gun was located in the corner room of a six-storey building; a single shot from an Israeli gun knocked off the corner and brought the gun crashing to the ground. The building was otherwise undamaged.

After the fighting ended in Sidon local medical facilities began to function again, but hundreds of civilians continued to turn up at the IDF surgical unit which had been set up at the mouth of the Zaharani River. This IDF unit treated about 250 civilians in the first two weeks.

Attacker's view of Beaufort Castle, from the south or Israeli side. At a height of 717 metres it commands most of south-east Lebanon, and was considered impregnable by its PLO defenders.





Maj. Sa'ad Haddad (third from left, in fatigue cap) reached Beaufort on 7 June, to accept the position from the IDF after its capture in a brief but savage assault by *Sayeret Golani*, the Golani Brigade's reconnaissance commando. Riding in an APC flying both Israeli and Free Lebanese flags, Haddad is greeted enthusiastically by local villagers. It should be noted that he had insisted on recruiting both Christians *and* Shi'ite Muslims for his militia, even at the cost of incurring the hatred of the Phalangists.

In the central-east sector a fierce battle took place at the villages of el-Hilweh (not to be confused with Ein el-Hilwe refugee camp) and Kfar Seit, 1,200 metres up a western ridge of the Bekaa near Joub Jannine.

A combined Syrian and PLO force held well-concealed positions in thick scrub, and were supported by tank guns on commanding ridges. As the vanguard of the Israeli task force approached the villages the Syrians and Palestinians opened heavy fire. The Centurions roared on, firing to protect the infantry who were following in armoured personnel carriers. An APC was hit by a 'Sagger' missile. A shell from a Centurion then destroyed the 'Sagger' post; but the area was alive with other 'Sagger' teams, some of them in Land Rovers. 'Saggers' hit a

Centurion, and then an armoured Medevac carrier as it moved in to pick up casualties. Another M113 infantry carrier was hit, and blew up.

Israeli infantry meanwhile captured the main village buildings. Artillery observers, dangerously exposed on a roof, called in fire from M109 self-propelled guns; supporting mortars also opened up as targets became identifiable. A well-sited anti-tank ambush was spotted just as the Israeli Centurions were heading in its direction. The vanguard commander, who was by now on the spot, planned and put into effect a multi-pronged attack which broke up the ambush.

As casualties mounted the medical teams established a dressing station and carried out a score of operations; a surgeon was among the wounded. Under cover of darkness Medevac helicopters lifted the two dead and 40 wounded from the village battlefield, which was secured the next day. The Syrians and PLO left behind 30 dead and several badly wounded men. The Israeli medical teams treated them, and they were airlifted out with the Israeli wounded.

An Israeli soldier told a *Financial Times* journalist about the ambush: 'Visibly reliving the moment, he described how guerrillas kept appearing everywhere with rockets and how his unit had to swivel its weapons from side to side as they tried to locate and destroy the sources of fire.'

Despite the intensive fighting in which its ground forces were engaged, Syria had not yet embarked on all-out war; but in Damascus, President Assad was facing the kind of dilemma which had confronted the Israeli cabinet on 4 June. His army of occupation in Lebanon was faring badly against the Israelis; the Syrian units in Beirut were on the verge of being cut off, and Syria might well lose all of Lebanon. Assad and his advisers considered what sort of war to fight. His brother Rifaat urged him to send more surface-to-air missile batteries to Zahle in the Bekaa - a move opposed by the Defence Minister, Tlas, whose Intelligence reports indicated that the Israelis could knock out the batteries. Nevertheless, Assad sent 19 extra SA-2, SA-3 and SA-6 batteries to Zahle.

The American envoy Philip Habib was at that moment in Damascus for talks with the Syrians; he was trying to induce them and the Israelis to agree to accept the status quo in Lebanon. The Israeli cabinet considered that the Syrians' strengthening of their missile batteries in the Bekaa could only indicate aggressive intentions; and in the early



Israeli infantry in action around El Baas, the large Palestinian refugee camp and PLO base outside Tyre. The leading man is armed with a *Glilon*, the shortened version of the *Galil* rifle; the patrol also carry a radio and a folding stretcher. Every Israeli soldier is trained to use at least one other weapon or item of equipment apart from his personal weapon. These men came under fire moments after this picture was taken.

hours of 9 June they authorised the elimination of the SAMs at Zahle. They recognised that this decision was likely to cause friction with the USA, but considered the military necessity to be of overriding urgency. The destruction of the batteries, and the associated air battles, provide one of the most dramatic and technically instructive episodes of this, or indeed of any other recent war.

Unknown to the Syrians, almost every military move they made was observed by the high-magnification cameras mounted in Israeli 'drones' - 'RPVs' or 'remote-piloted vehicles' - in the shape of pilotless aircraft only 12 feet long. Clear pictures were relayed back to ground commanders, who studied Syrian moves on a screen and on overlaid

maps. The Israeli-built Scout and Mastiff RPVs gave forward air controllers the capability of observing targets, and guiding Israeli attack aircraft to their objectives, without risking lives in piloted observer aircraft. The electronic wizardry in the RPVs gave Israeli commanders virtual control of the target area. Apart from their reconnaissance role, however, the RPVs also had another capability which was to contribute greatly to the success of the Israeli strikes on the Syrian SAM batteries.

The attack on the missile system¹ went in at 2 pm on 9 June; and the first Israeli aircraft to approach the Bekaa were the pilotless RPVs. Simulating actual attack aircraft closing on the Syrian positions, they obliged the Syrians to turn on the fire control radars of their missile batteries. In the deadly game of electronic hide-and-seek, this was the equivalent of a man turning on a torch to search for an enemy in a darkened room - it revealed the hunter's position as clearly as it revealed his intended prey.

Waiting for the information which the RPVs forced the Syrians to reveal were the human and electronic analysts carried by the E-2C

¹The Syrians used at least five different SAM systems in Lebanon, integrated to provide what the high command hoped would be 'impenetrable air space'. All were Soviet-supplied.

The SA-2 'Guideline', which has seen more active service than any other Russian SAM, has a range of up to 28 km, and a high altitude capability. The missile weighs 130 kg. Since 1968 the Syrian batteries have been linked to 'Fan Song F' radar equipment.

The 60 kg SA-3 'Goa' is intended for low and medium altitude use in conjunction with 'Guideline', and is linked to 'Squat Eye' and 'Flat Face' radar systems.

The SA-6 'Gainful', linked to a tracked 'Straight Flush' radar vehicle, can 'kill' as low as 30 m and as high as 18 km. Its triple launcher is mounted on a tracked vehicle. Warheads weigh 80 kg. The IDF AF made SA-6 sites its major target on 9 June.

The SA-8 'Gecko', firing two missiles from a wheeled launcher linked to 'Roll' radar equipment on a six-wheel amphibious vehicle, is effective between altitudes of 45 m and 12 km. In Soviet service since 1974, it had its first combat test in Lebanon. The IDF AF destroyed at least four launchers.

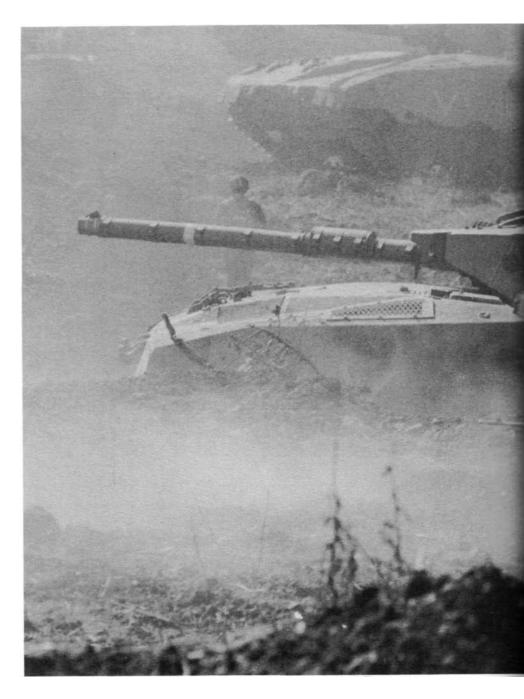
The SA-9 'Gaskin' fires four missiles from two containers mounted on a BRDM-2 vehicle. The single-stage missile is effective as low as 20 m and as high as 5 km. First taken into Lebanon in 1979 by a Libyan contingent, 'Gaskin' was the least common system, but examples are known to have been knocked out by the IDF AF in 1981 and again in 1982.

Most of these SAMs are guided to their target by various types of radio-command device from the ground, linked to radar systems. 'Gaskin' is guided by 'Gun Dish' radar, of the type associated with the deadly Soviet ZSU-23-4 quad-23 mm tracked anti-aircraft cannon; but final homing is by infra-red heat-seeking. All these radar systems are vulnerable to jamming; and the heat-seeking homer is vulnerable to decoy flares, routinely dropped by Israeli aircraft as they commence attacking runs.

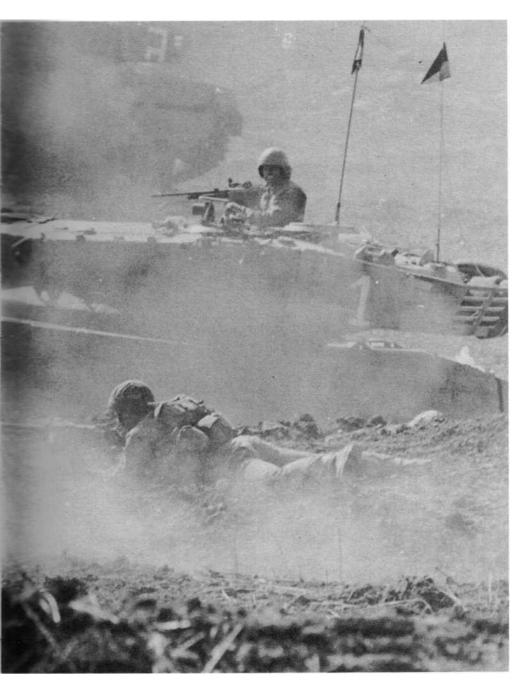
Although not strictly relevant to this section, the ubiquitous *SA-7 'Grail'* may be mentioned here. This 15 kg missile is man-portable and shoulder-fired, homing by IR heat-seeking. Used in its thousands by the PLO and Syrian troops in Lebanon, it only succeeded in hitting one Israeli aircraft; although it is theoretically effective from 23 m to more than 4 km, it has a notoriously unreliable guidance system.



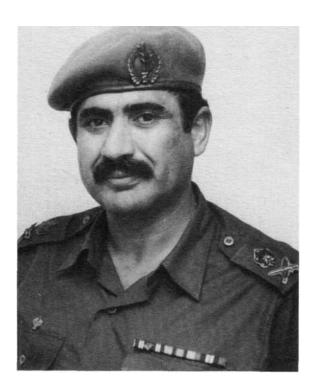
Merkava tank crewmen at prayer during a lull in the fighting on the eastern sector of the front. The brigade with which these men served was composed almost entirely of *yeshiva* (religious college) students; they had a reputation for hard fighting and hard praying.



IDF Merkava tanks in action on the coastal front. Note the oddly-shaped turret, which incorporates massive frontal protection for



the commander and gun crew. In the foreground an infantry 'MAGist' fires a Belgian-made FN-MAG machine gun.



Maj.Gen. Yekutiel Adam, GOC Task Force West, was killed in his field headquarters by PLO artillery fire on 9 June 1982, the fourth day of the war. (IDF)

Hawkeye, an American 'Airborne Early Warning' type, of which the Israelis had acquired four. The Hawkeye's extraordinary capabilities are mainly directed towards the detection of enemy aircraft and the control of friendly interceptors; but its passive defence systems can detect electromagnetic emitters on the ground. Information gathered directly by the Hawkeyes, or fed to them by other Israeli detection systems in the air or on the ground, quickly enabled the Israeli specialists to analyse and pinpoint the Syrian radars, providing them with the information necessary both to 'blind' them and to find and destroy them.

This information was also available to Israeli ground forces, who opened up an accurate artillery bombardment of those SAM positions shown to be within their range, and launched Israeli-built 'Wolf surface-to-surface missiles to home in on the Syrian radar emissions.

Meanwhile, directed by the Hawkeyes and under the overall control of a Boeing 707 modified for electronic intelligence gathering and command tasks, 96 Israeli Defence Force/Air Force F-4E Phantoms,

F-15 Eagles, F-16 Falcons and Kfir C-2S were sweeping over the Bekaa. Many of these aircraft, and of the RPVs which were still active in the area, were equipped with highly sophisticated Israeli-built electronic counter-measures devices to jam, deceive and manipulate the Syrian radars. While the missile batteries, dependent upon their radars, tried vainly to engage the Israeli aircraft, they were destroyed one by one. The weapons used included 'smart' bombs, which are guided to their targets by pinpoint beams of laser light (the targets being 'sparkled' with the laser by special forces personnel inserted on the ground); TV-guided Walleye bombs; Maverick missiles, which can be guided either by TV, by infra-red detection, or by homing on enemy radar emissions; Shrike missiles, which are radar-homers exclusively; and even by conventional 'iron bombs'.

The Syrians were faced with a dilemma by the flexibility of Israeli tactics and by the speed of their execution. If the radars were left switched on, they were destroyed by the various types of air- and ground-launched radar-homing ordnance. If they were switched off, the batteries were still vulnerable to attack by TV-guided, infra-red, or laser-designated weapons. Attempts to operate the radars in intermittent bursts were not successful, since they were unable to perform their tasks against the constant background of Israeli jamming and other counter-measures - which reached an intensity which can only be described as a radar operator's nightmare.

A second wave of 92 IDF/AF aircraft now appeared and joined the attack. They were still in peril from the 700-odd Syrian anti-aircraft guns which supported the SAM batteries; but these were brought under fire by Israeli artillery. This incoming fire from several directions created yet more confusion among the Syrians, as did the smokescreens which they released in an attempt to conceal their batteries and the movement of mobile SAMs. In practice, the spirals of smoke did more to help the Israelis pinpoint targets than to conceal them. Within little more than an hour, the IDF/AF and Israeli ground fire had destroyed 17 out of 19 SAM batteries, and damaged the two survivors.

At about the same time as the second wave of Israeli aircraft appeared, the Syrian Air Force was committed in strength in an attempt to save the missile batteries. The Israelis had, of course, anticipated this, and the nimble F-15S were flying top cover for the strike aircraft. Vectored on to the approaching MiG-2is, -23s, -25s and Sukhoi Su-7s



Mixed formation of IDF/AF F-16 Falcons and F-4E Phantom. The F-16 is a highly versatile type, equally effective as a ground-attack aircraft and an 'air superiority' fighter; it is believed that one Falcon pilot, at least, may have shot down five Syrian fighters over Lebanon, and the F-16s played a major part in the destruction of the SAM sites on 9 June. Although elderly by 'superpower' standards, the Phantom is still a formidable ground attack fighter; and some which operated over the Bekaa were specially fitted as highly sophisticated electronic counter-measures aircraft, jamming and manipulating Syrian radar.

by the ever-watchful Hawkeyes, the Israeli fighters tore into the attack. The F-15S were the only Israeli aircraft assigned exclusively to air-to-air combat, but other types also took part in the dog-fights which now built up to great intensity over the Bekaa Valley.

The Syrian fighter pilots had earned the respect of the Israelis for their courage over the Golan Heights in the 1973 Yom Kippur War; but in this encounter they suffered from serious handicaps. The religious application of Soviet training methods had left Syrian aircrew generally able to operate efficiently only if they stuck to absolutely rigid procedures. They were trained to make interceptions under control

from the ground, as part of a tightly integrated air defence system, including the SAMs in a mix of types to cover every range and altitude. These tidy conditions no longer existed in the howling skies over the Bekaa. The SAMs were deaf, blind, and rapidly being wiped off the map; and the vital ground control electronics, upon which the Syrian pilots depended to find their enemy and shape up for an attack, were being suppressed and jammed by the sophisticated Israeli ECM.

Soon so many aircraft - up to 200 at a time - were criss-crossing the sky over the valley that the Syrian anti-aircraft gunners had to cease fire

IDF/AF F-15 Eagle, the outstanding 'air superiority' fighter which probably achieved most of Israel's air-to-air victories over the Bekaa Valley. Operating in conjunction with the Hawkeye E-2C AEW aircraft, the F-15 is practically unbeatable. Its own radar is capable of tracking multiple targets simultaneously, of discriminating individual aircraft in a formation, and of automatically computing the best missile tracking solution on the target posing the greatest threat. By the end of the battles of 9 June the IDF/AF had shot down 41 Syrian aircraft for no losses.



for fear of hitting their own planes. The pilots had the same difficulty. The author spoke to an Israeli flier who said that 'the air was full of tension, due to the large number of enemy aircraft. . . . We had to differentiate between our own aircraft and the Syrian planes - and at high speed, that's not always easy.'

That day the Israelis shot down 29 MiGs in the first encounter; and by nightfall on Day Four they would claim no fewer than 41 Syrian aircraft, for no Israeli losses, in three distinct air battles. The Israelis claim to have downed a total of 90 Syrian combat aircraft over the three days of the air war, a figure which the Syrians do not dispute. No Israeli aircraft was shot down in air-to-air combat. Not since the Second World War had so many aircraft been lost in a single action; and in no other battle in the history of air warfare has such a loss been borne entirely by one side in an engagement. Most of the Israelis' kills were achieved with Sidewinder missiles; the IDF/AF operated both the latest American Sidewinder AIM-9L (which was, simultaneously, making a reputation for itself over the Falklands); and the Israeli modifications of the Sidewinder code-named Shafir 2 and Python 3,

Male and female maintenance crew complete the arming and servicing of an IDF/AF A-4 Skyhawk; despite its age, the Skyhawk is still an effective ground-attack aircraft, and Israel has perhaps 150 in service. A Skyhawk, an F-4E (S) Phantom and a Kfir, all shot down by ground fire, were the only Israeli jets lost during the war.





The Kfir C-2, an Israeli redesign of the Dassault Mirage V, is the result of Israel's desire to become self-sufficient in jet fighters. Powered by the 'embargo-proof American General Electric J79 turbojet engine, and with many refinements which improve its range, performance and capabilities over those of the original French design, it is a potent fighter-bomber and 'dog-fighter'. In 1982 the Kfir carried the main burden of close air support missions. (IAI)

which have been improved and adapted in the light of combat experience over Lebanon since 1976. There were reports of some 'gun' kills, achieved solely with the Israeli fighters' cannon; this is an unimaginably more difficult procedure than cannon dog-fighting of the Second World War era; and to achieve it in order to save expensive missiles attracts considerable kudos - besides demonstrating a superiority over the enemy which is almost insulting.

(In terms of air-to-air weaponry and guidance systems, the IDF/AF is much better equipped than the Syrians. Their Soviet missiles - even the very latest 'Advanced Atoll' and 'Aphid' - can 'lock on' to a target only over a much smaller 'envelope' than the comparable Western

missiles; and even displayed reluctance to lock on to an Israeli fighter on the rare occasions when a Syrian pilot managed to get into the perfect firing position, dead astern.)

On the coast the infantry, supported by the Navy, captured Damour after heavy fighting. The Israelis lost General Adam, killed in his HQ by artillery fire, and with him Colonel Moshe Sela, a senior staff officer. Entry into the sprawling refugee camp of Ein el-Hilwe, with its terrorist training centres, was postponed in order to enable non-combatants to leave.

In the central sector, tank battles were developing as the Israeli armour sought to establish itself further on the heights of Ain Dara above the Beirut-Damascus Highway. Task Force East penetrated the area east of Lake Qaraoun in a running battle with the PLO and the Syrian 1st Armoured Division, commanded by the President's brother Rifaat Assad.



LEFT A PLO fighter manning a heavy machine gun during fighting near Khalde.

RIGHT An Israeli APC advances through a southern Lebanese village. Even the most hostile foreign observers admit that at this stage the Shi'ite community greeted the IDF soldiers with smiles, applause, and flowers. (Author's photo)

Day Five - 10 June

The PLO men were fighting well and often held their positions with stubborn courage. Their training had made them adept at ambush, and they sometimes caught Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers on narrow roads and in defiles. The PLO's 'Lion Cubs' were now in action. These boys had been told to approach Israeli armour with concealed rocket-propelled grenade launchers and then to make a surprise attack. The Israelis were soon calling these attackers 'the RPG kids', and tried to take them prisoner rather than shoot them. Some turned out to be no older than twelve.

Inevitably, a few were shot. Somewhere near Rachidiye we met an Israeli infantryman in tears after he had badly wounded a teenage enemy. 'This RPG kid had fired one grenade at a tank,' he said, 'and he was aiming another when I shouted at him to drop it. He knew what I was saying because I used Arabic. He took no notice and swung the



launcher at me, and I had to fire.' Some Israelis did not fire at 'RPG kids' - and lost their own lives.

Day Five was eventful on all fronts. Task Force West reached the outskirts of Khalde, near the airport, and was now only 10 km from the heart of Beirut. High Command detached the column's forward units and sent them in an outflanking movement towards the east. This manoeuvre was also intended to cut off Beirut and the PLO forces in the western and southern outskirts from the east and the Damascus road.

In the central combat zone at Sultan Yakoub, north of Jezzine, the Syrian command had set up a strong ambush force of the 1st Commando Battalion supported by tanks and anti-tank guns of the 58th Mechanised Brigade to cover the route which the Israeli tanks must take.

One of the many Ashbal or 'RPG kids' employed by the PLO during the Israeli invasion. They would emerge from the shelter of caves to fire rocket-propelled grenades at Israeli vehicles before running for cover. Some relied upon the IDF soldiers' self-restraint to an astonishing degree, surrendering immediately after firing their rockets. (IDF)



A fresh Israeli battle group of M60 Patton tanks had been brought forward and was in the lead. Most soldiers of this reserve unit were from the Orthodox religious community, and they had a reputation for hard praying and hard fighting.

The Syrians had been shelling the roads during the day, so the Israeli tanks were sent forward by night. It was very dark, and the clouds of dust churned up by the tanks' tracks made visibility even worse for the commanders standing in the open turret hatches. All were apprehensive about ramming the tank in front. Progress was so slow that the commanding officer, himself well forward, radioed for greater speed.

When the Israeli unit reached a point about eight miles south of Ein Zhalta on the road from Moukhtara the Syrian guns opened up. Shells fell around the tanks and on the road, and a rain of rocks and metal cascaded over them. The commanders ducked inside and slammed shut the hatches, but even with their sophisticated target-spotting optics they could not locate the enemy guns. In their desperate need for visibility they opened their hatches - and some were sniped through the head.

The radio network went wild with calls for help and direction, but the CO quickly made his authority felt and calmed his men. 'Look for the guns firing at the tanks in front of you and behind you,' he said. 'You'll see them better than the guns firing at you.'

The Syrian commandos came in very close, some to within a few metres of the tanks. The noise was tremendous and several tanks caught fire. Tank crews choked in the smoke and fumes as they tried to rescue wounded comrades. Wounded and rescuers alike were picked off by the Syrian commandos. Some Pattons, trying to manoeuvre in the confined space, ran into other tanks. Ammunition was running short and help was far off; Israeli aircraft could not help until dawn.

The Task Force artillery commander broke into the radio network. 'Give me your precise bearings,' he told the tank brigade leader, 'and I'll lay down a covering barrage to give you a chance to get yourself out of there.'

The carefully calculated barrage hit the Syrian positions with devastating force. But these elite, disciplined troops held their ground despite casualties, and their commander brought up T-62 tanks for a final assault on the trapped Israeli column. Dawn was now breaking, and he had to annihilate the Israelis before their warplanes could

intervene. The commandos ran in with anti-tank grenades and actually clambered on to the Pattons to make sure of their kills.

The Israeli artillery commander, miles away, understood the critical situation, and ordered over the radios, 'Close down! Sit tight!' His guns then dropped anti-personnel shells right on top of their own tanks, blowing away the storming Syrian commandos. Gradually the Pattons edged backwards as the Israeli gunners changed their pattern of fire once more, this time to give the Pattons a safe corridor out.

With the coming of broad daylight on 11 June Israeli planes strafed the Syrian tanks and gun positions until another IDF tank column came into action. The Syrians rushed reinforcements along the Damascus-Beirut road, but Israeli fighters caught them while they were still on their transporters on the winding highway, and blew up bridges to prevent retreat. The Syrians brought in Mi-24 Hind and tank-killer Gazelle helicopters, but lost four of them to ground and air fire. About half the Syrian 1st Armoured Division was destroyed that day around Lake Qaraoun. The surviving Syrian tanks withdrew, and the Israelis consolidated along the Bekaa-Joub Jannine line. The battle had lasted seven or eight hours, and both sides had lost heavily.

Other Israeli mechanised units had followed the mountain roads to Kfar Qouq and Bekaa, each less than five kilometres from the Syrian border, in the rugged country to the rear of 'Fatahland'. This severed PLO territory from its Syrian support as completely as the difficult terrain permitted.

Many small-scale encounters took place. Shmuel Yitzhaky, a 27-year-old medic, spoke of one of them. He was attached to a group of five armoured personnel carriers which were the first to reach the village of Bir Shmali, just outside Tyre. The APCs had been accompanied by tanks and artillery but had somehow become separated from them. The young officer in command of the APCs decided to go in all the same.

'We didn't find much resistance at first,' Yitzhaky said, 'but then we were hit by rocket-propelled grenades. The PLO boys were very brave. There were only three or four of them, but they held us off all night. We were lucky that they had not been better trained; with the type of weapons they had they could have finished us off. A shell ripped into our Zelda. It was the kind that gets very hot before it explodes. I felt the heat and tried to get out.'

He almost made it; but the shell exploded, and steel fragments ripped

into his leg. He was evacuated to the edge of the village. When daylight came tanks and infantry went in and ended the night-long resistance. One of the PLO fighters, hit in the chest, was taken with Yitzhaky and other wounded Israelis to Rothschild Hospital in Haifa.

Air combats continued, and another 11 MiGs were brought down.

Day Six - 11 June

That morning Israeli Merkava tanks ambushed a Syrian unit of the 82nd Armoured Brigade, equipped with the T-72 tank, in the Bekaa Valley: nine of them went up in flames. The T-72 was the latest and most powerful of the Russian-made tanks supplied to the Syrian Army, and had been considered virtually invincible. Major-General Avigdor Ben Gal said of this action, 'To our great satisfaction, we saw that the T-72S burn just like any other tank.' The damaged T-72S lay in noman's-land, and the Syrians tried hard to prevent the Israelis from

An IDF M109 155 mm self-propelled howitzer in action against the Syrian Army on the eastern front.



removing any of the hulks. Nobody in the West had yet examined a T-72, and one was badly needed for evaluation. A specimen was later retrieved.

The Merkavas, in this action and others, performed well against T-55S, T-62S and T-72S. Some Merkavas were hit, but no Merkava crewman was killed in action, due both to its massive frontal protection, and to the design feature which allows men to leave a damaged tank through a rear door instead of by the always vulnerable top hatch. The Merkava demonstrated a 'survivability' superior to any other current tank design¹.

The Syrians, who had previously resisted Philip Habib's efforts to bring about a ceasefire, were shaken by their losses, and now accepted an agreement. At noon the IDF ceased fire on all fronts against Syrian troops; but the Israeli government excluded the PLO from any such agreement. It repeated its intention to continue 'all operations necessary to destroy the PLO on Lebanese soil'. The IDF took up positions in the Christian parts of East and North Beirut. The remaining Syrian units in Lebanon were concentrated in the Zahle-Chtaura area, where they began to receive reinforcements.

In less than six days the IDF had liberated 4,500 square kilometres of southern Lebanon; had broken the PLO's major defence system, and captured most of its arsenal. Convoy after convoy of trucks were already ferrying this war booty back to Israel.

The IDF's chief education officer sent a letter to the troops that day, 11 June. It is an interesting document because, except in its essential message, it is unlike anything which might appear in general orders in other armies. The fact that it came from the chief education officer rather than the Chief-of-Staff is also unusual. It reads in part:

Now that the aims of Operation 'Peace for Galilee' to guarantee safety to our citizens in the north have been achieved, Israel has initiated a ceasefire. Israel has called upon Syria to adhere to the conditions of the ceasefire in order to stabilise the situation in Lebanon.

The IDF is now situated over extensive areas of Lebanon; soldiers are coming into contact with a large, diversified civilian population. This contact presents you with a challenge - to behave in a humane, Jewish and IDF fashion.

¹See Appendix 3.



Syrian Army T-62 tanks advance over a rocky plateau in the south-east Bekaa Valley.

The chief military prosecutor has published binding instructions to ensure such behaviour:

It is absolutely forbidden to take spoils from any source whatsoever. Anyone violating this order can expect a trial and a maximum sentence of ten years in prison.

Roadblocks have been placed on all exit roads from southern Lebanon; everyone leaving the area will be checked. The peaceful civilian population must not be harmed; in particular, respect for women must not be violated.

All IDF soldiers must refrain from harming sites of cultural value, including archaeological sites, museums and the like.

It is forbidden to harm the holy sites of any religion.

The IDF must not act according to the standard accepted by our enemies; we must not allow feelings of revenge to guide our behaviour towards the civilian population in Lebanon. . . . A deterioration of the rules of moral conduct in the IDF, which is a 'people's army', will hurt you as a man and a citizen, and will have its effect on the moral level of Israeli society and on its quality of life.

The maintenance of the rules of fitting behaviour during your stay in Lebanon will also help Israel in its political and public opinion campaigns. Part of the civilian population in Lebanon has shown itself ready to co-operate with Israel. One of the goals of Operation 'Peace for Galilee' was 'the hope that a peace treaty will be signed with an independent Lebanon, its territorial integrity preserved'. This is why the initial contact between IDF personnel



and the citizens of Lebanon is so important. This contact is what will determine the character of future relations between two good neighbours.

The eyes of the world are now on our region. Many journalists and foreign correspondents are now in the combat zone.

Acts of looting, or damage to property, holy places, cultural sites or natural or scenic areas will play into the hands of our enemies. You must see yourselves as having personal responsibility for the image of the IDF and of the State of Israel in the eyes of the citizens of Lebanon and of world public opinion.

The principles of morality are basic to the Jewish heritage. Even in wartime, it must be remembered that to his fellow man, a human being is a human being.

The letter concluded with a long extract from Joshua VII, 19-25. (It should be noted that the chief education officer makes no mention of the evils of strong drink. This is because the Israeli armed forces are teetotal on and off duty. There is no alcohol in messes, canteens or recreation centres.)

The Israeli Army has always been efficient; but I have never seen it *look* so good as during the 1982 campaign in Lebanon. Its combat equipment was in excellent condition and well serviced; salvage and repair depots were in position almost before armour was in action. I saw few breakdowns, and much evidence that soldiers were taking more care of vehicles than in other wars. Soldiers going forward were thoroughly kitted out, and their new webbing equipment was carefully adjusted for fit. Artillery was well dug in and completely camouflaged, and it operated with greater speed and precision than in the Yom Kippur War. The most impressive aspect of the Israeli Army at war was its logistical support. Whenever I saw tanks and M109A1 self-propelled guns, their Alpha ammunition carriers were close by. Dumps of petrol, ammunition and other supplies were well sited and clearly marked.

