

A DAN DAILEY NOVEL

COLLISION

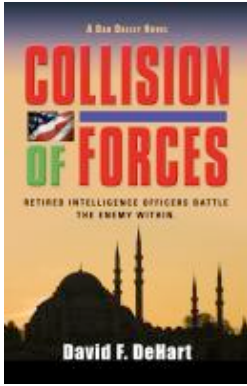


OF FORCES

RETIRED INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS BATTLE
THE ENEMY WITHIN.

A silhouette of a mosque with a large dome and several minarets, set against a bright orange and yellow sunset sky. The mosque is in the foreground, and the sky is the background.

David F. DeHart



They're back! Dan Dailey and Bull are joined by Bull's son, Chris. In an adventure that ranges from sleepy Wilsonville, Oregon to Washington, DC, to the Middle East, the three are in hot pursuit of the bad guys. In this techno-thriller, the question is: Who are the real bad guys? The answer comes in an explosive climax in middle of the Black Sea. It's a fascinating read and a great addition to the "Dan Dailey" legend.

Collision of Forces

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COLLISION OF FORCES

David F. DeHart

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First Edition

Prologue

Tehran, Iran

Someone's going to get killed...Haydar or me...or maybe both of us. Farid Yavari flicked his cigarette out the driver's side window. He moved over into the right lane and took the Valie-asr exit off the Chamran Expressway. His Khodro sedan coasted to a stop across the avenue from the Estaghlal East Wing Hotel. The five-star hotel, once known as the Tehran Royal Hilton, seemed to sprout from the valley basin, its twenty floors of concrete and glass blocking the sun from his eyes. He turned into the main entrance, parked in the valet section and exited the car.

Four hours of non-stop driving had frozen his back into a painful arc requiring him to stretch slowly, letting his muscles and bones find their rightful configuration.

"Masā'u l- khair," the valet attendant greeted him, relieved him of his car keys and handed him a claim ticket.

"Yes, it is a good evening, thank you." *A good evening for some maybe*, he thought, but for Haydar Bahrami, his Iranian Ministry of Intelligence Service field agent, this evening may not turn out to be so good. The MOIS did not tolerate loss of top-secret intelligence information, particularly when it might have been lost to an Iraqi puppet of the American spies, and *he* was personally responsible for the stupidity of his field agents. Haydar was one of his best recruiters; but

this recent screw-up in trusting a double agent with valuable intelligence would not go unpunished.

Farid's face grew dark and perspiration trickled down his cheeks, sopping his shirt collar. The thought of *this* particular information falling into American hands raised a level of fear in him he had not experienced since the Iraqis had captured him back in 1987. During the great eight-year-war against Saddam Hussein—*may a thousand goats piss on his soul*— he had been tortured for six months before being expatriated at the end of bloody conflict.

The doorman tipped his hat at Farid, who felt out of place entering the luxury hotel in his worn, black, sweat-drenched jacket, wrinkled brown trousers and dusty shoes. At a hotel charging \$300 a night, most of its guests were usually better dressed. The doorman started to say something, then spotting the bulge of a pistol under Farid's left armpit quickly turned back to his duties.

One did not challenge the MOIS, Farid said to himself. He hurried past the reception desk, went straight for the bank of elevators and stepped into a car just before its doors closed. He reached over and punched the button for the 19th floor where he would meet Haydar in the coffee shop. A man, wearing an expensive western suit, backed away from him and cleared his throat. It was then Farid caught a whiff of stench emanating from his own body—the odor of sweat and fear. He yanked a handkerchief from his back pocket and dabbed his damp face.

"Hot today," Farid said, jamming it back into his pocket.

The man grunted, stepping forward, to press the button for the next upcoming floor. When the elevator came to a

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jerky stop on the 15th, the man quickly exited, turned back and said, "You smell bad."

"*Ann ru sar et!*" Farid swore after him in Farsi, "Shit on your head!"

* * *

The Pentagon 0800 Hours

Room-E245-A did not have a sign designating its occupancy, nor the nature of its mission. The four men and one woman who staffed this miniscule section simply referred to themselves as "Special Ops." Since there were probably twenty other organizations in the Pentagon known by the same moniker, E245-A was easily overlooked in the mix.

It was one of very few offices situated at the end of a hallway. Since the corridors formed five concentric rings, there were virtually no "ends of the hallway."

