At Start, a Strike by Stealth

Air Force F-117 stealth fighters on March 20 (local Baghdad time) began the main phase of war in Iraq with strikes on a key Iraqi command bunker.

The attack also featured more than 40 Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from US warships in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

The strikes were intended to “decapitate” the Baghdad regime by, if possible, killing Saddam Hussein and his top aides.

The attack also marked the debut of an important new munition. In the attack, a pair of F-117A stealth fighters struck the target with four 2,000-pound EGBU-27 bombs. The “E” designation on the bombs indicates that the EGBU-27 is enhanced with Global Positioning System guidance, in addition to its laser seeker system.

Air Force officers had just that day certified the Nighthawk to deliver the new munition.

Insertion of the GPS capability permits the bomb to hit its target with near-precision accuracy even if it is obscured by smoke, clouds, or sandstorms—all factors that might interfere with a laser track. The EGBU-27s also have a backup inertial navigation unit, giving them a total of three guidance systems.

According to a senior defense official, F-117s had dropped roughly 100 EGBU-27s on targets in Iraq through the first two weeks of the war.

Airmen Killed in Combat

USAF announced the deaths of three airmen—an F-15E crew and a combat controller—who were killed in action during Gulf War II.

Maj. William R. Watkins III, 37, of Danville, Va., and Capt. Eric B. Das, 30, of Amarillo, Tex., were killed April 7 when their F-15E went down over Iraq. They were assigned to the 333rd Fighter Squadron, Seymour–Johnson AFB, N.C.

Watkins was the weapon systems officer and Das the pilot. Air Force officials said the cause of the incident is still under investigation.

SSgt. Scott D. Sather, 29, of Clio, Mich., was killed April 8, but the Pentagon released no details, except that it happened at a “classified location.” He was assigned to the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, Pope AFB, N.C.

Guardsman Died From Grenade

Maj. Gregory L. Stone, with the Idaho Air National Guard, on March 25 succumbed to injuries he sustained in the notorious March 22 grenade attack at Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait. The 1:30 a.m. attack also killed a US soldier and injured 12 others.

Stone, with the ANG’s 124th Air Support Operations Squadron, was serving with the Army’s 101st Air-
New Air Force PGM Unveiled
The Air Force’s new combination weapon—the Wind-Corrected Munitions Dispenser with the Sensor Fuzed Weapon—made its combat debut in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On April 2, a B-52 bomber dropped six WCMDs armed with SFWs over a column of Iraqi tanks. The WCMD uses Global Positioning System signals to automatically adjust for wind to allow the weapon to strike more accurately from higher altitudes, thus ensuring the bombs arrive over their designated targets.

The SFW deploys submunitions that sense the heat of individual armored vehicles.

WCMD and SFW were used separately in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Cruise Missiles Got Heavy Use
The Air Force and Navy made heavy use of cruise missiles in the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Through April 3, a senior defense official reported, USAF B-52 bombers had launched roughly 150 Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missiles. The Navy was reported to have fired more than 725 Tomahawk cruise missiles by April 5.

The systems mostly proved to be of devastating accuracy and power.

However, according to press reports, seven Tomahawks launched from ships at sea went astray, landing in Saudi Arabia and Turkey and possibly Iran. The former two nations closed their airspace to these weapons.

There have been no reports of the bomber-launched CALCJs going significantly off course.

USAF Staged Major Paratroop Drop
Air Force C-17s delivered nearly 1,000 Army paratroopers and 40 vehicles or platforms into northern Iraq, according to a senior defense official.

Air Force participants described the March 26 operation as the largest airdrop at least since Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989 and possibly since World War II.

It was the C-17’s first use in an operational airdrop. The mission was performed so that members of the Army’s 173rd Airborne Brigade could help open up a northern front in the war in Iraq. Officials said the Air Force almost immediately began using air-

Rumsfeld on Precision Airpower
On March 21, not long after the start of Gulf War II’s air campaign, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld met with Pentagon reporters. One purpose of the session was to set the record straight with respect to modern airpower.

