

Battle of khafji



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Battle of Khafji From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Battle of Khafji Part of the Gulf War Military operations during liberation of Khafji Date 29 January — 1 February 1991 Location Khafji, Saudi Arabia 28°25′N 48°30′E﻿ / ﻿Coordinates: 28°25′N 48°30′E Result Iraqis capture the Saudi city Khafji Coalition repulse the Iraqi troops two days later Belligerents United States Saudi Arabia Qatar United Kingdom Iraq Commanders and leaders Khalid bin Sultan Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz Norman Schwarzkopf Salah Aboud Mahmoud Saddam Hussein Strength 1st Marine Division 2nd Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 2nd Marine Division 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade U. S. Special Forces 1st Mechanized Division 3rd Armored Division 5th Mechanized Division Casualties and losses 43 dead 52 wounded 2 captured[1][2] 60—300 dead 400 captured[1][2] v · d · e Gulf War Invasion of Kuwait Kuwaiti Bridges — Dasman Palace Coalition intervention Ad-Dawrah — Qurah — Maradim — Khafji — Bubiyan — Wadi Al-Batin Air campaign Air-Air combat — " Package Q" Air Strike Liberation of Kuwait Order of battle — 67 Easting — 73 Easting — Al Busayyah — Phase Line Bullet — Medina Ridge — Highway of Death — Jalibah — Norfolk Post-ceasefire Rumaila — Safwan Iraqi uprisings The Battle of Khafji was the first major ground engagement of the Gulf War. It took place in and around the Saudi Arabian city of Khafji, from 29 January to 1 February 1991 and marked the culmination of the Coalition's air campaign over Kuwait and Iraq, which had begun on 17 January 1991. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who had already tried and failed to draw Coalition troops into costly ground engagements by shelling Saudi positions and oil storage tanks and firing Scud surface-to-surface missiles at Israel, ordered the invasion of Saudi Arabia from southern Kuwait. The 1st and 5th Mechanized Divisions and 3rd <https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

Armored Division were ordered to conduct a multi-pronged invasion toward Khafji, engaging American, Saudi and Qatari forces along the coastline. These three divisions, which had been heavily damaged by Coalition aircraft in the preceding days, attacked on 29 January. Most of their attacks were repulsed by U. S. Marines as well as U. S. Army Rangers and Coalition aircraft, but one of the Iraqi columns occupied Khafji on the night of 29—30 January. Between 30 January and 1 February, two Saudi Arabian National Guard battalions and two Qatari tank companies attempted to retake control of the city, aided by Coalition aircraft and American artillery. By 1 February, the city had been recaptured at the cost of 43 Coalition soldiers dead and 52 wounded. Iraqi Army fatalities numbered between 60 and 300, while an estimated 400 were captured as prisoners of war. The battle serves as a modern demonstration that air power can halt and defeat a major ground operation. It was also a major test of the Saudi and Qatari armies. Although the capture of Khafji was a propaganda victory for Saddam Hussein's regime, its subsequent recapture by Saudi and Qatari ground forces provided a major morale boost for the Coalition.

Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Order of battle
2. 1 Iraqi forces
2. 2 Coalition forces
- 3 Battle
3. 1 Beginning of Iraqi offensive: 29 January
3. 2 Initial response: 30 January
3. 3 Recapture of Khafji: 31 January — 1 February
- 4 Aftermath
- 5 References
- 6 Sources
- 7 Further reading

[edit]Background On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi Army invaded and occupied the neighboring state of Kuwait.[3] The invasion, which followed the inconclusive Iran—Iraq War and three decades of political conflict with Kuwait, offered Saddam Hussein the opportunity to distract political dissent at home and add Kuwait's oil resources to Iraq's own, a boon in a time of declining petroleum prices.[4] In response, the United Nations began to pass

