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A CHRONOLOGY OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR 1990-1991

2 August 1990: Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait.

6 August 1990: President George H. W. Bush orders the deployment of U.S. armed forces to defend Saudi Arabia in an operation named "Operation Desert Shield."

10 August 1990: Marine Safety Offices [MSOs] around the U.S. became immediately involved in Operation Desert Shield. MSO Hampton Roads was directly responsible for the activation inspections of 22 of 78 Ready Reserve Fleet [RRF] vessels activated nationwide. These and similar inspections by MSOs throughout the U.S. ensured that RRF vessels were fully capable of safely meeting their vital support mission. The quality of the inspection work is reflected in the 95 percent operationally ready rate achieved by the RRF vessels once they were in service. Additionally, a flexible Merchant Marine manning and licensing program was established to facilitate movement of RRF vessels.



In addition to the supervision of all regularly assigned peacetime port safety and security missions, Coast Guard MSOs were responsible for the establishment and supervision of Port Security Detachments in the coastal ports of the U.S. This effort involved the activation and organization of Coast Guard reservists to oversee shoreside and waterside security at facilities plus the supervision of the loading of hazardous materials and explosives aboard Military Sealift Command vessels bound for the Kuwaiti theater of operations.

16 August 1990: Multi-national maritime intercept operation began intercepting ships going to or from Iraq and Kuwait, consistent with U.N. Security Council Resolution 661.

17 August 1990: At the request of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Transportation and the Commandant of the Coast Guard commit Coast Guard law enforcement boarding teams [LEDETs] to Operation Desert Shield. A total of 10 four-person teams served in theatre to support the enforcement of UN sanctions by the Maritime Interdiction Forces. Approximately 60 percent of the 600 boardings carried out by U.S. forces were either led by or supported with the USCG

LEDETs. Additionally, a 7-man liaison staff was designated by the Commandant as Operational Commander for the USCG forces deployed in theatre. The first boarding of an Iraqi vessel in the theatre of operations conducted by a USCG LEDET occurred on 30 August 1990.

22 August 1990: President Bush authorized the call up of members of the selected reserve to active duty in support of Operation Desert Shield. Three port security units (PSU's), consisting of 550 Coast Guard reservists are ordered to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Shield. (This was the first involuntary overseas mobilization of Coast Guard Reserve PSU's in the Coast Guard Reserve's 50-year history). A total of 950 Coast Guard reservists are called to active duty. Other reservist duties included supervising RRF vessel inspection and loading hazardous military cargoes.



4 September 1990: USS *Goldsborough* (DDG 20) stops and challenges the Iraqi cargo ship *Zanoobia*. She was loaded with tea, a cargo prohibited under UN Resolutions. The Coast Guard officer in charge of the boarding party ordered the master to sail his vessel to a non-Iraqi or Kuwaiti port--the master refused. Whereupon the Coast Guard officer ordered a member of the boarding team to seize the helm. The team sailed the vessel to Muscat, Oman. [Edward J. Marolda & Robert J. Schneller, Jr., *Shield and Sword: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf War*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998, p. 91]

14 September 1990: The Secretary of Transportation and the Commandant of the Coast Guard authorized the first-ever deployment of a reserve port security unit overseas. PSU 303, staffed by reservists from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the first unit deployed. They were stationed in Al-Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

15 September 1990: A multinational boarding team, including four Coast Guardsmen, boarded the Iraqi tanker *Al Fao* after the tanker was stopped by the USS *Brewton* (FF 1086) and the HMAS *Darwin*. The tanker was permitted to proceed after the boarding team determined that it had no cargo on board.

22 September 1990: The second port security unit, PSU 301, staffed by reservists from Buffalo, New York, was deployed to Al-Jubayl, Saudi Arabia.



28 September 1990: "A Coast Guard LEDET from the USS *Brewton* (FF 1086) boarded HMASSuccess and presented relevant briefings and lectures to the visit and search parties of HMASSuccess, HMAS *Darwin*, and HMAS *Adelaide*." [Marolda & Schneller, p. 91.]

22 October 1990: The Iraqi merchant vessel *Al Bahar Al Arabi* was cleared to proceed by a multinational boarding team including Navy and Coast Guard personnel from the USS *Reasoner* (FF 1063) in the North Arabian Sea. The merchantman had apparently "disposed of" its prohibited cargo.

