



History from Home

THE U.S. MARINE CORPS IN THE PERSIAN GULF: 1990-1991

ARTIFACT CARDS



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Gulf War Artifact Cards

The materials included in this artifact card guide highlight the National Museum of the Marine Corps' collection of items associated with the Gulf War, 1990-1991. These items will be on display in the "Forward Deployed" Gallery upon completion of the Museum's final phase.

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AN/PVS-5A Night Vision Goggles

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert
Shield

DONATION:

Anonymous



Sunglasses at Night

Marine infantry, mechanized, and aviation units used infrared targeting and night vision devices to conduct operations at night or in low-light conditions.

The AN/PVS-5A is an example of what Marines call NVGs, or night vision goggles and are hands-free for the operator's convenience.

The goggles were used for general purposes during the Gulf War in a variety of ways, such as for vehicle drivers, riflemen, and unit leaders.

A modified version of the AN/PVS-5A Night Vision Goggles were worn in the 1984 comedy film Ghostbusters.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why are these goggles green?
2. Why would these goggles be preferred by Marine aviators during Desert Storm?

Blood Chit Number 101342

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

Unknown



Necessary Accessory

A blood chit is a written notice, in several different languages, carried by aircrews in combat. In the event that they are shot down, the notice identifies them as American and encourages the local population to aid them. This particular artifact features Middle Eastern languages: Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, and Turkish. A chit is a British term meaning a note representing a debt to be paid.

The first few sentences in English on the bottom read:
"I am an American and do not speak your language. I will not harm you!
I bear no malice towards your people. My friend, please provide me
food, water, shelter, clothing, and necessary medical attention."

During WWII, many flight crews flying over Asia had their blood chit sewn to the back of their flight jackets.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why are the languages on this blood chit during Desert Storm predominantly Middle Eastern?
2. Why do you think there are signatures on this particular blood chit?

Cyalume Lightsticks

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert
Storm/Ground War

DONATION:

Unknown



Step Into the Light

These lightsticks were specifically used by Marines to illuminate their field of vision during combat operations to mark the way for following vehicles. Lightsticks are water-proof, non-flammable, and non-toxic.

Lightsticks were used in the field for perimeter protection and as field flashlights to mark land mines for removal. Land mine removal became a large part of what Marines did during the ground assault phase of Operation Desert Storm.

Today, most military grade lightsticks can give you reliable light output for up to twelve hours.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think most lightsticks and glowsticks glow green instead of other colors?
2. Why would marking the way with lightsticks be important for Marines in vehicles?

First Generation GPS

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert
Shield

DONATION:

Marine Corps
Systems Command



Finding Your Place in the World

The AN/PSN-10 SLGR GPS receiver is a small rectangular device that could be mounted to either a vehicle or aircraft. AN/PSN-10 GPS receivers allowed U.S. forces to accurately navigate across the featureless Iraqi and Kuwaiti deserts and gave them a crucial technological advantage.

Even with some technological shortcomings (In 1991, there were only 19 GPS satellites in orbit), GPS devices during Desert Storm revolutionized combat operations on the ground and in the air.

The AN/PSN-10 SLGR GPS Receiver was known colloquially as "slugger," which was later replaced by a hand-held version, the AN-PSN-11 PLGR, or "Plugger."

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you find directions to navigate your way from one point to another today?
2. What are some similarities and differences between a phone GPS and the SLGR receiver?

Decal and Window Cards

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

MSgt Anthony J. Cimorelli III, USMC (Ret)



Feeling Patriotic

The patriotic fervor on the home front during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm had not been seen since WWII. Civilians back home supported the effort of the war with bumper stickers and decals on display in car and house windows. Service members returning home after this conflict received a warm welcome with parades and enthusiastic support overall.

Yellow ribbons symbolizing support of troops serving overseas (bottom right) were commonly displayed by Americans at this time.

The "Duty, Honor, Country" slogan on the left side bumper sticker is the official motto of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do we show support for Marines and other service members serving today?
2. What are some similarities and differences in the three artifacts?

