

The Gulf War

When Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, it triggered a chain of events which would ultimately lead to the largest foreign combat deployment of US forces since World War II. Advanced elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, along with USAF tactical fighter squadrons, began arriving in Saudi Arabia six days after the invasion, soon followed by the 101st Air Assault Division.

Only light forces were available on the ground until August 28, when the first heavy equipment of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) began unloading from freighters. These were quickly followed by the 1st Cavalry Division (organized as an armored division) from the United States, as well as the 1st British Armoured Division and the French 6th Light Armored Division. The first elements of two Egyptian heavy divisions had already begun arriving in western Saudi Arabia by this time, ferried across the Red Sea, and the US 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was operational in the Persian Gulf.

On November 8, the US VII Corps in Germany was ordered to reinforce the XVIII Airborne Corps already deployed in the theater. VII Corps would bring an armored cavalry regiment (3rd) and three heavy divisions (1st and 3rd Armored and 1st Infantry). By the end of the month, the first tanks from the new units were arriving, and the UN Security Council had authorized military action if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15.

By the time the deadline had expired, Iraq had deployed more than 40 divisions into the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO), including all but one of its Republican Guard divisions and all but one of its regular army tank and mechanized divisions. Iraqi forces had also completed extensive fortifications along the Saudi border.

On January 15, the combined air forces of the coalition began a powerful and well-coordinated offensive which immediately crippled Iraq's air defense system and within days had gained total and uncontested mastery of the skies. Following that, the tactical aircraft began heavy bombing of Iraqi ground troops in the forward defenses.

An important result of Coalition air superiority was that Iraq was denied access to aerial reconnaissance. The US Central Command (CentCom) had planned from the beginning to launch a deep sweep through the desert, but had kept its heavy divisions close to the coast as a deception measure. Now that the Iraqis were effectively blinded, the movement of troops and supplies inland began.

In an attempt to gain information about the Coalition deployment, as well as to gain political points, the Iraqis launched a series of attacks south from Kuwait on the night of January 29-30. One such series was directed primarily against US Marine forces guarding the inland part of the border, while a second series of attacks hit Saudi and Qatari troops along the coast near the abandoned city of Khafji. All of these attacks were repulsed with the exception of the one directed at Khafji itself, which succeeded in capturing the city. Coalition troops recaptured the city on the 31st, however, and wiped out the Iraqi unit (see page 65).

On the 15th of February, Coalition heavy divisions began moving to their final jumping-off positions, and the air offensive began the final phase of battlefield preparation. A few days later, major cross-border raids were begun, both by US Marines into Kuwait and by the 1st Cavalry Division operating against Iraq near the Kuwaiti border. On February 23, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment jumped off in its role as offensive covering force for the VII Corps. At the same time, the 1st Infantry Division conducted large cross-border attacks on the positions of the Iraqi *26th Infantry Division*.

Sunday, February 24, 1991

At 0400 hours on February 24, the ground offensive formally began, although it should be clear from the above that there were already considerable numbers of regular mechanized troops in enemy territory, in addition to the Special Forces troops which had been infiltrated weeks earlier. The plan was for the Marines and Joint Forces Command (Arab allies) to attack the thick Iraqi defenses in Kuwait, breaching the border berms and first fire ditches under cover of darkness. As the battle developed, Iraqi reserves would be shifted south. Then, after nightfall on the 24th, the rest of the attack would be launched. VII Corps would drive through the Neutral Zone between Iraq and Kuwait to outflank and surround the main Iraqi troop concentration while the XVIII Corps drove deep through the desert to cut the supply, reinforcement, and retreat routes between the KTO and Baghdad.

The Marine and JFC attacks went well, and the Iraqi front-line troops began to disintegrate. Given the limited resistance being offered and the lack of response from the Iraqi reserves, the jump-off date for the main attack was moved forward to mid-afternoon. The heavy divisions of the VII and XVIII Corps began crossing their line of departure at 1500 hours. By nightfall, 2nd ACR was halfway to Al Busayyah, the strategic road and logistical hub in the desert. The 101st had its main body established at Cobra Base and a brigade forward in the Euphrates Valley. Iraqi border forces at the key breakthrough points had been overrun and scattered.

Monday, February 25, 1991

Poor weather delayed the advance on this day more than did enemy resistance. Nevertheless, by evening, the 2nd ACR was at Phase Line Smash near Al Busayyah, while the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions finished off the remnants of the Iraqi *26th Division's* forward brigades. 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) moved northeast to pocket four Iraqi infantry divisions, pressing them up against the Wadi al Battin which runs along the Iraq-Kuwait border. The 1st Cavalry launched a reconnaissance in force near the Wadi al Battin while British 1st Armoured Division passed through the 1st Infantry Division and headed north.

On the flanks, the French and Americans of XVIII Corps continued their advance, while the Marines systematically chewed up the Iraqi *III* and *IV Corps* in Kuwait.