<https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

a series of resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. [5] Afraid that Saudi Arabia would be invaded next, the Saudi government requested immediate military aid.[6] As a result, the United States began marshalling forces from a variety of nations, styled the Coalition, on the Arabian peninsula.[7] Initially, Saddam Hussein attempted to deter Coalition military action by threatening Kuwait's and Iraq's petroleum production and export. In December 1990, Iraq experimented with the use of explosives to destroy wellheads in the area of the Ahmadi loading complex, developing their capability to destroy Kuwait's petroleum infrastructure on a large scale. On 16 January, Iraqi artillery destroyed an oil storage tank in Al-Khafji, Saudi Arabia, and on 19 January the pumps at the Ahmadi loading complex were opened, pouring crude oil into the Persian Gulf. The oil flowed into the sea at a rate of 200, 000 barrels a day, becoming one of the worst ecological disasters to that date.[8] Despite these Iraqi threats, the Coalition launched a 38-day aerial campaign on 17 January 1991.[3] Flying an estimated 2, 000 sorties a day,[9] Coalition aircraft rapidly crippled the Iraqi air defense systems and all but destroyed the Iraqi Air Force,[10] whose daily sortie rate plummeted from a prewar level of an estimated 200 per day to almost none by 17 January.[11] On the third day of the campaign, many Iraqi pilots fled across the Iranian border in their aircraft rather than be destroyed.[12] The air campaign also targeted command-and-control sites, bridges, railroads, and petroleum storage facilities.[13] Saddam Hussein, who is believed to have said, " The air force has never decided a war," nevertheless worried that the air campaign would erode Iraq's national morale. The Iraqi leader also believed that the United States would not be willing to lose many troops in action, and therefore sought to draw Coalition ground troops into a

decisive battle.[14] In an attempt to provoke a ground battle, he directed Iraqi forces to launch Scud missiles against Israel, while continuing to threaten the destruction of oilfields in Kuwait.[15] These efforts were unsuccessful in provoking a large ground battle,[16] so Saddam Hussein decided to launch a limited offensive into Saudi Arabia with the aim of inflicting heavy losses on the Coalition armies.[17] As the air campaign continued, the Coalition's expectations of an Iraqi offensive decreased. As a result, the United States redeployed the XVIII Airborne Corps and the VII Corps 480 kilometers (300 mi) to the west. The Coalition's leadership believed that should an Iraqi force go on the offensive, it would be launched from the al-Wafra oil fields, in Southern Kuwait.[18] [edit]Order of battle

Coalition and Iraqi units deployed in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, as of 24–28 February 1991. The Iraqi Army had between 350,000 and 500,000 soldiers in theater,[19] organized into 51 divisions, including eight Republican Guard divisions.[20] Republican Guard units normally received the newest equipment;[20] for example, most of the estimated 1,000 T-72 tanks in the Iraqi Army on the eve of the war were in Republican Guard divisions.[21] The Iraqi Army in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO) also included nine heavy divisions, composed mostly of professional soldiers, but with weapons of a generally lesser grade than those issued to the Republican Guard.[22] Most non-Republican Guard armored units had older tank designs, mainly the T-55 or its Chinese equivalents, the Type 59 and Type 69.[23] The remaining 34 divisions were composed of poorly trained conscripts. These divisions were deployed to channel the Coalition's forces through a number of break points along the front, allowing the Iraqi Army's heavy divisions and the Republican Guard units to isolate them and

counterattack.[24] However, the Iraqis left their western flank open, failing to account for tactics made possible by the Global Positioning System and other new technologies.[25] In Saudi Arabia, the Coalition originally deployed over 200,000 soldiers, 750 aircraft and 1,200 tanks.[26] This quickly grew to 3,600 tanks and over 600,000 personnel,[27] of whom over 500,000 were from the United States.[28] [edit]Iraqi forces earmarked for the offensive into Saudi Arabia was the Iraqi Third Corps,[29] the 1st Mechanized Division from Fourth Corps and a number of commando units.[30] Third Corps, commanded by Major General Salah Aboud Mahmoud (who would also command the overall offensive), had 3rd Armored Division and 5th Mechanized Division,[29] as well as a number of infantry divisions. Fourth Corps' commander was Major General Yaiyd Khalel Zaki. The 3rd Armored Division had a number of T-72 tanks, the only non-Republican Guard force to have them,[21] while the other armored battalions had T-62s and T-55s,[31] a few of which had an Iraqi appliqué armor similar to the Soviet bulging armor also known as "brow" laminate armor or BDD. During the battle of Khafji, these upgraded T-55s survived impacts from Milan anti-tank missiles. [32] These divisions also had armored personnel vehicles such as the BMP-1, scout vehicles such as the BRDM-2, and several types of artillery.[31] Also deployed along this portion of the front, though not chosen to participate in the invasion, were five infantry divisions that were under orders to remain in their defensive positions along the border.[31] An Iraqi modification of the T-55 tank, used during the battle. U. S. Marine Corps reconnaissance estimated that the Iraqi Army had amassed around 60,000 troops across the border, near the Kuwaiti town of Wafra, in as many as 5 or 6 divisions.[33] Infantry divisions normally consisted of three brigades with an attached commando