Flag, U.S. Marine Corps

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

Unknown



Semper Fi Flag

Marines of the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions fought against Iraqi soldiers in the burning Burqan oil field, which led to very bitter fighting on both sides. The light from the burning wells overpowered thermal sights and obscured the visibility of Marines. This flag, carried by Marines into combat, is a testament to the oil and smoke spewing from the lit Burqan oil wells on 25 February. After the battle was over, Marines advanced beyond the field towards Kuwait City.

This oil-stained flag is an interesting artifact in our cultural and material history collection.

It was reported that the Iraqi military burned somewhere between 600 and 700 oil wells . The last oil well was extinguished and capped in November 1991.

Questions to Consider:

1. What kind of environmental damage did the burning of oil wells likely do?
2. Can you think of other famous flags in Marine Corps history?

Iraqi Army Helmets

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

Mobilization Training Unit DC-7



Reclaimed Headgear

There were one million Iraqi men in uniform in 1990, making it one of the largest armed forces in the world. These helmets, representing various responsibilities within their structure, were captured on the path of the Marine Corps assault, likely taken from surrendered soldiers.

These artifacts were donated by the Mobilization Training Unit (MTU) DC-7, which was the small organization of Ready Reserve officers in the Marine Corps Reserve unit that provides historians, combat artists, archivists, and museum specialists in support of museum programs.

At the end of Operation Desert Storm, Marines of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force captured 22,308 prisoners.

Questions to Consider:

1. How are these helmets similar/different to those worn by Marines during the Gulf War?
2. Why do you think most of these helmets are tan colored?

Kuwait Liberation Medal

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

Commandant of the Marine Corps



From a Grateful Nation

This medal was presented by the Kuwaiti government to coalition forces for their service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from 2 August 1990 to 31 August 1993. The medal was first awarded by the Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Armed Forces on July 16, 1994. The medal features a falcon, a symbol of Kuwaiti prowess.

The color scheme of the medal, a vertical triband of green, white and red,; with a black trapezium, is a representation of the flag of Kuwait, adopted on September 7, 1961.

The inscription on the top of the medal reads "1991 LIBERATION MEDAL" in Arabic letters. The reverse of the medal is a map of Kuwait.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think symbolism is important in medals such as these?
2. Do you own any medals? What do they mean to you?

Meal, Ready-to-Eat (MRE)

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert Storm

DONATION:

Unknown



Dessert in the Desert

MREs, or meal, ready-to-eat, is a self-contained field ration distributed by the Department of Defense to service members in field conditions when traditional food facilities are not available. The individual packs had everything a Marine would need to fill the caloric needs of a meal in the unforgiving desert conditions of the Gulf War. This particular meal contains beef stew.

In some cases, starving Iraqi soldiers were given MREs after they surrendered and had their weapons taken away from them during the ground phase of Operation Desert Storm.

Did you know that the McRib, the popular McDonald's dish, began as a U.S. military MRE known as the "Menu 16 - Pork Rib or Rib Shaped Barbeque Flavor Pork Patty"

Questions to Consider:

1. Have you ever eaten anything that was prepackaged and ready to eat? How was it similar?
2. What are the benefits of having everything packaged for you in the field?

Protective Mask and Helmet

GALLERY:

Forward Deployed

SECTION:

Operation Desert
Shield

DONATION:

Col Dennis
Mroczkowski,
USMCR (Ret); MSgt
Anthony J. Cimorelli
III, USMC (Ret)



Gas! Gas! Gas!

Because chemical weapons were used during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, coalition forces prepared for the possibility of an attack during the Gulf War. This particular model is the M17A2 gas mask. This was the final variation of the M17 masks created by the U.S. military. It was later phased out by the M40 series protective masks still in use today. The helmet is the standard issue kevlar anti-fragmentation helmet.

The mask was always kept at the ready inside a carrying case and worn on the left hip of each Marine at all times.

Marines have worn a gas mask as part of their standard uniform since the First World War. The tradition continues today.

Questions to Consider:

1. How is the M17A2 gas mask similar and different than the original gas mask (small box respirator)?
2. We often sacrifice style and comfort for function. Could you adapt to this necessary accessory?