

Persian Gulf War

Vocabulary: Iraq, Middle East, Nomadic Tribes, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, dictator, standard of living, economic sanctions, sovereignty, international law

The Gulf War lasted less than one year, beginning with Desert Shield in August 1990 to Desert Storm beginning in January 1991 and ending February 1991. It took place in Iraq in the Middle East. Iraq is a nation that was not established until 1916. In 1916, the British and French governments formed Iraq with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This Agreement divided the territory known as the Middle East into the nations of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, and a few others. Before 1916, the Middle East consisted of many Nomadic Tribes, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey.

Saddam Hussein became Iraq's fifth president in 1979. The president was a **dictator**. He was born in Iraq in 1937 and lived there most of his life. He did many good things for Iraq. He made it a modern country. He built schools and hospitals. He improved farming methods. He created jobs and raised the standard of living for all the people. He also did many bad things. He created chemical weapons to use in battles. He imprisoned people who disagreed with him. He killed his political enemies.

Kuwait is a tiny country located at the toe of Iraq. Kuwait owed the government of Iraq a lot of money. It also had a large supply of oil resources. On August 2, 1990, President Hussein ordered the Iraqi soldiers to invade Kuwait. It wanted to take Kuwait's oil to pay for the money Kuwait owed to Iraq. However, Iraq violated Kuwait's sovereignty by invading it. This is against international law. As a result, the United Nations Security Council voted to punish Iraq. It passed a resolution to impose economic sanctions on Iraq and also set a deadline of January 15, 1991, for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

When President Hussein ordered his Iraqi troops to invade Kuwait in August 1990, several Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt called on the United States and other Western nations to intervene. In August of 1990, the United States and other Western nations agreed to help. The United States began to send supplies, troops, destroyers, helicopters and fighter planes to the Persian Gulf area to stage the attack to rid Kuwait of Saddam Hussein if he did not withdraw. This time of preparation was called Desert Shield.

President Hussein defied the United Nations Security Council demands to withdraw from Kuwait by mid-January, 1991 and refused to withdraw his troops. Therefore, Desert Storm began when the United States and its allies began an intense air attack on Iraq's air defenses in January of 1991. Then it attacked Iraq's communication networks, weapons plants, and oil refineries. It used the latest technology in air strikes. It used Smart bombs that had laser guidance systems and infra-red night bombing equipment built into the bombs. The Iraqi Air Force did not fight back.

Much of the research and development for the high-tech weapons used was carried out at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. For example, Patriot air defense missiles designed and built at Redstone were used to protect military installations in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Redstone Arsenal was built to manufacture weapons during WWII. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was the center of development of rocket technology in the race with Russia to the moon. In the 21st century, Redstone Arsenal developed anti-aircraft guided missiles, anti-tank missiles, and anti-armor missile systems.

In February 1991, the ground war of Desert Storm began. The United Nations sent an army to fight the Iraqis in Kuwait and Southern Iraq. The army consisted of 500,000 military personnel from the United States and 250 thousand from England, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The National Guard of Alabama sent 5000 soldiers. Fewer than 1000 of these soldiers lost their lives but many thousands of Iraqi soldiers were killed. It took 4 days for the United Nations army to win the war after the ground war began. On February 28, 1991, President George H.W. Bush announced the cease fire saying that Kuwait was free and the Iraq army was defeated. President Saddam Hussein had to recognize Kuwait as a sovereign nation. It also had to destroy all of Iraq's nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

Interesting Topics for Reports

1. General Schwarzkopf
2. Atrocities perpetrated upon the people of Kuwait by the Iraqis
3. Countries that border Iraq and Kuwait.
4. Countries that have frontage on the Persian Gulf
5. United Nations and its building in NYC
6. On the alabamaveterans.org website in the Soldiers' Stories section, students can read about an Alabama veteran, Trey Wilbourn, who lost his life in this conflict.
7. Read passages to students from a book called **Bend My Dogtags and Send Me Home** by Ginger Branson, a nurse who served during the war.

Iraq: a country next to Iran. The ancient civilization of Mesopotamia was in the area now known as Iraq.

In the Story: Saddam Hussein was the President of Iraq.

Middle East: the area around the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. All the civilizations in the western part of the world began in the Middle East.

In the Story: Iraq is in the Middle East.

Nomadic Tribes: Groups of people without a home. The group moves from place to place looking for food or shelter.

In the Story: Before WWI, the Middle East was filled with Nomadic Tribes.

Iran: Iran is an ancient civilization. It has had many names. Before WWI, it was called Persia.

In the Story: Iran has always been a part of the Middle East.

Egypt: a country in the northeastern corner of Africa. Its civilization is more than 5,000 years old.

In the Story: Egypt is part of the Middle East.

Turkey: a country between Europe and Asia and in the Middle East. Turkey was called the Ottoman Empire before WWI.

In the Story: Turkey is part of the Middle East.

Dictator: a political leader with complete control over a nation. The people of the country have no voice in decisions of the country.

In the Story: The President was a dictator.

Standard of Living: the level of comfort of a people in a country; how much access the people have to electricity, food, stores, etc.

In the Story: Saddam Hussein raised the standard of living in Iraq.

Economic Sanctions: actions taken against the economy of one country by another country or countries; an example of an economic sanction is for many countries to agree not to trade with one country

In the Story: The United Nations called for economic sanctions against Iraq for invading Kuwait.

Sovereignty: the right to independence; the right to have power over itself

In the Story: Saddam Hussein took away Kuwait's sovereignty.

International Law: laws that all nations have agreed to follow

In the Story: Kuwait's right to its own sovereignty is an international law.