

## Defiant

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DEFIANT. The advanced space shuttle used by the G.I. Joe team. The Defiant not only had the most advanced computer systems, but was armed -- unlike NASA's shuttles -- with a pair of laser cannons. The Defiant and its mobile crawler gantry was usually kept at the Pit in Utah. The crawler vehicle allowed for the shuttle's temporary launch pad to move back underground to stay hidden once a shuttle mission was launched. During the launch, the shuttle used -- instead of booster rockets -- a separate vehicle that could return to earth. The Joe known as Payload was the commander of the Defiant, while Hard Top controlled the crawler.

The Defiant was first used by the Joes in response to Cobra's attack on a U.S. spy satellite with their own shuttle. Hawk himself led the mission, which succeeded only in rescuing an astronaut stranded in space. Cobra managed to destroy a number of spy satellites, which allowed the purpose of their Terror-Drome project to go undetected. A short time later, Cobra's Star-Viper infiltrated the Pit and stole a top secret "black box" from the Defiant, which could access encrypted data from U.S. satellites. The government would eventually make a deal to get the device back from Serpenter by entering the Cobra Island civil war on the Cobra emperor's side. The Defiant played a key role in the Joe team's biggest operation yet, the Battle of Benzheen. When a group of Joes were ambushed in the desert nation of Trucial Abysmia, the Defiant deployed an armored vehicle from orbit in order to rescue the survivors.

Shortly before the shutdown of the Joe team in 1994, the Defiant and its crew participated in a joint mission between the G.I. Joe team and former members of the Soviets' October Guard. The Americans and Russians teamed up to stop an asteroid from colliding with the Earth. The Defiant missions since the Joe team was first disbanded are unknown.

(GI 65, 67, 72, 109, 110, 130, 145-148; SM 28)