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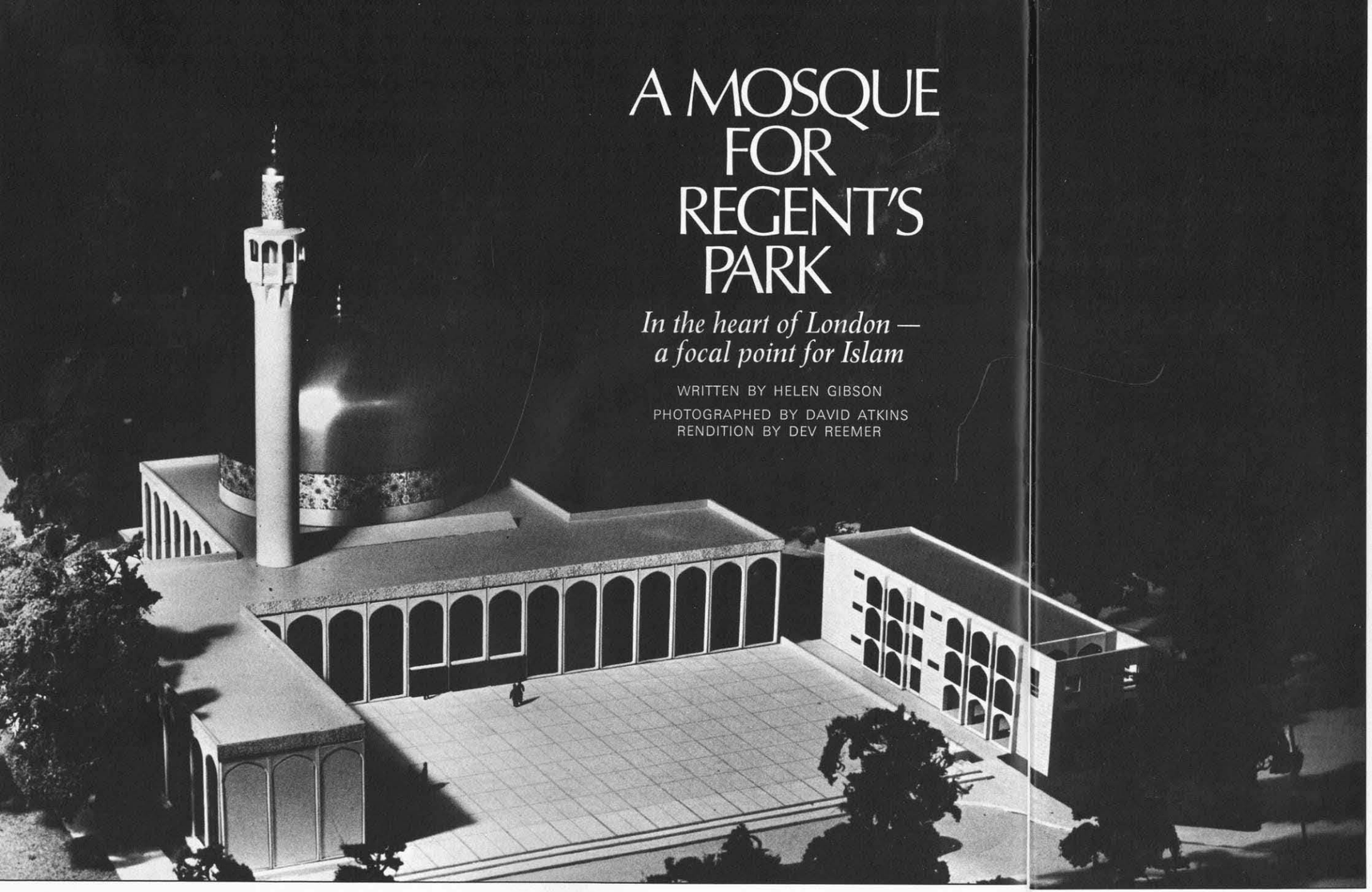
Cover: To the Arab world's Scout jamborees last summer came boys and girls from many Arab nations, such as this representative of Scouting in Saudi Arabia. Photographed by Khalil Abou El-Nasr. Back Cover: Cairo's Abla Khairy, the youngest swimmer ever to cross the English Channel, trains in the Nile for future long-distance challenges.

← Diver, cutting through an underwater hazard, blows stream of oxygen through high-carbon steel rod, as molten metal lights up the murky depths of the Arabian Gulf.



A MOSQUE FOR REGENT'S PARK

In the heart of London — a focal point for Islam

WRITTEN BY HELEN GIBSON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID ATKINS
RENDITION BY DEV REEMER

To the growl of bulldozers, a Muslim dream has started to take shape along the western edge of fashionable Regent's Park. And for London that shape will be unusual: a golden dome and a slender white minaret emerging from a crust of glowing mosaics and soaring above a complex of airy buildings in shapes far more familiar to Mecca than to London.

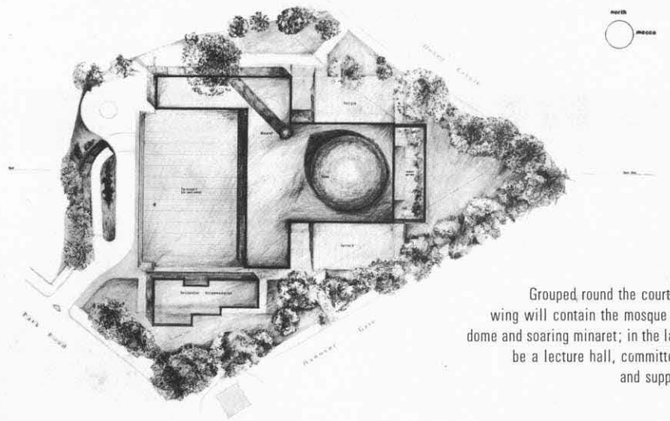
The dream—of providing a traditional mosque for Britain's Muslims and adding an Islamic Cultural Center to it—is an old one. Its origins, in fact, go back to 1944, when King George VI gave two and a half acres of land and a Victorian mansion to Britain's Muslims as a center for worship and study.

At that time the mansion was quite adequate for the number of Muslims in the country. Within 10 years, however, the mansion proved to be too small and plans for a bigger—and more traditional—mosque were launched. At first, under the impetus of various ambassadors and commissioners from Muslim nations, progress was swift. Funds were raised, a design was submitted to planning authorities and a foundation was laid. But that was as far as it got. After considerable deliberation, the Royal Fine Arts Commission concluded that the mosque would clash too violently with the adjacent Nash terraces, a famous series of elegant, classical-Greek houses designed in the early 1800's for England's Prince Regent.

After that setback the project drifted for a while. Ambassadors came and went but no one person stayed long enough to revive it. Then, five years ago, as the Muslim population in Britain climbed to 600,000, the project's board of trustees—now numbering 24—decided to let the world's architects see if an Islamic center and the Nash terraces were necessarily incompatible. They threw its design open to an international competition to which some 50 architects from 17 countries submitted ideas.

Some of the designs were exotic, such as a Turkish design in the shape of a tent, and some were traditional. But the best, according to a three-man panel from Paris's International Institute of Architects, the trustees and the Fine Arts Commission, was a modern adaptation of a classic design submitted by Sir Frederick Gibberd & Partners of London.

Although he was the architect of the passenger buildings at London's Heathrow Airport and had a major cathedral listed among his successes, Sir Frederick decided early on that a mosque was something special and devoted long hours to the study of Islamic architecture before going near the drawing board. From this research, he concluded that the mosque and the cultural center should be contained under one roof—to emphasize that Islam is a way of life, not merely a religious observance. He also concluded that the building must blend



Grouped round the courtyard, the central wing will contain the mosque under its copper dome and soaring minaret; in the lateral wings will be a lecture hall, committee rooms, library and supporting facilities.

modern facilities and simplicity of line with traditional features.

What he came up with, therefore, was a complex of concrete and glass whose lines are clean and modern, which provides such modern facilities as a lecture hall, a library, a cafeteria, and underground parking, yet offers features that are distinctly traditional. Most of the exterior walls, for instance, will be two-story examples of the traditional Islamic arch in pre-cast white polished concrete, each faced with doors and windows of tinted amber glass backed by lattice work. At the rear will be a copper dome reminiscent of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and above all of it will be the most familiar feature of all: a minaret soaring 141 feet in the air. Although its traditional function—as a platform to call the faithful to prayer—is impractical in modern London, the minaret will not be mere decoration. It will be equipped with an elevator and stairs to admit visitors to the balcony for a panoramic view of the mosque's courtyard and gardens, the broad lawns, deep green oaks and bird-dappled pond of Regent's Park and the lovely Nash terraces.

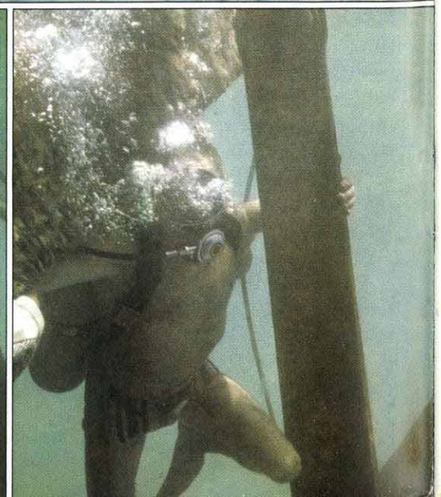
If possible, tradition will be observed elsewhere as well. Funds and other conditions permitting, Sir Frederick plans to incorporate the materials and themes that are the heritage of Islam: ceramic tiles and mosaics from Turkey, rugs from Iran and calligraphy from Egypt, Sudan and Morocco. On the second floor will be a women's balcony overlooking the main hall, an area large enough for 1,000 people and opening, through banks of hardwood doors, onto flanking, canopied terraces large enough to accommodate more than 5,000 people.

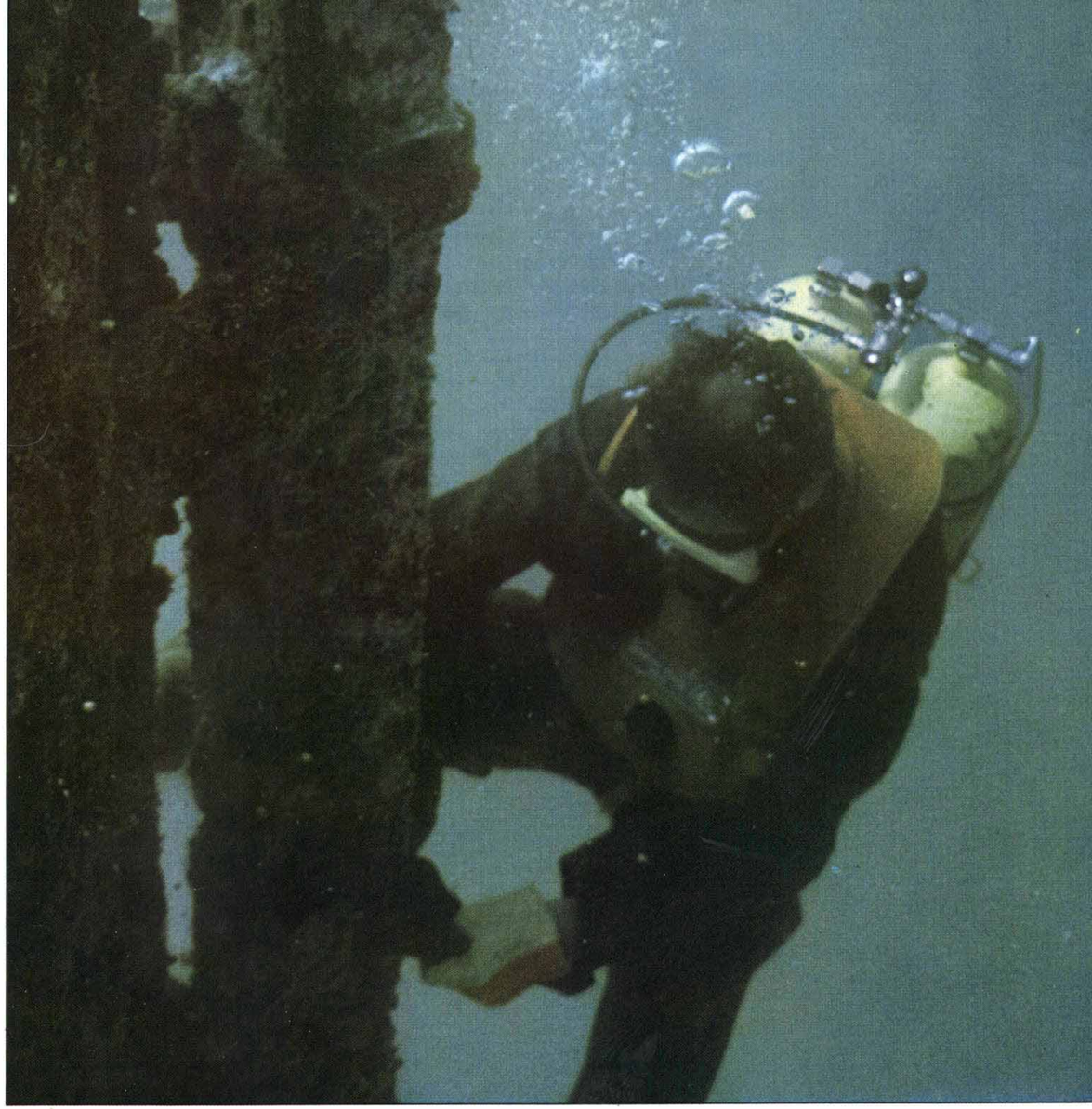
On special feasts the space will undoubtedly be needed. More than 8,000 persons used to gather in the gardens of King George's Victorian mansion for such major feasts as the '*Id al-Adha* and '*Id al-Fitr*. On completion of a traditional, recognizable mosque, attendance is expected to increase.

