

Scout patrols prepare for war by probing Iraqi weaknesses

IN NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — Each night at dusk, scout patrols slather their faces with camouflage paint and leave the haven of their lines to probe for Iraqi weaknesses.

Scouts of the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade inch a little farther out each night. They're now operating within three miles of the northern border.

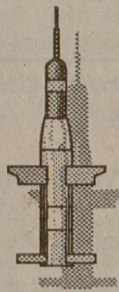
"Every night we get a little closer, and every night we get a little more of a picture of what's out there," said Lt. Joseph Sacchetti of Philadelphia, a 28-year-old platoon leader of scouts from the 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment.

The paratroopers' jobs are to gather and assemble bits of informa-

tion about the terrain and Iraqi positions.

They arrive at the spot where their methodical, painstaking work stopped the night before, then crawl on elbows and knees to new watch posts farther out.

"This is about as close as you can get to the border without paying taxes in the other country," said Capt. Clint Esarey, a public affairs officer who ac-



TOW Anti-tank

companied one patrol.

The scouts string razor wire across the desert floor as a defensive precaution. The night masks their movements while they serve as the brigades' eyes and ears.

They have goggles that turn night into day, thermal sights on TOW anti-tank missiles that see images of human forms and a global positioning system that bounces signals off satellites to tell them their latitude and longitude. The system is accurate to within 35 feet of any spot on earth.

"We're nocturnal; darkness is our friend," said Spec. John Rowe, 27, of Red Bank, N.J.

"This is no drill," said Maj. Ralph Delosua, 39, of Pemberton, N.J., the

1st Battalion operations officer. "This is for real. There are bad guys out there. Shoot to kill."

"Did you oil your weapon up today?" Lt. Sacchetti asked one of the men. "Might have to use it tonight."

Scouts are chosen from the ranks for the special duty. Their officers describe them as the best of the infantry: disciplined, smart, stealthy.

They talk with signals. Whispers are rare, and they break radio silence only in extreme emergencies.

"A light is like putting cross hairs on you," said Spec. Hiram Sanders, 25, of New York City.

"We're taking it to them now," said Sgt. Pana Giannakakos, 27, of Chicago, even though the ground war hasn't started.

Patriot self-explodes to hit incoming Scuds

EL PASO (AP) — The high-tech Patriot missile is deadliest when it meets a Scud head-on, but it also can explode near an oncoming Scud if it is about to miss.

The self-explosion, called a "proximity explosion," decreases the chance that the Scud's warhead or large chunks of debris will survive to crash to the ground.

"You have things that are moving at a very, very high rate of speed, and the proximity explosion sometimes will destroy the (incoming) missile — and sometimes it won't," said Larry McCracken of Raytheon, the Boston-based defense contractor that builds the Patriot.

Patriot batteries in Saudi Arabia and Israel have knocked out about three dozen Scud missiles since the start of the Persian Gulf war Jan. 17.

Most of the Patriots have been fired by Fort Bliss' 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, which downed the first Scud in the war and has destroyed most of the missiles fired at the Saudi Arabian cities of Riyadh and Dhahran.

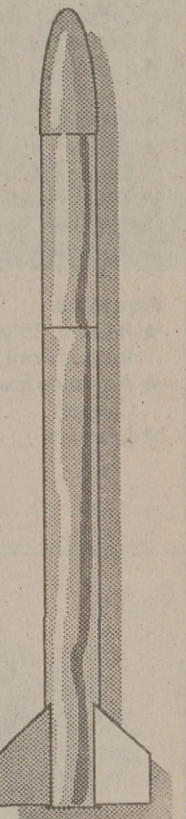
But a few of the Iraqi missiles have eluded the defenses. Others have taken only glancing blows from the Patriots and rained down deadly debris.

Surviving warheads and debris during a Scud missile attack in Tel Aviv Friday night apparently killed one person and wounded 53 others.

"We've never said that every missile engagement is going to destroy (a Scud)," said Dave Harris, spokesman for the Army Missile Command at the Redstone Arsenal in Alabama.

