

This amusing account, from the British armor journal, Tank, recounts the impressions of British troopers attached to U.S. forces during a search for weapons in the Balkans. From time to time, it is rewarding to see ourselves as others see us.... - Ed.

*Last One to Find a Gun Buys the Beers**

A Search Operation in the Zegra Valley

by Trooper M. T. Llewellyn, British Army

Whilst on Op Flers, Corporal Nash, Trooper Cheetham and myself were attached to the Americans for a search operation to see how they did things differently to us. The night before the operation, we attended the American brief to see where we would fit into the search. However, nothing was said about our role because they all seemed more interested with the search dog than an actual plan.

The brief went on for about 20 minutes, 15 of which were devoted to the damn dog. One of the officers asked the dog handler, 'Hey, doesn't the damn dog ever get tired?' and the dog handler stood up and said, 'Sir, yes Sir, the dog does get tired, Sir, but we take it away for a rest and then the dog and myself will rock and roll again, Sir!'

In the morning, we parked up at the front gate and waited for the rest to turn up. The Americans arrived in 10 massive Humvees (4x4 jeeps) ready for war. All of them wore body armor, helmet and pistols, carried rifles with grenade launchers, and had machine guns on all of their vehicles. I thought we were going to wait for an Apache escort, but we left for the target house without air cover.

We pulled up at the house and waited for the dogs to unload. We were expecting spaniels or something like that, but the door of the Humvee opened and two fiery-eyed hellhounds jumped out, causing a

mass dash of people trying to escape a savaging. We let them search the house first, on their own, which was best for all of us.

When the dogs finally tired and had gone to sulk in their Humvee about not being allowed to eat anyone, we gathered our kit and went into the house. When we do a search on a house, two men do each room so that we stay out of each other's way, and so that the house gets a thorough going over. However, our Yank colleagues have a competition to see how many people they can cram into one room, and so after a day's disorganized searching, they had only found an AK-47 magazine, whilst we had found a loaded 9mm pistol. Everyone then congratulated each other on being either members of, or friends of members of, the most fabulous country in the world, and true defenders of democracy.

On a serious note, it was good to see how other nations operate, and the Americans were very friendly, helpful, and just as keen as us. After this mission, we moved on to patrolling once more, but it would be fun to work with them again, and the finds made the whole thing worthwhile.

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*While the Americans may be able to purchase the beer, they would not be permitted to drink it in either Bosnia or Kosovo.