
Chapter 6

RESTORING CALM AFTER THE STORM

First Lieutenant Craig Borchelt's scout platoon, having led his battalion, the 3-37th Armor, through the ground war, now had orders to secure Safwan for the cease-fire talks between General Schwarzkopf and the defeated Iraqis. As Borchelt drove into the town, his senses, sharpened and on edge after five days of combat, were almost overwhelmed by the surreal and foreboding scene that greeted him. The town's silence was a dramatic counterpoint to the recent violence evidenced by devastated buildings and the deathly company of corpses strewn among destroyed T-62 tanks and MTLB armored personnel carriers. The only signs of life were occasional wild dogs and ravenous farm animals attacking garbage, bodies, and abandoned food rotting on the cluttered roads. Curiously bright metal objects, some cylindrical and others shaped like silver softballs, beckoned to the unwary. Each was an unexploded but fully fused bomblet requiring only a careless touch to add more carnage to the macabre scene.

Borchelt and his scouts, picking their way cautiously through the deadly obstacles, emerged on the northwestern edge of the town. Across a mile-wide expanse of onion and tomato fields, they could make out the familiar shape of Republican Guard T-72 tanks poised with main gun tubes pointed toward Safwan. Through binoculars, Borchelt could see Iraqi crewmen clad in undershirts leisurely smoking and pointing indifferently at the unexpected sight of American armor emerging from the outskirts of town.

Borchelt's contemplation of the bizarre standoff was suddenly interrupted when his radio operator reported that the mortar platoon had located a lone remaining family consisting of a woman and her four nephews and nieces. As the news was reported, Borchelt's somber mood

changed; out of this wasteland, a sign of hope still existed. From the hardened warrior emerged a powerful instinct to preserve life.

The repulsion of war often transforms instincts from killing to compassion. Soldiers, who just hours before had destroyed a half-dozen Iraqi tanks in close combat, "adopted" the frightened Iraqi family. The woman explained that the children's mother had been brutally beaten, raped, and killed because the father, who was eventually murdered, had refused to join the Iraqi army. Iraqi soldiers had also beaten the aunt so badly that she suffered multiple contusions and a badly fractured arm. Captain Craig Simons, the battalion surgeon, set the woman's broken arm and treated the children while the battalion executive officer, Major Thomas Connors, and the mortar crewmen scrounged food, water, and clothing from on-board supplies.

Word of humanity in the midst of war spreads quickly. These simple humanitarian acts soon began to multiply as townspeople reappeared, first in ones and twos, and later by the thousands, all seeking help from these least expected benefactors. Such scenes were to be repeated in the days ahead as the Iraqi regime's war against the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south forced the US Army into humanitarian operations for which it was ill-prepared yet quite willing to perform. Meanwhile, just 7 kilometers northwest of Borchelt's scout platoon, VII Corps units worked feverishly to set up the airfield for the forthcoming peace talks.

CEASE-FIRE TALKS AT SAFWAN

Just before 1100 on March 3, Schwarzkopf landed at Safwan airfield in a flight of three Blackhawks escorted by six Apaches. Schwarzkopf jumped from the Blackhawk with General Franks in trail, and as they strode briskly to the tents set up for the cease-fire talks on the northeast edge of the airstrip, they passed a big sign that said, "Welcome to Iraq, Courtesy of the Big Red One." General Rhame's division had set up the negotiation site with an array of Apaches, Abrams, and Bradleys to represent the might of the Coalition. Cameramen ran to catch up with the fast-paced CINC as he pushed his way through the crowd of soldiers and civilians lining his path. Multicolored flags, a wide variety of uniforms, and civilians in Arab garb lent something of a carnival air to the bright Sunday morning. Two Apaches hovered overhead as the Iraqi delegation, riding in American vehicles flying white flags emblazoned with the Moslem red crescent, inched toward the tent.

Negotiations began across a wooden table with Schwarzkopf and Coalition officials on one side and the Iraqi contingent sitting uncomfortably on the other. After a perfunctory hour, the Iraqis emerged smartly



General Schwarzkopf confronted Iraqi representatives with Coalition cease-fire demands.

and departed more quickly than they had arrived. Schwarzkopf then took up a position on the strip where he could address the crowd. Raising his booming voice over their murmurs, Schwarzkopf announced that the Iraqis had accepted all of the cease-fire terms and that Coalition prisoners would be repatriated in the next several days. After praising Coalition soldiers for their decisive victory, he fielded a couple of questions, but the excitement of the moment drowned out most of his responses.¹

The war was technically over. No further fighting would occur within the boundaries of Coalition-held territory behind the newly established line of military demarkation. However, until the details of the UN armistice were resolved, Coalition forces would remain in Iraq and Kuwait to protect and defend against any further Iraqi aggression. As Schwarzkopf's flight took off to return to the Kuwait City Airport, the hard work of keeping the victims of war alive continued.

Wars never end cleanly and this one was no exception. The cease-fire occurred more quickly than anyone had expected. The postwar process that had existed only in concept was now imminent. Literally overnight the Army found itself flexing an entirely different set of operational muscles. Staffs still exhausted from 100 hours of combat were suddenly inundated with the details of enforcing the cease-fire provisions. Combat soldiers from forward divisions formed demolition and search teams to find and destroy hundreds of thousands of tons of Iraqi ammunition, abandoned vehicles, and pieces of equipment scattered across thousands of square miles of desert. Even before Schwarzkopf and the Iraqi

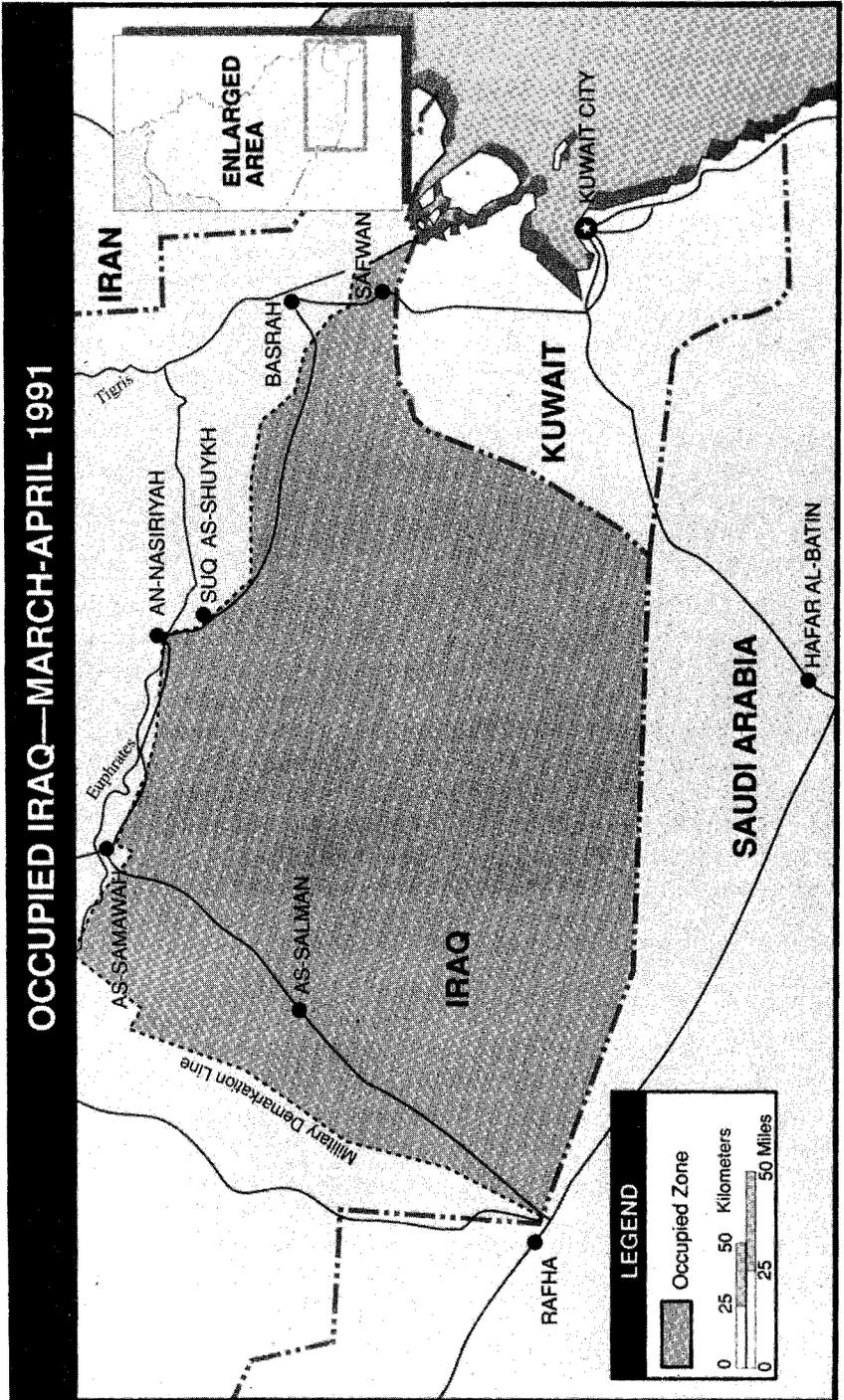
delegation had finished at Safwan on March 3, troops had begun "smelling the barn," while the media, politicians, and loved ones in the United States picked up the drumbeat to return their soldiers home. Conditions at Saudi ports and airfields complicated the situation. While some units were still unloading in Dhahran, many others were unsure if they even had a redeployment destination. VII Corps units were variously told they would disband, return to Germany, or transship as a complete unit back to the United States. The same dilemma applied to equipment. No one was sure at the time what would remain in theater or what would be processed for return. International events further confused the situation when a full-scale rebellion in Iraq and Saddam's subsequent brutal repression of the Kurds and Shiites caused a mad scramble to improvise assistance programs to address the terrible circumstances.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Humanitarian assistance is not a new mission for the Army, nor is it confined to wartime. During World War II and in Korea and Vietnam, soldiers provided humanitarian aid to those in need, often at considerable personal sacrifice. In the mid-seventies, the Army played a major role in the reception and resettlement of thousands of Vietnamese boat people. During the early eighties, the Army helped to resettle Cuban refugees. Later in that decade, soldiers provided such diverse humanitarian assistance as firefighting in the national forests of the American northwest and disaster relief in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, and in Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew, and Iniki.

