

Volume One • Issue Two MAY 2007

FREE e-publication

## WARTIME MAIL

by Libby

*"...it was held by a famous Commander, that his troops could march 3 or 4 days without food on the strength of one letter."*

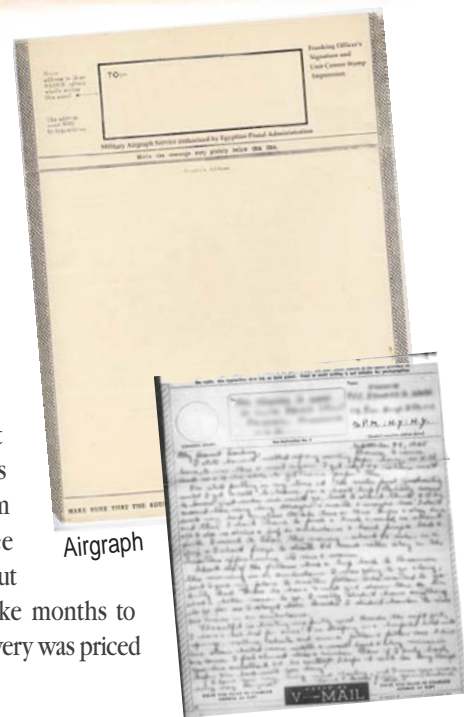
Important things, those letters from home. How would mail for the Rats have been handled?

The first British Base APO (Army Post Office) opened in Egypt in 1940 to serve the troops stationed in the Middle East and North Africa, but soon after the Mediterranean sea route fell within enemy range. Mail then had to be routed via South Africa and it took months to arrive, if at all. Something had to be done.

Because regular paper mail was too massive to send by air - the fastest way - reducing the size of letters was key. The answer came in the form of the airgraph (British equivalent of US V-mail). When using an airgraph (or V-mail) the soldier wrote his message in bold lettering into a set space on the letter-sized airgraph form. Then the airgraph was forwarded to a nearby processing centre (Cairo was the first) to be photographically reduced and transferred onto microfilm. Each frame on film contained one complete 'letter' so a single reel held thousands of them. The reel, much smaller and lighter than the same number of paper letters, was flown to the destination country. Once there, the photographic images were enlarged to about half the original airgraph size, printed onto notecard-sized paper, and sent to the recipient. The first batch of airgraphs were sent to the UK in 1941. Mail delivery time fell from months to weeks.

Not everyone liked airgraphs because of limits on message size and perceived lack of privacy. Many soldiers preferred using air letters (aka air mail letter cards), special lightweight paper sheets that folded to make their own envelopes. The similar aerogramme is still in use today.

Civilians were encouraged to use airgraphs and air letters too, but standard paper with envelopes remained an option. Regular letters from soldiers had the advantage of free delivery if under a certain weight, but they moved by surface and could take months to arrive. Airgraph, V-mail, and air letter delivery was priced at pennies.



Airgraph

V-mail

### ADDRESSING MAIL TO A SOLDIER

For military security, a soldier's unit location could not appear in the address so a 'Closed Address' system was devised. The APO designated in the address took care of relaying the letter to the appropriate country, unit, and individual wherever in the world he might be.

Mail to English soldiers:  
Service Number + Rank + Name  
Unit  
c/o APO England

Mail to American soldiers:  
Rank + Name + Serial Number  
Unit  
APO # XXX  
c/o Postmaster, New York, New York

US mail destined for North Africa was usually funnelled through the postmaster's office in New York.

*Special thanks to the Wards for their kind assistance.*

references:

<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/john.marflect/airgraph/airgraph.htm>

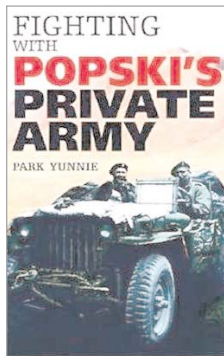
[http://www.remuseum.org.uk/specialism/rem\\_spec\\_pcsww2.htm#airgraph](http://www.remuseum.org.uk/specialism/rem_spec_pcsww2.htm#airgraph)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/yourplaceandmine/topics/war/v\\_mail.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/yourplaceandmine/topics/war/v_mail.shtml)

