

## INTRODUCTION

### Setting the Scene

When Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, it had the fourth largest army in the world and a vast array of modern equipment. Over the next few months, the United States would deploy tens of thousands of soldiers to counteract the Iraqi threat. These soldiers would find themselves operating in an immense, forbidding desert the combined size of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. The challenges of deploying and supporting these troops would be great. The United States had no longstanding coalition or host nation agreements in Saudi Arabia upon which to build a military presence, as it had in Korea and Europe.

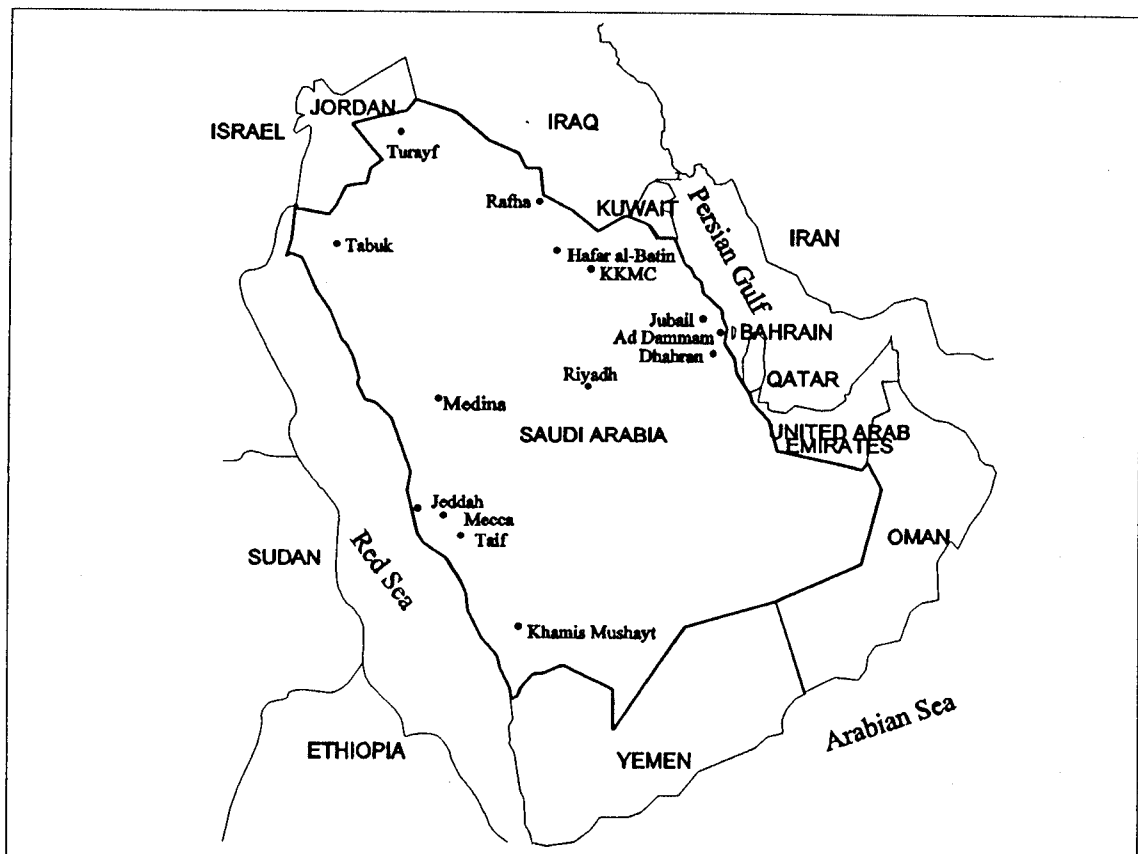
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida, was responsible for military operations in most of the Middle East and Africa—except for Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. CENTCOM, although designated a joint command, consisted of only a planning headquarters and had no forces assigned to it. It had to rely on forces supplied by other commands.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the 1980s, CENTCOM planners had concentrated on a scenario involving a Soviet invasion of Iran. By 1990, changes in Eastern Europe and the declining influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East made this occurrence less likely. The end of the long, mutually exhausting Iran–Iraq war that had weakened the Iranian military, Iraq’s growing ambitions, and the disparity between the forces of Iraq and its neighbors indicated a potential regional threat to U.S. interests.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the forceful, outspoken commander of CENTCOM, realized the Iraqis had replaced the Soviets as the major threat in the Persian Gulf and recognized that a regional conflict could threaten U.S. lives and interests.<sup>2</sup> In November 1989 Schwarzkopf directed his staff to revise its current operations plan for the region (OPLAN 1002–90) to reflect an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized CENTCOM to shift the focus to regional, non-Soviet threats to the oil supply in the Middle East. CENTCOM launched an effort to develop a plan to defend Saudi Arabia from a 22-division Iraqi threat and then take the offensive to recover any lost territory. Part of this process involved updating the list of forces to be deployed.

