In 1993 followers of African warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid shot down two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters in Mogadishu, Somalia. Nineteen US military personnel and one Malaysian soldier were killed, along with hundreds of Somalis. The US and other troops were in Somalia to support a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

TSgt Timothy Wilkinson was a member of the combat search-and-rescue team sent to the crash site. When his unit arrived, it got caught in a 15-hour firefight with Aidid’s followers. It was the longest firefight since the Vietnam War.

Wilkinson’s duty was to treat the wounded. Again and again, he darted into the firefight to retrieve wounded crewmen as well as the bodies of Soldiers who had died.

During one dash, a bullet took a piece of skin off Wilkinson’s face. “I learned then that life is a matter of millimeters and nanoseconds. If my head was turned a different way, I might be dead,” Wilkinson said later. “Fortunately, all the bullets missed me, and my scars healed up nice.”

Just as the rescue team’s ammunition was starting to run out, help arrived. The crew was evacuated safely. Wilkinson was awarded an Air Force Cross for his courage that day. He was the first enlisted person to get this award since 1975.
The Significance of Stealth Aircraft

In 1988 the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber entered the arsenal of the US Air Force. Stealth aircraft are unique for one important reason: they can evade radar. This means they can fly nearly undetected.

Stealth ability allows aircraft to run reconnaissance without being caught. A stealth aircraft can bomb an enemy with little chance of being spotted, especially at night. Imagine if the Germans had been able to escape radar as they approached the British Isles in 1941. The Battle of Britain, and perhaps World War II, might have ended differently.

An aircraft such as the B-2 is invisible because it’s made of special materials. Its paint can absorb and deflect electronic pulses from radar. Its shape cloaks the aircraft as well. Every part of the plane is designed to hide it from radar. Many details about the materials are classified—they are secret.

Among the other stealth aircraft the US Air Force flies are the F-117 Nighthawk and the F-22 Raptor fighters. The first home of the F-22, which will replace the F-117, was at Langley AFB, Va. The F-35 stealth fighter will be next to join the Air Force fleet.

Later in this lesson, you’ll read about the roles stealth aircraft played in various military operations.

THE F-22 RAPTOR IS THE NEWEST STEALTH AIRCRAFT DEPLOYED IN THE US AIR FORCE FLEET.

Courtesy of the US Air Force
FIGURE 3.1
Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia

Taken from Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War by Rick Atkinson. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.
The end of the Cold War did not bring the hoped-for peace. Instead, it created new tensions. Some alliances crumbled. The Soviet Union no longer had the might to spread communism. Only the United States remained a superpower, a powerful, dominant country that has nuclear weapons.

Some saw opportunity in these changes. Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq in the Middle East, was one of them. He wanted to grab the oil fields of Kuwait, a tiny country south of Iraq. Hussein assumed no one would interfere with his plan, since the Soviet Union and the United States were no longer engaged in the Cold War. He thought the Soviets and Americans wouldn’t take sides in conflicts outside their borders as they had in the past. He was wrong.

On 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces marched into Kuwait. By 4 August, Iraq controlled its neighbor. Iraq had prepared well for the invasion. With 550,000 troops, it had the fourth-largest army in the world. It had 16,000 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and 750 aircraft. But Iraq would not get to keep Kuwait.

Why the United States Got Involved in the Gulf War

On 6 August 1990 Saudi Arabia—a US ally and a major oil supplier—asked its allies to protect it from neighboring Iraq. Saudi Arabia saw what had happened in Kuwait. It feared Iraq would try to take over Saudi oil fields next.

The United Nations responded with Resolution 660, which ordered Iraq to leave Kuwait. The UN also passed Resolution 678, which permitted a coalition of UN troops to force Iraq out of Kuwait if it didn’t withdraw by 15 January 1991. A coalition is an alliance among nations. The Allies, for example, were a coalition during World War II.

On 8 August the United States sent forces to Saudi Arabia to deter an Iraqi invasion. The military dubbed the mission Operation Desert Shield. American and other UN troops “shielded” Saudi Arabia from aggression by placing troops and weapons on Saudi soil. The US Air Force arrived with Airmen, fighter planes, stealth fighters, bombers, gunships, tankers, reconnaissance planes, and transports.