## ***Fighting with Popski's Private Army***

by Park Yunnie, Published by Greenhill Books, 2002

384 pages - Reviewed by Ed Youngblood



Many RAT PATROL fans will already be familiar with Vladimir Peniakoff's memoirs, *Popski's Private Army*, recommended reading for RAT PATROL writers. The book details Peniakoff's (Popski) formation of a unit of irregulars in the British Army during the war in North Africa. Officially designated No. 1 Demolition Squadron, Middle East, the group quickly became known as P.P.A. - Popski's Private Army. The group wreaked havoc behind Axis lines in North Africa and

Italy and their adventures became the stuff of legends. Popski was not alone in writing his memoirs after the war. His sometime second-in-command, Captain Park (Bob) Yunnie published his own memoirs, *Fighting with Popski's Private Army*, in 1959.

RAT PATROL fans will primarily be interested in the book's first five chapters, which focus on the war in North Africa. The other eighteen are primarily on the war in Italy. Many of Yunnie's stories read like scripts from the television show, particularly an incident in which most of the unit's vehicles are destroyed in an air attack—you'll recognize the episode. Popski's book relays more of the story that ended up on the show, but Yunnie gives the reader another side and that is one of the great things about the book. While it stands up well on its own, it complements Popski's book by filling in the gaps when the two worked separately.

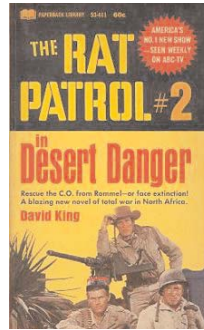
Yunnie truly seems to have loved what he did during the war and it shows in his writing. This is not a work about the horror of war, but a work about the adventure and camaraderie of war. In addition to the hazards of landing jeeps by glider in Italy, one learns about the Arabic method of brewing and pouring tea—an art form in itself. The author also recounts the human side of war; the death of a comrade, a child suddenly orphaned, and his own discomfort when he finds himself sheltered by Italians after having fought against the Italian army in North Africa. Perhaps the most poignant section of the book comes when he goes home on leave and is confronted by the stark contrast of his life of freedom and adventure in the war with life in war weary England, a section that Yunnie's son helps contextualize in the 2002 edition with an epilogue relating what happened to his father after the war.



## ***The Rat Patrol #2 - In Desert Danger***

by David King - Paperback Library Edition, Feb 1967

Review by Libby



If RAT PATROL action is your love, this book won't disappoint. Explosions rock, and bullets fly with astonishing frequency. The Rat Patrol, on a mission to rescue their Commanding Officer, creep deep into an enemy stronghold where Hauptmann Dietrich is in charge. The plot twists, and advantage shifts back and forth between opposing sides from start to finish. Friendly Arabs collaborate to help, but ultimately the Rats win through combined wits and skill.

There is more than action in this novel. The characters - particularly Troy, Dietrich, and Moffitt - gain added depth through illumination of their thoughts and feelings. A half hour television show could not, because of time constraints and the medium itself, offer the same character depth no matter how talented the actors.

The feeling of place - from open desert to Arab town - and time are well conveyed by King, in part because of his obvious knowledge of period weaponry and military detail. Both are sprinkled liberally through the novel for those with a taste for technical minutia.

Fans of the TV RAT PATROL foursome will be largely pleased with how the Rats are portrayed in the book. They run fairly true to the characters in the series' pilot episode. Because Tully drives for Troy in this book, and Hitch drives for Moffitt, one might guess King based characterizations for this novel on that particular episode.

Dietrich fans may, however, frown at how he is depicted in the novel. He is an ambitious, brutal commander - quite the 1960s stereotypical Hollywood German officer - a man often frustrated beyond reason to the point of ordering individual soldiers be shot for their mistakes. One does not sense such orders were carried out, but that Dietrich demonstrates such emotional extreme is out of keeping with Dietrich of the TV series. Of all the characters in the book, Dietrich is the least like his TV counterpart.

