



## Crusade

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In response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the United States dispatched combat aircraft (August 8) and ground forces (August 9) to Saudi Arabia. Those American forces, as well as those who arrived later, were collected as part of Operation Desert Shield. When Iraq refused to leave Kuwait, confrontational diplomacy was replaced by actions of a lethal nature. On January 17, 1991, the air bombardment of Iraq and its armed forces opened the combat phase of the campaign to restore the pre-invasion territorial status quo. On February 24, a ground assault was inaugurated which ultimately produced a cease-fire agreement four days later.

Every element of the armed forces of the United States, from the Coast Guard Reserve to active duty armored divisions shipped from Europe, participated in the defeat of Iraq. Doctrinally and technologically the military establishment was on trial as never before in the nation's history: The United States had to get it right. Although U.S. forces were joined by a host of allies, several of whom made significant contributions, Desert Shield/Storm was essentially an American operation.

This latest work from Rick Atkinson emulates the procedure he utilized in *THE LONG GRAY LINE*. He interviewed everyone he could reach, focused on a few individuals to carry specific themes forward, and then placed the whole in context by filling in some, but not all, of the background. This is not a definitive history of the war—nor was an earlier work by a colleague at the *WASHINGTON POST*. Nevertheless, those who prefer their history with a personal touch will find this work invaluable, and all others will be better informed.

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