

Volume One • Issue One JANUARY 2007

FREE e-publication

“THE RAT PATROL” LIVES!



Welcome to the first issue of DUNES!

“It’s been almost forty years since I first saw those jeeps leap over those dunes. It still gives me a thrill no matter how many times I see it.

When I was twelve there was no missing “The Rat Patrol”. My two older brothers and I would take our places in front of our television and not move, totally enthralled with Troy and his men as they gnawed their way across North Africa. My dad would watch too, but being a veteran of WWII he was far more aware of the show’s faults. But that didn’t matter to us; we were stoked by the action.” – Barbo

Sadly those TV days and our youth are long gone, and now it’s up to us - all of us - to keep the boys of “The Rat Patrol” alive and in the field. That’s what DUNES is all about.

Periodically - several issues are planned - DUNES will appear on the electronic horizon, free to faithful fans. But DUNES needs your help to fill the pages and leap the next dune.

Consider submitting your original, writings, drawings, or any other creative “Rat Patrol” item - a poem, vignette, cartoon, portrait, hobby photo, related book review, or non-fiction desert article. Keep it short, clean, and upbeat. (See submission guidelines and requirements at the URL below.) DUNES is a snappy, fun e-publication, sure to have something for every “Rat Patrol” fan. So, fire up your jeeps and get onto the dunes.

Let’s shake it!

Barbo (Tulliac) & Libby (Moffiac)

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For more information and submission guidelines:

<http://www.suncompass.fandom.tv/dunes.htm> or

contact email addie: rpdunes@gmail.com

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The REAL Desert Fox *by Barbo*



By 1941, British troops had pushed the Italian army all the way west across North Africa to Tripoli. Erwin Rommel, already a successful German general, was given the task of rescuing the Italians and taking western Libya back from the enemy. When Rommel arrived in Tripoli he found a demoralized Italian Army and he assumed command of the entire North African Campaign.

Using Blitzkrieg strategies, he drove his enemy all the way east to Tobruk. He consistently outwitted, outplayed and outmatched his British opponent. His caginess, improvisation, and brave trickery earned him the moniker “The Desert Fox”.

Rommel won more than a catchy nickname that has stuck with his legacy for over 60 years, because, for his desert successes he was promoted to Field Marshal – the youngest ever at age 50.

Rommel came by the name “The Desert Fox” honestly, as the Sahara is home to a sly creature fox known as the Fennec. In order for this animal to survive in such a harsh environment, he too uses craftiness to prosper in the heat and sand of North Africa.



The Fennec is the smallest of canines at only 8” high and a mere 3 to 4 lbs. To escape the desert heat he burrows to create his den, and does his hunting by night using the stalk-spring-pounce method of catching insects, rodents, and lizards. He also eats some plants. The wise Fennec caches his food as meals are few and far between, and he can go many weeks without water.

The tiny desert fox is equipped with oversized ears to hear even the slightest noise, fur lined paws that silence its presence, and keen night vision to aid in its existence. It is an agile, cunning and savvy creature, as was its namesake Erwin Rommel.

Resources:

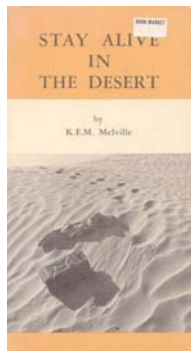
<http://users.pandora.be/dave.depickere/text/rommel.html>

www.achtungpanzer.com/gen1.htm

www.fresnochaffeezoo.com/animals/fennec.html

Book Reviews

Stay Alive in the Desert by K.E.M. Melville, Chief Medical Officer, Arabian Bechtel Corporation. The Jerboa Press 1970. 134p. B&W illustrations. – reviewed by Libby



This pocket-sized book is well titled, for the author, chief medical officer with a major Arabian oil company, intended to address the major pitfalls to surviving in the deserts of Africa. He did well. The book is rich in clear illustration and helpful information presented in two categories, “How to Drive in the Desert” and “Health and Hygiene in the Desert”.

The author includes many essential, but expected items such as: best choice of vehicle; lists of what to carry; how to find direction from sun, stars and sand patterns; where to dig for water; how to drive in sand; what to do if lost; how to diagnose a heat disorder; what to wear and not wear; basic first aid; and more.

