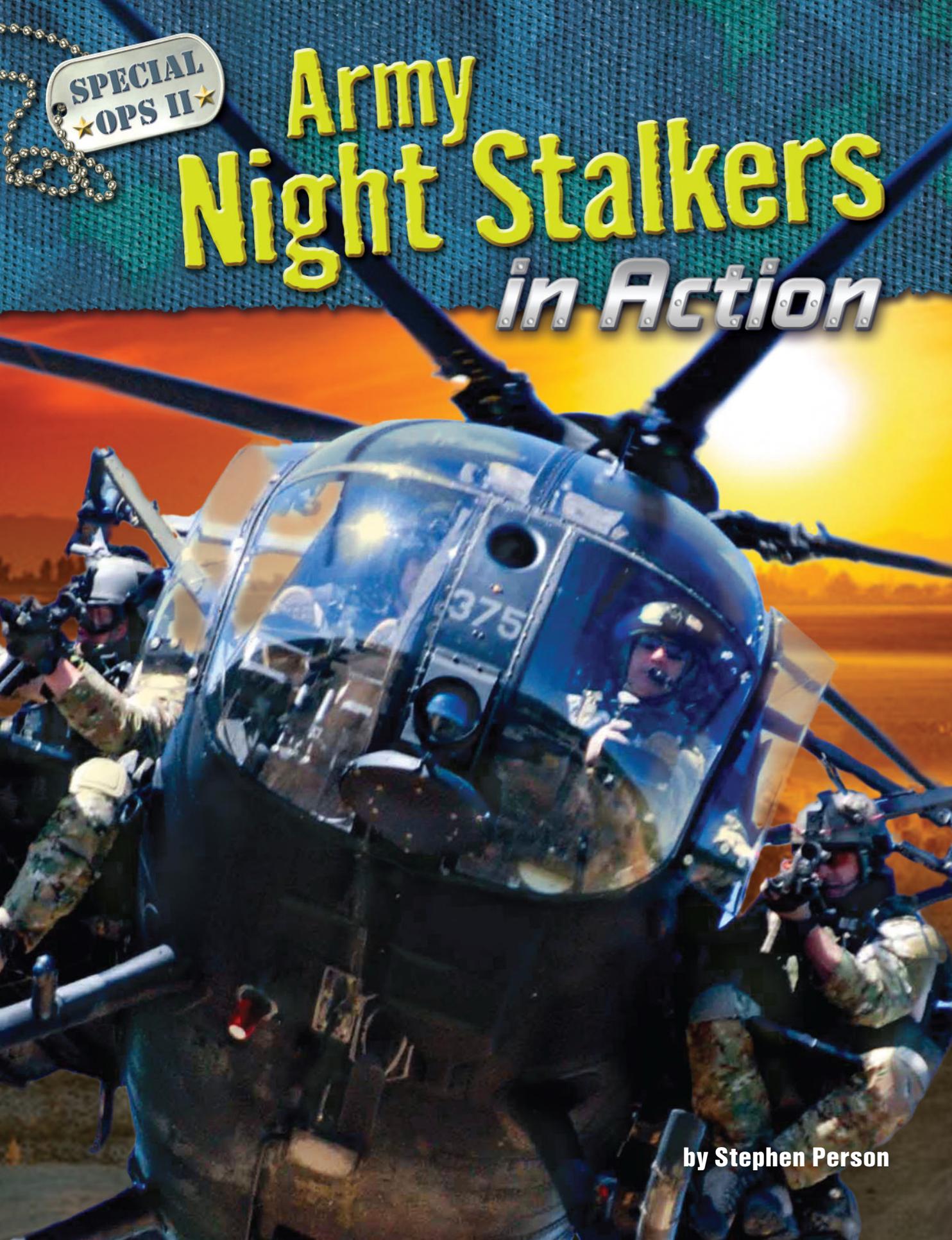


SPECIAL
★ OPS II ★

Army Night Stalkers *in Action*



by Stephen Person

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by Stephen Person

Consultant: Fred Pushies
U.S. Special Operations Forces Adviser

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Shot Down in Somalia

On October 3, 1993, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant was sent on the most dangerous **mission** of his life. A brutal **warlord** named Mohammed Farah Aidid was trying to seize control of Somalia (suh-MAHL-yuh), a country in East Africa. American forces, however, were determined to stop him. Michael was a U.S. Army helicopter pilot. His mission was to fly U.S. **Army Rangers** into the heart of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu (maw-guh-DEE-shoo), so that they could try to capture Aidid.



Michael Durant was flying a helicopter called a Black Hawk. This kind of aircraft is specially designed to carry small groups of soldiers to hard-to-reach places.

Michael Durant (far right) with the crew of his Black Hawk

After Michael flew the soldiers into the city, a fierce battle broke out between the Americans and Aidid's men. Michael was flying just 75 feet (23 m) over the city streets when an enemy **rocket-propelled grenade** (RPG) hit the tail of his helicopter. The aircraft spun wildly out of control and slammed down into the street.

A Black Hawk flying low over the streets of Mogadishu



Somalia is the easternmost country on the mainland of Africa.



Captured!

