

(U) Iraqi Commander Memoirs on Missiles (8)

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(U) Chapter IV: The battle of Hope and Honor (3) [subtitle]

(U) 24 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) I issued orders to the commander of Brigade 224 and the commander of the First Maintenance Unit to maneuver with the effort from the southern sector to the western sector once again. I ordered moving four batteries to the west, where three others were operational within that brigade. I gave the commander of the brigade information about their positions and degrees of readiness, as well as a description of each launcher, its usability, and faults. I also gave him instructions on the launching sites in al-Qa'im and al-Rutbah. Moreover, I issued orders to attack Haifa with three missiles and Tel Aviv with four missiles as quickly as possible.

(U) I issued instructions on the movement to and maneuvering with sites to insure that the movement and launching took place at different times to deceive the enemy. I also issued instructions to lift the arms of the launchers to 45 degrees to avoid leakage of missile fuel. Because there has been leakage on previous occasions, and different units are using this method. I also issued details on technical preparation and alerted everyone to ambushes on the western highway and the existence of huge potholes caused by enemy air and missile bombing on al-Rutbah area. This was to prevent the trucks carrying the launcher from falling into them. I explained that speedy dispatch of batteries would insure quick deployment and concealment. So, there ought not be any delay whatsoever. I supplied the commander of the brigade with other details, such as surprising the enemy by using the very al-Rutbah road that was hit.

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(U) I commissioned some units from Brigade 224 to insure protection for al-Anbar Base for Space Research following reports that it was being threatened.

(U) We began concealing launchers in the most unexpected places. I suggested new ideas and encouraged others to do the same. The concealment helped us continue the maintenance and repair work nonstop.

(U) I changed the passwords and symbols and chose new coordinates for targets in Tel Aviv and Haifa.

(U) We heard that the commander of the enemy coalition declared that the US Air Force destroyed all our mobile launchers. What launchers could they be talking about? Even the decoy launchers were not touched? Not a single launcher, equipment, or missile from al-Husayn Force was hit throughout the battle; and the casualties were on 10 wounded, not as the accursed Schwarzkopf and Peter La Pierre claimed.

(U) They alluded to our men's steadfastness and lack of accuracy. But, let me say this, the brave missile men fired steadily; and they did not so much as bat an eyelid out of fear of their aggression. The fear was with La Pierre, not our soldiers.

(U) What they wrote in their memoirs are sheer lies and false claims. The same can also be said about the Special Commission's inspection teams that came to Iraq in 1991 and claimed that they had photos of our equipment hit during the battle. But, they failed to produce those photos, which proves their lies. One simple proof is that my son, Muhammad Hazim, a fourth grader, participated twice in firing against enemy targets. He was at the launching sites and only 20 meters from the missiles. In fact, he pressed the firing button. He was also among officers and men on several occasions. This is what we call great faith.

(U) 25 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) The time is 1100 hours. The enemy carried out a raid on the positions of anti-aircraft Battalion 1040 under Brigade 223 and anti-aircraft Battalion 852 under my command.

(U) The phone rang in my office.

(U) Sir, some of our men were martyred and others wounded.

(U) God rest their souls in peace.

(U) At 1400 hours I decided to fire 10 missiles in the biggest strike since the aggression. I issued orders to the First Maintenance Unit to prepare al-Husayn Missiles Mark-3. I also issued orders for the missiles to be fueled by the technical batteries. Moreover, I took precautionary measures concerning the equipment of Brigade 223.

(U) At 1840 hours, we fired eight missiles against the Zionist entity. Two fell on Haifa and six on Tel Aviv.

(U) At 2227 hours the same evening, we fired two missiles on enemy headquarters in Riyadh. Were avenging for the blood of our righteous martyrs?

(U) They were the fourth and fifth strikes at the Zionist entity and the fourth on enemy targets in Saudi Arabia. (more) 10 nov i

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(U) 26 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) At 0330 hours, we carried out the fifth strike on enemy targets in Saudi Arabia with one missile. The target was in Dhahran.