Lebanon's roads are narrow, rough and vulnerable to blockage, and wherever possible, the Q staff used naval vessels, transport aircraft and helicopters to move supplies up to forward units and to key dumps. As far as I could tell, at no time was any fighting unit short of ammunition, weapons or water.

Three Syrian T-62S and a truck, knocked out by Israeli tanks and artillery in the mountains of the central sector. The fierceness of the night action in which they were destroyed may be judged by the way these wrecks are bunched - this probably represents an entire troop knocked out almost simultaneously. (Author's photo)

The Israelis made many of their more important assaults under cover of darkness. Arabs generally do not like night-fighting, while the Israelis are well trained in this form of warfare.

In its first war the first Israeli-designed and Israeli-built tank, the Merkava (Hebrew for 'Chariot'), proved itself to be one of the best tanks in the world. Apparently designed specifically for rocky terrain, the Merkava was subjected to immense stress on the mountain roads and barren ridges but few broke down.

The medical services operated with crisp efficiency. Medevac teams were as close to the front line as were British Forward Surgical Teams in the Falklands. Sometimes a soldier wounded in action was in an operating theatre in Israel itself within an hour of being hit. The IDF went to much trouble to avoid civilian casualties, as we personally witnessed. In a strictly military sense they went to dangerous lengths. By taking the time to call on civilians to leave a battle area they sacrificed surprise and increased their own casualties.

Israeli aircraft made low-altitude bombing runs, at great risk to the pilots, in order to avoid the civilian casualties which would be caused by less accurate high-level bombing. Later, Israeli planes used careful pinpoint bombing techniques so sophisticated that a single building housing a PLO headquarters could be hit without damage to buildings on either side.

From their relatively protected positions at sea the Navy's guns provided an additional and unexpected angle of attack, and played an important part in ensuring a speedy advance of the main armoured and infantry body along the dangerous coast road.

The quantity and quality of material found in PLO dumps surprised even Israeli Intelligence. The author examined several large storage depots, notably that at Damour operated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. All kinds of munitions were kept in elaborately fitted concrete caverns, ten metres high and nearly as wide, running literally for miles under the hills. In all, 5,000 tons of weapons and

Any soldier can find a small boy to, pose with, if told by an Army PR officer to project a kindly image; but pictures such as this cannot be dismissed so lightly if seen in conjunction with the long, specific, and minatory orders issued to all IDF personnel on the subject of respect for Lebanese civilians and property, quoted at length in this chapter. (IDF)



ammunition were taken from these caverns, which were garrisoned. The most prized find were many SA-9 anti-aircraft missiles.

Much of this war materiel had reached Lebanon in crates marked with the Red Cross or Red Crescent - obviously, without the knowledge of those organisations. The author saw crates of grenades stencilled 'Medical Equipment'. Katyusha rockets travelled in boxes marked 'Tractor Spares'. In the Damour tunnels the author saw weapons and ammunition made in the United States, Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, North Korea, Hungary, East Germany, Britain and Italy.

At times most of the traffic from Lebanon to Israel consisted of trucks laden with captured materiel. The author personally found an abandoned Soviet 130 mm gun with piles of shells in a grove near Nabatiye and aimed at the Christian town of Marjayoun; the gunners had left so quickly they did not even booby-trap it. In Tyre and Sidon the author saw the cellars of inhabited apartment buildings turned into storage rooms for ammunition and weapons. In many apartments were weapon emplacements, observation posts and command posts.

While pockets of resistance took days and even weeks to eliminate, the Israelis were conscious of an impressive victory, despite murmurs of criticism in Israel that the IDF had advanced too far north. Israel intended to secure its objectives quickly in order to forestall possible American and Soviet intervention - and in this it succeeded. However, not all the objectives had yet been achieved. The PLO was still present in force in Beirut; and Syrian commando and tank units around Ain-Dara - between Chtaura and Ein-Sofar - prevented an Israeli armoured division from reaching the main highway before the ceasefire came into effect. This was a significant Syrian accomplishment in view of Israel's air superiority.

4 The Siege

The ceasefire between Israel and Syria was precarious, but it held for ten days. In that time the Israelis and the PLO were in continual conflict. On 13 June the PLO and Israel did arrange a ceasefire but it held for only an hour or so; large numbers of PLO fighters either did not receive the information from their HQ, or ignored it. From then on fighting between Palestinians and Israelis was continual. On that day, 13 June, Israeli units took the presidential palace at Baabda during a 14-hour battle.

For more than a week the Israeli cabinet and the military leadership had been worried about what action to take concerning the large refugee camp of Ein el-Hilwe, home of thousands of Palestinian refugees. It was also the largest PLO stronghold in southern Lebanon. The many buildings, some of them large and well built, and the miles of narrow streets and paths were ideal for defenders and hazardous for attackers. The Palestinians had created a thick line of bunkers, underground command posts, ammunition dumps, machine gun posts and mortar pits.

For six days Israeli loudspeakers urged the civilians to leave the camp, and some did. PLO fighters shot in the back one man who tried to escape, and then tied him to a pole until he died, as a warning to others who were thinking about fleeing¹.

On five occasions delegations of Lebanese dignitaries from Sidon went to the camp to ask the PLO leaders as well as senior Palestinian citizens to come out for talks. The dignitaries themselves were not allowed close enough to talk, but they shouted to the PLO fighters to at least allow the civilians to come out. They also promised that any PLO man who came out without arms would not be harmed.

The PLO men inside the camp responded by firing at the delegation and yelling, 'Victory or death!' Many of them had been trained in this

¹Testimony from Abbas al-Haf, 55, a neighbour of the victim.

camp and they were confident that they could hold it. They expected the Israelis to make a creeping, house-by-house advance. Since this would have meant a protracted operation with many casualties, the Israeli generals chose to storm the camp in the hope that the shock of such an attack would bring about rapid surrender.

The attack went in on 14 June. Tanks were used against the stronger areas but armoured bulldozers were the spearhead elsewhere: fewer people on both sides would be killed, the Israeli command reasoned, if buildings were demolished quickly, thus depriving the defenders of sniping positions.

About 50 older people and mothers with children were lying on the floor of a mosque for protection when PLO fighters barricaded themselves into it and fired at the Israeli troops. As the Israelis approached some of the terrorists forced the sheltering civilians to their

Jeep crews of the reconnaissance unit of an IDF motorised brigade. The soldiers had been in action - or under the expectation of action - for about 60 hours, without sleep, when this photograph was taken.



feet and told them to walk towards the Israelis. If they refused, the terrorists said, they would be killed in the mosque. The civilians fearfully did as they were ordered while the terrorists, using them as a shield, fired at the Israelis. Terrified, the cluster of people lay down. The terrorists yelled at them, and then shot some of them before the Israelis captured the mosque¹.

Some close-quarter fighting took place, but as the Israeli armour ground on and the unoccupied area of the camp shrank many PLO men saw the futility of a last-ditch stand, and surrendered after much of the town had been destroyed.

Two Israeli units held back from engaging Palestinians deployed near the hospital until the patients could be evacuated. After two days of negotiations the 20 patients, mostly PLO fighters, were evacuated and treated at an Israeli medical post set up near the camp. From here they were sent on to a local hospital.

On 16 June a specially trained Phalange commando unit captured from the PLO the six-storey Lebanese University Sciences Faculty building overlooking the airport, and a large suburban area in South Beirut. This was the militia's only significant combat mission in Beirut while Bashir Gemayel was alive. (Much later they fought the Druse in the hills, and lost several hundred men killed.)

A new Syrian-Israeli ceasefire arrangement made on 16 June broke down on the 21st. On 22 June the IDF moved against a Syrian enclave on the Beirut-Damascus road. The Syrian forces' position stretched from their stronghold at Bekaa/Dahr al-Baidar down through the Bhamdoun area to Aley and close to Baabda; here the Syrians and the PLO were separated by only a thin Israeli-held strip of mountainous terrain. Israeli artillery bombarded Syrian positions at Bhamdoun, Zufar, Majdal Bana, Suq el-Arab, Kahle and Aley, where the Syrians had their headquarters. SAM sites were hit and destroyed, and two MiG-23s were shot down.

The Golani Brigade, supported by tanks, advanced that day and the next against Syrian commandos. The Syrian units withdrew through an escape route deliberately left open by the Israelis. By 26 June the IDF held the entire area from Zufar to eastern Beirut and 22 km of the

¹Testimony of Sa'ad Milhem, a 78-year-old resident of Ein el-Hilwe, whose home was destroyed in the fighting.

Beirut-Damascus road, thus cutting off the PLO from Syrian supplies. Finally, the Israeli units linked with those of the Christian Lebanese to the north of the city. West Beirut was now effectively under siege.

Meanwhile the Christians of East and North Beirut were giving the Israeli soldiers an ecstatic welcome. In a despatch from Beirut on 20 June Colin Smith of *The Observer* painted an intriguing picture of the troops' reception:

There were scenes reminiscent of those old newsreels of the liberation of Paris . . . after eight terrible years Pax Israelia had arrived. Young women and not-so-young women planted kisses on the unshaven cheeks of weary Israeli paratroopers. . . . Near the presidential palace at Baabda a green Peugeot disgorged a bow-legged madame pursued by her grandson who announced in English, 'She wants to kiss you.' As the full horror of their situation dawned the Israelis retreated into their armoured personnel carrier.

By now many hundreds of unofficial volunteers from Iran, Libya and elsewhere had arrived in Damascus and Tripoli (Lebanon) and were rushing south and west to support the Syrian and PLO forces. Syrian and PLO officers found this support embarrassing, since the Libyans (and even more, the Iranians) wanted to take command at local level. The Iranians demanded the right to make 'martyr's missions' - suicide attacks - against the Israelis, and a few were shot by PLO men to prevent them from provoking the massive Israeli reprisals which were sure to follow such attacks.

By the end of June the PLO believed that up to 700 Israeli tanks were deployed around the western part of the city, together with 1,000 armoured personnel carriers and 210 guns of 155 mm and 175 mm calibre. The true figure was not much less.

Israeli aircraft were dropping leaflets printed on pink and green paper, and carrying this warning:

The Israeli Defence Force is continuing its war against the terrorists and has not yet used its full force. The IDF is concerned not to hurt innocent civilians and anyone who doesn't fight against it.

Residents of Beirut, make use of the ceasefire and save your lives. You have the following exits:

(a) through the IDF forces to the east on the Beirut-Damascus road. (b) northward towards Tripoli.

Save your life and those of your loved ones.

The Commander of the IDF.



M109 howitzers in the Israeli lines south of Beirut during the siege. (Author's photo)

Many civilians wanted to leave; but the Palestinian fighters and their allies of the leftist Lebanese militias reacted to the leaflets by closing the remaining crossing points between East and West Beirut, thus sealing themselves - and the civilian population - into the four square miles of encircled West Beirut.

By now there was that stillness about the city that comes with the expectation of momentous events. The electricity was off in some areas and other quarters were without water. The telephone system had almost collapsed, bread was scarce and few petrol stations were open.

When Israeli planes bombed Beirut they had information from Intelligence which permitted accurate attacks. The London *Times* correspondent in Beirut, Robert Fisk, commented on 5 July:

Israeli aircraft have unerringly hit PLO offices in West Beirut. They have destroyed the headquarters building of Salah Khalaf, who under the *nom de guerre* of Abu Iyad runs Yasser Arafat's security service. They have razed the offices of Khalil Wazzir (Abu Jihad) who commands Arafat's military operations. Israeli Phantom fighter-bombers destroyed Ibrahim Quleilat's Nasserite Murabitoun militia in Tarik Jdedeh. . . . The Israelis appear to be aware of Arafat's every movement [in Beirut]. In one period he moved his base three times in two days and on each occasion Israeli planes attacked the three buildings in which he had been staying.

For a week following the Aley-Bhamdoun battles the IDF continued mopping-up operations in an effort to eliminate enemy pockets of resistance and to gather all combat materiel which had been left behind. The weapons collected by the end of June were sufficient to equip 30,000 men. In mid-July the IDF's quartermaster general announced that his supply, recovery and salvage units had located 413 arms and ammunition caches, though not all had been cleared out. His men had gathered 4,170 tons of ammunition - enough to fill 1,500 trucks; 764 vehicles and combat vehicles, including tanks and personnel carriers; 26,900 light weapons and 424 heavy weapons (artillery and rocket launchers); 1,295 communications devices, and 1,404 periscopes and field-glasses.

Released from battle at last, an Israeli tank crew luxuriate in an improvised shower somewhere in the hills of the central sector. Two can be seen to wear chains round one ankle; these secure identity tags. Tank crews no longer wear tags round their necks: in 1973 so many tank fatalities had their heads blown off that this is considered a more practical method of ensuring the identification of the dead. (Author's photo)



Throughout the second half of June and the early part of July PLO fighters still at large in the wild regions of southern Lebanon made hit-and-run attacks on Israeli units. On 28 June a PLO squad fired a rocket-propelled grenade at an army truck east of Damour and wounded three soldiers. Here and there they mined roads or sniped Israeli Army camps at long range. From 16 July onward the PLO garrison in Beirut was active on many parts of the perimeter, firing shells, missiles and small arms at IDF positions.

The Israeli cabinet had been agonising about the IDF's presence in Beirut and its future role - and in this debate they were joined by large numbers of the Israeli public. The IDF had gone much further than its original stated intention and, for the first time, Israeli troops had entered an Arab capital. Generals, politicians and intellectuals had insisted, ever since Israel had first been forced into war in 1948, that their army should never attack an Arab capital. Such an attack would give credence to the accusation that the Israelis were expansionist imperialists. This was also the first time that Israeli armed forces had attacked built-up areas, with consequent danger to civilians.

The Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, and Defence Minister Ariel Sharon favoured attack on the grounds that the job of defeating the PLO had to be finished; if the PLO were not driven from Beirut then before long they would return to the south of Lebanon. In any case, they argued, Beirut was no longer a normal capital but an occupied city without effective government.

Other members of the cabinet were worried about American opinion, Soviet reaction and dissent in Israel. Some soldiers objected to any continuation of the war and a few had refused duty in Lebanon. Despite these misgivings, the decision to drive the PLO from Beirut was taken.

Loudspeakers as well as leaflets dropped from the air urged the civilian population to get out of Beirut. The PLO did now allow some families to leave, and we saw them lining up in battered, overladen cars and utilities at the crossing points. 'They're crazy in there,' a bearded Lebanese Muslim student told me, pointing back into the ghetto of West Beirut. 'The PLO have a death wish and they all want to be martyrs.' His girlfriend added, 'And they want the Lebanese to be martyrs as well.'

'What about the Palestinian families?' we asked.

'They all want to be victims,' the student said.

The girl objected to this. 'Not the women,' she said. 'The men want to make the women into victims. They believe all that propaganda about fighting to the last Palestinian.'

On 22 July the Israeli Air Force commenced a seven-day bombardment of military targets. Bombing was limited to precision strikes on positively identified targets, as in Beirut Forest and the Ramlet el-Baida area, where there was little or no settlement. In the Fahakani area, south of Metropolitan Beirut, isolated targets such as PLO headquarters were hit. Pilots on a mission over Beirut or any other built-up area were assigned a single target and forbidden to bomb alternative targets. They were told to return to base with bombs undropped if they could not identify their primary target.

Simultaneously, the IDF made a surprise attack on Syrian positions in the eastern sector; in an air and artillery assault dozens of Syrian tanks, as well as support vehicles, guns and supply dumps, were destroyed. The Syrian command brought up from Syria three SA-8 missile launchers which were located and destroyed on 24 July before they could get into action. An SA-6 hit an Israeli Phantom on reconnaissance and it went down in flames.

The contrast between life in Christian East Beirut and PLO-occupied West Beirut was almost grotesque. In East Beirut we sat one day under a sunshade at a streetside cafe, and were served ice-cream by a white-coated waiter while we listened to gunfire from West Beirut a quarter of a mile away. The contrast between life in Beirut and in Jounieh, six miles north on the coast, was even more stark. At the beach young Christian men, taking a few hours off from fighting, showed off their prowess as water-skiers to bikini-clad lovelies lounging on the sand. At night people gathered on villa verandahs to watch the 'fireworks' in Beirut while sipping cocktails.

The Christians' disregard for the siege of West Beirut was so complete that the Lebanese state radio regularly advised about the dangers of traffic jams for all those people *heading for the beaches*. Several people from West Beirut, including Muslims, told us that only on the beach could they 'get away from the noise'. They meant the din of guns and rocket-launchers.

By chance, we were in Damour on the day when a large number of the former Christian inhabitants returned to the town. It looked much like the French town of Oradour-sur-Glane, destroyed by Nazi SS troops in

Yasser Arafat photographed during the siege of West Beirut. His dislike of small children is well known, but he has always been astute in his dealings with the foreign press, and was easily persuaded to pose for photographs like this.



1944 as a reprisal for alleged Resistance activity. The French have preserved the ruins of Oradour as a national monument; the Christian Lebanese would like to do the same in at least part of Damour.

The ruined houses still contained a few personal things left behind by those who survived massacre by the PLO in 1976. We found pictures on the walls, pots on the stoves, even a piece of work half-finished in a sewing machine. One house had beautifully crocheted curtains at the windows. Under some rubble I found a photograph album full of some family's snapshots: a family long gone and quite possibly murdered. It was difficult to tell which effects had belonged to Palestinians and which to the Lebanese Christians they had driven out.

A volunteer working party had cleaned up the mess which the **PLO** had left in the church on the western side of the town. The place where the cross had hung was pockmarked by bullets. Below, where the altar once stood, lay a pile of greasy engine casings and spare parts; oil stains spotted the floor of the church, which had been turned into a garage. Next door, in a row of dimly lit stone chambers **that** once served as **a** monastery, metal bunks lay overturned amid piles of clothing, cooking utensils and various personal belongings. PLO slogans and posters covered the walls.



Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was also induced to pose with a child during the siege. Such images are not easily reconciled with the PLO leaders' declared determination to hold on to their positions whatever the cost to Lebanese civilians trapped on the urban battlefield.

In another part of town the large St Elias church was in similar disarray; the now-departed PLO men had found a use for this church as well - a volleyball net was stretched between two pillars. This large new church, left unfinished by the fleeing Maronites in 1976, now bore many spray-painted PLO slogans. On the inside wall where the altar was to have stood two targets had been painted, and the stone all around them was roughened by bullet holes. Above them, where a cross should have hung, a triangular PLO symbol was painted in the Palestinian nationalist colours of red, green, black and white, framing a silhouette of a rifle and hammer.

A mass was being held in St Elias church to celebrate the Christians' return to Damour, and many people present were openly overcome by emotion. The Phalangists were taking no chances, however: helmeted young soldiers were posted in the bell tower and at every other vantage point to ensure safety from any PLO attack. Most of them had an image of the Virgin Mary stuck or taped to the butts of their automatic rifles. They saw nothing incongruous about this; they were fighting for their religion, they said.

While tension grew among the PLO men trapped in West Beirut, the Israeli troops, under less pressure than the Palestinians except when

actually on the perimeter, were relaxing. Late in July we attended an open-air Army concert near Damour at which the compere was the well-known actor Shlomo Eitan. In the background were many tanks, their great guns poking into the night sky. Like soldiers anywhere, the men clapped and cheered and laughed at the sometimes feeble but never bawdy jokes - the IDF frowns on blue humour. Eitan told a story about a Jew who had gone on a skiing trip in Switzerland and had become lost. Eventually, when he was in a bad way from exposure and hunger, a rescue team found him. 'We're from the Red Cross,' they told him. 'I've donated already,' the skier said.

Two girl singers sat on a Merkava tank to deliver their number, but other performers used a makeshift stage. The Ronnie Weiss five-man band included a man with large prominent teeth who was known, Eitan told the audience, as 'the teeth of the State'. The troops roared with laughter. The most popular performers seemed to be a group called 'Benzine' who sang 'Rock around the clock tonight', and the American dance team known as the 'Broadway Dance Marathon' who contributed an energetic Charleston and highly professional tap-dancing.

A male singer sang a gentle ballad about getting out of the Army, with the chorus line 'Perhaps we'll meet again in the Reserve', which the troops picked up and sang enthusiastically. They were quieter when the blonde Miri Aloni, a well-known singer, gave them a number about a quiet Saturday morning in camp when nothing was happening except mending. As an encore she sang 'How beautiful are the nights in the land of Canaan . . . your eyes are like two lights in the sky talking to me . . . what are they saying?' The troops, packed tightly together in places, swayed slightly to the tune of this love song.

The compere led the troops in community singing. They gave the greatest volume to 'When the saints go marching in', sung in English, and the greatest feeling to 'When peace comes', sung in Hebrew.

A few girl soldiers were present. The first 20 Army girls had been sent into Lebanon on 20 July. All unarmed, they were kept well away from the front line and served only in well-fortified command posts, relieving men from clerical work. The Army was taking no chances: the girls were forbidden to swim off the Lebanese beaches, and had to be accompanied by at least two male soldiers whenever they went outside their posts.

Next day, in the hills near Aley, we met a soldier who said he had been deep in Israel only an hour before. So how had he reached the front so

quickly, we asked him. 'I hitched a lift in a passing helicopter,' he said casually. He had waved to a low-flying scout helicopter, jerked his thumb towards the front, and the pilot had come down for him. 'The car broke down and my wife couldn't bring me to the border,' he explained to us.

In the hills where we met the heli-hitching soldier the war sometimes seemed unreal. In a now-deserted school near Baabda we met Colonel Paul Kedar, the IDF's chief spokesman at the front. Kedar, who in more peaceful days had created Israel's principal zoo, was a large, calm and personable reservist officer. His job was to give journalists and official visitors an account of the latest fighting and political situation. Just outside his office we stood on a lip of the hills and looked down on Beirut, spread out on the coastal plain like a gigantic model. It was easy to pick out every landmark: the Corniche Mazraa boulevard, the airport with a crippled airliner sprawled on the runway, the refugee camps, schools and universities, the port, the major hotels - gutted during the civil war of 1975-76 - and various other buildings. Military Intelligence knew precisely what each one was being used for. We could also see Israeli tanks and other positions, which would have been out of sight to the PLO men in Beirut. 'It's quite a pretty view, isn't it?' Kedar said. 'You wouldn't believe that it's a time bomb waiting to go off.'

While the time bomb was ticking it was possible to dine at Wakim's in the Ashrafiya quarter bordering the Green Line which separated Christian East Beirut from the PLO-Muslim West. We did this one



A young Muslim girl shot down by a PLO fighter when she tried to escape from West Beirut without permission. night, dining on asparagus soup, lamb kebab and rich mixed salads and finishing with *café blanc* (hot rose-water). Then we strolled through the darkened and semi-lit streets with some Lebanese we had known for a long time. 'Do you suppose that any of your friends at home will believe you when you tell them that you took a quiet walk through Ashrafiya just a few blocks from the PLO positions?' one of the Lebanese said. Put like that, we admitted that it was unlikely.

The Lebanese Prime Minister, Shafik Wazzan, a Muslim, sometimes went down from the hills to negotiate with Yasser Arafat in West Beirut. His journey was tricky because the PM could not be seen to be passing through a checkpoint manned by Israeli and Christian Phalangist troops; in any case, according to a diplomatic fiction, Israeli troops were not in Beirut. The solution was simple. When the Israelis and Phalangists were notified that the PM was on his way they tactfully disappeared, and a Lebanese Army squad took over at the crossing point. When the PM had come out of the West Beirut labyrinth again the Israeli and Christian soldiers quietly reappeared.

The meetings which Wazzan attended were usually acrimonious, and little was accomplished. The PLO leaders often made fierce public statements from which it was difficult to back away when negotiations took place. For instance, on 23 July Arafat said in a telegram to bereaved Palestinian families:

The Palestinian revolution will not surrender to American-Israeli conditions, will not lay down its arms and will continue its armed struggle to achieve the right of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on the land of Palestine.

On the same day Arafat's lieutenant Salah Khalaf said in an interview with *Al Khaley*, a United Arab Emirates newspaper:

The PLO will never recognise Israel's existence. Any person talking about recognition of the enemy should have his tongue and head cut off.

George Habash suggested making Beirut the PLO's Stalingrad or its Hanoi - a notion which not surprisingly infuriated many Lebanese, since it was not Habash's city to turn into rubble. The Lebanese also criticised Arafat for his comment, when asked if he proposed to leave Beirut: 'Did Churchill leave London during the blitz?' Beirut, the Lebanese said, was *their* capital; it did not belong to the Palestinians. His self-comparison with Churchill merely aroused derision.

In a despatch published in *The Times* on 24 July Robert Fisk observed:

The State of Lebanon turned out to be worth less to the Palestinians than the unborn state of Palestine. . . . A few nights ago a young armed Palestinian walked up to me in the street, an intelligent, brave man whom I have known for some years. He was troubled by reports of negotiations for a PLO withdrawal. 'We will never withdraw,' he said firmly, 'and if the Israelis come into West Beirut we shall destroy it with them. If necessary we shall destroy all Lebanon.'

Arafat made his intention clear to Sa'ad Sayil (Abu al-Walid), the military commander of the PLO forces during the siege of Beirut. Sayil, a capable officer, was the only member of Fatah who, without being one of its founders, had become one of its most prominent leaders. He had joined Fatah in 1970 after serving in the Jordanian Army, and contributed a good deal of military knowledge to the organisation. Not that his ideas were always accepted: some of his colleagues were jealous of his educated military background¹.

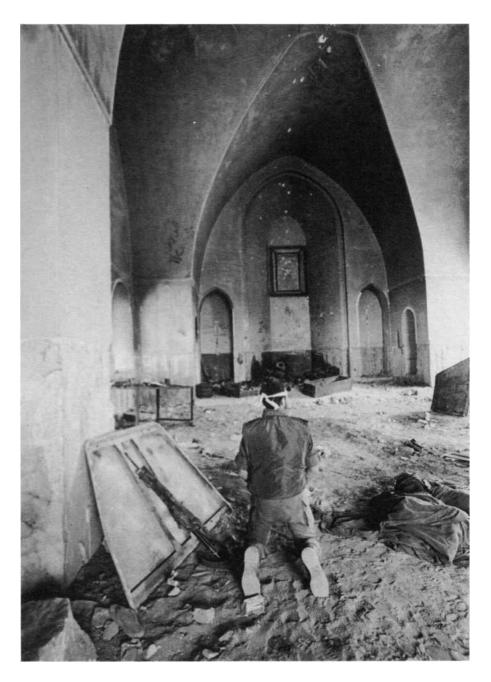
During the siege snipers were a constant hazard. Women were shot while queueing for bread and children while playing in the street; some people were hit while trying to retrieve belongings from abandoned homes. We knew of a Christian woman who became a sniper's victim when she returned to her old home in West Beirut - most Christians had long before been forced out of that sector of the city - to get a suitcase full of clothing.

The snipers were a strange and vicious breed, and many simply fired at movement without waiting to check the sex, age or 'status' of a target (they used the word 'status' to refer to political and religious affiliation). They included 'volunteers' from Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Journalists met a couple of members of the IRA; and at least one American negro, Isa Abdullah Ali, a Vietnam veteran from Washington.

A convert to the Shi'a faith, Ali told Bill Branigin of *The Washington Post* that he wanted to die in battle for his religion. He had already tried to do this in Afghanistan and in Iran. In Beirut he dressed in US Army combat fatigues, wore Airborne and Ranger badges and carried an M16

102

¹ Sayil was killed, reportedly by a Syrian assassination squad, in the Bekaa Valley in late September 1982.



A Lebanese Christian militiaman returns to a Damour church desecrated by the PLO during their occupation of this once-Christian town. (R. Nowitz)



Smoke rises from a PLO headquarters building in West Beirut after an Israeli airstrike. These attacks were carried out with great precision to avoid damage to surrounding buildings, and the pilots operated under very strict control. (Author's photo)

assault rifle. He claimed, by mid-August, to have killed nine Israeli soldiers with this weapon, using a 500-metre telescopic sight. He was equally ready to shoot a Christian, or anybody else pointed out to him as 'an enemy'. Ali identified with Khomeini's cause, so even Iraqis who had come to Lebanon to fight against the Christian Lebanese and the Israelis were also among his victims. He told Branigin that he was sure that sooner or later he was going to be killed, and we heard later that he was: according to a report he was shot by an Iranian, of all people, who because of the uniform he wore mistook him for an American.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Beirut - already sufficiently provided with its own killers - attracted numbers of psychopaths eager for any opportunity to live out their dark fantasies.

In a sense the bogging down of the IDF outside Beirut was a result of the unpopularity of the PLO in the Arab world. No Arab country had come forward to give unconditional refuge to the PLO; all had attached conditions about numbers, arms, political activities and movement.

On 28 July Arafat ordered a massive bombardment - 'Use everything that will fire,' the PLO were told - of Israeli positions. This was designed to show the Israeli government that Arafat was negotiating from strength. The barrage destroyed a number of vehicles and caused 31 Israeli casualties, three of them fatal.

On Friday 30 July Israeli guns heavily shelled PLO positions at Beirut airport. The following night parts of the Barak Armoured Brigade and the Golani Infantry Brigade were put on alert for an attack to capture the airport and then move on against enemy strongpoints at el-Ouzaai and Bourg el-Barajna. These moves were part of what officers were calling 'tightening the noose' around areas held by the PLO and Syrians.

On Sunday 1 August the airport was taken in very heavy fighting, and PLO positions were again shelled. The Barak and Golani units advanced from there, on 3 August, on to ground overlooking Bourg el-Barajna. Other units meanwhile took el-Ouzaai and Hai e-Saloum.

The Barak and Golani soldiers strengthened their positions by piling up earth ramparts around their tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Their position was hazardous, and they were constantly in danger from snipers, anti-tank missiles and shells. To bring their main guns to bear on the enemy the Israelis had to drive their tanks up the ramps of the embankments, which made them vulnerable to Sagger missiles.

The men in these positions were so shaken by the barrage that at 4 pm they were relieved by fresh troops from their own brigades. The replacements had hardly arrived when the shelling increased in intensity and accuracy. The position became an inferno. Amid the blazing tanks and troop carriers some men died trying to help wounded comrades - and the wounded themselves were hit again and killed. Israeli gunners opened fire on the **PLO** and Syrians but could not silence them. An hour later fighter-bombers knocked out the enemy guns. By that time 13 Israeli soldiers were dead, 19 were wounded and six were out of action through 'shell shock' - psychiatric wounds.

While the battle for el-Ouzaai was in progress the IDF captured, against resolute resistance, PLO positions around the Lebanese National Museum and the Hippodrome, both in the centre of the city and on the border between the Christian and Muslim quarters.

THE WAR OF DESPERATION

On 4 August Israeli gunners bombarded West Beirut, and cluster bombs were dropped. Some Western correspondents in Beirut at the time said that civilians were terrified. The Hotel Commodore, the Western press centre, came under fire for the first time. The battle and bombardment ended on 5 August.

The Israeli purpose - and Sharon's personal intention - seemed to be to sap the will of the PLO leadership to continue the struggle. It was certainly weakened, but Arafat clung to the hope that superpower pressure would force an Israeli withdrawal. He and his lieutenants repeatedly conferred on ways to save face and to get the best possible terms for a pull-out. They also wanted time to make the best arrangements for the transfer of their operations abroad.

