



BRIGHT STAR '00

By Major Robin E. Lockwood

In the autumn of 1999, the skies over Egypt were filled with dogfights, high-G maneuvers and missiles as gray, brown and black aircraft from around the world tried to get the best of each other. Although it may sound like World War III, it was nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, it happens every other year.

Bright Star began in 1980 as a U.S. Air Force Egyptian exercise, with joint elements added in 1983 and other countries participating as of 1995. Eleven countries the U.S., Egypt, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan and

Left, this formation flying over the pyramids of Cairo illustrates some of the variety of aircraft participating in Bright Star 00 from Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and the U.S. Counterclockwise from top: MiG-21, two F/A-18s, F-14, Mirage 2000, F-4, F-16, AMX, Mirage 5, Alpha Jet, F/A-18, F-16 and B-1. Below, some of the deployed Marines got into the Egyptian spirit by building a Sphinx sand sculpture.



SSgt. Jim Vazmegyi

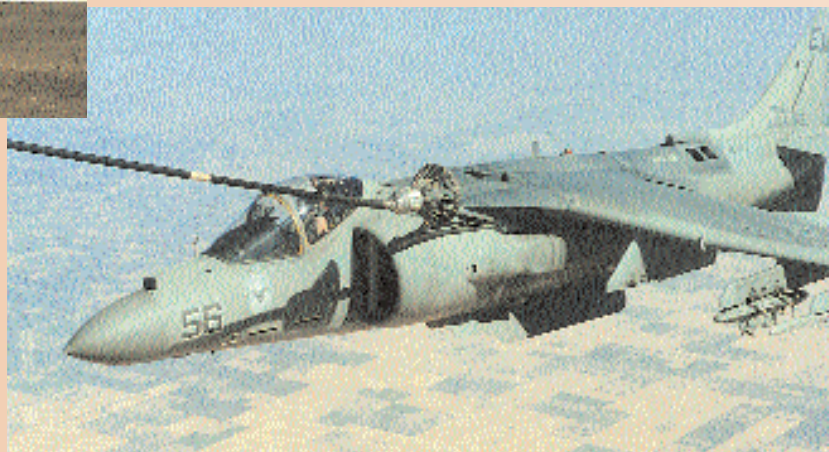


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Above, an Air Force B-1 bomber, two U.S. F/A-18 Hornets and Egyptian E-2 Hawkeyes wait their turn on the tarmac in Cairo. Left, 25-pound "blue death" practice bombs prepare to be loaded on an F/A-18. Below, refueling ops by two KC-130 Hercules of VMGR-234—here with a VMA-223 AV-8B Harrier II—ensured the coalition aircraft could keep flying.



Sgt. Baker

Germany took part in Bright Star 00, from 11 October to 7 November 1999.

Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 41, NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas, provided Red Air aggressor units for the exercise. A variety of assets joined under MAG-41 to form the Air Combat Element (ACE) for Bright Star 00: Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 471, Marine Air Logistics Squadron (MALS) 41, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234 and Marine Fighter-Attack Squadron (VMFA) 112 from NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas; MWSS-471 Det A, Minneapolis, Minn., and Det B, Green Bay, Wis.; MWSS-472, Atlanta, Ga.; MWSS-473, Miramar, Calif.; and VMFA-321, NAF

Washington, D.C. The ACE also supported four AV-8B Harrier IIs from Marine Attack Squadron 223 aboard *Bataan* (LHD 5).

Over 60% of the MAG-41 forces were comprised of reservists, providing a unique opportunity to operate with their active-duty counterparts in a large-scale exercise. Their support enabled the participating nations to learn invaluable lessons for future joint international operations.

Missing Scan (21_2)

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Above, VMGR-234 crew members unload one of two KC-130 *Hercules* in Egypt. Left, Cpl. S. E. Pierce of VMFA-112 prepares an F/A-18 *Hornet* to take to the air as an aggressor. Maintenance personnel worked long hours to meet the operations department's daily schedule of 12 "up" aircraft. Below, F/A-18 *Hornets* of VMFAs 112 and 321 combined to form a single squadron for the duration of the exercise.

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