Civil affairs (CA) units, both Active and Reserve, are composed of soldiers who possess the skills necessary to organize humanitarian assistance operations. They assist military commanders in establishing temporary military government, including administration and assistance in restoring the basics essential for survival in occupied or conquered territories. This rather unique specialty started formally during the World War II occupations of Germany and Japan. By the early sixties, most civil affairs units were assigned to the Army Reserve because most of the skills needed by civil affairs units, such as public education, utilities engineering, and city management, are more closely related to civilian than military professions.² This fortuitous fit between military needs and civilian means has produced part-time CA soldiers who are also full-time school principals, fire chiefs, waste management engineers, foreign service officers, lawyers, and police officers.

The only Active CA battalion, the 96th from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, arrived in theater between August and November 1990. Lieutenant Colonel Ted Sahlin, its commander, organized his soldiers into CA teams of about five soldiers each. These soldiers put their valuable



cultural skills to work by assisting the Saudis with host-nation support, tactical reconnaissance, and liaison between Arab and US headquarters.³

As ARCENT planning transitioned to the offensive, the civil-military needs, and subsequently the civil affairs troop list, changed dramatically. The liberation of Kuwait under the best of circumstances would require substantial recovery assistance for an undetermined period. Even if Coalition forces planned to attack through sparsely populated areas, dislocated civilians were sure to be in the battle area. Therefore in early December, Colonel James Kerr, Jr., the ARCENT civil-military operations officer, asked for a full slate of civil affairs units for ARCENT forces. He requested that the first CA units to deploy be those with a Southwest Asia regional focus.⁴ Mobilization of Reserve civil affairs units continued into January, but because much of their equipment arrived late, many did not join their assigned tactical units until just before G-Day. Considering the fact that the 352d Civil Affairs Command, ARCENT's CA headquarters, would not fully close in theater until January 24, Yeosock made the decision to decentralize most civil-military operations down to corps level or below.

Soon after hostilities ended, Shiites in unoccupied southern Iraq revolted to depose Saddam's Baathist supporters. North of Baghdad, the Kurds reignited their centuries-old struggle against the Baghdad government. After some initial setbacks, Saddam's forces regrouped and began a brutal program to repress both revolts. In full view just across the military demarcation line, American forces watched helplessly as Republican Guard soldiers killed thousands of their countrymen. In northern Iraq, the Kurds fled north to seek refuge from the marauding Iraqis in the mountains of eastern Turkey and western Iran. In the south, refugees fled to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, toward the Americans.

SOUTHERN IRAQ

Refugees fleeing an-Nasiriyah, near the military demarcation line in the Euphrates River Valley, began a steady migration toward the sanctuary of the 82d Airborne Division in the XVIII Airborne Corps area of operations. They had heard that in addition to food, water, and medical treatment, the Americans would provide protection from Iraqi reprisal. The refugees settled at an abandoned Polish construction camp near Suq as-Shuykh, about 35 kilometers southeast of an-Nasiriyah. Soldiers named the settlement Camp Mercy. Depending on the intensity of the fighting north of the military demarcation line, Camp Mercy's population ranged from as few as 200 to as many as 6,000. In wide-eyed horror, the refugees recounted Saddam's atrocities against his own people. Stories emerged of mass executions, of family members dragged through the streets lashed behind tanks, and of patients and doctors murdered in hospitals.⁵ From February 28 until March 24 when the 82d departed

Iraq, doctors and medics treated more than 1,100 refugees for maladies ranging from minor illnesses to gunshot wounds. Airborne soldiers distributed more than 35,000 meals. Army trucks and helicopters returned several hundred dislocated Kuwaitis to the border near Safwan and transported non-Kuwaiti and non-Iraqi refugees to a camp established by the Saudis in Iraq, just across the Saudi border near the town of Rafha. Although they encouraged the refugees to return to their homes in Iraq, the paratroopers' kindness and aid continued to attract many thousands to the American sanctuary.⁶

In VII Corps the story was similar. At Safwan, the family that the 3-37th's mortar platoon had adopted was quickly joined by refugees who began to trickle in on March 3. Safwan was the first safe town refugees encountered as they fled from the horrors of the fighting in Basrah, 45 kilometers to the north. As the Republican Guard became more brutal, the refugee problem became more acute. At first his superiors could not provide Lieutenant Colonel David Gross, the battalion commander, much help. He had not received orders to establish a permanent refugee center, so he had to improve the efficiency of his temporary sites with the few soldiers he could spare.

Many of the refugees were residents of Safwan and its surrounding area, but some were former residents, though not necessarily citizens, of Kuwait. In addition, numbers of Egyptians, Pakistanis, and Palestinians had been trapped in Iraq since August and wanted out. Kuwaitis manning border checkpoints south of Safwan would not allow non-Kuwaitis to flee Iraq to the relative sanctuary of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Thus, thousands of refugees who had lived in Kuwait before the war were trapped in the Safwan limbo. Among the saddest cases were the Kuwaiti dissidents who, after escaping the horrors of Basrah prison, walked barefoot from Basrah to Safwan. For six months, they had subsisted on one bowl of rice and a cup of water per day. Malnourished, dehydrated, and sick, they arrived in Safwan to recount horrific stories of torture and cruelty. Some of their friends and families had been hanged from electric wires thrown over utility poles. Others had been beaten, starved, or tortured with electric shocks for not cooperating with their Iraqi captors.

The task of providing even basic necessities soon began to overwhelm the battalion. Realizing the enormity of the growing problem, Gross instructed Doctor Simons to move his battalion aid station forward to Safwan. He also requested and received additional food and water from his forward support battalion. At that point, ARCENT's Mobile Command Post was located in Kuwait City under the command of Brigadier General Robert Frix who dispatched his G5, Lieutenant Colonel Don Saffold, to Safwan to assess the situation. Clearly, the refugees' most pressing need was for food and water, and Frix directed Saffold to purchase a large quantity of basic foodstuffs and bottled water and push it

forward to the hastily established camps. Prior to receiving civil affairs support, Gross had to exploit talent where he found it. He used Captain Ernest Marcone, one of his operations officers who had prior experience in Special Forces, to assess, screen, and organize the refugees into manageable groups of about 20 to 30 each at two sites established by the scout and mortar platoons. Whenever possible, Marcone arranged the groups around a single extended family or nationality. One of his primary tasks was to teach these city dwellers how to maintain basic outdoor sanitation.⁷

As the Safwan population grew, the number of injuries caused by unexploded ordnance rose alarmingly. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi mines remained buried throughout the area, many in unmarked minefields. Time after time, unsuspecting children who wandered in the fields to play stepped on the small, hard-to-detect plastic antipersonnel mines. Equally threatening were the artillery- and air-delivered bomblets that had landed in soft sand at odd angles and had failed to detonate. Highly unstable, these enticingly shiny and palm-sized bomblet munitions attracted curiosity. A child needed only to touch a bomblet for it to explode. The terrible sight of dead and maimed children was devastating to the soldiers. They distributed flyers warning residents of the danger and instructing them to report the locations to Coalition linguists at the food or medical sites. Explosive ordnance disposal soldiers and engineers then located and destroyed as many of the mines and bomblets as they could.

Despite their best efforts, the soldiers in Safwan could not eliminate the problem. On March 19, four Iraqi children were the victims of yet another detonated cluster bomb. A nearby ground surveillance radar team from the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion hastily mounted their M113 armored personnel carrier and tore through the bomb-cluttered streets to aid the children. Although two of the children had died almost immediately, it looked as if the other two could be saved. The radar team, consisting of Sergeant Lynn Wey, Specialist Richard Trevino, and Private First Class Paul Harmon, concentrated their combat lifesaving skills on those two. Despite their efforts, another died. But once stabilized, the surviving child was treated by Doctor Simons and evacuated to an American hospital in Saudi Arabia.⁸ Nor were Iraqi civilians the only casualties of the mines and unexploded ordnance. On March 2, Major Mark Connelly, an Army doctor, was killed when he stepped on a land mine.