During 10-12 August the IDF tightened its grip on Beirut, and on the 12th bombarded the PLO quarters for 11 hours with artillery, naval

Under the watchful eye of an Italian airborne infantryman of the Multi-National Force, civilians stock up with food after the withdrawal of the PLO and the restoration of a deceptive and short-lived 'normality' in the streets of Beirut.



guns and air strikes. That evening, as the firing ceased, the PLO leaders decided not to make further shows of strength and sent a message that they would withdraw on Israeli conditions. A ceasefire was arranged; and it was agreed that a multi-national force should supervise the withdrawal of the PLO, without their heavy weapons, partly by sea to various Arab countries and partly by road to Syria.

The PLO began its withdrawal on 21 August. The next day Shaun Usher reported in *The Mail on Sunday:*

They gathered at sunrise in West Beirut's municipal soccer stadium, a dusty, war-battered arena stinking of rancid garbage and human waste. Though the setting was squalidly inglorious they were high on the Arafat version. . . . Nobody mentioned that helpless civilians had been the new super armour making the 'victory' possible. Some soldiers arrived by stolen Mercedes Benz. Beirut is lousy with Mercs, many stolen in Europe . . . A wife in flowing robes captured the loudspeakers and half-chanted, half-sang a message of pride and grief soaring up into that chilling, ululating Arab cry, a fiendish yodel that was answered by the men's savage approval.

The Multi-National Force took up position. In the port the 2nd Parachute Regiment of the French Foreign Legion was in charge, later to be relieved by the US 32nd Marine Amphibious Unit. An Italian contingent of Marines and Bersaglieri took up position along the Green Line. Two days later Bashir Gemayel was elected as Lebanon's new president, succeeding President Sarkis. On 30 August the Syrian 85th Brigade withdrew from Beirut along the main road. By now half the PLO force had withdrawn and left for Arab countries.

In the eastern sector - the Bekaa region - the Syrians greatly strengthened their forces while the Israelis withdrew some reserve units back to Israel. The Lebanese Army, such as it was, entered West Beirut for the first time in eight years.

As the PLO men left Beirut they repeatedly loosed off their automatic rifles and machine guns into the air in gestures of defiance and anger. All these thousands of bullets had to come down somewhere they killed 17 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians and wounded 42. This lunatic shooting remains my most vivid memory of the PLO fighters' departure from Beirut.

Over a loudspeaker truck came a message that was more an exhortation: 'Tell the Arabs of your heroic resistance in Beirut and ask them where their MiGs and Mirages were. Ask them why they

abandoned us. Tell them you fought the Israeli Army with your Kalashnikovs and RPGs and dynamite sticks.'

Seeking reasons for their defeat, the PLO blamed betrayal by renegades and the work of Israeli spies. Israeli Military Intelligence was efficient - but not as good as the PLO believed, nor as cunning as some Western correspondents wanted to make out.

There were rumours that Israeli Military Intelligence had long since infiltrated the PLO's political and military command structure. This is possible, though it is even more likely that Palestinians themselves sold information to Israeli agents. Some spy stories were dramatic but - in the author's opinion - dubious: Robert Fisk of *The Times* published one on 5 July 1982. According to Fisk's informants, there had been a Palestinian commander, 'a friendly, capable man with a stubbly beard', who was revered by the PLO men for his soldierly qualities. He had often briefed foreign correspondents on the struggle of the Palestinian revolution. Soon after the Israeli army fought its way into Tyre the Palestinian officer was observed standing on the pavement watching the Israeli tanks driving past when some Israeli officers drove up in a jeep. They appeared to recognise the Palestinian but 'they did not try to arrest him - they saluted'.

Fisk is a first-rate reporter, but on several grounds the story he was given by his informants is hard to credit. If this man was an Israeli posing as a Palestinian he would not wait around to be recognised - spies do not want recognition. If it were to become known that he was an Israeli spy posing as a Palestinian he was in immediate danger of getting a bullet in the head, or worse. Israeli officers would not be so stupid as to salute a man they knew to be an undercover agent. And finally, Israeli soldiers of any rank never salute on active service; they are very bad at saluting at the best of times. Just possibly the 'spy' was a Palestinian traitor; one story says that he was later found in an orchard with the back of his head blown off. But a traitor would have been even more wary than an Israeli of being recognised by his Israeli friends.

5 Post Mortem

THAT the invasion was a military success for Israel is evident. The IDF took only six days to advance 60 miles across difficult terrain, a rate which compares favourably with that of any other mountain campaign in history. The PLO was broken, its stores were captured, it lost thousands of prisoners, and those not captured were forced to flee. The Syrians lost large numbers of planes and tanks, suffered heavy casualties and had their self-confidence damaged. The threat to Israel's northern region was removed, and the PLO was deprived of its last contiguous border with Israel.

The political victory was less obvious, if only because the PLO was not eliminated from Middle East politics. However, the fact that no Arab nation in any way helped the PLO throughout its military action against Israel was an indication of the PLO's decreased status in the Arab world. Despite his military reverses at the hands first of the Israelis and later of the Syrians, Arafat did not suffer political eclipse. He was received by the Pope soon after his first retreat from Lebanon, and he continued to be regarded as the leader of the PLO even though half of it was no longer under his control.

Within Israel some criticisms were expressed. Martin van Crefeld, a professor of history at the University of Jerusalem, said, 'There exists the distinct impression that the Israeli Air Force's successes in Lebanon were achieved by dint of technological superiority and by concentrating on specific threats, but only at the cost of almost losing sight of what airpower is all about. By virtue of its very success the IAF's war in the air resembled a kind of pinball game that was almost unrelated, and sometimes detrimental, to the conduct of the campaign as a whole.'

The author differs from Dr van Crefeld's apparent opinion of 'what airpower is all about'. It is not solely concerned with protecting the land forces from enemy air attack and making an advance easier for them; and demoralisation of the enemy is only one of airpower's functions. Another is accumulation of technological intelligence in anticipation



An Israeli armoured corps crewman, painfully but not seriously wounded, is treated by medics after an action on the central front. Since the Yom Kippur War, when the IDF suffered unacceptably high casualties among highly-trained tank crews, there has been a major study of ways to protect these important personnel from serious injury and death: one result has been the unusual design of the Merkava tank. (IDF)

of war. In this the IAF excels. For several years it had flown reconnaissance missions over enemy territory with RPVs and manned aircraft. Occasionally pilots engaged the missiles to learn all that could be learned about the way they work. Knowing just what they were up against, they were able to develop specific countermeasures. In some ways the IAF's war *was* unrelated to the rest of the campaign, because it did not always need to be related.

Van Crefeld argues that the combination of quantity with technological sophistication 'made it possible to avoid any kind of military thought, a tendency that was particularly evident in regular as opposed to reserve units'. The IDF in Lebanon, he said, 'piled tank upon tank and gun upon gun. A command and control system superior to anything previously employed made it possible to achieve good interarm co-operation and, above all, to spew forth vast amounts of ammunition.'

He misses the point that this *was* the military thought which he claims was lacking. The thinking had already been done, so that there was less need for tactical changes of mind and of direction once battle was joined. The speed of advance was proof of the military thought that had gone into the campaign. Using many tanks, guns and a lot of ammunition is one way of achieving a quick victory with few casualties for the attacker. It is necessary when the enemy has strong positions, and it helps to compensate for lack of surprise. Tactical originality, always the forte of Israeli commanders at all levels, was not so necessary in this war.

Israeli quality had not declined, but Syrian quality had improved markedly and the PLO had fought better than expected. This might lead to a claim that the Israeli performance was somehow less impressive than in previous wars; but it is hard to understand how this claim can be pressed, given the physical facts of the Israelis' victory on the ground.

Van Crefeld and some others say that the IDF's morale in Lebanon was lower than during any other Israeli campaign. They base this claim on public dissent among servicemen when on leave or on their return from the front. In Israel, of all places, the level of morale cannot be measured by dissent. Vincent Hanna, a BBC reporter, said, 'Israel is a society more free and democratic than our own . . . there is open debate and political conflict at every level¹.'

¹Journalist, July August 1982.

An isolated instance when this freedom to comment does seem to have reached the point of damaging morale and combat readiness was the so-called 'Geva Affair', which attracted passionate comment in Israel. During the siege of Beirut an officer named Col. Eli Geva, who had proved his courage and competence when his Brigade 211 had led the advance of Mordechai's division up the coast road, refused an order to attack the city, and resigned his command. He stated the belief that it was no part of his duty to interfere to such an extent in the internal affairs of Lebanon, or to risk killing her citizens on the streets of her capital. He took the honourable position that he was entirely willing to serve on in the ranks of his brigade as a private soldier; but this request was refused, and he was dismissed the service. His brigade was shaken by these events, and — as mentioned in an earlier chapter — was only pulled together by a personal appeal from Chief-of-Staff Eitan.

We heard some soldiers express their dislike of the war; but then we have heard similar expressions in other armies in other wars. We neither saw nor heard of any instances of the classic results of low morale - e.g. insubordination, suicide, self-inflicted wounds, desertion, throwing away equipment, or general military slackness. Morale was higher for at



Israeli medics tend a captured PLO fighter with several wounds, including eye burns.

least one good reason: lightly wounded men, who in previous wars would have been treated at a unit medical centre and returned to duty, were evacuated to the rear.

Casualties were heavy on both sides. Between 6 June and 28 October the Israelis had 368 dead, 2,383 wounded. (Losses by rank: one majorgeneral, one colonel, two lieutenant-colonels, 19 majors, 28 captains, 46 lieutenants, 132 sergeants, 90 corporals, 49 privates.) Two pilots and a soldier were taken prisoner. The loss of so many officers and NCOs indicates the Israeli Army's principle of leadership from the front.

Figures released in February 1983 showed that 466 Israeli servicemen had been killed, and by May 1984 3,500 had been wounded. Of these 400 finished treatment with a 50 per cent disability or more. Five were blind, and more than 30 had suffered brain damage and paralysis. Six soldiers lost both legs and 17 men were paralysed and would spend many years in wheelchairs. Some of the serious casualties were caused by RPG rockets fired from close range in urban areas. Many men suffering from head wounds had been hit when in tanks or armoured personnel carriers - though it is significant that Merkava crews were not wounded 1.

Six hundred of the wounded were classed as psychiatric casualties. This was about 25 per cent of the total number, and twice as high as the percentage recorded in the 1973 war. While 47 per cent of the total number of injured in Lebanon were reservist soldiers the number of reservists among those who suffered psychiatric damage amounted to 78 per cent.

Up to the 1967 war the IDF barely recognised the existence of psychiatric casualties. The large number in 1973 came as a shock and found the IDF unprepared. Casualties were flown out to a camp near Tel Aviv and put under the care of psychiatrists. Some have still not recovered from the trauma of that war. Steps were taken to deal more efficiently with psychiatric casualties the next time, and in 1982 the Army was ready. Mobile teams of psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers were in being. Their job was to identify psychiatric casualties at the medical evacuation centres and to treat them close to the front. If they responded they were quickly returned to their units,

¹Israel had approximately 140 tanks knocked out, of which about 40 were total losses and the rest were salvageable. APC total losses were about 135.



Simha Holzberg, a well-known Israeli 'character', helps a tank crewman under treatment in hospital for severe burns. Holzberg is not a member of the IDF, but has attached himself to it to help the wounded in several of Israel's campaigns. (IDF)

since this in itself was part of the treatment. Those who did not respond to psychiatric first aid were evacuated to a camp near Netanya for psychiatric treatment in a military atmosphere; for instance, all patients had daily periods of physical exercises. These methods were successful, and most casualties made a quick and full recovery.

Some observers have wondered why a fairly large number of men became psychiatric casualties during a war that was 'relatively easy'. Victory was assured, these observers say; Israeli control of the skies was absolute, and many units did not fire a combat shot. In this kind of war why should an army have more than a few psychiatric casualties?

Such casualties *can* indicate a lack of unit supportiveness, and no doubt this was a contributory factor in Lebanon. The more obvious reason is that even before the war began the Israeli citizen-soldiers were sick at heart at the prospect of yet another conflict. The tank soldier who had said to us in a desperate voice, 'Why don't they leave us alone?' was voicing this sentiment. There was also the bitter feeling, expressed to us several times, that Israel was being internationally vilified for doing that

most natural of things, defending itself. In the author's view, the basis of psychiatric wounding was desperation - the desperation that makes a man say to himself, 'There's no end to Arab hostility.'

Some Israeli soldiers asked us why the outside world was so upset about PLO casualties during the liberation of Lebanon when the Syrians, only months before, had butchered thousands of its own people and destroyed entire suburbs in Hama without a word of protest from abroad.

Another factor must be taken into account. Medical science in 1982 was better able to identify a psychiatric wound than in 1973 or 1967, so the statistics appeared higher even though the number of sufferers was probably no greater than in the earlier wars.

Again, the IDF had not previously fought a war of ambush on narrow trails and in village streets; such a form of warfare produces a greater degree of tension than open warfare in that anticipation of attack is more acute for much longer.

Yet another factor tending to produce stress - in this war as never before - was the intense anxiety many soldiers felt about the risk of harming innocent civilians, Lebanese and Palestinians, in a friendly country. As mentioned above, the troops were under orders to take risks rather than put civilians in danger¹. Nevertheless civilians were killed or wounded, and soldiers were often deeply distressed about this.

Syrian Military Leadership

An analysis of the Syrian performance during the war in Lebanon reveals confusion and distrust among the members of the high command. In addition, the Syrian leaders were unsure of their strategic policy. Generally the intention was to cause Israel as much difficulty as possible without actually going to war. While they wanted to provoke the Israelis to the point where the world would regard Israel, and not the Syrians and PLO, as the aggressors in Lebanon, they did not want an Israeli invasion of Syria itself.

Rifaat Assad suggested that the Israeli Army should be drawn into the Bekaa Valley and there trapped and annihilated. This simplistic idea

^{&#}x27;In contrast, the Americans in Vietnam, the UN forces in Korea, and the Allies in Europe from D-Day onwards, killed large numbers of civilians and saw it as a regrettable but inevitable evil of war. I know of no instance in these wars when a commander gave the order 'Take risks rather than kill civilians'.

from an earlier age of warfare was opposed by the Defence Minister,

Mustafa Tlas, who had the backing of Military Intelligence officers.

The leaders were united only in the belief that the air defences protecting their positions in Lebanon were impregnable. The massive and complex web of radar and missiles could not be breached, and the Israeli Air Force would suffer heavy losses.

President Assad was prepared for a limited war - one that would give the Syrians a chance to recover the Golan area lost to the Israelis in the 1973 war. But while he had a strategic concept to achieve this end he had no realistic tactics. He was confident, however, that should a great tank battle be fought in this war his T-72 tanks could wear down the Israeli armour.

From the outset of the war the Syrian high command was in disarray because of the conflicting interests and theories of powerful personalities. On paper the chain of command was clear enough. The president, Hafez Assad, was commander-in-chief, with Mustafa Tlas as Defence Minister and Hikmat Shihabi as Chief-of-Staff. Below them came General Shafik Fayad, commander of the Syrian Third Army; General Ali Duba, chief of the Intelligence services; and General Rifaat Assad, the president's brother, commander of the 'Defence Brigades' which included at one time during the war the 1st Armoured Division. The Prime Minister, Abd Qasim, also had certain military responsibilities.

From the first day of the war, 6 June, there was confusion about who made the tactical decisions. On that day and others several leaders made contradictory decisions. Shihabi gave orders which were later countermanded by Tlas and Rifaat Assad; and on at least two occasions General Duba moved large units though it was not within his authority to do this.

Duba's Military Intelligence system was reputed to be highly efficient but it failed to inform the high command about the Israeli 'spies in the sky' - the RPVs. An Intelligence report also said of the Merkava tank: 'It is a good tank but it cannot be considered a true main battle tank because it is too light. Also, it does not carry enough ammunition to sustain a long battle.' In fact, the heavily protected Merkava has a loaded weight of 62 tons; and carries 83 rounds for its 105 mm gun, compared with the Syrian T-62's 40 rounds. Again, the Syrians did not know the range of the Merkava's gun; and even



Some of the 500 or so armoured vehicles lost by the Syrian Army in the 1982 war. These T-62S are among about 200 AFVs which were recovered in salvageable condition by the Israelis. If past wars are any guide, many of them will be put back into fighting condition; modified by the substitution of some Israeli components; and placed in reserve in Israel's own tank armoury. Some of the older, simpler T-54 and T-55 tanks captured at various times have been passed on to the 'South Lebanese Army' led by Haddad and, since his death, by Lahad.

more seriously, they underestimated Israeli ammunition. The Israeli Military Industries M111 105 mm APFSDS-T anti-tank round actually punched a hole in the gun barrel of one T-62: despite the very low angle of impact, the barrel's rounded surface and its extremely hard material, the projectile did not glance off but penetrated the bore. Such damage to their tanks shocked the Syrian commanders.

The loss of some 500 armoured vehicles in the Lebanon battles was a tremendous blow to Syrian military confidence¹. Much of the blame must rest on faulty Intelligence which put the tanks in the wrong place at the wrong time. Senior Syrian officers were also stubbornly reluctant

¹Israeli sources list Syrian armour losses as 200 T-62, 125 T-54 and T-55, nine T-72 and about 140 APCs. The numbers of Syrian and PLO tanks captured intact or salvageable cannot be established exactly, but were apparently significant - in excess of 200.

to admit to a tactical mistake in positioning troops, guns and armour, and thus extremely slow to redeploy. The Syrian tanks were generally not in good battle order. Training of maintenance crews had been neglected, despite Soviet advice that the Army should have more technical schools. Repair facilities were rarely available close to the battle; tanks had to be transported back to Damascus and beyond.

Personal interests sometimes influenced professional military decisions. Rifaat Assad is one of the biggest narcotics dealers in the Middle East, and his major base of operations is in the Shouf Mountains. Much of his military planning was based on the need to hold the Shouf, to prevent any disturbance of his lucrative traffic in drugs - which meant backing the Druse against the Lebanese Christians, both of whom had enclaves in the Shouf¹.

The Syrian officer corps, though better than it had been in 1973, was still deficient in leadership qualities. Mostly drawn from upper class families, the officers considered their own survival more important than the victory of their unit in combat; leadership from the front was consequently fairly rare. Some Syrian prisoners told their Israeli captors that junior officers fired on their own men from the rear to keep them going forward. This statement is to some extent corroborated by Russian observers who reported (in transparent 'Socialist double-speak') that 'battalion officers took positive action to maintain momentum in the assault'.

The best field leadership came from the older non-commissioned officers. The quality of the ordinary soldiers was often better than their own officers knew; the Israelis found them determined in attack and stubborn in defence. Syrian troops were particularly courageous during the fighting for Ein Zhalta, a Lebanese mountain resort held by the Syrians. The commandos holding Bhamdoun also fought well during the battles of 22-23 June.

On 14 June the Syrian 85th Mechanised Brigade, with T-55 tanks and BTR-60 and BMP APCs, attacked Israeli armour south-east of Beirut and closed to within 100 and even 50 metres. They fought so

¹The leading American columnist Jack Anderson stated in *The Washington Post* of 21 March 1983: '. . . the list of officers enriching themselves from drug traffic is a veritable *Who's Who* of the Syrian Army. . . . The most senior man involved is Rifaat Assad.' *Time* Magazine estimated, on 2 April 1984, that Rifaat Assad had amassed a personal fortune of \$100 million from drug trafficking and other activities. Chief Inspector Clevé Marquise of Interpol confirmed to the author that Assad makes no secret of his narcotics distribution business.

stubbornly that they lost all their tanks and other vehicles. This did not say much for their leadership, but proved the ability of Syrian troops to stand up to pitched battle.

Overall, the Syrian Army was weak in two aspects: fire discipline, and night-fighting ability. The men fired too much and too often, even when they knew that fresh supplies could not quickly reach them. The Israelis also used ammunition at a brisk rate in this war, but they knew that their armoured ammunition carriers would get through with more. The Syrian Army, like many Arab and African armies, appears to equate volume and rate of fire with effectiveness. Soviet advisers have noted that the Syrians seem to gain confidence from the noise of their own

Yasser Arafat with his bodyguard in West Beirut during the siege, shouting 'To Victory!' A charismatic leader, Arafat has little understanding of military realities, and sometimes gives the impression of believing the wild rhetoric with which he encourages his followers. Many PLO fighters showed great courage and determination; their officers were less impressive, and often abandoned them.





Although officially against the Geneva Convention, shotguns are widely used as close-combat weapons by some modern armies. This American-made Model 10 short-barrelled type is obviously an ideal weapon for killing human beings - and almost useless to a sportsman. It is a type used by the PLO in street fighting; one PLO man, who had been using such a weapon against Christian civilians, told the author that 'nothing clears a house faster'.

weapons. The senior Russian training officer in Syria had warned General Shihabi that wasteful fire in combat is a primary cause of defeat; the Chief-of-Staff had passed relevant orders on to the Army commanders, but without significant result.

In all their wars against Israel the Arab armies have demonstrated a dislike for night-fighting. Night-fighting schools have been established in Syria with Soviet assistance, but they have not markedly increased efficiency. Soviet observers with Syrian units in Lebanon reported that all ranks were unable to keep direction at night, that units lost cohesion and that morale was low. Nevertheless, there were occasions when some units, notably commandos, fought well in the darkness.

The Russians also reported that Syrian infantry reconnaissance patrols sent out by night returned with little useful information - in contrast to their Palestinian allies, who were often successful. In the mountainous central and eastern sectors Syrian patrols lost their way and had to wait for dawn to get their bearings.

Syrian logistics were often faulty, even though their lines of supply and communication were short; Damascus itself, with its vast military stores, was less than 20 miles away from most units. Extra ammunition and other supplies was frequently slow to arrive. The Soviet officers observing this aspect of the Syrian war machine commented that the

Syrian staff officers lacked 'a sense of anticipation'. They waited for a request for ammunition, petrol or other vital supplies to arrive, instead of foreseeing the need and sending resupply towards the front.

Some Syrian units surrendered when they ran out of ammunition. Also, small arms ammunition - 9 mm, 7.62 mm and 12.7 mm - was sometimes defective. The author found rounds which had been struck - i.e. the base cap had been hit by the firing pin of the weapon - but which had not fired. Some ammunition for the Syrian Army is bought abroad, but as all this imported material is marked with Syrian headstamps it is not easy to identify ammunition as of Syrian or foreign manufacture.

The Syrian Army did not have an effective medical corps, partly because of a traditional attitude to casualties: a wounded man is a liability to those still functioning, and no other man's life should be risked to save him. Some brigade and battalion commanders made clear to their men that they did not want fit men to abandon their duties just to take wounded to the rear. Those wounded men who did manage to reach safety were cared for and taken back to base hospitals, but the Western notion of rescuing men under fire is alien to the Syrian Army. Helicopters are too valuable to be used on such missions. Not infrequently Israeli medics found themselves treating Syrian and PLO wounded - under fire - who would otherwise have died of their wounds or of thirst. The Soviet military observers with the Syrian Army reported that the Syrians often did not even search their knocked-out tanks for wounded crewmen who might be trapped inside.

This does not necessarily indicate any unusual callousness; according to Arab Islamic thinking, a person is responsible for his own misfortunes, and cannot logically expect anybody else to extricate him from them. If this should happen, then he has been fortunate. The Arabs' respect for strength is an associated factor: the wounded man is no longer strong, and while one may sympathise with him, any respect for him is nevertheless diminished¹.

The Syrian Army published no casualty figures. Unofficial but reliable sources suggest that 650 were killed and 3,800 wounded between 6 June and 30 September 1982; and the Israelis captured 149 Syrian personnel. After an action the Syrians often did not bother to collect and bury their dead, even when it was safe for them to do so.

¹Neither the Syrians nor the PLO appear to provide treatment for combat stress.

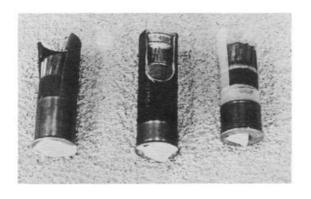
Arafat and the PLO

Yasser Arafat was not merely chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. He was, in effect, its military commander-in-chief, the supremo. His colleague Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) was nominally the PLO's field commander, but the PLO regarded Arafat as the organisation's strategist and to a large extent as its principal tactician. He claimed to have much military knowledge, and it certainly went back a long way - to his days with the Egyptian Army in the 1950s.

His principal quality as a commander-in-chief was that he was an inspirational figure to most of his men until the retreat from Beirut, and to many of them even after that debacle. He energetically moved around his units and gave them encouraging talks, and he was conscientious about bestowing praise on his fighters. His public relations work was also efficient; he was generally available to the media, and he had a good line with journalists meeting him for the first time.

Over the years he had consulted American, British, West German and Soviet publicity experts about his television 'image' and he had become a professional interviewee. One of his techniques was to evade a question by asking another. In November 1983 he was asked, 'Why do you continue to support terrorism, Mr Arafat?' He replied, 'Have you asked President Reagan why he uses the big guns of the USS *New Jersey* to terrorise the ordinary people in the mountains?'

Arafat had organised the PLO competently for administrative purposes, but because he always saw war in terms of terrorist activity and guerrilla ambushes he did not plan his fixed defences in depth. Some foreign experts had advised him to do so, as had some of the former regular Jordanian Army officers who had joined the PLO.



Cutaway examples of shotgun ammunition used by the PLO; the single, huge slugs make appalling and usually fatal wounds. (IDF) After 1976 the PLO adopted traditional military forms, structures and armaments - which is why the Israelis had become even more alarmed about the organisation's intentions. But the PLO leaders paid little attention to the strategy and tactics which were required for a conventional army. The Cubans and East Germans, always eager to cause more disruption in the Middle East, told Arafat and his lieutenants that elite special units would be more appropriate for the PLO than the use of large formations and weapons, but the advice was ignored.

In June 1982 President Assad sent one of his senior officers to Arafat to urge him to co-ordinate his defence; the Syrian high command feared that the Israelis would break the PLO front and that Arafat had no second echelon defence at the likely breakthrough points. Their worry was justified.

Arafat did not understand the capabilities and limitations of the weapons in his arsenal. His interest in a shell or rocket was restricted to its explosive effectiveness. To any arms salesman trying to sell him a new projectile he said, 'How many Israelis will it kill?' On one occasion he said, 'If you will guarantee that your grenade will kill President Reagan we will buy one million of them!'

His rhetoric irritated and sometimes infuriated foreign journalists, especially when he - and all other PLO spokesmen - claimed every military defeat as a victory. Several times during the war he announced to press conferences that victory was only a day away. Jonathan Randal wrote of '. . . the PLO's infuriating habit of portraying defeats as victories'.

In late June he claimed that with 2,000 rocket-propelled grenade launchers he could knock out 200 Israeli tanks and kill their crews. He presented this information as if the attack was about to happen, when the journalists present knew that most of his vast stock of launchers had already been captured by the Israelis.

Arafat's worst failure as a military commander was that he had never studied his enemies; he seemed to have no knowledge of what made the Israelis fight, just as he had no knowledge of Israel as a society. When Arab journalists asked him about his plans to deal with an Israeli attack he laughed and said, 'I leave such things to my brother Abu Jihad.'

Abu Jihad's tactics were direct enough: he believed in causing casualties. This showed that he had studied the Israelis, and knew that





PLO booby traps disarmed in Lebanon. The can of tomato juice has a hole in the bottom for the wire of the anti-lifting device which would explode it if anyone picked it up. The matchboxes exploded when opened, and contained enough PE to blow off an arm. Much use was made of food containers for booby-trapping, often using simple but effective trigger devices based on cheap plastic surgical syringes. Tragically, the kind of items which the PLO rigged in this way were exactly the kind liable to attract hungry civilians and scavenging refugees. (Author's photos)

casualties have a traumatic effect on the Israeli community. 'If we can kill enough Israeli soldiers,' he told an Algerian journalist on 7 June, 'the Israeli public will stop the war.'

The senior PLO leaders had a casual attitude to the study of war. Each leader of a faction had his own ideas about military action, and genuine co-operation was rare. Sometimes during the 1982 war two or more factions insisted on operating at the one place and independently of the others. On at least two occasions groups fought over the right to engage the advancing Israelis at a particular spot. The leaders had never bothered, despite vast amounts of money at their disposal, to build up a logistic and technical infrastructure to maintain the heavier weapons and to redeploy them.

The senior leaders also failed to induce junior officers to set an example and lead from the front. The rank and file PLO men were often

left virtually leaderless, but fought bravely. Arafat seemed to be ignorant or heedless of the effect that poor junior leadership had on his men. Indeed, this neglect was a major cause of the mutiny which later split the PLO. Arafat appointed to higher command two officers who had run away during the fighting. Many ordinary PLO men resented this and refused to accept the two as their superiors. They particularly disliked Colonel Hajj Ismail, commander in the Sidon sector, who was alleged to have abandoned his post on the first day. (Ismail was shot and seriously wounded in Algiers in January 1984.)

The training which so many PLO leaders at all levels had received in the Soviet bloc countries, in North Korea and in Vietnam had improved their efficiency in some ways. On 6 June 1982 it quickly became clear that they had become masters of ambush in the Russian style. Except where it was necessary to set up a trap quickly, the PLO ambushes were complex: that is, they had two or three movements, and they made use of tactical delay.

The author saw the site of an ambush in the hills east of Beirut where a **PLO** leader had mined a road which Israeli armour had to use. The mine damaged the lead tank badly enough to stop it, and instantly the other Israeli tanks and their following infantry put down massive small arms fire on the scrub-covered hillsides - the traditional and effective 'mad minute' tactic adopted by the US Army in Vietnam. When there was no answering fire the Israelis relaxed, and after a while exposed themselves fairly freely as engineers cleared the road. It was then that the PLO unit sprang the second part of the ambush, opening fire with automatic weapons and RPGs. They caused few casualties only because their fire discipline was poor: they then retreated quickly and probably suffered few casualties themselves.

Sometimes the PLO units set double ambushes. The first, perhaps at a bend in the road, would be cleared by the Israelis, who moved on confidently - only to be hit again less than 100 metres further on. At other times the fire came from two or three different directions, to throw the ambushed unit into confusion. The Russians and other Communist instructors had succeeded in getting the PLO fighters to hold their fire until the enemy was at relatively close range - a sign of the discipline which comes only from much training under competent leaders; but they had failed to stop them from 'spraying' their fire in an indiscriminate way rather than firing controlled, carefully aimed bursts.

Given that the booby trap is a standard item in the guerrilla and terrorist arsenal, it is unsurprising that Lebanon produced an interesting and deadly array of such devices. Most of those used by the PLO were based upon Soviet models, but some were locally created. They deserve a brief digression.