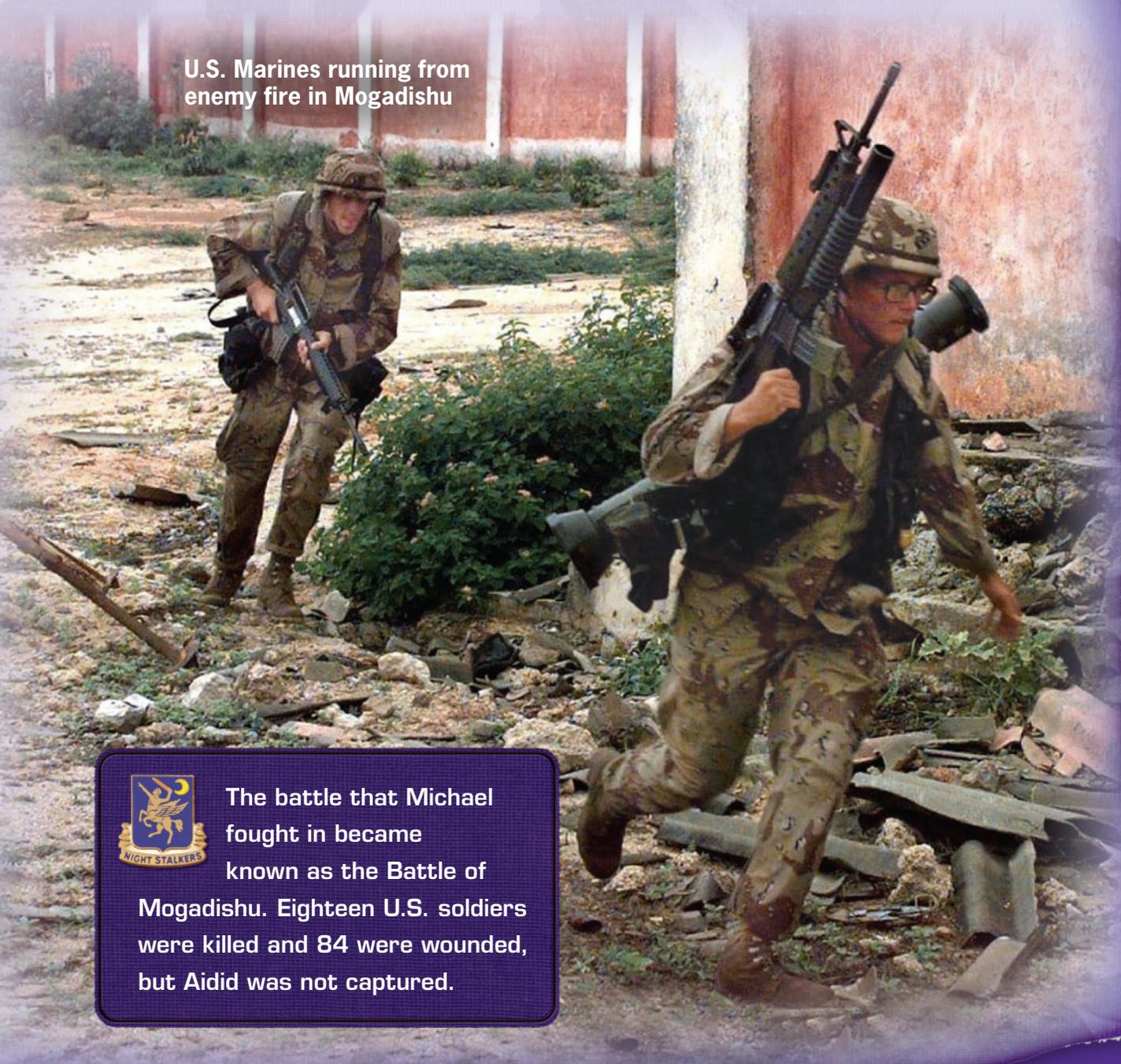
Michael lay in the **cockpit** of his crumpled Black Hawk. He was in terrible pain. Bones in his back and in one of his legs were broken. Bullets were flying all around, and bombs exploded nearby. Two soldiers rushed over to help him out of his helicopter. Before they could rescue him, however, enemy fighters charged up to Michael and grabbed him. Michael Durant was now a prisoner of war.



The remains of Michael's helicopter

Michael's worst fears were coming true. Still, he had known that something like this could happen at any time—and he had accepted the risk. Michael had one of the toughest jobs in the U.S. Army. He was a pilot for a special unit known as the Night Stalkers.

U.S. Marines running from enemy fire in Mogadishu



The battle that Michael fought in became known as the Battle of Mogadishu. Eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed and 84 were wounded, but Aidid was not captured.

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About the Author

Stephen Person has written many children's books about history, science, and the environment.

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Army Night Stalkers *in Action*

On October 3, 1993, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant was sent on a dangerous mission to help stop a brutal warlord from seizing control of the African country of Somalia. Michael was a helicopter pilot for the U.S. Army's elite special operations force known as the Night Stalkers. His mission was to fly U.S. Army Rangers into the heart of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, so that they could capture the warlord. Would Michael be able to carry out this risky mission?

Look inside to meet the Army Night Stalkers who bravely serve our country, and get an inside look at how they train for and carry out their dangerous missions. From rescuing prisoners to capturing terrorists, no job is too tough for Army Night Stalkers.

Army Night Stalkers
in Action

CIA Paramilitary Operatives
in Action

Marine Scout Snipers
in Action

Navy SEAL Team Six
in Action

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