Troy is, as in the TV series, the top dog and in charge throughout the novel, but this is a story about a team, not just one man. All the players are given fairly equal treatment and each has opportunity to show his skills and talents.

All in all, *In Desert Danger* should be an enjoyable read for any RAT PATROL fan.





## LETTERS HOME by Barbo

MARCH 20TH, 1942

DEAR MOM, DAD, ANNIE & STEVEN.

WELL, I'VE BEEN IN THIS NEW JOB FOR 3 MONTHS NOW. I LOVE IT. ESPECIALLY MY UNIT-MATES. TULLY'S GREAT. WHEN EVER WE GET A THREE DAY PASS, WE HAVE A GOOD TIME. HE'LL BE MY FRIEND FOR LIFE. I GET ALONG REALLY WELL WITH SERGEANT TROY TOO. UNFORTUNATELY, OUR OTHER MAN, COOPER, WAS WOUNDED A FEW DAYS AGO. THE GOOD NEWS IS, HE'S ON HIS WAY HOME.

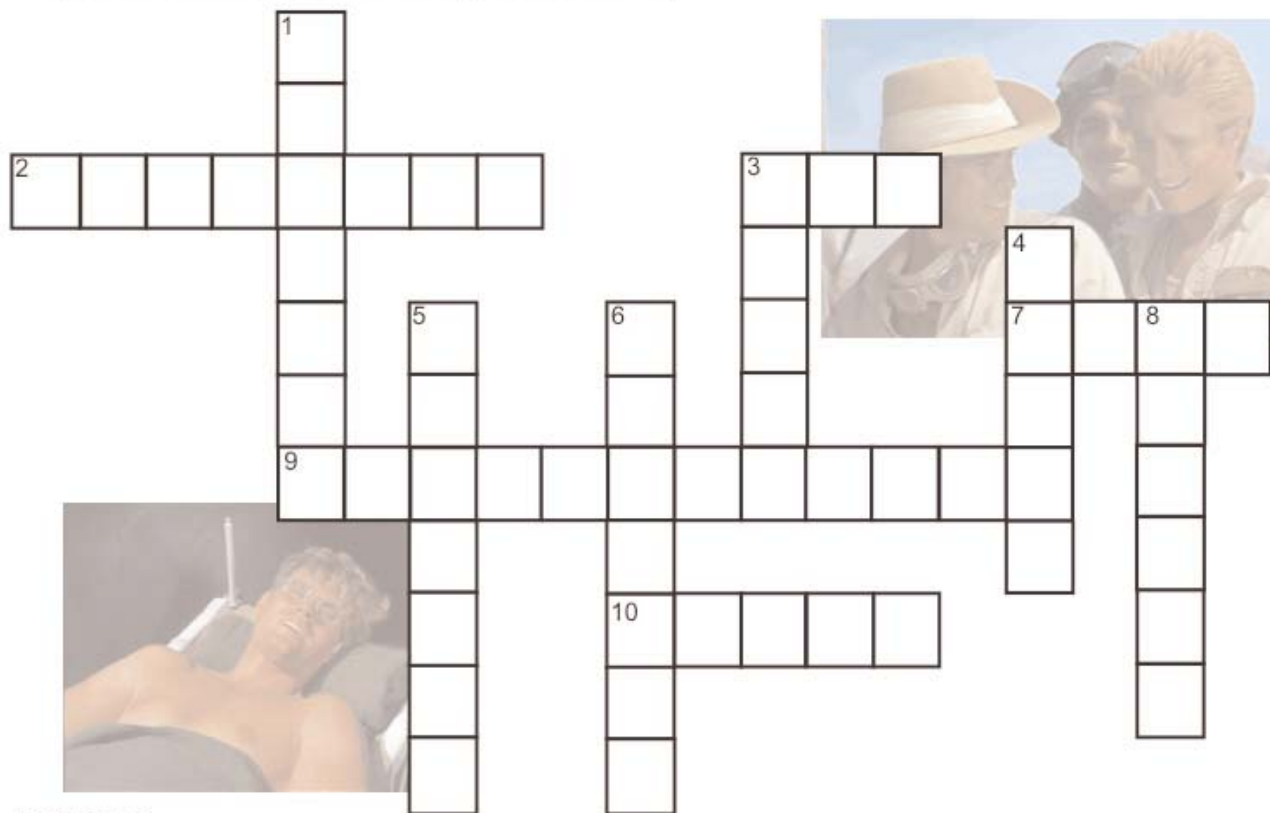
WE MET HIS REPLACEMENT YESTERDAY. AN ENGLISHMAN NAMED MOFFIT. IT WILL TAKE SOME GETTING USE TO HAVING HIM AROUND. HE SEEMS A LITTLE UPPIITY. TULLY'S NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT DRIVING FOR HIM INSTEAD OF TROY.