But the author, obviously desert savvy, gives more. He presents eye-widening information such as: how to tell a Culicine mosquito from an Anopheles mosquito; how to apply a tourniquet and administer an anti-venom injection in the derriere; what search pattern a pilot will follow.

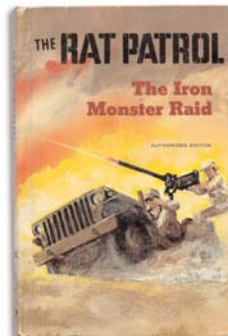
The information included occasionally reaches into the unexpected. For example - don't ration water. Partially deflate your tires for better traction. Keep watch for buried wartime armaments. Slow down at the crest of a dune. Scorpion bites are rarely fatal. And much more.

This reviewer enjoyed the book on a couple of levels. One, because it presents useful and unusual information about how to stay alive in the desert, and because it offers a glimpse at the western approach to African desert travel of the day. It is not so very different from that of “The Rat Patrol.” This book would surely have helped the lads stay alive in the desert too.



“The Rat Patrol” - The Iron Monster Raid

by I.G. Edmonds, Illustrated by Michael Lowenbein
Western Publishing Co. Inc, 1968 – reviewed by Libby



The story is set in Tunisia, December 1942, several weeks after Operation Torch brought the US army crashing ashore in North Africa to fight alongside the British and her allies. The fighting there would be over in a matter of months, but the Rat Patrol could not know that.

Their job in the novel was to slow the implementation of Hitler's secret weapon - a weapon in the charge of Hauptmann Dietrich:

The Iron Monster of the book's title.

If this book was written to give fans of the TV series a fresh boost of Rat Patrol entertainment, it achieves its goal. With jeeps, trains and a secret weapon; shifty comrades and shifty locals; chases through the old Medina; and the entire war hanging in the balance, it has it all.

All the “Rat Patrol” characters appear and are easily identifiable, but it is Sergeant Troy who dominates. The book could have been titled, “The Sergeant Carries On”, a phrase drawn from the novel that implied that simply leaving everything to the sergeant would ensure success in every venture. In this case, the sergeant ‘carrying on’ throughout is obviously Troy.

Troy is the hero, but the other lads are given supporting roles and they acquit themselves well through the many pitfalls they encounter. Dietrich, however, is surrounded by his usual complement of incompetents and experiences his traditional bad luck.

If you yearn for deep illumination of characters, the author offers minor tidbits. e.g. Sam was never so stubborn as when he appeared mild. Tully grew up with a rifle in his hands. But it would be a mistake to expect great character insight, for this is principally an action story for young readers.

History is light in places, and some minor details are suspect, but much in the novel seems historically sound. e.g. A German ‘monster’ tank was tested in Tunisia in 1942. The author, a war vet, brings a realistic sense of place and time to the book.

If you are looking for a quick entertaining read and a fresh dose of Rat Patrol action, this book fulfills that mission.



LETTERS HOME by Barbo

03/04/41

Dear Mother,

I only have a moment, but I wanted to send you a note to let you know that I am well and am about to embark on a new adventure.

I've been assigned to the Long Range Desert Patrol. There will only be four of us - myself and three Americans. (I say - will I survive?)

