

Operation Iraqi Freedom was an awesome demonstration of integrated air and space power.

Power and Precision

By Guy Aceto, Art Director



USAF photos by TSgt. Richard Freeland

USAF photos by 1Lt. Daniel Triplett



At top, a B-52 radar navigator pulls pins from Joint Direct Attack Munitions before the bomber takes off for a close air support mission during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Above, B-52 pilots review maintenance forms for another B-52 prior to a CAS sortie.

At left, SrA. Andrew Marshall, an aircraft maintenance crew chief, checks anti-collision lights on a B-52 loaded with laser guided bombs. The venerable B-52 made history when, during the war in Iraq, it dropped LGBs for the first time.

USAF photo by TSgt. Jason Tudor



A1C Efren Molinar removes the cowling from an engine on a B-52 in Southwest Asia. He was one of three crew chiefs readying the B-52 for a wash, completion of which requires 12 airmen working six hours.



A USAF C-130 theater transport delivers an airfield assessment team from McGuire AFB, N.J., to Baghdad International Airport, shortly after coalition forces took control of the facility. The team determines whether the airfield can handle larger aircraft such as the USAF C-5 and C-17.

At right, TSgt. Wayne Hall, the team's chief airfield manager, checks the damage to a taxiway at Baghdad International.

Below, engineers from the 823rd RED HORSE unit, Hurlburt Field, Fla., repair a hole in the runway.



Above, Army Sgt. Stephan Tetreault (left) and Air Force TSgt. Gerald Davis inspect a remote firing device used by explosive ordnance disposal units. Davis is a member of USAF's new Airborne RED HORSE team.



At left, A1C Brandon Midthun, 21st Special Operations Squadron at RAF Mildenhall, UK, mans a machine gun on an MH-53M Pave Low helicopter. Below, SSGT. Ryan Renuart, a gunner with Air Force Reserve Command's 301st Rescue Squadron, Patrick AFB, Fla., waits for his HH-60 helicopter to take off.



USAF photo by SSGT. Cherie A. Thurby

An MH-53M from the 21st SOS breaks left during a mission over Iraq. Special Operations Forces and rescue forces were in high demand during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



USAF photo by SSGT. Jerry Morrison Jr.



Coalition forces found several large weapons storage sites in Iraq. A USAF special operations Combat Control Team, staging out of Baghdad International, were sent to investigate this one, found near a presidential palace in Baghdad. It contained a large amount of ammunition and various weapons, including rocket propelled grenades.



USAF photos by MSgt. Ronny Przynsucha

Air Force KC-135 tankers were airborne during all OIF missions. Above, aircraft in line to refuel include several USAF fighters—two F-15Es, two F-16s, and an F-117—and a Royal Australian Air Force F/A-18.

At right, a Royal Air Force Canberra PR9 photographic reconnaissance aircraft returns from a mission over Iraq.

Below, a Navy crewman directs a Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier armed with laser guided bombs.



USAF photo by SSgt. Bennie J. Davis III

US Navy photo by PH3 John Taucher



USAF photo by SSgt. Matthew Hammen

Above, Maj. Robert Comwell and Lt. Col. Keith Turner, pilots of this USAF E-8C Joint STARS radar aircraft, clean the windshield before takeoff. Joint STARS aircraft were airborne 24 hours a day to help coalition forces maintain battlefield awareness.



Members of the 491st Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron unload wounded from their C-141 after airlifting them from Southwest Asia to Ramstein AB, Germany. Helping the 491st are members of Ramstein's 86th Aeromedical Staging Facility.

Ramstein-based medical personnel treat the immediate needs of wounded personnel at the staging facility, then, as shown at right, load them on ground vehicles for transport to nearby Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for any additional treatment.



Coalition aircraft, led by USAF F-15Cs, quickly established air dominance over Iraq. Here, maintenance crew chief SrA. Adam Kruse prepares an F-15C for a sortie.

Abandoned and destroyed Iraqi weapons litter the landscape. Pictured at right is what appears to have been an Iraqi MiG-21 fighter.



USMC photo by SSgt. Bryan Reed

US Marine Corps photo by Lt. Andreas A. Plaza



USAF photo by SSgt. Jerry Morrison

At left is one of many armored vehicles destroyed from the air as coalition air forces cleared the way for ground forces advancing toward Baghdad. Above, US Army and Marines forces disabled this tank, which they found in searching the city of Mosul for weapons caches and abandoned equipment.

AP photo/APTN



Australian special forces discovered MiG fighters, above and right, under camouflage netting at a captured Iraqi air base near Baghdad. Officials reported finding 51 fighters near the base.



AP photo/Richard Lewis



A C-17 airlifter lands at a base in Bulgaria, where, below, airmen prepare to load humanitarian supplies bound for Iraq.



At Baghdad airport, Tanker Airlift Control Element members unload equipment and supplies from a Tennessee Air National Guard C-130.



TSgt. Mark Harris of the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron, McChord AFB, Wash., shows an Iraqi boy how to blow bubbles. Harris and other members of a USAF Combat Control Team at Baghdad airport handed out such toys to Iraqi children.



South Carolina Air National Guard pilots "Paps" (left) and "Robo" prepare to fly combat sorties in F-16CJs.

At right, a B-1B returns to its home base at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., after a deployment supporting operations in Southwest Asia.

President Bush, on May 1, declared combat operations in Iraq to be at an end.



Maj. Doug Bodine, of the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth, receives hugs from his wife and daughter upon his return. ■