In the cultural center, usage by national and religious societies and clubs of such other facilities as the committee rooms and lecture hall is also expected to be high. But the focal point will unquestionably be the second-floor library, with its 70-seat reading room and shelving for 75,000 volumes. The library was a cornerstone in the plans of the late Raja of Mahmudabad, former director of the cultural center, for a program of study in comparative religion and a collection of books in all languages, including every book in English on Islam.

What all that will eventually cost is still a matter of estimates, but basic construction is already close to $7 million, a good proportion of which has already been raised. Some of the money came from government and private grants and some from donations from Muslim visitors to England, but most of it was raised in a fund-raising tour made by the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya and Tunisia two years ago. With a model of the center, Their Excellencies journeyed through the Arabian Gulf nations and collected about $2.5 million. Further trips to Pakistan, the Far East, the rest of the Middle East and North Africa are scheduled. Should any money be left over after construction it will be invested to provide maintenance income.

Helen Gibson, formerly with UPI, contributes frequently to Aramco World.



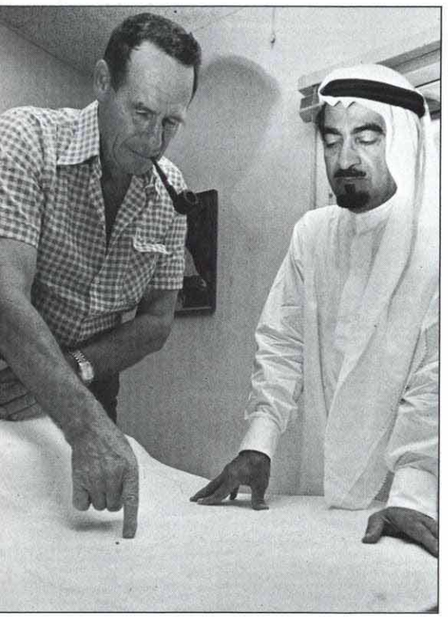


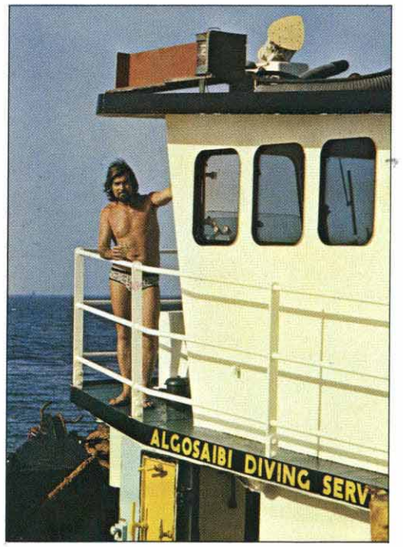
DIVERS OF ARABIA

WRITTEN BY JACKIE DRUCKER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY S. M. AMIN AND JOHN BURCHARD

Beneath the waters of the Arabian Gulf, divers perform such varied tasks as (top left) filling nylon grouting bag with cement, (far left) installing hydraulic controls in underwater pipeline, (left) placing an anchor on seabed to avoid hooking a pipeline, and (above) removing sea growth for inspection of a boat fender.





Top: Khalifa al-Gosaibi (right) and Dee McVay confer over a diving job. Bottom: Ray Monaghan, diver and captain of **Lillian-18**, on the bridge.

Dee McVay, now of Saudi Arabia, is a model of success in the American mold. Left fatherless at 16, he struggled, failed, struggled some more and finally made it. With his partner, Khalifa al-Gosaibi, a man cut from the same bolt, he now presides over a company that owns 20 ships, employs 70 marine specialists and accepts, with a rare no-nonsense efficiency, some of the world's biggest undersea maintenance projects.

But basically Dee McVay is a diver. As a young man he raised waterlogged lumber from deep Idaho rivers and dug gold out of underwater crevices in Oregon. Later he dived for rubies in Ethiopia and for pearls in the Arabian Gulf. On one occasion he spent two hours on the bottom of a river while a spider trapped in his helmet industriously spun a web across, up and down his face.

For some men such experiences provide no more than good conversation. For Dee McVay they provided exactly the right background for a later meeting with Khalifa al-Gosaibi, a smiling, optimistic Saudi Arab entrepreneur with an eye on the future and a taste for unlikely ventures.

Earlier in his entrepreneurial career, Khalifa al-Gosaibi had put together a profitable shrimp business that included a processing plant, a cold-storage warehouse and a fleet of shrimp boats with names that spell out his commercial philosophy with commendable economy: *Kifah* (struggle), *Filah* (expectation), *Najah* (success) and *Rabah* (profit). But in 1962 he was thinking of a more exotic venture: pearls.

In those days—and for that matter, these days—pearls were gathered by methods which antedate the Queen of Sheba. Teams of up to 20 hardy divers, without tanks or air hoses, would plunge down to the oyster beds, fill their baskets with oysters, return to the surface with the help of a rope and dive again. Pondering this one day, Khalifa al-Gosaibi began to wonder if divers with modern equipment might enable the famous Arabian Gulf pearls to again compete with the recently developed cultured pearls of Japan. He wrote to Dee, whom he had met previously and who was then diving for rubies in Ethiopia, asking him to think about it too. Not long after Dee returned to Saudi Arabia to work out the arrangements.

The scene of the negotiations might well have been staged in Hollywood. Khalifa pitched a tent on a sandy beach by the sparkling Gulf, covered the floor with exotic carpets and laid on a sumptuous Arab banquet that included an entire sheep, chicken, squab, camel meat and mountains of rice. He also dressed for the occasion, in white *ghutra* and flowing robes, and Dee, in a short-sleeved shirt and jeans, was impressed. He was even more impressed when he found that Khalifa and he had much in common. Both were men of action, unafraid of the future and with the courage to leap in an unexplored direction. Besides, to a man who had mined gold in Oregon and searched for rubies in Ethiopia, Khalifa's proposal was irresistible. Surely with a competent guide to the oyster beds and the extended bottom time permitted by modern equipment, he could vastly increase the catch of men who descended into the depths as their fathers and grandfathers before them.

As it turned out—after three months of hard work—he and Khalifa were wrong. The venture ended with no more than enough pearls to pay the crew's wages—plus increased respect for the hardy divers of the Gulf. But it didn't matter much either. For just as Dee and Khalifa decided to wind up the pearling scheme, someone from Aramco telephoned and said: "We understand that you have a boat, equipment and crew. Would you be interested in a short contract to backstop one of our own diving crews?" Khalifa and Dee huddled, clarified the scope of the job, negotiated a price and went to work.

Years ago the Gulf would have been the last place in the world to found and operate a diving and marine service. Shallow and remote from the main shipping lanes of the world, the Gulf managed quite well with shallow-draft dhows and the occasional freighter. With the discovery of oil, however, and the subsequent drive toward modernization, the Gulf changed. Its waters today are dotted with drilling rigs, gathering lines and loading platforms. Its bottom is carved into harbors and channels deep enough to accommodate the world's biggest freighters and tankers. Its shoreline is rimmed with modern ports—some with piers extending miles into the Gulf. When McVay and al-Gosaibi accepted the contract with Aramco, therefore, they made what would turn out to be a profitable decision.

For Dee that decision was the beginning of a long and difficult road—but also the end of another. After his father died Dee had given up school to earn a living for himself, his mother and three siblings in a variety of demanding jobs that included firefighting, logging, road construction and, when that proved insufficient, professional boxing after work. For a time, in fact, Dee thought that boxing would be his career. He won national ranking by knocking out his own friend and tutor Curley Nogle, then Oregon State champion, and was being talked about as an eventual contender for Joe Louis's heavyweight crown. But then —the first disappointment—he ran into a heavy-weight named Del Curran and, after two unsuccessful bouts, switched to diving.

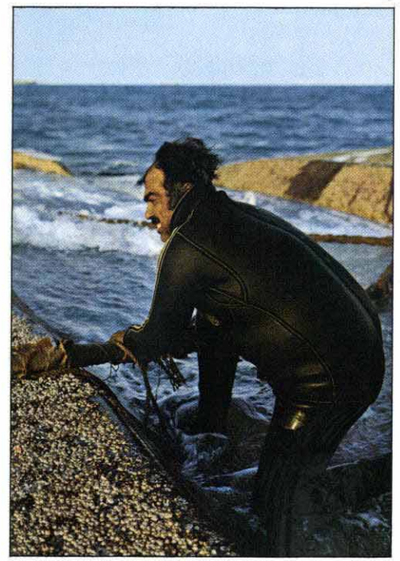
As a boy Dee had been fascinated by water. He would descend into Montana lakes carrying stones to counter his buoyancy. This fascination led him later to a U.S. Navy school in World War II where, during training in 1942, he got an air drill tangled in his diving suit. Before it could be shut off it damaged his knee so badly that the doctors said he would never regain the use of his leg. As his unit was leaving for the Pacific, however, Dee decided to ignore the doctors. He stowed away on a ship, checked into a hospital in Hawaii, eventually rejoined his unit and spent the next four years as a diver with the colorful Seabees, the Navy's World War II construction battalions.

After the war, Dee decided to stick with diving and spent the next 14 years in a series of tough, often innovative ventures. Believing that his new techniques could be applied to gold mining, he used diving equipment to recover gold that was lost by earlier, more primitive techniques and wound up in deep crevices in swift rivers. It proved successful—he collected $20,000 worth of gold in one season—but a flash flood washed away not only the gold but a lot of his equipment. Later he used surplus Navy diving equipment to reclaim waterlogged lumber which had sunk to the black, cold, 40- to 100-feet depths of lakes and rivers in Idaho and Oregon. He raised the lumber by attaching inflatable canvas sacks to the logs and pumping them full of air—a technique, he says, that is now employed on a wide scale in the Northwest.

About then, however, the Bechtel Company offered him an 18-month diving contract in Saudi Arabia. Dee accepted it, spent the 18 months with Bechtel and, after moving to Ethiopia, received the intriguing proposal on pearling from Khalifa al-Gosaibi that eventually gave birth to what today is called "Al-Gosaibi Diving Service."