Revamping a war plan so extensively was a huge undertaking and often took years. Barring delays, CENTCOM planned to submit the final version to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April 1991, 22 months after beginning work on the plan.

In March 1990 CENTCOM began preparing for a major, joint-command computer exercise to test the assumptions of its draft operations plan for the Middle East. The exercise, INTERNAL LOOK 90, ran concurrently at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Hurlburt Field, Florida. It was based on six Iraqi heavy divisions invading Saudi Arabia. CENTCOM simulated sending U.S. forces to the Middle East to deter an Iraqi attack, defend critical port and oil facilities, and defeat the enemy forces. The scenario gave the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps from Fort Bragg enough time to deploy and establish a defense in eastern Saudi Arabia before the attack began.



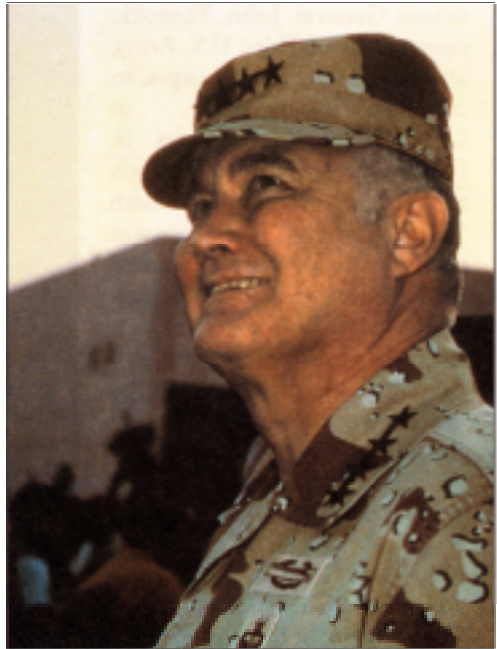
*Southwest Asia*

The exercise started at D+6 (day of ground attack plus 6), and by starting six days into the operation, CENTCOM planners assumed away potential logistics and engineer problems. Also the exercise scenario stayed close to the Persian Gulf coast where the infrastructure was fairly well developed, so planners did not have to worry about moving an entire corps across a desert. When U.S. troops actually arrived in Saudi Arabia later, however, they would quickly push out of Dhahran into the desert, with little infrastructure for housing or operations.

Completed in July, INTERNAL LOOK 90 validated the basic tenets of CENTCOM's operations plan. It illustrated that any intervening force in the

region would need considerable support from the Saudis. It also confirmed that the greatest risk came from the serious shortage of sealift capability. The exercise convinced General Schwarzkopf that he had to deploy ground combat units first if the events scripted in the exercise ever occurred.

As CENTCOM completed its exercise and began circulating its draft operations plan, events in the Middle East began to mirror the **INTERNAL LOOK** 90 scenario. On 18 July 1990, Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, accused Kuwait of driving down the price of crude oil and reasserted Iraq's claim to oil in a disputed border area controlled by Kuwait. The discussions between the two nations to resolve the matter quickly failed. Meanwhile, General Schwarzkopf and his staff began preparing a response to a possible Iraqi invasion. On 31 July and 1 August, he presented deployment options to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, the President, and the National Security Council.