“Just before coming down, after the air campaign began in earnest, ... I saw some of the images on television, and I heard various commentators expansively comparing what’s taking place in Iraq today to some of the more famous bombing campaigns of World War II.

“There is no comparison.

“The weapons that are being used today have a degree of precision that no one ever dreamt of in a prior conflict. They didn’t exist.

“And it’s not a handful of weapons. It’s the overwhelming majority of the weapons that have that precision.

“The targeting capabilities—and the care that goes into targeting, to see that the precise targets are struck and that other targets are not struck—is as impressive as anything anyone could see.

“The care that goes into it, the humanity that goes into it—to see that military targets are destroyed, to be sure, but that it’s done in a way and in a manner and in a direction and with a weapon that is appropriate to that very particularized target.

“I think that the comparison [with World War II bombing campaigns] is unfortunate and inaccurate. And I think that will be found to be the case when ground truth is achieved.”
fields in the area to continue to build up and supply ground forces.

Pentagon planners had originally expected to move the US Army’s 4th Infantry Division through Turkey into Iraq, but Ankara refused to grant permission for such maneuvers.

Officials said 15 C-17s participated in the operation, which required flying in formation in total darkness using night vision goggles. The flight originated at Aviano Air Base in northern Italy.

**Threat to GPS Fizzled**

The Great GPS Scare turned out to be a false alarm.

In the run-up to the war, some had expressed concern that Iraqi forces could employ inexpensive jammers to disrupt the relatively weak signal emitted by Global Positioning System satellites circling the Earth. Disruption of this nature would have put a severe kink in USAF’s ability to use GPS–guided weapons and navigate in the desert.

However, the problem proved to be largely unfounded, as coalition forces used GPS–guided weapons with impunity. DOD data shows that coalition forces by April 5 had dropped more than 3,000 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, just one type of GPS–guided weapon.

Early in the conflict, there were reports that Iraq had obtained several GP jammers, possibly from a Russian supplier. Maj. Gen. Victor E. Renuart Jr., Central Command operations director, announced March 25 that coalition forces had identified six of these jammers and had destroyed all six.

**SOF Quickly Seized Airfields**

Early in the war, coalition Special Operations Forces seized three key airfields in Iraq’s western desert and immediately began using them as bases of operation.

US, British, and Australian forces captured the first two bases, known as H-2 and H-3, on March 21. The bases are in the westernmost section of Iraq.

Details on the special operations have been scarce, but it is believed the airfields were used as coalition helicopter bases. They would be useful for missions seeking out weapons of mass destruction, Scud missiles, and for monitoring the main roads from Baghdad to Amman, Jordan, and Damascus, Syria.

Seizure of the bases, in conjunction with the airdrop that opened a northern front, allowed coalition forces by early April to put pressure on Baghdad from all directions.

**MQ-1 UAV Killed AAA**

A USAF Predator unmanned aerial vehicle —along with such front-page screamers as “Is Liz —whinging” is Britishese for whining)—was not said.

The first surprise was that Peter Arnett was back on network television, broadcasting for NBC from his old home stand in Baghdad.

Arnett had been dumped by CNN after his 1998 report, “Valley of Death,” was exposed as bogus. It claimed that in 1970, US forces used nerve gas, killed 15 or 20 defectors, and wiped out a Laotian village of 100 people, including women and children.

He tried to put the blame on his producer, April Oliver, saying he had only read a script and was being "trashed on a daily basis by the right wing news media," but CNN excused the exit clause in his contract anyway.

It was not Arnett’s first misadventure in military reporting. In 1965, working for the Associated Press, he picked up and repeated a false allegation by Radio Hanoi that the US Army used poison gas in Vietnam. Reporting from Baghdad for CNN in 1991, he broadcast and later defended Saddam Hussein’s claim that the United States had bombarded a “baby milk plant,” which turned out to be a biological weapons factory.

As the current war with Iraq approached, Arnett was sent to Iraq by the National Geographic Explorer series, telecast on MSNBc. He subsequently signed up to work for NBC itself. According to ABC radio in Australia, “When Peter Arnett arrived in Baghdad this year, he was treated like a celebrity by Arab and Iraqi media.”