At the same time, US military planners prepared for a second operation in case Iraq didn’t meet the deadline to leave Kuwait. The United States called this action Operation Desert Storm. Many UN members, including Britain and France, contributed to it.

Iraq did not exit Kuwait as ordered. The stage was set for battle between Iraqi and UN forces.
FIGURE 3.2

Initial US air strikes on Iraq

Taken from Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War by Rick Atkinson. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.
How the United States Used Air Power in the Gulf War

The US Air Force worked out a plan to fight Operation Desert Storm. Both military strategists and President George H. W. Bush wanted to avoid another Vietnam. They settled on three tactics:

1. *Keep the air battle going.* Do not pause. In Vietnam, such pauses gave the North Vietnamese time to rebuild and repair.
2. *Conduct parallel air strikes.* In other words, bomb many targets simultaneously. Don’t focus on one target at a time.
3. *Coordinate air-strike efforts of the US Air Force, US Navy, and other coalition air forces* using one overall commander and one unified plan called an Air Tasking Order.

The Targets

The United States and United Nations decided that their air strikes would aim for four kinds of targets. They based their decisions on the theories of a 19th-century European named Carl von Clausewitz. He said that the best targets were at the “center of the enemy’s gravity.” This meant that US forces ought to begin by taking out the important targets, such as lines of communication. This would prevent Hussein from giving orders to his troops. The targets were Iraqi:

1. communication sites
2. air defenses
3. supply lines and enemy troops
4. threats to UN ground troops.

The Execution

On 17 January 1991 US air strikes on Iraq began. The US Air Force’s first targets were communications links, such as TV stations and telephone-relay stations in Baghdad, Iraq’s capital. Also, the Air Force made parallel air strikes. It targeted large numbers of these sites, rather than just one at a time.

Second, US aircraft went after Iraq’s air-defense systems, such as SAMs. The third target was supply lines and warehouses. With air superiority secured, UN ground troops were ready to move into Iraq.

On 29 January 1991 Iraq launched an attack against UN forces in Saudi Arabia. This attack failed. Then on 22 February 1991 a 100-hour battle began to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait for good. US air power took the skies over Kuwait. UN ground forces followed. Kuwait was at last free of Iraqi rule.
Lessons the USAF Learned From the Gulf War

The US Air Force had two goals in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm: to protect Saudi Arabia and to free Kuwait.

To achieve these aims, the US military drew up clear tactics and targets. The Air Force based many of these tactics and targets on lessons learned in other wars like Vietnam. One important lesson: don’t give the enemy a chance to repair and rearm.

Grabbing air superiority early on gave the US and UN forces an edge as well. Once these forces had struck Iraqi air bases and destroyed communication lines, Iraqi pilots couldn’t receive directions from commanders or get into the air.

Finally, US technology gave the UN effort the upper hand in the air. The F-117 stealth fighter, for instance, flew 1,271 sorties during Operation Desert Storm. A sortie is a flight or an attack by a single combat aircraft. The F-117 was the only aircraft to bomb central Baghdad. In addition, the KC-135 and KC-10 tankers made the long-distance war possible. They refueled more than 14,500 aircraft in mid-air.

F-117 NIGHTHAWK

Courtesy of the US Air Force
The Role of Air Power in Operation Enduring Freedom

On 11 September 2001, 19 Islamic extremists hijacked four American commercial airliners. The hijackers flew two of these planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. They crashed a third aircraft into the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C. Passengers on a fourth airliner fought the terrorists, who crashed the plane into a field in Pennsylvania. More than 3,000 people died in the attacks.

Less than a month later, the US military unleashed Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The goal was to destroy the terrorists’ organization and their bases in Afghanistan, a country in southwest Asia. The terrorists were from a group called Al-Qaeda. The Taliban regime, which ruled Afghanistan at that time, let Al-Qaeda forces train in its country. Therefore, OEF targeted members of the Taliban as well as of Al-Qaeda.

US Aircraft in Afghanistan

OEF began on 7 October 2001, when US Air Force bombers struck terrorist training camps and bases. At the same time, US Navy fighters made strikes from aircraft carriers, and US and British submarines launched missiles at targets in Afghanistan.

