

Utah National Guard HISTORY HIGHLIGHT



Jan 2023

Operation Desert Storm

"Make no mistake about it, Operation Desert Storm truly was a victory of good over evil, of freedom over tyranny, of peace over war." Dan Quayle

At the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq was left with a substantial amount of debt having to finance their war through multiple Gulf nations. Looking to recoup Iraq's financial losses, Saddam Hussein turned his sights to the small, but wealthy neighboring nation of Kuwait.

Following multiple Iraqi threats against Kuwait, the U.S. declared its support for Kuwait, however this did not deter Saddam Hussein. On Aug. 2, 1990, Iraq sent an invasion force of more than 100,000 troops into Kuwait, and in a matter of hours, took control of the small country.

The international community nearly unanimously condemned the Iraqi invasion and a U.S. led coalition began imposing economic sanctions and demanding Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Additionally, the U.S. began deploying forces into Saudi Arabia to aid in stabilizing the area and gave Iraq a 45-day deadline to remove all its forces from Kuwait.

The deadline, set to end on January 15, came and went as Iraq refused to remove its troops. Soon after, Operation Desert Shield ended, and Operation Desert Storm began. President George Bush said in a speech given at the end of the deadline, "Saddam was warned over and over again to comply with the will of the United Nations: Leave Kuwait or be driven out. Saddam has arrogantly rejected all warnings. Tonight, 28 nations -- countries from five continents, Europe and Asia, Africa, and the Arab League -- have forces in the Gulf area standing shoulder to shoulder against Saddam Hussein. These countries had hoped the use of force could be avoided. Regrettably, we now believe that only force will make him leave."

In the early morning of Jan. 17, 1991, the air war began, followed by the ground invasion of Iraq on Feb. 24, 1991. Due to the overwhelming and cumulative successes of the air missions, superior forces, weaponry and speed of the ground invasion, the ground campaign lasted only 100 hours before Iraq fell.



Iraqi prisoner of war compound guarded by members of the 625th Military Police Company near Sarrar, Saudi Arabia.



151st Air Refueling Wing

338 members of the 151st Air Refueling Wing served in a variety of capacities in support of Operation Desert Storm.

KC-135 aircraft and aircrew belonging to the 151st Operations Group were assigned to the 1701st Strategic Wing, the largest tanker wing ever formed and flew numerous combat missions in enemy airspace.

151st ARW crew chiefs served in Moron Air Base, Spain to conduct KC-135 phase inspections for aircraft rotating in and out of theater.

The 151st ARW also supported Operation Desert Storm by deploying security police, medical personnel and firefighters, backfilling active-duty units throughout the U.S. and Europe.

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Utah National Guard units saw service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in many different roles.

The 141st and 142nd Military Intelligence Battalions (Linguists) supported numerous units including the 82nd and 101st Airborne, 24th Infantry Division, and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiments. The linguists primarily served as screeners for captured Iraqi prisoners of war and in some cases, aided in interrogations and interpretation.

The 625th Military Police Company primarily served by guarding and processing Iraqi prisoners of war but were also tasked with convoy escorts and other tactical operations. In all, the 625th would process, re-locate and guard more than 80,000 Iraqi POWs.

The 120th Quartermaster Detachment, 115th Engineer Group was tasked with water purification and made history by being the “first unit to uncrate and bring online the 150K Skid Mounted Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit in a tactical environment.”

The 1457th Engineer Battalion was activated shortly after the air war began. As the only mission capable engineer battalion in Europe, they took on and completed more than \$5,000,000 worth of construction projects.

Every Utah National Guard unit activated and deployed in support of Operations Desert Shield and Storm served with distinction. They were lauded by their leaders for their unwavering professionalism, dedication, unmatched e-sprit de corps, and willingness to take on any task or mission set before them.

Sources:

Roberts, Richard. *Legacy, History of the Utah National Guard*. 2003.

UTNG 1991 History Report

The Gulf War, 1991, Department of State Office of the Historian



A KC-135 from the 151st ARW refuels a Navy F-14 over Saudi Arabia during the first days of the air war in Jan.1991.



Members of the 144th Evacuation Hospital stand in front of the 400 bed hospital site known as “Emerald City.” The 144th was prepared to give medical and surgical care to patients inside the combat zone. The 144th was also the primary treatment facility for any nuclear or biological attacks. At the time, these forms of attacks were a serious threat and soldiers trained regularly to combat the danger.