It was not, Dee recalls, an easy delivery. Although the first Aramco contract was completed to the client's satisfaction and other contracts followed, it soon became clear that their one rented boat and some dilapidated diving equipment were insufficient for a market that, the partners began to realize, was potentially huge. They needed compressors. They needed masks. They needed bottles, hoses, and communications equipment. Above all they needed people —divers, crews, maintenance personnel— and, most urgent of all, boats.

To solve the boat problem, Dee began to scour the Gulf for anything that would float,



Ali Abdallah, first diver hired by the Diving Service, at work on the bottom of an overturned hopper-barge at Dammam Pier.

and triumphantly returned with two Basra river boats built in the shade of date palms on the shores of the Shatt al-'Arab. Although they knew the boats were intended for the more sedate waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Dee and Khalifa equipped them with compressors, tanks and hoses and launched them in the choppy Gulf where they contributed to numberless miles of underwater pipeline inspection and quite a few cases of *mal de mer*. They also procured several small Aramco tugs, which the oil company had decided to auction off in favor of newer and larger vessels, and added some dhows.

It is difficult for the average Western worker, white collar or blue, to visualize what life was like aboard the Service's early boats. As veterans Billie Nielsen and Jim Hall, put it, "Life was bloody awful!" Divers lived in primitive shelters, slept on deck when temperatures rose to 120 degrees and frequently provided their own food by catching fish. Sometimes they had to barter fish for fresh water. As there was no communication between the ships and the office, they often had to sail to shore, hail a taxi and send word back to the headquarters in al-Khobar.

One of their chief headaches was equipment. Anchors, for example, are indispensable in maintaining the positions of diving boats and barges in choppy, unpredictable waters and are, moreover, easily lost in rough seas. At one point anchors were so short that the Service faced a curtailment of work—and the idling of divers and crews on the payroll. To solve the problem the Service mounted a two-pronged effort that included the manufacture of anchors by a blacksmith in al-Khobar who had never seen an anchor and a search by boats and crews of the bottom of Dammam harbor for anchors lost by merchantmen over the years. To the relief of the Service—and their clients—the combined yield from these sources eased the problem.

The Service also quickly learned that operating a diving company has a lot in common with running a fire department or an ambulance service; at any time, it might be called upon to help in emergencies. Once, for example, the master of a small tanker tied up at one of the oil-loading piers at Aramco's Ras Tanura Terminal found himself unable to discharge the ballast from one of his main tanks because a pin in the tank's discharge valve had sheared off inside the tank. As every hour of delay in deballasting and loading meant heavy financial losses, the only solution was to send someone into the inky interior of the ship to thread his way through invisible struts and braces and open the valve with a wrench. When Aramco relayed its request for help to the Service, the only available diver was the then

and present manager of Marine Equipment and Maintenance, ex-U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer and ex-advisor to the Royal Saudi Navy, Coen Bright. Without hesitation Bright threw tanks, rubber wet-suit and other necessary diving gear into his car, drove the 40 miles to Ras Tanura, spent 15 minutes pouring over the ship's drawings of the interior of the tank and then disappeared into the stygian, oily ballast water. Half an hour later, the valve was open. Afterward, Bright's only comment was that it was no job for anyone afflicted with acute claustrophobia.

One reason for the success of the Diving Service is its willingness to undertake small, trying, economically marginal jobs of importance to local development. Several years ago, during an expansion of the great man-made harbor of Dammam—today the major port for Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province—engineers in charge of deepening the roadbed leading to the port's newest wharves discovered that a large dredger could not be moved close enough to the wharf area to accomplish the necessary close-in deepening. This minor but vital job was accepted by al-Gosaibi. Thereafter, for several weeks, al-Gosaibi divers, slung with extra weights for stability, and, plagued by schools of curious squid, operated pneumatic drills from morning to night in water 15 to 25 feet deep, steadily boring into the bedrock of the harbor and stuffing the holes with high explosives.

On another occasion Dee and Khalifa learned that the city fathers of Safwa, a village not many miles distant from Aramco's headquarters in Dhahran, had a serious problem. A large artesian well that for decades had irrigated the village's vital palm groves was plugged with an accumulation of debris and sand. There was, the city fathers reported, only enough water for two of the village's five irrigation channels. Could the Diving Service help?

Nothing loath, McVay made a quick estimate of the probable cost, without any increment for profit, a figure which turned out to be dismally low, and agreed to restore the water flow for this sum. As the source of the water was 90 feet down, he decided to use an air lift—a large hose operated by a diver on the well bottom into which is fed compressed air from a hose at the surface. After moving the mouth of this apparatus into position the diver would spend his time collecting and tying together for rope transport to the surface the larger debris which the years had carried to the bottom of the Safwa well. My husband, who served as a weekend volunteer on this project, recalls elevating a bicycle frame, old tires and other contemporary artifacts not usually associated with a farming village in a distant desert kingdom.

In microcosm, the problem involved in this venture was typical of those which frequently confront the Diving Service. At 90 feet or thereabouts, a diver can work no more than a limited period without either decompressing or risking the bends. As the job did not warrant a decompression chamber the only practical alternative was to assign a large number of highly paid divers, each working for no more than two periods of 35 or 40 minutes per day followed by a decompression stop of ten minutes at 10 feet.

Finances aside, the project was highly successful. The blockage was removed, the five irrigation channels were restored and the divers learned to know, enjoy and respect the inhabitants of an Arabian village, whose warmth and hospitality were in the finest Arab tradition.

The main reason for the Service's success, however, is the high caliber of its divers who, despite a wide diversity of backgrounds and education, share certain qualities that are indispensable: confidence, self-reliance, craftsmanship, integrity and courage.

Some of the divers learned their trade in one of a number of navies. Others graduated from diving schools in Europe and the U.S. Still others took up scuba diving as a sport while in school and decided to turn their hobby into a profitable job. One supervisor, John Jennings, is an ex-boxer whose skills have helped settle more than one dispute. But whatever their backgrounds they share a uniform pride in their physical fitness, a *sine qua non* to the regular practice of their trade, and to a man are self-confident and self-reliant, traits vital to men who work in relative isolation and must exercise their skills while wearing cumbersome gear in strong, frequently cold currents, often with zero visibility. The best divers also possess a high degree of mechanical aptitude, can read and interpret blueprints and write concise, meaningful reports. Of utmost importance too is personal integrity and devotion to duty; an inaccurate or incomplete report can mean enormous losses in terms of money and time to the client.

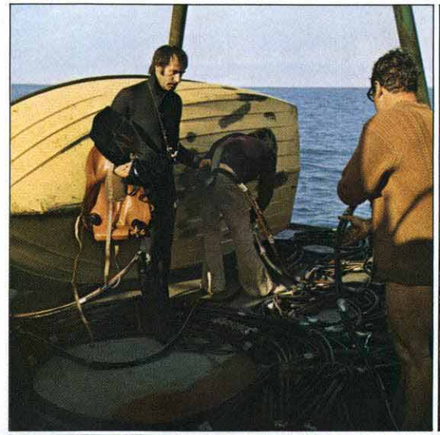
Above all, perhaps, they must be inured to physical discomfort and have the ability to keep cool in the face of danger. One time, for example, the Diving Service assisted in the installation on the Gulf floor of a 500,000-barrel underwater storage tank for crude oil constructed by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company for Dubai's al-Fatah field. The job, which required up to eight divers working in 160 feet of water, was completed safely but for a final inspection diving supervisor Jim McClaskey had to enter the enormous tank and examine its vast interior. In the total darkness he could not see that his air supply and voice-communication lines had become entangled in the struts and bracing of the tank. Suddenly, however, he lost communication with the surface and realized that a line had been cut somewhere. If his communication line could be cut, why not his air line? Resisting panic, he slowly and carefully retraced his path, gathering his air hose in his arms, until he could reach the narrow opening at the top of the tank leading to the surface and safety. As any diver will say, "You've got to be tough to be a diver."

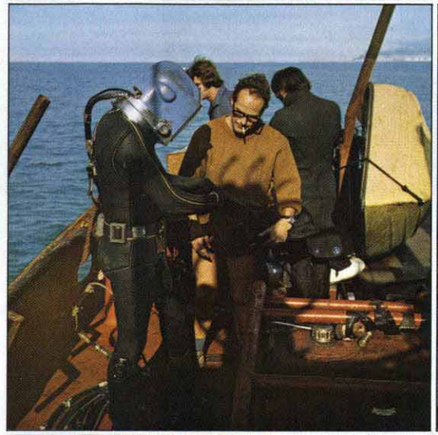
The company's versatility cannot be overlooked either. The al-Gosaibi-McVay partnership, for example, is frequently asked to cope with one of the major problems in underwater maintenance: how to insure that once a structure is placed on the bottom it will stay there. In the Arabian Gulf the combined effect of tide and current makes the sea bottom an unreliable, ever-changing scene. In a single season the sand beneath or beside a structure, pipe or line may be washed away, leaving it unsupported. When this occurs divers pack bags of cement or other substances beneath, beside or above the structure to lend it support and stability. At one time, this meant lowering cement-filled bags from a barge down to their underwater destinations—no easy feat. Today, workers mix cement with sand and water aboard a barge anchored near the worksite and force it through a high-pressure hose to the bottom, where divers have already positioned the empty bags. The bags are then filled in place. This technique—pioneered in the Gulf by the al-Gosaibi-McVay team and called "grouting"—is especially adaptable to undersea pipeline maintenance. In moderate depths and under reasonable weather conditions a single barge can lay as many as six or eight bags per day. At Iran's Kharg Island, recently, the Diving Service also had to experiment with laser-beam equipment in the installation of 60-ton sections of "risers," the vertical sections of pipeline which link sea-floor pipelines to steel platforms above offshore oil wells. Despite the size and exacting nature of the work—to attach the 56-inch risers to the platform and insure adequate support—the job was completed on schedule and without injuries.

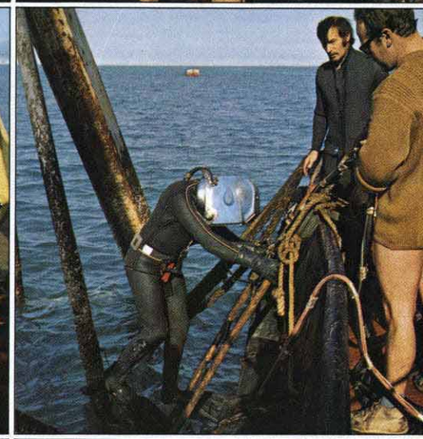
To satisfy the ever-growing demands of clients for a greater volume of quality work, the Diving Service is continually developing its staff—particularly those employees who demonstrate an ability to grow. In the early days, for example, the Service hired a cheerful Saudi Arab named Ali Muri to drive a well-used Chevrolet. Willing Ali, however, quickly earned not only indefinite tenure but the opportunity to expand along with the Service. He now supplies the Service with six modern trucks, four new personnel sedans and all the drivers and maintenance men necessary to keep them in operation.

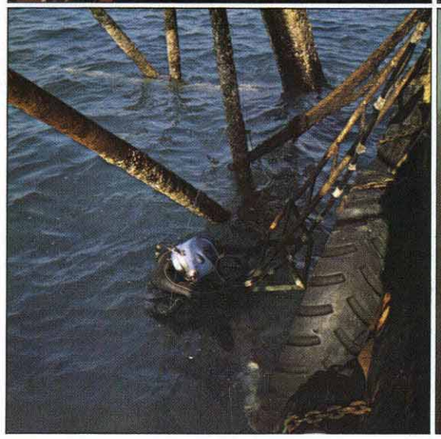
Another example is Ali Abdullah who, when Dee was with Bechtel, served as his tender, the man who, among other things, feeds and retrieves the air hose as the diver moves about the bottom and who, in general, is responsible for the needs and safety of the diver insofar as these can be seen to from the surface. When Dee and Khalifa embarked upon their pearling venture in 1964, Ali gave up the security of his job with Bechtel to join them and, along the way, become a diver himself. Later, when the new Service needed more divers, Ali was the first hired. Since that time he has perfected his diving skills and become particularly adept at welding and burning.

Like Ali, some of the divers from many lands have been with al-Gosaibi almost from the company's inception. Others have performed a year's contract, departed and later returned for more. There was even one man—Colin Hart—who was seriously injured but refused to either stay in the hospital or relinquish his responsibilities.