When correspondents from other American news organizations, including CNN, were expelled, Arnett was allowed to stay. “The Iraqis have thrown the CNN crew out of Baghdad and I’m still here,” he gloat in an interview with TV Guide. “Any satisfaction in that? Ha, ha, ha, ha.” The Iraqis, he said, “see me as a fellow warrior.”

On March 30, state-controlled Iraqi television broadcast an interview with their fellow warrior, who began with glowing words for the cooperation of the Ministry of Information, “which has allowed me and many other reporters to cover 12 whole years since the Gulf War with a degree of freedom which we appreciate.”

With little prompting, he said, “It is clear that within the United States there is a growing challenge to President Bush about the conduct of the war and also opposition to the war. So our reports about civilian casualties here, about the resistance of the Iraqi forces, are going back to the United States. It helps those who oppose the war.”

“Clearly the American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces,” he said, adding that “The first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance. Now they are trying to write another war plan.”

Arnett was wrong on several points—for example, support for Bush in the United States was rising, not falling—and, at best, he was speculating on others, such as a change in the war plan.

More important, Arnett had told Iraqi rulers what they wanted to hear, praised them to the Iraqi television audience, and gave them encouragement to continue the fight. Some, such as John Podhoretz in the New York Post, speculated on whether this amounted to “aid and comfort” to the enemy.

Initially, NBC spokeswoman Alison Gollust leapt to Arnett’s defense, saying, “His impromptu interview with Iraqi TV was done as a professional courtesy. … His remarks were analytical in nature and were not intended to be anything more.”

Flooded with “thousands” of e-mails and telephone calls, NBC rethought its position and fired Arnett in the middle of the night March 31. National Geographic fired him, too.

“When you give an interview to a guy in an Army uniform who works for a dictator whose government we’re at war with, it raises some real questions about your judgment,” said NBC News President Neal Shapiro.

Arnett was apologetic, sort of, on NBC’s “Today” show. “I want to apologize to the American people for clearly making a misjudgment,” he said. “I created a firestorm in the United States, and for that, I am truly sorry.”

He was hired almost immediately by the stridently antiwar Daily Mirror, which bills itself as “Britain’s brightest tabloid newspaper.” In his first day on the new job, Arnett wrote that “I report the truth of what is happening in Baghdad and will not apologize for it. I am still in shock and awe at being fired. … The right wing media and politicians are looking for an opportunity to be critical of reporters who are here. I made the misjudgment which gave them the opportunity to do so.”

How Arnett felt about having his stories in the Daily Mirror—along with such front-page screamers as “Is Liz Queen of the Whingers?” (about actress Elizabeth Hurley; “whinging” is Britishese for whining)—was not said.

—John T. Correll
vehicle—designated MQ-1—fired one of its two Hellfire missiles and destroyed a radar-guided anti-aircraft artillery weapon on March 22 in southern Iraq.

The Air Force, which just began testing the use of missiles on the Predator in 2001, has begun converting its reconnaissance-only RQ-1s to armed MQ-1s. (See “USAF Gallery of Weapons,” beginning on p. 160.)

Helicopters Had Some Problems
Coalition helicopters had a tough go, suffering a series of mishaps that caused numerous fatalities.
On March 21, eight British troops and four US Marines were killed in a USMC CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter crash. The next day, two Royal Navy Sea King helicopters collided, killing six British troops and one US Navy officer.
Soon after, Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopters engaged in a bitter battle with ground forces south of Baghdad, a fight that resulted in the shoot-down of one helicopter and the capture of its two crew members. According to the New York Times, all 32 Apaches in that mission were damaged, with at least 17 rendered unable to fly.
On March 30, a USMC UH-1N Huey helicopter went down in southern Iraq; DOD later reported two Marines dead. Then on April 2, an Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in central Iraq; CENTCOM said six soldiers died. On April 4, another Marine helicopter, an AH-1W Super Cobra went down; DOD reported the pilot was killed. No further details were available on any of these incidents.