Tuesday, February 26, 1991

1st Armored Division took Al Busayyah in the morning of February 26 (see page 66), and VII Corps then turned east and began to drive in the flank of the large mass of Iraqi armor in northern Kuwait and southern Iraq. 2nd ACR and 3rd Armored Division pushed back the *50th Armored Brigade* of the Iraqi *12th Armored Division*. This unit had been pushed forward to screen the hasty redeployment of the heavy mechanized forces, which were now turning to face west. The Iraqi heavy divisions were now tasked with covering the withdrawal of the infantry from Kuwait. 1st Armored began engaging intermingled elements of the *Adnan* and *Madinah Division* of the Republican Guard as well as the *12th Armored Division*.

During the afternoon, 2nd ACR had been engaged pinning the *Tawalkana Division* in place while 3rd Armored Division maneuvered forward to finish it off. Meanwhile, AH-64 gunships of the 11th Aviation Brigade raided deep into the rear areas of the Iraqi armor concentration, shooting up the *17th Armored Division* on the main highway from Kuwait City to Basra.

In the south, the Iraqi *52nd Armored Division* broke out of the pocket formed by 1st Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division, and British 1st Armoured Division, then headed north to join the main armor concentration. To the west, 24th Division had joined the 101st in the Euphrates Valley, and was involved in heavy fighting in a virtual maze of logistical sites and bunker complexes.

Wednesday, February 27 through Thursday, February 28, 1991

At 0900 hours on February 27, Kuwaiti troops of the 35th Brigade liberated Kuwait City, while US Marines destroyed the Iraqi *3rd Armored Division* on the runways of Kuwait International Airport.

24th Infantry Division in the west had now begun to move east and in the morning captured Jalibah Air Base (see page 68). 3rd Armored Division launched a rolling attack during the night of February 26-27, and continuing throughout the 27th, which destroyed the *Tawalkana Division* near Phase Line Tangerine (see page 69). In the afternoon of the 27th, 1st Armored Division came into contact with two brigades of the *Madina Division*, along with elements of the *17th* and *52nd Armored Divisions*, and shot them to pieces in the Battle of Madinah Ridge (see page 70). Farther south, the 1st Infantry and British 1st Armoured Divisions drove deep into northern Kuwait and finished off the last bits of the *52nd Armored Division*.

By nightfall, the Iraqi forward divisions had all been defeated and were in full retreat. Coalition divisions followed up the retreat in a classic "pursuit to destruction" which ended at 0800 hours on the following day with the beginning of the presidentially imposed cease-fire.

SADDAM STRIKES BACK KHAJJI

JANUARY 30, 1991, 1300-1800 HRS

Once the Coalition air offensive began, the Iraqi Air Force was quickly put out of action: either destroyed, forced to flee to Iran, or pinned down in its shelters. This blinded the Iraqi high command and made it difficult for it to gain adequate information about Allied strength and deployments. To remedy this, a series of attacks were conducted on the night of January 29-30.

Mechanized forces from the second defensive echelon were brought forward to reinforce the organic tank and Special Forces battalions of the front-line Iraqi divisions. All of these units were placed under command of the *5th Mechanized Division*, which served almost as a mini-corps headquarters, reportedly controlling as many as a dozen brigades at the height of the battle.

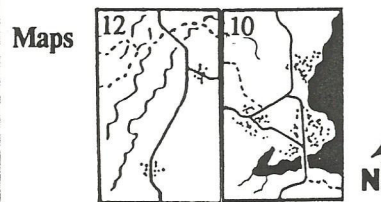
The first attack was launched at 2300 hours on January 29 and consisted of a mechanized battalion reinforced with at least two companies of tanks. It drove out of the southwestern corner of Kuwait, and encountered LAV-25 patrols of the 1st Marine Division. The Marines brought the column under direct and indirect fire and illuminated the area with flares. At 0600 hours on January 30, shortly after first light, a second wave of Iraqi tanks and APCs reinforced the first attacking echelon. Iraqi tanks actually reached positions within 25 meters of the Marines. But Marine AH-1 Cobra gunships and AV-8B Harrier attack aircraft were joined by Air Force A-10s and pounded the Iraqi armor for over an hour. At about 0900, the Iraqis broke off the action and withdrew, leaving dozens of burning vehicles behind them.

At almost the same time as the first attack on the Marines, an Iraqi mechanized column farther inland launched an attack down the coast road toward Khafji. As there was little military value to the city, there were only light security troops manning the few roadblocks. The advanced guard of the battalion smashed through these and was in Khafji before midnight; the rest of the battalion followed within an hour or two. Unknown to the Iraqis, two six-man Marine patrols were also in the city, and they would play a cat-and-mouse game with the Iraqis for the next 24 hours.

It took a while for the Allies to realize what had happened, and efforts to counterattack were complicated by a morning attack just to the west of Khafji by another Iraqi mechanized column. By early afternoon, however, this force of Iraqis withdrew, having sustained heavy losses.

Meanwhile, a battalion of Saudi National Guardsmen was launching the first counterattack against Khafji. Believing that it was held only by an Iraqi company, the Saudis were surprised by the level of fire and quickly fell back. They launched several more counterattacks and were soon reinforced by a company of Saudi M-60A3s. In the afternoon, the Qataris and Saudis from the inland battle became available and added considerable firepower to the attack. By evening, the Saudis had broken into Khafji and rescued the Marines hiding there. They secured the city center before midnight, although the mop-up operation would continue throughout the next day.