Two major types were encountered, which may be called the 'military' and the 'casual'. The PLO used conventional road mines camouflaged to look like lumps of earth or cattle dung, in accordance with Soviet training; the Yugoslav 3-PMA and the French M59 were the most common types. Irregularly shaped and painted brown, these mines are almost impossible to detect, and have the added advantage that they can quickly be planted over a wide area without digging. Other 'military' booby traps were planted in discarded items such as weapons, magazines, ammunition pouches, slabs of explosive, helmets, and other pieces of military debris which might attract the attention of soldiers. The 'casual' booby traps were devices hidden in everyday objects such as cigarette packets, mess tins, food cans, chocolate bars, biscuit tins and household electric fuse boxes. The Israelis were infuriated to find stocks of booby-trapped dolls made in Pakistan. There is no evidence that these caused, or were intended to cause, any Israeli military casualties; they were apparently meant for use against children during terrorist incursions into Israel.

The more conventional devices, as used by most of the world's armies, included grenades attached to trip-wires or concealed pressure switches. Scattered booby-trapped objects, both 'military' and 'casual', were activated by movement, which caused an electrical circuit to close. Trigger mechanisms often made use of a simple surgical syringe. One type featured an iron ball in the barrel of a syringe, with the bared wires of the circuit fixed inside one end; movement sent the ball rolling down the barrel on to the wires, completing the circuit. The syringe could also be used, with its plunger spring-loaded, as either a 'pressure' or a 'release' trigger, its movement either up or down the barrel bringing bared wires into contact. A more sophisticated version of the rollingiron-ball mechanism used an ampoule of mercury. A commercial device designed for the automatic control of lighting systems was modified by the PLO into an explosive trigger, which was set off when movement of the black plastic box in which it was assembled allowed mercury to flow over the ends of two bared wires simultaneously to complete a circuit.

One 'military' booby trap which certainly caused casualties was the doctored Kalashnikov magazine. Pairs of these magazines, taped together in 'duplex' style for quick reloading of the AK-47 assault rifle, were filled with plastic explosive and fitted with an electrical trigger, hidden and made 'safe' by five rounds of ammunition in the ends of the magazines. The Kalashnikov is an efficient weapon, and the Israelis have captured huge stocks of them for their own use. An unwary soldier would naturally thumb out the visible rounds to find out how many there were - and in so doing he closed a circuit and triggered the explosive.

Slabs of explosive were booby-trapped in two ways. Those left lying around without concealment were hollowed out and fitted with an internal trigger mechanism and detonator set off by movement. Others were wrapped in styrofoam together with large numbers of nails, and

The PLO lost virtually all its heavy weaponry in 1982. The ancient T-34/85 tank, one of perhaps 60 in PLO hands, is long outdated in armoured combat; but is still an effective support weapon if dug in as a static 'pillbox'. This one was camouflaged inside a building on the central sector — the debris of the structure lies around its blackened hulk.







The quadruple 23 mm anti-aircraft cannon, a Soviet ZSU-23-4, was a formidable weapon. With a range of 8,000 metres, these cannon were used extensively against IDF/AF aircraft, though with little success; as a support weapon in ground combat they can also do appalling damage. The 12-tube 107 mm rocket launcher, made in the Soviet Union or North Korea, resembles the old German *Nebelwerfer* so hated by Allied troops in 1944-45. It is used in towed batteries, and can lay down a devastating barrage on such targets as enemy-used roads, mountain passes, and lines of infantry advance. (Author's photos)

covered with plaster shaped and coloured to look like a stone; they were set off when movement triggered a surgical syringe 'release' mechanism concealed on the underside of the 'stone'.

The combination of plastic explosive, nails for shrapnel and a syringe release trigger was also used in empty food cans. Cigarette packets filled with plastic explosive were fitted with a trigger which activated when the packet was opened - although a danger warning was sometimes given by dark stains caused by the explosive on the paper of the packet.

While they were responsible for relatively few Israeli casualties,

booby traps did occasionally slow down an advance: soldiers who discover mines or booby traps in their path are obliged to treat everything they see as suspicious, and this takes time. Such devices tend to be counter-productive in the long term, since they put soldiers on their guard and encourage them to 'shoot first and ask questions afterwards'. It goes without saying that the 'casual' traps killed many more Lebanese and Palestinian civilians than Israeli soldiers. They were planted in exactly the kind of items which would most attract an unsophisticated civilian caught in the middle of a war and cut off from normal sources of supply.

(The Israelis did not use booby traps, but they did air-drop some anti-personnel cluster bombs on PLO positions. The outer casing of this weapon resembles that of a normal high explosive bomb; but it strips off in mid-air, releasing about 200 small 'bomblets' over an area as big as a football pitch. Some explode on impact with the ground; others are fitted with delayed action fuses, for the good military reason that the known presence of unexploded bombs tends to discourage immediate repair of airfields and fortifications. To this extent they are a form of booby trap, and it cannot be denied that they may have caused innocent casualties.)

It is impossible to say with certainty how many PLO fighters were killed. At times during the war PLO propagandists wildly exaggerated casualties in an attempt to gain world sympathy. At other times, for military reasons, they claimed to have suffered few or no casualties in various actions. From various sources, the author's estimate of PLO dead is around 2,000, but some PLO leaders would put the figure at 3,000. It is known that only two officers of any rank were killed, both of them the equivalent of majors. (The tendency of more senior ranks to desert their men in action has already been remarked upon.) PLO prisoners numbered 9,000; most were later released, including the 4,800 freed on 24 November 1983 in exchange for six Israeli soldiers held in Tripoli by Arafat's forces. Virtually all the PLO's armour and heavy weapons were either knocked out or captured.

6 Testimony

THE contents of the first part of this chapter come from the Lebanese people who live in the southern region which, until June 1982, had been dominated by the PLO. As the Palestinian fighters were pushed back on Beirut and finally bottled up there, tens of thousands of Lebanese who had fled from the south in the years between 1970 and 1982 returned to their homes. Others had travelled north so as not to be caught between the advancing Israelis and the Palestinian fighters, and they now returned to the south.

Journalists were able to move more freely around southern Lebanon, and for the first time in years they found the people of town and village willing to talk. Those of us who had been in the area between 1975 and 1982 had found the local people frightened into silence; on the rare occasions when they did talk their stories were coloured by the presence of whoever happened to be listening. If Fatah men were around the locals would praise them and damn the soldiers of Haddad's Free Lebanese Army.

Now the repressed truth came bubbling out. We were in the Christian village of Achiye, south of Jezzine, on the day when its surviving inhabitants returned. Father John Nasser, the local priest, told us what had happened on 19 October 1976. About 1,000 armed terrorists raided the village because its inhabitants had 'co-operated' with the Israelis - though what they could possibly have done to help Israel was not clear. The raiders broke into the houses, rounded up about 100 families and drove them into the church where they were locked up. Sixty-five of the inhabitants were kept outside, and over the next few hours the imprisoned villagers heard the sound of gunfire. After two days the terrorists released the prisoners, who came out to find the 65 men, women and children lying murdered; the youngest victim was an infant in arms. Father Nasser lost two brothers and 15 cousins among the victims. As the survivors wept over their dead the PLO men blew up their church; it was rubble when we saw it, and

Father Nasser said the village proposed to keep it that way - 'as a way of remembering'.

As we sat in the shade of a verandah we heard the story repeated by a grandmother, by a young woman and by 35-year-old George Aoun, one of the villagers with authority who was now trying to encourage the others to believe that life really would be different and that the PLO would not return. We also spoke to a tough-looking red-headed man in green military fatigues and combat boots, who cradled a Kalashnikov in his right arm. As with all the Christian Lebanese fighters, he had two magazines taped together 'duplex fashion'; when one was empty he could replace it in a moment with the full one. Not too reluctantly, he allowed the others to talk him into showing us his wound scars; the largest was in his stomach, ripped open by a shell fragment. His face was that of a seasoned soldier of 30; in fact he was 17, and he had been a fighting man from the age of 11.

Since the author never accepts an atrocity story uncritically, we asked what had happened to the bodies: and George Aoun showed us. The terrified survivors had had no time to bury their dead - they were in a hurry to run before the terrorists came back, and 65 graves take time to dig - so they had piled the corpses into two brick sheds. Their remains were still in the sheds in July 1982. In the clothing of some of them the author could pick out the multiple holes made by automatic fire. We would not swear to 65 corpses, but we personally counted at least 50. According to Aoun the shootings were a punishment because the young men of the village had refused to join the terrorists in their attacks against Israel.

As with the Achiye massacre, there was always corroborative evidence for atrocities. Some was provided by highly responsible people.

Dr Ghassan Hamud, proprietor and director of the Hamud Hospital, the largest and most modern of Sidon's 11 hospitals, said that many parents brought their daughters, some of them children, for a virginity check. In many cases, he said, it was clear that the girl had been raped.

The PLO used Dr Hamud's hospital for their injured members. 'They always presented themselves as national heroes,' the doctor said, 'and boasted how they had spilt their blood in battle against the Zionist enemy, in the holy Arab cause of the liberation of Palestine. The truth is that more than 90 per cent of their injuries were incurred during in-

fighting between the various factions. The terrorists would arrive at the hospital in a long convoy of cars. They started behaving badly in the parking lot, forcing us to remove our cars to make way for them. Once my brother, the hospital administrator, refused to move his car, and they rode over it with a heavy military vehicle and crushed it. . . . The PLO patients and their escorts spread terror throughout the hospital. A sick or wounded terrorist kept his arms beside him. Whenever he wanted to call a medical attendant to his bedside he shot at the ceiling.'

Imam Sayid-a-Din Badr from the village of Haruf said that PLO men had tried to force him to give a sermon in praise of the PLO, but he refused. On his return home from prayer he found that his young son was missing. Some days later the boy's mutilated body was brought in by a shepherd who had found it in the field. The murder and mutilation of the Imam's son caused such hostility towards the PLO throughout the area that Yasser Arafat himself had to come to Haruf. On his orders, thousands of residents were brought to the reception in the village

A family returning to their home in southern Lebanon from which they had been driven by the PLO occupation.





These Lebanese children, and their parents, became refugees during the PLO occupation of the south. When the family returned to their house they found that their cellar had been used as a PLO munitions store. Among the ordnance visible here are 122 mm and 155 mm shells. (IDF)

square. As a dramatic gesture to the crowd, Arafat gave his personal revolver to the eldest brother of the murdered boy, saying, 'Take my gun and go revenge your brother's blood, shed by the Zionists.'

The young man could do nothing but hand the weapon back to Arafat.

In 1980 another religious leader, Sheikh Mahmoud al-Masri, a Shi'a Muslim of Ansar, resisted the entry of the PLO into his village. In a strong sermon he declared that it was the moral and religious duty of Muslims to oppose the PLO, who had imposed a reign of terror on towns and villages. 'I told the people', Sheikh al-Masri said, 'that the PLO abused and humiliated our brethren, raped our wives and daughters, looted our property. We set up two roadblocks at the gates of the village and armed men were posted there. Under cover of night, the

terrorists stormed Ansar in force. They subjected the village to heavy fire in order to teach its inhabitants a lesson. They then turned first to my house, burst in and tied me and my wife up. After they raped my daughter before our eyes, they shot her, leaving her naked body with the breasts cut off on the threshold of the house.'

Salah Safro, mukhtar of Burj-Bahal, a village near Tyre, was in Sidon on a business trip on the day that the Fatah branch of the PLO was to execute a Lebanese. He was accused of having collaborated with the Israelis, the 'proof being a pair of Israeli-made shoes found in his house. As a warning to others, the execution took place in the city's central square. The victim's arms and legs were chained to the bumpers of four cars. At the signal of a pistol-shot fired by a Fatah officer the four cars started up. . . . Safro said that some people in the crowd collapsed in shocked horror.

The PLO 'executed' many Lebanese allegedly guilty of betraying the Palestinian fighters. One teenage girl accused of 'spying for the Zionist enemy' was spreadeagled screaming against a wall in Tyre and shot by a firing squad.

Miriam and Diana Fakhr-a-Din, teenage girls from Sidon, said that they dared not go out at night for fear of the PLO. 'We knew that they killed people and sometimes mutilated them and cut their limbs off. Once they raped a girl in our school and then they slaughtered her. We were prohibited from leaving the house in case we were raped too. The terrorists did many filthy things. We did not even dare to go to the beach because they molested us. They roamed the streets in jeeps and made fun of people and girls.'

David Shipler, of *The International Herald Tribune*, reported several incidents concerning the PLO (27/28 July 1982):

The rank-and-file of the guerrillas seemed to come from the lowest strata and often, therefore, the PLO's armed muscle blended with a bitter material greed. The Lebanese found themselves helpless. . . . The head of the public works department in Southern Lebanon said the guerrillas made his life miserable by stealing his equipment and limiting his authority over the workers. 'We couldn't do anything,' he said. 'If I tried to make them work, I was afraid . . . they would shoot you and nobody would ever know.'

Youssef Sayed, a 25-year-old student from Ein el-Hilwe, told Shipler, 'When a student is called up for military service with the PLO he is

obliged to go. Otherwise he won't be accepted next year in the UNRWA school ... the UNRWA personnel are in the PLO¹.

Mrs Dolly Read, a Lebanese woman who lived near Sidon, said, 'Before the PLO we used to be pro-Palestinian. They were poor, we should help them. . . . In 1976 they stopped a bus and said that those who were Christian should come down. My cousin stepped down and was killed. When we saw the Palestinians were killing us and threatening us and having barricades and shooting innocent people, then came the hatred. . . . '

'They set themselves above the law, they terrorised, extorted and inflicted their own summary punishments,' wrote John Bulloch in the London *Daily Telegraph* on 20 August.

The catalogue of PLO crimes against the Lebanese is long. A committee of 'concerned Lebanese' collected evidence of murders, rapes, beatings, arson, theft, blackmail, extortion and numerous other crimes. The group claims to have evidence of 15,000 such incidents.

Some of the worst crimes were committed against young Palestinian women who were induced to join the PLO groups as fighters. Very few of these girls were 'natural' terrorists, so their instructors set out to crush their softer feminine instincts. In Rachidiye camp and other places they told us² how they had been subjected to brutal and perverse sexual assault and various other indignities designed to turn them into terrorists. All this information helped to explain why women hijackers have been more ruthless than their male counterparts. Women have carried out cold-blooded killings and, puzzlingly, have been more brutal to other women and to children than the men have been. We were sorry for these PLO girls because, in assuming a male role as fighters, they had renounced all hope of marriage and a normal life. Not all of them are brutalised, and in the aftermath of the 1982 war they were bewildered and worried; the PLO had been their security and now it had gone.

As details of the Palestinians' reign of terror came to light so too did

'The foreign UNRWA personnel were not members of the PLO, and nor were all Palestinian UNRWA employees; but it appears to be true that some students were threatened with the termination of their UNRWA schooling if they did not join up as fighters. Mahmoud Alloud, a deputy mayor of Ein el-Hilwe, told the author that his son had been so threatened by a Palestinian UNRWA official.

²They spoke to my wife; what they had to say could not be said to a man.



A Lebanese accused of 'betraying the PLO' is dragged to death behind a car in the streets of Sidon, *pour encourager les autres*.

information about their organisation. Tons of documents were seized by the Israelis from headquarters and offices in Tyre, Sidon, Nabatiye and Beirut.

From a foreign point of view (rather than that of the Israelis) the great interest of the documents is the close relationship they reveal between the PLO and the Communist bloc. In the documents all Communist countries are represented in one way or another in the PLO network of political and military ties. The unifying theme behind the support given by this variety of nations and cultures to the PLO is 'revolution'.

Among the documents were many graduation diplomas of PLO personnel who had been given military training in Communist

countries. For instance, the Soviet Ministry of Defence issued a diploma to Zyad Ibrahim Sharkas when he completed a course for infantry platoon commanders in July 1981. Another was given to Muhammad Mabry Hussain on completion of a course for electrical technicians at Odessa Military School. A Hungarian Military Academy diploma went to Muhammad Farlin Kador to record his course in T-34 tank driving.

Some courses were for senior officers. The Soviet Ministry of Defence put Colonel Rashad Ahmad 'Abd-al-Aziz through three months training for armoured battalion commanders and awarded him a diploma. In many cases the diplomas carried a photograph of the PLO member concerned, invaluable material for Israeli Military Intelligence.

Other papers listed the names of PLO men sent on air defence courses in Vietnam, armour courses in Hungary and a company commanders' course in Bulgaria. One of the company commanders, Lieutenant Mahmoud Muhammad al-Rawai, was reported for

PLO officers with a Russian instructor (left background) during a training course in the Soviet Union. (PLO)



'misbehaviour', and attached to the report is his letter of apology in which he pleads to be allowed to finish the course. Another 12 company commanders underwent training in China, while Major Awd-allah Umar abu-Leil, commander of the Galilee Battalion in Fatah, attended a course in Yugoslavia.

On 11 January 1982 a signal from Fatah HQ asked all units to send candidates for a three-year course for Army engineers in East Germany, at the end of which they would be appointed second lieutenants. In Sidon a captured hand-written document recorded a list of courses taken in Eastern bloc countries by officers and NCOs of the September Martyrs Battalion of the Kastel Brigade.

One of the most interesting documents was a report by Colonel Rashad Ahmed, commander of a party of 194 PLO men sent to the Soviet Union for training, addressed to Yasser Arafat. We quote it in full, because behind the stifling jargon it provides much information about military training and attitudes:

The brother, head of the PLO Executive Committee, the General Commander of the Palestinian Revolutionary Forces, the brother Yasser Arafat, may Allah protect him!

Subject: Report on the Palestinian delegation to the Soviet Union Date of Report: 22 January 1981

On 1 September 1980 the delegation arrived in Simferopol in the Soviet Union, where it had been decided to hold the courses. The delegation numbered 194 officers and NCOs. Courses were given for the following posts:

- 1 Tank battalion commander
- 2 Tank company commander
- 3 Infantry company commander
- 4 Reconnaissance company commander
- 5 Infantry platoon commander
- 6 Anti-tank platoon commander
- 7 Sagger missile platoon commander
- 8 Anti-aircraft platoon commander

Factions of the Resistance [movement] as follows:

- 1 The Palestinian National Liberation Movement Fatah
- 2 The Palestine Liberation Army
- 3 The Armed Struggle
- 4 The Popular Front
- 5 The Democratic Front
- 6 The General Command

- 7 Saiga
- 8 The Arab Front
- 9 The Popular Struggle Front
- 10 The Palestine Liberation Front

Studies began in all the courses in a regular fashion, according to the programme which had been prepared. The delegation command studied the programme for each course and made comments, which were taken into account as far as possible, especially in connection with theoretical issues which suit our conditions and combat procedures in towns, mountains, and coastal plain defence.

After classroom studies were completed in the various courses attended by the delegation, the time arrived for final manoeuvres, in which all members of the delegation participated. The exercise included:

- 1 Command and staff exercise (work on maps)
- 2 Tactical exercise

When discussing the exercise, the delegation command proposed that the command and staff exercise involve the entire delegation, in accordance with the specialisation in each course and its role in the battle; the tactical exercise would then follow. However, the college commanders pointed out that the method which the delegation command wanted to use was not feasible, due to its heavy demand on resources which the college was unable to provide under the circumstances. In the end, the delegation command accepted the college's opinion, and the exercise was carried out in the following way:

1 Command and staff exercise at brigade level:

The battalion commander students comprised the brigade command in the exercise. The brigade staff was made up of students from other courses. Altogether 17 officers participated. Work on the map lasted for three consecutive days. The result was excellent according to the officers who supervised on behalf of the college. The work was done under the daily and personal supervision of the college commander. The command and staff exercise included the following stages:

- a) Advance when expecting an encounter battle; carrying out an encounter battle
- b) Attack in direct contact
- c) Defence
- 2 On the fourth day of manoeuvres, the tactical exercise was begun by members of the delegation an infantry company reinforced by a tank company in a direct contact attack. All types of organic and attached weapons were used in the exercise imitating a real battle. The exercise was carried out in earnest by the Palestinian combatants despite the difficult weather conditions. The exercise was a success; it earned the praise of teachers, observers, and other delegations at the college.

Achievements of the delegation:

- 1 In instruction
- a) The subject matter was picked up very well. The teachers saw that the Palestinian delegation was the best in rapid learning, compared with the other delegations.
- b) The anti-tank course teachers noticed that trainees prepared their guns and took up firing positions in less than the required time.
- c) Teachers who accompanied anti-aircraft course trainees on their trip to the firing range reported that they performed very well.
- d) The delegation did well in discussion on political topics in the framework of the political lessons; the Soviet comrades deem such lessons very important and concentrate on them.
- 2 Ties (between nationalities at the school)
- a) Creation of good ties with instructors and workers at the college.
- b) Familiarisation with the customs and traditions of the peoples of the host country.
- c) Explanation of the Palestinian cause, the role of the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian revolution until the realisation of victory and the establishment of an independent state.
- d) Getting to know the other delegations and liberation movements, and establishing good ties while explaining our case, whether during personal meetings or in the framework of official meetings.

The commander of the delegation from South Africa showed full understanding for our revolution cause, so much so, that during the closing ceremony for his delegation, he spoke in front of all the delegations and the Soviet comrades about the Palestinian revolution and Yasser Arafat more than about himself and the host country.

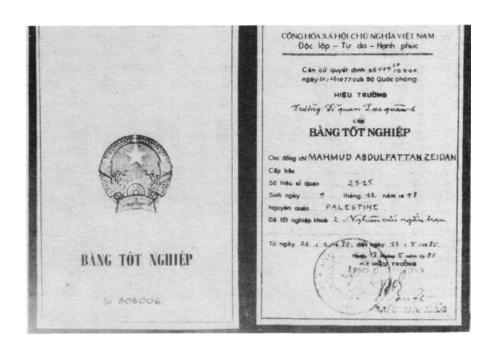
Negative aspects of the mission:

- 1 From the point of view of the college
- a) Shortage of Arabic interpreters. At first the delegation command had many difficulties concerning this matter. Because of the constant request, the college was compelled to supply interpreters, but they did not succeed in rendering exact military translations. In the end, in co-operation with trainees of the other courses and with the new interpreters, they overcame the problem, but not without great difficulty.
- b) Shortage of audio-visual material.
- c) The training period for the anti-tank, missile and anti-aircraft courses ended 15 days before the departure date, forcing the college to repeat many of the lessons and subjects.
- d) Due to the size of the Palestinian delegation and the presence of other delegations, a third of the members of the delegation had to sleep ten to a room. This caused difficulties, which were only overcome by a joint effort.



Among captured PLO documents were found these certificates of graduation from various military training courses. One, with a photo of the presentation ceremony and a facsimile translation, marks the success of Hassan Hussein Taher in an artillery and mortar officer's course in the Soviet Union. Abdulla Mahomed Hamza apparently completed a T-34 tank crew course in Hungary. Mahmud Abdul Fattan Zeidan was trained even further afield, in North Vietnam. (IDF)





- 2 From the point of view of the delegation
- a) The participants in the courses did not correctly understand the political aspects of sending military delegations abroad. As a result, the upper echelon of the delegation, namely the participants in the battalion officer course, refused to study and asked to return, using all sorts of illogical excuses. If this is considered according to the correct military criterion, and despite the possibility of overcoming these difficulties very simply if each one of them had remembered the orders he received during his meeting with the commander of the struggle before the trip, the situation would have been entirely different. This was noted by the delegation command in the report which was sent to Your Excellency through the representative of the organisation in Moscow, Colonel al-Sha'ar, on 22 September 1980.
- b) Those responsible in most of the organisations were not careful in choosing candidates for the course and the delegation command was forced to send a few of them home. Following are the names of the people sent home, and the reasons for their return:

First Batch:

- 1 Ra'ad Ahmed Razaq al-Madani from the PLA was sent on a reconnaissance company commander course. He asked to be transferred to the course for tank battalion commanders. When the delegation command and PLO representative objected, he asked to return on the grounds that there was no point in keeping him there.
- 2 Haydar Jawad Safa from the Democratic Front tried to create an organisational problem between the Democratic Front and the Popular Struggle Front, together with comrade 'Afif al-Masri of the Popular Struggle Front.
- 3 Hassan Radha Bakr from Saiqa asked to return on the grounds that his state of health did not allow him to continue his studies. This was agreed upon in the presence of the delegation command and a representative of the organisation.
- 4 Muhammad Radha Mahrar from Saiqa asked to return because his state of health did not allow him to continue his studies. This was agreed upon in the presence of the delegation command, a representative of the organisation, and the trainees' escort.
- 5 Sahil al-Bitr from the PLA asked to return because his state of health did not allow him to continue his studies. This was agreed upon in the presence of the delegation command and a representative of the organisation.
- 6 Lieutenant Ibrhim al-Mahdun from the PLA asked to return because his state of health did not allow him to continue his studies. When the Bulgarian 'brother' came there together with Ra'ad Tamarzi, the commander of his unit, he tried to persuade him (to stay) but to no avail.

Second Batch:

- 1 Ali Ahsan al-Najar Palestinian Liberation Front failed in commanding the missile course, and was a bad example in military discipline because he used to jump from the college wall, in contravention of orders. The delegation command also found out that he was connected with the smuggling of counterfeit dollars.
- 2 'Afif Muhammad al-Masri Struggle Front did not behave himself outside the college. He spent his time with one of the girls of doubtful character and accompanied her home. His clothes were later taken by a man who claimed to be the girl's brother. He left her home without his clothes and reported the incident to the militia, which returned his clothes.
- 3 Fawzi al-Asadi Struggle Front spoke with the representative of the organisation, Colonel al-Sha'ar, in an unbecoming manner.
- 4 Darwish Dhib Sa'ad Arab Liberation Front is indecent and a pervert. He got mixed up with a girl of doubtful character. He claimed that she took his money together with a report for the delegation command. The commander of the delegation himself brought him from the city, blind drunk.
- 5 Ahmad al-Sharqi Saiqa testified to the Simferopol inspector-general during the investigation of a claim made by one of the members of the delegation, Hassan Qassem Hussein, that the militia and unidentified people had beaten him and taken his money. In the course of this evidence, al-Sharqi attacked the commander of the college, and threatened the college in the name of the members of the delegation that if his friend's money was not returned, 'something would happen'.
- 6 Salim Samir Asbar PLA irregularities in training and malingering despite the warnings given him.
- 7 Mahmud Nimr Shaqiqat Fatah returned on his own request. He incorrectly claimed that he had problems with the Soviet comrades. We talked with him in order to prevent his return, but he stuck to his position.

To His Honour the General Commander (Arafat)

The return of the first and second batch has been completed in the hope that this will deter those whose behaviour is bad, or those who were mistakenly chosen. In spite of this, mistakes have been repeated. If the delegation command had to return people and withhold certificates according to orders, half the delegation would have had to return. However, in the interest of our revolution and our people, the delegation command invested all its efforts in absorbing as many as possible up to the last moment and this will be attested to by Colonel Abu Majdi himself, and those who accompany him.

For example, one of the members of the Popular Front, whose name is Sa'id Razaq, came back late from leave and arrived at the college at 04:30 in the morning. On the next day they celebrated the end of the course and the commander of the college decided to hold back his certificate. We all agreed to this, including Abu Majdi. However, after the certificates were distributed, the

THE WAR OF DESPERATION

commander of the college went back on his decision and gave the man his certificate.

Going by my experience in command of this large delegation, I ask your permission, Commander of the Struggle, to submit to you a number of simple proposals and I request that you study their usefulness, for the sake of the good name of the revolution and our people in foreign countries.

Following are the proposals:

- 1 The opening of a training course for those who are to be sent abroad before their departure, in which they will study the latest developments in the Palestinian problem and the aims behind the dispatch of military delegations abroad, over and above the studies themselves.
- 2 The conducting of early checks, by the instruction administration, of those intended to participate in courses as regards their suitability, and the dispatch of only those who pass the checks.

The PLO was generously funded by various Arab states, and did not rely solely upon Soviet bloc sources of arms supply. The latest weapons from European and other manufacturers were purchased on the world market through purely commercial channels. Among this captured selection is at least one interesting anomaly. Various models of the ubiquitous Kalashnikov AK-47/AKM family are unsurprising, as are the older Simonovs, and even the rack of Brens. But the left man holds an M16/M203 rifle/grenade launcher, an intriguing find since it is a US government weapon of recent issue. (Author's photo)



- 3 The subordination of the officers to the course command so that their personal ability as commanders can be checked without taking into account the considerations of organisations or preferences according to former opinions.
- 4 Choice of people of high quality, who are capable of representing us outside, will be the responsibility of the direct commander.
- 5 Explanation, before the trip, to candidates for courses abroad with regard to arrangements and rules in the absorbing college.
- 6 Lowering the level of the courses abroad to those which cannot be conducted within the training directorate.
- 7 If the need arises to send people to courses of all types and specialities, it is preferable to lower the number in order not to harm the quality and to allow a better selection.
- 8 If a large number of courses are chosen, it is advisable to appoint a delegation commander who is not connected with any course, so that this will be his only function. It is also advisable to use officers who have already participated in a course at the same college and who know its rules.
- 9 The military delegation in foreign countries must be equipped with a large number of books in foreign languages, especially in the language of the host country in political, historical and cultural subjects. They should also have PLO stickers and slogans in booklets and publications, etc.
- 10 Similar material should also be sent by post.

Sir, the Supreme Commander, may God protect him, I am sending this report on behalf of the PLO delegation to the Soviet Union, and pledge our adherence to wise behaviour which will guide us to victory and the establishment of our independent state; long live the PLO under your leadership, the sole legal representative of the Palestinian people.

Signed *Colonel Rashad Ahmed* Commander of the Delegation.

Not surprisingly, the PLO trainees in Communist countries had lessons in Communism. In the case of those from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine the lessons were requested by the leaders, George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh respectively, who are Marxists. The PLO generally assisted - and was prepared to assist - groups of every political persuasion. Captured documents also showed that it had connections with neo-Nazi and other Fascist groups.

7 The Media War

THE author is aware that this chapter may be dismissed by some people as 'pro-Israeli'. It is not intended to be pro- or and- either side. Had the news media treated the PLO unfairly I would say so. The simple fact is that the Israelis got a raw deal, and it is an historian's task to explain why and to put the record straight. Quite apart from this, the difficulties experienced by journalists in covering this unusual war need to be described as part of the history of war reporting. In modern times the reporting of a war can have results as important as the war itself - as Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Falklands, Grenada and Lebanon have shown.

Israel's war against the PLO in Lebanon was notable for more different reasons than is usually the case with armed conflict. It was, for instance, the first real testing ground of modern electronic cameras in battle. And, arguably, the reporting of the war was more controversial than in any other war this century.

Since the author and his wife were studying the war for the purpose of writing about it for a quarterly magazine and for a book, we were not subject to the pressures imposed on journalists who had to produce something for the next edition of a daily paper or for nightly television news bulletins. We were therefore in a position to observe the observers. This meant, in the author's case, watching them do a job for which he himself was qualified and experienced. He found the experience instructive.