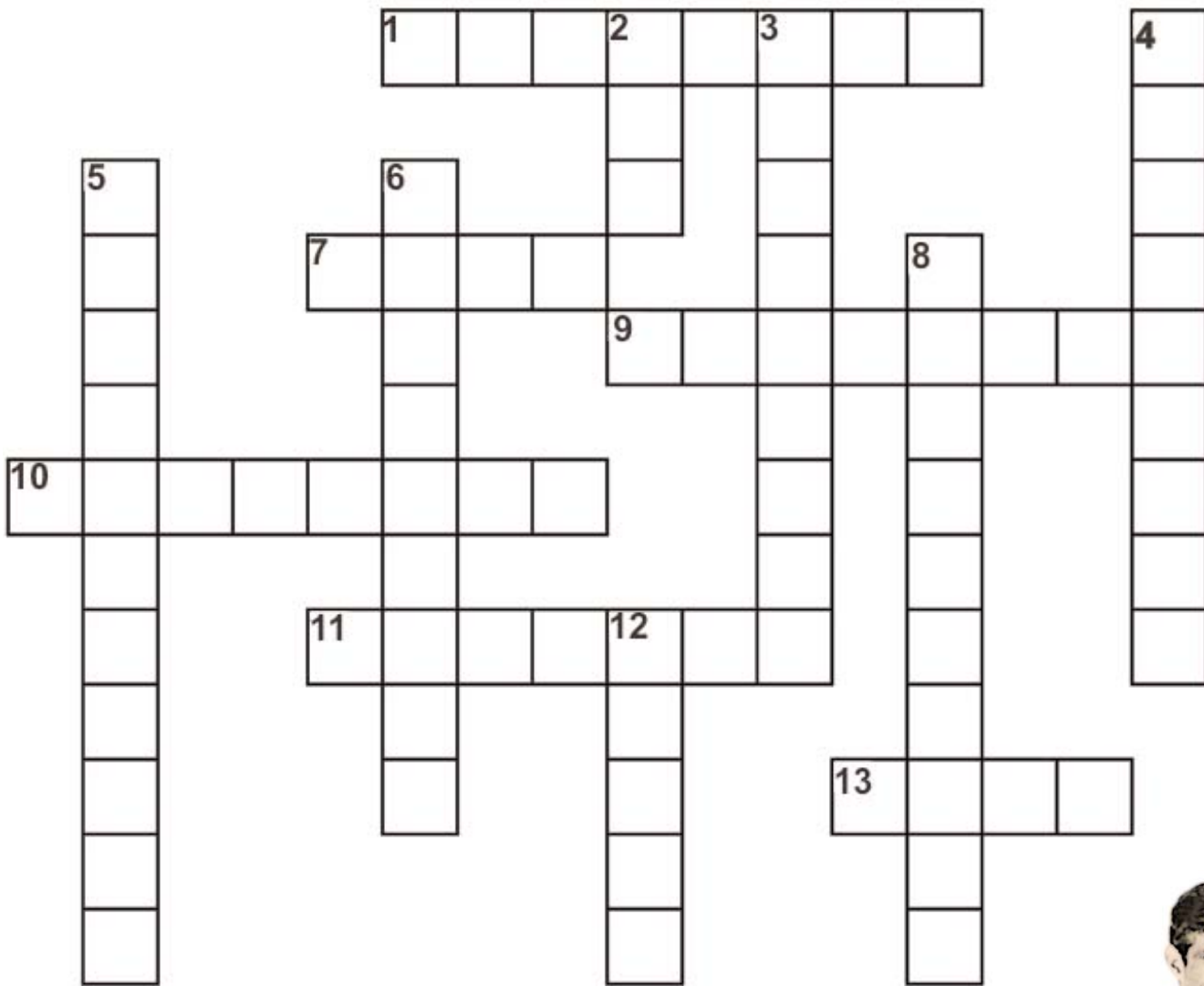
Sergeant Sam Troy will lead us into the Sahara to wreak havoc on Rommel and his bunch. Doesn't that sound like fun! At least I know North Africa like the back of my hand. You know I love the desert just as much as father.

The other two men are Mark Hitchcock and Tully Pettigrew - both privates. All three men are quite leery of me. I'm not sure why, but I get the feeling I will need to prove myself very quickly. And, I shall.

I'll try to write often, and I promise to take care of myself. Don't worry mother. I am truly fine and enjoying all this so far. I know I can make a difference. Cheerio for now and say hello to all back in the local.

God save the King!
Your
loving son
Jackie

CROSSWORD: "Chase of Fire" - Pilot Episode by Libby



ACROSS

- 1 Tully is the best moonshine runner in all of this state.
- 7 "You could dig in that sand for a _____ and never find the prize." - Sgt Moffitt
- 9 Sgt Troy's girlfriend's military rank.
- 10 Sgt Troy's one word response when he heard their replacement was British.
- 11 Hitch attended a _____ school.
- 13 The British left (how many) _____ hundred tons of petrol in the buried dump.