This mysterious cell came under the command of an Air Force bird colonel, Charlie Kittins, and was staffed with a young Army major, Chris Bulliard; Marine Captain Hank Collins; Air Force Master Sergeant Will Lofton, and Navy Chief Petty Officer Amy Carter.

The ironic thing about this office, it was several miles from its parent, the Defense Intelligence Agency, located at Bolling Air Force Base. Since many of E245-A's missions originated out of the "Puzzle Palace," Colonel Kittins and his staff of Special Ops personnel were tucked away in obscure offices in The Pentagon.

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It is a little known fact in spite of the 17.5 miles of corridors crowded with 23,000 military and civilian personnel, you could walk to any other room in the Pentagon in seven minutes.

Major Bulliard dashed out of E245-A, briskly walked through three connecting corridors, arriving at Colonel Kittins' office in record time. He strode past the Old Man's secretary and entered his boss's blue-carpeted office. He stopped smartly before the Colonel's desk and checked his chronograph...exactly 3.5 minutes. He grinned and tapped the watch.

"Three and half minutes, sir. Personal best!"

"Tell someone who gives a crap, Chris." Kittins looked up at the young Army Intelligence major. He bore a startling resemblance to Jim "Bull" Bulliard, his father— big, burly, and blond-haired—and to his mother, Margo, a beautiful Chinese-American who married Chris's father after a tour of duty in Korea. The young major was also tall, blond and, according to the colonel's secretary who had a crush on him, 'had gorgeous almond-shaped brown eyes.'

"You just returned from leave?"

"Yes, sir. Got back last night."

"So, how's Bull?"

"Fine, sir, for a 70-year-old man. Has some breathing issues, but other than that, the same."

"And your mom?"

"Couldn't be better. She drives Dad up the wall at times, trying to get him outside to help in the vineyards."

Kittins smiled. He recalled Margo was a former CIA operative who had been placed on full disability after losing an eye in a dangerous operation in Korea. She was one of

few who had been awarded 'The Company's' highest honor. Major Bulliard did indeed come from exceptional stock.

"Good people, your folks." Small talk out of the way, Kittins pointed at the armchair next to his desk, and reached for a classified folder on top of a foot-high stack of similar documents. He flipped open the file and pulled out a single page; what appeared to be a printout of an email, safeguarded in an evidence pouch.

"Tell me what you make of this," he said passing it over to Chris. It was an email from 'Ahmadi1234@aol.com,' addressed to 'CDS1256@msn.com,' dated three days earlier. The subject was "Radical Range." The message in English was brief: "*Success, brother. Here it is.*" There was no name, no other annotations. Then he noticed there was an attachment listed: "R26021.xls."

Chris held it up to the light. The paper was stained with dark smudges. A piece had been clipped out leaving a small square hole in the midst of the stain.

He handed it back to the colonel. "Blood?" He pointed at the hole.

"Yep, type O negative."

"Has it been haplotyped?" he asked.

"Has it been what? Haplotype? Is this some reference to all this internet bullshit?" Colonel Kittins was a holdover from the pre-internet era, who hated computers and everything else having anything to do with cyber technology.

"DNA taken from the sampling is processed," Chris said. "The various markers, STRs and Mtdna data are compared to a large database which ..."

"Stop! I don't give a shit. What does it do for me?"

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Chris sighed, trying hard not to be condescending. "It tells you what the person's heritage or tribal group might be. For example, you being of Irish ancestry are probably classified as R1b1c, or as R1b1b2, akin to the Atlantic Modal..."

"My blood tells you that?"

"Yes, it would. So if we can haplotype the sample, it could tell us this person's ethnicity and perhaps even the location of his or her ancestors."

"Don't think it's necessary in this case. The blood was from the American soldier who took this paper off an Iraqi down near Abadan."

"Abadan, sir? Isn't that in Iran?"

"Yeah, according the Agent in Charge of our Basra intell office, one of our special agents was conducting an interdiction search, under the guise the man was an infiltrator. He was reading this document he found on the man, when he and the Iraqi were killed."

"Who killed them?" Chris imagined it must have been Iranian border patrol, but why kill both? Chris shuddered at the vision of a young soldier killed while holding this very document. Although he had served a tour in Afghanistan and another in Iraq, Chris had not been in a position to be shot. Blown up by an improvised explosive device maybe, but he had never had to dodge bullets. He shook his head, as if to dispel the thought.