BATTLE CONDITIONS



Key Towns & Villages

10A, B, & C: Khafji & suburbs

Terrain

Depression: Wadi
Rough: Marsh
Vegetation: Scrub
Slopes: Gentle

Atmospherics

Wind: Moderate variable
Precipitation: None
Visibility: Normal

Advanced Rules

Troop-Carried Weapons
Antitank Missiles
Limited Visibility
Advanced Munitions
Helicopters
Amphibious and Aquatic Movement

Special Rules

Marine Patrols: The Coalition player has two Marine patrol units. Instead of placing these units on-map, the attacker writes down the numbers of any two hexes in Khafji, designating them as containing a Marine unit. Both units may be placed in the same hex.

Only Iraqi dismounted infantry and command units may search a hex, and they do so by spending one complete Movement Phase in the hex. The searching unit is considered to be moving around in the hex, and so may not enter or remain in a firing position while searching.

If the Iraqi player searches a hex containing a Marine patrol, the Marine patrol is discovered and placed on the board. From then on it is treated as a normal unit. Marine patrol units may not be discovered in any other manner.

Each turn, each of the two Marine patrol units may either move or call fire as an artillery FO. If they call fire, they may spot for the USMC artillery deployed off-map, and may direct it to any hex which they can see. If a patrol moves instead, the Coalition player notes its new hex number. Hidden patrols may only move one hex, and they may not enter a hex containing an Iraqi unit of any type.

If the Coalition player wishes to move farther than one hex or enter an Iraqi-occupied hex, he may do so by placing the patrol unit on the map and from then on treating it as a normal combat unit.

Chemical Variant: If desired, players may add six salvoes of mustard gas and three salvoes of nerve gas to the Iraqi off-board artillery salvo count. All Coalition units are protected against mustard gas. Only the USMC patrols are also protected against nerve gas.

Objective

The Coalition must drive out the Iraqi forces. The Iraqis must hold Khafji against the Coalition counterattack.

Scenario Length

17 Game Turns (16 daylight, 1 night)

ATTACKER: Coalition Troops (Green) Coalition Initial Forces

5th Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernized Battalion (plus one tank company, 10th Royal Saudi Mechanized Brigade) (Morale: 6): 1×[c]Cmndr, 1×[r]Patrol, 1×V-150, 9×RegInf, 2×V-150/90, 1×V-150/TOW, 3×MdMtr (54 salvoes HE, 6 salvoes Smoke), 4×M60A1, [3×Carl Gustav]

Saudi Fire Support: 1×[f]FO, 1×Jeep, 3×M109 155mm howitzer (off-map) (6 salvoes HE, 6 salvoes DPICM, 6 salvoes Smoke)

USMC Fire Support: 1×[f]FO, 1×HMMWV, 3×M198 155mm howitzer (off-map) (6 salvoes HE, 6 salvoes DPICM, 6 salvoes Smoke)

USMC Patrols In Khafji: 2×[r]Patrol (concealed in Khafji)

Coalition Initial Forces Setup

All Coalition forces set up anywhere on either map southwest of the hex row connecting hex 1617 on Map 10 with hex 0202 on Map 12, but no nearer than three hexes from any hex of Khafji.

Coalition Reinforcements

Qatari Mechanized Battalion Task Force (Morale: 6): 1×[c]Cmndr, 7×AMx-10P, 6×RegInf, 2×VAB/HOT, 3×AMx-30, [3×Milan]

Elements, 2nd Battalion, 10th Royal Saudi Mechanized Brigade (Morale: 4): 1×[c]Cmndr, 1×[s]M577, 2×MdMtr (54 salvoes HE, 6 salvoes Smoke), 8×LIInf, 8×M113, 2×M150, 1×[c]M60A1, 2×M60A1, [2×Dragon]

USMC Aerial Support: 1×AH-1 Cobra

Coalition Reinforcement Setup

All Coalition reinforcements enter on the west edge of Map 12.

DEFENDER: Iraqi (Brown)

Iraqi Forces

Elements, 5th Mechanized Division: 6×Dummy
Mechanized Battalion (Morale: 3): 1×[c]Cmndr, 1×MdMtr (14 salvoes HE, 2 salvoes Smoke), 1×B11 107mm recoilless rifle, 9×RegInf, 2×MdTruck, 10×Type 63 APC, [1×AT-3, 1×RPG-7]

Tank Battalion (less detachments) (Morale: 2): 1×[c] T-55, 6×T-55

Recon Company: 3×[r]ERC-90 armored car
Fire Support: 1×[f]FO, 1×Jeep, 3×D30 122mm gun/howitzer (off-map) (12 salvoes HE)

Iraqi Forces Setup

Iraqi forces may be deployed anywhere in Khafji.

WINNING

If, by the end of the game, there are no more than four Iraqi units in Khafji, the Coalition player wins. Failing this, the Iraqi player wins.