<https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

unit, although some infantry divisions could have up to eight brigades—however most infantry divisions along the border were understrength, primarily due to desertion.[34] Armored and mechanized divisions normally made use of three brigades, with each brigade having up to four combat battalions; depending on the division type, these were generally a three to one mix, with either three mechanized battalions and one armored battalion, or vice versa.[35] Given the size of the forces deployed across the border, it is thought that the Iraqi Army planned to continue the offensive, after the successful capture of Al-Khafji, in order to seize the valuable oil fields at Dammam.[33] The attack would consist of a four-prong offensive. The 1st Mechanized Division would pass through the 7th and 14th Infantry Divisions to protect the flank of the 3rd Armored Division, which would provide a blocking force west of Al-Khafji while the 5th Mechanized Division took the town. The 1st Mechanized and 3rd Armored divisions would then retire to Kuwait, while the 5th Mechanized Division would wait until the Coalition launched a counteroffensive. The principal objectives were to inflict heavy casualties on the attacking Coalition soldiers and take prisoners of war, whom Saddam Hussein theorized would be an excellent bargaining tool with the Coalition.[36] As the units moved to the Saudi border, many were attacked by Coalition aircraft. Around the Al-Wafrah forest, about 1,000 Iraqi armored fighting vehicles were attacked by Harrier aircraft with Rockeye cluster bombs.[37] Another Iraqi convoy of armored vehicles was hit by A-10s, which destroyed the first and last vehicles, before systematically attacking the stranded remainder.[38] Such air raids prevented the majority of the Iraqi troops deployed for the offensive from taking part in it.[39] Iraqi armored fighting vehicles at Khafji T-72[40] T-55[41] T-62[42] BMP-1[40]

Weight 37.6 t (41.5 short tons) 36 t (39.7 tons) 40 t (44 tons) 13.9 t (15.3 tons) Gun 125 mm 2A46D smoothbore (4.92 inches) 100 mm D-10T2S rifled (3.94 in) 115 mm U-5T smoothbore (4.53 in) 73 mm 2A2B Grom Low-pressure gun (2.9 in) Ammunition 44 rounds 43 rounds 40 rounds 40 rounds Road range 342.8 km (300 miles) 500 km (310.7 mi) 300–450 km (186–279 mi) 500 km (310.7 mi) Engine output 780 PS (573.7 kW) 580 PS (426.6 kW) 580 PS (426.6 kW) 300 PS (220.6 kW) Maximum speed 60 km/h (37.3 mph) 50 km/h (30 mph) 50 km/h (30 mph) 40 km/h (24.9 mph)

[edit]Coalition forces During the buildup of forces, the United States had built observation posts along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border to gather intelligence on Iraqi forces. These were manned by United States Navy SEALs, Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance and Army Special Forces personnel. Observation post 8 was farthest to the east, on the coast, and another seven observation posts were positioned each 20 km (12 mi) until the end of the "heel", the geographic panhandle of southernmost Kuwait. Observation posts 8 and 7 overlooked the coastal highway that ran to Al-Khafji, considered the most likely invasion route of the city.[43] 1st Marine Division had three companies positioned at observation posts 4, 5 and 6 (Task Force Shepard), while the 2nd Marine Division's 2nd Light Armored Infantry Battalion set up a screen between observation post 1 and the Al-Wafrah oil fields.[44] The Saudis gave responsibility for the defense of Al-Khafji to the 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade and a Qatari armored battalion, attached to Task Force Abu Bakr. The 5th Battalion of the 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade set up a screen north and west of Al-Khafji, under observation post 7.[44] At the time, a Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade could have up to four motorized battalions, each with three line companies. The brigade had a <https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

nominal strength of an estimated 5,000 soldiers.[45] The Saudis also deployed the Tariq Task Force, composed of Saudi Arabian Marines and a battalion of Moroccan infantry. Two further task forces, Othman and Omar Task Forces, consisted of two Mechanized Ministry of Defense and Aviation Brigades, providing screens about 3 km (1.9 mi) south of the border. The country's main defenses were placed 20 km (12 mi) south of the screen.[44] The majority of the Arab contingent was led by General Khaled bin Sultan. The forces around Al-Khafji were organized into the Joint Forces Command-East, while Joint Forces Command-North defended the border between observation post 1 and the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border.[46] The "heel" of Kuwait. Coalition armored fighting vehicles at Khafji AMX-30[47] V-150[48] LAV-25[49] Weight 36 t (39.7 short tons) 10 t (11.02 tons) 16.3 t (18 tons) Gun 105 mm modele F1 rifled (4.13 inches) 90 mm Cockerill rifled (3.54 in) 25 mm autocannon (0.98 in) Ammunition 50 rounds 39 rounds 420 rounds Road range 600 km (370 mi) 643 km (400 mi) 660 km (410 mi) Engine output 780 PS (573.7 kW) 202 PS (148.6 kW) 350 PS (257.4 kW) Maximum speed 60 km/h (37.3 mph) 88 km/h (54.7 mph) 99 km/h (61.5 mph)

