



THIS MONTH'S MILITARY HISTORY

The Middle East After the Great War

- 1918 6 The last engagement of the American Indian Wars takes place on the Mexican border.
- 1942 6 FDR authorizes the largest armaments production buildup in U.S. history.
- 1943 15 The Pentagon is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
- 1945 3 GEN Douglas MacArthur is put in charge of all ground operations in the Pacific.
- 1951 4 Seoul falls to the North Koreans for a second time.
- 1962 12 The first American combat action in the Vietnam War is conducted west of Saigon.
- 1966 17 The Palomares Incident occurs over the Mediterranean Sea.
- 1991 17 Operation *DESERT STORM* kicks off in the Persian Gulf.
- 1994 2 The F-4G *Wild Weasel V* flies its last mission, it will be replaced by the F-16CJ.
- 2009 5 The Miracle of the Hudson takes place.

TRIVIA

- 1 What was the U.S. Army Air Force's only jet fighter prior to the transition to the U.S. Air Force?
- 2 What World War II Army LTC went on to found his own brand of audio speakers?
- 3 What was Elvis Presley's rank when he was discharged from the Army?

ANSWERS FOR DECEMBER 2021 QUESTIONS

- 1 What day did the largest U.S. Army, pre-WWII, exercise/maneuver end?
➤ 1 DEC 1941
- 2 What patriotic American song was written on Christmas day of 1896?
➤ *The Stars and Stripes Forever*
- 3 How much money did it cost a West Point Cadet to watch the first Army-Navy football game in 1890?
➤ 52 cents (\$15.88 in 2021)



whoever is humming the jaws theme is gonna get slapped

You might think that it's cold outside, and it is! (Well for some of us.) Just remember that way back, Washington crossed a river on Christmas morning to attack a British position. Snow, sleet and ice battered the force with intense cold and wind. But at least, there probably were no sharks swimming in those icy waters that morning.



Trivia answers, digital newsletters, and more history is available on the ASC History website:

<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>

The end of World War I signified the end of the last of the major old-world empires: the Ottoman Empire. As Ryan Gingeras wrote in his book *The Fall of the Sultanate*, "It is likely that no study can bridge the numerous divides and antagonisms that mar contemporary perceptions of the end of the Ottoman Empire."¹ This same implication and consideration could and can be used to describe the rest of the Middle East after the Great War. However, while we will briefly examine the stage of modern conflicts in the Middle East, we would be negligent to not remind readers that such strife and conflict in the region begins far before the birth of modern society.

The World War Era roughly established the geopolitical boundaries that we know of in the Middle East today. Beginning with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War, Western powers began to divide up the region to the best of their limited understanding. Syria and Lebanon came under the protection of France, while Iraq and Lebanon came under the protection of Britain. Despite the establishment of these new protectorates, many other factions within the fledgling nations were promised intent to establish new nations of their own. This was especially true in the new Kingdom of Iraq which hegemonized populations of Kurds, Assyrians, and Turkmens. These small protectorates would gain their independence

following the Second World War. The internal factions began struggling almost immediately.

By the onset of World War II, the rise of Adolf Hitler pressed the need to establish an independent Jewish state. A mass exodus of displaced Jewish immigrants had fled to Palestine. Subsequently, after World War II ended, the British established the state of Israel. Tensions in this region have persisted over territorial disputes pertaining to the geopolitical boundaries, but they began almost immediately in the 1948 Israeli-Arab War.² The region remained a hotbed for small skirmishes, land-grabs, and proxy wars throughout the Cold War and into the modern Global War on Terror.

The region was a hotbed for several major events from it's arbitrary fracturing. These events included the 1956 Suez Crisis and the 1967 blocking of the Suez, the OPEC trade wars, the Iranian Hostage Situation, the Iran-Iraq War, the Afghanistan Civil Wars, and the Gulf War. Many of these conflicts erupted due to territorial disputes, proxy conflict from world superpowers, and resource grabs.

American involvement in the Middle East largely culminated itself in the form of proxy aid. Today, most American activity in the region is for insurgency deterrence. Conflict continues internally among many factions for land rights, resources, and political recognition—all of which is beyond outside control.

The Hussein Regime Ends

On 13 DEC 2003, a joint task force consisting of multiple military and U.S. federal agencies commenced Operation *RED DAWN* near the Iraqi city of Tikrit. Task Force 121 was to search two locations in the town of ad-Dawr situated to the north of Tikrit on the Tigris River. TF121 had launched multiple raids in an attempt to find Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who had fled after the 2003 invasion of Iraq had begun. On the evening of 13 DEC 2003, TF121 was about to conclude it's thirteenth unsuccessful attempt to locate the despot. At 2030 local time, Hussein was located between the two locations being searched by TF121. Upon discovery, he did not resist capture and was immediately arrested.

Following the capture, the international community clamored with reactions ranging from praise to criticism. Cautionary praise was later revealed to be the reality, when several nations praised the capture but cautioned on the potential for additional regional destabilization and retaliation. Increases in insurgency operations and sympathetic retaliation began to increase in the months that followed the capture. So great were some forms of this interference that it delayed the proceeding court hearings.

The first hearing occurred on 1 JUL 2004, where Hussein appeared to be "confident" and "defiant" throughout. He maintained that all of his actions through his dictatorship were justified, to include the 1990 Invasion of Kuwait and posed that the United States was the active instigator in Iraq.³ Hussein had been and continued to be held on Iraqi Army and Joint military installations within Iraq up through his verdict.

His composure began fading during the onset of the 2005 trials, and the subsequent verdict delivered in 2006. Hussein was found guilty of crimes against humanity on 5 NOV 2006. He was sentenced to death by hanging for his role in the killing of 148 Shiites from Dujail in 1982.⁴ Subsequent charges included his actions against Iran, Kuwait, and harboring of al-Qaeda sympathizers in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Hussein was executed on 30 DEC 2006 between 0600 & 0900 local time at Camp Justice, Baghdad. His two sons had been killed prior to his own capture in 2003. With his death, and the jailing and execution of other prominent old-regime figureheads, the Hussein regime had come to a close no later than early 2007 ending almost forty years of oppression.

- 1. Gingeras, Ryan. *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1922*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. 2016. pp7-8.
- 2. Lewis, Bernard. *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*. Scribner, New York, New York. 1995. pp 348-350.
- 3. "You are an Iraqi. You know who I am." *The Guardian*. 20 OCT 2005. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/20/iraq.mainsection>
- 4. Sample, Kirk. "Saddam Hussein is Sentenced to Death." *The New York Times*. 5 NOV 2006. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/05/world/middleeast/05cnd-saddam.html>

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