DOWN

- 2 Cut up small this makes a nice fire, according to Sgt Troy.
- 3 Where Sgt Moffitt attended OTC (Officers Training Corps).
- 4 Hauptmann Dietrich rode in this sort of vehicle.
- 5 Name of the song heard playing in the opening scene of this episode.
- 6 Tully's last name.
- 8 "Navigation, _____ - that's our ball of wax." - Sgt Troy
- 12 What Sgt Moffitt isn't wearing around his neck in this episode.



Hitch says, the answers will appear in our next issue.

DOWNTIME by SarahAnne Corlett

"Hitch, Tully, take the jeeps over to the motorpool for service."

Private Mark Hitchcock watched his sergeants, Sam Troy and Jack Moffitt, march up the steps into the base headquarters before starting the engine to follow the order. He and fellow driver, Private Tully Pettigrew, almost never got invited to meetings with the brass. It was always "Take the jeeps to the motorpool" or "Pick up some supplies". Not that these weren't important jobs! If their jeeps broke down in the desert, behind enemy lines... Hitch couldn't imagine all of the ways they might be killed as a result, but he knew that every one of them was extremely unpleasant. It was just that Hitch sometimes craved the attention the sergeants got. The recognition. Nobody looked at the guy driving the jeep. They looked at the guy standing in the back, firing a machine gun and shouting orders.

Hitch sighed as he pulled the jeep into the first empty space he found. A mechanic's legs stuck out from under a nearby car. Hitch didn't know why they let the motorpool mechanics work on their jeeps, anyway. Tully was the best mechanic in the army. Give him the motorpool's resources – parts and tools – and they would never have car trouble that wasn't related to jerry bullets.

Tully wandered over, a matchstick between his teeth. He surveyed the mechanics working, the number of vehicles in for service.

"Be a couple hours before they get to ours," he drawled.

"Imagine there's some trouble to be had 'round here."

Hitch grinned. Tully never seemed bothered by their lot in this war. Tully never seemed bothered by much of anything, unless something happened to one of their jeeps or one of their friends.

Hitch nodded towards Headquarters. "What if they need us?"

"They'll know where to look."

"You'll be at the bar, with a bourbon in one hand while you carve your initials into the bar with your knife in the other," Hitch teased.

"And you'll be on a blonde in the back of the room somewhere."

Wearing twin mischievous grins, they set off for the local cantina.

**SOFT SOAP** By J. Ward

Tully pulled the jeep to the side of the street and regarded the building dubiously. "You sure this is it?"

"Yup." Hitch grinned. "*Chez Cerise Noir*, otherwise known as Ugly Pierre's."

"Worst beer in town, I hear."

"So?" Hitch was studying a second storey window where curtains waved in the breeze. Tully sighed.

"So, I didn't get all slicked up to spend my pass swilling down piss in a dump."

"You didn't get 'slicked up' at all." Hitch jerked his thumb at Tully's red kepi. "Why do you wear that thing anyway? Makes you look like a hillbilly."

"That thing was my granddaddy's, he wore it in the War Between the States. When Pa went off to France in '17, Granddad gave it to him. Said it would bring him luck."

"Did it?"

Tully shrugged. "Guess it depends how you look at it. Might be Pa came home full of lead, but when he wasn't fighting, he had himself some good times with them mademoiselles."

"Yeah?"

"S'what he said." Tully tugged at his earlobe. "So why are we here if it ain't for the booze? Can't be for dames, Sarge said nothing but Ayrabs in this town."

Hitch grinned. "Well, maybe I know something Sarge doesn't."

"Like what?"

"Like that." Hitch nodded at the window as faint feminine voices drifted through the curtains. "I heard Ugly Pierre's got three daughters just back from school in France. A convent school, get my drift?"

Tully stared up at the window and rubbed his chin. "Ugly Pierre,' huh. You reckon they take after their ma?"

For a reply, Hitch swept off his garrison cap. He snatched Tully's kepi, jammed it onto his head and vaulted out of the jeep. With a wink, he stationed himself beneath the window and drew a deep breath. "*Mademoiselle from Armentieres, parlez vous?*" he sang.

SOFT SOAP, CONT'D

The female voices fell silent.

"*Mademoiselle from Armentieres, parlez vous?* The colonel won the Croix de Guerre, the son of a gun was—"

Tully caught the glint of sunlight as water arced out through the window. The cascade burst over Hitch's head; laughter exploded behind the curtains.