[edit]Battle On 27 January 1991, President Saddam Hussein met with the two Iraqi army corps commanders who would lead the operation in Basra, and Major General Salah Mahmoud told him that Khafji would be his by 30 January. During his return trip to Baghdad, Saddam Hussein's convoy was attacked by Coalition aircraft; the Iraqi leader escaped unscathed.[33][50] Throughout 28 January, the Coalition received a number of warnings suggesting an impending Iraqi offensive. The Coalition was flying two brand-new E-8A Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Joint STARS) aircraft, which picked up the deployment and movement of Iraqi forces to <https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

the area opposite of Al-Khafji.[51] Observation posts 2, 7 and 8 also detected heavy Iraqi reconnoitering along the border, and their small teams of air-naval gunfire liaison Marines called in air and artillery strikes throughout the day. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Barry, commander of the forward headquarters of the 1st Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Intelligence Group, sent warnings about an impending attack to Central Command. CentCom leaders were too preoccupied with the air campaign to heed them however,[52] and so the Iraqi operation came as a surprise.[53][54]

[edit]Beginning of Iraqi offensive: 29 January A view of the city of Khafji, prior to the battle. The Iraqi offensive began on the night of 29 January, when approximately 2,000 soldiers in several hundred armored fighting vehicles moved south.[55] The Gulf War's first ground engagement was near observation post 4, built on the Al-Zabr police building.[56][57] Elements of the Iraqi 6th Armored Brigade, ordered to take the heights above Al-Zabr, engaged Coalition units at Al-Zabr.[58] At 20:00 hours, U. S. Marines at the observation post, who had noticed large groups of armored vehicles through their night vision devices, attempted to talk to battalion headquarters but received no response. Contact was not established until 20:30 hours, which prompted Task Force Shepard to respond to the threat. Coalition soldiers at observation post 4 opened fire on the Iraqi column, but this largely ineffective fire drew a heavy Iraqi response which forced the company to retire south, by order of its commanding officer.[59] To cover the withdrawal, the company's platoon of LAV-25s and LAV-ATs (anti-tank variants) moved to engage the Iraqi force. One of the anti-tank vehicles opened fire, after receiving permission, at what it believed was an Iraqi tank. Instead, the missile destroyed a friendly LAV-AT a few hundred meters in front of it.

Despite this loss, the platoon continued forward and soon opened fire on the Iraqi tanks with the LAV-25's autocannons. The fire could not penetrate the tanks' armor, but did disorient their tank commanders.[60] Soon thereafter, a number of A-10 ground-attack aircraft arrived but found it difficult to pinpoint enemy targets and began dropping flares to illuminate the zone. One of these flares landed on a friendly vehicle, and although the vehicle radioed in its position, it was hit by an AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missile that killed the entire crew except for the driver. Following the incident, the company was withdrawn and the remaining vehicles reorganized into another nearby company.[61] With observation post 4 cleared, the Iraqi 6th Armored Brigade withdrew over the border to Al-Wafrah under heavy fire from Coalition aircraft. Coalition forces had lost 11 troops to friendly fire and none to enemy action.[62][63] While the events at observation post 4 were unfolding, the Iraqi 5th Mechanized Division crossed the Saudi border near observation post 1. A Company of the 2nd Light Infantry Armored Battalion, which was screening the Iraqi unit, reported a column of 60–100 BMPs. The column was engaged by Coalition A-10s and Harrier jump jets. This was then followed by another column with an estimated 29 tanks. One of the column's T-62 tanks was engaged by an anti-tank missile and destroyed.[64] Coalition air support, provided by A-10s and F-16s, engaged the Iraqi drive through observation post 1 and ultimately repulsed the attack back over the Kuwaiti border. Aircraft continued to engage the columns throughout the night, until the next morning.[65] Another column of Iraqi tanks, approaching observation post 2, were engaged by aircraft and also repulsed that night. [66] LAV-AT destroyed by a friendly anti-tank missile during the fighting around observation post 4, near Al Wafra. An additional Iraqi column crossed <https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