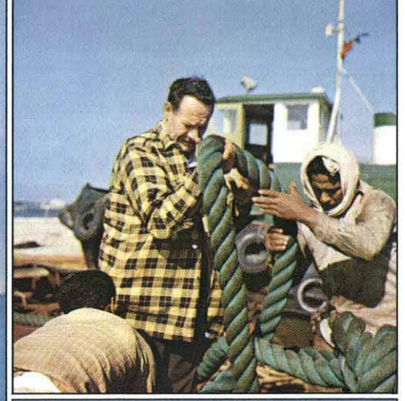




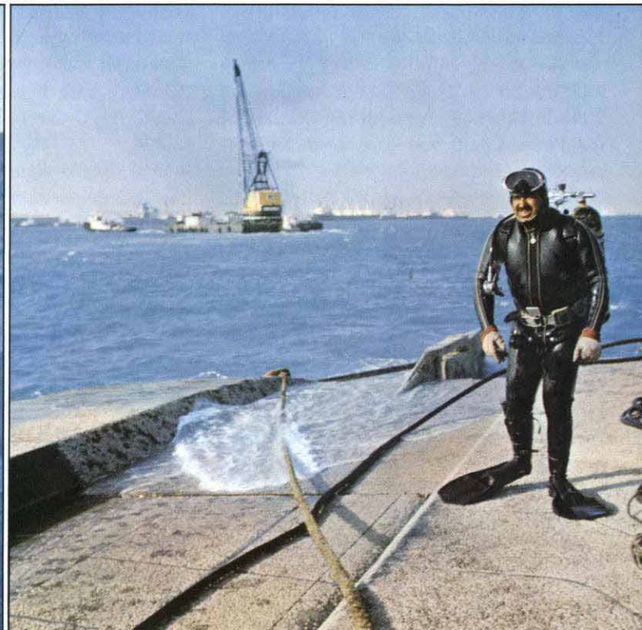




All members of a diving team are qualified divers. At top, they assist one another in preparation for an underwater burning job. Diver descends into water with burning rods and (bottom right) cuts through metal structure with arc-welding machine.



Dee McVay, in plaid jacket, assists in refloating and resubmerging a hopper-barge at Dammam Pier. Anchor (below) is taken out on tug to be dropped on seabed to hold barge secure. **Lillian-1** (below right) moves barge into position. Diver drops into sea (bottom left) to help rig cables by which barge will be turned right-side up by liftcrane. (Bottom right) Ali Abdallah surveys overturned barge.



Instead, he volunteered to take over the job of company agent on Bahrain. Why? Because, he says, the Service pays well, provides ever-improving accommodations and creature comforts, offers work continuity and the opportunity to grow and advance in the job and—not least by far—is extremely safety conscious. Divers are always furnished with, and encouraged to use, the most modern—and most expensive—equipment and the results are impressive. In some 500,000 hours of diving only three divers have been lost, a record that, considering the profession, is spectacular.

Over the years the Diving Service has also upgraded and expanded its fleet—most recently by adding four new 109-foot, Danish-built vessels able to accommodate up to 12 divers and supporting personnel, 375 tons of cargo, 30 tons of fuel and 30 tons of water. All named *Lillian*—after Dee's wife—and christened by her on a blustery day in Denmark in 1973—the new craft can cruise for three weeks, moor at sea for several months, and be rotated 360 degrees by use of the twin screws. But the star of the fleet is a spectacular 237-foot LST which Dee had completely refurbished and overhauled in the United Kingdom. Able to house and transport up to 42 people, it has its own desalination plant capable of producing nearly seven tons of fresh water per day.

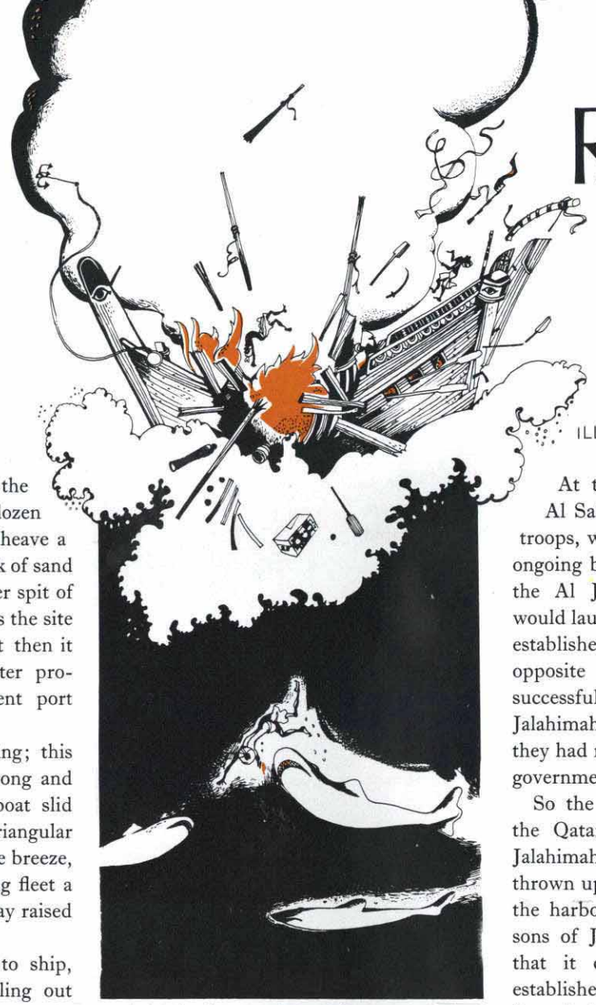
All of these additions, as well as a number of the older members of the fleet, are equipped with air compressors, modern decompression chambers and ship-to-shore radio which keep each *Lillian* in constant contact with her many sisters and with the various al-Gosaibi offices scattered around the Gulf. The Service has also introduced cranes to move heavy loads to or from the bottom, and video cameras which divers take to the bottom to permit experts on the surface to observe close details of the work below. As a result, the Service has frequently cut job costs and time substantially.

Nearly as essential to the success of the Service is the backup staff of administrative and executive personnel without which no modern business can continue to function—men like Jim McClaskey, whose line got cut in the Dubai tank, and Lou Cunningham. McClaskey, a lawyer who came to help with burgeoning administrative and contract problems, was, to everyone's delight, also able to develop his sports-diving experience to the point where he won the admiration of the professional divers. Cunningham, a man with experience in labor relations, personnel management and banking, started at the top—he came in as an executive vice president—but as a sports diver has had some experience at the bottom as well.

Equally important are the engineers, mechanics and maintenance technicians whose skills affect the very lives of the divers; and still further to the rear are the secretaries, liaison men, carpenters and accountants who, constantly at work behind the scenes, make the operation run. Not least among these is Dee McVay's Lillian for whom all the vessels in the fleet are named.

Since her marriage to Dee in 1965, Lillian has served as administrative assistant, number-one secretary and, when Dee was undergoing back surgery, as Dee's substitute. During that time, she found herself in *de facto* command, supervising everything from contracting and purchasing to hiring, firing and handing out work assignments to 50 or more divers. For all those contributions the company decided early on to name the fleet's vessels after her and, more recently, to send her to Denmark for the christening of the boats whose purchase in 1973 brought from a top oil executive a succinct summary of the firm's achievements: "phenomenal."

Jackie Drucker, who researched this story in and under the Gulf, does free-lance writing in between tennis, archeology and scuba diving.



RAHMAH OF THE GULF

WRITTEN BY JON MANDAVILLE
ILLUSTRATED BY PENNY WILLIAMS

One dark moonless night in the summer of 1826 several dozen men worked feverishly to heave a 40-foot dhow across the narrow neck of sand and reach the open sea. This slender spit of land, known today as Ras Tanura, is the site of the world's largest oil port. But then it was no more than a sand breakwater protecting Tarut Bay and the ancient port towns of Qatif and Dammam.

That night there was no shouting; this was a disciplined crew under a strong and experienced commander. As the boat slid into the waters of the Gulf, its triangular lateen sail lifted to catch the offshore breeze, a watch on the anchored blockading fleet a few miles off the mouth of Tarut Bay raised an excited cry: "Rahmah's out!"

The shout, echoing from ship to ship, brought half-asleep sailors stumbling out through hatchways. Soon the heavy humid night air was filled with shouted orders; axes flashed as anchor cables were cut, oars splashed out on the several galleys, sails were hauled up. Slowly the fleet got underway, but far too slowly. Rahmah, known to some in shipping circles as the Scourge of the Pirate Coast, was once again loose to pursue his business.

Today Rahmah ibn Jabir is a hero in the popular folklore of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. In the early 1800's, however, opinions differed.

The ruler of Bahrain Island requested time and again the same British-fleet action against him as had been carried out against other small flotillas based along the Pirate Coast. "Destroy this bandit!" he cried. Each time the request was refused on grounds of Rahmah's studied neutrality and friendly attitude toward British shipping. As one British historian wrote late in the century, "... Rahmah was rather a petty territorial ruler ... than a pirate; ... he had always carefully abstained from offenses against the British government and British subjects." Piracy, like beauty, often lies in the eyes of the beholder. As it happened, in Rahmah's case it was not piracy but war grown from the bitterest seed—a family feud.

It all began some 40 years before that fateful summer night in a burgeoning city-state called Kuwait at the head of the Gulf. In 1782 the heads of the three families who ran the city-state like the merchant aristocracy of classic Corinth met together in council and decided the time had come to exert a more direct control over their trading zone; in a word, they decided to take over Bahrain Island, halfway down the Gulf. At stake was control of the coasting trade and through it a monopoly in the India-to-Europe commercial trade. Their rival for this role was the growing maritime power of Oman, at the other extreme end of the Gulf.

At the council it was agreed that the Al Sabah family, while sending support troops, would remain at home and tend to ongoing business while the other two clans, the Al Jalahimah and the Al Khalifah, would launch the invasion from their already established base on the Qatar Peninsula opposite the island. The invasion was successful; but shortly thereafter the Al Jalahimah withdrew to Qatar, claiming that they had not received a fair share in the new government of the island.

So the feud was born. Khor Hasan on the Qatar coast became the seat of the Jalahimah government. Buildings were thrown up, as well as fortifications to protect the harbor and attract commerce. But the sons of Jabir of the clan Jalahimah knew that it could never seriously rival the established trade of Bahrain. Every ship from India that sailed past Qatar on its way to that island reminded them of what might — what should — have been, and further set their resolution to reclaim what was justly theirs. One of the sons was Rahmah.

For the next 20 years our sources tell us almost nothing of Rahmah. All attention is focused elsewhere in these years, on vaster movements which would affect the course of Gulf history far more broadly and deeply than the local city-state trade wars.

One was from within the heart of Arabia, a call for a return to the simpler, purer practices of worship found in the early days of the Islamic Community. This Wahhabi Reformation, as it came to be known, swept all before it and by 1798 outriding preachers of the reform had reached the Gulf and incorporated many of the tribes and city-states which had been recently crushed by the expanding powers of Kuwait and Oman.

The other movement came from without: the force of European empire, particularly the efforts by Napoleon to cut England's route to India. In 1798 Napoleon invaded Egypt with the clear intention of cutting England off from her Indian empire, in response to which England rapidly moved to secure the Gulf by making Oman into a client state and by sending a squadron to impose a truce on the Gulf's other city-states. So emerged the Trucial Shaikhdoms of recent Gulf history.

Thus in a larger view of human history, the tides of power running through the Gulf had changed in Britain's favor. Those small states directly in the path of the current were willy-nilly lifted up and bowled along like so many rounded pebbles along the beach, helpless in the surge. Few of the rulers knew or cared about the cause or ultimate purpose of the tide; it was enough to keep their ships of state upright while it took them where it would. Fewer still defied this elemental force of modern history.

Yet Rahmah did, and successfully so as long as he lived. Like a stormy petrel he set his wings to the shifting winds and waves, through all his twisting way intent on but one end: the seizure of Bahrain Island, righting the wrong done his family.

