

Desert storm essay

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In 1979 Saddam Hussien became president and took control of Iraq, which immediately set the tone for his rule. The killing of his cabinet 21 members showed the tone. Saddam wanted to make his country of Iraq whole again, so in 1990 he decided to invade Kuwait. In less than 4 hours during the invasion, he had taken Kuwait and controlled 24% of the worlds oil supplies. The possibility seemed as if his next target was to be Saudi Arabia because of the major oil in the country. The war begins as the United States enters scene after a call for protection by Saudi Arabia. President George Bush and the United States had set a deadline for January 15, 1991.

On this date all Iraq forces were to be out of Kuwait. Saddam then decides to ignore the deadline. The ignored decision by Saddam then triggered Desert Shield, which is the build up of troops in the region. This eventually leads to Desert Storm or an all out attack to free Kuwait. On January 17, 1991, Desert Storm began with a coordinated attack, which included tomahawk land attack missiles that were launched from cruisers, destroyers and battleships in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. The tomahawk land attack missile launches created a cautiously crafted joint strategic air campaign. The initial barrage of over 100 tomahawk land attack missiles took out heavily defended targets in the vicinity of Baghdad.

This made a critical contribution to eliminating Iraqi air defenses and command and control capabilities. In all, two hundred and eighty eight tomahawk land attack missiles were launched as part of the linked air campaign. The launches were conducted from both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf from nine different cruisers, five destroyers, two battleships, and two nuclear powered attack submarines. The chief shooter was the destroyer

USS Fife that in total had fired 58 missiles. The cooperative air campaign was successful beyond the fondest expectations. As full partners in that campaign, the Navy and the Marine Corps aviators flew from carriers and amphibious ships in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and from bases ashore, from the day hostilities began until the cease fire was ordered.

Navy aircraft's struck targets up to 700 miles distant, with Red Sea sorties averaging 3.7 hours in length, and Persian Gulf sorties averaging 2.5 hours. This was also the case for their ground based Air Force counterparts, which many flights lasted as long as five hours and virtually every flight required airborne refueling at both ends of the journey. Several weeks before the city of Baghdad was bombed on January 17th, 1991, U. S. intelligence agents successfully inserted a computer virus into Iraq's military computers. This was designed to disable much of Baghdad's air-defense system.

The size of Saddam's Iraqi army in the Kuwait theater of Operations was probably much smaller than the Pentagon reported. On the night preceding the war, Iraq may have had as few as 300,000 soldiers, compared to 540,000 that was estimated by the Pentagon. The Pentagon has also stated that of the 148 American servicemen and women who had perished on the Desert Storm's battlefield, 24 percent of the total killed in action were victims of friendly fire. This means that the Americans could have thought the people were enemies even though the deceased turned out to be on their side. Then, eleven more Americans were killed when exploded-allied munitions blew up, raising the friendly fire percent to 31 percent. The majority of the soldiers had said that the thousands of unexploded mines and bombs they encountered were more dangerous than enemy fire.

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For the air part of the war in Desert Storm, the Navy and Marine Corps are the units who took part in it. Pilots, aircrews and support personnel joined in the most forceful and successful air assault in the history of recent warfare. From the beginning of the air campaign, until the end of offensive combat operations 43 days later, the Navy and Marine pilots destroyed the main targets and helped secure the United States military and its coalition partners, who owned the skies over Iraq and Kuwait.

Two large amphibious assault ships operating from six aircraft carriers, and ground bases and the makeshift airstrips ashore, the Navy and Marine wing aircraft were an integral part of the coalition air campaign. There were more than 94, 000 sorties flown by U. S. aircrafts during the war. The Navy and Marine aircrafts flew close to 30, 000. The sea service pilots flew around 35 percent of the sorties, which was in straight proportion to their numbers in the U. S. air inventory.

More than 1, 000 Navy and Marine Corps aircrafts joined the U. S. Army, Air Force, and coalition partners to knock out the Iraqi military machine.

The air campaign was conducted in four phases. Phase 1 was to gain air superiority by destroying Iraq's strategic capabilities. That phase was accomplished within the first seven days. Phase 2 required the destruction of air defenses in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. During Phase 3, the coalition airmen continued to service Phase 1 and 2 targets as needed, but also shifted emphasis to the field army in Kuwait. Finally, Phase 4 required air support of ground operations.

As for the cost of the war, the U. S. Department of Defense has estimated the cost of the War in Desert Storm at \$61 billion. Other sources say that number could be as high as \$71 billion.

The operation was financed by more than \$53 billion that was promised by countries around the world, most of which came from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States. Those countries paid about \$36 billion and Germany and Japan paid about \$16 billion. Some of the money pledged by countries such as Saudi Arabia was delivered in the form of in-kind services to troops, such as transportation and food.