Coalition Lost Seven Fixed-Wing Aircraft
Fixed-wing aircraft have not been immune to danger either, as the coalition lost a total of seven by April 8.
Two coalition fighter aircraft—Navy and British—were apparently shot down by Patriot missile batteries. The RAF GR4 Tornado was shot down March 22 and the Navy F/A-18C April 2. The Navy incident is still under investigation, per CENTCOM.
On April 1, the Navy lost an F-14 that crashed due to mechanical failure, and an S-3 Viking and USMC AV-8B Harrier had carrier landing accidents. In each of those three incidents, the pilots were safely recovered.
The Air Force lost two aircraft in Iraq. A USAF F-15E crashed April 7 and an A-10 on April 8. USAF reported April 18 that the body of one of the two F-15E crew members had been found and reported April 23 that the second was also killed in action. The A-10 pilot was rescued unharmed.

The B-2 “First” for Captain Wilson
Air Force Capt. Jennifer Wilson became the first woman pilot to fly the B-2 stealth bomber on a combat mission.
It happened April 1 when Wilson flew the B-2 on a sortie over Iraq. Wilson, deployed to a forward location with the 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, is an experienced combat pilot, having flown B-1B combat missions during Operation Allied Force over Kosovo in 1999. She was later accepted for B-2 training and qualified in that aircraft in 2002.

Airmen Joined the Big Drop
When C-17 transports dropped 1,000 paratroopers into northern Iraq on March 26, the jumpers included 20 members of the Air Force’s 86th Contingency Response Group, Ramstein AB, Germany.
The 86th CRG has security, intelli-

War Plan Critics Blasted
Gen. Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, took a verbal swipe at some Pentagon critics on April 1. He struck out at those military officers—currently serving and retired—who had been critical of the Central Command war plan.
Less than two weeks into Operation Iraqi Freedom, critics had raised a chorus of objections to the battle plan, calling the operation a failure. They declared that the air campaign did not produce “shock and awe” and said the ground campaign was ineffective because it lacked sufficient size and heavy armor to protect long supply lines and punch through Iraqi forces.
Some critics claimed that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld forced Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commander of Central Command, to make do with less equipment than was needed to properly run the war. Additional heavy equipment was still flowing toward the Persian Gulf when hostilities began and would not be in place for more than a month.
Myers said the campaign began when it made sense. “How do you protect tactical surprise when you have 250,000 troops surrounding Iraq?” the chairman asked. Surprise, he said, was achieved by “starting the ground war first, [the] air war second.”
The war plan accomplished a string of complicated objectives, Myers observed.
“How do you protect tactical surprise when you have 250,000 troops surrounding Iraq?” the chairman asked. Surprise, he said, was achieved by “starting the ground war first, [the] air war second.”

Achieving these objectives was possible because US forces “went in very early, even before the ground war, to secure those places,” Myers said.
Battling the Friendly Fire Problem

By any measure, the frequency of American fratricide—when a unit mistakenly attacks a friendly military unit—has been lower in Gulf War II than in previous wars. Several incidents, however, served as reminders that blue-on-blue friendly fire is still a vexing problem.

The coalition has flown huge numbers of sorties, dropped thousands of precision guided and unguided bombs, fired hundreds of missiles, and unleashed massive barrages of tank, helicopter, and artillery fire, the overwhelming majority without incident. However, over the first two weeks of the war, the Army’s Patriot missile defense systems engaged coalition aircraft on several occasions and caused some fatalities.

On March 22, a Patriot interceptor destroyed a Royal Air Force Tornado, killing its two crew members. The Patriot system had mistaken the aircraft for an incoming missile. Senior defense officials said shortly after the incident that electronic systems used to identify friendly aircraft had failed somehow.

On March 25, another Patriot system locked onto a USAF F-16, which detected the radar lock and promptly destroyed the system’s radar dish with a High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile. No casualties resulted from this incident.

Finally, the Patriot system was blamed for downing a Navy F/A-18C fighter on April 2. The Hornet was over central Iraq when it was shot down. More than a week later, the pilot had not been recovered.