*General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander, U.S. Central Command. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSGT Wagner)*

At 2:00 A.M. on 2 August 1990, three divisions from Iraq's elite Republican Guard (140,000 Iraq soldiers) pushed across the Kuwait border. Within hours they had taken control of Kuwait City and driven the royal family into exile in Saudi Arabia. Kuwait's ambassador to the United States asked for military assistance. General Schwarzkopf met with Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, his key advisors, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff later that morning. He laid out two options for using U.S. military force to respond to the Iraqi threat: launch retaliatory air strikes against Iraq or deploy air and ground forces according to OI'LAN 1002-90. The same day, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution #660, which condemned Iraq's actions and demanded the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

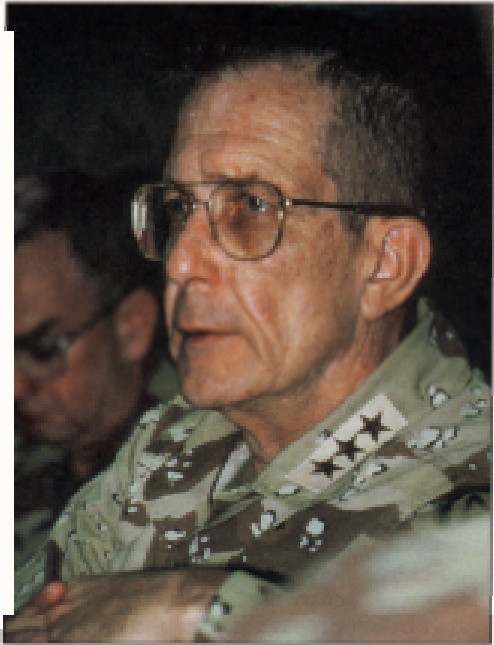
During a 4 August meeting at Camp David, Schwarzkopf presented President George Bush with CENTCOM's plan to deploy a force to defend Saudi Arabia against encroachment. Bush decided that if invited, the United

States would deploy **enough** troops to deter further Iraqi attack. Meanwhile, General Schwarzkopf directed Lieutenant General John Yeosock, commander of Third U.S. Army, at Fort McPherson, Georgia, to come immediately to CENTCOM headquarters in Florida. Before he left, Yeosock told Major General William “Gus” Pagonis [Pagonis was promoted to Lieutenant General on 12 February **1991**], deputy chief of staff for logistics at U.S. Army Forces Command, to prepare a logistics plan that he could present to Saudi Arabia’s King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz.<sup>3</sup>

On 5 August Cheney, Schwarzkopf, Yeosock, Deputy National Security Advisor Robert M. Gates, and other top administration officials flew to Saudi Arabia, at the direction of President Bush, to confer with King Fahd and to negotiate the deployment of U.S. troops. By that time, 11 Iraqi divisions were either in or on their way to Kuwait. At the 6 August meeting, Cheney made King Fahd three promises: the United States would deploy a force large enough to get the job done, stay as long as necessary, and leave when requested to do so. At the end of the meeting, the king formally invited the United States to send troops to reinforce his defenses.

When he returned to Washington the next day, Secretary Cheney informed the President that King Fahd had agreed to let the United States send forces to defend Saudi Arabia. In a nationally televised address on 8 August, President Bush condemned Iraqi aggression and announced the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in what was designated Operation **DESERT SHIELD**. The United States, he explained, demanded Iraq’s “immediate and unconditional” withdrawal from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait’s legitimate government, release of all hostages and free functioning of all embassies, and “the stability and security” of the Persian Gulf.<sup>4</sup>

CENTCOM’s missions were clear: deter further Iraqi aggression, defend Saudi Arabia, enforce United Nations’ sanctions, and develop an offensive capability to liberate Kuwait. The plan for the defense of the Arabian peninsula



*Lieutenant General John Yeosock, Commander, Army Central Command. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Ybanez)*

