

BOOKS

Jointness in the Real World

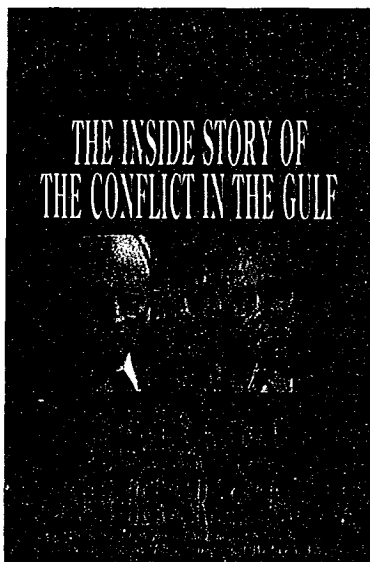
reviewed by MajGen Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., USMC(Ret)

**THE GENERALS' WAR—
The Inside Story of the
Conflict in the Gulf. By
Michael R. Gordon and Lt-
Gen Bernard E. Trainor,
USMC(Ret). Little, Brown
and Company, Boston,
1995, 527 pp., \$27.95.
(Member \$25.15)**

Michael Gordon and LtGen Bernard E. Trainor have teamed up to write the most penetrating, well-researched, and balanced book produced to date on the war in the Persian Gulf. A remarkable, comprehensive piece of history, enriched with descriptions of the participating commanders from the very senior levels down to the companies and platoons at the tip of the spear, this book explodes many of the myths created through the media during both DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. It is by far the most accurate portrayal of what really happened at the political, diplomatic, and military levels from Washington through Allied capitals to the combat zone in Kuwait.

In what is described as a "war by miscalculation," the authors present an intriguing description of warnings of an Iraqi invasion by intelligence analysts in the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency that were not believed by senior intelligence officials or the State Department. At the same time, the Bush Administration continued to pursue a policy of bringing Iraq back into the family of nations through diplomatic and economic aid, while believing that a full-scale invasion was unlikely. The administration's policy is described as a litany of inaction that, until the day of the Iraqi attack into

Kuwait, was guided by two basic assumptions—first, that Iraq, after having fought Iran for years, was tired of war and needed a respite; second, that she would use diplomatic coercion and subversion, not war, as her primary levers of power. It is interesting to note that the Bush Administration was not alone in its assessment as most of the moderate Arab states had misread Saddam Hussein's intentions as well.



The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 set off a series of diplomatic and military moves that brings into focus the major military personalities directing the crisis. Gordon and Trainor do an excellent job of describing the role of Gen Colin L. Powell, the political-military master

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who was the key player in shaping the war plan. They accurately portrayed Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the U.S. Central Command (CentCom) commander, as a man with a volatile disposition who terrorized his staff, but generally let his commanders do what they wanted to do. In the age of "jointness," this was to cause him problems that he did not foresee in the beginning of the buildup. Both he and Powell were tasked with developing a unified plan out of the conflicting views of the Air Force, Navy, Army, and the Marines, that was never completely harmonized. The results of this were to be seen at the end of DESERT STORM where half of the Iraqi Republican Guard got away only to return as a potential threat to Kuwait some 3 years later.

The authors correctly portray the Air Force arriving early in the planning phase with an agenda of its own that called for winning the war through the use of air power alone. While there was much tension within the Air Force as to how this was to be done, then BGen C. Buster Glos-son is given much of the credit for developing the air plan with guidance from Schwarzkopf and particularly LtGen Charles A. Horner, CentCom's air component commander. Unlike the Air Force, which was heavily represented in the CinC's headquarters in Riyadh, the naval component commander chose to stay aboard ship in the Persian Gulf and remain aloof from the political intrigues in the Saudi capital. The result was that the Navy was not a major player in the development of the air plan that generated several confrontations over just how air operations would be executed during the early weeks of DESERT STORM. While the air warfighting philosophies of both Services are accurately portrayed by the authors, the differences were never completely harmonized by the air planners in Riyadh.

DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM have been described as true joint operations in the media; howev-

er, Gordon and Trainor's analysis of the planning for the ground campaign demonstrate that the reality was quite different. The arrival of the Jedi Knights, a special team of field grade Army planners from Fort Leavenworth, imported secretly by Schwarzkopf, is an example. The Jedis, tasked with planning the ground offensive strategy in secret, excluded the Marines from the process until LtGen Walter E. Boomer, dual-hatted as the Marine component commander and commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, discovered their activities and complained. The initial result was a campaign plan that relegated the Marines to a minor role until Schwarzkopf himself intervened on the Marines behalf. The Navy was oriented around the aircraft carrier battlegroups and displayed little interest in amphibious operations in spite of a large amphibious force under its control. This did not change until the Commandant of the Marine Corps dispatched a special team of amphibious

planners to the fleet flagship in January 1991, to provide a focus on potential attacks from the sea. The actual air campaign is portrayed as being riddled with inter-Service tensions. A joint forces air component commander was created to run the air war, but his staff was dominated by the Air Force, much to the irritation of the other Services. While the Air Force concentrated on targets in Iraq, the Army and the Marines complained that specific targets they wanted hit in their respective zones were ignored.

The war in the Persian Gulf demonstrated some of the realities of the missile age. Iraq's use of the Scud missile against targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel created major political problems for the Bush administration as well as CentCom. In what may be a forecast for future conflicts, U.S. surveillance systems did a good job of picking up Scuds as they were launched in Iraq, but had an extremely difficult time detecting Iraqi mobile missile launchers prior to any firing. The authors describe in

detail the efforts undertaken by CentCom, to include the extensive employment of American and Allied special operations units into Iraq, to find and destroy the mobile launchers. This effort on the ground, as well as dozens of allocated air sorties to destroy the launchers, proved to be largely ineffective.

On the U.S. side, the description of new technologies introduced in this conflict provides an excellent picture of the way the Services will probably fight in future power projection missions or major regional conflicts. The F-117 stealth fighter saw its first extensive employment in combat and executed its missions over Iraq in a highly effective manner. The Navy's superb Tomahawk missile system proved to be very reliable and accurate, in spite of initial reservations by Gen Powell. The

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massive use of the Global Positioning System by the Services significantly enhanced accurate navigation and position reporting by units operating in the desert. A variety of electronic warfare systems were used to effectively blind and confuse enemy units in Kuwait and Iraq.

While the air campaign did not achieve all assigned objectives, it did play a major role in destroying key strategic targets as well as the Iraqi Army's ability to maneuver on the ground. By the commencement of the ground campaign, the enemy had sustained a severe pounding from the air. The authors describe in detail the ground assault into Kuwait and Iraq and charge that the strategic significance of the earlier battle for Khafji was completely missed by Schwarzkopf, the CentCom staff, and the Army. For the Marines, Khafji provided confirmation of Iraqi weaknesses and the stagnation that was spreading through the ranks of their Army. In what is described as one of the major miscalculations of

the war, Schwarzkopf's plan for taking the war to the Republican Guard remained the same after Khafji as before, thereby illustrating his failure to appreciate the decay in the Iraqi Army, its low morale, inability to maneuver, and general disintegration. The Marines spectacular advance through the Iraqi minefields toward Kuwait City, coupled with the collapse of the Iraqi Army in front of them, upset the timetable for the Army's attack in the west. The XVIII Airborne Corps responded smartly to a Schwarzkopf edict to move up the schedule for attack by one day; however, the VII Corps, made up of excellent U.S. armored divisions and trained to conduct a highly synchronized style of warfare in Europe, was slow to attack. By the time the VII Corps attack started to move, the Iraqis were in general retreat and under heavy air

attack north of Kuwait City. An XVIII Airborne Corps attempt to cut off the Iraqi retreat was stopped short when the political decision was made in Washington

to order an abrupt cease-fire. The failure of Schwarzkopf to recognize the conditions within the Iraqi Army and adjust the plan accordingly led to the incomplete victory over the Republican Guard.

To understand the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. joint operations today, this book is must reading. The authors have done a superb job of separating the facts from the fiction about the war in the Gulf. *The General's War* should be required reading for all future commanders in all branches of Services as well as being invaluable to any student of history.

US  MC

>MajGen Jenkins commanded the amphibious landing force that comprised the 4th MEB, 5th MEB, and 13th MEU(SOC) in the Gulf War. He retired on 31 August 1994.