

= Toyota War =

The Toyota War is the name commonly given to the last phase of the Chadian ? Libyan conflict , which took place in 1987 in Northern Chad and on the Libyan ? Chadian border . It takes its name from the Toyota pickup trucks used as technicals to provide mobility for the Chadian troops as they fought against the Libyans . The 1987 war resulted in a heavy defeat for Libya , which , according to American sources , lost one tenth of its army , with 7 @, @ 500 men killed and US \$ 1 @. @ 5 billion worth of military equipment destroyed or captured . Chadian losses were 1 @, @ 000 men killed .

The war began with the Libyan occupation of northern Chad in 1983 , when Libya 's leader Muammar Gaddafi , refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Chadian President Hissène Habré , militarily supported the attempt by the opposition Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT) to overthrow Habré . The plan was foiled by the intervention of France which , first with Operation Manta and later with Operation Epervier , limited Libyan expansion to north of the 16th parallel , in the most arid and sparsely inhabited part of Chad .

In 1986 the GUNT rebelled against Gaddafi , stripping Libya of its main cover of legitimacy for its military presence in Chad . Seeing an occasion to unify Chad behind him , Habré ordered his forces to pass the 16th parallel so as to link with the GUNT rebels (who were fighting the Libyans in Tibesti) in December . A few weeks later a bigger force struck at Fada , destroying the local Libyan garrison . In three months , combining the methods of guerilla and conventional warfare in a common strategy , Habré was able to retake almost all of northern Chad , and in the following months , inflicted new heavy defeats on the Libyans , until a ceasefire putting an end to the conflict was signed in September . The ceasefire left open the issue of the disputed Aouzou Strip , which was eventually assigned to Chad by the International Court of Justice in 1994 .

= = Background = =

Since 1983 Chad was de facto partitioned , with the northern half controlled by the rebel Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT) headed by Goukouni Oueddei and supported on the ground by Libyan forces , while the south was held by the Western @-@ backed Chadian government guided by Hissène Habré . This partition on 16th parallel (the so @-@ called Red Line) into Libyan and French zones of influence was informally recognised by France in 1984 , following an accord between France and Libya to withdraw their forces from Chad . The accord was not respected by Libya , which maintained at least 3 @, @ 000 men stationed in northern Chad .

During the period between 1984 and 1986 , in which no major clash took place , Habré greatly strengthened his position thanks to western support and Libya 's failure to respect the Franco @-@ Libyan 1984 agreement . From 1984 onwards , the GUNT also suffered increasing factional tensions , centered on the fight between Goukouni and Acheikh ibn Oumar over the leadership of the organization . Taking advantage of the GUNT 's difficulties , Habré struck a series of accords with smaller rebel factions , which left the GUNT at the beginning of 1986 with only three of the eleven factions that had originally signed the Lagos Accord in 1979 . The remaining factions were Goukouni 's People 's Armed Forces (FAP) , Acheikh 's armed branch of the Democratic Revolutionary Council (CDR) and that part of the Chadian Armed Forces (FAT) which had maintained its loyalty to Wadel Abdelkader Kamougué .

= = Forces on the ground = =

At the opening of 1987 , the last year of the war , the Libyan expeditionary force was still impressive , comprising 8 @, @ 000 soldiers , 300 tanks , many multiple rocket launchers (rocket artillery) and regular artillery pieces , Mi @-@ 24 helicopters and sixty combat aircraft . These forces did not have a unified command , but were divided into an Operational Group South , active in the Tibesti with 2 @, @ 500 men , and an Operational Group East , centered in Faya @-@ Largeau .

Apparently formidable , the Libyan military disposition in Chad was marred by serious flaws . The Libyans were prepared for a war in which they would provide ground and air support to their

Chadian allies , act as assault infantry , and provide reconnaissance . By 1987 , however , Muammar Gaddafi had lost his allies , exposing Libya 's inadequate knowledge of the area . Libyan garrisons came to resemble isolated and vulnerable islands in the Chadian Sahara . Also important was the low morale among the troops , who were fighting in a foreign country , and the structural disorganization of the Libyan army , which was in part induced by Gaddafi 's fear of a military coup against him . This fear led him to avoid the professionalization of the armed forces .

