

LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO OPERATION DESERT STORM CASE STUDY

“After months of preparation, we are on the eve of the liberation of Kuwait, a small peaceful country that was brutally attacked and subsequently pillaged by Iraq. Now we will attack into Kuwait, not to conquer, but to drive out the invaders and restore the country to its citizens. In so doing, you not only return a nation to its people, but you will destroy the war machine of a ruthless dictator who fully intended to control this part of the world, thereby endangering many other nations, including our own.

We will succeed in our mission because we are well trained and well equipped; because we are U.S. Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen; and because our cause is just. Your children and grandchildren will read about your victory in the years to come and appreciate your sacrifice and courage. America will watch her sons and daughters and draw strength from your success.

May the spirit of your Marine forefathers ride with you and may God give you the strength to accomplish your mission.

*Semper Fi,
Boomer”*

—This message was sent to the men and women of I Marine Expeditionary Force by their commanding general, Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, on the eve of the ground attack into Kuwait. February 1991

Lesson Introduction

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce you to an actual campaign. The Desert Storm case study offers an excellent teaching vehicle. You will be exposed to how this campaign linked battles and engagements in an operational design to accomplish strategic objectives. Moreover, throughout lessons contained in the 8803A course, the threads linking this campaign to Joint Warfare, Organization of Joint Forces, Campaign Design and Planning, War Termination, and other key elements of operational level warfighting will emphasize the importance of Joint doctrine in effective decision-making at all levels of conflict. The primary text for our case study will be *The Generals' War* by Michael R. Gordon and LtGen (Ret.) Bernard E. Trainor. To lighten the reading load, you will find required readings of various chapters of *The Generals' War* located in almost every lesson. We have attempted to align appropriate chapters and lesson subject matter although perfect fits are just not possible. The 8803A course has been sequenced to allow a better flow between the content and the book's presentation of Operation Desert Storm. Chapters 5, 11, and 15 have not been included, but you may certainly read them if time and energy permit.

The educational objectives listed below apply over the course of 8803A. You will not get a full understanding of these objectives until you have read and analyzed the entire case study through the eyes of the authors of *The Generals' War* and the material in these lesson plans.

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

Objective 1. Using the Gulf War as your example, be able to explain the link between the national objectives in support of military objectives and the importance of a clearly defined conflict termination. [JPME Area 3(d)(e)]

Objective 2. Comprehend how the U.S. military was organized within the CENTCOM framework to conduct Joint and multinational operations at the operational level of war. [JPME Area 1(b)(e), 3(a)]

Objective 3. Comprehend how CINCCENT planned for the defensive phase of the impending Gulf War prior to a complete buildup of U.S. and Coalition forces. [JPME Area 2(b), 3(a), 4(d)]

Read:

- *Joint Military Operations Historical Collection*, pp. V-1 to V-15 (14 pages)
- *The Final Report to Congress*, pp. 73 to 76 and 84 to 85 (6 pages)
- *The Generals' War*, Chapter 1 (27 pages)

Requirement 2

Objective 4. Comprehend the capabilities and limitations of deployed U.S. military forces as organized in order to fight both a defensive and offensive campaign in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operation (KTO). [JPME Area 1(a)(b)]

Objective 5. Understand the Joint and combined command structure as established by CINCCENT prior to STARTEX in the KTO. [JPME Area 1(d)(e), 3(c)]

Read:

- *The Final Report to Congress*, pp. 86 to 88 (3 pages)
- *The Generals' War*, Chapter 2 (22 pages)

Lesson Summary

“Our success in the Gulf reflected outstanding military leadership, whether at the very top, like General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and

General Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief of the forces in U.S. Central Command: or at the component level like Lieutenant General Chuck Horner, who orchestrated the coalition’s brilliant and massive air campaign, or Vice Admiral Hank Mauz and Vice Admiral Stan Arthur who led the largest deployment of naval power into combat since World War II, or Lieutenant General John Yeosock, who implemented the now-famous ‘left hook,’ or Lieutenant General Walt Boomer who led his Marines to the outskirts of Kuwait City, while continuing to divert Iraqi attention to a possible amphibious attack, or Lieutenant General Gus Pagonis, who provisioned this enormous force that had deployed unexpectedly half-way around the world; or at the corps or division level, wing commander, or battle group commander level. The command arrangements and the skills of the military leadership were challenged by the deployment of such a large force in a relatively short period of time, the creation or substantial expansion of staffs at various levels of command and the establishment of working relationships among them, the melding of the forces of many different nations and of the different services into an integrated theater campaign, and the rapid pace of the war and the complexity of the operations. The result was a coordinated offensive operation of great speed, intensity and effectiveness.”

—Final Report to Congress
 Conduct of the Persian Gulf War
 April 1992

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5			
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D
X	X		X	X		X			X		X	X	X				X					