Within 18 months, coalition air forces flew more than 85,000 sorties. They conducted more than 48,000 airlifts of troops and cargo. They dropped more than 9,650 tons of bombs.

The main US Air Force combat aircraft involved were the B-1, B-2, B-52, F-15E, F-16, A-10, and AC-130. OEF began with eight B-1s. In the first six months of operations, these aircraft accounted for 40 percent of the guided and unguided explosives dropped in Afghanistan.

The B-2 stealth bomber made the longest flight in its history early in OEF, when it flew from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, to Afghanistan.

While the war removed the Taliban regime and led to a new government in Afghanistan, attacks by pro-Taliban fighters and Al-Qaeda terrorists continue. The United States, however, now joined by its NATO allies, has made great strides against the terrorists.
Precision Weapons

Among the weapons the Air Force used in Afghanistan are precision weapons. **Precision weapons** are guided missiles and bombs. They are so accurate that they can be placed within feet of their target.

The Hellfire missile is one of the precision weapons used in Afghanistan. The MQ-1 Predator delivers the Hellfire. The Predator is an unmanned aircraft that a pilot controls remotely. (Think of the remote-control device you use to change channels on your TV. It allows you to channel-surf from across the room, or “remotely.”) After the pilot has fired the missile, sensor operators then guide the missiles to their targets.

Precision weapons are the wave of the future because they can keep US forces far from combat. This helps keep casualties down.

Operation Noble Eagle and NORAD

In addition to fighting terrorists overseas, Airmen have duties back home. Members of the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and active Air Force serve in Operation Noble Eagle (ONE). Its goal is to safeguard American soil.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) runs ONE. As its name implies, NORAD has a big job: to defend the skies over the United States and Canada.

ONE began shortly after 11 September 2001. Within 16 months, US aircraft flew more than 27,000 sorties over American cities. They were on the lookout for suspicious aircraft, and they continue this job today. Fighters such as the F-15 Eagle or the F-16 Fighting Falcon shoot flares if they find an airplane flying in space where it is not supposed to be. For example, planes may not fly over the White House unless they have permission. If an airplane enters that airspace, Air Force fighters have the right to shoot it down if it does not respond to warnings and depart.
TSgt John Chapman: An Exceptional Brand of Courage

TSgt John Chapman was a combat controller during Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan. Air Force combat-control teams support special operations in the field.

It was in the early hours of 4 March 2002, in what became a 17-hour ordeal on top of Tukur Ghar mountain in southeastern Afghanistan. Operation Anaconda—a coalition effort to destroy Taliban and Al-Qaeda units—was just starting.

Sergeant Chapman was attached to a Navy sea-air-land (SEAL) team. The team’s MH-47 helicopter was hit by Al-Qaeda enemy machine gun fire. A rocket-propelled grenade then hit the helicopter, causing a SEAL team member to fall from the aircraft into enemy-held territory.

The helicopter made an emergency landing more than four miles from the fallen SEAL. Chapman called in an AC-130 gunship to protect the stranded team.

Chapman called in another helicopter to evacuate his stranded team. Then he volunteered to rescue his missing team member from the enemy stronghold. He engaged and killed two of the enemy before advancing and engaging a second enemy position—a dug-in machine gun nest.

From close range with little cover, Chapman exchanged fire with the enemy. Finally he died after receiving multiple wounds. Because of his actions, his team was able to move to cover and break enemy contact.

The Navy SEAL leader credited Chapman with saving the lives of the entire team. In gratitude, the Navy named a cargo ship after him. For his bravery and courage, the Air Force awarded him the Air Force Cross. He became the service’s highest-decorated combat controller.
FIGURE 3.3

Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan began in March 2002.

Courtesy of Maps.com
SrA Jason Cunningham: A Display of Uncommon Valor

SrA Jason Cunningham was in the Navy before he decided to switch to the Air Force. He wanted to be a pararescueman. The pararescuemen’s motto is “That others may live.”

Airman Cunningham was the primary Air Force Combat Search and Rescue medic assigned to a Quick Reaction Force. His team was sent to recover American servicemen in the battle in which TSgt John Chapman was killed. Shortly before landing, his MH-47E helicopter took rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire. This severely disabled the aircraft and caused it to crash land. The assault force formed a hasty defense. Three members were killed immediately; five others were critically wounded.