the Saudi border to the East, although still along the coast, towards the city of Khafji.[67] These Iraqi tanks were screened by the 5th Mechanized Battalion of the 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade. This battalion withdrew when it came under heavy fire, as it had been ordered to not engage the Iraqi column. Elements of the 8th and 10th Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigades also conducted similar screening operations. Due to the order to not engage, the road to Al-Khafji was left open.[68] At one point, Iraqi T-55s of another column rolled up to the Saudi border, signaling that they intended to surrender. As they were approached by Saudi Arabian troops, they reversed their turrets and opened fire. This prompted air support from a nearby AC-130, destroying 13 vehicles.[69] Nevertheless, the Iraqi advance towards Al-Khafji continued on this sector, despite repeated attacks from an AC-130. Attempts by the Saudi commanders to call in additional air strikes on the advancing Iraqi column failed when the requested heavy air support never arrived.[70] Al-Khafji was occupied by approximately 00:30 on 30 January,[71] trapping two six-man reconnaissance teams from the 1st Marine Division in the city. The teams occupied two apartment buildings in the southern sector of the city and called artillery fire on their position to persuade the Iraqis to call off a search of the area.[72] Throughout the night, Coalition air support composed of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft continued to engage Iraqi tanks and artillery.[73] [edit]Initial response: 30 January Distressed by the occupation of Khafji, Saudi commander General Khaled bin Sultan appealed to American General Norman Schwarzkopf for an immediate air campaign against Iraqi forces in and around the city. However this was turned down, and it was instead decided that the city would be retaken by Arab forces.[74] The task

<https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

fell to the 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade's 7th Battalion, composed of Saudi infantry and two Qatari tank companies attached to the task force.[75] These were supported by U. S. Army Special Forces and Marine Reconnaissance personnel.[76] The force was put under the command of Saudi Lieutenant Colonel Matar, who moved out by 17: 00 hours. The force met up with elements of the U. S. 3rd Marine Regiment, south of Khafji, and were ordered to directly attack the city.[77] The engagement of that night was to be the first battle the Qatari Army had seen in its entire history.[78] A platoon of Iraqi T-55s attacked a Qatari tank company south of the city, leading to the destruction of three T-55s by Qatari AMX-30s, and the capture of a fourth Iraqi tank.[79] Lacking any coordinated artillery support,[78] artillery fire was provided by the 11th Marine Regiment.[79] Supporting artillery from the 11th Marine Regiment. An initial attack on the city was called off after the Iraqi occupants opened up a heavy fire, prompting the Saudis to reinforce the 7th Battalion with two more companies from adjacent Saudi units.[80] The attempt to retake the city had been preceded by a 15-minute preparatory fire from U. S. Marine artillery. However Iraqi fire did manage to destroy one Saudi V-150 armored personnel carrier.[81] Meanwhile, 2nd Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade's 5th Battalion moved north of Al-Khafji to block Iraqi reinforcements attempting to reach the city. This unit was further bolstered by the 8th Ministry of Defense and Aviation Brigade, and heavily aided by Coalition air support. Although fear of friendly fire forced the 8th Ministry of Defense and Aviation Brigade to pull back the following morning, Coalition aircraft successfully hindered Iraqi attempts to move more soldiers down to Al-Khafji and caused large numbers of Iraqi troops to surrender to Saudi forces.[81]

That night, two U. S. Army heavy equipment transporters entered the city of Al-Khafji, apparently lost, and were fired upon by Iraqi troops. Although one truck managed to turn around and escape, the two drivers of the second truck were wounded and captured. This led to a rescue mission organized by 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment, which sent a force of 30 men to extract the two wounded drivers. Although encountering no major opposition, they did not find the two drivers who had, by this time, been taken prisoner. The Marines did find a burnt out Qatari AMX-30, with its dead crew.[82] That same night, a U. S. Air Force AC-130 was shot down by an Iraqi surface to air missile (SAM), killing the aircraft's crew of 14.[83] The interdiction on the part of Coalition aircraft and Saudi and Qatari ground forces was having an effect on the occupying Iraqi troops. Referring to Saddam Hussein's naming of the ground engagement as the "mother of all battles", Iraqi General Salah radioed in a request to withdraw, stating, "The mother was killing her children." [84] Since the beginning of the battle, Coalition aircraft had flown at least 350 sorties against Iraqi units in the area and on the night of 30—31 January, Coalition air support also began to attack units of the Iraqi Third Corps assembled on the Saudi border.[85]