I HAVE TO GO. I'LL WRITE SOON. I'M DOING FINE. YOUR SON *Mark*

P.S. SEND MORE GUM!

# CROSSWORD: "The Life Against Death Raid" by Libby

(All answers can be found in *The Life Against Death Raid*.)



## ACROSS

- 2 The German colonel was suffering from battle fatigue, but only partial \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Hitch's tattoo was dated nineteen forty-\_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 Troy told Tully to "play \_\_\_\_\_" in the ambulance.
- 9 Moffitt said about the German nurse, "Her English is good, but she's rather \_\_\_\_\_."
- 10 Troy put the Germans chasing them to sleep with Molotov Cocktails full of \_\_\_\_\_.

## DOWN

- 1 About how many miles were they from their front lines when Hitch was wounded?
- 3 Tully had seen a German field hospital about \_\_\_\_\_ miles away.
- 4 Actor who played the part of the German doctor.
- 5 The crazed German colonel threatened to report his comrade to what organization?
- 6 The German doctor said, "In this division we do not mix sentimentality with \_\_\_\_\_."
- 8 An unconscious Hitch left the hospital in this.

### Answers to last crossword puzzle (Chase of Fire - January 2007 issue of DUNES):

Across: 1: Kentucky; 7: week; 9: sergeant; 10: smashing; 11: private; 13: five.  
 Down: 2: TNT; 3: Cambridge; 4: halftrack; 5: Lili Marlene or Lili Marleen; 6: Pettigrew; 8: demolition; 12: ascot.



## OVER EASY

by Con Featherby

Hitch took off his cap and fanned his face with it. Noon in the middle of the stupid desert was hotter'n heck. Even standing under the tree it was too hot to do anything. Tully lay stretched out by Hitch's feet, his helmet tipped over his face. Hitch dropped another pebble onto Tully's helmet. It bounced off with a soft thunk, but even after sixteen pebbles Tully hadn't moved. Hitch gave up. "How much longer before that supply drop, Sarge?" he asked.

Troy took a swig from his canteen. "All I know is sometime today." He got to his feet. "I'll go spell Moffitt." He hoisted the Thompson over his shoulder and headed for the nearby ridge.

Hitch toed Tully. "Wake up," he said.

Tully tipped back his helmet and squinted up at him. "Why?" his expression said.

"Because this is boring."

"What is?"

"Waiting."

Tully pulled his arms into a stretch and sat up. He slipped a toothpick into the corner of his mouth, gnawing on it a moment before speaking. "Know what Bart said?"

"That guy at the motor pool?"

"Said the Jerries fried an egg on a panzer."

"No way."

Tully shrugged and returned the toothpick to his mouth.

Hitch thought on it. "Can't be that hot." He leaned out of the shade and put his hand onto the jeep hood. He jerked it off again. "Crimminy, that's hot!" He strode to the back of the jeep and started rummaging through their gear.

Tully rose, his eyes on Hitch, but he didn't leave the tree's shade.

"Aha!" Hitch grinned and held up his discovery. "Look what I found."

"That's mine! Traded a whole box of matches for that egg."

"Come on, Tully," said Hitch, moving to the front of the jeep and rubbing at the hood with his shirt sleeve. "We can't let the Jerries beat us." He frowned at the hood and the grime imbedded in the metal. "It probably isn't even a chicken egg."

"It is too. I was saving it for breakfast tomorrow."