14 November 1990: PSU 302, staffed by reservists from Cleveland, Ohio, arrived in the Gulf. They were stationed in Bahrain.



16 January 1991: The White House announced the commencement of Operation Desert Storm: offensive action against the forces of Iraq under the provisions of U.N Security Council/U.S. Congressional resolutions.

With the commencement of Operation Desert Storm, Coast Guard MSOs increased both the level and tempo of port safety and security activities in the port to protect critical commercial and military waterfront facilities from the threat of terrorism. The Coast Guard increased both shoreside and waterside security patrols in ports using regular and reserve augmentation forces, established and enforced waterside security zones around key facilities and in one case, in Norfolk, responded to a potential terrorist bombing incident at a bulk liquid facility.

17 January 1991: The air offensive against Iraqi forces began.

18 January 1991: Coast Guard LEDET personnel on board the USS *Nicholas* (FFG-11) assisted when the frigate cleared eleven Iraqi oil platforms and took 23 prisoners.

13 February 1991: In response to the Iraqi action of firing oil wells and pumping stations, some off shore, in Kuwait that caused oil spills in the Gulf, two HU-25A Falcon jets from Air Station Cape Cod, equipped with Aireye technology [which precisely locates and records oil as it floats on water], depart for Saudi Arabia as part of the Inter-agency oil spill assessment team [USIAT] They were accompanied by two HC-130 aircraft from Air Station Clearwater which transported spare parts and deployment packages. The Falcons mapped over 40,000 square miles in theatre and located "every drop of oil on the water. . .The USIAT used the mapping product to produce a daily updated surface analysis of the location, condition and drift projections of the oil." The AVDET was deployed for 84 days, flew 427 flight hours and maintained an aircraft readiness rate of over 96 percent. [Christopher J. Stickney, "'Are You Derby?--No, We're Coast Guard!", Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association *The Bulletin* (August/September 1991), pp. 17-20.]



24 February 1991: Coalition forces began a ground offensive to liberate Kuwait.

28 February 1991: By presidential order all Coalition offensive operations ceased at 0800 local time.

11 April 1991: The UN Security Council declared a formal cease-fire, ending the Gulf War.

April 1991: Wayne Chamberlain and MKC Monez of PSU 302, assigned to a Navy MUIW unit, became the first Coast Guardsmen to enter Kuwait after its liberation. The unit was assigned to sweep Kuwait City harbor for mines. They also connected about 20 street lamps to a generator, thereby bringing power to the city.

21 April 1991: On April 21, 1991, a Tactical Port Security Boat (TPSB) of PSU 301, stationed in Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, was the first boat in the newly reopened harbor, Mina Ash Shuwaikh in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Because of certain security concerns, a determination was made to send one of the 22-foot Raider boats belonging to PSU 301 and armed with .50 caliber and M60 machine guns, to lead the procession into the harbor and provide security for the festivities. On April 20, a contingent of six Coast Guard personnel, led by LCDR M.S. Zecca, Executive Officer of PSU 301, along with MKC R.S. Grinnell (above, right photo) BMI M.C. Emond, PSI R.P. Robertson, MK2 J.J. Ford, and BM3 N.D. Bradley, left base Al Jubayl for Kuwait City.



"First Flags to Fly by Water in Free Kuwait!": by BM1 Mel Emond, USCGR. "Following Desert Storm, the first boat into Kuwait was a Coast Guard boat. Upon touching shore, Raider coxswain BM1 Mel Emond put up the national and Coast Guard ensigns, the first flags to fly in free Kuwait by water. Also pictured is LCDR Mark Zecco of Leavenworth, Kan."





For more information see:

Ronald L. Davis, "CG port security boat first into reopened harbor in Kuwait City," *The Coast Guard Reservist* (Sep/Oct 1991), p. 13

Edward J. Marolda & Robert J. Schneller, Jr. *Shield and Sword: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf War*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998.

Christopher J. Stickney, "Are You Derby?--No, We're Coast Guard!", Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association *The Bulletin* (August/September 1991), pp. 17-20.

"U.S. Department of Transportation Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm After-Action Report, March 10 1992."