The number of refugees at Safwan continued to grow. In March more than 3,000 dislocated civilians crowded into Safwan and more were on the way. ARCENT quickly directed the establishment of a more permanent camp nearby.⁹ On March 19, the 1st Brigade, 3d Armored Division, commanded by Colonel William Nash, replaced the "Big Red One" in the Safwan area and assumed the mission of humanitarian relief, this time

with more authority and resources. Nash divided his humanitarian assistance operation into three phases: initial relief, sustainment and program enhancement, and site closure once the last refugees were taken to Saudi Arabia. Nash's soldiers focused on distributing food and water, providing emergency medical care, and getting organized for the rest of the mission. Lieutenant Colonel John Kalb, who commanded 4-32d Armor, secured a site inside the town for a second medical facility. The 404th Civil Affairs Company, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Brier, an insurance executive in civilian life, organized a bulk-food distribution site in a nearby school and enlisted the help of town leaders in Safwan to induce the locals to assist in the distribution effort. Additional military police, doctors, and interpreters augmented the brigade.¹⁰

Refugees quickly overwhelmed Safwan's original refugee sites and by late March the armor battalion had to establish another. They located it south of the town at an abandoned Indian construction camp compound about a kilometer north of the Kuwait-Iraq border. As Kalb's battalion led the way, Brier's soldiers assisted in running the site since none of the regular soldiers had any experience in such work. As additional refugees flooded the new site, soldiers searched and registered them and provided food, water, tents, blankets, shoes, and clothing. Camp organization was a continuous problem because many refugees were unwilling or unable to help themselves. Local elders, assisted by civil affairs soldiers, established eight subvillages within the site, each of which contained groups of refugees of similar status. All single males lived in one subvillage and widows without families in another. Most subvillages were occupied by groups of extended families. Life support consisted of a medical aid station and water and food distribution points. A trash pit and slit-trench latrines completed the site. Soldiers from the 22d Chemical Company and the 12th Engineer Battalion combined efforts to repair a pump, which eventually allowed more than 20,000 gallons of water to be pumped into storage tanks at Safwan. Military police and Kalb's soldiers patrolled the area to keep law and order among potential troublemakers. Although conditions were not what anyone desired, the refugees were grateful for the Americans' care. Chief Warrant Officer Ben Beouei, an Arabic-speaking physician's assistant with the 122d Main Support Battalion of the 3d Armored Division, told of his astonishment when an Iraqi woman knelt down and kissed his foot after he treated her seriously ill baby. He recalled later that as each patient left his makeshift facility: "They all said thank you and thank God for the Americans."¹¹

The growing refugee problem at Safwan was being repeated elsewhere in occupied Iraq. The population of as-Salman, the largest village in west-central Iraq, numbered about 4,000 during better times. Its water well and its position astride a major paved north-south highway allowed the village to prosper. On G-Day, B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion,

arrived on the trail of the French 6th Light Armored Division and found the town virtually empty. The townspeople began to trickle back after the cease-fire, but many key citizens whose services were essential to restore the town to normal operation, such as doctors and engineers, did not return right away. Therefore, Major Jack Knox, commander of B Company, became "mayor" of as-Salman. One of his CA soldiers, Captain Joseph Lindland, got the as-Salman water system working. By no means an expert, Lindland traveled more than 100 kilometers to Rafha to learn from the waterworks supervisor how water pumps and generators worked. When as-Salman's non-Iraqi itinerant workers returned to their jobs, trash collection and street cleaning resumed. By mid-March the town, under the leadership of its American mayor, was running as well as could be expected.¹²

On March 23, VII Corps assumed the occupation mission for all of southern Iraq. The 11th Aviation Brigade picked up the French 1st Combat Helicopter Regiment and relieved the French 6th Light Armored Division on the western flank. The 11th's civil affairs team, led by Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel John Meyers, took charge of the as-Salman humanitarian effort. Just as Safwan provided a funnel for refugees in the east, as-Salman and Rafha provided a conduit in the western area of the occupation zone. Meyers and his civil affairs team organized a program to deliver food, water, and medical treatment each day to a series of temporary checkpoints spread along 200 kilometers of the north-south highway between the Saudi border and the military demarcation line at the Euphrates River in the north. The checkpoints moved often to keep up with the shifting flow of refugees. Meyers borrowed a brigade helicopter to overfly the highway daily to count refugees and to coordinate delivery of supplies.¹³

The as-Salman endeavor, born of necessity, was never intended to be a permanent solution. CENTCOM knew that sooner or later the Saudi government would have to shoulder more responsibility as VII Corps soldiers began to leave. By the end of March the Saudis had established a large, semipermanent refugee holding facility, known as Rafha I, just inside the Iraqi border. Before the end of March, Rafha I contained more than 17,000 refugees. All were non-Saudis denied entry into Saudi Arabia. The funnel of refugees was controlled by a government wrestling with itself to establish a mechanism to accept more foreigners where no mechanism had previously existed.

The permanent cease-fire agreement with Iraq called for Coalition forces to depart Iraq by the end of April and for the United Nations to assume responsibility for occupied Iraq. However, before Coalition forces could withdraw, thousands of dislocated civilians in Safwan, as-Salman, and Rafha I had to be moved out of Iraq to protect them from Iraqi retribution. After General Yeosock's personal intervention, the Saudi



"Help on Wheels," HQ 2d Armored Division (Forward), Rafha, Saudi Arabia, April 1991.

government agreed to build and operate a permanent refugee camp just inside Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ It was not indifference to the plight of their fellow man that motivated the Saudis, but rather their desire to avoid the creation of a "Gaza Strip" inside their border. Construction of the permanent camp would require about six months, but by then American soldiers would be gone. To get the refugees out of Iraq sooner, Brigadier General Gene Blackwell's 2d Armored Division (Forward) built a temporary camp, Rafha II, just inside Saudi Arabia adjacent to the proposed site of the permanent Saudi refugee camp.

Rafha II was a large facility, about 1 by 1.5 kilometers, surrounded by a concertina barbed wire fence and capable of accommodating 30,000 refugees. Engineers placed 13 rubberized 3,000-gallon fabric tanks known as SMFTs (semitrailer-mounted fabric tanks) on top of sand berms around the perimeter of the camp. Gravity-fed water flowed from the SMFTs to faucets and shower facilities inside. A perimeter road ringed the camp and another bisected it. On each side of the bisecting road, refugees were grouped by family and organized into subcamps known as "counties." Each county had its own water, showers, and latrines.

The Saudis insisted that dislocated civilians be registered and resettled in Rafha II before they would assume responsibility for camp operations. The International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees were among the nongovernmental organizations ready to assist the Saudi government in camp administration. Dislocated civilians began arriving at Rafha II almost immediately upon its completion. Some drove cars, but most traveled by military and civilian trucks and buses. American military police



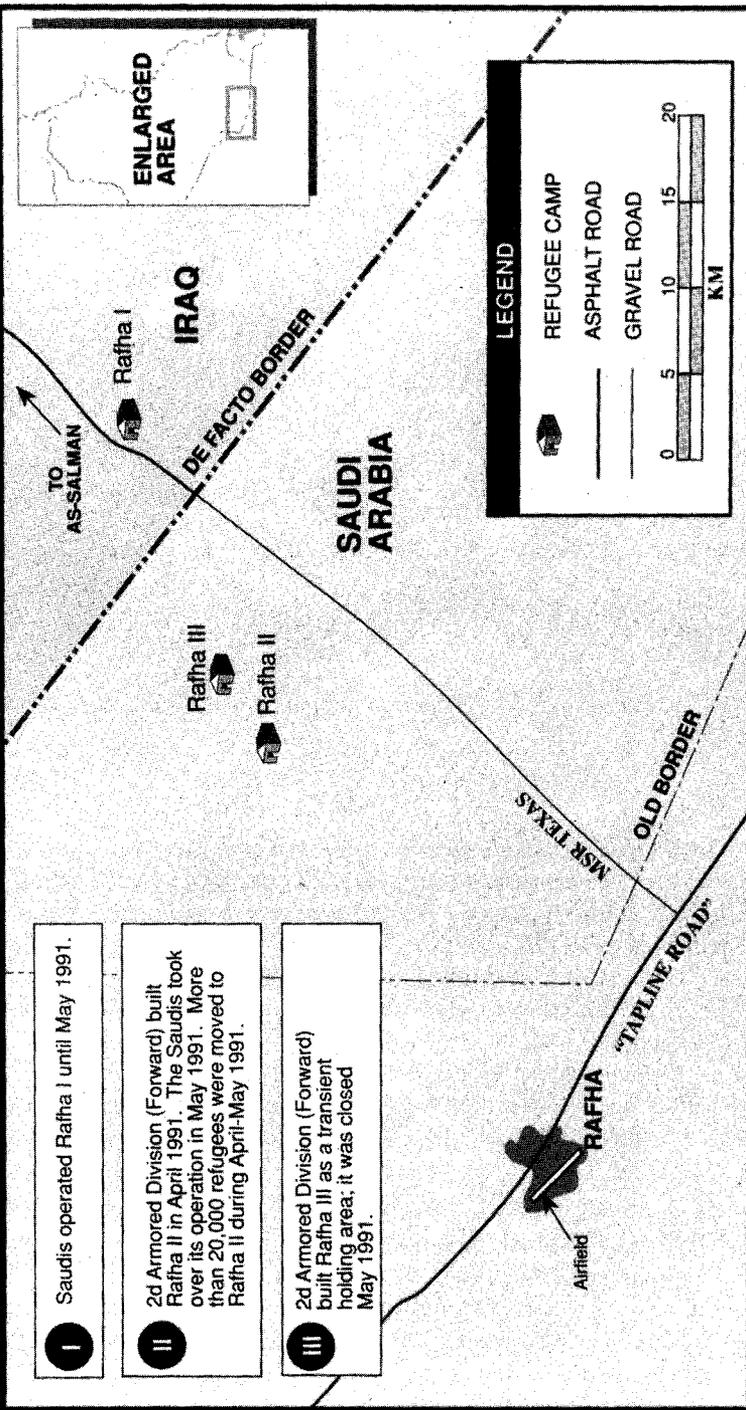
3d Armored Division soldiers assisted refugees from a Safwan camp as they arrived by Air Force C-130 at Rafha.

registered the refugees and gave each an identification card and an MRE with a bottle of water on arrival.