Another case of potential friendly fire occurred on April 3, when an Air Force F-15E fighter may have mistakenly bombed a convoy of US Special Operations Forces and Kurdish allies. Three Americans, one Kurdish soldier, and possibly one civilian reportedly were killed in the incident. At least five US personnel and several Kurds may have been wounded. Another incident of coalition aircraft bombing coalition forces may have occurred on April 6.

Coalition forces also experienced at least one incident in which a coalition tank fired on another coalition tank.

In the 1991 Gulf War, 35 of the 148 US battle deaths (24 percent) were the result of fratricide. The April 7 Washington Post reported that, in Gulf War II, 13 of 71 US fatalities (18 percent) stemmed from friendly fire.

All of these incidents in Gulf War II are under investigation.

In the first 16 days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, USAF airlifters and tankers carried out more than 8,000 sorties—more than half of all the Air Force’s total wartime sorties.

The total included more than 3,000 refueling sorties (two-thirds of all coalition tanker missions) and 5,000 airlift sorties (all of the coalition lift missions).

A senior Pentagon official said USAF crews through April 3 had flown about 3,500 intertheater lift missions, most of them with the C-17 aircraft. C-130 crews had performed another 1,400 lift missions within the Iraqi theater.

The crews of KC-135 and KC-10 tankers, meanwhile, had delivered 32.1 million gallons of fuel to various aircraft from different US services and different nations. They had been flying virtually around the clock.

In the first 21 days of the war, more than 200 USAF active duty, Guard, and Reserve tankers operating from 15 locations had flown more than 4,700 sorties.

The high demand for mobility forces—aerial refuelers and airlifters alike—had some calling for a re-evaluation of currently declared USAF airlift requirements.

Mobility Requirements Study 2005, completed in 2001, increased the Air Force’s lift requirement from 49.7 million ton-miles per day to 54.5 MTM/D. The requirement itself may no longer be valid.

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Mobility Requirements Study 2005, completed in 2001, increased the Air Force’s lift requirement from 49.7 million ton-miles per day to 54.5 MTM/D. The service’s actual capability has been short of this requirement from the beginning, and the requirement itself may no longer be valid.

At a March hearing, USAF Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper told a House panel that “it should be clear from year to year that we are not meeting the lift requirement. He said, “That number was established with a completely different set of assumptions.”

Gen. John W. Handy, the commander of Transportation Command and Air Mobility Command, told National Defense Magazine that the war on terrorism has made the MRS-05 findings obsolete. Further, he said, existing lift assets would not be able to accommodate the demands of two major crises simultaneously.
ported by the wing’s maintenance unit flew more than 500 sorties over 18 days with a 100 percent MC rate. Officials point out that these rates have been achieved at a time of sandstorms, high humidity, and 90 degree temperature.

Maintainers supporting E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft have also succeeded despite adverse conditions, according to officers of the 405th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, a 45-person team deployed from Tinker AFB, Okla. Their AWACS aircraft have achieved a 99 percent MC rate.

Persian Gulf weather poses its unique problems for AWACS maintainers. Work on the E-3’s rotating radar dome atop the aircraft normally takes 12 hours, but high winds can keep them from going up on the radar dome at all.

High temperatures can also slow things down. “If I have to hook up an air-conditioning unit to the dome, it adds two hours to the maintenance schedule, just to cool it off,” said TSgt. George Lull.

The Bomb Builders Delivered

The group of “bomb builders” that deployed from the 5th Munitions Squadron at Minot AFB, N.D., to the Gulf didn’t see many of their products return to base.

The units, which add fuses, take inventory of the weapons, and generally get the bombs ready for use, normally work with inert training munitions.

In an operational setting, however, “we build, they bomb,” noted MSGt. Stephen Sims. “Watching an aircraft come back empty is the ultimate in job satisfaction,” he added.

The Minot munitions experts represent about one-third of the deployed munitions flight, which includes additional personnel from four other bases, as well as mobilized reservists.

Heavy Load for Reserve Forces

More than 223,203 National Guard and Reserve members DOD—wide were mobilized to support current operations, as of April 16. The number had gone up by more than 2,000 in just the week earlier.