"Killers weren't ID'd. The best guess is our men were taken out by snipers, firing from over on the other side of the river."

"Karun River. I know the area. What's significant about this email?"

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Colonel Kittins picked it up again and read the subject: "Radical Range."

"What does this mean, Radical Range? I don't believe I've heard of it."

"Doesn't surprise me. I am only one of about three people in the Pentagon who knows what it means. Not even the SECDEF knows. He will this afternoon though; there's a briefing at 1500 hours, conference room A-200. Be there."

"Sir, this file attachment, 'RR26021.xls,' did we find it with this email?"

The colonel handed Chris the file folder. "No. That's why I called your butt in here. After the briefing, finding the document will be your job."

Chapter Eight

Andrews Air Force Base

0830 Hours

Sergeant Lofton drove through the main gate at Andrews, flashed his Pentagon ID at the military policeman, and headed toward the far side of the vast complex toward Black Ops R&D. He checked his watch and commented they were right on time.

Chris patted his coat pocket to confirm he had brought the email and turned to face Amy in the back seat.

“Did we get the test results of the paper this email was printed on?”

“Yes, right here,” she said handing a document to Chris. He opened the single sheet and read aloud:

“Manufacturer: SKU, 1334604. Brand, KramerMill. Paper Type: Printer Paper Laser. 26 lb. 98 US / 110+ Euro Bright. Note: This stationary is similar to standard issue DOD printer paper used primarily on laser printers. However, this particular SKU does not appear in the Military Procurement Standard Catalog. It is two pounds heavier and is listed in the GAO’s catalogs as special order: US State Department, for use in embassies and consulates. This specimen’s watermark is partially truncated at the upper right corner, obscuring the department name. Close examination reveals it is identical to the US presidential seal, with its blue background; whereas the State Department seal’s

background is white. The colorless watermark on this specimen appears the same. The letters "ST" can be seen in the upper left quadrant of the partial watermark. This, in concert with the GAO SKU number, leads us to a 99% certainly this document was printed on a laser printer on stationary issued to the United States State Department."

Will Lofton laughed. "Damn. Could those analysts be any more anal? No pun intended. I mean, why the hell can't they just come out and say, 'This paper is US State Department issue?' How difficult is that? Damn!"

"Typical feather-merchants," Chris added. "But, what is really interesting is, Hank Collins tracked a State Department staff member to her consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, and this paper," he tapped his breast pocket again, "was picked up in Southern Iraq."

"Sounds to me like we need someone who speaks both Turkish and Arabic, and who's spent some time in Iraq. Someone with an intell background," Amy said,

Chris smiled and spoke softly, "I know just the man."

* * *

Wilsonville, Oregon

0830 Hours

Dan Dailey set his morning newspaper aside, drained the last of his black coffee and turned to his dog, a nine-year-old yellow lab. "Come on Molly, time for a walk."

He rose from his recliner slowly and stretched to release the cramped muscles from his back. In the kitchen, he uncapped a medicine bottle and shook out two painkillers

which he downed with a glass of tap water. His left hip, still bearing a nine-millimeter lead slug, courtesy of a North Korean spy thirty years ago, had begun to act up lately. This periodic recurrence usually happened when he became too idle; sitting on his butt all day reading and throwing out curse words at the TV news media who didn't know their asses from the proverbial hole in the ground when it came to the crisis in the Middle East.

Dan's 40-year career as an intelligence officer in which he had faced numerous villains in the shadowy world of international espionage, had taught him almost nothing appearing in the news media had one fucking thing to do with reality. In his opinion, terrorists came in two flavors: someone who was willing to wreak havoc on innocent people solely for personal benefits; and, the most dangerous of the lot, brainwashed, witless zealots who believed the way to heaven was through the bloody pools of their victims. The latter were nearly impossible to eliminate, unless you destroyed the former. The path to success in such a mission could never be achieved by dispatching young white, Anglo-Saxon, Christians, Defense Language Institute graduates with twelve weeks of intell training, into the core of fanaticism.

Dan stood before the oval mirror centered in his coat rack and examined the white-haired, 72-year-old retired Army colonel who glared back. Lines embedded across his brow and crinkles at the corners of his dark eyes, and a permanent frown, were the marks of a troubled, lonely, cynical old man, he thought. He slipped on his wind-breaker, pulled a black wool watch cap over his head and reached for the dog leash.

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“Come on girl, let’s get some air.”