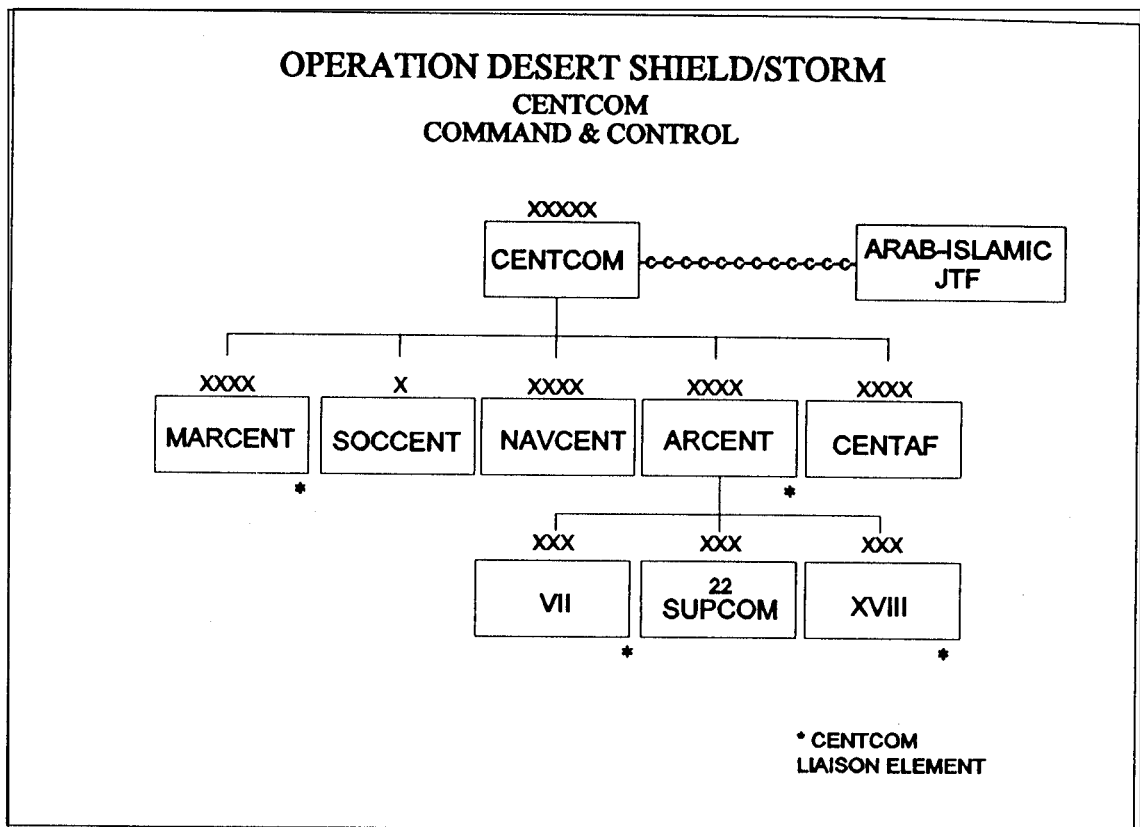
was incomplete and had not yet been reviewed or approved by the services or the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since the plan had not been finalized, planners had not developed a comprehensive force list. It took time to identify all the requirements and match those requirements with specific units. Although INTERNAL LOOK 90 provided the framework, CENTCOM had to make ad hoc decisions about the details.

U.S. forces became part of an international coalition that had been quickly crafted to combat Iraqi aggression. Coalition members committed ground forces on 8 August. Of the nearly 50 countries—including Arab and Islamic nations such as Egypt and Syria—who would join this coalition, 38 would deploy air, sea, or ground forces. Together, coalition members would commit more than 200,000 troops, 60 warships, 750 aircraft, and 1,200 tanks. In addition, coalition members would contribute billions of dollars in assistance-in-kind and cash.

Never had the American military projected such a large force so far so fast. In the first six weeks of Operation DESERT SHIELD, the United States moved by air the equivalent of the entire Berlin airlift, an operation that had taken 65 weeks. The U.S. military built a massive logistics structure that stretched more than 8,700 miles. The operation was equivalent to moving Richmond, Virginia, and Des Moines, Iowa, more than 8,000 miles and setting them up in the desert.