"Could be a ...a lizard egg," said Hitch, pouring a little water from his canteen onto the hood. It dried instantly. "It's been in this heat too long anyway. Nobody - not even you - would eat it now." He scrubbed at the hood with a rag he'd found under the seat.

continued on next page

The following vignette was inspired by "The Blind Man's Bluff Raid" episode of the RAT PATROL TV series. Be advised that it includes spoilers for that episode.

## CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

by SarahAnne Corlett

Captain Hans Dietrich smiled as they rumbled toward the rendezvous that his American prisoner, Sergeant Sam Troy, had pointed out on their map. He was a wily one, Sergeant Troy. Dietrich had been bested by him and his elite patrol frequently in the past. They were unorthodox and clever and Dietrich finally realized he couldn't beat them face-to-face on the battlefield. If he was going to take them down, he had to divide them, trick them and hit them hard.

The rendezvous was perfect. As far as Troy's men were concerned, it was safe. They would be thinking of their commanding officer, separated from them in the midst of a skirmish. They weren't aware that Dietrich had arranged for Troy to end up "sun-blind", in a hospital he thought was American. Troy's concern for those under his command was as well known as the loyalty of his men. Dietrich had known that the former would eventually compel Troy to reveal the patrol's meeting place. The latter would ensure that his men would remain there until Dietrich arrived.

Dietrich leaned forward in his seat. Though it offered him no better view of the endless expanse of desert before them, he found it difficult to sit still.

Everything had gone precisely to plan. Troy's betrayal of the secret location couldn't have been more perfect if Dietrich had scripted it. In fact, he had practically scripted the last part. The part where he had stepped in to thank Troy for handing him the patrol. The part where he had let Troy know that he had been beaten and that it was Hans Dietrich who had beaten him.

Dietrich's smile widened. A palm tree had become visible in the distance. It wouldn't be long now. He would enjoy telling Troy's men that it had been Troy himself who had led the Germans there.

He remembered how he had left Troy, still blind, packed into the back of a prisoner transport, headed for a prisoner of war camp. Dietrich had given Troy a pair of sunglasses to protect his eyes from the sun as they readjusted to sight. He had wanted their last meeting to burn into Troy's mind every day Troy spent in the camp. Dietrich couldn't help the small swell of triumph he felt. No battle had been so fiercely fought, so drawn out and so satisfying in the eventual victory. The Rat Patrol was in his grasp.

"Herr Hauptmann?"

His lieutenant. They were there. Dietrich peered out through the dust and the glare of the sun from his perch in the half-track. A familiar knot began to form in the pit of his stomach. He couldn't see a soul in any direction. The German vehicles ground to a halt, and Dietrich stepped down onto the hot desert sand, resignation already colouring his movements. A single German motorcycle sat abandoned by a palm tree. The sunglasses left carefully on its seat told Dietrich all he needed to know.



## OVER EASY, CONT'D

Moffitt approached. "I'm famished. What's for lunch?" He frowned at the rag in Hitch's hand. "I say, isn't that my spare ascot?"

"Eggs," said Hitch, ignoring Moffitt's observation. Fame was more important than a dumb ascot. He rubbed at the hood. "Or one egg, to be exact."

Moffitt stepped closer. "I hear the Jerries cooked one on a panzer."

"We're using a jeep hood. Even better. You want it over easy, Moffitt?"

Moffitt smiled hopefully. "With bangers and mash?"

Tully lay down and jerked his helmet down over his eyes again. "Nuts," he said.



### RAT PATROL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Complete  
Second Season of  
The RAT PATROL  
on DVD is due to  
be released  
June 12, 2007.

**Smashing!**

## OPERATION BIG SURPRISE *By Iris*

"Where the devil have you been?" Moffitt barked at Tully.

Tully settled into the jeep. "Had something important to do."

"More bloody important than the war?"

Tully shrugged.

Moffitt looked over to the second jeep for the other two members of the team. He sighed. "Now where have they got to?"

"Sarge said something about more explosives," Tully offered.

"What? We have two bloody jeeps full!" Moffitt checked his watch. Were they ever going to leave? Was he the only one worried about winning the war?

Tully shrugged.