Standing on the sidewalk in front of his small home with its neatly groomed yard, he pondered their route. To the left and up the hill to South Park Avenue? Or perhaps to the right and the mile long walk to Summit Drive? “Where to? You choose.”

He patted the dog’s large graying yellow head. She sat and looked up at him as if to say, “Your choice, Leader of The Pack.” Receiving no response, Molly stood and began walking straight ahead to the trail to Cyber-Center Campus, home of three high-tech companies housed in what looked like a beautifully landscaped park.

“Good choice, old girl. Nice brisk walk through the woods to the land of technological bull-shit-in-the-making, suits me just fine.” He pulled up his collar, tugged his watch cap over his ears and headed toward the brick monument entrance proclaiming it home to: “QB-FIVE GROUP – TYRINEX - INFINITE RANGE SYSTEMS.”

Chapter Thirteen

Portland Air National Guard Base 1910 Hours

Chris and the two pilots of their C21A airplane caught a ride over to the officer's club, where the pilots managed to arrange for a room at the base's bachelor officers' quarters. An Air National Guard crew of six was gathered around a table playing a drinking game unfamiliar to Chris. They were reciting a chant until someone botched the words, then they all jumped to their feet shouting: "Here's to the Cardinal!", while the victim had to chug a large mug of beer. One in particular had apparently lost the game more than the others.

When they passed by their table, one of Chris's pilots recognized the patches they wore on their flight suits and told Chris they were the crew of a C-130 transport aircraft; an Oregon Air Guard plane. As drunk as they were, he hoped they were not on standby.

Before Chris and his men managed to take a seat at the bar, one of the crew, a captain, waved at them. "Hey guys! Come on over and join us. We could use a little class here."

Chris had no intention of doing so. He could just see Colonel Dailey showing up while he and the pilots were wasted.

"Hey, let me buy you drink. It's my birthday." The captain stumbled toward him.

"No thanks." Chris turned to the bartender and ordered a cup of black coffee.

Jason, one of his pilots, frowned, "Some reason why we can't have a drink, Major?"

"No, go ahead get what you want. I'm buying. Don't forget, though, we have to take off early tomorrow morning."

"You guys come in on the C21?" The Air Guard captain shouted at them from a distance of two feet. He pointed in the general direction of the OANG hangers.

"That's my bird. Like it?" Jason said.

"Like it? Jesus Christ, man, it's the coolest fuckin' aircraft in the military. Reminds me of a Lear 31. Very fuckin' cool."

"It's the same as the Lear 35A actually, only a couple of million more, as equipped."

"You bring in some high-falootin' VIP to our little corner of the world?"

Chris was tiring of the drunk's questions. "Yeah, me." He turned to the bartender and called her over. "Give these men another round on me."

"Sorry, Major, I cut them off an hour ago."

"Hey, there's a war going on, be nice."

She smiled and took the twenty-dollar bill Chris slid toward her.

Chris had finished three cups of coffee, wolfed down a greasy burger with fries and had made two trips to the latrine. His pilots were on their third drink and were deep in the midst of a war story—their hands and fingers displaying daring air maneuvers, as if they had personally been involved in air-to-air combat—which Chris doubted. One

thing about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; there was little opportunity to engage in aerial combat, other than to avoid the rare surface-to-air missile these days.

Chris had just returned from another trip to the latrine, when the front door opened and a tall man, dressed in black slacks, black turtle neck sweater, and wearing a dark wool watch cap, strode in. A large yellow Lab followed at his heels.

He stopped inside the door and surveyed the room. In the light of the bar, the newcomer's severe features made all heads turn his way. His face was chiseled from pale granite, bearing sharp lines and a thin scar running from the left corner of his brow to his prominent cheek bone. The man's eyes, hooded by tufts of white, were the color of his attire—black as polished ebony, a gift from his Irish ancestors. Wings of long white hair protruded from under the watch cap, almost reaching his broad shoulders.

"Over here, sir," Chris called out to him.

Without a word Dan Dailey walked by the table of drunken pilots, ignoring them as if they were simply empty chairs. Their heads followed him as if drawn to him by a magnetic thread. He pulled out a barstool and gave his dog a hand-signal to lie down, which she did, letting out a solemn sigh, settling at his feet.

The barmaid whisked a hand through her long bottle-blond do, donned a bright-toothed smile. Her smile faded when she spotted his long hair and whiskered face. "I'm sorry, sir, but this club is for military officers only.