Before 1804 Rahmah had played Oman against Kuwait while consolidating his own forces in Qatar. But when Oman and Kuwait united to oppose the increasing power of the Reformists, Rahmah joined the Reformists.

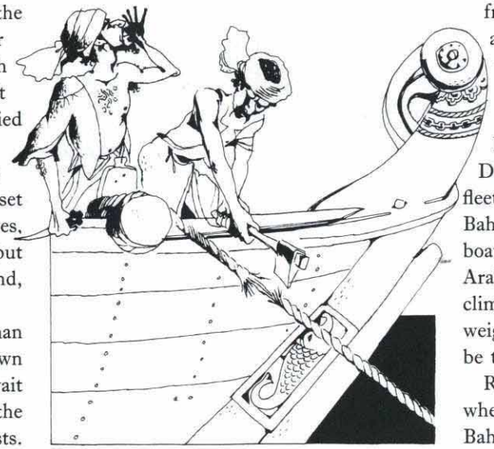
Reformist backing stood the wily captain in good stead for another seven years. But in 1811, on the verge of gaining Bahrain with that support, he lost it as, on the Red Sea coast, 1,000 miles away, Egypt, at the request of the Ottomans, entered Arabia to suppress the Reformist threat to the empire. To meet this thrust Reformist troops withdrew from the Gulf, leaving Rahmah to his own devices. Immediately attacked by a joint Omani-Kuwaiti force, he retreated from Qatar to a mainland town called Dammam, now a thriving port in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province.

If checked, however, Rahmah was not stopped. He entered new negotiations with Persia and in 1814-15 participated in joint Omani-Persian attacks on Bahrain. It mattered not with whom he fought, so long as it was against Bahrain.

In 1816, however, he paid for this shift of alliance. Reformist forces remaining on the Gulf blew up his base in Dammam and again he had to flee.

This, you think, must surely be the end? Not at all. Rahmah is alive and well, Bahrain still beckons, and there are other allies in the offing. In 1818 the Reformist capital of Dir'iyah fell to the Egyptian expeditionary army, the Saudi forces were scattered and the Egyptians marched to the Gulf where, at Dammam, they were met by Rahmah.

By what feat of poetic persuasion, what promises did he win over the Egyptian commander? No way of knowing, but within months he was ensconced again in Dammam, now as Ottoman governor of the district. Soon, though, the Egyptians withdrew as rapidly as they had come and the



governorship of Dammam proved to be a hollow title. With the Egyptians gone and the Reformists weakened, Rahmah was back to where he started, playing Oman against Kuwait. There was, however, a difference, a world of difference. For now came the British Indian Navy to impose on all the city-states — including Bahrain — after a series of naval and amphibious operations, a "General Treaty of Peace." Rahmah, for the first time, was alone.

For a brief period Persia, herself covetous of Bahrain Island, offered some protection, but in 1821 under British pressure even that was withdrawn. Desperately Rahmah turned again to Oman, but Oman was not prepared to jeopardize her favored position with the British; in 1822 the British Resident in Muscat was informed by the Sultan that Oman would "no longer" be responsible for Rahmah's actions.

It was now clearly a losing battle. Desertions and attrition took their toll, and by late summer of 1826 the Bahrain fleet had Rahmah and his few remaining boats securely blockaded and at its mercy.

Then it was that fateful night that Rahmah slipped across the Peninsula to the open sea. An ordinary man might have seized the chance of freedom in exile in some distant town or country. Not Rahmah. Sailing directly for the Persian coast, he again began to recruit men to continue the battle and with 25 or 30 men sailed back to Dammam, somehow successfully running the blockade.

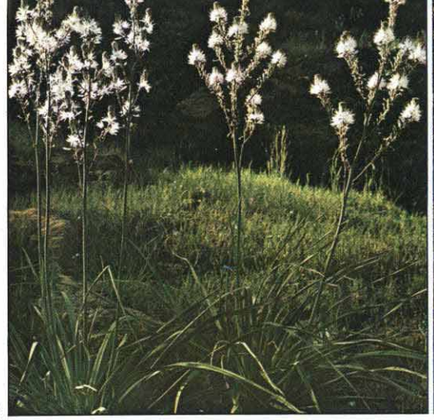
He returned none too soon. There he found that the Bani Khalid, dominant tribesmen of the land behind Dammam, had been persuaded by local townsmen and Bahraini leaders to mass for a land attack from the south and west. At the same time a like force was marching from the north, while the Bahraini fleet was poised for invasion. Rahmah chose—had he any choice?—to fight on the sea.

Leaving his eldest son to defend the Dammam fort, he sailed out to meet the fleet and defiantly grappled his ship to the Bahraini flagship. "The scuppers of the two boats flowed with blood," says Ibn Bishr, Arab chronicler of the event. This was the climax of the long struggle and by sheer weight of numbers Rahmah clearly was to be the loser.

Rahmah knew this. Perhaps he knew it when he sailed out and grappled the Bahraini flagship. In any case, with the fighting at its fiercest, he took his eight-year old son in his arms, lit a slow match from the coals of his waterpipe, went below and touched off his gunpowder kegs. When the smoke cleared from the thunderous explosion, all that could be seen were two burning hulks sinking into the debris-filled waters.

So ended Rahmah ibn Jabir. Today his exploits live on in campfire stories; his poetry is quoted, and the site of his ruined fort pointed out to curious tourists. Better perhaps than any other he epitomizes that era in Gulf history when, like the ancient Greeks of Sparta and Athens, small city-states fought great maritime wars and battles—and a few of their leaders were made into legend.

Jon Mandaville is an associate professor at Portland State University where he teaches and writes on Islamic History.



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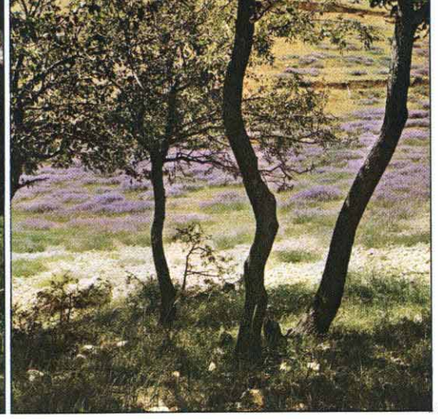

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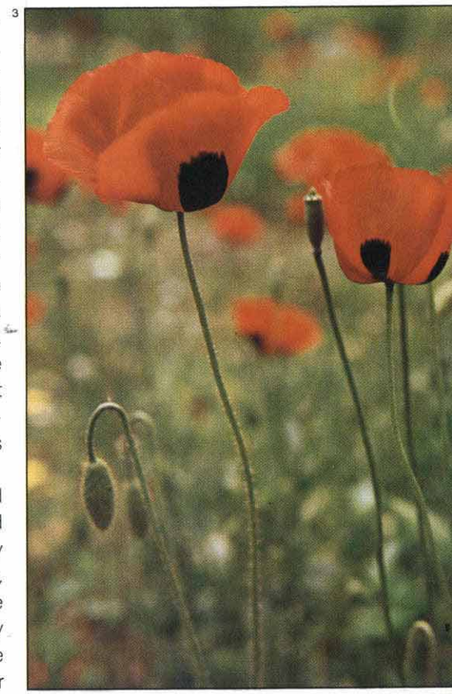
Spring comes early in Lebanon. In fact, it is hard to say just when winter ends and spring begins. While the high mountain ranges are covered in snow and the ski runs attract crowds of winter-sportsmen, the lower slopes and the coastal plain are at their greenest. But it is not just a matter of altitude: on the coldest, most blustery day in January the almond tree puts out delicate pink blossoms that defy the elements, and anemones and cyclamen find shelter from icy rains in the crannies of an old stone wall. Spring and winter commingle here: the high snows feed the streambeds with rushing torrents, which in turn awaken the green life along their banks.

The spring advances in waves of color. First green, starting before Christmas and growing lusher and more verdant as the year turns. Then it's pink time: the time of asphodel, cyclamen, rock roses, and wild geraniums. This deepens to the lilac, purple, mauve of the Judas tree, wild gladiolus, orchis, salvia, lupine. Later still the dominant color is yellow: golden broom, yellow-green euphorbia, pale butter-colored snapdragon, flame and yellow tulips, and the whole wide-eyed family of daisies and chrysanthemums. And on the threshold of summer, the blues take over with wild flax, grape hyacinth, buddleia, campanula, and a wide range of blue thistles, some with even the branches and leaves a bright cobalt. Of course the colors are not stictly segregated. Often contiguous fields will form a checkerboard of yellow, lilac, green and blue, and a patch of river bank may look like a corner of one of those medieval tapestries where a profusion of small variegated flowers forms a background for a lady with a unicorn.

Wild flowers? Anemone, cyclamen, gladiolus, tulip, chrysanthemum, geranium—these are names from the seed catalogues and herbaceous borders of the West. But they are natives of Lebanon, or very early immigrants long acclimatized. Many of our favorite cultivated plants came originally from the Middle East, brought back by Crusaders and missionaries, explorers and intrepid Victorian tourists. The list can be extended: iris, heliotrope, poppy, hollyhock, larkspur, narcissus, mignonette, pink. They have been bred to larger sizes and different colors by western botanists and gardeners, but they are recognizably the same as their wild ancestors.

Some of them are old in song and story. The lily of the field that surpassed Solomon in all his glory is thought by some to be the red and purple anemone, by others the rosy purple gladiola. The Biblical lily of the valley was probably the wild hyacinth. The Greeks, for some strange reason, thought that the rather disappointing grayish-pink spike of the asphodel grew in Paradise. The bright red adonis was believed to have sprung from the drops of blood of the corn-god Adonis, when he was gored by a wild boar. Egyptian mummies have been found garlanded with larkspur, and the blue has hardly faded. The French fleur-de-lys was modeled on the wild iris. And Judas by tradition hanged himself on the Judas tree, whose flowers blushed to their present hue with shame.

Photographer Gene Johnson lived in Lebanon for three years during which he compiled a collection of wildflower photographs from which these few have been chosen.



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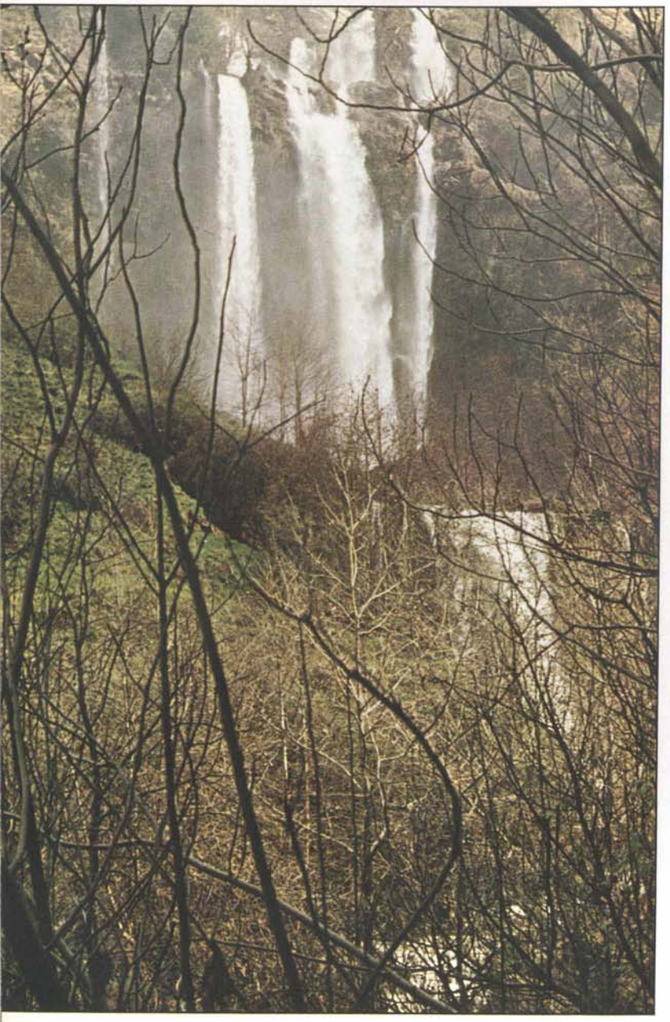
SPRING IN LEBANON