Slowly Hitch turned around. Soapsuds slid down his cheeks and dripped from his nose. Gingerly, he removed the kepi, wrung it out, and trudged back towards the jeep. A sudden hiss brought him up short.

"*Monsieur!*"

A dark curly head poked between the curtain. A delicate hand released a scrap of cloth; Hitch made a dive and caught it before it touched the sodden ground. As he looked up, the girl blew a kiss and ducked back behind the curtains.

Hitch tucked the handkerchief in his breast pocket. He climbed into the jeep and settled the kepi on his head. "Just for tonight?" He grinned at Tully.

With a sigh, Tully slipped the jeep into gear and gunned the engine. As they bounced down the street, Hitch laced his hands behind his head.

"...*Hinky dinky parlez vous!*"



SHADOWS OF KA by Pat Shaw

The night was as cold as a witch's hospitality. Near the meagre fire two men settled, their hands wrapped around steaming mugs of coffee, and prepared to listen to their companion.

"So Sarge," began Tully. "Why did the Egyptians mummify?"

"That's really a good question," returned Jack Moffitt. "And one I shall enjoy explaining."

Mark Hitchcock looked over at his fellow driver, Tully Pettigrew, and sighed.

"Am I keeping you up, Hitch?" asked Moffitt.

"Sorry Sarge, but Troy did say we should try and get some sleep. It'll be time to relieve him on watch soon."

"You may be excused if you want to go," Moffitt said.

"Maybe not just this minute," returned Hitch, looking into the long shadows and shivering.

Moffitt turned from Hitch and slipped into his civilian persona, the lecturer. "You see, the Egyptians believed mummification was a guarantee of eternal life. For the spirit of the deceased to live on after death it needed a body to inhabit. So, they used mummification to preserve the body for the afterlife."

"Is that how come the coffins looked like people?" persisted the young private.

"The spirit had to be able to find and recognise the body it came from. This is the reason for Funeral Masks that looked like the deceased and anthropoid coffins which also resembled the person inside."

"Anthropoid coffins?" asked Hitch, clearing his throat.

"Human shaped," supplied Moffitt, before continuing. "The ancient Egyptians believed that the ram-headed god, Khum, sculpted all people and parts of their spirit or spirit. The spirit was made up of three parts, the *ka*, the *ba* and the *akh*."

"Why three?" asked Tully.

"The *ka* was thought to be a double or invisible twin of the person. It acted as a sort of guardian angel during life. After death it stayed in the tomb with the mummy. Sometimes *ka* statues were also buried with the mummy so if anything happened to the body the *ka* would have a place to live," explained Moffitt, thoroughly enjoying himself.

"You mean the whole area around the Valley of the Kings is infested with these invisible *ka*'s floating around?" asked Hitch, taking off his glasses and polishing them on his shirt.

Jack Moffitt chuckled. "I hadn't thought of it that way, but perhaps they are."

"And what about the *ba* and the *akh*?" asked Tully impatiently.

"What you doing, Tully?" asked Hitch, flinching at the snap of the fire.

"Gonna write a book?"

"I'm just interested that's all."

"I won't knock a little extra knowledge, but maybe we have had enough for tonight," said Moffitt, noting Hitch's pallor in the firelight. "It's time for someone to relieve Troy. How about it, Tully? We can continue this tomorrow."

"That kinda depends on Dietrich," sulked Tully, rising and grabbing his rifle.



Vignettes, cont'd

A DESERT NIGHT *by Lake*

"Plums."

"I say; what, Troy?" Moffitt's brow quirked as he looked up from the revolver he was examining. Nightfall was never restful for those who spent days riding the desert hard; work kept the Rat Patrol in fighting form.

"Plums - gigantic purple-black ones; they're ripe right about now." A cool finger of air ruffled Troy's hair as he bent studying a map case.

He tugged his jacket collar higher. "My grandfather grew them in his orchard." His voice drifted. "Practically explode when you bite them; juice all over you."

Moffitt smiled. Sometimes there was no rhyme or reason for what recollection came upon one when stresses finally eased. Food conversation was always a favorite. "You get a look about you when your grandfather comes up, and that farm. Bittersweet, I dare say."