[edit]Recapture of Khafji: 31 January — 1 February On 31 January, the effort to retake the city began anew. The attack was launched at 08: 30 hours, and was met by inaccurate Iraqi fire which knocked-out two Saudi V-150 wheeled vehicles.[86] The 8th battalion of the Saudi brigade was ordered to deploy to the city by 10: 00 hours, while 5th Battalion to the north engaged another column of Iraqi tanks attempting to reach the city. The latter engagement led to the destruction of around 13 Iraqi tanks and armored personnel carriers, and the capture of 6 more vehicles and 116 Iraqi soldiers, costing

the Saudi battalion two dead and two wounded. The 8th Battalion engaged the city from the northeast, linking up with 7th Battalion. These units cleared the southern portion of the city, until 7th Battalion withdrew south to rest and rearm at 18:30 hours, while the 8th remained in Al-Khafji.[87] The 8th continued clearing buildings and by the time the 7th had withdrawn to the south, the Saudis had lost approximately 18 dead and 50 wounded, as well as seven V-150 vehicles. Coalition aircraft continued to provide heavy support throughout the day and night.[88] A veteran of the Iran-Iraq War later mentioned that Coalition airpower "imposed more damage on his brigade in half an hour than it had sustained in eight years of fighting against the Iranians." [89] During the battle, an Iraqi amphibious force was sent to land on the coast and move into Khafji. As the boats made their way through the Persian Gulf towards Khafji, American and British aircraft caught the Iraqi boats in the open and largely destroyed the Iraqi amphibious force.[90] The Saudi and Qatari units renewed operations the following day. Two Iraqi companies, with about 20 armored vehicles, remained in the city and had not attempted to break out during the night. While the Saudi 8th Battalion continued operations in the southern portion of the city, the 7th Battalion began to clear the northern sector of the city. Iraqi resistance was sporadic and most Iraqi soldiers surrendered on sight; as a result, the city was recaptured on 1 February 1991.[91] [edit]Aftermath During the battle, Coalition forces incurred 43 fatalities and 52 injured casualties. This included 25 Americans killed, 11 of them by friendly fire, and two wounded; another two soldiers were captured in Al-Khafji.[1] Fourteen American airmen were killed when the AC-130 they were in was shot down by Iraqi SAMs. Saudi and Qatari casualties amounted to 18 killed and 50 wounded. Two Qatari AMX-

<https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

30s main battle tanks and between seven and ten lightly armored Saudi V-150s were knocked out.[1][2] Iraq listed its casualties as 71 dead, 148 wounded and 702 missing. U. S. sources present at the battle claim that 300 Iraqis lost their lives, and at least 90 vehicles were destroyed.[1] Another source suggests that 60 Iraqi soldiers were killed and at least 400 taken prisoner, while no less than 80 armored vehicles were knocked out; however these casualties are attributed to the fighting both inside and directly north of Khafji.[2] Whatever the exact casualties, the majority of three heavy Iraqi divisions had been destroyed.[92] Marines of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, in the painting *Cleaning up Khafji*. The Iraqi capture of Al-Khafji was a major propaganda victory for Iraq: on 30 January Iraqi radio claimed that they had "expelled Americans from the Arab territory".[93] For many in the Arab world, the battle of Khafji was seen as an Iraqi victory, and Hussein made every possible effort to turn the battle into a political victory.[94] On the other side, confidence within the United States Armed Forces in the abilities of the Saudi and Qatari armies increased as the battle progressed. After Khafji, the Coalition's leadership began to sense that the Iraqi Army was a "hollow force" and it provided them with an impression of the degree of resistance they would face during the Coalition's ground offensive that would begin later that month. The battle was also a major propaganda victory for Saudi Arabia, which had successfully defended its territory.[95] Despite the success of the engagements between 29 January and 1 February, the Coalition did not launch its main offensive into Kuwait and Iraq until the night of 24–25 February.[96][97] The invasion of Iraq was completed about 48 hours later.[98] The Battle of Khafji served as a modern example of the ability of overwhelming air power to stop a major offensive decisively. It

<https://assignbuster.com/battle-of-khafji/>

offered the Coalition an indication of the manner in which Operation Desert Storm would be fought, but also hinted at future friendly-fire casualties which accounted for nearly half of the American dead.[99]