For the Air Force, more than 18,000 Air National Guard and 14,000 Air Force Reserve Command forces have been mobilized to help conduct operations at home and in Southwest Asia. They fly fighters, bombers, tankers, airlifters, and rescue aircraft. They provide maintenance and munitions crews, medical personnel, and air traffic control and communications specialists—whatever is needed.

Officials say the only way to distinguish reservists from active duty airmen is by their uniform patches.

Loggies Cut Wait Time in Half

Logistics with the 320th Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron initiated new customs and delivery procedures that have cut by 50 percent the time needed to receive parts. According to USAF officials, the streamlined customs procedures per-

Rubbed Out. This before-and-after sequence shows how airpower turned an Iraqi camp (left) into unusable real estate (right). Green means light damage, yellow means severe damage, red means destroyed.

Columbia University professor Nicholas De Genova gained instant fame and infamy March 26 when he declared, “The only true heroes are those who find ways to defeat the US military” in the war in Iraq.

As the professor told it, he would be happy to see US military forces suffer “a million Mogadishus,” a reference to the horrific October 1993 battle in which 18 US Army Rangers lost their lives to street thugs in the capital of Somalia.

The professor’s comments, emitted at an antiwar “teach-in” on Columbia’s New York campus, were immediately condemned, even by organizers of the protest. “He and the press have hijacked this teach-in, and I’m very, very angry about it,” said political science professor Jean Cohen, an organizer. The Columbia Daily Spectator reported that Cohen called De Genova’s comments “not innocent… This was a planned undermining of this teach-in.” Another protest organizer, history professor Eric Foner, said, “If I had known what he was going to say, I would have been reluctant to have him speak.”

De Genova, an assistant professor of anthropology and Latina/o studies, responded to the criticism in a March 27 letter to the Spectator. He accused the paper of quoting him “in a remarkably decontextualized and inflammatory manner.”

Then, he promptly reaffirmed the opinions. “Imperialism and white supremacy” have been hallmarks of US nationalism, De Genova wrote.

Further, said he, “The disproportionate majority of US troops come from racially subordinated and working-class backgrounds and are in the military largely as a consequence of a treacherous lack of prospects for a decent life.”

His implication was that today’s soldiers entered the military service because they couldn’t do anything better with their lives. However, a recent study conducted by his own institution—Columbia University—said just the opposite. The study measured recruit status in four ways—family socioeconomic status, verbal and quantitative skills, educational achievement, and work orientation. It stated flatly that today’s recruits “do not come from the more-marginal groups on any of four dimensions.”

Undeterred by such inconvenient facts, De Genova plunged ahead, claiming that the US troops have a choice: They can serve their nation, or they can “refuse to fight and contribute toward the defeat of the US war machine.”

According to De Genova, a million Mogadishus—and the accompanying deaths of the same racially subordinated and working class people he purports to support—would serve a greater good. The professor wrote that “Vietnam was a stunning defeat for US imperialism; as such, it was also a victory for the cause of human self-determination.”
mit direct delivery of the cargo to units in need, with great savings in time. Some parts were taking up to 12 days to wend their way through several bases before reaching a final destination. “With direct delivery, we can cut that time in half,” an official noted.

Air Force Materiel Command also worked to cut parts delivery times Stateside. One AFMC logistics unit was recently told to find and ship GPS antennas needed by F-16s flying OIF missions. What had once been a two-week task took less than 24 hours, officials said.

Gulf War II Had a Civilian “First”

Air Force Materiel Command officials cited a “first” in deploying a civilian to serve as an aircraft battle damage repair engineer. The command sent “Steve,” one of six such engineers who signed up to deploy as a condition of employment, to Southwest Asia for Iraqi Freedom.

Steve’s job is to design repairs on the spot if USAF maintainers cannot fix a damaged aircraft using standard technical orders. The task is to get the aircraft fixed fast and back into the air.

A key part of Steve’s job, said Maj. William Stahl, an AFMC combat logistics support officer, is to determine whether the repaired aircraft “is safe to fly and issue any necessary flight restrictions.”

Normally, AFMC looks to active duty service members first, then reservists, before turning to civilians for deployment. ABDR engineers are in short supply.