Climbing out of the jeep, Moffitt spotted Troy striding towards them. Hitch trailed not far behind carrying a crate. "Troy, was that really necessary?"

"We'll need it," Troy responded as he climbed into his jeep.

Moffitt watched Hitch carefully put the crate into the back of the jeep and slide into the driver's seat.

"Let's shake it," Troy yelled above the noise of the two jeep engines.

Moffitt turned and jumped in to his jeep as it surged forward. He glared at Tully but Tully just stared ahead, intent on his driving.

As the four men settled into their routine of traveling through the desert, Moffitt let his irritation slip away. Hopefully, they would be able to finish off their mission without being sighted by an enemy patrol. Moffitt almost laughed at that thought. Their luck was never that good.

An hour before nightfall Troy called a halt. "We'll camp here."

"Why?" Moffitt asked. "We can make a few more kilometres with the daylight. Especially with our late start."

Troy glared. "There isn't any cover between here and the next few kilometres. We stay here."

Moffitt snatched his machine gun from its boot and stalked off to stand watch. He could not understand the sudden lack of enthusiasm his American counterparts seemed to have for this mission.

Just before nightfall Moffitt returned to camp to see that a small fire had been built. The crate that Hitch had so carefully lugged to the jeep earlier in the day now sat precariously close to the fire.

"Do you think that is wise?" Moffitt said to no one in particular.

"It's not dark enough for anyone to see the fire," Hitch said.

"No, the case of explosives," Moffitt pointed.

"It's fine," Troy said.

Bloody right, thought Moffitt.

"Look and see."

Moffitt gingerly pried the crate open. He stared into the box until he heard a cough behind him. He turned in confusion, and saw the wide grins on his friends' faces.

"Happy Birthday!"

"But how?"

"Piece of cake," they said, slapping him on the back.

"Now blow out the candles so we can eat," Tully ordered, holding out his plate.



March 12, 1943  
Sergeant Sam Troy  
Long Range Desert Patrol  
Head Quarters 2nd Corps  
North Africa

Gentlemen:

I pray that this letter finds you all in good health and spirits. You, of course have no idea of who I am but still I was compelled to write.

My name is Mary Riley, the niece of a man you rescued from a prisoner of war camp in North Africa last month. I cannot adequately express in mere words the gratitude of our family for the safe return of my uncle, Major Bernard Indrus. When my aunt Hazel received the news that he had been captured and imprisoned in a camp, she was devastated, fearing never to see him alive again.

To you, Sergeant Troy, I must confess that I have never heard of a more determined man, (although my uncle did use the word 'stubborn') when so many things went wrong and all seemed lost, you did not give up.

Sergeant Moffitt, without your expertise, I am certain that many more would have been lost that day on the beach. For certain, it is true that the British are staunch and brave friends.

I wish to extend our sincerest sympathies to you, Private Hitchcock on the loss of your dear friend Marianne during the rescue. Uncle Bernard could give us only a few details of the part she played but she was by all accounts very brave to have done all that she did.

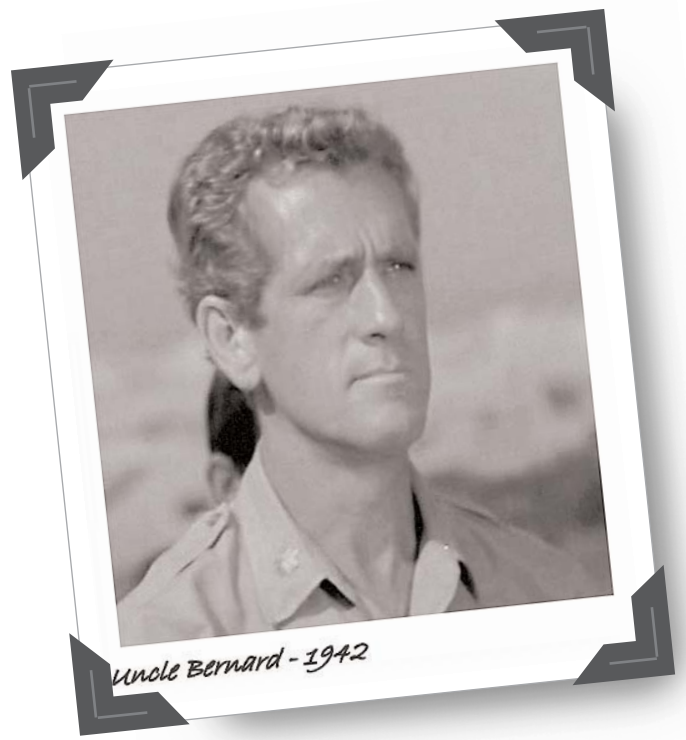
Private Pettigrew, I hope it will not embarrass you terribly, but my dear aunt has gone so far as to find your mother and call her on the telephone to thank her for your part in the operation.

