constant air attacks and, later, the artillery barrages to which they had been subjected, resulted in fewer than 250 allied servicemen being killed. 47 British men gave their lives during the Operation, 9 in the pre-hostilities stage, 24 in action, 10 during hostilities (not in action) and 4 subsequent to hostilities.

There was much clearing up to be done. The extensive minefields laid by the Iraqis in the northern Gulf had to be cleared, with the immediate priority being to open up a deep-water channel into the port of Ash Shu'aybah for military and support shipping. In reflecting our pre-eminence in MCM operations, it was particularly fitting that Royal Navy mine clearance divers should confirm the safety of the harbour before HMS CATTISTOCK, the first vessel to enter, led a USN warship and a merchant ship towards their berths. Once plans of the Iraqi minefields had been handed over, our minehunters continued to clear the waters, with MCM vessels from other nations joining the UK/US forces in this vital task. Further out to sea, the role of the frigates and destroyers reverted to that of enforcing sanctions under the United Nations resolutions, and two Nimrods remained at Seeb to support these operations.

During hostilities, the Iraqis had deliberately pumped oil into the northern Gulf, creating the largest ever oil slick—35 miles long and 10 miles wide. The flow had been stemmed by allied precision bombing of the pumping stations, and experts had already begun their efforts to contain the damage before the war ended. Their work is still ongoing. As the ground offensive started, we received reports that the occupying forces were setting fire to oil wells in Kuwait. Within a few days well over 500 oil heads were ablaze. The flames and plumes of smoke made an eerie backdrop to the ground operations in Kuwait, and thereafter remained a striking illustration of the vast amount of work which will be needed to restore the country to its pre-war state.

Our 12 prisoners of war were soon freed and quickly reunited with their families. The first British units returned to their home bases on 10 March but, in view of the continuing internal unrest in Iraq, an infantry battle group was retained in Kuwait and a squadron of Tornado GR1 aircraft held at Muharraq, together with two Victor tankers. Specialist teams from the Royal Engineers started to clear minefields and assisted in the recovery of essential services within Kuwait, while logistics personnel organised the return of the Division's equipment. On 3 April, the United Nations Security Council set out the terms for a formal ceasefire; Iraq indicated acceptance on 6 April and it came into force on 11 April. The focus of attention then turned away from the erstwhile battlefield towards the north and east of Iraq and in particular to the plight of the Kurdish refugees who were fleeing from the retribution being handed out by the Iraqi army. British forces soon became involved in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to the hundreds of thousands of Kurds who had fled to the mountains along the Turkish/Iraqi border. Operation HAVEN, spearheaded by 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines, had begun.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA REPORTING

· For me, one of the most enduring memories of the Gulf War was the television news film of a Tomahawk cruise missile flying towards its target in the centre of Baghdad. Throughout the preparation phase and during hostilities, media reporting of events was detailed and speedy, and we made a conscious decision early on to assist as best we could the many reporters and agencies. The Ministry of Defence negotiated with the Saudi Arabian authorities to obtain visas for some 170 British journalists, radio and television reporters and technicians so that they could cover British and allied military activities. A number of these people were formed into small Media Response Teams and were attached to major army formations in the field, went to sea in Royal Navy ships, or were based with Royal Air Force detachments. These teams were therefore able to report at first hand on the UK's participation in the conflict, and I compliment them for their generally accurate coverage. In addition to the specific information relayed by these teams, the broader picture was provided at daily press briefings in Riyadh and at other regular briefings notably in London.

The speed of modern satellite communications meant that the public sometimes received information on their television sets more quickly than I did through the military command chain. Media analysis of this information was extensive and provoked a lively debate on the war situation; however, there were occasions when media information from theatre was either inaccurate or incomplete; the resulting analysis was then at best speculative and at times misleading. It was vital to preserve the integrity of the Coalition deception plan, and thus a temporary news blackout was imposed when the land offensive began. The rationale for this was generally accepted by the media. Overall, Operation GRANBY was the most extensively reported campaign ever, and I was generally impressed by the quality of the reporting. It is clearly important that the public

are kept informed of the progress of military operations, but there is a balance to be struck if operational security is not to be put at risk. While there was some frustration amongst journalists, I believe in the circumstances we got this balance about right.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, most of our forces have been trained for war as part of a large international alliance. However, since the Korean War, actual hostilities involving British forces have all been outside the NATO area and, Suez apart, conducted either alone or with Commonwealth allies. Operation DESERT STORM/GRANBY has proved that disparate forces can fight together effectively under a coalition flag. I must mention also the leading role of the United Nations. All allied military action was in accordance with resolutions passed by the Security Council, and the highly successful interaction between political leaders and military commanders which led to such an efficient expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait has provided an encouraging blueprint for the future. This crisis has shown that the United Nations can respond effectively in the face of unprovoked aggression, and it is to be hoped that this example of international resolve will deter other potential aggressors.

Operation GRANBY served as a timely reminder that our Services may be called upon to operate in distant theatres at short notice. In keeping with the campaigns that over the centuries have built up the history and traditions of the British Armed Forces, our servicemen and women acquitted themselves on Operation GRANBY with resolve, professionalism and courage, which rightly attracted the praise of the allies in theatre and the public at home. They did a marvellous job; I am very proud of them and greatly privileged to have commanded them during this operation.

P B HINE, Air Chief Marshal, Joint Commander, Operation GRANBY

JOINT HEADQUARTERS

JOINT COMMANDER .

Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick HINE GCB ADC RAF

CHIEF OF STAFF

Air Marshal Sir John KEMBALL KCB CBE RAF

NAVAL DEPUTY

Rear Admiral R T NEWMAN (to 29 January 1991)
Rear Admiral A P WOODHEAD (from 29 January 1991)

LAND DEPUTY

Lieutenant General Sir Michael WILKES KCB CBE

DIRECTORS OF OPERATIONS

Air Vice-Marshal R E JOHNS CBE LVO RAF
Air Commodore T NATTRASS AFC RAF
Brigadier P J SANDERS CBE (from 18 February 1991)

THEATRE

COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES ARABIAN PENINSULA

Air Vice-Marshal R A F WILSON CB AFC RAF (11 August to 30 September 1991)

COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES MIDDLE EAST

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DEPUTY COMMANDER and AIR COMMANDER

Air Vice-Marshal R A F WILSON CB AFC RAF (to 17 November 1990)
Air Vice-Marshal W J WRATTEN CB CBE AFC RAF (from 17 November 1990)

SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER MIDDLE EAST

Commodore P K HADDACKS RN (to 3 December 1990)
Commodore C J S CRAIG DSC RN (from 3 December 1990)