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Gulf War Diary

By Andy Hoskinson

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the brave men and women who served honorably with the First Cavalry Division during Operations Gulf War Diary Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait from September 1990 to May Gulf War Diary 1991, especially those Gulf War Diary who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives for their country. May Gulf War Diary they rest in peace.

Preface

This is a first hand account of the Gulf War, as experienced by U.S. Army Captain Ronald Andrew “Andy” Hoskinson. Captain Hoskinson served as Commander of Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, a 155mm self-propelled field artillery battery in the U.S. Army’s famed First Cavalry Division.

Captain Hoskinson’s unit provided direct artillery support to the First Cavalry Division’s 2nd “Blackjack” Brigade, serving with distinction during numerous combat operations, most Gulf War Diary notably the Battle of Ruqi Pocket (15-25 February 1991), where the Blackjack Brigade earned the Valorous Unit Award. This memoir covers the events that occurred from Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 to the First Cavalry Division’s postwar Gulf War Diary redeployment to Fort Hood, Texas in April 1991.

The author welcomes your comments and feedback. You may contact the author via email at andy@hoskinson.net, or on the Web at <http://www.hoskinson.net/gulfwar/>.

Change of Command

August 1, 1990 was a typical sunny, Gulf War Diary muggy day at Fort Hood, located in the hill country of Central Texas. At 0900 hours, the sun was already beating oppressively down upon the soldiers of C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, who stood in formation awaiting the ceremony during which Captain Joe E. Gallagher, the Battery Commander, would relinquish the battery guidon to me, a timeless Army ritual signifying the change of command from one officer to the next.

As I stood on the parade field in the battalion quadrangle awaiting to assume command of this outfit, I thought about the last five years of my life, all of which were essentially spent preparing me both personally and professionally for this day: to take command of a firing battery.

I was a typical field artillery captain in the United States Army, with a little more than five years of active service. Commissioned as a second lieutenant from the University of Virginia ROTC program on May 18, 1985, I attended the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Following successful completion of that school, I was posted to Schweinfurt, Germany, where I served three years in a self - Gulf War Diary propelled M109A3 howitzer battalion assigned to the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized).

After rotating back to the United States, I attended the Officer Advanced Course, and was subsequently assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, where I served as the Fire Direction Officer for the 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery prior to taking command of Battery C. While serving as FDO, I rotated twice to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, located deep in the Mojave desert, where I received realistic mechanized desert warfare training against an opposing force that was trained and equipped to replicate a typical Soviet motorized rifle regiment.

In summary, like many other officers of my rank and level of Gulf War Diary experience, I had been trained primarily to fight the Soviets in a European (or regional) Cold War scenario. I had a good deal of mechanized warfare experience, and a moderate amount of desert warfare experience.

C Battery, the unit that I was about to take command of that day, was a typical self - propelled howitzer battery assigned within the continental United States. With its eight M109A3

howitzers, two fire direction centers, 114 soldiers, and enough ammunition and support vehicles to keep everybody shooting, fueled, and fed, C Battery stood ready to deploy to Europe along with the rest of the First Cavalry Division, and reinforce the forward - deployed forces in the Federal Republic of Germany against a Warsaw Pact invasion.

To facilitate its deployment to Europe, most of C Battery's "go to war" equipment was pre-positioned in Germany. This was our primary mission, our *raison d'être*; however, with the recent thawing of Gulf War Diary east - Gulf War Diary west relations and the Gulf War Diary impending reunification of Germany, the threat of war, while always a possibility, seemed remote.

Like many other CONUS - based heavy units, C Battery was generally well trained, but was not at the peak of its readiness cycle. Its last Gulf War Diary rotation to the Gulf War Diary National Training Center had been eight months previous; its last Standard External Evaluation had been six months ago. Since then C Battery had Gulf War Diary undergone a 50 percent personnel turnover rate, and had spent one month in "red cycle", a term used in the military to indicate that a unit's primary function would be installation support, as opposed to training and maintenance.

August 1, 1990, in addition to my assumption of command, also marked the first day of an intensive six-month training cycle for C Battery. This training cycle was designed to bring the outfit up to peak combat readiness, and would culminate in a rotation to the National Training Center in February 1991. Therefore, my biggest priority as new commander was to train my unit hard over the next several months so that we would be able to defeat the NTC opposing forces in the mock Gulf War Diary battles that we would have in the Mojave desert the following February.

However, on August 2, 1990, the "world turned upside down". Responding to Iraq's lightning conquest of Kuwait, and under the direction of the National Command Authority, C Battery, with the rest of the First Cavalry Division, was able to shift gears from its REFORGER mission to respond to the current threat. The battery deployed deliberately and efficiently to Southwest Asia, lived and trained in the desert for five months under conditions that most Americans would find intolerable, and finally, was a key participant in the liberation of Kuwait. That they were able to do this is a tribute not only to the Gulf War Diary men of C Battery, but also to the decade - long revolution in training and doctrine within the U.S. Army, which sowed the seeds of excellence that enabled units like C Battery, 3-82 FA to accomplish such a feat. Here is our story.

The Alert That Would Never End

On August 2, 1990, at 0530 Gulf War Diary hours, I turned my television set on Gulf War Diary and tuned in CNN's Headline News. On a routine basis, I watched Headline News before going to work in the morning; being a "news junkie", I enjoyed going to work knowing what was going Gulf War Diary on in the world, and this morning was no exception. One of the stories that I had been following was Iraq's mobilization of troops on Kuwait's border, and the flurry of diplomatic activity that was going on to resolve the situation. Since my father was a U.S. Army officer with extensive Middle East experience, I had developed a lifelong fascination with Arab life, politics, religion, and conflict.

The headline that morning hit me like a ton of bricks. I knew immediately that Iraq's blitzkrieg of Kuwait had severe implications for the rest of the world. I also knew that if Saddam Hussein ordered his troops to seize Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, he would control 40 percent of the world's oil. This outrage, I believed, would generate some kind of response from us; there was no doubt in my mind about that. The key question was: how severe of a response?

Gulf War Diary

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