I tried to dissuade her; but she would not be discouraged, indeed, I am certain that had she been able to locate the phone numbers for everyone's parents, she would have called them all to express her gratitude.

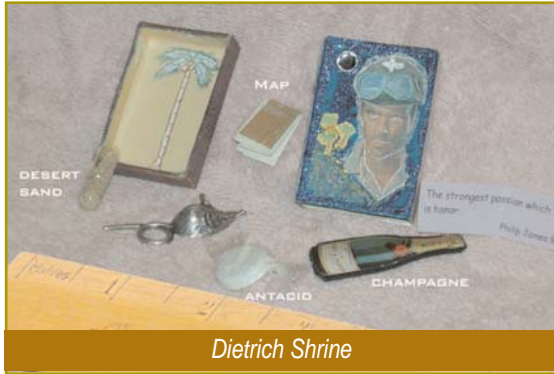
If ever any of you gentlemen should find yourselves in Joplin Missouri, you have a warm welcome and a standing invitation to stay with us for as long as you please.

Sincerely yours,  
Mary Elizabeth Riley

*By JC Lasiter*



# HOBBIES Matchbox Personal Shrines *by Judith Wolford*

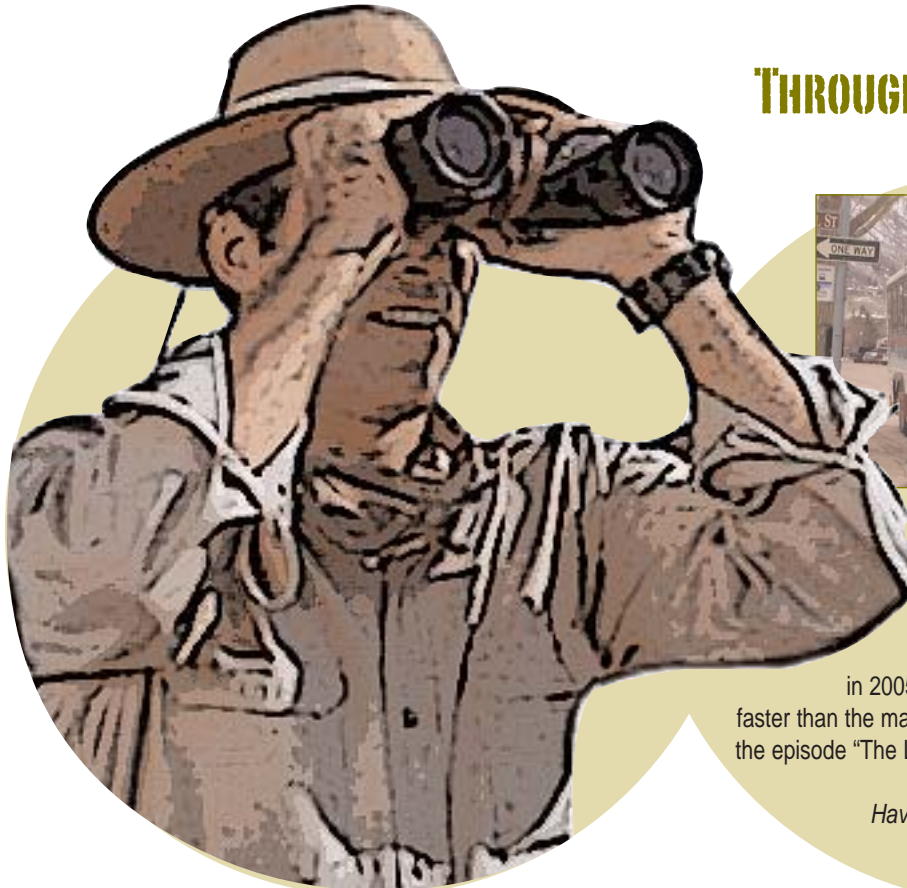


These boxes are a tiny homage to some person or theme, and so inside them they contain various charms and found items related to that subject matter. The 'trick' is, of course, that everything must fit inside the closed box.