Operating from the Israeli side of the battle was simple. A journalist presented himself to the government press office on arrival in Tel Aviv

¹Other analysts have investigated the reporting of the Lebanon war in much more detail - and in more forthright terms - than is possible here. The most thorough analyses are: *Misreporting Lebanon* by Joshua Muravchik, for the Heritage Foundation, Washington, 66 pp, No. 23 Policy Review, Winter 1983. *Media Coverage: the War in Lebanon* by Frank Gervasi for the Center for International Security, Washington, 36 pp, October 1983. *The Journalists' War Against Lebanon - Techniques of Distortion, Disorientation and Disinformation* by Edward Alexander, 12 pp article in *Encounter Magazine*, September 1982. *The Times' Goes to War* by Melvin J. Lasky, 5 pp article in *Encounter Magazine*, October 1982.

and received a yellow card. Then he might go north to stay either as a paying guest at the kibbutz of Gesher Haziv, near the Lebanese border on the western side of Israel, or at Metulla, right on the border on the eastern side. The great majority chose Gesher Haziv. Here the journalist was assigned an Israeli military press officer equipped with Uzi sub-machine gun, a helmet and a flak jacket. (Reporters could also have a helmet and jacket if they asked for them.)

Gesher Haziv, with its five-star comfort for the paying guests, was *the* place to be. Here journalists encountered confreres they might not have met for years; and each night the professionals returned to the kibbutz and exchanged adventure stories. During the first days of the war one woman press agency photographer hid in the backs of cars, and even disguised herself as a man, because the Israeli Army would not allow women into Lebanon: it was 'too dangerous for a woman'. A journalist



For the great majority of Lebanese civilians - like ordinary people everywhere - the hope of some degree of day-to-day safety is far more important than any political consideration. If Israeli, or even Syrian troops make it possible for them to go about their daily lives relatively free of the fears aroused by indiscriminate killing in the streets, temporary occupation is a price they can bear to pay. This Israeli reservist was photographed while guarding shops in Bhamdoun.

from the Israeli publication *Yediot Aharanot* threatened to complain to the High Court when she was kept out; the Army then changed its policy and allowed in those women who qualified for press cards (including the author's wife).

Another hive of press activity was the Arazim Hotel in Metulla. Normally a tranquil place, the Arazim became the northern HQ of the Army Spokesman - Captain Yitzhak, on our visits - and the base for about 60 journalists covering the eastern flank of the campaign. It was a chaos of media equipment and personal gear, as reporters and cameramen sought information, advice and help from the Army Spokesman and his staff. Yitzhak was in a difficult position: he just did not have solid answers to many of their questions, and he knew that whatever he said would be flashed around the world within hours.

During 'no-go' periods some of the veteran war correspondents sneaked across the border anyway, and made their way to the battle fronts in cars rented at enormous cost. One TV crew lost three rented

Israeli flour being unloaded for distribution to civilians in Sidon in June 1982. In this city, reported by so many journalists as 'flattened', there was relatively little war damage, and except for one period of 48 hours the city functioned normally.



cars - one to a direct hit while the men were in a nearby house, the second run over by a tank, and the third by driving it into a ditch. No vehicle could be insured for driving in Lebanon, but this did not worry the American TV men; they paid four times the real price of the lost cars without complaint.

Those journalists operating from Beirut faced greater hazards than those with the Israelis. Neither a foreign press card nor any other credential meant much in Beirut; over the years the PLO and the Syrians had murdered several journalists for filing critical copy. Various factions issued press permits, but these were not necessarily recognised by other factions.

The pass that mattered most was probably that of the Palestinian Press Agency, WAFA. This carried the bearer's photograph, a duplicate of which was retained in the WAFA office. Without this pass it was dangerous, if not impossible, to circulate in West Beirut. A journalist caught taking photographs or making notes would be immediately arrested, if not shot at. Kenneth Timmerman, an American journalist based in Paris, spent three weeks in a PLO prison in Beirut after being unable to identify himself to their satisfaction.

All 15 groups of the PLO in Beirut had their own prisons. Many journalists were aware of the existence of these prisons, but the author has been unable to trace any mention of them in the Western press. Timmerman, after release from prison, approached a wire service with news of the prisons. 'I was coldly received,' he said, 'and dismissed with the assurance that they would report nothing. They still had people in West Beirut and could not put them in jeopardy¹.'

Timmerman has pointed out that there were no journalists unfriendly to the PLO operating in the besieged part of Beirut, because no newspaper or other news organisation would make the error of sending into West Beirut somebody who had adversely reported on the PLO in the past. Thus a first selection of journalists was made by the PLO; in Timmerman's words, 'When it came to muzzling the press, the PLO had things worked out to a fine science.' The three basic 'tools' were exemplary terror, intimidation and silence.

Later in the war it became possible to cover both sides - Israeli and PLO - on the same day: a rare opportunity in the history of war

¹Commentary Magazine, January 1983.



A hospital roof in Sidon: the framework is part of a PLO rocket launcher, emplaced on this vulnerable target for the most cynical reasons. It was knocked out with a few precisely aimed shots, which caused no internal damage to the hospital and no casualties among the patients. (IDF)

journalism. A reporter could hire a taxi, drive to Israeli HQ just outside Beirut, and talk to officers about intentions and strategy; then, in the same taxi, he could drive down into the city, produce the appropriate press passes, and be at PLO headquarters in less than an hour.

It should be stressed that few journalists of any nationality were in the field with the Syrian Army, though some reported from Damascus. The Syrian Army turned away those journalists who sought to report the war from their side.

The television crews in West Beirut hired a taxi service to collect their video-tapes and make a run each evening to Damascus, from where they were sent off to the world's networks. The American television networks for some time chartered a high-speed motor cruiser to make the trip from Jounieh to Cyprus carrying their video cassettes. By the end of the siege ten companies were sharing this service. The owner of the cruiser, a Greek millionaire from Athens, charged \$80,000 dollars a month.

There were two centres for foreign press people in Beirut: the Commodore Hotel in the West, and the Alexander in the East. It was at the Commodore that the PLO held its daily press conferences and where all official PLO guests were housed. It was never a relaxed hotel at which to stay, and there were eyes everywhere. Guests' luggage was frequently searched, generally in a clumsy way. A room cost \$100 and dinner was \$50.

Most of the television coverage of the siege was filmed from the rooftops of the Alexander and Commodore. Despite an occasional shell they were the safest places to be while still within reasonable view of the fighting. The Alexander received several hits from Palestinian positions on 12 July, and was damaged by a car bomb in August. The Commodore was hit by a single Israeli bomb on 4 August, the day of the heaviest fighting of the siege.

Some journalists reporting from Beirut had been staff correspondents there for years, and had good contacts with the PLO and with the Maronite Christian leaders. This did not necessarily make their professional task any easier for, with the PLO especially, they had to stay on reasonably good terms with men for whom violence was a way of life while trying to maintain their standards of journalistic objectivity. Still, their experience of Beirut had taught them how to move around, which gave them an advantage over the newcomers who reached Lebanon by boat from Cyprus to the Christian port of Jounieh.

All journalists learned that it was important to remember the current password. The reporter who forgot it was living dangerously, especially when challenged by a teenage sentry from the PLO, Christian Phalange or Shi'a militia cradling his Kalashnikov and eager for an excuse to use it.

From both sides - the south, and within Beirut - some reporting was oddly uninformed, to say the least. For instance, Marvin Howe of *The New York Times* referred to some people who had been made refugees 'when the Israelis invaded Damour, a Palestinian settlement south of Beirut' (18 July). In fact, Damour was a famous centre of Lebanese Christendom until it was largely destroyed and seized by the PLO in the 1975-76 Lebanese civil war. Those of its residents who were not killed on that occasion fled for their lives. Without reference to the events of 1975-76, Howe's story was open to misinterpretation.

As with Britain during the Falklands war, which was being fought at

the same time, Israel did herself much harm by tight censorship practices, especially during the first week of the operation. These practices were militarily justified; but they prevented Israel's side of the story from being well reported. They also made the press suspicious and angry. 'What are they trying to hide?' and 'They can't do this to us!' were two themes which often appeared just beneath the surface of the media coverage of Israel's actions.

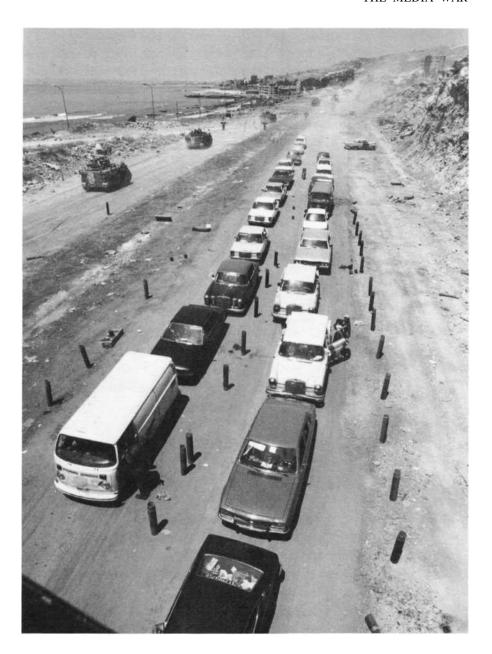
Israeli TV had sent experienced camera crews and reporters to the front, but because a trade union dispute made it impossible to use electronic cameras the Israelis shot the war in black and white. These films, though professionally superb, were useless to the American networks, which in a few days had about 20 electronic crews on the job.

Operating from Gesher Haziv, these crews raced north under escort each day, frantically filming 'war incidents' on the way. Arriving in the Israeli-held suburbs of Beirut at about noon, they focused their cameras on the puffs of smoke which indicated shells bursting. By a certain time all crews had to finish filming and hand their cassettes to a messenger, who rushed them to Tel Aviv to be transmitted by satellite - 'birded', in TV jargon - to New York or London.

Television became a victim of its own creation: the public appetite for bloody pictures. The TV crews shot tens of thousands of feet of film, and they got some colourful material. Some of it was breathtakingly false, as in the case of the American crew filming the results of 'indiscriminate Israeli bombardment from the sea' - Roman ruins.

The TV crews were under intense pressure, and rarely had time to interview anybody in depth. The author was present on several occasions when a cameraman or presenter grabbed any Lebanese or Palestinian civilian who happened to be around - perhaps understandably, they could not tell the difference between them - and then encouraged their subject to sift through wreckage, or to hold a cloth to their eyes as if weeping, while the camera turned. One day the author and his wife heard an American TV reporter giving instructions to a middle-aged Lebanese woman. 'Look all chewed up, ma'am,' he said encouragingly. When she gave him a blank look he said to the crew, 'Goddamit, she doesn't even know English! Cry, baby, will you!' He mimed some anguish for her, and, with a laugh, she obliged.

The author was more interested in the many Lebanese families having picnics on the beach; but nobody filmed them.



A convoy of IDF M113s heading north on the coastal road for Beirut, passing a queue of civilian vehicles heading south. Most Lebanese roads have been in a deplorable condition for ten years, since the beginning of the civil war; this highway suffered very little war damage in 1982.

In their dash for news and their equally hurried return trip to Israel to send it (for there were no telex or even telephone facilities in Lebanon) the journalists gained impressions. Much war reporting is inevitably a matter of impressions; but truth was not well served when these impressionistic reports reached the home office, to be made even more dramatic by sub-editors, especially those on newspapers which favoured short, stark headlines - SIDON FLATTENED, for example. At Gesher Haziv we met a German reporter who told us an interesting story. He had sent to his paper what he considered to be a thoughtful piece in which he mentioned that he was writing it just after eating a pleasant lunch in a Sidon hotel. When he next made telephone contact his editor said, 'What's this crazy stuff about lunching in a hotel in Sidon?'

'What's wrong with that?' the reporter asked.

'We ran a story that Sidon is flattened,' the editor replied. 'Why do you have to invent a hotel lunch there?'

The reporter could have lunched at any one of a dozen hotels; some of them did not close even on the few days when fighting took place. About five per cent of Sidon's dwellings had been severely damaged, while a number of other office buildings and houses suffered minor damage. Most were intact and untouched. The city itself was teeming with life: thousands of people were shopping at stores full of goods, cinemas were open and the traffic was as bad as a London rush hour.

Another problem was that many of the journalists who flocked to the war had no background knowledge of recent Lebanese history. Some of them readily admitted that they knew nothing of the civil war of 1975-76 and of the hostility between Christians and Muslims. When badly briefed reporters saw the city of Damour, wrecked in 1976, some of them assumed the damage to be days or hours old. Even so, they hardly needed a knowledge of history to make a deduction from the fact that the rubble in Damour had weeds growing out of it.

The author read reports which described in dramatic terms the rough road between the border and Beirut. It was, they said, 'scarred by shellholes and bomb craters and chewed up by tank tracks'. For as long as I could remember that road had been hazardous, with potholes, crumbling edges, ruts and protruding stones; the Lebanese have done no real work on it for decades. Military traffic had not improved its deplorable surface, but it bore no obvious shellholes or craters.

Frank Gervasi, a veteran American war correspondent, later studied media coverage of the war¹, and found television to be the chief offender in terms of distortion and incompetent reporting: 'All the major American networks showed Israeli tanks and artillery rolling past the ruins of Tyre, Sidon and Damour - cities which had already been heavily damaged by the PLO - [thus] creating the impression that what viewers were seeing was the result of Israeli military action. Little attempt was made by anchormen or commentators to explain that the battered homes, churches and shattered public buildings so dramatically portrayed in full colour on TV screens were at least as much the result of previous PLO depredations as they were the consequence of Israeli combat action.'

It would be interesting to know the basis for a claim, made in a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* on 20 June 1982, that the 'death and devastation' wrought by the Israelis in Lebanon had caused '40,000 killed and wounded' and made '700,000 homeless'. About 200 more or less prominent intellectuals were induced to sign this advertisement. The author is aware of only one major piece of research into casualties in Lebanon. It was carried out by Frank Gervasi, who spent weeks canvassing hospitals in the coastal cities where there had been heavy fighting. By mid-July he had his statistics.

In Tyre, 56 people had been killed and 95 wounded; 20 were still in hospital. In populous Sidon the official count was 265 dead and about 1,000 wounded, including 300 who did not need hospital treatment. The casualties in the two camps of Ein el-Hilwe and Rachidiye were put, by local mukhtars, at between 1,000 and 1,200. 'Too many from a humanitarian point of view,' Gervasi observes, 'but far fewer than the PLO propagandists claimed.' At Nabatiye the mayor told Gervasi that ten people had been killed and 15 wounded during the fighting.

For several days running - 7 to 12 June - the French television channel *Antenne* 2 showed footage of a girl whose head was hanging limply, ostensibly dead, being carried in the arms of an Arab. The film had been taken in Damour in 1976. Shots of the same girl lifting her head, very much alive, were omitted. This material was repeatedly used as the background picture for reports on the current fighting in Lebanon, until challenged in *Le Monde* and *Paris Match*.

^{&#}x27;See note at beginning of this chapter.

News about the death of a French TV correspondent, Pierre Creole, was also broadcast repeatedly in France; the reporting implied that he had died in an 'indiscriminate' Israeli air raid. Israel was quick to express regrets over his death. Only afterwards, when the film in his camera was developed did it become clear that he was not killed in an air raid but as a result of being too close to a large PLO arms dump, which blew up.

The author saw a European newspaper photographer pose a group of Lebanese children in a burnt-out car south of Beirut. They had been walking along the seafront, but were persuaded to pose amid the wreckage so that the photographer could dramatise his pictures of 'Israeli devastation'.

A few weeks after the battle for Beaufort Castle we were in the countryside north of the castle in the company of an American professor of journalism. He was intrigued by the number of white flags of surrender fluttering from several houses. 'They wanted to make sure

Rocket-propelled grenades delivered to the PLO in Lebanon packed in crates marked with the Red Crescent - the Muslim equivalent of the Red Cross. (Author's photo)



that the Israelis didn't fire at their homes,' he said. In fact, families in that region hang out a white cloth to indicate that a girl of marriageable age lives there. Cameramen from many countries had filmed the symbols of this pleasant custom as 'white flags of surrender'.

Where some pro-PLO European journalists may have fixed solely upon havoc in Lebanon in order to condemn Israel, American journalists - and especially network TV - did it in order to satisfy the professional and material requirements of their news organisations.

Newsweek's, 'special report' (21 June), covering the first week of the war, contained this key-note passage:

After the first waves of terror bombing and indiscriminate shelling no one could count the bodies buried in the rubble of Lebanon's coastal cities. Hundreds of thousands of refugees huddled on open beaches and scavenged for food and water.

Although much dispute remains about Israeli targeting during the siege of Beirut, especially its last days, there was no 'terror bombing' or 'indiscriminate shelling' during the first week of fighting. Refugees, who never did number hundreds of thousands, did not stay on the beaches after the fighting ended, but returned to their homes, most of which were intact; and they were never forced to 'scavenge'. All this is now accepted.

Newsweek was not the only publication to report 'indiscriminate' firing. The fact is that artillery fire often appears to be indiscriminate to a reporter not close enough to see a strike; and fire control officers are often acting on information to which a reporter is not privy. For instance, the author saw a field gun firing at the base of an apartment building in an incident which some civilian observers might well have labelled 'indiscriminate'. Ten minutes later we reached that building and saw a PLO multiple-barrel rocket-launcher which the Israeli shelling had knocked out.

There was little reporting on the following major aspects of the war: The significance of the vast quantities of arms found in PLO bunkers and tunnels.

The rapidity with which the Lebanese were able to resume normal life as they returned to their homes in the liberated areas.

The benefits *at that date* to Lebanon itself, and to Western influence in the Middle East of the Israeli military action.



Large-calibre rockets, made in North Korea and shipped into Lebanon for the PLO in crates with the kind of markings which had become a black joke long before Lebanon hit the world's headlines: 'Parts of tractor'. . . .

The realities of the PLO as an instrument of international terrorism, revealed in the tons of captured documents.

The extent of Israeli help in the relief and rehabilitation of the Lebanese population, including its large Palestinian Arab minority.

During the siege another factor was at work: the natural sympathy of foreign journalists for people with whom they share adverse circumstances. This shared suffering tended to make journalists identify with the people of West Beirut - a condition well known in war.

It was inevitable that media coverage of the war from PLO-held West Beirut was sometimes highly selective, or intensely emotional, or even poetic in its imaginative use of language. We should not be too surprised about this. Much of the problem lay in the dangerous nature of the journalist's job. John Kifner wrote in *The New York Times*:

To work here as a journalist is to carry fear with you as faithfully as your notebook. It is the constant knowledge that there is nothing that you can do to

protect yourself and that nothing has ever happened to an assassin. In this atmosphere a journalist must often weigh when, how, and sometimes even whether to record a story. In the Middle East facts are always somewhat elusive. But there is a pervasive belief among the Beirut press corps that correspondents should be extremely wary . . .

They needed to be wary, not only of incurring the wrath of the PLO or the Syrians, but simply in moving about. With apparently limitless ammunition, the Palestinian fighters constantly loosed off sprays of automatic fire. Men posted in buildings as snipers fired at anything that moved.

The main source of information in West Beirut was the PLO spokesman's office, where highly professional and articulate publicists gave the 'latest figures' for casualties and assessments of war damage. Most Western newspapers accepted from the PLO a figure of 'up to 600,000' for Palestinian casualties to 10 June. This exceeded the entire population of southern Lebanon. That the figure was later revised to 10,000 - a reduction of more than 98 per cent - was not widely reported.

Cooped up within West Beirut, the foreign journalists had no way of verifying anything the PLO leaders told them. Of course, they occasionally saw a building damaged by bombs or shells, and some streets were little more than rubble. And they saw casualties - always a distressing experience. In this environment many developed the 'rubble syndrome', a condition of anxiety and stress which led them to see nothing but hopelessness and destruction.

Mike McCourt of the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) vividly reported on 28 June:

As they [historians] have written about Stalingrad and Berlin they will write of the siege of Beirut in 1982. Two square miles of West Beirut are now dust and mortar. The rest of the city, nearly all of it, resembles some ancient ruin. The Israeli siege has made most of West Beirut a ghost town.

McCourt's surprising comparisons with Stalingrad and Berlin may perhaps be excused as generous literary licence; but the author can only affirm that *he* did not come across 'two square miles of dust and mortar'. In fact, when one went up to the heights behind the city it was difficult to see *any* ruins; and it was possible to walk through miles of streets without coming across any damage beyond the scars of the seven-year conflict before 1982.

The author read a description¹ of the aerial bombing of Ein el-Hilwe in which a foreign observer told two reporters of 'carpet bombing' which 'continued for ten days without respite'. 'Carpet bombing' is an imprecise and unmilitary phrase, but if it means anything, it means systematic, yard-by-yard saturation bombing. According to the observer, waves of bombers saturated one segment of the camp after another, returning day after day. Had a bombing of this type actually taken place, a single raid would have been enough to wipe out most of Ein el-Hilwe; ten days of it would have reduced it to dust. But the observer's description made good copy, and under the circumstances it observer's description made good copy, and under the circumstances it was easy for reporters without knowledge of the realities of war to accept it.

Sometimes the PLO propagandists simply conned the media. In August, United Press International distributed a photograph which showed a nurse in a Beirut hospital feeding a seven-month-old baby who was said to have lost both arms after being burned in a bombing. A photograph of an injured child will always get into a newspaper, and this particular infant made hundreds of front pages all over the world. President Reagan even kept a picture of the child on his desk in the Oval Office; thus she became known as 'Reagan's Little Girl'.

The Israeli Health Minister, Eliezer Shostock, sent a special team to Lebanon to find the baby; and the mother and child - a baby boy, and not a girl as reported by UPI - were traced to a Lebanese village. Professor Baruch Modan, the ministry's director-general, found the infant in good health; he had suffered some burns, but neither arm had infant in good health; he had suffered some burns, but neither arm had been amputated, though one was strapped to his side because of a fracture. A closer examination of the original photograph showed that an apparent arm stump was the top of a milk bottle from which the nurse had been feeding the child. When all this became public knowledge, UPI confirmed its error (on 24 August). The original picture was used by *The Washington Post* on page one; the corrected story, on page 14.

US News and World Report (2 August) showed a woman mourning at a graveside in Beirut, and explained that her son was a victim of the Israeli invasion. To those who could read Arabic the tomb inscription revealed that this was the grave of Halad Belaty who had died on 29

¹New Society, 19 August 1982.

Ramadan 1400 - that is, on 10 August 1980, two years before the Israeli invasion.

Sometimes newspapers and magazines published a photograph of a single badly damaged building with a caption which indicated that it was typical of an entire area. More often than not the buildings on either side were completely undamaged; but then, the picture value of an undamaged building is nil.

Favourable coverage by the media, particularly television, encouraged Arafat and the PLO to stay on in Beirut day after day. Arafat and his lieutenants hoped that the massive propaganda stream going out of Beirut might induce the Americans to force the Israeli Army to withdraw. He had much advice from his brother, Dr Fathi Arafat, chief of the PLO's Red Crescent organisation (the Muslim Red Cross equivalent). It was Fathi who gave out casualty figures, and he urged the other PLO propagandists to work on a 'human interest' publicity campaign.

Photographs appeared showing Arafat with babies in his arms outside the entrance to one of his bunkers. He actually dislikes small children, but the cameramen convinced him that 'kiddies in colour sell dog food', as the author heard one of them say - that the advertisers on television like children in news films.

Some correspondents became aware of the shortcomings of the electronic media. Bill Moyers, appearing on CBS Evening News on 23 August, succinctly expressed his disquiet:

Watching scenes of the Beirut evacuation I was struck by how it is possible for the cameras to magnify a lie. These Palestinian troops left town as if they had just won a great victory. Arafat, they praised as a conquering hero. In fact, they are leaving town in defeat. And in fact, Arafat led them to this cul-de-sac where they made their last stand behind the skirts of women and among the playgrounds of children. . . .

A far-ranging analysis of the news media's handling of the war was carried out by Colonel Trevor Dupuy, a retired American army officer who is president and executive director of the Historical Evaluation and Research Organisation based in New York. Dupuy went to Lebanon to observe the war as a conflict; but he became even more interested in the way it was being reported. In a long article entitled *Behind the Lies in Lebanon*, which was syndicated in the United States, Dupuy was

bluntly critical of the media. His organisation sent printed copies of this report to 3,500 major newspapers in the US A; from none of them did he receive a single complaint of unfair criticism, let alone any hint of more robust measures. The report, which is to be expanded into a book in 1986, carries considerable weight: Dupuy, author of 80 books on military matters, is regarded as an open-minded historian by defence ministries and military headquarters around the world. His conclusion:

I am disgusted by the many false and irresponsible media reports by those who have a moral responsibility to present facts truthfully and objectively. Tales of wanton destruction and devastation of such cities as Tyre, Sidon, Damour and Nabatiye are not only inconsistent with my own combat experience and the various studies I have made on the nature of urban destruction in past wars, but were obviously contrary to what I saw in those cities.

Among Dupuy's examples of incompetent reporting were accounts of the bombing of West Beirut on 12 August:

According to headlines all over the world, on that day the Israeli Air Force launched its most intensive and devastating attack of the war on West Beirut. It was reported that hundreds of buildings were destroyed and nearly 1,000 people killed or wounded.

On that day I spent about five hours observing this bombardment. During that time, it was apparent from my observation that no more than 150 bombs, probably 200 to 500 kilograms each, were dropped on Beirut. As far as artillery bombardment was concerned, [from] the many Israeli positions I visited in and around East Beirut, I saw fewer shell bursts than bomb explosions during the time I was there.

It must have been extremely unpleasant for people in West Beirut during that time, and the refugees I saw streaming through the Galerie Samaan checkpoint were obviously happy to be out. However, to any veteran who has been under air or artillery attack in 'normal' combat situations, this was relatively modest harassment.

Therefore I was surprised to learn from a BBC broadcast that night [12 August] that bombardment was so intensive that President Reagan telephoned Prime Minister Begin to express 'outrage'.

My surprise turned to astonishment when I read in the 14 August issue of the *International Herald Tribune*, quoting PLO communiques, that the warplanes dropped 44,000 bombs and that 700 houses collapsed. The article did not comment on these statistics or present any differing assessment. So the reader could only conclude that the *Herald Tribune* believed these figures.

I later discovered that *The Washington Post* of 13 August reported, again without comment, a statement made by the PLO representative in New York that 1,600 bombs and rockets were dropped and 42,000 shells fired.



Distribution of Israeli military ration packs to Lebanese children in Sidon.

Let's suppose that I am not a very good observer, that instead of 150 bombs, 2,000 were dropped during the five hours I was there watching. This means that 42,000 bombs would have had to be dropped in the remaining six of the 11 hours during which the attack was reported to have taken place.

That means 7,000 bombs per hour, or more than 100 per minute. No air force in the world could drop 42,000 substantial bombs on one target the size of Beirut in six hours, or drop 44,000 bombs - 4,000 per hour or 70 per minute - in 11 hours.

The Israeli Air Force has fewer than 600 combat aircraft. In a maximum effort, it might be able to commit 300 of these to such a mission, and these could probably fly three combat sorties each during 11 hours. That is a maximum potential of 900 sorties; and if each plane carried four bombs on each sortie, that would be an absolute maximum of 3,600 bombs, less than one-tenth of the number that the *Herald Tribune* reported.

But I stick to my on-the-spot observation that the actual intensity was probably about one-tenth of that theoretical maximum and thus less than one-hundredth of the reported intensity.

As to the Washington Post report, the figure of 1,600 bombs was theoretically possible, but suggests an intensity at least four times greater than what I saw.

The reported 42,000 rounds of artillery fire would have required a bombardment averaging nearly 4,000 shells per hour. On the basis of what I saw, this could not possibly be true.

How could responsible reporters present such figures without a word of comment?

Several Israeli scholars, distressed by the media coverage of the war, have been working ever since on a voluminous study to account for what they consider was a 'word war' against them.

It should be said, finally, that a good many reporters showed bias to neither side. In his *Misreporting Lebanon* Muravchik says that on the whole the work of *The New York Times* was of a higher standard than that of other news outlets. He also praised the TV company CBS for its 'care in avoiding tendentious and loaded wording'.

8 Reluctant Peace-Keepers, Eager Martyrs

ON 23 August 1982 Bashir Gemayel had been elected president of Lebanon and was waiting for his official investiture. The 34-year-old Gemayel was part-politician, part-storm trooper, and he had already shown that he would use whatever means were necessary to achieve his nationalist goals. To his Phalangist followers he projected the personal magnetism of a combat leader who had fought and suffered with them on the battlefield. He fervently believed, as he told the author, that the departure of all foreign forces was a prerequisite to solving his country's problems and forging national unity. He was particularly anxious to see the Palestinians go; some people who had known him for years said that he was obsessed with the Palestinians.

Jonathan Randal of *The Washington Post* has written¹ that the Lebanese and Palestinians had something in common: 'a natural affinity for the dangerous rhythms of street fighting, as graceful and courageous as bullfighters in their long courtship with violence'.

This extravagantly poetic description has some truth in it; but what the Christian Lebanese and the Palestinians had more markedly in common was their mutual hatred. The Palestinians wanted to see Gemayel dead - as did rival Maronite Christian factions, and various Shi'a Muslim groups.

Randal also noted (as we too observed) that the Christian militiamen looked down on the Israelis as soldiers. This oddly patronising attitude was the result of equating soldierly qualities with soldierly appearance the Israelis were scruffy, bearded, and wore crumpled uniforms. The Christians were always immaculately turned out, clean-shaven and with their boots polished; but they were, in Randal's assessment, 'timorous and unwilling to take risks'.

Gemayel himself had to take risks, because he had incurred so much enmity. In March 1979 a bomb in his car had been defused. In February

^{&#}x27;In The Tragedy of Lebanon, Chatto & Windus, 1983.

THE WAR OF DESPERATION

1980 a car bomb killed his 18-month-old daughter and three bodyguards. Afterwards he still insisted on driving around alone, although he changed cars as many as ten times a day.

Gemayel wanted the Lebanese Army - weak, demoralised and underarmed though it was - to take on the peace-keeping burden, although he knew it would have to cope with setbacks. In the meantime the presence of the US Marines, 800 French troops and 500 Italians did something to give the people confidence.

By the time the PLO evacuation from Beirut was complete on 1 September more than 11,000 Palestinians had sailed from the port and 3,625 Syrian soldiers had been moved by convoy from West Beirut to the Bekaa Valley. When US Marine HQ in Beirut was informed that the last chartered ship, *Mediterranean Sun*, had received clearance from the Israeli Navy to sail for the Syrian port of Tartus with 700 Palestinians, the Marine radio operator said, 'OK, well done. Now let's go home.' The American defence secretary, Caspar Weinberger, announced in Beirut that the 800 Marines would be leaving the capital in a few days.

Israeli Merkava tanks in 'harbour', safe beneath a skyline. The IDF ended 1982 still in the positions they had captured in July; but by that time their government and high command were anxiously seeking a formula which would allow them to pull out. (IDF)



That day Israeli Prime Minister Begin, acting on information that the PLO had probably left between 2,000 and 3,000 men in West Beirut, asked the Lebanese Army to move into that part of the city to keep order. He and his cabinet feared that in the political vacuum which now existed this delayed-action PLO force would restart the war. The Lebanese Army's senior officer on the spot, Colonel Qun, told the Lebanese Prime Minister, Shafik Wazzan, that he would not allow his units to enter West Beirut on the grounds that it was 'too dangerous'; so the IDF was ordered in.