The Libyans had also to deal with the greatly strengthened Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT) , which was composed of 10 @, @ 000 highly motivated soldiers , led by experienced and able commanders , such as Idriss Déby , Hassan Djamous and President Hissène Habré himself . And while FANT previously had no air power , limited mobility and few anti @-@ tank and anti @-@ aircraft weapons , by 1987 it could count on the French Air Force to keep Libyan aircraft grounded and , more importantly , to provide 400 highly mobile Toyota pickups equipped with MILAN anti @-@ tank guided missiles . It is these trucks that gave the name " Toyota War " to this last phase of the Chadian @-@ Libyan conflict .

= = Libyan expulsion = =

Habré selected as the first target for his reconquest of northern Chad the well @-@ fortified Libyan communications base of Fada . It was defended by 2 @, @ 000 Libyans and the bulk of the Democratic Revolutionary Council (CDR) militia (Gaddafi 's closest Chadian allies) , well @-@ provided with armour and artillery . Hassan Djamous , the thirty @-@ year @-@ old FANT commander @-@ in @-@ chief , pitched about 4 @, @ 000 ? 5 @, @ 000 men against Fada 's Libyan garrison . Taking advantage of his army 's superior knowledge of the terrain , which apparently included unknown access points to the base , Djamous avoided a frontal assault and used his forces ' high mobility to surround the Libyan positions and then unleashed his troops , destroying the defending garrison . In the battle , 784 Libyans were killed and 100 tanks destroyed , while only 50 FANT soldiers died .

The unexpected defeat stunned Gaddafi , who then reacted on January 4 by recalling to service all of the army reservists . In an act of defiance towards France , he also ordered the bombing of Arada , well south of the 16th parallel . France retaliated with a new airstrike on Ouadi Doum and destroyed their radar system , effectively blinding the Libyan Air Force in Chad for several months . Gaddafi attempted to contain the FANT threat by rushing several new battalions into Chad (especially to Faya @-@ Largeau and Ouadi Doum) , including units of the elite Revolutionary Guard . This brought the amount of Libyan forces in the country to a total of 11 @, @ 000 by March .

In March 1987 , the main Libyan air base of Ouadi Doum was captured by Chadian forces . Although strongly defended by minefields , 5 @, @ 000 soldiers , tanks , armored vehicles , and aircraft , the Libyans ' base fell to a smaller Chadian attacking force led by Djamous equipped with trucks mounted with machine guns and antitank weapons . Observers estimated that , in the Chadian victories in the first three months of 1987 , more than 3 @, @ 000 Libyan soldiers had been killed , captured , or deserted . Large numbers of tanks , armored personnel carriers , artillery , fixed @-@ wing aircraft , and helicopters were captured or destroyed . In some cases , Libya sent its own aircraft to bomb abandoned Libyan equipment to deny its use to the Chadians . It was reported that , in many cases , Libyan soldiers had been killed while fleeing to avoid battle . At Ouadi Doum , panicked Libyans had suffered high casualties running through their own minefields .

The fall of Ouadi Doum was a severe setback for Libya . Deserted by most of their Chadian allies , Libyan forces found themselves isolated in foreign territory , and the loss of the main Libyan air base in Chad prevented Libya from providing close air cover to its troops . In general , the offensive against FANT had exposed the vulnerability of Libya 's heavy armor to a more mobile enemy . On Gaddafi 's orders , a general withdrawal was undertaken from Borkou @-@ Ennedi @-@ Tibesti Prefecture , beginning with Faya @-@ Largeau . The town had served as the main Libyan base during the preceding four years , but was in danger of being encircled . Its garrison of 3 @, @ 000 men , together with the survivors of Ouadi Doum , retired toward the Libyan base at Maatan @-@

as @-@ Sarra , north of the Chadian border . In an attempt to reduce the damage inflicted to his international standing , Gaddafi announced that Libya had won the confrontation , and was now leaving Chad so that the opposition could play its part in fighting Habré .