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 3d AD, moved dislocated civilians from Safwan to Rafha II in late April and into early May. Safwan refugees who chose to go to Saudi Arabia were making a lifelong decision never to return to Iraq. Those who wished to return to their homes in Iraq were offered gasoline and all the food and water they could carry. When Safwan closed on May 7, the "Ready First" soldiers had registered more than 24,000 people and distributed more than 979,000 meals, 173,000 cases of bottled water, and 1,136,000 gallons of water. In addition, division doctors and medics had treated more than 23,400 patients.

Blackwell's soldiers processed a total of 20,000 civilians into Rafha II—4,000 a day at the peak of the operation.¹⁵ When the flood of refugees threatened to overwhelm Rafha II, Blackwell built a smaller camp, Rafha III, to provide a short-term holding area. On May 10, Blackwell handed over responsibility for the camps to the Saudis.

COALITION REFUGEE CAMPS NEAR RAFHA, SAUDI ARABIA MARCH-MAY 1991



I Saudis operated Rafha I until May 1991.

II 2d Armored Division (Forward) built Rafha II in April 1991. The Saudis took over its operation in May 1991. More than 20,000 refugees were moved to Rafha II during April-May 1991.

III 2d Armored Division (Forward) built Rafha III as a transient holding area; it was closed May 1991.



More than 20,000 refugees occupied Rafha II, May 1991.

KUWAIT CITY

By its nature, the effort to save lives in occupied Iraq was an evolutionary affair based on emerging needs. On the other hand, bringing Kuwait City back to life required a much more structured effort. A cornerstone of the President's Gulf War objectives was to restore the legitimate government of Kuwait. Once it became apparent that Saddam would not leave Kuwait without a struggle, the Bush administration accepted the reality that much of Kuwait City would be damaged, either by retreating Iraqis or by the liberating Coalition. Naturally, no one was more concerned about restoring Kuwait after the war than the Kuwaitis themselves. Other than the "tanker" war with Iran in 1988, Kuwait had never faced such disaster.

In September 1990 the Kuwaiti government in exile had established the Kuwait Economic Recovery Program (KERP) in Washington under the direction of Fawzi as-Sultan, a Kuwaiti official of the World Bank. In October, the Emir had formally requested the President's support for the recovery effort. As a result, the Defense Department, in November, established the Kuwaiti Task Force (KTF) led by Army Reserve Colonel Randall Elliott. Elliott was particularly well qualified for the job. A career foreign service officer and an expert on the Middle East, Elliott was a personal

friend of Edward Gnehm, the newly appointed American ambassador to Kuwait. As operations officer for the 352d Civil Affairs Command, Elliott had compiled a computerized data base with the names and civilian skills of each of the command's members. When the KTF was still a concept, Elliott had used his data base to identify 57 of its 63 potential members based on their particular civil-military skills. When it was time to organize his task force, Elliott had already located most of its eventual members and informally alerted them.

The KTF received planning assistance from the American-educated, mid-level officials of the Kuwaiti government assigned to the KERP. The Kuwaiti-American team calculated that after the war they would be required to care for 600,000 residents. Before deploying to the desert on January 26, Elliott's citizen-soldiers assisted the KERP in obtaining more than \$558 million in contracts for goods and future services. More than 70 percent of the dollar value of these contracts went to American firms.¹⁶ Once in Saudi Arabia, the KTF concentrated on organizing their short-term recovery efforts. The KTF and the KERP located their previously purchased supplies and organized a program for distributing them to Kuwait City residents. Kuwaiti officials then turned to the US Army Corps of Engineers because of its experience in responding to natural disasters. The Corps established the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Organization (KERO) under Colonel Ralph Locurcio to conduct damage surveys and administer reconstruction contracts. On January 14, 1991, DOD signed a \$46.3 million foreign military sales agreement with the Kuwaiti government to assist in the restoration of facilities and systems controlled by the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, and the National Guard.

On February 15 Colonel Kerr and newly arrived Brigadier General Howard Mooney, commander of the 352d CA Command, briefed Yeosock and Frix on the plan for civil-military support in liberated Kuwait. To supervise the recovery effort, they proposed a combined civil affairs task force with Mooney in command. Yeosock agreed with the task force concept, but he placed Frix and the ARCENT Forward Command Post in command of the overall Kuwait recovery mission. Having been on the ground since August 1990, Frix was the right choice to coordinate the effort. Frix task-organized military units, such as engineers and logisticians, with Mooney's Combined Civil Affairs Task Force to form Task Force Freedom.

Lead elements of Task Force Freedom entered Kuwait City by ground and air in the early afternoon of February 28, immediately on the heels of the retreating Iraqi troops. The drive up the coastal road to the city past the destruction of the ground war and the burning oil-well fires in the darkened midday reminded them of Dante's description of the journey into the "ninth circle of hell."¹⁷ Frix had elected to move the ARCENT

Forward Command Post, "Lucky Tac," and its signal, security, and support staff to Kuwait City as his base of operations. The KERO team entered Kuwait on March 4. Frix established his headquarters at Camp Freedom, a warehouse complex near the Kuwait International Airport. Relief efforts kept Task Force Freedom decisively engaged for more than two months. In addition to commanding the task force, Frix also directed the humanitarian assistance operations in southern Iraq.

Kuwait City was badly damaged but not destroyed. Although enemy soldiers looted everything movable, most of the buildings and infrastructure remained intact. Mooney and the KERO's damage assessment and survey teams conducted more than 1,260 inspections of hospitals, schools, and telecommunications centers to determine the extent of damage and to estimate the time needed to return them to normal operation. Based on Frix's priorities, soldiers first repaired essential facilities and functions, like food distribution centers and hospitals. They left other, less crucial facilities to be fixed later. Fortunately, food was not an immediate problem because residents had hoarded sufficient quantities to last until the local food distribution system got going again. Using contracted trucks, the Kuwaiti Task Force delivered bulk food and bottled water to neighborhood food centers where Kuwaitis then distributed it to families.

The Iraqis had stolen most of the equipment and supplies from medical facilities, but the buildings were intact and structurally sound. Kuwait City medical personnel received an unexpected bonus, compliments of the civil affairs soldiers working with VII Corps units in southern Iraq. First Lieutenant William Burke of the 418th CA Company, a police officer in civilian life, had led a small team into a bunker complex near Safwan. Moving cautiously and constantly checking for booby traps, Burke had stumbled onto an underground field hospital only recently vacated by the Republican Guard, complete with beds and equipment for about 60 patients. They found several bunkers loaded with medical supplies of every sort, including crutches, X-ray machines, wheelchairs, and literally tons of bandages. Burke had spent 12 of his childhood years in Saudi Arabia and could read the Arabic markings on the equipment and supply containers. He realized that most had been looted from Kuwaiti hospitals. For the next four days, Burke and his team made more than 20 round-trips by truck moving the precious supplies to the Ministry of Health building in Kuwait City.

The biggest problem Frix faced was to return Kuwait City to normal, and the first step toward this objective was to turn on the street lights. Smoke from burning oil fires had turned day into night and the resulting pall added to the pervasive sense of despair that gripped the city. For months the Kuwaitis had suffered the terror of rampaging Iraqis kicking in doors to loot and kill in the middle of the night. Lighted streets would symbolize an end to that terror. By March 27 the 416th Engineer

Command and KERO had restored enough generating capacity to produce more than 150 megawatts of power and the lights went on. Reluctantly at first, Kuwaiti citizens began to emerge from their homes to walk about freely at night. With lights and power on, the combined civil affairs task force turned its attention to restoring the city's electrical grid system, which had suffered significant damage.

To restore order, Major General Jaber al-Kahlid, the military governor of Kuwait City, immediately established martial law. Kuwaiti units that assisted in liberating the city were assigned among the 16 police stations, providing control and stability to the chaotic situation. Colonel Jesse Johnson, commander of CENTCOM's Special Operations forces, became Jaber's military advisor. US Special Forces soldiers who were still with Kuwaiti units began to expand their role beyond that of advising. With the help of Kuwaiti resistance fighters who remained in the city during the entire occupation, SOF soldiers cleared areas of booby traps and minefields and otherwise assisted in the recovery. Resistance members also guided Special Forces teams to key Iraqi headquarters buildings and torture sites. The teams collected and evacuated five truckloads of documents indicating possible violations of the Geneva Convention.¹⁸

Task Force Freedom, which operated until the end of April, was a tremendous success. During its tenure, not a single Kuwaiti died from lack of water, medical care, or food.¹⁹ As the *New York Times* reported, "It is the American Army that has turned the electricity back on here, got the water running, cleared the highways of shrapnel and wrecked cars, hooked up those telephones that work, dredged the main port of Shuaiba and unloaded the ships, brought the drinking water and food, fixed the police cars, and fed the animals in the zoo."²⁰ Mooney's damage assessment and survey teams allowed Frix to focus his soldiers' efforts on the most pressing needs, and soldiers of both Active and Reserve components worked together to bring relief to the residents of Kuwait City.