The IDF turned its attention to the Syrians, too, because they had made it clear that they were still aggressive. Over several days Israeli aircraft destroyed Syrian ground-to-air batteries in the Bekaa, where Syria by now had three divisions of troops. A further series of attacks blew up the strategic Damascus-Beirut road west of Chtaura, effectively cutting off Syrian troops west of the central mountain chain from reinforcements and supplies.

The US Marines left on 9 September, with a cheerful marine holding up for the photographers a sign that read 'Mission Accomplished'. *Time* Magazine ended its report about Lebanon for that week with the same two words.

In fact, other than the evacuation of the PLO, little had been accomplished despite the statement by Lebanese Prime Minister on 9 September that 'As of today there is no East Beirut and no West Beirut. We have reached the end of our sorrows.'

Of course there were two Beiruts - one Christian and one Muslim. Each had scores to settle with the other, and snipers were active in several parts of the city. The Syrians were still occupying large parts of Lebanon, and, in consequence, so was the Israeli Army.

Certainly there were some hopeful signs. The French Foreign Legion began to lift mines from the main approach roads to Beirut. Prime Minister Wazzan opened the Sodeco crossing point between East and West Beirut, and it was hoped that before long Beirut Airport would reopen. Electricity supply and telephone service were resumed.

Then, on 14 September, the Phalangists suffered a shattering loss - Bashir Gemayel was assassinated. A member of the Syrian Socialist National Party, Habib Chatouni, had hidden a Japanese-made electronically triggered bomb behind a panel in a wall. Set off from 200 metres away, it killed 20 other people as well as Gemayel. (Chatouni was

quickly caught, tortured for information, and killed.) Very soon, Christians and Muslims were fighting each other yet again.

Two days later Sabra and Shatila entered the media vocabulary. Sabra and Shatila were Palestinian refugee camps in southern Beirut though suburbs would be a better description. Because of the departure of the PLO fighters the camps' population was mostly made up of older men, women and children. Phalangist raiders went into the camps at about 6 pm on the night of 16 September on a mission of murder.

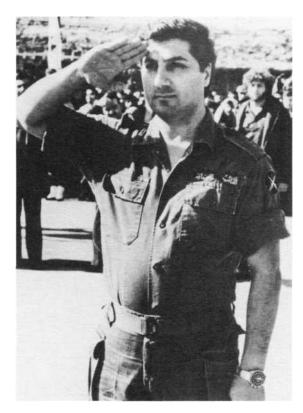
The killers belonged to an 'Intelligence unit' of the Phalangist army led by Elie Hobeika, aged 29. Hobeika, who habitually carried a pistol, a knife and a hand grenade on his belt, was - as Lebanese, Palestinians and Israelis have all told the author - the most feared Phalangist in Lebanon. It had been his duty to protect Bashir Gemayel; he had failed, and he wanted to take out his frustrations on somebody.

His unit was considered specially trained in discovering terrorists who tried to hide among the civilian population. In an orgy of killing that lasted 38 hours the Phalangists slaughtered up to 800 people, methodically rounding up and killing everybody they could find. It was butchery of a kind the civilised mind cannot comprehend. Some victims were shot in the head at point blank range, others had their throats cut. Some had their hands tied behind their backs before being murdered. One young man was castrated. A Phalangist threw a hand grenade at four doctors who tried to leave Acca Hospital under a white flag; three of them were killed.

No Phalangist concerned in the massacre has ever made a statement, but we know that the killings were regarded as revenge for the murder of Bashir Gemayel and for various massacres of Christians by the PLO and other Muslims, and as a way of driving the Palestinians from Lebanon.

The killings shocked the Israeli people. Israeli troops had been positioned around the outside of the camps, and the Phalangists' 'terrorist hunt' had gone in with Israeli agreement. There were claims that during the prolonged massacre warning of what seemed to be going on had been passed to a high level of the Israeli command structure, but had not been acted upon. Press and public demanded an explanation from Prime Minister Begin and Defence Minister Sharon. Sharon insisted that the Israeli military commanders had told the Christian leaders time and again that any military action must be limited to the

Lebanese President-Elect Bashir Gemayel, in the uniform of his Phalangist 'Lebanese Forces' militia. Israel pinned great hopes on his leading a stable, relatively friendly regime; but he was by no means a cooperative tool of Israeli foreign policy. Aged only 34, he had fought and intrigued his way to the leadership of the Phalangists in a series of bloody gang wars. His assassination by Habib Chatouni on 14 September 1982 led directly to the Sabra and Shatila massacres. (Al Masira)



terrorists still hidden in West Beirut, and that civilians must not be illtreated. This statement of general principles did nothing to mitigate the Israelis' sense of shock and guilt over the specific events at Sabra and Shatila.

Massive demonstrations in Israel against the Begin-Sharon government aroused world interest. Many Israelis believed that their leaders should have anticipated the Christian attack on the Palestinians. They felt that after the Gemayel assassination it had been predictable that the Christians, who had lost tens of thousands of their men, women and children during the years of PLO occupation, would seek revenge: cycles of ever more barbarous revenge were, after all, one of the few constant factors in Lebanese politics.

The Israeli government ordered a commission of inquiry into alleged complicity by Israeli Army officers. The chairman was the president of the supreme court, Yitzhak Kahan, and the members were Justice Aharon Barak and Major-General Yona Efret. Their judgement, in February 1983, made clear that no Israelis were involved in the killings; but it found blameworthy Defence Minister Sharon; the Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General Raphael Eitan; the head of Military Intelligence, Major-General Yoshua Saguy; the commander in Lebanon, Lieutenant-General Amir Drori; and the commander in the Beirut sector, Brigadier-General Amos Yaron. In essence, the commission made these criticisms:

Sharon: Blameworthy for deciding that the Phalangists should enter the camps, disregarding the danger of acts of vengeance and bloodshed. *Eitan:* Blameworthy for his lack of foresight in failing to take appropriate measures to prevent the massacre.

Saguy: Blameworthy for 'indifference and a conspicuous lack of concern, of shutting of eyes and ears to a matter regarding which it was incumbent on the director of the Intelligence arm to open his eyes and listen well to all that was discussed and decided'.

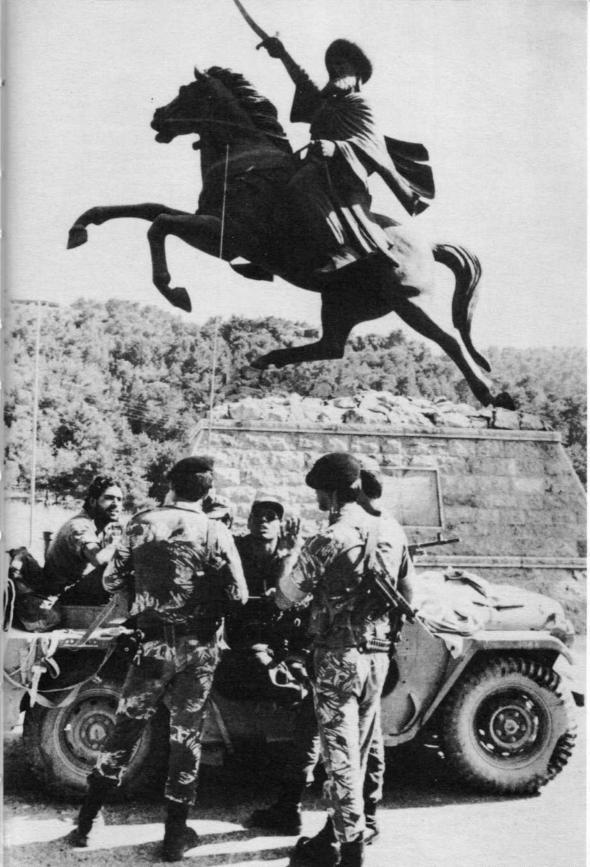
Drori: Blameworthy for his 'breach of duty' in failing to tell the Chief-of-Staff that there were at least suspicions of a massacre.

Yaron: Blameworthy for 'thoroughly mistaken judgement' and 'grave error'.

Sharon and Saguy lost their posts, but no penalty was imposed on Eitan as he was due to retire in two months' time. Drori, too, was not penalised, but Yaron was barred from holding a field command for three years.

Eitan issued an order of the day which declared that the Israeli Army would not only accept the government's decision concerning the Sabra-Shatila events, but would learn the lessons of the Kahan Commission's findings. 'The IDF will prove that it has the ability to withstand criticism and draw painful conclusions,' he wrote.

Phalangist 'Special Forces', armed with Swiss assault rifles and fashionably arrayed in the camouflage clothing which is *de rigeur* for militiamen - whatever its practical uselessness in street fighting - confer with Israeli soldiers in August 1982. Israel's hopes of stability in Lebanon foundered as much upon the Phalangists' refusal to give up their vicious local feuds as upon the radicalisation of the Shi'a community in the south. The Gemayel faction even refused to co-operate with Haddad's 'South Lebanese Army' in the border area.





Israeli Maj.Gen. Amir Drori was the commander in Lebanon in September 1982. He was criticised in the Kahan Report for failing to pass on to Eitan reported suspicions of a massacre in progress in Sabra and Shatila. (IDF)

The Times commented that the commission of inquiry had reported on the events in Sabra and Shatila 'in unsurpassed detail and with painful frankness'. Perhaps for this very reason Israel was thrown into political disarray, and Israeli was set vehemently against Israeli.

In a way the Kahan Report was anti-climax. Long before it was published Israel was already in turmoil, because the massacres had heightened the conviction of many Israelis that the war had been unnecessary in the first place; others considered that the IDF should never have pushed through to Beirut.

The objective outsider can see that the war was the inevitable consequence of 14 years' provocation; and that for the Army to continue to Beirut and crush the PLO was military logic. To have stopped short of expelling the PLO from Beirut would have been to declare the conflict a draw; such an indecisive result would have been an invitation to the PLO to continue their attacks on Israel.

The Army's problem was that in entering Beirut it had unwittingly become involved in the savage feuds of Palestinians, Christians,

Muslims and Druse in their various factions. The democratic Israelis were out of their depth in the Byzantine complexities of Lebanese politics.

The dissent expressed by a large section of the Israeli public against the war was a remarkable manifestation of democracy. Weeks before the massacre, massive demonstrations had taken place in Tel Aviv and large ones in Jerusalem. Even soldiers in uniform took part in these demonstrations; some of them, including a brigade commander, refused service in Lebanon. This serious decision could only result in military disgrace and the end of a service career. Various servicemen's groups were organised, notably Soldiers Against Silence; they demanded that 'the truth about Lebanon' should be made known.

A major truth about Lebanon was that the Israeli leaders did not understand the depths of enmity within Lebanese society. Nor did they comprehend the centuries-old revenge mentality which afflicted *Christians* as well as Muslims; they believed that Christians generally were humble and forgiving. 'What sort of Christians are *these* people?' an Israeli professor asked the author soon after the massacres. 'I never expected that any other Christians could be as vicious as the Nazis.'

What had begun as Operation 'Peace for Galilee' in June 1982 took on a still wider dimension in October 1982 when a multi-national peace-keeping force (MNF) reached Beirut. It was made up of Marines from the USA; paratroops and Foreign Legionnaires from France; a wide range of units from Italy; and 100 men of the Blues and Royals with armoured cars from Britain. The Israeli campaign against the PLO might have concluded, but the war was continuing - and becoming wider in its strategic implications.

The MNF was entering an arena which its political masters only dimly understood. This may seem paradoxical, since Britain and France had vast experience of Middle Eastern involvement to draw upon. Italy, too, had possessed a Muslim empire, and its leaders should have known something of the powerful forces which constantly cause friction in this region. But Britain and France had moved out of the eastern Mediterranean decades before - France from Syria Lebanon in 1941, and Britain from Palestine in 1948. At that time the force of Islam was still dormant, the Soviet Union's influence was negligible, the arms held by subversive groups were primitive, the prestige of the imperial powers was great, and the people of the region were politically

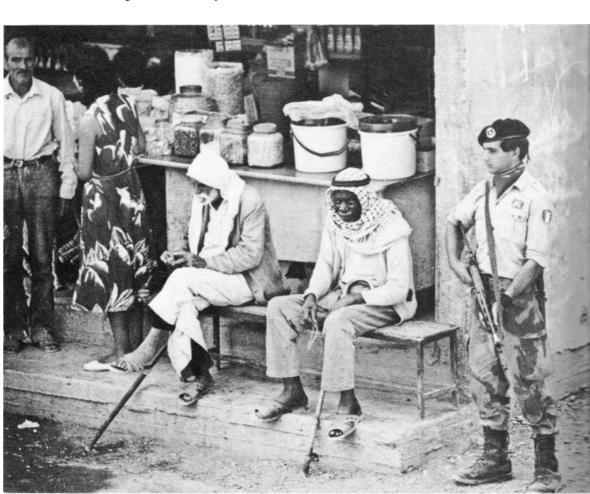
THE WAR OF DESPERATION

unsophisticated. All this had since changed and British and French expertise was out of date.

The Americans were simply innocent - if that is not too euphemistic a word. They were committing troops to the most politically complex region in the world without any clear political objective beyond the general aim - laudable in itself - of maintaining peace.

In the Middle East conflict attracts conflict, and instability attracts extremists. Almost simultaneously with the departure of the PLO another group was moving in to fill the vacuum. This time it was made up of Iranian Revolutionary Guards sent by Ayatollah Khomeini to form a strong outpost for his *jihad* or holy war against the West, and particularly against the United States.

An Italian marine of the 'San Marco' Battalion on duty in a Palestinian area of Beirut. Italian MNF troops established a trusting relationship with the Palestinians, and were spared the kind of major attacks which fell upon the French and American contingents; but they still lost two men killed.



Led by Hussein Mussawi, they established themselves at Baalbek under Syrian sponsorship and looked for ways to exploit Lebanon's instability. In north Lebanon many PLO men remained in place; they, too, wanted to wage another war against Israel, the Phalangists, and anybody else who aided their enemies. In eastern Lebanon the Syrians hastily regrouped their battered forces and asked the Soviet Union for urgent tank and aircraft replacements, as well as more advanced anti-aircraft defences. Within Beirut and in southern Lebanon Shi'a Muslim groups also saw an opportunity to increase their political strength by the use of force.

On 1 September as the PLO was leaving Beirut, President Reagan had proposed a peace plan based on self-government by the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gazans in Gaza, a freeze on Israeli settlements in occupied territories, guarantees for the security of Israel and an undivided Jerusalem. The Israeli government rejected the initiative on the grounds that it was contrary to the Camp David accords. The Arab League summit in Fez did not comment on it, and Syria opposed it. King Hussein of Jordan preferred the concept of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian committee as a step towards a future formal relationship between the West Bank and Jordan. The Arab League summit then proposed an eight-point peace plan which made no more progress than the Reagan plan.

By the end of 1982 Israeli forces were still deployed where they had been when the war of movement ended in July. As long as they remained there Israel could assure the security of its own northern frontier and prevent the re-investment of Beirut by Syria and the PLO. It remained to find a political formula that would permit Israel to withdraw without risking these gains.

The complications involved in a prolonged presence in Lebanon led some Israelis to wonder whether they were trapped in a quagmire. Israel, against its will, found itself implicated in various controversies such as the standard of shelters to be provided for the refugees in southern Lebanon, and the Druse-Maronite clashes in the Shouf Mountains and the region around the hill town of Aley. This latter was a bloody and vicious little chapter of the war, and it was to continue for months.

For a while in mid-1982 the Christians and Druse had been allies, united by their common delight in the Israeli victory over the hated



Syrians. On at least one occasion the two groups came together on the Beirut-Damascus highway for a kind of macabre ritual. Christians and Druse piled up the bodies of Syrian soldiers killed in a clash with the Israeli Army, like so many logs of wood, and burned them - still in their boots, helmets and personal gear. Around the makeshift pyre they mingled together in back-slapping triumph.

When we had been in Aley in July it was a lively place, full of people shopping, talking and sightseeing - Christians and Druse alike. Now the coffee tables were deserted and Aley was like a ghost town, with that peculiar air of tension that invests a place where violence erupts intermittently and irrationally.

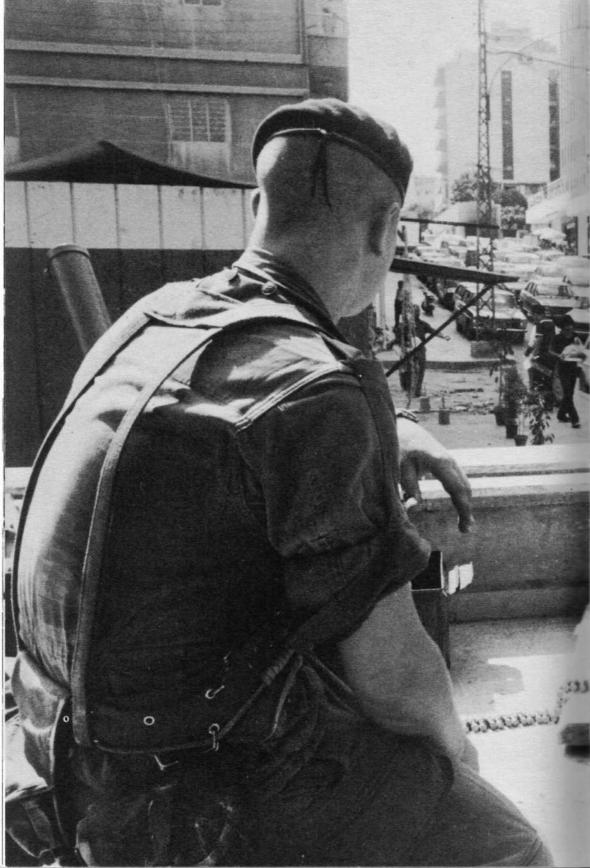
Often the violence was 'a mistake', as both Christians and Druse explained. On one occasion a Druse patrol fired an RPG into the back of a jeep because they thought it was carrying Phalange fighters. Instead, they killed four soldiers of the Lebanese Army, with which - at that time - the Druse had no particular quarrel.

Schooling had been abandoned because snipers were shooting at school buses. The Shouf was without water and electricity because the Phalangists had blown up the district generator and the Druse had destroyed the pumping station. The daily death toll was about ten, with perhaps 30 wounded, but in one period of 24 hours 17 people were killed. The automatic rifles and machine guns were hardly ever quiet, and shell explosions were frequent.

Caught in the middle of this savage feuding was the Israeli Army. Its officers tried to mediate between the warring factions, and though they had no wish to be policemen they had to impose curfews, control important road junctions and patrol the streets. The IDF posted guards over the homes of those people thought to be particularly at risk. At one time a local Israeli commander held in custody the representatives of both sides, and threatened to keep them until they worked out a

LEFT A US Marine sentry in Beirut; the magazine has been removed from his rifle. This kind of gesture, intended to underline the 'non-confrontational' role of the Marines, was lost on the fanatical Muslim guerrillas.

OVERLEAF This French para, on guard duty in Beirut in July 1983, illustrates a rather more bellicose style. They never used their AA 52 machine guns, but the impression that they would be willing to do so had a pronounced peace-keeping effect. (ECPA)





ceasefire. After 36 hours they agreed; then left the Israeli camp, and promptly went back to shooting.

Several men had an interest in provoking fighting between the Druse and Christians. One was Rifaat Assad, brother of the Syrian president, who wanted to protect his Shouf-based drug-smuggling ring and to prevent the Christians from swamping Druse autonomy. Ahmed Jibril's Marxist faction within the PLO also wanted to ensure that the Shouf did not fall under Phalangist control; the Druse had made the Shouf a safe haven for Jibril's men.

The Americans were in greater danger than they realised; and on 18 April 1983 a car bomb destroyed the US Embassy in Beirut with the loss of 66 lives. The Americans persisted in their peacemaking efforts, and chaired a series of talks between Israeli and Lebanese negotiators, with the Saudi Arabians taking a strong but discreet interest. On 17 May 1983 an agreement was signed which provided for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon provided Syria also withdrew its troops. Relations between Israel and Lebanon were to be 'normalised', a desirable state of affairs for both countries.

On 2 November 1982 the Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, David Kimche, had said: 'By removing the power of the PLO and by restoring full sovereignty and independence to Lebanon, Israel has set in train a new process in the Middle East which we hope will lead eventually to peace.' Now, seven months later, it seemed that peace might indeed be possible.

Syria refused to co-operate. President Assad was in a strong position since he knew that Israeli public opinion, alarmed by IDF casualties, would not tolerate further military action on a large scale. In the Bekaa Valley he also had 10,000 PLO fighters, virtually leaderless since Arafat's withdrawal from Beirut; Syria planned to take over these forces and use them against Israel and the Lebanese Phalange.

By the beginning of the third week in May 1983, at about the time Israel and Lebanon were signing a peace agreement, it was clear that many of the PLO fighters who had been evacuated from Beirut had returned to Lebanon and were stationed behind the Syrian lines in the eastern valleys. A bitter conflict developed between pro- and anti-Arafat factions, and the Fatah commander in the Bekaa, Musa Awad (Abu Musa), proclaimed a mutiny against Arafat's leadership. Supported by about half the PLO fighters, he was recognised by Syria.



Paras of the French 11°DP are briefed beside their VAB armoured personnel carriers. They carry the full armament of a combat section: FAMAS assault rifles, FR F1 sniper's rifles, AA 52 machine guns, and 89 mm rocket launchers. Despite their wariness and obvious combat readiness, the French had no more effective defence against suicide car-bombers than the US contingent. (ECPA)

After his retreat from Beirut Arafat had gone on to a spectacular propaganda triumph, being received in audience by Pope John-Paul II. This coup was the result of several years' work in the Vatican by Farouk Khaddoumi, the PLO's 'foreign minister'. It supported Arafat's claim to have won a political victory against Israel. He enjoyed no such victory in Syria; and as the PLO mutiny developed into savage fighting he sent telegrams to Arab heads of state accusing Syria and Libya of stirring up inter-PLO fighting in the Bekaa. As tension increased the Syrian authorities asked Arafat to leave Damascus; while the Mufti of Jerusalem, supporting Arafat, offered dispensation to anyone who

murdered President Assad¹. Assad was too well guarded to be in serious danger, but a car bomb in Baalbek, Lebanon, killed 36 people, mostly Iranians.

Sporadic fighting continued, and in September 1983 the IDF withdrew from Beirut and established a front line at the Awali River in southern Lebanon. Phalangist militiamen and their families had moved into the Shouf area - traditionally under Druse control - soon after the Israeli advance had made it safe for them to do so; but with the Israeli withdrawal the Phalangists were without protection. The Lebanese Army, which had been re-formed, re-armed and trained by American instructors, was still not strong enough to take over the Israeli positions. The Druse at once attacked both the Phalangist enclaves and the Lebanese Army. The Americans, fearing that the loss of the key centre of Souk al-Gharb would increase the threat to the MNF, supported the Army with heavy gun fire from the USS *New Jersey*.

In the hills the war had become essentially anti-Christian, with Muslims slaughtering Christian non-combatants in many towns. A comprehensive list of massacres between 31 August and 13 September reads as follows:

```
31 August 1983 36 Christians had their throats cut in Bmariam
7 September 1983 100 people massacred or 'disappeared' in Bhamdoun
10 September 1983 64 victims in Bireh
10 September 1983 30 victims in Ras el-Metn
11 September 1983 15 victims in Maasser Beit ed-Dine
11 September 1983 36 victims in Chartoun
12 September 1983 3 victims in Ain el-Hour
12 September 1983 12 victims in Bourjayne
13 September 1983 11 victims in Fawara
14 September 1983 84 victims in Maasser el-Shouf
```

Throat-slitting, as at Bmariam, is notoriously the 'signature' of a Druse massacre. The Palestinians habitually use their guns, but they do not go in for cutting throats. At Bireh several victims were executed in the village church, some of them on the altar.

By 11 September the French *Comité d'aide aux chrétiens du Liban* estimated that 42 villages in the Shouf had lost all their Christian inhabitants and all Christian houses had been wrecked and burned. On that day the Druse leader Walid Jumblatt announced his policy while

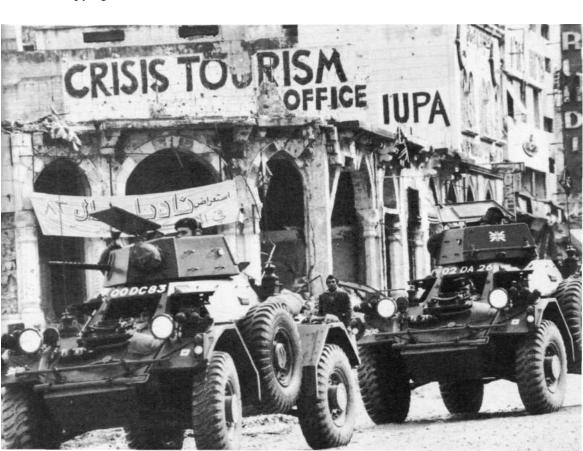
¹In the leading Arabic West Bank newspaper Al Quds, 2 June 1983.

making a speech in Damascus: 'With the help of our Syrian allies we have removed the Christians and only Druse villages will remain from now on. Such is our objective.'

Throughout the summer of 1983 Syrian-Iranian links had become stronger, and more Iranian revolutionaries arrived at Baalbek. Fanatically dedicated to the Islamic Revolution, they were repeatedly harangued by the mullahs who had accompanied them. Their main enemies, they were told, were the Israelis, the Americans, the French and the Lebanese Christians. Khomeini had declared Islamic *jihad* or holy war against these 'enemies of Allah' who had offended 'Allah's representative on earth' - Khomeini himself. It was the duty of Muslims faithful to the Koran to kill these infidels.

Early in October 1983 a European journalist with extensive

Britain's tiny 100-man contingent with the MNF comprised a weak squadron of Ferret armoured cars, here crewed by 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards. Their primary mission was guarding the building in 'no man's land' used for inter-faction negotiations. They suffered no serious attacks, and no casualties. (Crown copyright)



connections in Lebanon telephoned an official of the American Embassy in London to warn him that Islamic fanatics were planning to attack the American Marines' position in Beirut.

'Our boys can handle it,' the official said.

'Probably,' the journalist conceded, 'but only if they are told of the danger. I'm not speculating about an attack - it has been planned.'

'What kind of attack?' the American asked, still not convinced.

'That I don't know, but it may be with a kamikaze glider. The Iranians are experimenting with these things in the Bekaa.'

'Nobody can be sure of hitting a target with a glider,' the American replied. 'Anyway, why *now*}'

'Because it's the martyrdom season,' he was told.

'Chrissake!' exclaimed the American diplomat. 'What's that?'

Muharram, the first month of the Muhammadan year, is an emotional month for Shi'a Muslims. They perform 'passion plays' and take part in mass processions and demonstrations that have no parallel in the Sunni Muslim world. Tens of thousands of young men rake their backs with hooks on the end of chains as a symbol of their fidelity to Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, whom they regard as the Prophet's successor. Ali was killed in AD 661 (year 61 of the Muslim calendar) and in 680 the same fate befell his second son Husain. Their violent deaths instilled in the Shi'as an admiration for these 'martyrs' and a passionate desire to emulate them. This was explained to the American at the London Embassy, but he seemed unable to credit what he heard.

That the marines were not warned of imminent attack was obvious the sentries on duty at the gate to their headquarters carried unloaded rifles, and no substantial barriers had been erected to stop an attack by vehicle. The various factions who have fought in Lebanon never carry weapons just for show. Every firearm is loaded at all times and the owner is prepared to use it without hesitation. When it was later disclosed that the Marine sentries on duty had empty firearms the belligerents in Lebanon would not at first believe it. 'An unloaded weapon is just a toy,' a Druse told the author. 'A soldier is not a soldier unless he can shoot - he is a corpse.'

On 23 October a holy war warrior rammed a truck laden with 2,000 lbs of explosives into the building which housed the headquarters of the US Marine Corps in Beirut. The explosion destroyed the building and

killed 241 Marines. Minutes later another suicide truck bomber crashed into one of the French paratroops' bases and 58 died. On 4 November a similar attack was made on the Israel Border Police HQ in Tyre and 60 people, 28 of them Israelis, were crushed to death.

President Reagan and President Mitterand threatened retaliation against the planners of the ram-bomb attacks - the Free Islamic Revolutionary Movement and another group, both backed by Syria and Iran. But they could find no tactics to counter this new kind of suicidal warfare, and the MNF's sphere of operations was restricted to a small part of Beirut.

The Americans continued to use naval guns to support the hard-pressed Lebanese Army in its battles with the Druse in the Shouf Mountains, but the huge one-ton shells from the USS *New Jersey* did little damage to actual military targets in the hills. French carrier-based aircraft bombed a suspected Shi'a terrorist base near Baalbek, but this raid, too, had limited military value.

On 29 November 1983 the USA and Israel agreed to establish a joint political-military committee to strengthen strategic co-operation between the two countries in the face of the 'Soviet threat'; this was certainly a long-term worry, but the American administration was even more concerned about its lack of a power-base in the area. It was clear, said President Reagan, that without Israel the USA had no reliable strategic partner in the Middle East. The announcement of this agreement - desirable though it was - finally buried any faint hope of presenting America as a genuinely even-handed mediator in the region: now her troops were seen merely as one more armed faction.

Meanwhile, Fatah troops loyal to Yasser Arafat were fighting those now under Syrian control. Brigadier-General Tariq Khadra, commander of the Palestine Liberation Army, also turned against Arafat and said he would accept orders from the breakaway faction. Arafat and his supporters were besieged in Tripoli, where they came under heavy attack from PLO mutineers backed by Syrian armour and artillery. The internecine fighting was some of the most savage seen in Lebanon, and many Lebanese civilians were killed or wounded when caught in the cross-fire. After numerous ceasefires had broken down Arafat's 4,000 fighters were evacuated from Tripoli during 17-20 December in Greek freighters escorted by French warships.

The countries providing MNF contingents were reluctant to



The US Marines' huge Patton tanks were a potent symbol of the unsuitability of this kind of unit for 'peace-keeping' in a murderously complex situation like Beirut in 1983. Restrictions on their operations limited them more or less to the role of sitting ducks for any Iranian-inspired fanatic who sought martyrdom in a blow against 'the Great Satan'.

withdraw them because of the inevitable damage to their prestige, but it was obvious that they could achieve little more; the troops were nothing more than targets waiting for the next shell, rocket or ram-bomb attack. If they were to move out of Beirut and into the hills to fight their attackers they would no longer be a 'peace-keeping' force, and they would risk even more casualties in unfamiliar country.

Finally, on 22 February 1984, the last American Marines pulled outor 'redeployed', as the US administration described this retreat. And quite soon the MNF ceased to exist. Some of the best-trained troops in the world, with some of the best equipment, had been forced out by a relative handful of primitives whose principal weapons were fanaticism and a desire for martyrdom.

The numbers of men involved in this concluding phase of the Lebanon war were few, but the MNF's withdrawal from Beirut was a decisive political defeat. It showed that the West has neither a viable strategy nor workable tactics when confronting *jihadic* warriors.