In Lebanon it's hard to say when winter ends and spring begins.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY G. GENE JOHNSON

1. Asphodel
2. A field of lilac and white
3. Black spotted poppies
4. Poppies in a rock crevice
5. Anemones
6. Flame-colored tulips
7. Rock roses
8. Red poppies and yellow chrysenthemums



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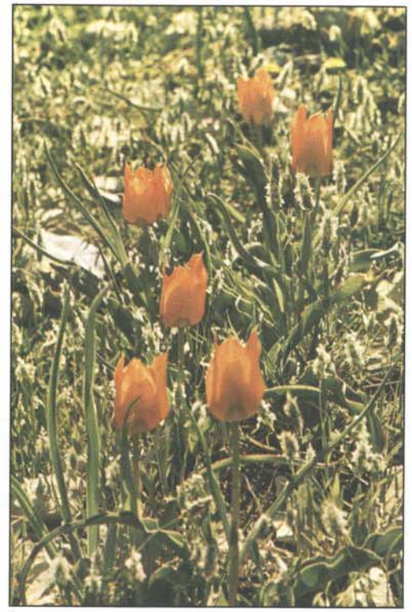

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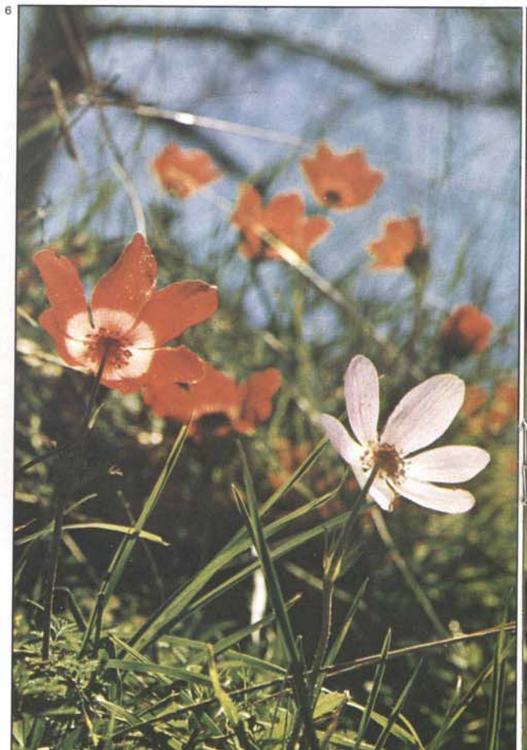

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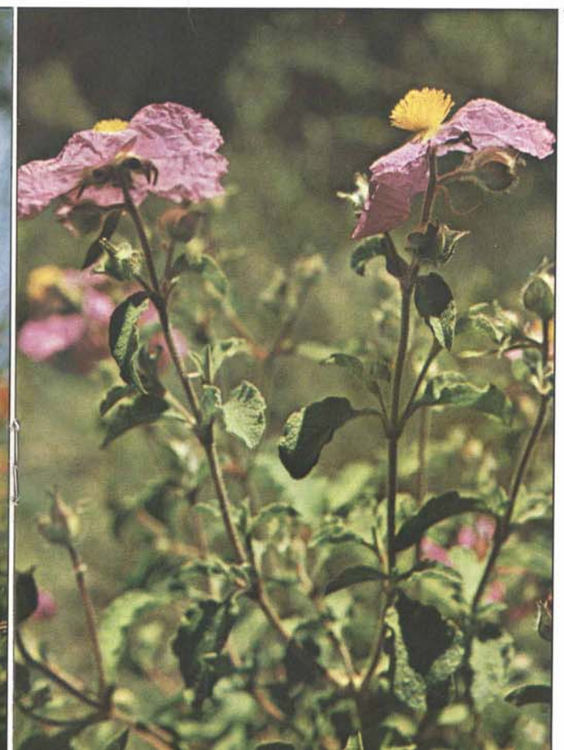

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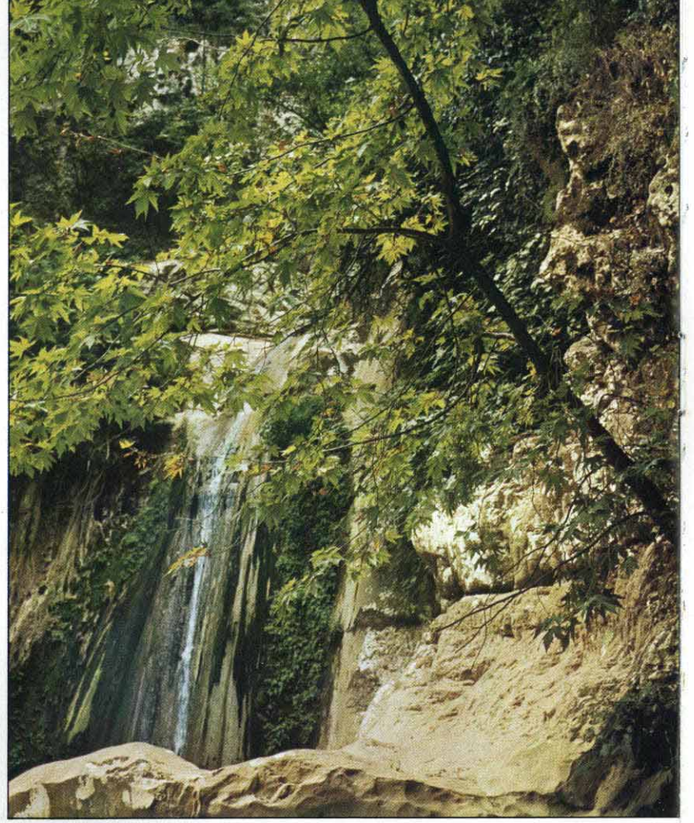
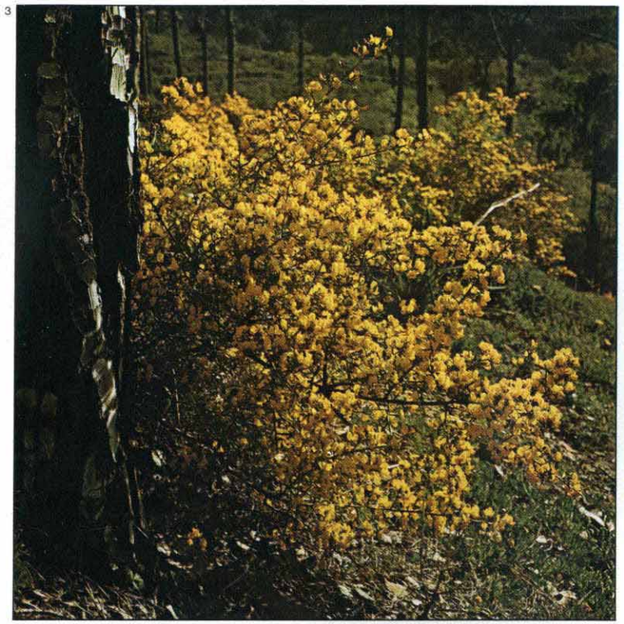
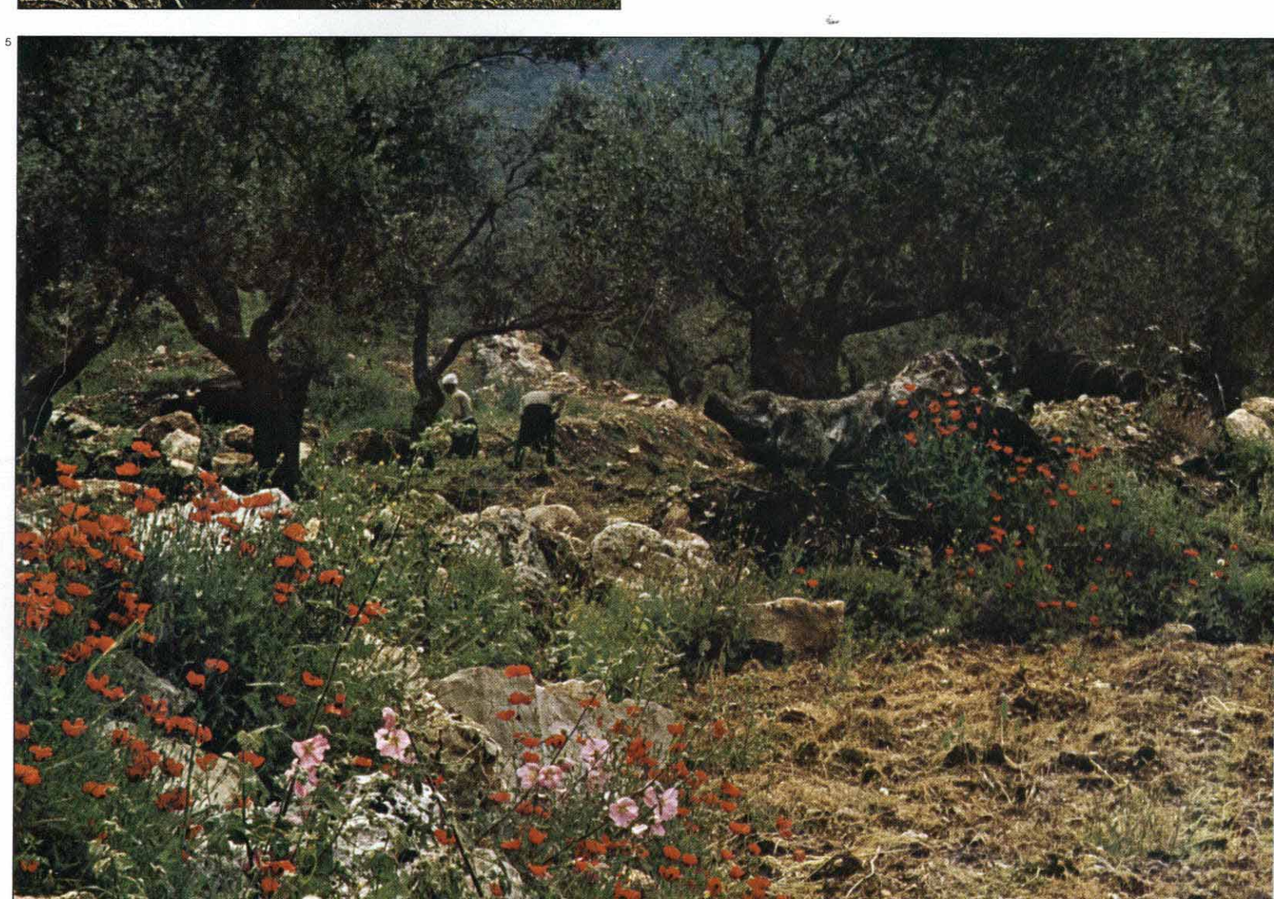
1. Wild gladiola
2. Cyclamen





3. Yellow broom
4. Emerald frog on a silver branch
5. A natural rock garden



ABLA: QUEEN OF THE NILE

"After the Channel, the Nile will be easy!"

WRITTEN BY ANTHONY HOGAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN FEENEY

Cairo's Abla Khairy, the youngest swimmer ever to beat the English Channel, wants to try it again. This time, though, she wants to break the Channel record and sees no reason why she can't. "Now that I've done it once, the psychological factor no longer will be as important," Abla said. "With better conditions than I had in August, I can concentrate on the stroke. I know I can do it."

She probably can. Last August, at the age of 13, stocky, determined Abla made the grueling 21-mile swim from England to France despite five-foot waves and chill temperatures dismaying to a girl accustomed to Egypt's tepid waters. She made it, furthermore, in 12 hours and 30 minutes, three hours under the mark set by 14-year-old Leonore Modell—previously the youngest Channel swimmer—and only two hours and 45 minutes more than Lynn Cox's record for women 16 and over.

In the meantime, Abla is preparing for another go at the annual Nile River race—a swim she now views with confidence. "After the Channel the Nile will be easy." She also shops a lot—for clothes mostly—goes to the movies and, with some prodding, reminisces about the now-famous swim and the circumstances that led to the decision to try it.