The KERO surveyed and restored major infrastructure systems and facilities in Kuwait. It also worked on electrical substations, water mains, two seaports, the international airport, and more than 160 public schools and buildings, including police, fire, medical, ministerial headquarters, and defense facilities. In the first 10 months after liberation, the KERO managed \$300 million in repair work done by major American and foreign construction firms. On April 8, Colonel Glenn Lackey, the Task Force G3, traveled to Riyadh to brief Schwarzkopf on Task Force Freedom's accomplishments. He passed on Frix's recommendation that the executive agency for restoration of Kuwait be shifted from CINCCENT to the Secretary of the Army fully 30 days ahead of the originally projected date. Schwarzkopf and the Secretary of Defense endorsed that action and set April 30 as the end date for the emergency phase of the restoration of Kuwait. Army Major General Patrick Kelly, commander of the Defense

Recovery Assistance Office, assumed responsibility for long-term reconstruction efforts in the city.

REDEPLOYMENT: RECOCKING THE FORCE

The ARSTAF, at the direction of Lieutenant General Reimer, the DCSOPS, had directed the 22d Support Command to start working on redeployment in December 1990. At the same time, Reimer directed the ARSTAF to draft a redeployment plan entitled "Reshaping the Army." The plan would preserve General Vuono's three vectors and provide for a comprehensive rearming and refitting of the Army's contingency force. It would maintain worldwide readiness while reshaping the Army. Continuing to shore up FORSCOM, Reimer assigned his assistant, Major General Tom Fields, to lead the ARSTAF effort. A team led by Colonel Randy Medlock briefed the blueprint for reshaping the Army to its 1995 base force endstate in theater and at FORSCOM in late February-early March.

On March 2, 1991, before the cease-fire talks and the restoration of Kuwait, CENTCOM issued ARCENT initial redeployment orders. The redeployment of US forces from Saudi Arabia would require 10 months to complete. According to Schwarzkopf's policy of "first in, first out," the first priority was to get XVIII Airborne Corps out of Iraq and back to the US to resume its worldwide contingency corps mission. The ARCENT plan was for VII Corps to relieve XVIII Airborne Corps until the final UN accords were complete. Luck's corps pulled out of Iraq and returned to Saudi Arabia to begin redeployment while Franks extended his forces to take over the entire occupied sector in Iraq.

ARCENT had to locate and gather all supplies and equipment in the theater for preparation and shipment to appropriate destinations. When VII Corps eventually cleared out of Iraq and redeployed, ARCENT would shut down the theater. The soldiers of the 22d Support Command had to close buildings, seaports, and airport facilities and turn them over to the Saudis. ARCENT established five redeployment assembly areas near seaports and airports in Saudi Arabia where Army units could prepare their equipment for storage and shipment and process their soldiers for flights back to the United States or Europe. Assembly areas at KKMC, Dhahran, King Fahd International Airport, al-Jubayl, and Doha, Kuwait, each had wash sites and provisional units to help soldiers clean and repair equipment. Once the equipment was ready, US Agriculture Department and US Customs inspectors certified that it met United States entrance requirements.

From the start the redeployment was not without problems. Inspectors contributed to the confusion among the soldiers preparing equipment for shipment, resulting in delays in loading. When the Department of Agriculture finally did begin certification on March 24, 1991, two weeks after



The homecoming parade in New York City rivaled World War II ticker-tape extravaganzas.

redeployment began, inspectors certified equipment for shipment one day, only to have different inspectors reject the same equipment the next day. The urgency displayed by government agencies in getting the troops back home was not matched in getting the equipment back. With the war over, USTRANSCOM reimposed peacetime rules for loading equipment in ships. Transportation operators at Saudi Arabian ports organized the loading to make maximum use of space rather than to meet unit load plans. As a result, some critical equipment, particularly things packed in shipping containers, did not arrive for months. All of these factors slowed the return of units to full combat readiness at their home stations.

Nevertheless, the same technology, management techniques, and inspired efforts of soldiers during the buildup also prevailed during redeployment. Military Airlift Command sent aircraft schedules and

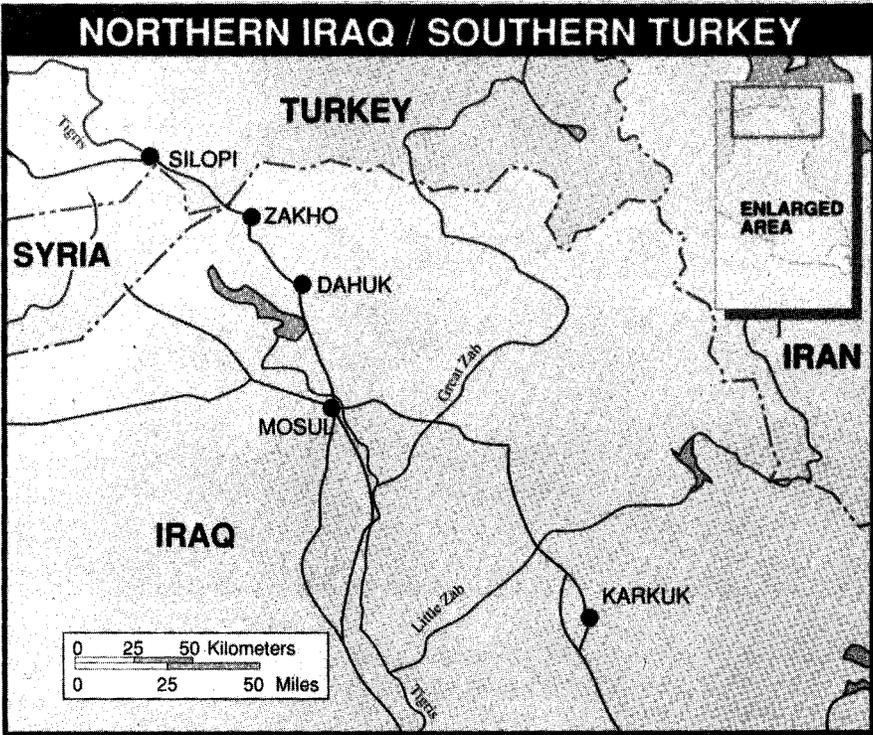
numbers from the United States to the 22d Support Command staff; they in turn planned and sent passenger schedules to affected units via satellite. At its peak, the command shipped 5,000 passengers out of Saudi Arabia each day. From March 2, 1991, to January 2, 1992, ARCENT shipped 541,429 soldiers and 1,928,000 tons of equipment and supplies back to Europe and the United States in 2,500 aircraft and 420 ships.²¹ The last XVIII Airborne and VII Corps soldiers left Saudi Arabia on June 14 and August 15, 1991, respectively. The 22d Support Command, which Yeosock charged with running the redeployment, left Saudi Arabia on January 2, 1992.

Despite the challenges and interminable waiting, going home was filled with excitement for the returning troops. The first contingent, representing all Army units in the theater, boarded planes for the United States and Europe after a short departure ceremony in Dhahran on March 8, beginning a cycle of homecoming celebrations that would be repeated for many months. In a cathartic outpouring of national pride and appreciation, millions turned out for the welcome-home parades held in Washington, D.C., on June 8 and New York City on June 10. While these redeployment and homecoming events unfurled before the American public, humanitarian assistance continued unabated in the theater.

NORTHERN IRAQ

With Desert Storm headlines fading from the front pages of the newspapers, world attention focused on the plight of the Kurds in northern Iraq and southern Turkey. The Pesh Merga, a loose confederation of 10,000 Kurdish guerrillas, grasped the opportunity offered by Saddam's preoccupation with the more dangerous Shia rebellions in the south. In a matter of days, the Kurds seized the key cities of northern Iraq, including the oil production center in Karkuk, ousting the few Iraqi military left in the those towns. Their successes, however, were fleeting. They could not stand up to Saddam's Republican Guard, the remnants of which had escaped from Basrah to deploy to the north, fully supported by helicopter gunships and artillery. The Iraqi counterattack was at once vicious and indiscriminate, pushing the Kurds out of villages and onto the few roads through northern Iraq. Some fled because their homes were destroyed; most simply left out of fear of reprisal and mass extermination, sparked by memories of the recent past. The Iraqi army pushed these people north like cattle, packing them against the Turkish border.

The picturesque mountain region on the Turkish border with northern Iraq can be one of the most inhospitable areas in the world. High elevations, steep slopes, narrow, mostly unpaved roads limited to mountain passes and ravines, and a restricted water supply join the unforgiving climate, with its extremes of hot and cold, to create incredibly harsh conditions. Many Kurdish refugees forced to exist in the open on the



exposed mountainsides along the international boundary were dying at a rate of nearly 2,000 per day from exposure, starvation, dysentery, and Iraqi-inflicted gunshot wounds.

On April 5 President Bush announced that relief supplies would be sent to the area. Two days later, US Air Force MC-130 cargo planes began air-dropping the first relief supplies into the mountainous areas of northern Iraq. Within days, additional air and ground forces from the United States and a dozen other countries, along with more than 45 private relief organizations, moved to southern Turkey and northern Iraq. Many units in Saudi Arabia were alerted to assist; some, who were about to board planes for the United States, were simply diverted to Turkey. In Europe, other units were ordered to deploy from Germany and Italy to augment the force.

