The Persian Gulf War
Lesson Objective

**OBJECTIVE:** Know the key events of Operation Desert Shield/Storm and the impact of air and space power to its success during the Persian Gulf War

**Samples of Behavior**

- State the **US objectives** of the Gulf War
- List the **Objectives of the Air Campaign** in the Gulf War
- Outline the **key elements** of Col Warden’s “**Instant Thunder**” plan
- Identify the **four phases** of the Air Campaign
- Describe the **significance of air and space power** in the Gulf War
Overview

- Background
  - Iraqi Threats
- The Plan of Attack
  - Concept of Operations
  - Five Strategic Rings
  - Targets
  - Campaign Overview
- Video
Background

Desert Shield... Desert Storm
US Objectives

- Immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait
- Restoration of Kuwait’s legitimate government
- Security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf
- Protection of American citizens abroad
Operation Desert Shield

- CENTCOM CINC
  Army Gen Schwarzkopf
  - CENTAF Gen Horner
    - Became JFACC during the war

- In First 5 Days
  - Five Fighter Squadrons, contingent of AWACS, and part of 82nd Airborne Division
  - USAF-deployed fighter force equaled Iraqi AF in 35 days
  - Air Reserve/Nat’l Guard called to active duty
Iraqi Threat

- 4th largest armed force in WORLD
- **Nuclear, Biological, Chemical**
- Scud Missiles

*But we also had to worry about...*
Air Defense Threat

- Iraq’s air defense system thought to the best outside of the Soviet Union

- US was probably the only nation in the world with the airpower to “disintegrate” an integrated system of this type
Planning for the Storm

What were we going to do...

and how were we going to do it?
Objectives

*What were we trying to achieve?*

- Isolate & incapacitate Iraqi command structure
- Win Air Superiority
- Destroy Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Capability
- Eliminate Iraqi Offensive Military Capability
- Eject Iraqi Army from Kuwait
Concept Of Operations

The way we were going to achieve the objectives

- Powerful & Focused air attacks on strategic centers of gravity over a short period of time

It ain’t going to be no Rolling Thunder!

-- Target Hussein Regime, not Iraqi people
-- Minimize civilian casualties & collateral damage
-- Minimize coalition losses
-- Pit US and Coalition strengths against Iraqi vulnerabilities
“Instant Thunder”

- Developed by Col John Warden and his Checkmate staff in Washington

Named to directly contrast Rolling Thunder

Based on Warden’s 5-ring model of the modern nation state
The Five Strategic Rings

A planning framework

Leadership
Key production
Infrastructure
Population
Fielded Military Forces

Applied to Iraq...
# Target Systems

<table>
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<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Key Production</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Fielded Force</th>
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<td>Electricity</td>
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<td>Incapacitate Tele-</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>- Iraqis</td>
<td>Air Defense</td>
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Campaign Overview

Four Part Campaign:

Phase I -- Strategic Air Campaign
Phase II -- Suppression of enemy Air Defenses over Kuwait vicinity
Phase III -- Air Attacks on ground forces in Kuwait and vicinity
Phase IV -- Ground Operations as Directed
Video
Results: Accomplish Objectives?

- Isolate & incapacitate Iraqi command structure
  - Air Force Destroyed
- Win Air Superiority
  - Majority of Armor/Artillery Destroyed
  - SCUD Production Destroyed
- Destroy Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Capability
  - Air Kill Ratio: 35-0
  - SAM & AAA destroyed/suppressed
  - > 200 aircraft destroyed on ground
  - 375 shelters destroyed/damaged
  - > 120 aircraft fled to Iran
  - Destroyed all known Nuclear and Biological R & D and Production capability
  - 75 percent of Chemical

Airpower alone did not eject Iraqis, but...
Airpower Prepared the Battlefield

Isolated & Decimated Forces In Kuwait Theater Of Operations

- 60% of Tanks and Artillery Destroyed
- Demoralized enemy troops: 20-40% desertion rates
- Interdicted supply lines: most troops below subsistence level

Phase IV, the ground war, lasted only 100 hours
Lesson Reaffirmed

- Air Superiority is vital
- Single Air Commander essential for victory
- Strategic Air Campaign theory validated
- The offense is stronger than the defense in air warfare
- Air Power can prevail over ground forces

And where do we document lessons learned on Airpower?
AF Doctrine

A belief in the best way to implement/use air and space power

Based on:

- History
- Technology
- Leaders, etc.

Must NOT stagnate
Conclusion

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- Results…Lessons Reaffirmed
Back-Up Slides
STRATEGIC

- **Stealth**
  - 2% of force hit 40% of Strategic Targets
  - Struck most targets in Baghdad, undetected
  - Unstoppable…and couldn’t make us “pay”

- **Surgical**
  - Hit the targets…and only the targets
  - Limited Collateral Damage and Casualties
TACTICAL
(you can’t hide)

- Innovative “Tank Plinking”
  - Tanks vulnerable…Iraqis buried them
  - F-111 found them with infrared sensors
  - One 500 lb laser bomb = 1 tank

- Iraqi fighters…if you fly, you die
  - Hid in “hardened” shelters
  - One laser bomb = 1 plane