



SECOND SUPPLEMENT TO

# The London Gazette

of Friday, 28th June 1991

Published by Authority

---

 Registered as a Newspaper at the Post Office
 

---

SATURDAY, 29TH JUNE 1991

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

DESPATCH BY  
 AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR PATRICK HINE GCB ADC  
 FRAES CBIM RAF  
 JOINT COMMANDER OF OPERATION GRANBY

AUGUST 1990—APRIL 1991

## INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of July 1990, the warming of east-west relations had led to a marked reduction in international tension. The size and composition of the British armed forces were under scrutiny, and the initial conclusions of the Options for Change deliberations suggested significant restructuring of our defences in response to the clearly reducing threat from the Warsaw Pact. Within a week, there was a major change in the world order; the unprovoked Iraqi invasion of neighbouring Kuwait redirected the focus of our military attention from predominantly European issues to the Middle East. On 8 August, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Honourable Tom King PC MP, announced that British Forces were to prepare to deploy to the Gulf region. On 10 August, the Chief of the Defence Staff, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir David Craig GCB DSC MA FRAES, appointed me the Joint Commander of Operation GRANBY, on which some 45,000 servicemen and women were eventually deployed in theatre.

In this despatch I will describe the way the Operation developed over the ensuing eight months, looking briefly at the background and the military build-up, before covering in more detail the six week period of hostilities which began on 16 January, and drawing a line at the acceptance of the official ceasefire on 11 April 1991. I will often describe single-Service actions; I would, however, stress at the outset that this was a joint operation with each arm's activities frequently linked to the others'. Moreover, while I will detail the involvement of British forces, we must remember that this was an international operation fought by the largest military coalition since the Second World War, and we were but one nation among many. I list at the end of my despatch the senior commanders in Operation GRANBY. I also attach maps to represent the disposition of our forces in theatre.

A full length epic would be required to do justice to the endeavours, bravery and resolve of all those involved, military and civilian, at home and abroad. While, inevitably, it is impossible to refer to all of those whose contribution would otherwise merit it, the

relative brevity of this despatch should not detract from the highest esteem in which we all should hold our participants in Operation GRANBY, whether those in the theatre of operations or those who supported them from bases in the United Kingdom, British Forces Germany and Cyprus.

## BACKGROUND

The Iraqi dispute with Kuwait has its roots in the post colonial history of the Gulf region, but the catalyst for the recent invasion came in the middle of July 1990. The immediate source of conflict was the Rumaila oilfield which straddles the Iraq/Kuwait border; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq maintained that Kuwait had stolen £1.3 bn of Iraqi oil from this field and demanded compensation. Kuwait rejected the charges and, in response, Iraq cancelled £5.5 bn of loans which it had received from Kuwait during the Iran/Iraq war.

A week after these events, the two sides agreed to talks which were held in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia; on the agenda were the disputed territory between the states, oil pricing and the cancelled Kuwaiti war loans to Iraq. On 1 August, in the middle of negotiations, Iraq pulled out of the talks; and the next morning, at 0200 hours local time, Iraqi troops crossed the Kuwaiti border. Iraq possessed the Arab World's most powerful military machine and, with a strength of over a million, the fourth largest permanent army in the World; facing them were the Kuwaiti defence forces, number a total of 20,300. In addition to his huge standing army, President Saddam Hussein had recalled the Popular Army, a militia of several hundred thousand men who had supported Iraqi frontline troops in the nine year war with Iran. He also issued orders to re-form fifteen infantry divisions and one armoured division which had been disbanded after the ceasefire in 1988.

Up to 100,000 Iraqi troops were massed on the border; the Republican Guard Force Command was chosen to lead the invasion. About 30,000 Iraqi troops, including armoured brigades equipped with modern T72 tanks, were used in the main attack across the desert towards Kuwait City, a distance of about 80 miles. Several Iraqi ships were off the Kuwaiti coast; some were used to mount a naval barrage on the capital while helicopters flew special forces from the ships into the city.

The troops crossed the border at three separate points in the north-west of the country and were met by artillery fire as they