American soldiers played a prominent role in relieving the misery. On April 18, when the humanitarian mission's emphasis changed from air-drops to on-the-ground relief, Lieutenant General John Shalikashvili, deputy commanding general of US Army Europe, assumed command of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort. Shalikashvili's most immediate task was to stop the dying and stabilize the situation. He then needed to secure a safe area and assist the refugees in returning to their homes.



View from northwest to southeast near Zakho, Iraq, May 1991. Transit Camps 1, 2, and 3 were located in the broad valley beyond the nearest foothills.

Shalikashvili faced three major problems as he set about organizing the relief effort. First, despite the cease-fire, a large hostile Iraqi force presented a significant threat to Coalition troops in the area. Shalikashvili worked out informal rules of engagement to prevent armed conflict between the various Coalition forces and the Iraqis. In 17 recorded incidents when they were fired on by Iraqi troops, Coalition forces showed great discipline and restraint in not returning fire. Second, interoperability posed a major problem. Incompatible communications equipment and language differences would be overcome by extensive liaison, much as they had been during the war with Iraq. Third, Shalikashvili's planners were even more strapped for information about that region of northern Iraq than Schwarzkopf's were about southern Iraq when planning the Great Wheel. They would need to rely heavily on the British whose experience in the region was extensive.

Shalikashvili immediately set to work designating two task forces. Joint Task Force Alpha, commanded by Brigadier General Richard Potter, worked with civilian relief organizations to dispense humanitarian assistance to Kurds in the mountains. Joint Task Force Bravo, commanded by

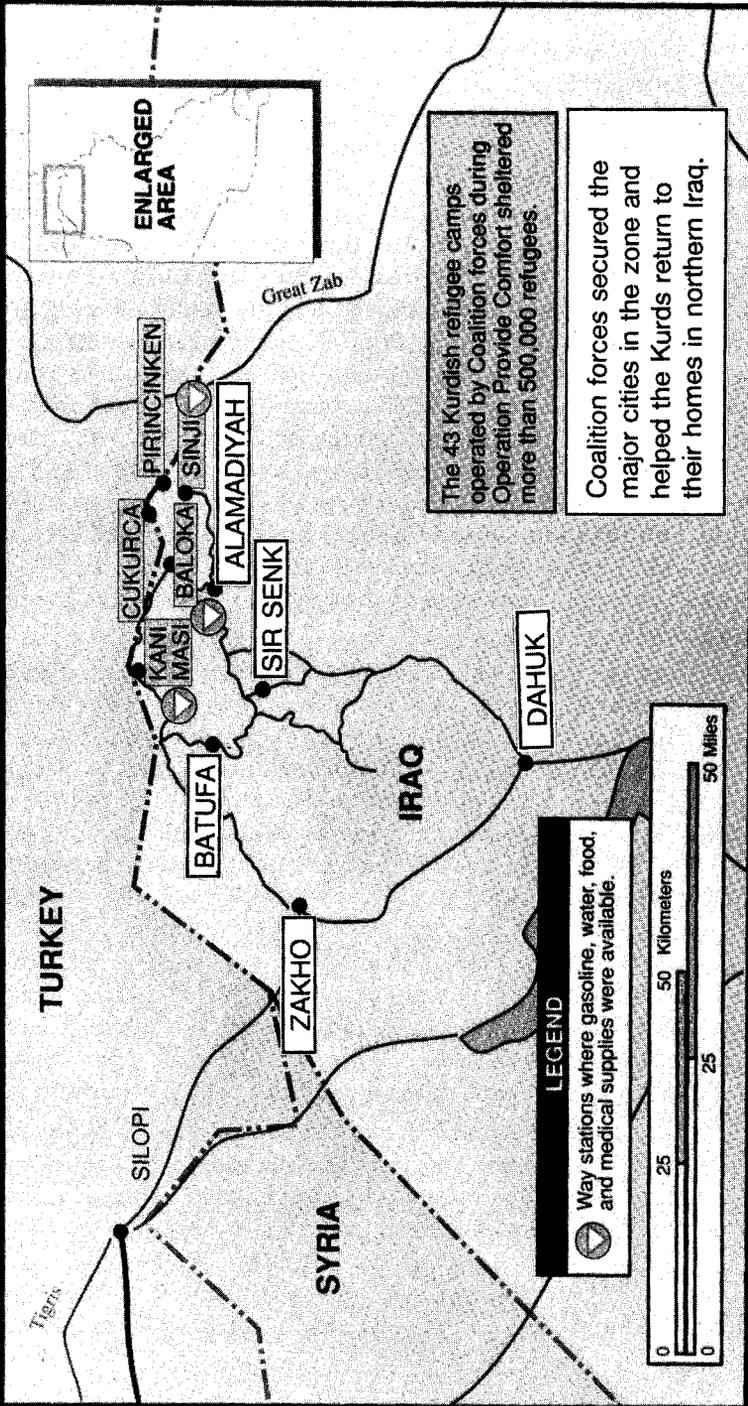
Major General Jay Garner, opened the towns and cities of northern Iraq to provide a safe haven so refugees could go home.

Parachute drops got supplies to the mountain camps quickly but not very efficiently. Some bundles were lost on the steep slopes or damaged when dropped, and, unfortunately, some fell on the desperate refugees, killing or injuring them. Delivery was more precise by helicopter, but helicopter delivery required someone to build landing zones, coordinate ground transportation, and control distribution of the supplies. Within the next two weeks, three battalions of American Special Forces soldiers, part of Joint Task Force Alpha, moved into the mountain refugee camps to organize the resupply effort, improve the refugees' sanitation conditions, and provide basic medical care.²² One of those soldiers was Major Lloyd Gilmore, commander of C Company, 2-10th Special Forces, whose company moved to the rugged mountains near Pirincinken along the Iraq-Turkey border.²³ Their camp was in a river valley about 4 kilometers long astride the border, wedged between two towering mountains. For eight months each year, including April, the area was completely inaccessible by road. Twenty thousand people, disorganized and dispirited, were crammed from the valley floor to the highest points in the surrounding mountainsides.

Described by the Green Berets as "Woodstock without music," the valley was almost too crowded to walk without stepping on someone. Dead animals, garbage, and human waste had turned the ground into a quagmire, fueling outbreaks of dysentery and cholera. A hastily dug graveyard, located at one end of the valley, grew steadily as 50 or more people a day were buried. Refugees were desperate for any form of shelter. The more fortunate threw blankets, plastic sheets, or used American parachutes over tree limbs to create primitive lean-tos and tents. The less fortunate lived in the open. To get the situation under control, Gilmore called the camp elders together as soon as he arrived. His team leaders met with the people, drank tea, and got to know them personally. Gilmore established a parallel hierarchy with the Kurdish elders by matching each of his team leaders with a Kurdish counterpart. Slowly, he added structure and organization to what had been a helpless mob.

A United Nations High Commission for Refugees representative monitored camp activities and provided expertise on refugee management. Nevertheless, the various nongovernmental agencies residing in the camp came to consider Gilmore as mayor of the project and leader of the total relief effort. Although their initial contacts were reserved, soldiers and civilian relief workers soon recognized that they were both dedicated to the same cause and eventually established a solid working relationship.

REFUGEE CAMPS IN NORTHERN IRAQ



Gilmore had to get the refugees to improve sanitation conditions, the cause of most of the health problems in the valley. The younger, weaker children, as well as older adults, were the most susceptible to disease and death, with 40 to 50 children dying each day, mostly from dysentery caused by impure water. The river that ran through the valley provided the only water for washing, cooking, drinking, personal hygiene, and sewage disposal. The farther downstream in the valley that a family lived, the greater the risk of disease. While some soldiers spent their first days in the camp building landing zones for delivery of supplies, others immediately began to teach the refugees rudimentary sanitation requirements such as boiling water and digging latrines.

By mid-April, additional supplies began arriving to support Gilmore's efforts. A key item was the World Health Organization kit, designed for disaster relief and refugee assistance missions. The kit contained enough medical supplies to treat about 10,000 people. For Gilmore, the most important item in the kit was the rehydration fluid. A very bad-tasting potion similar to a "super Gatorade," this liquid provided needed salts and minerals for the children, allowing them to survive the dehydration induced by dysentery. Complying with Potter's determination "to stop this dehydration of the kids," Gilmore directed his medics to begin treating the most severe, life-threatening cases.²⁴ A British doctor and nurse from the organization "Save the Children" focused on the most serious medical cases while acting as general consultants to the Special Forces medics. The doctor, long used to working with Third World medical staffs, soon gained respect for the diagnostic skills of the medics and began to treat them as colleagues of equal competence. Gilmore's medics found one three-year-old boy who was so small and malnourished that he hovered near death. Because he was too weak to swallow, the medics provided a dose of the "magic" fluid by introducing a tube into his stomach. The boy not only regained his strength within hours but lived to return to his family.

The combination of rehydration fluids, antidiarrheal medicines, boiling water, and the use of latrines seemed magically to stop the dying. The soldiers' morale rose as the horrors of the camp abated. American soldiers have always had a weakness for kids, and within days they became green-clad pied pipers walking about the camp with tiny, chattering entourages in tow. The soldiers knew that without their help most of the kids would have died. "It's a good feeling," said Sergeant Mike Conlon. "We know we're doing some good. We come back [to our base camp] at night, we're tired, we're smoked. But it's real, we can see the effect."²⁵

Soldiers fed the refugees MREs, which, like most soldiers, the Kurds did not much like. Unfamiliar with the contents and not very thrilled with the taste, most Kurds refused to eat them once they were beyond the risk of starvation. About the same time as sanitation and health conditions



Medical supply delivery in northern Iraq during Operation Provide Comfort, May 1991.