Despite enemy fire, and at great risk to his own life, Cunningham stayed in the burning fuselage of the aircraft to treat the wounded. As he moved his patients to a more secure location, mortar rounds began to hit within 50 feet of his position. Disregarding this extreme danger, he continued the movement and exposed himself to enemy fire on seven separate occasions.

After a time the second casualty collection point was also endangered. Cunningham braved an intense attack while moving the critically wounded to a third collection point. He was mortally wounded and quickly deteriorating, but he continued to direct his patients' movement and transferred care to another medic.

Cunningham had given medical treatment to the wounded while under fire for seven hours. He was killed saving the lives of 10 service members. The Air Force awarded him the Air Force Cross after his death.
Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is the nation’s highest US military decoration for valor or bravery in combat, awarded to members of the armed forces. It is given for conspicuous gallantry and courage at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty. The Medal of Honor is sometimes called the “Congressional Medal of Honor” because the president awards it on behalf of the Congress. It is awarded rarely, and then only to the bravest of the brave. The recipients’ valor must be well documented.

Air Force Cross

The Air Force Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor as an award for valor. The other military services have a similar award. It is awarded to members of the Air Force for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force or while serving with friendly forces against an opposing enemy force.

Silver Star

The Silver Star Medal is the nation’s third highest award designed solely for valor in combat. It is awarded to members of the military for distinguished gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States or while serving with friendly forces against an opposing enemy force.

Bronze Star

The Bronze Star Medal is awarded to any person in the military who distinguishes himself or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service. The service must not involve participation in aerial flight. It must occur while he or she is engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.
Another front in the war on terror is Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The US military and its coalition partners launched OIF on 19 March 2003. It began with an air and ground campaign that quickly became known as “Shock and Awe.” Within 22 days, coalition forces reached Baghdad. The coalition met some resistance. But the coalition forces mostly overwhelmed the Iraqis with air power, tanks, and troops.

The objective of OIF was to remove Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from power and to rid the country of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A weapon of mass destruction is a chemical, biological, or atomic weapon that can kill large numbers of people in one use.

US forces captured Hussein on 13 December 2003. After a long trial, the new Iraqi government executed him on 30 December 2006. Despite their success in capturing Hussein, however, US and coalition forces found no WMDs in Iraq.

Throughout OIF, insurgents, including members of Al-Qaeda, have poured into the country to fight US and allied forces. An insurgent is a rebel or guerrilla fighter.

US air power and ground troops are the main players in this ongoing mission. As of early 2007 British troops were stationed in southern Iraq. US Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors were operating in the rest of that country.

**US Aircraft in Iraq**

Among the aircraft the US Air Force has used in Iraq are stealth aircraft. Twelve F-117 fighters flew into Baghdad to hit command and control targets on 20 March 2003. This attack weakened Hussein’s ability to communicate with his military. US F-117 pilots flew 100 sorties.

As of June 2006, the B-2 stealth bomber had flown 49 sorties in OIF. It had dropped more than 1.5 million pounds of bombs. First employed in combat during Operation Allied Force (discussed later in this lesson) the B-2 bomber achieved “full operational capability” in December 2003.
Precision Weapons

Precision weapons have also played a large role in Iraq. About 70 percent of all weapons used in OIF have been of precision type. Two of the newer ones are the GBU-38 and GBU-39. GBU stands for “guided-bomb unit.”

The GBU-38 went into action for the first time in 2004, when it was used to bomb a terrorist meeting in central Iraq. F-16 fighters delivered those GBU-38s. Weighing 500 pounds, they are smaller than some other bombs. But the GBU-38’s size and accuracy allow the military to target a particular building without seriously damaging surrounding buildings. This precision approach puts civilians at less risk. The US military tries to avoid civilian deaths when fighting in crowded areas such as Baghdad.