These are small (1x 1-1/4 inches) matchboxes purchased from any grocery or drug store. Pictures, usually found in magazines or cards, are used on and in them [though, in the case of the RAT PATROL, I printed color pictures obtained from good scans or screen captures of the actors.]. I also paint, wallpaper, and glitter glue designs on the boxes. In some cases, I work with a magnifying glass to do the proper cutting and placement. I have found that glitter is an extremely forgiving medium and can cover up a multitude of imperfections or mistakes!

I purchase or salvage certain charms, stones, and other ornaments to put into the box to reveal the theme to the recipient. This is the greatest fun of creating the shrines - finding the exact right items to place inside them, and I have found that sometimes I have more than I can use. The search for the proper contents is often the most challenging part of the creation. I want the items to be revealing of the theme or individual, but I also want there to be some concept of discovery and surprise on the part of the recipient of the box.

My final touch is to locate some apropos quotation to include inside the box - preferably whimsical, since I find creating the boxes to be a very fun activity. And - without question - every box must have a title (and my name), since these are my own works of art.



## THROUGH THE FIELD GLASSES



Anne Barnes photographed this bus headed for El Jebel in Aspen, Colorado in 2005. We suppose it is faster than the man on the donkey in the episode "The Last Chance Raid".

*Have you had a recent "rat" sighting?*



# 2007 RAT CALENDAR

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



**MAY**

sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fi	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		
2	0	0				7



**JUNE 2007**

sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fi	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



**JULY 2007**

sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fi	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				

**AUGUST 2007**



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fi	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	

## RAT RECIPE - Hitch's Dorcas Gazelle w/Couscous by Barbo

Sometimes the Rat Patrol has no choice but to get creative at mealtime. While trying to avoid a boulder, Hitch accidentally ran over a gazelle, and came up with this unit pleaser. (The private is an excellent driver.) Thankfully, in the last village Hitch traded some bubblegum for some local staples including couscous, onions and spices.



1 Dorcas Gazelle	1 tsp. dried wild desert sage
1/2 cup camel butter	2 tins of army ration consomme
3 wild onions or leeks	2 cups couscous
1 tbs. salt	pinch of sand (not optional)

Skin and gut gazelle and chop meat into bite-sized pieces. In a frying pan, melt butter and brown onions and meat. Add consomme and simmer. Add couscous and cook until tender. Add salt and sage to taste and serve with local flatbread. Bon appetite, Sarge.

## RAT ART GALLERY



Moffitt by Nett

## DUNES POETRY

### MANFRED'S LAMENT

by Libby

Young Manfred so wished he had fled,  
quite sure he'd be better off dead.  
Those four Rats in their jeeps  
left his camp in such heaps  
Herr Hauptmann would shout for his head.



### A HAUPTMANN'S COMPLAINT

by J. Ward

I'm cursed with a certain young 'freiter,\*  
who is lacking all skill as a fighter.  
When those Rats come a'calling,  
o'er his feet he keeps falling.  
I wish I could send that twerp *weiter!*

\* 'freiter is short for 'Gefreiter' which is German for Private. Weiter means 'further away'.

Disclaimer: This is a non-profit, fan, electronic publication. No copyright infringement is intended. Dunes is a free newsletter. For more information and submission guidelines: <http://www.suncompass.fandom.tv/dunes.htm> or contact email addie: [rpunes@gmail.com](mailto:rpunes@gmail.com) © Copyright Barbo/Libby 2007

Credits: *Editor-in-Chief* - Libby / *Managing Editor & Art Director* - Barbo