Army medics inoculated infants during Operation Provide Comfort.

improved, the soldiers began receiving and distributing bulk food such as potatoes, flour, sugar, rice, and cooking oil. The refugees could then prepare their own meals.

Potter's Joint Task Force Alpha soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, working with the nongovernmental organizations, performed organizational and medical miracles. Within 10 days of their arrival, most of the refugees in the mountains were healthy enough to go home. Conditions in the camps, although somewhat stable by late April, would only get worse as temperatures climbed and water sources dried up. So far the weather had cooperated. The moderate April climate kept the Kurds from freezing while snow melting in the higher elevations continued to feed water to the river. Although contaminated, water was at least plentiful and would remain so until the end of May. Insects, major carriers of disease, were not a significant problem. However, as the temperature rose, so would the potential insect problem. Gilmore realized that time was his greatest enemy.

Most refugees, however, were not willing to go home until they could feel safe from the hated Iraqi army. Refugees repeatedly told Gilmore that they would rather risk death through exposure in the mountains than return to certain death in their hometowns. While working to stop the dying and to reestablish stability, Shalikashvili simultaneously turned his

attention to establishing a security zone and getting the refugees safely to their homes. He tasked General Garner with securing areas of northern Iraq so that he could begin repatriation.

Garner arrived in Silopi, Turkey, on April 17 with five hand-picked officers. The American 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), already at Silopi, provided the baseline organization for him to build Joint Task Force Bravo. The MEU had an aviation squadron, a battalion landing team, and a marine service support group. Also attached were a battalion each of British Royal Marines and Royal Dutch Marines. Joint Task Force Bravo grew, and within days Garner was commanding a combat force of soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors from nine countries with the firepower of an army division. His staff, built upon the marines and his five American soldiers from Germany, represented a multinational and multi-Service collection of combat forces.

On April 19 Shalikashvili met with Iraqi military representatives in Zakho, Iraq, where he issued a rather dramatic demarche: Coalition forces would enter northern Iraq to create a security zone in order for the Kurds to return to their homes. Shalikashvili told the Iraqis that Coalition forces were on a humanitarian mission and were not looking for a fight. The Iraqis were ordered to withdraw their armed forces 30 kilometers south of Zakho, where their artillery would be beyond the range of the town. On the morning of April 20, American Marines airlifted into the vicinity of



Lieutenant General Shalikashvili (left) discusses Provide Comfort security plans with SACEUR, General John Galvin (center), and Major General Garner (right) during a helicopter flight over northern Iraq.

Zakho and after careful negotiations between Garner and the Iraqi commander, the Iraqi soldiers withdrew. But playing a sly game of bait and switch, 350 Iraqi special police quickly showed up in town to replace them. The Kurds did not want the special police in their town, so Garner sent his British Royal Marines, supported by the American and Royal Dutch Marines, into Zakho to chase them out. Fresh from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland, the British commandos were most familiar with operations in urban areas. Although the situation was tense, the special police realized that the British had called their bluff and withdrew without incident. Dutch marines set up checkpoints around the town, allowing Iraqis to leave but denying non-Kurds entry into the town.

As more combat units arrived in Silopi, Garner expanded the security zone. Coalition forces under the command of British Brigadier Andrew Keeling extended Coalition control to the east by securing the town of Batufa on April 28. Four days later, Keeling's soldiers and marines secured Sirsenk and al-Amadiyah, both key Kurdish towns in the northeast portion of the security zone. A French brigade secured Suri on May 6, and by mid-May Joint Task Force Bravo controlled most of the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, an area 70 by 160 kilometers in size. The major exception was Dahuk, normally populated by about 500,000 people. After a series of tense negotiations with Iraqi military officials in Dahuk, Shalikhshvili, Garner, and the Iraqis agreed to a compromise, allowing both the Coalition and the Iraqis to occupy Dahuk. The Iraqis could maintain a small police presence there, but not the special police, and all Iraqi military forces would have to withdraw at least 6 kilometers south of the city. The Coalition agreed to provide 81 soldiers, most of whom would be engineers or civil affairs or explosive ordnance demolition specialists. These soldiers would provide a degree of security for international relief workers in the town and for the Kurds upon their return. By then foreign relief organizations were very comfortable working with the military and insisted that Coalition forces provide security in most areas.

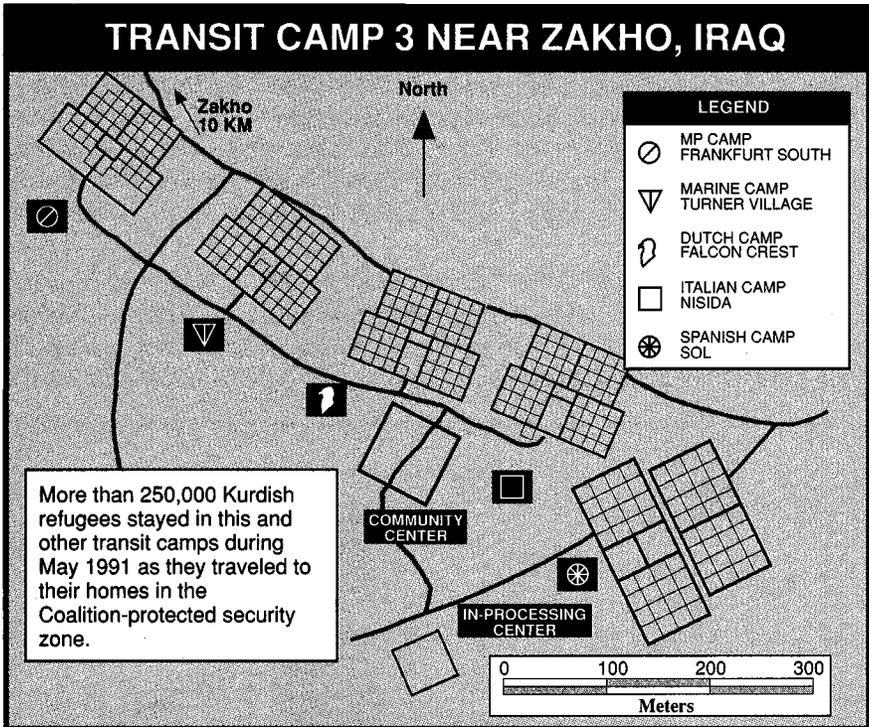
Garner employed his own version of psychological warfare to keep the Iraqis honest. One of his commanders, Lieutenant Colonel John Abizaid, who had led A Company, 1-75th Infantry (Rangers) during Urgent Fury, drove his 3-325th Airborne Battalion Combat Team over hundreds of miles in the security zone. Encountering an Iraqi formation menacing the Kurds he was protecting, Abizaid told the Iraqi commander to withdraw or face destruction. Two A-10's roaring overhead punctuated his demand and the Iraqis hastened to withdraw. Garner, taking a page from such experiences, directed every aircraft, both rotary- and fixed-wing, to fly low and slow to produce as much noise as possible when in the security zone. Every day Coalition forces conducted overly dramatic rehearsals of their actual contingency plans, carefully staged to impress their Iraqi audience. Vehicles rushed about to generate all the noise and dust they

could, and radio operators eschewed net discipline to keep up a steady stream of transmissions. The Iraqis, always prone to theatrics themselves, were impressed by this tremendous effort and chose to stay away.²⁶

Once Zakho, Dahuk, and the other towns in the security zone were under Coalition protection, the Kurds felt safe enough to begin the long trip home. Although coordinating movement for 500,000 very eager people proved to be a challenge, the refugees made the journey in only a few weeks. To encourage the refugees to leave the mountain camps, Potter created a series of transient way stations along the Turkey-Iraq border. In his zone, Garner established a series of temporary refugee camps to be used by the Kurds as they traveled south.

Coalition engineers, under the command of Colonel Steve Winsor, helped provide for the refugees' basic need for sanitation and shelter by building latrines and other facilities, often using contractors for construction. Winsor sent a team into southern Turkey and northern Iraq to help establish relocation camps for Kurdish refugees coming down from their mountain sanctuaries. A corps contractor built 4,000 latrines on-site at Zakho and put them in service. Through \$3 million in contracted projects, a small contingent of contractor personnel provided latrines, water, tanks, and workhouse tents to three refugee camps in the Zakho Valley.

In northwest Iraq, soldiers from the 418th Civil Affairs Company ran one of three transient refugee camps in the area. One of the CA specialists was Major Ronald Jelks, in civilian life a sales executive from Kansas City, Missouri. Jelks was the American mayor of Coalition Transit Camp Three, located in a yawning valley about 10 kilometers southeast of Zakho. As soon as they arrived on May 13, Jelks divided his group into sections responsible for camp administration, food distribution, water and sanitation management, camp security, and civilian labor coordination. Jelks had a diverse assortment of Coalition military units to assist him in running the subcamps he eventually established. One came under the control of US Marines, another under Army military police, and a third under an Italian airborne infantry battalion. A Dutch engineer battalion ran the fourth subcamp, and a Spanish airborne infantry battalion ran the remaining one. In 48 hours, Jelks had transformed a northern Iraqi wheat field into a functioning tent city. Dutch and American engineers constructed a road network and laid out the camp dimensions. Other Coalition soldiers began to dig latrines and mark locations for tents where Jelks expected the refugees to pitch their own temporary lodging. Jelks divided each subcamp into four "blocks," each containing 64 "zozans," with each zozan holding 12 tents.²⁷ The camp setup was something like an American KOA campground, so Jelks inevitably chose "Kampground of Iraq," or "KOI," as his logo. His men encouraged refugees to come to the camp, to stay as long as they liked, and then to move on toward their homes. The camps were not intended to be permanent.