Air Traffic Control in a Crunch

USAF air traffic controllers came under heavy pressure to perform in the first days of OIF, when coalition air forces began immediately to fly more than 2,000 daily sorties in and over Iraq.

TSgt. Mark Morrison of the 46th Operations Support Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla., deployed to the Gulf to help control the movement of Air Force A-10 and F-16 fighters, Marine Corps fighters, and British fighters.

“After a big mission, I’d say we land 15 to 20 aircraft a minute,” Morrison said. “That’s outrageous.”

Though a normal 12-hour combat shift entailed the control, on average, of 275 aircraft, surge operations meant more than 500 aircraft needed direction.

In the forward deployed wing, nine air traffic controllers worked around the clock.

The Rescue of POW Lynch

A joint service special operations team on April 1 rescued Army Pfc. Jessica D. Lynch from the Iraqi hospital where she was being held prisoner. According to Central Command, Army Rangers, Navy SEALs, Air Force combat controllers, and Marines participated in the rescue operation. “It was a classic joint operation done by some of our nation’s finest warriors,” said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, CENTCOM deputy chief of operations, at a press briefing in Qatar.

Lynch, with the Army’s 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company out of Ft. Bliss, Tex., was captured March 23 when her convoy took a wrong turn near Nasiriyah, Iraq. The convoy was ambushed by Iraqi paramilitary forces.

Several Americans were killed in the attack, and others were taken prisoner and subsequently shown on Iraqi television. Lynch was not among those POWs interrogated on Iraqi TV and was initially listed as missing by the Pentagon.

According to a DOD release, an Iraqi lawyer came across Lynch while visiting his wife in the hospital and observed an Iraqi colonel slapping the severely injured 19-year-old—first with his palm then backhandedly.

The lawyer, identified only as “Mohammad,” decided to seek out US forces and walked six miles to a Marine position to inform them of the captured soldier. Mohammad returned to the hospital to perform reconnaissance and eventually provided Marines with the information critical to Lynch’s rescue, including the room in which she was being held.

Brooks said the US rescue force also found 11 bodies at the hospital. Two were in the morgue and nine others were buried in a nearby graveyard. Members of the rescue force could find no shovels, so dug with their hands to recover the bodies for return to the US. DOD identified eight of the bodies as US soldiers.

Buzz Words

The man who ran the Gulf War II air war was Air Force Lt. Gen. T. Michael Moseley, the Combined Forces Air Component Commander. The air boss, known to all as “Buzz,” spoke to the press for about 90 minutes on April 5. Excerpts:

Iraqi forces: “Our sensors show that the preponderance of the Republican Guard divisions that were outside of Baghdad are now dead… I find it interesting when folks say we’re softening them up. We’re not softening them up. We’re killing them.”

Iraqi aircraft: “I believe that [Iraq’s Air Force] has not flown because… they’ve made a calculation that they will not survive. Now time will tell. We’ll have to find an Air Force senior officer that’s still alive out there one of these days and ask him that question.”

Joint airpower: “I’m not sure I care how we kill [an enemy] tank. … I’d just say we’ve just killed a hell of a lot of them and we’re going to keep moving them until they quit moving them.”

Critics of the war plan: “I’m amused by the way that they critique it, but at the end, it’s a whole lot like listening to a cow pee on a flat rock. It just doesn’t matter.”

Shock and awe: “The term ‘shock and awe’ has never been a term that I’ve used. I’m not sure where that came from.”

Fast movers: “In the south, we’ve had such a rapid movement of the surface forces that we’ve progressed straight from some strategic attack targets and interdiction targets to close air support.”

Fate of Saddam: “I don’t know whether he’s still alive, but I suspect his quality of life is not as good as it was two weeks ago.”

The 21,000-pound “Mother of All Bombs”: “I haven’t seen this MOAB. I saw it on the television.”

Experience level: “There are not too many captains and majors and lieutenant colonels out there in the Air Force and in the flying Navy who haven’t been in combat or haven’t been in this theater multiple times.”

Efforts to jam GPS signals: “We’ve killed every GPS jammer that’s come up—with a GPS weapon. So that hasn’t worked out very well for them.”