In a sense, that decision goes back to her birth. For Abla's mother, Inas Hakky Khairy, was also a long distance swimmer who, 22 years ago, tried the Channel herself. She didn't make it but never lost hope that one of her three children would. "I tried to interest my two older daughters, but it didn't take," Mrs. Khairy said. "I had more or less given up when Abla, at seven, began to show interest."

The actual decision, however, was made in 1974 when Abla finished second in the annual Nile River race in which swimmers trace a figure eight around the Gezira and Rhoda islands in the Nile. The distance,

AP PHOTO

On Dover Beach (top) Abla anticipates victory before plunging into the English Channel last August. (Below) Abla owes a lot to the encouragement of her mother and to her trainer, Abul Fattah Shafshak.

21.5 miles, is supposed to be the same as the usual Channel route from Dover, England, to Cap Gris Nez, France, but in fact, because of tides, the Channel distance is close to 34 miles.

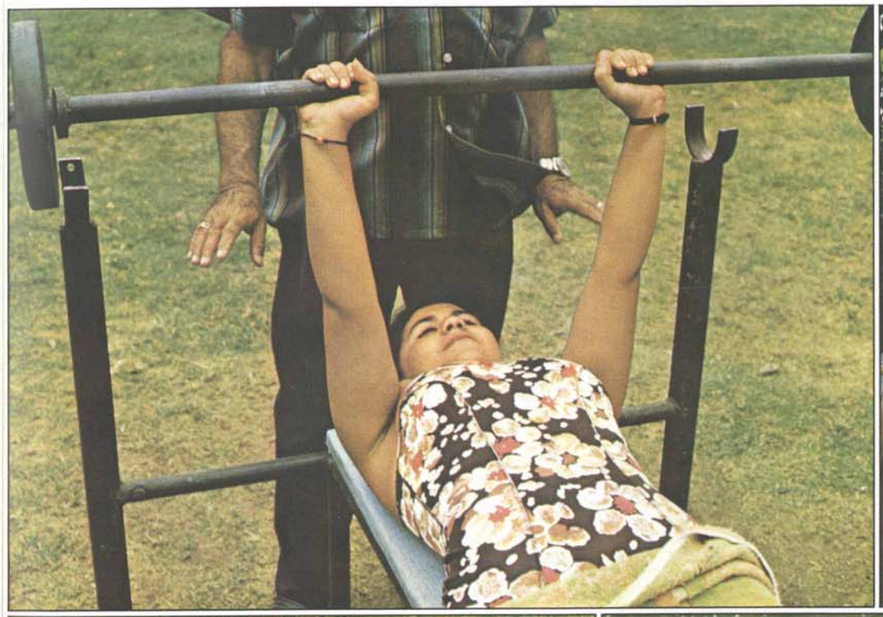
Heartened by that victory and encouraged by the Egyptian Long Distance Swimming Federation —which for 20 years has been backing Egyptian swimmers in such international competitions as the Naples-Capri and Lake Michigan races—Abla began to train in earnest. Each day for six hours she swam at the Gezira Sporting Club pool, concentrating on short-distance spurts to build endurance. At other times she swam in the Nile. She also undertook exercises —working out with weights and doing pull-ups—to build up her arms and legs for the punishing hours ahead. Finally, she spent a few days in the Mediterranean off Alexandria —in an attempt to prepare for the fierce channel chop—and headed for Britain.

Swimming there, she said, was a shock. Although she finished third among women competitors in a 17-mile tune-up race across Lake Windermere on August 4, she was dismayed by the temperature of the water compared to the tepid waters of Egypt. "Windermere was so cold I didn't see how I was ever going to last in the Channel," she said. She was so nervous, in fact, that on the morning of the swim—August 18—she remained in her room at the Amsterdam Guest House until 11 a.m. But then, with her mother, her coach, Abul Fattah Shafshak, and other members of the swimming federation she went down to the shore, eyed the slate-gray sky and the rough seas breaking on the Dover beach and, at 12:29 p.m., entered the Channel.

As she had expected, the water, despite her head-to-toe coating of grease, seemed icy and after two hours she wanted to stop. But except for pauses to gulp black coffee and swallow hearty helpings of apple sauce, bananas and glucose, she didn't stop. Hour after hour she swam on.

Then night came and with it fear. "My mother was holding a light over the edge of the boat but I'm myopic a bit and I couldn't

Abla chats with her mother (right), herself a long-distance swimmer who tried unsuccessfully to swim the English Channel 22 years ago. (Below) Abla works out, strengthening her muscles and improving technique for her coming attempt to break the cross-Channel speed record.



see it," Abla said. "I thought I was lost and that I'd never get out of the water even if I died."

But again she kept going, her arms feeling as heavy as the weights she had lifted back in Cairo. "I knew I was close," Abla said, "but I thought I would have to quit."

So did her mother who, poignantly remembering her own efforts in the same waters, knew exactly what Abla was going through. "The waves were four to five feet high and smashing into the side of the boat," Mrs. Khairy said. "I started to cry because I was sure she wasn't going to make it and she had come so far."

But Abla did make it. At a place called "Bloody Rocks" on the French coast, her foot touched land and she was hauled aboard. It was 12:59 a.m. August 19, 12 hours and 30 minutes after her departure from England.

Later, Abla shivered as she recalled that moment. "All I could think of was that name: 'Bloody Rock!' " She remembered that everyone was shouting as they pulled her into the boat and that someone told her she had beaten the time of Leonore Modell, the previous youngest Channel swimmer, by just over three hours. "But I was just happy to be out of the water," Abla said, "and on the way back to England I was seasick. It took days to get over it."

In the meantime she had become a celebrity. In Britain headlines read "Queen of the Nile Conquers Channel," which she liked, and "Water Baby Beats Channel," which she didn't. Her two older sisters, it seems, had teased her about being the baby in the family.

In Cairo the treatment was even more enthusiastic. Newspapers there splashed photos of Abla giving the thumbs-up sign after the swim, crowds of spectators cheered her return and friends kept telephoning congratulations. But the high point was her presentation to President Anwar Sadat, who awarded Abla and Jihan Metwalli, 17, another Channel swimmer, the Order of the Republic for Sports, First Class. "It was a dream come true," said Abla, "because that's why I swam the channel—for Egypt."

Anthony Hogan is a veteran newsman now living and free-lancing out of Cairo.

Against the Cairo skyline, Abla practices her stroke in the Nile.

ARAB JAMBOREE

REPORTED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY KHALIL ABOU EL-NASR

They came from the Atlantic coast of Morocco, the Mediterranean shores of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, the banks of the Nile and the forests of the Sudan, the mountains of Lebanon, the cities of Syria and Iraq, the plains of Jordan, the oasis towns of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, the island of Bahrain, and the ports of Yemen, Oman and the Arabian Gulf. Some 1700 boys and 500 girls from nearly every country in the Arab world converged on Lebanon last August for the Eleventh Arab Boy Scout and Fifth Arab Girl Guide jamboree.

The Boy Scouts' camp was at Smar-Jubail, about 37 miles north of Beirut, in a newly built "Scout City" on a 60-acre hillside that will become a permanent site for sports events and future meetings of this kind. The Girl Guides camped near a lovely 18th-century Lebanese town with the romantic name of Deir al-Qamar —"Monastery of the Moon"—in the mountains some 25 miles southeast of Beirut. The boys and girls got together for the opening day of the jamboree, which lasted 10 days for the Boy Scouts and eight days for the Girl Guides.

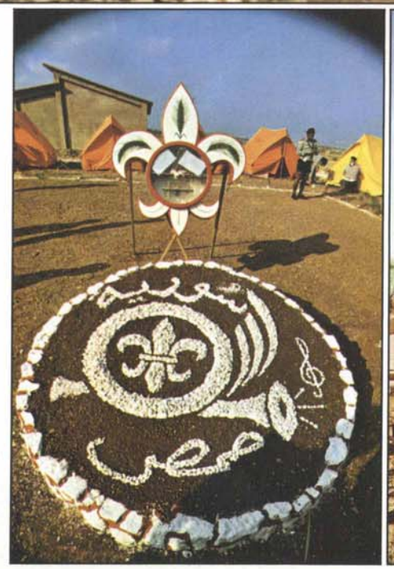
Although the participants were all Arabs, there was probably as much variety among them as there would be, say, at an all-Europe or all-America Scout jamboree. Each delegation took a lively interest in the special activities and displays of the others. The Boy Scout band of the city of Homs in Syria drew the crowds with its lively brass and drums. Dancing ranged from the communal, arm-linked **dabkeh** of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine to the mock-fierce **ardhah**, a sword dance of the Arabian Gulf. The Saudi Arabian Scouts dispensed old-time Arab hospitality in the form of bitter Bedouin coffee, sweet tea and dates. The Kuwaitis scored with a performance on a bagpipe made of a goatskin, while a scion of the United Arab Emirates played on an ancient horn made of wood and metal. The delegates exchanged local sweets and other refreshments, and among the most popular displays were the national costumes of each country.

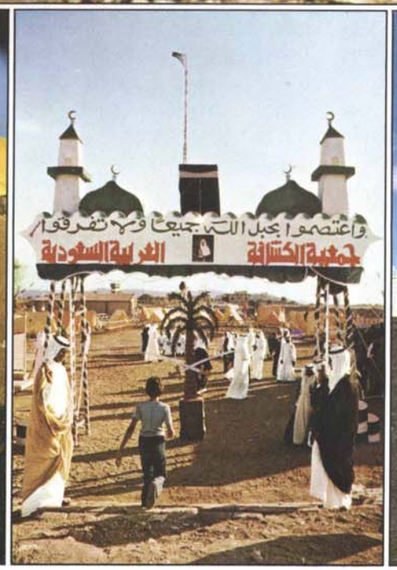
Traditional, worldwide Scouting activities were not neglected. The raising and lowering of national flags, marching contests, bugle-blowing, bonfires, sports, handicraft classes and displays were all part of the show.

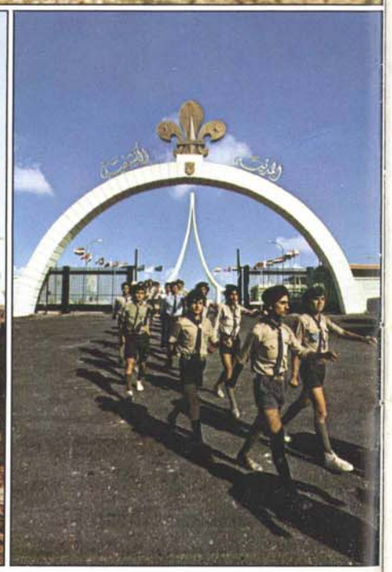
The Lebanese hosts were not remiss in their hospitality. Both the President and the Prime Minister of Lebanon attended the opening ceremony, along with about 15,000 other people, including members of the Cabinet and of the diplomatic corps. Delegates were taken on sightseeing tours—transportation by courtesy of the Lebanese Army—to such famous sites as the Cedars of Lebanon, the Roman ruins of Baalbek and the ancient Phoenician port of Sidon. The Lebanese University arranged field trips and lectures on ecology and the protection of the environment. The Lebanese Civil Defense provided medical back-up for the Scouts' own specialty of first aid.

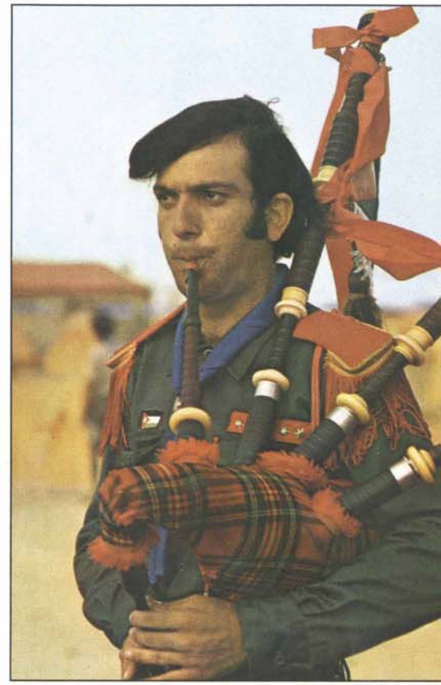
On the last day of the jamboree, the delegates exchanged gifts, home addresses and promises to write—or perhaps even to visit. Thus the jamboree fulfilled one of the aims of Scouting—to cement friendships and international understanding—in a region that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf.