The US Air Force used the GBU-39 in combat for the first time on 5 October 2006 in support of ground troops in Iraq. At 250 pounds, it is the smallest guided bomb the Air Force has. F-15Es employ this weapon, which can strike within six feet of a target from 60 miles away.
CMSgt Kevin Lynn:  
A Historic Impact on the Future of the Iraqi Army

Meritorious service can involve many types of action. For example, CMSgt Kevin Lynn helped establish the first military police academy in Iraq. He was deployed there from 28 February to 23 July 2004. Chief Lynn and fellow Air Force security forces members renovated a bombed-out former Republican Guard base in Taji, Iraq. They turned it into a new police academy. Lynn served as commandant of the school. Starting from scratch, they developed and taught a course for the academy in just nine days.

At the same time, he was also a battle-tested veteran. He and his team continued to train forces during the “April Offensive.” This consisted of 18 days of nonstop mortar and rocket attacks. Overall, Lynn survived 31 mortar and 34 rocket attacks that killed 10 soldiers and injured many others. He continually risked his personal safety to ensure mission success and guarantee his team’s safety. He provided security on numerous convoy missions and patrolled East Gate on Taji Military Training Base.

In all, Lynn and his team graduated more than 500 military policemen and 40 military police instructors. For his work, Lynn received the Bronze Star Medal on Dec. 14, 2004.

CMSgt Kevin Lynn and his team transformed a war-torn environment into a successful Military Police academy.

Courtesy of CMSgt Kevin Lynn
A1C Elizabeth Jacobson: An Extraordinary Commitment to Her Country

A1C Elizabeth Jacobson, 21, was providing convoy security 28 September 2005 near Camp Bucca, Iraq, when a roadside bomb struck the vehicle she was riding in.

The Riviera Beach, Fla., native was assigned to the 17th Security Forces Squadron at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. Airman Jacobson had been in the Air Force for two years and had been in Iraq for more than three months. She was the first female Airman killed in the line of duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“She was an outstanding Airman who embraced life and took on all the challenges and responsibilities with extraordinary commitment to her country, her comrades, and her family,” said Col. Scott Bethel, 17th Training Wing commander at Goodfellow.

“Her dedication to the U.S. Air Force and serving her country was evident in all aspects of who this young lady was,” he said.

Gen Richard Myers: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Born in 1942, Gen Richard Myers entered military service as a member of ROTC during his college days. In 2001 he became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs is the military advisory group to the president of the United States. Besides the chairman, the top-ranking officer from each branch of the military, including the Marine Corps, is in the group.

Myers helped shape the direction of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. He retired in September 2005. Two months later President George W. Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
The Role of Air Power in Various Other US Military Operations

The “Air Force has been at war continuously for over 15 years, since the opening rounds of Operation Desert Storm . . . ,” said Gen T. Michael Moseley, chief of staff of the Air Force, in a letter to US Airmen in March 2006.

In addition to the major military operations you’ve just read about, Airmen have flown other missions since 1991. Some were combat missions. Others were humanitarian. Some were both.

### US Global Interventions, 1990 Through 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Operation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desert Shield</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Storm</td>
<td>Iraq, Kuwait</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Comfort</td>
<td>Iraq, Turkey</td>
<td>1991–1996</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Watch</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1992–2003</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Hope</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
<td>1992–1993</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Relief</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1992–1993</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Promise</td>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1993–1994</td>
<td>humanitarian/military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deny Flight</td>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>1993–1995</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uphold Democracy</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>1994–1995</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberate Force</td>
<td>Bosnia</td>
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<td>Shining Hope</td>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraqi Freedom</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2003–</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operation Provide Comfort

Following the 1991 Gulf War, the United States launched Operation Provide Comfort. Its purpose was to protect the Kurds, an ethnic minority in northern Iraq, and to provide food for Kurdish refugees fleeing into Turkey. Iraq’s Saddam Hussein was fighting a rebellion the Kurds had launched against his government. He was also after Kurdish oil fields. Employing C-130s, the US Air Force delivered thousands of tons of relief supplies, including food, tents, and blankets to Kurdish camps. Operation Provide Comfort ended in 1996 and was replaced by Operation Northern Watch.

Operation Southern Watch

Starting in August 1992, the United States enforced a no-fly zone in Iraq. A no-fly zone is airspace enemy aircraft aren’t allowed to enter. This zone was in southern Iraq. Its purpose was to protect the Shiite Muslim population and Kuwait. Its name was Operation Southern Watch.

Iraqi pilots regularly shot at US aircraft. Sometimes they entered no-fly airspace. This operation ended just before OIF kicked off.