These military actions left Habré in control of Chad and in a position to threaten the expulsion of Libya from the Aouzou Strip , affected the international perception of Libya as a significant regional military power , and cast renewed doubt on the competence and determination of Libyan soldiers , especially in engagements beyond the country 's borders to which they evidently felt no personal commitment .

The Toyota War attracted considerable interest in the United States , where the possibility of using Habré to overthrow Gaddafi was given serious consideration . As part of the Reagan Administration 's support for his government , Habré , during a visit to Washington , received a pledge of US \$ 32 million worth of aid , including Stinger anti @-@ aircraft missiles .

= = Renewed Chadian offensive = =

In August 1987 , the encouraged Chadians carried their offensive into the disputed Aouzou Strip , occupying the town of Aouzou following another battle in which the Libyans suffered severe losses in troops and abandoned equipment . In retaliation , Libya intensified its air bombardments of towns in the north , usually from altitudes beyond the range of FANT 's shoulder @-@ fired missiles . Appeals by Habré for French air missions to defend the area against the bombing were rejected , as Aouzou had been retaken against the wishes of French President François Mitterrand . Instead , Mitterrand called for international mediation to settle competing claims to the disputed territory .

After a succession of counterattacks , toward the end of August the Libyans finally drove the 400 Chadian soldiers out of the town . This victory ? the first by Libyan ground forces since the start of the Toyota War ? was apparently achieved through close @-@ range air strikes , which were followed by ground troops advancing cross @-@ country in jeeps , Toyota all @-@ terrain trucks , and light armored vehicles . For the Libyans , who had previously relied on ponderous tracked armour , the assault represented a conversion to the desert warfare tactics developed by FANT . To highlight the victory , Gaddafi flew foreign journalists to the region , so the news of his victory could reach the headlines .

Habré quickly reacted to this setback and to the continued bombing of FANT concentrations in northern Chad . On September 5 , 1987 he mounted a surprise raid against the key Libyan air base at Maaten al @-@ Sarra . Reportedly , 1 @,@ 000 Libyans were killed , 300 were captured , and hundreds of others were forced to flee into the surrounding desert . Chad claimed that its troops destroyed about 32 aircraft ? including MiG @-@ 21 and MiG @-@ 23 fighters , Su @-@ 22 fighter @-@ bombers , and Mi @-@ 24 helicopters ? before the FANT column withdrew to Chadian soil .

The attack had been opposed by France , who refused to provide FANT with intelligence and logistical support , causing FANT to suffer considerable losses . The French Defence Minister André Giraud let it be known that " France was not implicated in any way " in the attack and " had not been informed of it " . The American reaction was markedly different , as it had previously supported the attempted reconquest of the Aouzou Strip ; it now welcomed the Chadian raid .

= = Ceasefire = =

Because of domestic opposition , internal demoralization , and international hostility , Gaddafi assumed a more conciliatory attitude following his defeat . On the other side , Habré also found himself vulnerable , as the French feared that the attack on Maaten as @-@ Sarrah was only the first stage of a general offensive into Libya proper , a possibility that France was not disposed to tolerate . As a result , Mitterrand forced Habré to accept the mediation efforts of the Organization of African Unity 's Zambian Chairman , Kenneth Kaunda , which resulted in a ceasefire on September 11 .

It was assumed that war would , sooner or later , resume , but in the end the ceasefire violations were relatively minor . Gaddafi announced in May 1988 that he would recognize Habré as President

of Chad " as a gift to Africa " , even if Libya refused to leave the disputed Aouzou Strip . On October 3 the two countries resumed diplomatic relations , and another important step was made when the two countries agreed in September 1990 to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice . On February 3 , 1994 the court ruled in favour of Chad , thus definitively solving the Aouzou controversy by assigning the territory to the southern country .