A version of the Patriots currently being used by soldiers in the Middle East is the second upgrade of the Patriot, which was first produced in the early 1980s.

The Patriot was first modified so it could track and intercept ballistic missiles. The new Patriot — known as the PAC-2 missiles — have new warheads and fuses that were rushed into production after Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion.



Patriot

Gulf Briefs

NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — Allied warplanes caught an Iraqi military convoy moving across the open desert in southern Iraq overnight and destroyed 24 tanks, armored personnel carriers and supply vehicles.

The action on Monday night was visible to U.S. Marines across the border in Saudi Arabia. The attack was reported by a U.S. media pool Tuesday.

AUSTIN — House members said they are introducing a resolution in support of Israel and its citizens during the Persian Gulf war.

Reps. Sherri Greenberg and Elliott Naishtat, both Austin Democrats, said the resolution expresses sympathy for Israel's losses, condemns Iraq's missile attacks on the country, commends Israel's restraint and recognizes the nation's right to self-defense.

IN EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — A U.S. Navy medic who won the first Purple Heart in the war with Iraq says he lay in pain on the desert floor for about three hours before a medical helicopter took him to a hospital.

Clerence Conner, recovering from a shrapnel wound in the right shoulder, said the military's system of medical evacuations needs improvement.

"They don't really have the Medevac system worked out," said the 21-year-old medical corpsman from Hemet, Calif. "They don't have a lot of the bugs worked out. ... It felt good to get the helicopter in there."

AUSTIN — Although the Persian Gulf war has caused oil prices to fluctuate in recent weeks, the state's diversified economy is not being significantly affected, Comptroller John Sharp said Tuesday.

Oil prices were in the \$28 to \$30 per barrel range before war broke out, shot up and then fell to the \$22 to \$23 range.

But Sharp said that so many other industries now hold a share of the state economy, it remains relatively immune to such oil price swings.

SAN ANTONIO — A military judge postponed indefinitely the sentencing of a Brooks Air Force Base security police officer found guilty of refusing an order to deploy to the Persian Gulf.

Sentencing for Staff Sgt. William A. Meeks, 27, had been set for Monday. He was found guilty in a court-martial Friday.

The military judge presiding, Lt. Col. Mark Breidenbach, postponed sentencing for what he said were procedural reasons, said base spokesman Jim Miller. The exact nature of the reasons was not specified.

Information numbers

The Department of Defense has created several around-the-clock telephone numbers that are designed to help family and friends of troops in the Persian Gulf area obtain information regarding casualties.

General Information

Air Force, 1-800-253-9276
Army, 1-800-626-1440
Coast Guard, 1-800-367-8724
Marines, 1-800-523-2694
Navy, 1-800-732-1206

For immediate family members only:

Air Force, 1-800-253-9276
Army, 1-800-542-9254
Coast Guard, 1-800-424-7950
Marines, 1-800-523-2694
Navy, 1-800-255-3808

Poll shows Americans support war

NEW YORK (AP) — About three out of five Americans say that if Iraq withdraws from Kuwait, the United States should continue fighting to force Saddam Hussein from power, an Associated Press poll found.

The poll taken Wednesday through Sunday found 74 percent approval for President Bush's decision to go to war. An even higher 82 percent said the United States should continue to fight until Iraq withdraws from Kuwait, regardless of the number of casualties.

Getting Iraq's occupying army out of Kuwait is the expressed goal of the United Nations resolutions that authorized the U.S.-led attacks that began nearly two weeks ago. But the poll shows only 38 percent of Americans would be satisfied with that result; 59 percent think the United States should fight on to force Saddam from power.

The telephone poll of 1,015 Americans by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., has a margin of sampling error of 3 percentage points in either direction.

The poll was taken after American prisoners of war were paraded on Iraqi television last week.

Bush then suggested that Saddam would be brought to justice for war crimes. But pressed at a news conference Friday on whether Saddam will be allowed to remain in power, Bush said, "I'm staying with our objectives."