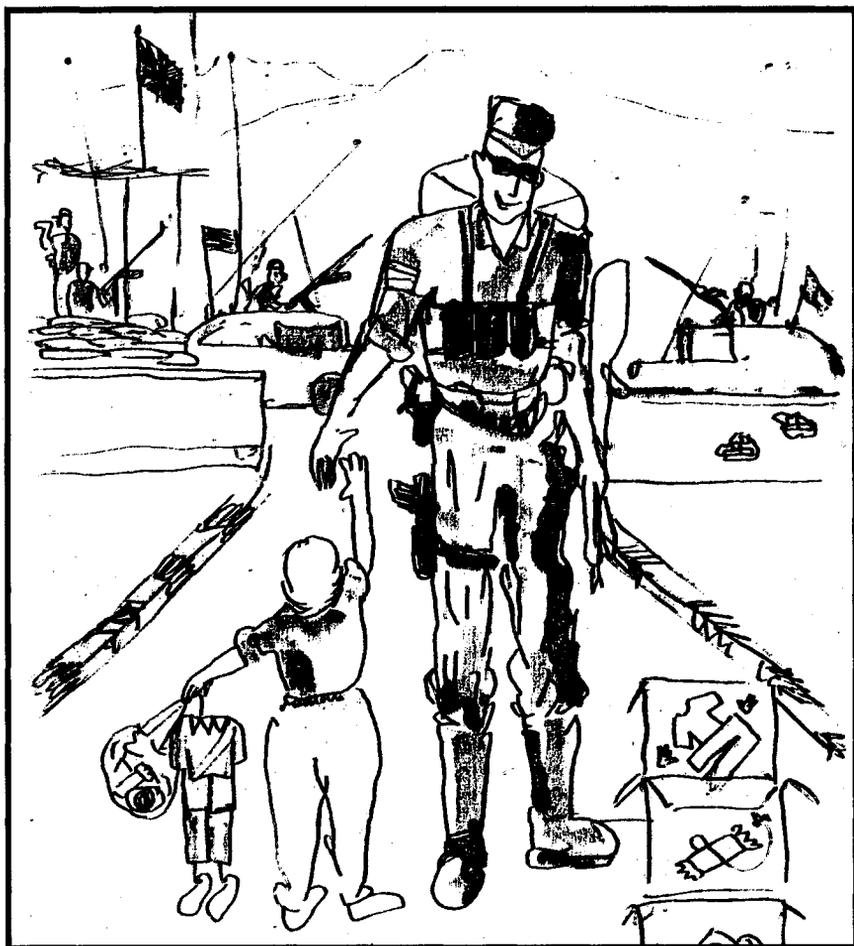
Once the refugees began to arrive, Jelks' soldiers counted, medically screened, and placed them in one of the subcamps with members of their extended family or regional group. No fences surrounded the camp and the people were free to come and go. The work was grueling for the soldiers tending the campground, requiring usually 12 to 16 hours a day to take care of the 20,000 refugees living there.

Jelks established control by keeping communications open with both his Kurdish and Coalition partners and by holding daily meetings with the camp's leaders. He wanted to incorporate the Kurdish leadership and people as much as possible in day-to-day camp operations. When needed, French and Dutch military field hospitals provided medical support for Transit Camp Three, but by mid-May earlier epidemics had been checked. Only two refugees died during the three weeks that Transit Camp Three was open: a little girl from nonvirile meningitis and a 70-year-old man from a heart attack.²⁸

By late spring the people in Gilmore's Pirincinken camp had started to return to their homes as well. The camp was remote, requiring most people to make a day-long walk down the rugged mountains to the main road in order to find cars and tractors that they had abandoned on the Iraqi side of the border. Those without cars rode in trucks driven by

locally contracted drivers. Gilmore used helicopters to transport those who could not walk. Because some refugees feared Iraqi reprisals upon their return, United Nations representatives took several Kurdish leaders into the towns and villages to show that the Iraqis had departed and would not soon return. The word spread quickly and the exodus from the refugee camp, which started as a trickle in late April, turned into a flood within a week. By early May most of the 20,000 refugees had departed the Pirincinken camp.

Operation Provide Comfort was a success by any measure. American military organization and leadership held together a Coalition of forces even more disparate than that of Desert Storm. It consisted of armed forces from more than a dozen nations, along with thousands of civilians



Picture drawn by Umer-a-Sindi, a 10-year-old Kurd, in May 1991 and presented in gratitude to Major General Jay Garner, commander of Task Force Bravo.

from more than 60 organizations. The operation was executed with no prior planning or preparation. Civilian relief organizations, loosely organized under the auspices of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, worked within areas secured by military units from many nations. Time was not available for fancy formal agreements, a fact recognized by military and civilians alike. Everyone focused on the tasks at hand: to stop the dying, to secure a safe haven for the Kurds, and to get them back to their homes before summer heat dried out the mountain streams and cut off the water supply.

GREAT SOLDIERS, GREAT PROVIDERS

Many of the skills and capabilities that make a great military force successful in waging brutal battle paradoxically serve equally well in relieving large-scale human suffering. Whether created by war itself or by natural disaster, the requirements to handle mass casualties, to feed, protect, and transport large numbers of people, and to restore order are adjuncts of military operations. Yet the transition from war to humanitarian relief is anything but automatic. In the absence of discipline, leadership, and moral restraint, soldiers, themselves brutalized by battle, have often terrorized the helpless populace of a defeated foe. Such is not the American way.

In the Gulf, consistent with the American way of war, soldiers fought the enemy tank-to-tank one day and then actively provided that same enemy lifesaving assistance the next. From chaotic Safwan to the choked camps of Rafha to the pathetic plight of the Kurds in the mountains of northern Iraq, Coalition forces fought to save thousands of lives in an effort that lasted much longer than the war. In some ways—certainly in the hearts of those served—the effects of this humanitarian support will also last longer than those of the war.

Notes

1. Lieutenant Colonel Terry Johnson, 11th Aviation Brigade, the air mission commander for General Schwarzkopf's flight to Safwan.

2. John R. Brinkerhoff, *Waging the War and Winning the Peace: Civil Affairs in the War with Iraq* (Washington: Office, Chief of the Army Reserve, August 1991), p. 10.

3. Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Carl T. Sahlin, commander, 96th CA Battalion (Airborne), November 20, 1991.

4. Interview with Colonel James T. Kerr, February 27, 1992.

5. John Kifner, "Iraqi Refugees Tell US Soldiers of Brutal Repression of Rebellion," *The New York Times*, March 28, 1991, p. A-1.

6. Interview with Major Randy Kolton, April 7, 1992.
7. Interviews with Lieutenant Colonel David Gross and Captain Ernest Marcone, 3d Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Infantry Division, February 12, 1992.
8. Interview with Major Thomas Connors, executive officer, 3-37th Armor, 1st Infantry Division (Mech), February 12, 1992.
9. Interview with Major David Estes, S3, 4-32 Armor, 3d Armored Division, April 23, 1992.
10. Captain James P. Aiello, "History of the Ready First Combat Team (1st Brigade), 3d Armored Division, 20 March through 11 May 1991," and memorandum, AETV-TFC, "Humanitarian Relief Operations, HQ 3d Armored Division," undated.
11. Staff Sergeant C. Randy Piland, "American Troops Answer Iraqis' Call for Help," *Jayhawk*, April 9, 1991, p. 5.
12. Interview with Major Douglas Nash, B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), November 20, 1991.
13. Interview with Colonel John Meyers, 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, March 27, 1992.
14. Interview with Colonel Joseph Molinari, March 9, 1992.
15. Meyers interview.
16. Brinkerhoff, p. 58.
17. Interviews with Major General Robert Frix, DCG, Third US Army, February 27, 1992, and Brigadier General Howard Mooney, CG, 352d Civil Affairs Command, July 14, 1991.
18. Interview with Colonel Jesse Johnson, commander, Special Operations Command Central, May 15, 1992.
19. Frix interview.
20. John Kifner, "US Army Doing the Work in Kuwait," *New York Times*, April 5, 1991, p. 10.
21. 22d Support Command After-Action Report, January 2, 1992, Vol. XII, p. 13.
22. Lieutenant Colonel Gordon W. Rudd's *Operation Provide Comfort, One More Tile on the Mosaic* (Washington: The US Army Center of Military History, undated) provides most of the overview material for this portion of chapter 6.
23. Interview with Major Lloyd Gilmore, commander, C Company, 2-10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), March 5, 1992.
24. John Kifner, "Green Berets Bring Food and Discipline to Kurds," *The New York Times*, April 25, 1991, p. A-13.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. Interview with Major Ronald Jelks, 418th Civil Affairs Company, April 8, 1992.
28. *Ibid.*