The MNF failed in Lebanon because neither their political nor military leaders had comprehended the nature of 'peace-keeping' or of warfare in this area. They were not necessarily the best troops for the job. Marine, Paratroop, and Foreign Legion training fits men for aggressive, 'keep-going' attack, not for the patient diplomacy and static defence which was the only possible stance in Beirut. They suffered from another disadvantage: they believed that their 'gung-ho' reputation would deter attack.

The impotence of the MNF, with its conventional approach to defensive peace-keeping tactics, was starkly apparent when confronted by dedicated and fanatical terrorists eager to die in battle. The very senior American, British, French and Italian officers who were sent to Beirut to study the situation could suggest no solution. Their helplessness vindicated the Israeli tactics of a hard-hitting all-out combined-forces assault against a strong guerrilla force which was a threat to peace. More significantly, it was clear that the Israeli decision to mount its operation before the PLO became even stronger was militarily a sound one. In fact the Israelis had delayed too long; their large number of war dead - 583 to the end of June 1984 - proved this. The Israeli mistake lay not in going to war, but in going to war too late. They had allowed their PLO enemies to become too strong.

Israel could not afford the luxury of 'redeployment'. A military withdrawal from Lebanon would be interpreted by the Arabs as retreat or defeat, at the very least as a serious erosion of Israel's overall deterrent stance. Such an Arab perception would affect the Lebanon-Israel peace agreement and would seriously damage future peace prospects with Jordan. The Arabs would focus on war, not diplomacy, if they perceived a 'weak' and defeated Israel.

Some Israeli experts claimed that Israel's deterrent stance could best be restored by getting out of Lebanon, so that the IDF could devote its energies to the kind of training and reconstruction of its fighting forces which would ensure Israel's deterrent capabilities - and ensure that the Arab states appreciated them.

But by 1984 history had moved on, and the enemy in southern Lebanon was no longer the PLO. It was Shi'a fundamentalism, inspired, incited and armed by Iran and Syria. By March 1984 70 per cent of anti-Israeli terrorist activity in the south was Shi'a, not Palestinian. This activity was aimed at Israel, but as the ram-bomb attacks in Beirut showed, the Western world was the longer-term target.

After the Italians, British and Americans left Beirut, the French, determined to show that they were not being forced to retreat, stayed on for a time; but this brave defiance deceived nobody. The retreat of the MNF, and particularly of its American backbone, did not only mark the end of a particular phase of the war which had begun in June 1982. It also ended American, and by association Western prestige in the region. The Syrians, Lebanese, PLO and much of the Arab world now knew that the Western powers were impotent in the Middle East.

9 And it Came to Pass

IN September 1984 Shimon Peres took office as Prime Minister of Israel following an election which produced no clear victory either for his Labour party, or for the Likud coalition. He had campaigned on a promise that he would withdraw Israeli soldiers from Lebanon as soon as possible - a policy which reflected public opinion, which could no longer tolerate the price the troops were paying.

It was not possible simply to order the Army to pull out. Disengagements are always dangerous; and apart from the need to devise a practical future security policy, Israel had a responsibility to keep the peace in areas under its control. Army officers warned that when the IDF moved out a dangerous vacuum would be created; Palestinian refugees would become the victims of Shi'a murder squads, and Christian villages in southern Lebanon would also be vulnerable to Shi'a hostility. Sidon was a particular headache, with 80,000 Shi'as, 45,000 Sunnis, 20,000 Christians and 80,000 Palestinians living in and around the city. Since all these groups were swearing tribal vengeance on one another, the Israelis could not arrange any form of assured protection.

Yet again, the Americans were reminded of the difficulty of providing effective defence against the threat posed by fanatical suicide bombers. Just before noon on 27 September 1984 a van with diplomatic plates pulled up at a checkpoint outside the American Embassy complex. When Lebanese security guards ordered the driver to halt, he drew a pistol and opened fire; then, racing his engine, he zig-zagged through the concrete 'dragon's teeth'. A British security guard accompanying the British Ambassador, who was visiting his American counterpart, opened fire on the van. The driver fell sideways, pulling on the wheel, and the van veered to the right. It hit a parked car 30 feet from the Embassy, but the explosion which followed was still powerful enough to bring down the facade of the building. That only 12 people were killed and 35 wounded - and not hundreds - was due to the British guard's accurate shooting.





THE WAR OF DESPERATION

On 30 January 1985 Yitzhak Shamir, the Foreign Minister (and former Prime Minister), had foreign diplomats in Israel briefed about the likelihood that various sectarian militias were planning to attack rival civil communities when the Israeli troops moved out. This situation had been created by the refusal or inability of the Lebanese Government to put its army into the areas to be evacuated by Israel, and by the Syrian veto on a UN military presence in the area. The Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman, Avi Pazner, said 'We are, unfortunately, acquainted with the sad, murderous reality in Lebanon, and certain events are bound to follow.'

Psychologically, there was a stronger reason for a slow and steady

PREVIOUS PAGE Sunday 23 October 1982 taught the world what 1,000 lbs of high explosives will do when detonated below a ninestorey block of apartments. The remains of 'Drakkar', the French HQ in West Beirut, where at least 70 people died - most of them young French conscripts who had voluntarily extended their tour to serve in Beirut. (An Nahar/Gamma)

BELOW US Marine Patton tank photographed during the evacuation from Beirut. The name 'Psycho' was applied to the gun barrel during the crew's tour of duty in Lebanon; the Marines said that it was an appropriate choice, in 'that crazy killing country'. (USMC)



withdrawal rather than a rapid disengagement. The PLO, the Syrians and the Shi'a of the south would present a rapid pull-back as a military defeat. For the sake of its future security Israel could not afford to lose military prestige. In any case, time was needed to strengthen Israel's northern defences against possible attack. Having achieved security by invasion and defeat of the PLO, it was necessary to keep it.

Despite the deliberately steady pace of the withdrawal the Shi'as and their allies *did* claim that the Israelis were fleeing. Typical headlines, in a pro-Syrian Beirut newspaper, were LEBANESE RESISTANCE TRIUMPHS and ENEMY DECIDES TO RUN AWAY.

In southern Lebanese villages a call was frequently broadcast from mosques, 'Kill the Israelis! Death to the invaders!' It was a symptom of the dangerous politico-religious forces which were overheating the Shi'a community of perhaps 400,000 people in southern Lebanon. The Shi'as had welcomed the Israelis as saviours in 1982, and had accepted the Israeli military presence as a necessary inconvenience. But they are a volatile and easily aroused people; and *agents provocateur* sent by the Syrian Army, the Druse leaders and the Iranian fundamentalists in Baalbek succeeded in turning them against the Israelis. Relatively few Lebanese Shi'as actively fought against the Israeli troops; but those who did had the passive support of the population, who gave them shelter and allowed them to hide weapons and explosives in their homes.

The Iranians in particular - many of them religious leaders - were preaching *jihad* or holy war and calling for martyrs to fight the Jews and Christians. The Shi'a villagers were told that the Americans and French had already been attacked and pushed out of Lebanon; it was now time to kill Israelis. To those who pointed out that the Israelis were already leaving Lebanon the mullahs' reply was invariably the same: 'That is all the more reason for killing them - so that they will not come back.'

Foreign Ministry spokesman Pazner had warned diplomats of 'certain events'. His prediction came bloodily true on 10 March. A Shi'a suicide bomber drove a pick-up truck loaded with 220 lbs of explosive into a lorry packed with Israeli soldiers going home: 12 of them died in the explosion. At times during the withdrawal attacks on Israeli troops reached ten or 12 a day.

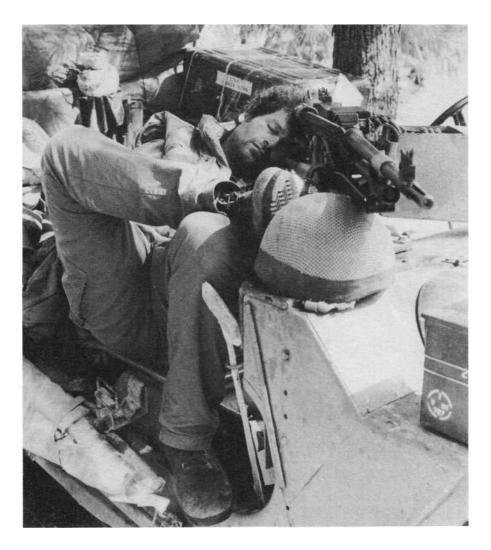
The Israelis retaliated with what the Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, called 'the Iron Fist' policy. When the Shi'as attacked an Israeli

Army unit the IDF responded by blowing up buildings in which arms caches were found, and by relentlessly tracking down the terrorists. Fundamentalist Muslims, consumed by the fervour of holy war, almost welcomed such retaliation; they considered it proof of the effectiveness of their campaigns.

For more than two years Shi'a extremists had been training young women as suicide attackers at Melli and Shiraz universities in Iran. During 1984 they recruited some Lebanese Shi'a girls, and among them was Sana Mhaydali, a pretty 16-year-old. She could not drive a car, but her recruiters gave her an elementary lesson in putting a vehicle into gear and steering it. In April 1985, having rigged a car as a bomb on wheels, they push-started it for Sana's last journey. She succeeded in ramming an Israeli vehicle, killing two Israeli soldiers and herself.

Thanks to a propaganda video tape which she recorded before her mission, this unfortunate girl became an instant celebrity, and is immortalised in death as 'Queen (or 'Bride') of the South'. The Cypruspublished *Middle East Times* commented: 'What did Sana's Shi'a mentors tell her? Did they have no reservations in telling her that a fiery death in an exploding car was better than a life of friendship, family and love? Clearly they were happy to have such a beautiful martyr. But in this case the Shi'a use of religious images and promises of heaven is truly corrupt. . . . The grim fact is that Sana was lured to her death by those older than her whom she trusted, but who were willing to use her life for their own sake.'

During a visit to Lebanon in the summer of 1985 the author found out more about Sana Mhaydali. The daughter of a customs officer, Sana was born at Unkun in the Saida district and was the youngest of a family of four. After a period of education at a Christian school, she finished her studies in 1982, at the age of 14, and began work in a video shop near her home. She became pregnant by a local boy. Because her father might well have killed her for 'dishonouring' the family, Sana left her home and her job, on 23 March 1985, and fell under the influence of the local agent of the Syrian Popular Party, Abd el-Trzi, and other men. Trzi recruited her as a prospective suicide attacker and, according to her friends, exploited her despair at being pregnant. 'Sana didn't really want to be a martyr,' the author was told, 'but the men talked her into it. It was Trzi's idea to make a film about Sana's "holy mission" and to call her "Bride of the South".'



An exhausted Israeli soldier asleep behind his machine gun in the hills near Jezzine. The aftermath of the 1982 invasion has caused much self-questioning and anguish in the IDF, which in all Israel's previous campaigns has been able to pride itself on the 'purity' of its mission of national self-defence. These doubts are shared by a section of the Israeli public; and, since political argument is the lifeblood of Israeli society, they are voiced loudly and repeatedly. The war finished the career of Menachem Begin, and - it seemed at one stage - of Ariel Sharon, though this judgement may well be premature. But though enthusiasm for adventures beyond Israel's borders may have evaporated, the determination to continue to defend Israeli soil and lives is unblunted.



The IDF buries its dead in a new military cemetery near Jerusalem. The Lebanon war has cost Israel more than 650 dead, losses which are felt particularly keenly in Israel's small and closely-knit population. (IDF)

Another 16-year-old Lebanese Shi'a, Muhammad Mahmoud Burro, was captured during an Israeli Army raid on a southern village. In an interview with *The New York Times* (16 April 1985) this trained suicide car bomber said that he had been blackmailed into volunteering for martyrdom. Abu Hassan, security chief for the Amal organisation in Beirut, had threatened to make a lot of trouble for the Burro family, who were already deep in financial and other difficulties.

That the Shi'as attacked the Israeli troops so fiercely is richly ironic. Ever since modern Lebanon came into being the Shi'a people had felt that they were the 'slaves' of the much wealthier Christians and Sunni Muslims. The Israeli occupation freed the Shi'as from this inferior status, and they became much more self-confident. Without Syrian and Iranian incitement the Lebanese Shi'as might have remained as friendly to Israel as they were when we saw them welcome the Israeli soldiers as 'saviours' in 1982.

While Lebanon once more fell to pieces President Amin Gemayel, elder brother of Bashir, was isolated in his palace near Baabda, Beirut. He tried desperately to show that he was a credible president - and failed. He had no viable national army¹; and the 'Lebanese Forces' militia, now commanded by Samir Geagea in succession to Fadi Frem, had turned against him. They saw him as a mere tool of the Syrians, and they were, in any case, almost exclusively concerned with preserving the Christian community of the Lebanese heartland north and north-east of Beirut.

In mid-April 1985 Christian artillery east of Sidon shelled Lebanese Muslim and Palestinian areas of the city; Muslim gunners responded, and fighting went on for two weeks. But the bloodiest fighting of all occurred in Beirut, especially for control of the square of Sakiet el-Janzir, through which many roads run down to the seaside Corniche. This battle was first fought between the Murabitoun - a Nasserite group, and the only militia of the Sunni Muslim community - and the Shi'a Amal movement led by Nabih Berri.

During ten hours on the night of 16 April 1985 the whole of West Beirut became, yet again, a battlefield. Just before midnight the Druse militia entered the battle on the side of Amal, and by mid-morning on the 17th the Murabitoun had been crushed. Hundreds of houses were looted, and several families were found massacred in their homes. The Syrians were directly responsible for the fierceness of the combined Amal-Druse assault on the Murabitoun, as Ghassan Seblani, a Druse leader, admitted: the fighting was 'pre-arranged and planned', he said.

Once again the Syrian factor was showing itself to be dominant in the dismemberment of Lebanon. The Syrian leaders had good reason, from their own point of view, to stage manage the latest battle for West Beirut. Since April 1984 PLO fighters loyal to Yasser Arafat had been trickling back into West Beirut; simultaneously, Arafat's aides in charge of logistics had been channelling money and arms to the Murabitoun. Arafat and the Murabitoun leaders planned an alliance which would give them the strength to survive the threat posed by the Shi'a-Druse

¹Although re-equipped and to some extent re-trained by the United States, the Lebanese Army still suffered from the fatal weakness of being organised in separate Muslim and Christian battalions. This guaranteed its uselessness as an effective arm of impartial national authority, and the polarisation of factional feeling in one unit or another with every new turn of events. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Muslim units were still commanded by Christian officers.



The Lebanese Army's organisation in segregated units drawn from the different communities in the country ensured its disintegration during the civil war of the 1970s. Re-equipped and partly re-trained by the Americans, it fell apart again, for the same reasons, in 1984-85. It is bitterly ironic that in May 1985 the largely Shi'a Muslim 6th Brigade was fighting side by side with the Shi'a Amal militia to expel PLO fighters from the Sabra and Shatila camps. At the time of writing it seems possible that the death-toll may approach that inflicted on the camps by the Maronites in September 1982, which was presented to the world as indirectly the responsibility of Israel. In Lebanon, the only constant factor is killing. (Laurent Maous/Gamma)

combination. The Syrian leadership, implacably opposed to Arafat as leader of the PLO, had to crush the PLO-Murabitoun union before it could become an effective military and political force. It is also true that the Syrian command has no confidence in the Lebanese Sunni community as fighters, and sees no future in trying to make them into a military force. The defeat inflicted on the Murabitoun was designed to show the Sunnis that they had better concentrate on that to which they are best suited by temperament and tradition - that is, commerce.

Meanwhile, the Israeli withdrawal went ahead competently under the command of General Ori Orr. Computers determined the number of trucks and man-hours needed for the massive operation, which took place in stages. Brigadier-General Chaim Erez, in charge of certain phases of the evacuation, faced enormous problems in getting heavy equipment and static installations dismantled and returned to Israel. Whatever could not be moved was destroyed and ploughed into the ground. Deep tunnels built by the PLO in the mountains east of Sidon, and other bunker and trench complexes, were demolished to make it more difficult for the PLO to return to their former territory.

The most difficult aspect of the evacuation was providing security for the long, heavy convoys moving along roads through guerrilla-infested countryside. Security was tight; numbers of jeeps armed with two heavy machine guns guarded each convoy, while foot patrols in flak jackets searched the sides of the roads for bombs and land mines -not without paying a price in lives and limbs. All intersections were sealed off with concertina barbed wire and armed half-tracks as convoys passed. As they left, the Israelis distributed leaflets warning the Shi'as against terrorist acts and threatening retaliation.

Throughout the Israeli withdrawal and the inevitable manoeuvres which preceded it the role of UNIFIL was ambiguous. By April 1985 officers at the headquarters of the 5,800-strong force were saying that the UN should pull UNIFIL out. For seven years it had failed to carry out the duties laid down for it by the Security Council. Between 1982 and 1985 UNIFIL soldiers could do little more than provide 'protection and humanitarian assistance to the civilian population', as the UN Secretary-General described their function. This was greatly appreciated by the people of southern Lebanon; but in an area where every man and boy goes around armed and is ready to shoot on the slightest provocation or suspicion, UNIFIL has always been an anomaly. Its troops are under orders not to shoot except in direct self defence, and they are not supposed to get killed in combat¹.

In February the fundamentalist pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of Allah movement) threatened to 'take action' against those countries whose troops serve with UNIFIL, because they were 'interfering with the will of Allah and because no foreigners should remain in Lebanon'. The countries concerned were France, Norway, Ireland, Sweden, Ghana, Nepal, Fiji, Finland, the Netherlands and Italy.

In view of UNIFIL's previous history of ineffectiveness in controlling the movements of PLO terrorists, the Israeli Army left it out of account when planning its defences along the Lebanese border.

¹During the period 1978-85 40 UN troops *were* killed in action, and another 60 died in Lebanon from other causes.

The security plan is based on a buffer zone between a mile and a half and ten miles in depth, patrolled by the South Lebanese Army under Major-General Antoine Lahad, successor to Major Haddad. On the Lebanese side of the border Israeli engineers dug an anti-vehicle ditch, though not a continuous one, for a length of 55 miles; it was designed to 'swallow up' any suicide attacker and his car-bomb. Watchtowers, electronic warning devices and powerful floodlights cover the entire border, and well-trained regular soldiers from elite units man the border defences.

Long before these defences were complete it had become clear that most of the leaders of the various Shi'a factions were slowly retreating from their policy of terror against Israel following the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon. Yitzhak Rabin's policy, though resolute and retaliatory in style, was to encourage the relatively moderate members of the Shi'a community to withdraw from the extremist stance which they had been incited to adopt. It had been demonstrated that every attack the Shi'as made would cost them dearly; and Rabin's uncompromising realism, though providing no instant remedy, was having its effect. In May 1985, with Israeli withdrawal proceeding on schedule, there came signs that the Shi'a leaders were taking a rather longer view. Explicit warnings began to be issued against any attempt by the PLO to return to the south to resume attacks on Israel under cover of the Shi'a community.

Nevertheless, the PLO did make occasional attempts to break through and re-establish themselves in the south and to bypass Israeli land defences. On 22 April the Israeli Navy intercepted and sank a ship carrying 28 PLO gunmen along the northern coast of Israel; 20 were drowned and the other eight were captured.

Three years after the start of Israel's 1982 war against the PLO in Lebanon, it is clear that Palestinian militancy has suffered a severe defeat. Thousands of PLO fighters have died; thousands more are scattered, impotently, in refuges far from Israel's borders; and much of the remaining armed strength of the PLO in Lebanon has been brought firmly under control of Damascus, as a tool of Syrian policy. Under the stress of defeat the factional tensions within the PLO have broken out in open warfare. Yasser Arafat's authority and freedom of manoeuvre have been seriously compromised. Although it would be a mistake to put too much weight on his words, it is hardly conceivable that, before the June



Street scene, Beirut, 1984: a bullet-scarred apartment block, a white Mercedes, shoppers profiting from a relatively calm period, and a proudly decorated militia barricade. . . . The forces let loose among the Lebanese population stretch back far beyond the Israeli intervention, and will stalk the streets long after the last IDF soldier has crossed the border southwards. (Azar/Gamma)

1982 invasion, he would have stated publicly, if through a third party, that under certain conditions he would be prepared to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242, explicitly recognising Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state (interview with *The Washington Post*, 15 May 1985).

As for tortured Lebanon herself, her future defies prediction. The Americans, French, Italians and British have long gone from Beirut, and so have the Israelis. The Lebanese Army is fragmented, badly led, and afraid to move decisively. Although he is still the nominal president of a nominally sovereign nation, Amin Gemayel's humiliating dependence on Syria, as the only power with the will and resources to dictate events in Lebanon, has reduced his standing even within his own Maronite community. The 'Lebanese Forces' militia are prepared to act only to safeguard their own small Maronite areas; and pressure from Damascus has played a part in the removal of Samir Geagea from

command. Ironically, the man who has replaced him - and who in May 1985 was issuing placatory statements about the legitimacy of Syria's interests in Lebanon - is none other than Elie Hobeika, last encountered in these pages amid the carnage of Sabra and Shatila. (It is not too surprising that Hobeika was acceptable to the Syrians, as he is reputed to be a discreet partner in Rifaat Assad's business enterprises.) In the south, Lahad's Southern Lebanese Army militia is installed in the buffer zone along the Israeli frontier; it has continuing Israeli support but is understrength.

When the author was in Lebanon in June 1985 no fewer than seven distinct and separate armed feuds were raging - with all the bloody savagery which has become so depressingly familiar to an appalled world - between various Shi'a, Sunni, Druse, Christian, PLO and Syrian factions.

The major conflict was being fought between Shi'a Amal and PLO gunmen in the wrecked Sabra, Shatila and Bourg el-Barajna camps, for the PLO had not heeded the Shi'a warning to keep out of Beirut and the south. It was not possible for observers to enter the sprawling, battered districts, but it seemed likely that in weeks of fighting another major massacre took place - the number of dead might well have equalled the Palestinians killed by the 'Lebanese Forces' in 1982. The Shi'a gunmen were so ruthless that they tore off the bandages of men under treatment in hospitals to see if they had combat wounds: if so, they were shot dead. Numerous women and children were also among the victims.

The only beneficiary of all this desperate conflict was Syria. Having divided and sub-divided the many groups opposed to Syrian domination of Lebanon, the Syrian leaders had ensured that no combination of potential enemies would be strong enough to defy them. (The 'Lebanese Forces' of the Maronites comprised a mere 2,000 regulars.) After more than ten years of effort the Syrians could feel confident that they controlled Lebanon; military occupation was an irrelevance, since all the Lebanese leaders were dependent on Damascus.

Having suffered more than 650 battle deaths, the Israelis are left, alone, to hold a front line against Islamic fundamentalism, Syrian and Iranian expansionism, and international terror - and, behind them, the opportunist ambitions of the Soviet Union.

Appendix 1 Palestinian Military and Para-Military Forces

All Palestinian military and para-military forces (except the Abu Nidal faction) are nominally subordinate to the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, under its Chairman, Yasser Arafat. Arafat also heads Fatah, the largest PLO constituent organisation. The PLO attempts to co-ordinate the activities of its member organisations; but it lacks full operational control, and the military forces of the different organisations are in practice responsible only to their own leadership.

Palestinian forces fall into four categories: (a) the regular Palestine Liberation Army - PLA; (b) quasi-regular units of the various organisations; (c) militias, supplementary to the various quasi-regular units; and (d) terror squads.

The Palestine Liberation Army is based in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. In Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon it deploys two brigades, an independent battalion, and other independent units. In Jordan it has a third brigade. Total strength is about 4,000 men.



Salah Khalaf, better known under the *nom de guerre* of 'Abu Iyad', headed Arafat's 'security service'. His West Beirut headquarters were pinpointed and destroyed by the Israelis during the siege, but he escaped.

THE WAR OF DESPERATION

Quasi-Regular Forces:

| Organisation | Commander | Armed |
|---|--|--------------------|
| | | personnel |
| Al-Fatah | Yasser Arafat | $13,000^1$ |
| Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) | Dr George Habash | I,IOO ² |
| PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC) | Ahmad Jibril | 60 |
| Saiqa | Dr Issam al-Qadi | $2,100^3$ |
| Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) | Nayef Hawatmeh | 1,350 ⁴ |
| Arab Liberation Front (ALF) | Abd al-Rahim Ahmad | 450 |
| Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) | Bahjat Abu Gharbiyya and Dr Samir Ghusha | 300 |
| Palestine Liberation Front/ Abu Abbas faction | Mahmud al-Zaidan, alias Abu Abbas | 450 |
| Palestine Liberation Front/ Abu Nidal faction ('Black June') | Sabri al-Bana, alias Abu Nidal | 600 |
| Others, totalling | | c. 3,000 |

Notes

The para-military militias of the various organisations total about 20,000 personnel.

The terror squads total about 200 personnel.

The total strength of the armed membership of the various Palestinian forces and organisations is thus about 43,000 men and women.

¹Supposedly divided into four brigades. Three, each of 2,000 to 2,500 men, fought in Lebanon in 1982: the Kastel, Karameh and Yarmouk Brigades.

²Supposedly divided into four 'battalions', though these would only field about 275 men each.
³Supposedly divided into three battalions, which at about 700 men would be of conventional size.

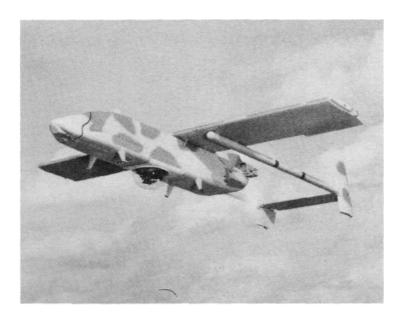
⁴More typical of the deliberately misleading and inflated unit titling practice of most underground organisations, DFLP claims eight 'battalions', each of which could only field less than 200 men.

Appendix 2 The Scout Remote-Piloted Vehicle

Under modern battlefield conditions there is a vital need for 'real-time information' - accurate information on the enemy's status and movements, with minimum delay. But gathering such information conventionally, under the threat of sophisticated weapons, involves great risk to human life and expensive equipment. One solution to the problem has been provided by Israel Aircraft Industries, who developed the Scout RPV.

The Scout is a 'miniplane', just over 12 feet long and with a wingspan of just over 16 feet. It is catapulted into flight from a ramp that can be

The Israeli Scout RPV - note the clear perspex camera cupola under the centre section. Only 12 feet long, and with a 22 hp engine, it operates at about 100 mph at an altitude of 15,000 feet, and is thus almost undetectable to human eyes and ears.



fitted to any truck. Its 22 hp two-cylinder engine can keep it airborne for as long as seven hours if necessary - in military terms, an extraordinarily useful 'loiter time' - and it can then be brought back under remote control for retrieval. This is by flying it into a vertical net, but conventional landings are also possible. A typical Scout field unit consists of four to six RPVs, a control station and a take-off and landing unit; the whole operation is handled by ten men.

Before the flight the ground station gives the Scout a computerised check-out; and uses the same equipment to calculate target coordinates. The Scout carries television cameras covering the entire 'hemisphere' below the vehicle; their magnification is so powerful that they can detect individual people, and the details necessary for the identification of all types of vehicles and equipment. These pictures are automatically transmitted back to the control truck, where operators analyse them. The flight path is traced continuously on a map by a plotter. If required, the information transmitted by the RPV can be received by several ground stations simultaneously, so that various commanders can monitor continuously what the camera in the sky is filming.

The Scout is remarkably easy to operate and maintain; and its makers claim that - with an operating altitude of about 15,000 ft and a cruising speed of around 100 mph - it is almost undetectable. There is no record of an RPV being spotted by Syrian or PLO personnel in Lebanon: the Scout's cameras would have picked up their reaction had they noticed it.

Appendix 3 The Merkava

From the viewpoint of the professional defence community, the combat debut of the Merkava is one of the most interesting aspects of the Lebanon war, and for this reason the tank is worth describing in detail.

Tank designers have several major factors to consider: protection and 'survivability' - i.e. the ability of the essential components and the crew to survive enemy hits; firepower; mobility; versatility; and ease of maintenance. In most of these categories the Merkava has proved extremely successful. Its one ostensible handicap - mobility - must be set against the very specific requirements of the IDF.

The 'Chariot' was developed largely due to the efforts of General Israel Tal, a famous tank general of the 1967 war and later commander of Israel's Armoured Corps. Tal's priority was 'survivability'. The author touched elsewhere in this book on the traumatic effect of battle casualties on the small, tightly-knit Israeli population; and from a coldly practical point of view, losses among technically skilled personnel such as tank crews are especially damaging. The protection enjoyed by the Merkava crew is outstanding; it has been achieved by unconventional methods; and its price in terms of mobility has clearly been felt worth paying, in view of the IDF's special requirements.

In the past Israel has faced challenges on two very different fronts: the empty sands of the Sinai Desert, where mobility was a major advantage; and the rocky hills of the Golan, where ruggedness was of more practical importance. The design of the Merkava suggests that the conditions on the Syrian front took precedence. It must also be noted that Israel has only produced some 200 Merkavas, out of a total tank strength of more than 2,500. It is clear that Merkava is not intended to take over the role already performed successfully by the Centurion and the various models of the Patton series. It is a tool for a particular job; and by all accounts, it performs that job admirably.

The most obvious novelty is the placing of the engine in the front rather than the rear of the hull. Together with the very sharply sloped armour on the hull and turret front, which increases the effective armour thickness against flat trajectory hits, this gives massive frontal protection. Even if the engine is penetrated and knocked out, the crew survive, and the main armament remains operational. The armour itself is made up not of a single thick plate, but of layers of thinner plates with space between; this configuration has proved effective in dissipating the super-heated tongue of gas which a modern HEAT shaped-charge anti-tank projectile punches through armour.

Apart from the effective design and sloping of the armour itself, further protection has been achieved in unusual ways. Anything which gets in the way of a modern anti-tank shell or missile, and delays or slows its impact, gives the main armour of a tank a better chance of stopping it. Many of the items which are normally carried inside a tank e.g. batteries, machine gun ammunition, searchlights, tools and various spare components - are stowed outside the Merkava in armoured compartments, thus increasing the 'stand-off protection. Even more unusual is the use of fuel as protection, which may appear a contradiction in terms. In fact, it has been established that four inches of fuel gives the same protection as one inch of armour plate. Panniers fitted with flexible, self-sealing fuel tanks are mounted over the tracks on each side of the Merkava, and another over a foot thick is placed in front of the turret. With non-volatile diesel fuel, which does not burn nearly as readily as petrol, and with efficient fire-suppression systems, this arrangement gives useful added protection.

In Lebanon the Merkava formed the spearhead of many armoured columns. They were inevitably hit many times by all kinds of ordnance: by shaped-charge HEAT rounds and missiles, and by APFSDS tank-fired armour-piercing rounds, which rely for their effect not upon the tongue of gas emitted by a shaped explosive charge but upon a hyper-velocity rod of a super-dense metal such as tungsten carbide. Some projectiles partly penetrated the armour, and some tanks were disabled; but the IDF is adamant that no Merkava crewman was killed, and that most damage was quickly repaired by field maintenance crews. (The PLO did set one on fire near Khalde, but photographs suggest that this was posed for the photographers - petrol was poured over the outside of an abandoned tank and set ablaze for the benefit of the cameras.)