Operation Northern Watch

After US and UN troops subdued Iraqi forces operating against the Kurds, they still couldn’t go home. They had to make sure Hussein didn’t send his troops and aircraft into hostile action again. So the United Nations set up a second no-fly zone in the northern half of Iraq. This was done in part to protect the Kurds. The name of this mission was Operation Northern Watch.

A crew chief checks an F-15 as it prepares for flight on 16 March 2003 in Operation Southern Watch.

Courtesy of the US Air Force
Between 1997 and 2003, 1,400 US, British, and Turkish fliers served in the mission with 50 aircraft. The Iraqis shot at them daily, often using SAMs. The UN aircraft would occasionally strike back. The last US aircraft serving in the mission headed home on 17 March 2003. OIF began two days later.

**Operation Provide Hope**

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, it split into 15 countries. Food and medical supply shortages followed. Many of the new countries were not stable because for 70 years they had relied on a central Communist government in Moscow. The United States provided supplies through Operation Provide Hope. This humanitarian mission ran from February 1992 to May 1993.

US Airmen flew cargo planes like the C-5 Galaxy, the C-141 Starlifter, and the C-130 Hercules. They delivered 6,000 tons of food and medicines. NATO provided bases in Germany and Turkey. The mission was a success.

**C-5 Galaxy**

![C-5 Galaxy](image)
FIGURE 3.4

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia

Courtesy of Maps.com
The former Yugoslav republics each contain a mixture of ethnic groups. Serbs were the majority in Serbia, but made up significant minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro. Likewise, large numbers of Croats live in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia’s province of Kosovo contained a large majority of ethnic Albanians. This ethnic mixture made the breakup of Yugoslavia more difficult, because the Serb minorities in the breakaway republics and Kosovo wanted to live under Serbian rule, not that of other ethnic groups. The dictator of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, maintained his power partly by stirring up Serbs’ fears of what would happen if Yugoslavia broke up.

A Serb is a member of the Serb ethnic group. A Serbian is a resident of Serbia.
Operations Deny Flight and Deliberate Force

Combined with the Provide Promise effort, NATO opened Operation Deny Flight over Bosnia. It ran from April 1993 to December 1995. NATO forces created no-fly zones for Serbian aircraft.

US pilots in fighters such as the F-16 shot down Serbian aircraft that violated the no-fly zone. In retaliation, Serbs grabbed UN peacekeepers. So NATO launched a mission called Operation Deliberate Force. NATO forces used precision-guided weapons and aircraft to hit the Serbians hard. UN forces also began protecting the peacekeepers. The Serbians gave in toward the end of 1995.

Operations Allied Force and Shining Hope

Despite the end of the Bosnian war, Yugoslavia continued to be a center of conflict. In 1999 Milosevic directed Serbian forces to attack ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Kosovo is a province in southern Serbia.

Milosevic didn’t heed NATO’s warnings to stop his attacks. So NATO launched an air campaign called Operation Allied Force in March 1999. NATO air forces flew more than 38,000 sorties. The air campaign succeeded in forcing Milosevic to withdraw his forces from Kosovo after 78 days. No ground forces were involved.

The US Air Force marked two “firsts” in this effort. The B-2 stealth bomber engaged in combat for the first time. And the United States used its 2,000-pound GBU-31 precision weapon for the first time. In fact, the B-2 bombers dropped the GBU-31s. B-2s flew 30-hour round-trip missions from their base in Missouri. They caused 33 percent of the damage inflicted on the Serbs in the first eight weeks of Operation Allied Force.

Humanitarian airlifts were key to the success of this campaign. US airlifts, as part of Operation Shining Hope, kept Albanian refugees from starving while NATO crushed the Serbian attack on Kosovo.

Milosevic was indicted as a war criminal in 2000 and tried before a United Nations court. He was charged with crimes against humanity in Kosovo, violating the laws of war in Croatia and Bosnia, and genocide in Bosnia. He died in 2006 just before the end of his trial in the Netherlands.
Operations Provide Relief and Restore Hope

Somalia, an East African country, had a severe food shortage in 1992. Its people risked starvation. Beginning in August, the United States, along with other friendly countries, airlifted food through Operation Provide Relief. C-141s carried the goods to Kenya, another African nation. Smaller C-130s then flew the food into Somalia.