"He was a great guy," Troy said. "Got too old to work the orchard. And once we kids - after my dad died - we couldn't be there to help." Snaps of canvas punctuated Troy's words as he closed the map case.

"Life has a way of intervening in our best plans." Silence hung like a whisper curtain.

"He reminded me of those fruit trees: skin like bark, and gnarled." Troy extended his hand, fingers crooked downward. "Sometimes in the *suk*, I'll smell him - sweat and oil and fruit. I catch myself checking around me." His face fell dark.

"He probably likes knowing you're still looking out for him." Moffitt's words were in danger of the wind taking them away. "Maybe he's not really gone so long as you're thinking of him."

"Don't try to spook me."

"It's not spooking." He leaned over to rummage in a crate and removed a rag. "You obviously cared about him, and he you. Why shouldn't you still think of him?" He threaded the rag into the barrel with practiced care.

"It's living in the past. I can't get lost in that out here. Too dangerous." His hand rubbed the canvas case and absently fingered a fresh bullet hole in it.

"Just keeps you human, old man. No point fearing being human." He loaded the weapon he held, closed its barrel with a definitive click, and holstered it.

"You're a good one to talk," Troy said without rancor.

"We're products of who and what came before us. Why run from it? We're already running ourselves ragged."

"Every now and then we turn around and fight, too." Troy grimaced, rose and put the canvas case in the back of the jeep. He briskly rubbed his palms together.

"That we do," Moffitt said. He shivered, then turned an expectant smile upon Troy. "Tea?"

Troy smiled back, shook his head in familiar surrender, and tucked his tongue wryly into the corner of his lip. "No. No tea, Moffitt."

Troy never accepted his offer, but it never stopped Moffitt from extending it.



HOBBIES

Modelling



The model pieces in Randy's "Rat Patrol" dioramas are 1/35th scale and it took him about 55 hours to complete the one shown. Getting the details right takes time. Troy's hat alone took more than two hours to perfect and the jeeps, requiring intricate, many-layered painting (to create the illusion of tiny rust and scuff marks) and dry brushing, took roughly 15 hours each.

The figures - people and jeeps - are all Tamiya figures (small plastic models). Each rat, except for Tully who only needed to be given a toothpick in his mouth, is a complex combination of bits and pieces of various figurines glued together - a head cut from one figurine, body from another, legs from a third, etc. Troy's hat was fashioned with care from a British pith helmet, and Hitch's cap was previously a German enlisted man's cap.

Randy's skill and attention to even the most minute details gives his "Rat Patrol" dioramas a startling realism. It's almost like seeing the lads themselves, deep in a new raid.



THROUGH THE FIELD GLASSES



This sign was spotted when passing through Guelph, Ontario in 2006. Could this be 'our' Sergeant Moffitt?

Have you a recent "Rat Patrol" sighting?

2007 RAT CALENDAR

Just print out this page and cut out the squares. Subsequent months will appear in future issues. Or use all four months at once on the refrigerator, bulletin board or by your computer.

JANUARY 2007



sun	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEB 2007



sun	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

march



sun	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

2007



APRIL 2007

sun	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

RAT RECIPE - Dietrich's Pfirsich Kuchen (peach cake) *by Barbo*

When Hans was a boy, his mother taught him how to make this rich dessert. When his camp resources are plentiful, he often bakes it for his fellow officers and they indulge in a little piece of home along with some good laughs and a hot cup of coffee.



Crust:

1 cup sugar
1/2 lb. local camel butter
1 cup flour
1/2 cup water
pinch of salt
pinch of sand (not optional)

Filling:

2 tins peach halves
1 cup sour goat cream
1/2 cup sugar

Mix dry ingredients and add water. Press evenly into a flat pan. Place peach halves on top of crust. In a separate bowl, mix sour cream and sugar together thoroughly and pour over peaches. Bake at 350° for 30 mins. Let cool before slicing into squares. Genießen Sie!

RAT ART GALLERY



Tully by Barbo

DUNES POETRY



Beverage Brew Up

A serious young sergeant named Jack, known well for his knowledge and tact, said, "In times of great fear, discard all that beer, and sip tea for the bracing you lack."

His clever young comrade named Hitch, whose future was sure to be rich, said, "It isn't the fear that makes me drink beer, but I get my best sleep in a ditch."