Merkava in the hills near Aley; the tank is seen here from the rear, with its gun traversed to 'nine o'clock'. Note the large hatches in the rear hull, which allow both rapid loading with palletised ammunition, and also access for the crew, for casualty evacuation cases, or for any other soldier who needs a well-protected ride in the front line of battle. (Author's photo)

The propellant used in modern tank ammunition burns far more easily than any fuel, and is harder to put out; so the main danger of catastrophic internal fires and explosions when a tank is penetrated comes from the tank's own stored shells. It is therefore a further important advantage that the Merkava's front-engine design allows an armoured compartment for ammunition, further protected by fire-suppression systems, to be located in the rear of the hull - an angle from which tanks are rarely fired upon. Very little ammunition is carried in the turret 'ready racks' in combat. Replenishment is also much easier, quicker and safer than with conventional designs, because pallets ready-loaded with shells can be inserted from the outside through two armoured, rapid-action doors in the rear hull.

This rear ammunition compartment is the key to another unique strength of the Merkava: its ability to carry extra men in action. If part of the normal load of 85 rounds of ammunition is unloaded, or passed forward for temporary stowage inside the turret, soldiers can enter from the rear through a central door (in relative safety, as they are usually covered by the bulk of the tank). Infantry squads can be taken forward for special missions under the heaviest fire; there are varying claims as to

the number who can be accommodated, but it may be as many as ten. The pinned-down crews of abandoned tanks can be picked up under fire; and on several occasions during the Lebanon fighting the Merkava was used as a field ambulance to evacuate nearby infantry casualties from positions where no other vehicle could have survived. It has been claimed that in extreme emergency as many as 15 casualties were crammed into a Merkava under fire. Finally, the unusual layout allowed senior officers to use the Merkava as a forward command post on some occasions, enjoying heavy armour protection and good communications.

The Merkava has a conventional four-man crew: driver, gunner, loader, and commander. The driver sits on the left side of the engine, which is isolated from the main fighting compartment by an armoured bulkhead. The fighting compartment extends for the full width of the hull, and incorporates - in the usual manner - the 'turret basket' or 'turntable': the assembly holding the armament, turret crew positions and other equipment, which extends from the bottom of the visible part of the turret down to the hull floor, and which swivels with the turret. The gunner's position is on the right of the gun breech, with the commander behind and above him; the loader/radio operator's station is on the left of the gun.

The main armament is the 105 mm M68 gun, firing mainly HEAT (high explosive/anti-tank) and APFSDS (armour-piercing finstabilised discarding sabot) rounds; there are also HESH (high explosive squash-head) and White Phosphorous incendiary rounds for this weapon. A 60 mm mortar is also fitted, a useful secondary weapon which allows 'soft' targets to be engaged without using up main gun ammunition. There is one 7.62 mm machine gun mounted co-axially with the main gun; and two more are mounted externally, by the commander's and loader's turret hatches, for use in close combat and against aircraft.

The Merkava's engine is an American model AVDS-1790-6A 12-cylinder air-cooled diesel, with an output of 900 bhp at full load; together with the CD-850-6BX automatic transmission, this is the largest single item among the foreign-made and imported components, which represent about 43 per cent of the total cost - the engine and transmission alone represent about 25 per cent of the total cost. The combat weight of the Merkava is about 62 tons, and it is generally

accepted that it is under-powered. Its top road speed of 24 mph, and its range of about 150 miles, compare unfavourably with the 45 mph and 310 miles achieved by the current American main battle tank, the M1 Abrams. But the Merkava is not intended to be a general purpose tank for open-terrain operations where speed and range are paramount.

Crew comfort is a serious factor in Middle Eastern conditions; heat exhaustion can degrade the combat performance of a tank crew catastrophically. The Merkava provides air conditioning by controlled airflow from the engine air intake; and cooled drinking water is piped into the fighting compartment from a rear container.

In its primary role as a tank destroyer the Merkava, with its low silhouette and sharply sloped armour, has proved very effective. The commander has all-round vision and aiming visibility even with his hatch 'buttoned down'. The fire control system, incorporating Israelimade Elbit computer components, is extremely accurate. In Lebanon Merkavas successfully engaged Syrian tanks at ranges of around 1,500 metres, and on occasion at up to 2,000 metres. This ability to engage at long range, which gave the Israelis the 'first strike' capability so vital in a tank battle, was backed up by the accuracy and penetrating power of the new Israeli M111 APFSDS-T kinetic energy round, which turned 'first strike' into 'first kill'. The armour of both the T-62 and the muchimproved T-72 was penetrated. On 11 June 1982 Merkavas of the Israeli 7th Armoured Brigade encountered T-72MS of the Syrian 82nd Tank Brigade, 3rd Armoured Division in the Bekaa Valley, and within moments they knocked out nine of these formidable tanks.

Since the end of the Lebanon war the IDF has introduced the Merkava Mk 2, of which about a dozen have been built so far. Details are shrouded in secrecy, but it is believed that they include a more powerful engine; fire control improvements to give better night-fighting capability; improved suspension; and improved armour. The substitution of a 120 mm gun for the 105 mm M68 is believed to be planned for a future Mk 3 version.

Index

A-4 Skyhawk aircraft, 74 Abu-Leil, Maj. Awd-allah Umar, 139 Abu Nidal ('Rejectionist Front'), 26, 30 Acca Hospital, 170 Adiye, 29, 131, 132 Adam, Maj.Gen. Yekutiel, 48, 70, 76 'Advanced Atoll' missile, 75 Afghanistan, 102 Ahmad, Abd al-Rahim, 206 Ahmad, Col. Rashad 'Abd al-Aziz, 138, 139, 147 Ain Dara, 61, 76, 88 Ain el-Hour, 184 Alawite Muslim community, 33 Alexander, Edward, 148 Alexander Hotel, 153 Aley, 91, 94, 99, I79, 211 Algeria, 33 Al-Hawadeth, 15 Ali, Isa Abdullah, 102 A'Liwa'a, 15 Allied operations in Lebanon (1941), 47, 50 Alloud, Mahmoud, 136 Al-Khaley, 101 Aloni, Miri, 99 Al-Ouds, 184 Amal militia, 16, 17, 200, 204 American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 15, 20, Amir, Aharon, 22 Anderson, Jack, 118 An-Nahar, 12 Ansar, 134 Anti-Lebanon mountain range, 42 Antwerp, 24 Aoun, Ĝeorge, 132 'Aphid' missile, 75 Aqiya bridge, 54, 59 Arab Defence Council, 15 Arab League, 15, 177 'Arab Resistance Front', 9 Arab Liberation Front (ALF), 140, 145, 206 Arafat, Dr Fathi, 163 Arafat, Yasser, 13, 20, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33, 93, 97, 101,

105, 106, 109, 119, 122, 123, 133, 139, 141, 163, 182, 183, 187, 199, 200, 202, 205, 206 Arazim Hotel, 150 Argov, Shlomo, 22, 26 'Army for Liberation of the South', 17 Arnoun, 54, 56, 59 As'ad, Kamal, 17 Asadi, Fawzi al-, 145 Ashbal ('Lion Cubs', 'RPG kids'), 32, 77, 78 Ashrafiya, 100, 101 Assad, President Hafiz al-, of Syria, 31, 33, 39, 64, 116, 123, 182, 184 Assad, Rifaat, 33, 39, 64, 76, 115, 116, 118, 182, 204 Associated Press (AP), 15, Athens, 24 Awali River, 53, 54, 58, 184 Baabda, 89, 91, 92, 100, 199 Baalbek, 177, 184, 187, 195 el-Baas, 53, 65 Ba'ath party, 33 Badr, Imam Sayid-a-Din, 133 Bakr, Hassan Radha, 144 Bana, Sabri al- ('Abu Nidal"), 205, 206 Bangladesh, 102 Barak, Aharon, 171 BBC, in, 164 Beaufort Castle, 28, 54, 56, 61-63, 158 Begin, Menachem, Prime Minister of Israel, 21, 51, 95, 164, 169, 170, 171, 184, 186, 187, 188, 197, 199 Beirut, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 26, 29, 36, 41, 42, 61, 64, 78, 82, 88, 92, 95, 96, 100, 102, 106, 107, in, 122, 125, 131, 137, 151, 158-161, 163-165, 168-170, 174, 177 Beirut-Damascus highway,

36, 42, 50, 61, 76, 91, 92,

169, 179

Beit ed-Dine, 61

Bekaa Valley, 20, 22, 36, 42, 44, 49, 54, 59, 64, 66, 72, 80, 81, 102, 107, 115, 168, 182, 183, 213 Belaty, Halad, 162 Berri, Nabih, 199 Bhamdoun, 91, 94, 118, 149, 184 Bireh, 184 Bir Shmali, 80 Bitr, Sahil al-, 144 'Blazer' tank armour, 40, 45 Bmariam, 184 BTR-60 APC, 118 BMP APC, 35, 118 Boeing 707, 70 booby traps, 126-130 Bourg el-Barajna, 26, 105, 204 Bourghlike, 54 Bourjayne, 184 Branigin, Bill, 102, 104 Brazil, 15 Britain, 88 British troops, 175, 185 Bulgaria, 138, 144 Bulloch, John, 136 Burj-Bahal, 135 Burro, Muhammad Mahmoud, 198

Cairo Agreement (1969), 9, 17 Callaghan, Lt.Gen. William, 46 Camp David, 177 Centurion tank, 40, 47, 50, 53, 63, 64, 209 Chartoun, 184 Chatouni, Habib, 169, 171 China, 139 Christian community, 8, 10, 15, 20, 26, 96, 97, 98, 118, 167, 175, 177, 179, 182, 191, 198, 199, 204; welcomes Israeli troops, 92; militias, 28, 32, 40, 49 Chtaura, 82, 88, 169 civil war, Lebanese, 1975-82, 10, 12 cluster bombs, 106, 130 Cobra helicopter, 47 Columbia Broadcasting Systems (CBS), 163, 166

Commentary Magazine, 151 Commodore Hotel, 106, 153 Corniche Mazraa, 100 Crefeld, Dr Martin van, 109, 111 Creole, Pierre, 158 Cyprus, 152, 153 Czechoslovakia, 88

Dahr al-Baidar, 91 Daily Telegraph (London), 15, 136 Damascus, 33, 42, 50, 56, 64, 80, 92, 118, 120, 152, 183, 185, 203 Damour, 8, 29, 61, 88, 95, 96, 97, 99, 103, I53> 156, 157, 164 Damour es-Safa River, 59 Davis, Mrs Helen, 44 Dayan, Moshe, 38 Defender helicopter, 47 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), 98, 139, 144, 147, 206 Doueir, 59 Drori, Lt.Gen. Amir, 48, 172, 174 Druse community, 91, 118, 175, 177, 179, 182, 184, 187, 195, 204 Duba, Gen. Ali, 116 Dupuy, Col. Trevor, 163, 164

East Germany, 88, 139 E-2C Hawkeye aircraft, 70, 72, 73 Efret, Maj.Gen. Yona, 171 Egypt, 9 Ein el-Hilwe, 21, 28, 59, 61, 76, 89-91, 135, 136, 157, 162 Ein el-Kantar, 54 Ein-Sofar, 88 Ein Zhalta, 79, 118 Eitan, Lt.Gen. 'Raful', 38, 46, 50, 52, 112, 172; character and philosophy, and Geva affair, 39 Eitan, Shlomo, 99 cl-Hilweh, 63 Encounter Magazine, 148 Erez, Brig.Gen. Chaim, 200

F-4E Phantom aircraft, 70, 72, 74, 93, 96 F-15 Eagle aircraft, 71, 72, 73 F-16 Falcon aircraft 71, 72 Fahakani, 96 Fakhr-a-Din, Miriam and Diana, 135 Falklands war, 153 'Fatahland', 29, 48, 54, 80

Fayad, Gen. Shafik, 116 Fez, 177 Fiii. 201 Finland, 201 Fisk, Robert, 93, 102, 108 France, 88, 175, 201 'Free Lebanese Army' ('South Lebanese Army'), 17. 204 Free Islamic Revolutionary Movement, 187 Frem, Fadi, 199 French Foreign Legion, 107, 169, 175, 189 French troops, 168, 180, 183, 187, 194

Gal, Maj.Gen. Avigdor Ben, 48, 81 Galilee, 47, 56 Gaza Strip, 20, 24, 177 Gazelle helicopter, 35, 80 Geagea, Samir, 199, 203 Gemayel, President Amin, of Lebanon, 199, 203 Gemayel, President-Elect Bashir, 21, 40, 91, 107, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171 Gemayel, Pierre, 10 Gemavel family, 40 Gervasi, Frank, 148, 157 Gesher Haziv, 51, 149, 154, 156 'Geva affair", 39, 112 Geva, Col. Eli, 112 Ghana, 201 Gharbiyya, Bahjat Abu, 206 Ghorra, Edouard, 12 Ghusha, Dr Samir, 206 Gillois bridges, 47 Golan Heights, 50, 72 Greek Catholic community, 'Guardians of the Cedars',

Habash, Dr George, 31, 101, 147, 206 Habib, Philip, 16, 20, 64, 82 Haddad, Maj. Sa'ad, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 42, 61, 63, 131, 172,202 Hai e-Saloum, 105 Haifa, 81 Hama, 115 Hamud Hospital, Sidon, Hamza, Abdulla Mahomed, 142 Hanna, Vincent, 111 Hardale bridge, 54 Harnick, Maj. Guni, 57 Haruf, 133 Hassan, Abu, 198 Hawatmeh, Nayef, 98, 147,

Hezbollah ('Party of Allah' movement), 201
Hippodrome, Beirut, 105
Historical Evaluation and
Research Organisation, 163
Hobeika, Elie, 170, 204
'HOT' missile, 35
Howe, Marvin, 153
Hule Valley, 42
Hungary, 8*8, 138, 142
Hussain, Muhammad
Mabry, 138
Hussein, Hassan Qassem, 145
Hussein, King of Jordan, 9,
177

Iraq, 9, 12 Ismail, Col. Hajj, 61, 125 Israel, public attitudes to war in, 95, 170-175, 182 Israeli Air Force (IDF AF), 22, 27, 52, 80, 109, 111; over Bekaa Valley, 65-75; over Beirut, 93, 96, 104, 105, 106, 164-165 Israel Defence Forces (IDF): monitor PLO activity, 28; Chief-of-Staff, 37: strength and organisation, 37, 50; tactics, 38, 51, 55; reserve mobilisation, 41, 45-46; dispositions for Operation 'Peace for Galilee', 47-52; attitude to Lebanese civilians, 82-86, 92, 115; medical treatment, 86; servicewomen, 99; and infiltration of PLO, 108; morale, 39, 111-115; casualties, 21, 113, 189, 198, 204; tank losses, 113; and media, 148-149, 154; in occupation of Lebanon, 179, 182-184, 191; phased withdrawal, 194-195, 200-201; reprisals against Shi'a community, 195-196. Units: Task Force East, 49, 54. 58-59, 76; Task Force Centre, 48, 59; Task Force West, 48, 53, 58, 61, 78; Division 36, 49; Div. 90, 49; Div. 91, 48, 53; Div. 96, 53; Div. 162, 49; Div. 252, 49; Barak Armd.Bde., 105; Golani Bde., 54, 57, 59, 91, 105; Parachute Bde. 35, 53, 58; Bde. 211, 53, 112; Vardi Force, 49; Special Manoeuvre Force, 49; Para Bn. 50, 53; Sayeret Golani, 57, 63

Israeli Navy, 59, 76, 86, 168, 202; amphibious operations, 53-54, 58; frogmen, 38, 53
Italy, 88, 201; Italian troops, 106, 107, 168, 175, 176

Jericho, 24 Jerusalem, 177, 198; Mufti of, 183 Jezzine, 8, 58, 59, 61, 78, I31, 197 Jibril, Ahmed, 182, 206 Jones, Selma, 48 Jordan, 111 Jordan Valley, 42 Jordanian Army, 102, 122 Joub Jannine, 63, 80 Jounieh, 21, 96, 152-153 Journalist, 111 journalists in Lebanon, 148-166; and Israeli accreditation, 149; killed or seized by PLO, 15, 151; intimidation of, 151, 160-161; and 'rubble syndrome', 161; women journalists, 149-150 Jumblatt, Kamal, 9 Jumblatt, Walid, 184

Kador, Muhammad Farlin, 138 Kahan, Yitzhak, 171 Kahan Commission, 172, Kahle, 91 'Katyusha' (BM-21) rocket launcher, 14, 19, 20, 24, 30, 35, 54, 88 Kedar, Col. Paul, 100 Kfar Qouq, 80 Kfar Seit, 63 Kfar Tibnit, 61 Kfir C-2 aircraft, 71, 74, 75 Khaddoumi, Farouk, 183 Khadra, Brig.Gen. Tariq, 187 Khalde, 76, 78, 210 Khalaf, Salah ('Abu Iyad'), 93, 205 Khomeini, Ayatollah, 16, 104, 176, 185 Kibbutz Bar'am, 17 Kibbutz Misgav Am, 16, 19 > 31Kifner, John, 17, 160 Kimche, David, 182 Kiryat Shemona, 47 Kuneitra, 50 Kuwait, 33

Labour party (Israeli), 191 Lahad, Gen. Antoine, 202, 204 Lake Qaraoun, 44, 54, 61, 76, 80 LAR-160 rocket, 55 Lasky, Melvin J., 148 Lebanese Army, 10, 13, 21, 40, 107, 168, 169, 179, 184, 187, 199, 200, 203 'Lebanese Forces', 21, 199, 203, 204 'Lebanese Front', 40 Lebanese Journalists' Association, 15 Lebanese National Museum, 105 Lebanese Television, 17 Lebanese University Sciences Faculty, 91 Lebanon mountain range, 41, 49 Le Monde, 157 Libya, 14, 20, 33, 92, 183 Likud coalition (Israeli), 191 Limassol, 24 Litani River, 28, 42, 44, 54 London, 24, 154 A-Luzi, Salim, 15

Ma'alot, 18
Maasser Beit ed-Dine, 184
Maasser el-Shouf, 184
Madani, Ra'ad Ahmed
Razaq, 144
Maudun, Lt. Ibrahim al-,
144
Mahrar, Muhammad
Radha, 144
The Mail on Sunday
(London), 107
Majdal Bana, 91
Majdi, Col. Abu, 145
Marjayoun, 24, 44, 54, 61,

Marquise, Chief Insp. Cleve, 118 Masri, Afif Muhammad al-, 144, 145 Masri, Sheikh Mahmoud al-, massacres, 8, 131, 132; see also Sabra Shatila Maverick missile, 71 McCourt, Mike, 161 Melli University, 196 Melkart Agreement (1973), Merkava tank, 40, 50, 67, 68, 81, 82, 86, 99, no, 113, 116, 168, 209-213 Metulla, 31, 42, 54, 149, 150 Mhayadali, Sara, 196 'Milan' missile, 30, 35 Middle East Times, 196

Mitterand, President, 187

Mitla Pass, 46

Modan, Prof. Baruch, 162 Montezari, Ayatollah Muhammad, 15 Mordechai, Brig.Gen. Yitzhak, 48, 53, 112 Moscow, 144 Moukhtara, 79 Mount Hermon, 42, 49 Movers, Bill, 163 Multi-National Peace-Keeping Force (MNF), 106, 107, 175, 184, 187-190 Murabitoun militia, 93, 199, 200 Muravchik, Joshua, 148, Mussawi, Hussein, 177 Mi-8 helicopter, 35 Mi-24 'Hind' helicopter, 35, MiG-21 aircraft, 35, 71 MiG-23 aircraft, 35, 71, 91 MiG-25 aircraft, 71 Mi Abrams tank, 213 M48A5 Patton tank, 50 M60 Patton tank series, 40, 45. 47, 50, 54, 79, 188, 194, 209 M109 self-propelled gun, 64, 81, 85, 93 Mi 13 'Zelda' APC, 47, 49, 53, 55, 56, 58, 155 MTU-55 tank, 47

Nabatiye, 7, 14, 28, 29, 54, 61, 88, 137, 157, 164 Nahariya, 24 Nairn, Bassam, 49 Najr, Ali Ahsan al-, 145 Naqoura, 42 Nasser, Father John, 131, Nasser, President Gamal Abdel, of Egypt, 9 National Liberal Party 'Tigers', 40 New Society, 162 Newsweek, 15, 159 New York Times, 15, 17, ¹53, ¹57, 160, 166, 198 New York, 154, 163 Nepal, 201 Netanya, 114 Netherlands, 201 night-fighting, 86, 120 North Korea, 14, 88, 129, Norway, 201

Observer (London), 15 Odessa, 138 Operation 'Litani', 18, 26 Orr, Gen. Ori, 200 el-Ouzaai, 105

Pakistan, 102, 126 Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), 31, 34, 58, 144, 145, 187, 205 Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), 16, 21, 92, 97, 98, 109, 122, 123, 131, 134, 136, 141, 147, 148, 151, 152, 157, 189, 195, 200, 201, 204, 205; establishment of Lebanese bases, 7, 9; and Lebanese leftists, 10, 93; treatment of Lebanese civilians, 12, 22, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 98, 101, 102, 131-136, 137, 139, 145; courts, 14; and international terrorism, 15, 160; and media, 15, 151, 153, 162, 163; trains overseas, 125, 137-147; attacks on Israel, 9, 19, 20, 24, 26, 174; internal quarrels, 30, 124; and Shi'ite Amal militia, 17, 198, 199, 204; strength (1982), 13, 28, 30, 206; Executive Committee, 30; tactics, 32, 55, 125; in eastern sector, 59, 63; in western sector, 61; at Tyre, 53, 61, 80; at Beaufort Castle, 57; at Sidon, 54, 62; munitions dumps, 86, 94, 158; fights on after Syrian ceasefire, 89, 95; Arab reluctance to offer refuge, 105; withdraws from West Beirut, 107, 168; tactical weaknesses, 124-125; casualties, 130, 161; in northern Lebanon, 177, 182; mutinies against Arafat, 183; returns to West Beirut, 199; Fatah faction, 13, 28, 30, 57, 102, 131, 182, 187, 205-206; Saiqa faction, 9, 32, 140, 144, 145, 206; Karameh Bde., 29, 54, 206; Kastel Bde., 29, 61, 206; Yarmouk Bde., 29, 206; Galilee Bn., 139; September Martyrs Bn., 139; Kamal Kaush Gp., 31 Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), 140, 145, 206 Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), 140, 144, 145, 206 Paris, 24 Paris Match, 157 Pazner, Ari, 194, 195 Peled, Brig.Gen. Yossi, 49

Phalange movement (Kataeb), 21, 26, 40, 63, 177, 179,182; militia, 91, 98, 101, 167, 170-172, 184 Poland, 88 Pope John Paul II, 183 Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, see DFLP Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), 15,31, 139, 147, 206 PFLP-General Command, 139, 206 PT-76 tank, 35 Python 3 missile, 74 Qasim, Alod, 116

Quasmiya, 54
Quleilat, Ibrahim, 93
Qun, Col., 169

Rabin, Yitzhak, 195, 202
Rachidiye, 28, 53, 54, 77, 136, 157
Radio Beirut, 15
Ramlet el-Baida, 96
Randal, Jonathan, 123, 167
Ras el-Ain, 54
Ras el-Metn, 184
Rawai, Lt. Mahmoud
Muhammad al-, 138
Razdq, Sa'id, 145
Read, Mrs Dolly, 136

Quadi, Dr Issam al-, 32,

Qlaile, 54

206

122, 162, 164, 177, 187 Red Crescent, 88, 158, 163 Red Cross, 88, 99 Remote-piloted vehicles (RPVs), 65, 66, 71, in, 116, 125, 207-208 Rihane, 29 Rome, 24

Reagan, President Ronald,

Sa'ad, Darwish Dhib, 145 Sabra camp, 170, 171, 200, 204 Sabra Shatila massacres, 170, 172, 174, 204 Safa, Haydar Jawad, 144 Safro, Salah, 135 'Sagger' missile, 30, 35, 45, 63, 139 Saglus, Maj.Gen. Yoshua, 172 Saida, 196 Sakiet el Janzir, 199 SAMs (surface-to-air missiles), 20, 30, 36, 37, 64-73, 88, 91, 96, 169 Samaan, Galerie, 164 Samir, Salim, 145

Sarkis, President, 107 Saudi Arabia, 14, 26, 33, 182 Sayed, Youssef, 135 Sayil, Sa'ad ('Abu al-Walid'), 102 Seblani, Ghassan, 199 Sela, Col. Moshe, 76 Sha'ar, Col. al-, 144, 145 Shafir 2 missile, 74 Shamir, Yitzhak, 194 Sharkas, Zyad Ibrahim, 138 Sharm el-Sheikh, 38 Sharon, Ariel, 20, 21, 51, 95, 106, 170, 171, 172, 186, 197 Shaqiqat, Mahmud Nimr, 145 Sharqi, Ahmad al-, 145 Shatila camp, 170, 171, 200, 204 Sherman tank, 40 Shi'a Muslim community, 16, 17, 20, 26, 63, 134, 167, 175, 191, 195, 204; welcomes Israeli troops, 8, 76; incitement against IDF, 190, 198; attacks on IDF slacken, 202; attacks on PLO, 204 Shihabi, Gen. Hikmat, 32, 33. 120 Shipler, David, 135 Shiraz University, 196 Shostock, Eliezer, 162 Shouf Mountains, 8, 36, 118, 177, 179, 182, 184, 187 Shrike missile, 71 Sidewinder AIM-9L missile, 74 Sidon, 13, 17, 28, 53, 54, 56, 61, 62, 88, 125, 132, 135, 136, 137, 139, 150, 152, 156, 157, 164, 165, 191, 199 Simteropol, 139 Six-Day War, 47 'Smart bomb', 71 snipers, 102, 169 Sodeco, 169 'Soldiers Against Silence', 175 Souk al-Gharb, 184 South Africa, 141 'South Lebanese Army', 172, 202, 204 Soviet Union, 14, 20, 88, 129, 138, 139, 175, 204; observers in Lebanon, 118, 120-121 Suez Canal, 51 suicide bombers, 92, 186, 191, 195, 202 Sukhoi Su-7 aircraft, 35,

Sukhoi Su-22 aircraft. Sultan Yakoub, 78 Sunni Muslim community, 16, 186, 191, 198, 199, 200. 204 Sug el-Arab, 91 'Swatter' missile, 35 Sweden, 201 Syria, 14, 20-22, 27, 28, 47, 89, 115, 177, 182, 183, 187, 190, 195, 199, 200, 204, 205; closes Lebanese border (1968), 9; sends troops into Lebanon (1976), 10; supports PLO, 10, 13; 'Greater Syria' concept, 12; and judgement of Israeli intentions, 27; and ceasefire (11 June 1982), 82; resumes fighting, 91; and PLO mutiny, 183; dominates Lebanese Christian and Muslim factions, 203-204 Syrian Air Force, 71-75 Syrian armed forces: organisation and strength, 33-37, 50; operations in Lebanon (1982), 58, 59, 61, 63, 64, 79-82; casualties, 121; tank losses, 117: strengths and weaknesses, 119-121; withdrawal from Beirut, 168; and journalists, 152 *Units:* 1st Armd.Div., 36, 39, 76, 80; 3rd Armd.Div., 213; 58th Mech.Bde., 36, 78; 62nd Ind.Bde., 36; 68th Tank Bde., 36; 76th Tank Bde., 36; 82nd Tank Bde., 81, 213; 85th Mech.Bde., 36, 107, 118; commando battalions, 36, 78, 79, 118

Tal, Gen. Israel, 209 Taha, Riyadh, 15 Taher, Hassan Hussein, 142 Tamarzi, Ka'ad, 144 Tarik Jdedeh, 93 Tartus, 168 Tatro, Nicholas, 17 Tel Aviv, 45, 113, 148, 154, 175 Television crews and coverage, 7, 150-154, 159, 163, 166 *Time* Magazine, 169 The Times (London), 93, 102, 108, 174 Timmerman, Kenneth, 151 Tlas, Gen. Mustafa, 33, 39, 64, 116 Toolan, Sean, 15 Tripoli, 12, 29, 92, 187 Trzi, Abd el-, 196 'Two-Week War', 20 Tyre, 7, 13, 18, 19, 28, 30, 42, 53, 54, 56, 59, 62, 65, 80, 88, 135, 137, 157, 164, 187 T-34 85 tank, 30, 35, 127, 138 T-54. T-55 tanks, 30, 35, 40, 50, 82, 117, 118
T-62 tank, 34, 50, 59, 79, 82, 83, 85, 116, 117
T-72 tank, 34, 81, 117, 213 United Nations, 12, 14, 18, 47, 203 United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), 18, 19, 20, 29, 42, 46, 20*1* United Press International (UPI), 162 UNRWA school, 136 Unkun, 196 US Embassy, 182, 191 US News and World Report, 162

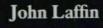
United States of America, 26, 27, 65, 88, 95, 163, 176 US Marines, 107, 168, 169, 175, 179, 186, 188, 194 US Sixth Fleet, 54 USS \(\forall ezv Jersey\), 122, 184, 187 Usher, Shaun, 107

Vardi, Brig.Gen. Danni, 49 Vienna, 24 Vietnam, 138, 143 'Voice of Hope', 48

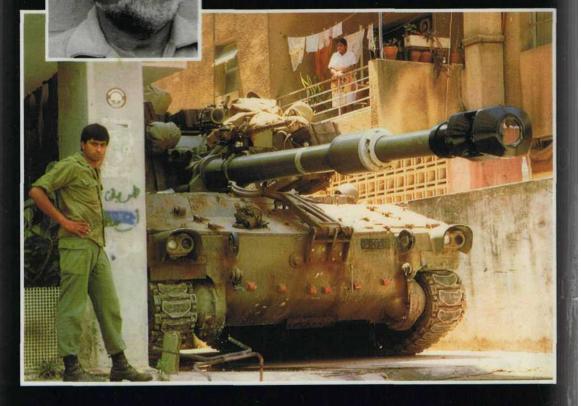
WAFA Press Agency, 151
Wakim's cafe, 100
Waldheim, Kurt, UN
Secretary-General, 19
'Walleye' bomb, 71
Washington, 20, 102
Washington Post, 15, 102, 162, 164, 165, 167, 203
Wazzan, Shafik, 101, 169
Wazzir, Khalil ('Abu
Jihad';, 93, 122, 123
Weinberger, Caspar, 168
West Bank, 16, 20, 24, 177
West Berlin, 24
Wilson, Gen., 50
'Wolf missile, 70

Yaron, Brig.Gen. Amos, 53, 58, 172 *Yediot Aharanol*, 150 Yitzhaky, Shmuel, 80, 81 Yitzhak, Capt., 150 Yom Kippur War (1973), 21, 34, 46, 72, 85, no Yugoslavia, 139

Zaharani River, 28, 62 Zahle, 20, 44, 64, 65, 82 Zaidan, Mahmud al- ('Abu Abbas'), 206 Zefat, 46 Zeidan, Mahmud Abdul Fattan, 142 Zufar, 91



An eye-witness account of Israel's bitterest war – and of how it was reported – written from the perspective of 40 years' Middle East experience



ISBN 0-85045-603-7