Khalil Abou El-Nasr has contributed photographs to Time *and other publications and appears regularly in* Aramco World.

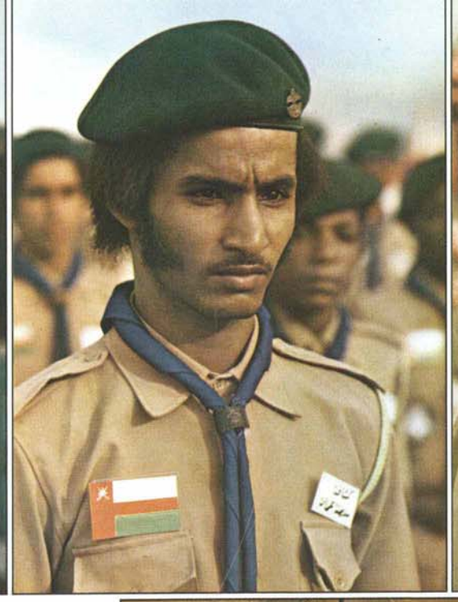


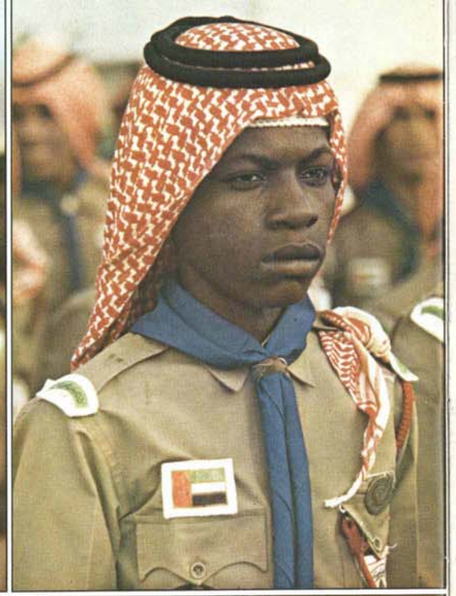


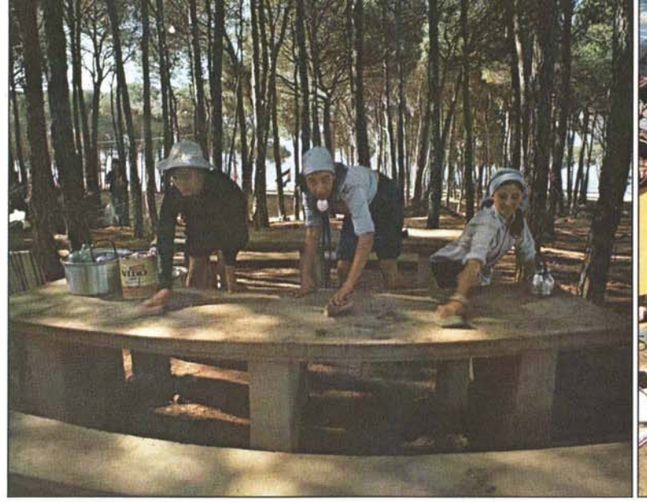


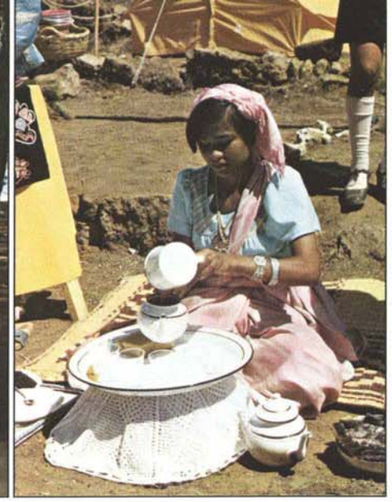


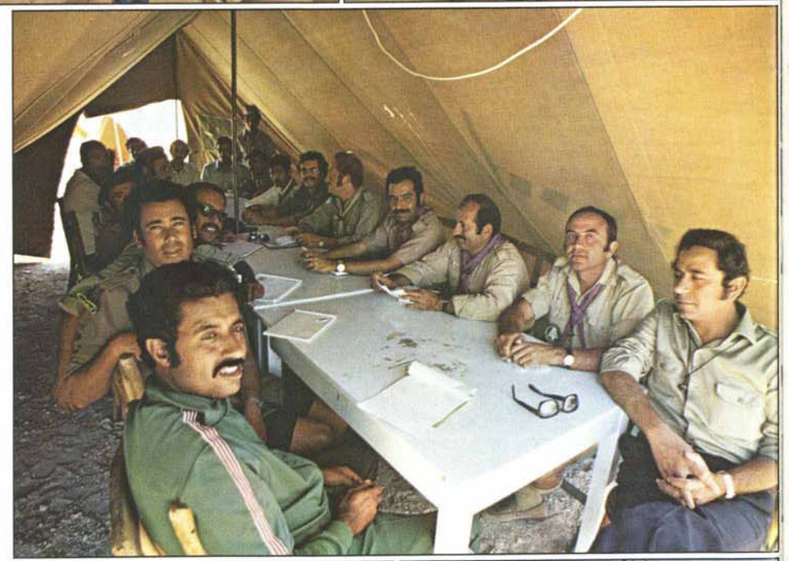
Surrounded by flags of the Arab nations, Arab Boy Scouts do their own thing. Above, a Boy Scout from the United Arab Emirates blows an ancient horn; a member of the Boy Scout Band of Homs, Syria, blows a trumpet; and a Jordanian Scout performs on bagpipes, complete with Scottish tartan. Left, the Homs Boy Scouts laid out their emblem in pebbles; the Saudi Scouts raised a decorated gate to their camp. Near left, Lebanese Boy Scouts march through the permanent gate of Scout City.

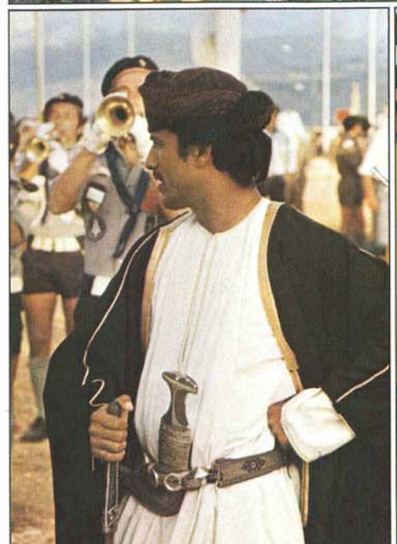


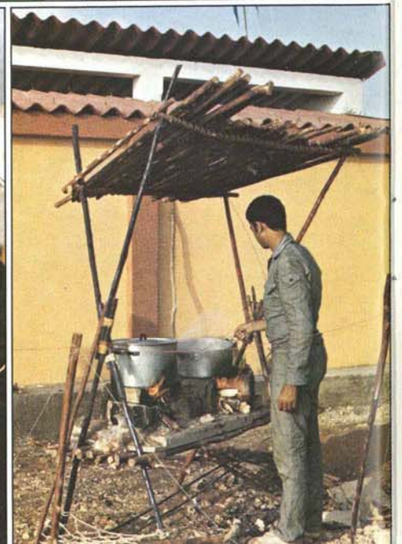






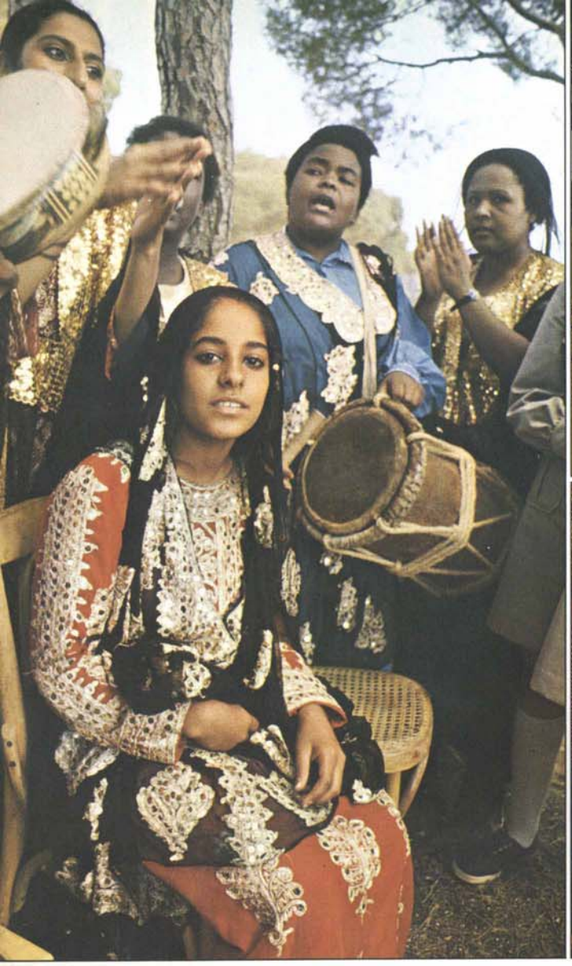


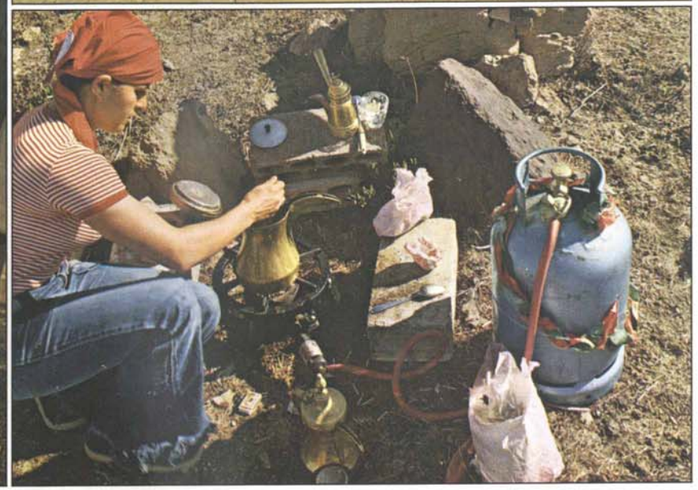


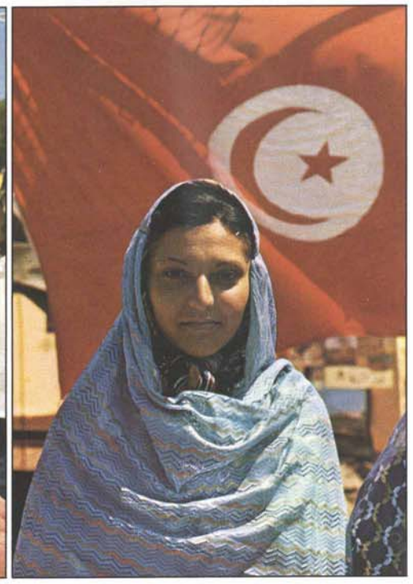


Clockwise from top left: Scouts from Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates stand at attention. The captains of the national groups meet to coordinate plans. Brewing soft drinks in the Egyptian camp. An Omani Boy Scout in national dress. Palestinian and Jordanian Scouts exchange fraternal greetings.

Top: Girl Guides scrub a table under the trees; a Libyan Girl Guide prepares tea. Above: Four Girl Guides from four Arab countries: Sudan, Bahrain, Algeria and Egypt. Right: During the march-past, Libyan, Egyptian and Iraqi Girl Guides.







Clockwise from upper left: Kuwaiti girls in national dress form an impomptu orchestra. Guides from Iraq erect a handicraft exhibit. A Jordanian Girl Guide prepares Arab coffee. Guides from Tunisia and Sudan show their national costumes. Right: March-past in center of Scout City where tent-like arch soars into sky.