Chris started to speak, but received a squint from Dan saying, "*Let me handle this.*"

One of the drunks yelled over, "Yeah. No dogs allowed either!"

Dan's features sharpened. He turned and glared toward their table. "Who said that?"

The 'birthday boy' raised a beer mug. "I did." Finally absorbing the older man's demeanor, he cleared his throat. "I mean...unless he's some kind of service dog for the elderly."

Dan turned his back on them, opened his wallet and handed the barmaid his retired military ID card. "Here." He turned around again. "And, yes, Molly is my service dog, trained to rip out the throats of smart-assed young flyboys who don't have the wisdom to know when they are about to get their balls kicked!"

The barmaid looked at his ID. "Yes sir, Colonel Dailey. What will you have?"

"Jameson's. Neat."

There was a scuffling of chairs and boots heading toward the exit as four smart-assed young flyboys gained the wisdom to bail out.

Dan grasped Chris's shoulder in a painful clamp. "Nice to see you son. You look good, except for the weird haircut. What's that all about?"

"Pentagon special, Uncle Dan." Chris pointed to his left, "Meet my flight crew, Jason Crump and Todd Little."

The two pilots stood and reached to shake Dan's hand. "Nice to meet you sir." Jason held Dan's hand a fraction too long, causing him to frown.

"I know you, Captain?"

"Yes sir. I choppered you and a couple of guys out of a fire-fight near Balad two years ago. One man wasn't in too good of shape, right?"

Dan nodded slowly. "Right." He touched the scar on his cheek. "He didn't make it. I did...he didn't." His eyes seemed to dim and his jaw tensed.

"Alright, Chris, what's the scoop?"

"I'll fill you in on the way home. I assume I'm staying at your place?"

"Wouldn't have it any other way. How about you guys?" He looked at Todd and Jason. "I have another bed, as long as you're willing to share it with Molly."

"Thanks, Colonel," Jason said, smiling, "blondes aren't my type. We're booked in here."

Chris paid the tab and left a generous tip for the barmaid. "Jason, I plan on taking off at about 0800...unless Colonel Dailey has other plans."

Dan looked toward the barmaid and leaned closer to Chris. "Okay, how about telling me what's going on?"

"Miss? You have something else to do? We'd like a minute or two here," Chris said.

"Sure. No sweat." She dropped the towel she had been using to swab the pilots' table. "I'll be in the back if you need me."

When she had left the room, Chris scooted his stool closer to Dan. "One of my men, a Marine captain, Hank Collins, is sitting in an MIT cell in Istanbul, accused of murdering a Turk."

"No shit! And, I suppose the powers to be think I'm some sort of international defense lawyer?"

"He doesn't need legal advice; he needs to be sprung."

Dan began to laugh. It came from low inside him, a gut-level laugh that built and burst when it reached his throat. He pulled a white handkerchief from his pocket and dabbed

his eyes. When he finally settled, he said, "Well, now, isn't this something? Defense Department practically blackballs me for a similar operation, but it's okay now? *The times they are a changing,*" he sang with his best Bob Dylan imitation.

"I'll give you the details later," Chris said, "but it's imperative that I bring you back to DC. You'll be expected to fly out to Istanbul upon arrival."

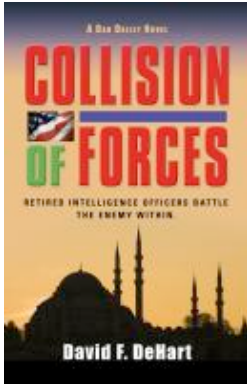
Dan rubbed his chin, making a faint sandpapery hiss, picked up his whiskey and drained it. He smacked his lips and turned to the pilots. "File a flight plan for tomorrow to Sacramento Executive Airport. Got that? Not Sacramento International."

Chris stood and stepped back. "Sir, we have to get back to DC." His face looked like a child that had just been scolded. "I have orders."

"Calm down, lad. If that old bastard you work for, 'Kitty-Kitty', as he is affectionately known, probably told you to give me what I want, right?"

Chris smiled. "Word for word!"

"Thought so. Here's the drill. I have to drop Molly off at my sister's house on the way. And, call your Dad. I'm not going to crank up the "Have Balls Will Travel" team without including Bull. Although it seems whenever we work together one, or both of us, gets shot!"



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