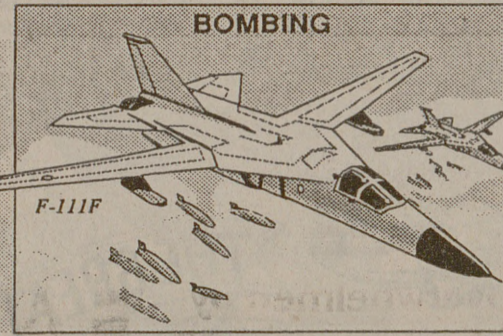
The allies have not committed to going further than expelling Iraq from Kuwait.

U.S. Air Power In the Gulf Region

An air attack is expected to be the key to any U.S.-led offensive because it would clear the way for allied ground forces. Here is a brief look at some of the different functions of aircraft that may be used in the Persian Gulf.

BOMBING

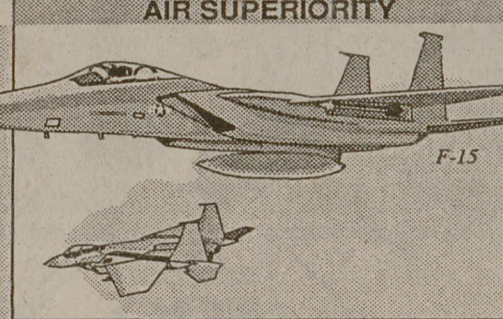
At the outset of an attack, bombers would strike deep into Iraq. The supersonic F-111F features a variable-sweep "swing wing." The plane can operate from treetop level to altitudes of 60,000 feet. It was used in the 1986 bombing raid on Libya.



F-111F	
Wingspan:	70 ft.
Length:	73 ft. 6 in.
Max. speed:	1,320 mph
Range:	2,925 miles
U.S. bombers in the Gulf include: F-111F, F-117A stealth fighter-bomber, B-52G, F-15E, A-6	

AIR SUPERIORITY

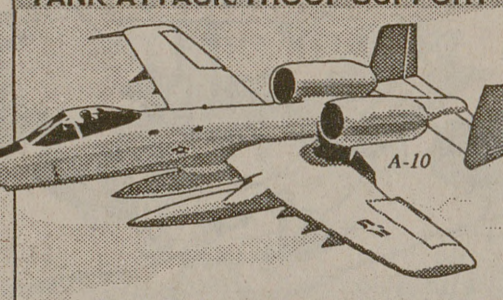
The F-15 is a single-seat, long-range air-combat fighter. Each F-15 C Eagle interceptor is armed with eight air-to-air missiles, including four AIM-7F Sparrows which can be fired at up to 30 miles' range.



F-15 C/D Eagle	
Wingspan:	42 ft. 9 3/4 in.
Length overall:	63 ft. 9 in.
Max. speed:	921 mph
Range:	2,878 miles
U.S. air-superiority fighters in the Gulf include: F-15B/C, F-14	

TANK ATTACK/TROOP SUPPORT

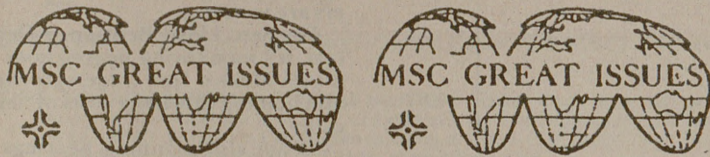
The A-10A is designed to operate from short unpaved runways, withstand prolonged exposure to gunfire from the ground and hit tanks with its powerful Avenger 30mm cannon and 16,000 pounds of ordnance.



A-10A Thunderbolt II	
Wingspan:	57 ft. 6 in.
Length:	53 ft. 4 in.
Max. speed:	423 mph
Range:	1,240 miles
U.S. attack and dual-role aircraft in the Gulf include: A-10, AV-8B Harrier, F-117A stealth fighter-bomber, F/A-18, F-16C/D, A-7E, F-4G Wild Weasel	

Source: Jane's All The World's Aircraft; The US War Machine; Operation Desert Shield: The First 90 Days

API/Ross Toro, Karl Tate



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