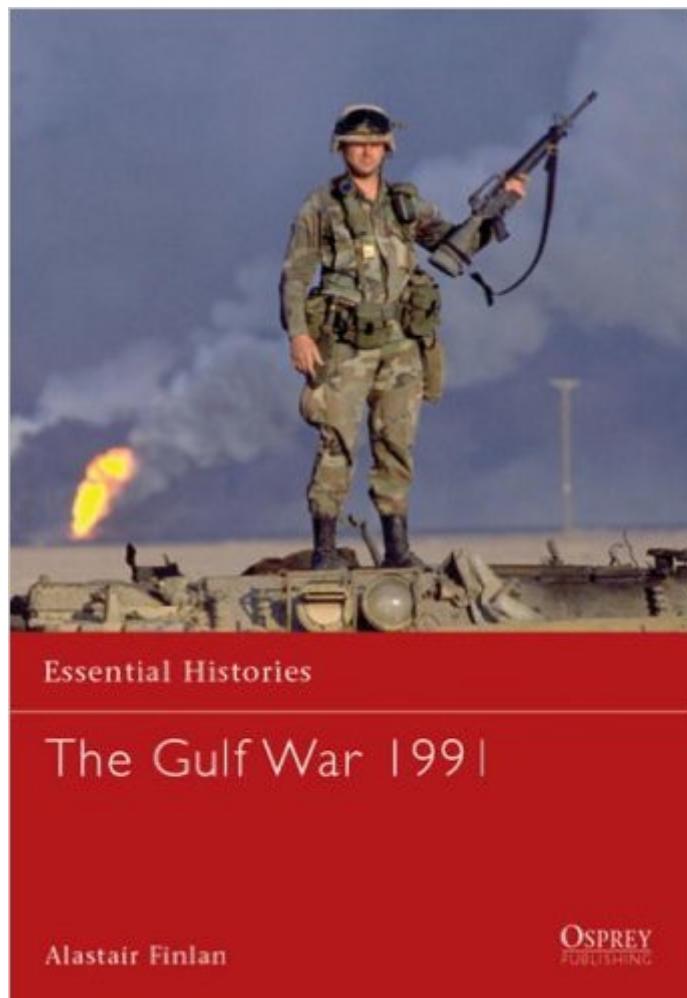


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The Gulf War 1991 (Essential Histories)



Synopsis

The Gulf War of 1991 heralded a new type of warfare that was characterised by astonishing speed and high technology with remarkably low numbers of casualties amongst the coalition forces. Just under a million coalition personnel were deployed to the Gulf region to face a variety of threats from extreme temperatures to weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and suspected nuclear) and a formidable Iraqi occupation force. This book assesses the defensive Operation Desert Shield (the build up of coalition forces) and the offensive Operation Desert Storm (the liberation of Kuwait) as well as the key personalities on both sides.

Book Information

Series: Essential Histories (Book 55)

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Osprey Publishing (May 20, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1841765740

ISBN-13: 978-1841765747

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 0.2 x 9.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,460,071 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 inÂ Books > History > Middle East > Kuwait #196 inÂ Books > History > Military > United States > Operation Desert Storm #641 inÂ Books > History > Middle East > Iraq

Customer Reviews

In order to have a good grasp on what's happening in Iraq today, an understanding of the war in 1991 is essential. There's a fair amount of literature on the "first" gulf war, but Finlan's book would be a great place to start if you're not already familiar with the subject. The Essential Histories series is aimed towards the beginner, with the goal of providing a short and readable account of the main issues surrounding a particular conflict. Finlan's book does a very good job at providing context to the war by covering most of the relevant angles. If the book is to be faulted for anything, it would be that it's heavily skewed towards the military aspect of the war at the expense of the political details. The political background to the war was just as important as the military one and should have been given more attention. Finlan's treatment of the subject is objective and fair for the most part. While the book is quite short (only 84 pages of text) the purpose of the book is to be introductory, not all

inclusive. The only factual innaccuracy is that he attributed the 1996 Khobar Towers attack to Saudi dissidents, but it is widely known that Hezbollah, working with Iran, were responsible for the attack. Anyone desiring a greater understanding of Iraq that doesn't know quite where to start would most likely benefit from this book. For those already familiar with Iraq and its history, this book will not provide anything new.

As usual from Osprey Publishing this is welcome addition to my military history library. Years ago I was involved in the high level planning for this operation. I had been waiting for Osprey to develop an account of the operation and I am not disappointed by this volume.

This book will give you a very good overview of the 1991 conflict in about 90 pages. The events leading to the war, the opposing forces and the description of the operations are clearly exposed. The day-by-day color maps showing the ground war and the progression of the coalition forces are particularly excellent. The chapter on casualties is especially interesting concerning the Iraqi combat and civilian losses, considering the discrepancies in numbers previously published (from estimates as low as 750 military deaths to the wild and groundless 200'000 total deaths boasted by some media).

Most Osprey series booklets are good introductions to the battles/campaigns they cover. However, this one is not. Not that it does not do a good job for its length (96 pages). It is simply that the political history and military campaign (especially the former) are far too complex for 96 pages. It just cannot be done. In addition, but again due to the short length of the book, almost no perspective (political, military or in terms of military personalities [even of Hussein]) from the Iraqi side is provided. This is the deepest flaw of book.

Like all 'Essential Histories' books of Osprey this one gives a clear, but limited account of the war. It covers the most important political and - especially - military aspects of the war. But many - also noteworthy - events aren't mentioned. So, if you (as a start) just want to know the essentials about this conflict; read this book. For more detailed information read a more comprehensive book.

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