But there was a snag. Somali warlords often stole the food before it could reach the people. These warlords fired at US cargo planes. The United States shut down Operation Provide Relief in 1993. But it soon launched another mission, Operation Restore Hope.

FIGURE 3.5
Somalia and neighboring countries in Africa

Courtesy of Maps.com
Restore Hope had two goals. The first was to distribute food. The second was to go after the warlords and their gangs. Restore Hope ended in May 1993, when the United Nations took over the relief mission.

But in mid-1993 a warlord named Mohammed Farah Aidid directed his supporters to interfere with the aid mission. They ambushed and wiped out a Pakistani convoy. During the US effort to arrest some of his top lieutenants, the firefight in Mogadishu—which you read about at the beginning of this lesson—broke out.

In response, the United States started Operation Restore Hope II. It airlifted combat forces back into Mogadishu, and stationed AC-130s at bases in Kenya. But many Somalis supported Aidid. The United States abandoned the effort to arrest him and sought a political solution instead. US troops left Somalia in March 1994.
Operation Uphold Democracy

Haiti is a small country on a Caribbean island. In 1991 a military coup removed its elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, from office. A military coup is a sudden takeover of power by the military. The new leaders suppressed the Haitian people’s rights. Many Haitians fled to the United States in boats or anything that would float. They tried to enter the country illegally.

Despite diplomatic efforts, by 1994 no solution was in sight. The Haitian economy was weak. More and more Haitians were trying to make the dangerous, 700-mile sea voyage to US shores. The United States drew up a plan to return Aristide to power. It was called Operation Uphold Democracy. In September 60 C-130s packed with US paratroopers headed toward Haiti. When the Haitian military leaders found out that US forces were headed their way, they gave up power. US troops entered Haiti peacefully.

In 1995 the United Nations took over the mission. It put a US commander in charge of UN operations in Haiti.
Natural Disasters

Sometimes there’s no military coup to overcome; no no-fly zones to enforce; no war refugees to feed. Sometimes natural disasters are reason enough for the US Air Force to step in and help.

Here’s an example: when Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in 2005, the Air Force and the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) joined forces with other branches of the military and civilian agencies to help Americans affected by the storm. This was the first time CAP, the Air Force’s official volunteer auxiliary, and the active Air Force collaborated. Together, they conducted search-and-rescue missions. They delivered 30,000 tons of goods.

The Air Force has been involved in many such missions. For example, in 1991 the Air Force aided Bangladesh in southern Asia when it suffered serious flooding. When Hurricane Andrew hit south Florida in 1992, Airmen delivered 20,000 tons of food and supplies. In 1993 it delivered help to earthquake-damaged India.

Aviation has come a long way from that day on a wind-blown sand dune in North Carolina when Wilbur and Orville Wright first launched their frail flyer. Today it’s hard to imagine a world without flight. The US Air Force has grown from a tiny unit of the Army to an independent, equal military service. Rotary or fixed-winged aircraft are essential equipment for all branches of the military. On the civilian front, each day millions of ordinary people board commercial aircraft of all sizes and travel across the country and around the world.

But there’s another part of the story of flight—the development of rockets and humans’ entry into space. The next few lessons will tell that story, starting with the solar system and people’s struggle to understand it.

CAPSULES

“Air superiority is not the God-given right of Americans. It doesn’t just happen. It takes a lot of people working hard to produce the capabilities that provide it for US forces.”

GEN RONALD R. FOGLEMAN, USAF
Lesson 3 Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. Name three stealth aircraft used by the US Air Force.

2. What did US forces want to target first in Operation Desert Storm? Why?

3. What is a precision weapon? Name one such weapon used in Operation Enduring Freedom. Name one used in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

4. What is the goal of Operation Noble Eagle? What do participants in ONE do?

5. What is a no-fly zone?

6. What are two of the main cargo aircraft used to airlift food in missions like Operation Provide Hope?

7. What first-time event occurred after Hurricane Katrina struck?

Applying Your Learning

8. Reviewing the operations discussed in this lesson, do you think airpower alone can win a conflict? Or are ground troops always necessary as well?