The commander of Forces Command, General Edwin H. Burba, Jr., observed that it was “the greatest mobilization and the greatest deployment, given the time constraints we were under, that ever occurred in the history of the world.” The Army deployed 295,800 personnel in six months (compared to 45,800 in six months during the Korean War and 168,400 in six months of 1965 during the Vietnam War). The United States ultimately deployed more than 500,000 men and women, with their equipment and supplies, from the United States and overseas locations.<sup>5</sup>

In Saudi Arabia the primary sea ports of debarkation were Dammam and Jubail, and primary aerial ports of debarkation were Dhahran, Riyadh, and King Khalid Military City. Saudi Arabia was well developed. Soaring oil revenues in the 1970s had enabled the country to invest heavily in public works. Dammam had one of the best ports in the world. Dammam and Jubail had modern facilities with immense capacities and staging areas. The airports, particularly the Dhahran Airport, were large and modern. Huge public housing projects—designed originally for a growing population of foreign workers and citizens migrating to the cities—stood largely unoccupied, so the Army had a potential source of troop housing near the ports of entry.



Although the Saudis had modern seaports, airports, and some modern roadways to receive deploying forces, no logistical infrastructure was in place to feed, shelter, and supply such a large force. Moreover, at the time of the invasion, the United States had no formal status of forces agreement with Saudi Arabia that provided for host nation support or authorized the use of its installations by U.S. forces.

When the invasion occurred, the United States had no forces deployed in the Middle East, except a few ships and a small administrative support unit in Manama, Bahrain, that managed ships entering and exiting the port. Yet the U.S. Air Force had spent more than \$300 million to build warehouses in the Middle East to store equipment needed to sustain a force. The Army had no similar pre-positioning program in the theater, which meant it would have to bring everything it needed from the United States. The Marines had three naval transport squadrons with enough pre-positioned equipment and supplies to support the Marine expeditionary force for 30 days.<sup>6</sup>

The operations plan gave the United States a head start in preparing its defense of Saudi Arabia, but the Iraqis had the lead. Schwarzkopf's solution was to create the impression that the country was well defended until he could bring in heavy reinforcements. He ordered that deploying combat forces be given precedence over shipping ammunition, spare parts, and other items. Because of

this requirement, in the first weeks CENTCOM's force was incapable of moving very far or shooting for very long. Not until 24 September when the first heavy armored division was positioned in the desert was Schwarzkopf confident that he could repulse an Iraqi attack.'

General Yeosock's perspective was similar. He wanted to deploy a force that could, if necessary, start fighting as soon as it arrived. Since air transportation and host nation support were limited, he decided to deploy aviation units, air defense systems, and antiarmor weapons first, followed by heavy forces including combat engineer units.

Using this guidance, Army planners shaped the initial troop list. The rapidly deployable XVIII Airborne Corps and 82d Airborne Division were obvious first choices. To provide mobility and tank-killing capability, planners included the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. To provide heavy armored capability, they added the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Stewart, Georgia, and the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas.

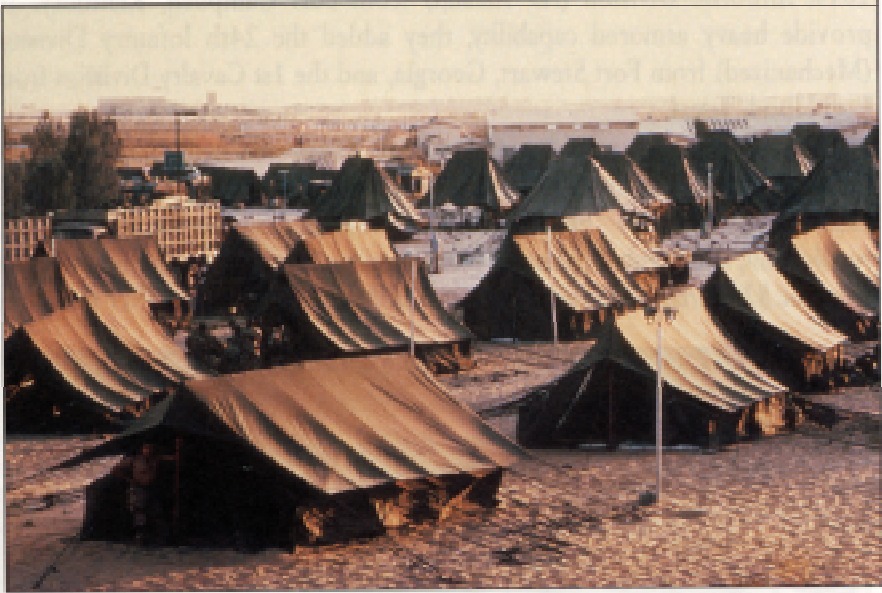
General Yeosock would command ARCENT—the Army component of CENTCOM. After arriving in Saudi Arabia on 6 August, he and his small staff established ARCENT headquarters in Riyadh to oversee the arrival, sustainment, and combat planning for deploying Army units. The first soldiers from the 82d Airborne Division deployed on 8 August, 31 hours after the initial



*Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney talks with soldiers of the 24th Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, Georgia.*  
*(Photo by Jonas Jordan, USACE, Savannah District)*

alert order. When they arrived in Dhahran, they had no logistics structure to support them, no shelter in the 120-degree heat, and no sanitation facilities.

Meanwhile, a Marine naval transport squadron was already en route to Saudi Arabia, as were F-15 planes from the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing. Some heavier ground forces were airlifted while their tanks and other equipment came by sea. These units included the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), the 1st Cavalry Division, and the 2d Armored Division. In the first seven days, an entire brigade--4,575 paratroopers and their equipment--arrived in Saudi Arabia ready to fight. By 24 August, more than 12,000 soldiers from the XVIII Airborne Corps were in the country. Shipment of material continued throughout August and September from five Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico ports.<sup>8</sup>



*Tent city of the 82d Airborne Division.*

Third U.S. Army had developed a list of the Army units needed, based on the INTERNAL LOOK 90 scenario, but the Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia was so urgent that combat forces had to be on the ground before the Army could develop an adequate support base. The Army had to deploy many combat units quickly with only the most essential support units. To ensure that the greatest amount of combat power was available the CENTCOM commander accelerated the deployment of combat forces and delayed the deployment of theater logistics forces. Thus, the first units had to rely on their organic supplies and equipment or on host nation support.



Army planners initially believed that the support command from the XVIII Airborne Corps could provide enough support, but the command was quickly overwhelmed. General Yeosock established a provisional theater support command headquarters in Dhahran-known as ARCENT (Forward)-to manage all theater logistics.

When Pagonis arrived on 8 August, he brought with him four talented logisticians-Colonels Stephen Koons, John Tier, and Robert Klineman, and Lieutenant Colonel James Ireland. This small, energetic group immediately began implementing a plan they had drafted on the flight over and became the nucleus of all logistics support for Army troops arriving in country. The rest of the 22-person team that Pagonis had selected at Fort McPherson arrived a few days later. He would grab additional personnel whenever he could. On 16 August, Yeosock appointed Pagonis as ARCENT's deputy commander for logistics. Three days later ARCENT (Forward) was formally designated as the provisional ARCENT Support Command (SUPCOM) with Pagonis as its commanding general.<sup>9</sup>

Pagonis' huge task was to receive, sustain, and house the XVIII Airborne Corps. He found soldiers sleeping in the sand and on handball and tennis courts in Dammam. Hundreds slept on the ground behind quarters occupied by the U.S. Military Training Mission. Between 10 and 25 August, Pagonis and his



*Soldiers of the 24th Infantry Division set up temporary quarters in this warehouse after arriving in Saudi Arabia.* (U.S. Army photo by Gil High, Soldiers Magazine)

small staff received 40,000 soldiers. The rapid influx of combat forces meant that a U.S. logistics command would have to coordinate the reception of troops while supporting incoming units and building logistics bases farther inland.

The need for engineers to support the logistics effort was also clear. When the Forces Command engineer, Colonel Julian E. "Emory" Pylant, discovered that General Pagonis was deploying without a staff engineer, he saw the need to get someone in the theater to highlight engineer issues. At the suggestion of Lieutenant General Henry J. Hatch, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and at the urging of Colonel Pylant, Pagonis agreed to add a Corps officer, Lieutenant Colonel James Walter, to his staff to do engineer planning.<sup>10</sup>

As the designated Department of Defense's contract construction agent for the Kuwait theater of operations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would help fill the void in engineering capability and provide critical design, construction, contracting, and real estate support for the U. S. forces.