(U) At noon, surrounded by my officers, I must have gone into a reverie. For I roamed the streets of beloved Palestine, the holy Arab land and spot from which Prophet Muhammad ascended to the seven heavens. How beautiful Haifa looked also from the sea! There was a pause. Then my eyes focused on the bright green patches on the big map of Palestine I posted on the wall. It was indeed huge with a 6,000/1 scale and its squares had markings related to our operations. That map continued to be the subject of our pride and admiration as it represented the land and the cause of our struggle, the Palestine question.

(U) At 2200 hours, as I was still working on the coordinates with the help of the squares on the map when the phone rang. The speaker on the other side was the commander of Brigade 224 informing me about the presence of enemy infiltrators in the western region. I immediately ordered protection for the launchers as first priority. I then ordered setting up roadblocks all along the highway, using troops from the commando brigade of the 1V Army Corps to protect roads and bridges. I emphasized that the troops must stay close to the launchers like personal guards.

(U) I ordered Brigade 224 to help capture or liquidate the infiltrators. Meanwhile, I informed the general command of the Armed Forces about the subject and at the same time checked the order for the sixth strike on the Zionist entity and hostile targets in Saudi Arabia.

(U) At 2250 hours, a missile was fired on an enemy target in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. And at 2300 hours, four missiles were fired on Tel Aviv and one on Haifa.

(U) 27 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) I was studying the leader's 21 January 1991 order turning over the Missiles Directorate to the Missile Corps Command when the commander of Brigade 224 called to say that our units succeeded in capturing a group of infiltrators and killing some of them. The commander said that they found in their possession weapons, ammunition, compasses, and radio communication equipment, as well as maps. He said the infiltrators spent the whole of last week near Sa'd Base and then walked to the 180 km area.

(U) Didn't I say that God is our protector from the eyes and plots of the enemies?

(U) 28 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) I issued instructions on future use of equipment and the need for precaution, concealment, preservation of launchers, reduction of the active force, and maintenance work on launchers. I assigned the role of supervision to the reservist and maintenance units, and emphasized the need for everyone to be ready to carry out major strikes with full force in certain cases.

(U) My instructions also called for continuing work on more than one axis and area, both in the west or the east, and the need to tighten security on roads and bridges and to speed up work in general. For I noticed that some command units tended to be a bit slow.

(U) Furthermore, my instructions called for closer liaison and communication, as I was not satisfied with some of the measures taken by Brigade 223 which affected control operations.

(U) "The enemy has lost its senses completely," cried out Captain Faris Hazim, the command operations officer I nicknamed "sprightly officer!" My recollection of Captain Faris, when I saw him for the first time in a missile unit, was that he spoke softly and moved slowly. So, I was surprised to find him in this place which called for quick action. But, it is a fact that I could no longer dispense with his work. That calm facade hid a brilliant brain. So, we got accustomed to listening patiently to his words, which remained calm even in the most sensitive and crucial moments.

(U) What is it? I asked.

(U) The enemy is directing intense fire on al-Qa'im, he said.

(U) There is nothing new about that, I remarked.

(U) He said: The new thing is that the enemy has directed its fire on the highway between Kilometers 160 and 190, bombing civilian cars and trucks coming from Jordan. The enemy is killing defenseless children and civilians in tents.

(U) O God, take vengeance on the Zionists, the American tyrants, and their collaborators among the traitors of our nation in this world and the life hereafter; and have mercy on all of our martyrs.

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(U) Staff brigadier General 'Abd-al-Qadir and Colonel Ghanim needed an explanation. I told them: The matter is very simple. The enemy is under the wrong impression that the civilian trucks and cars are camouflage for our launchers, or that they carried missiles, or that some of our weapons are in bedouin tents.

(U) Indeed, the enemy went crazy. It covered the region day and night. Its infiltration also continued by helicopter and land. Nevertheless, our missiles continue to be hurled on them from the same region, thanks to the mighty efforts of our officers and NOC's. Indeed, I can still imagine the NCO truck driver waiting for the missile to be launched to whisk the launcher away to another safe hiding place.

(U) This is the spirit of chivalry and nobility which Saddam Husayn instilled in everyone of us. This is the bright picture, which is reminiscent of the heroism of the first Arab era.

(U) At 1845 hours, the 19th battery fired a missile in the direction of a hostile target in Riyadh. It was followed by the fourth battery, which fired another missile in the direction of Tel Aviv at 2205 hours. At 2230 hours, the Operational Missile Control Center informed us about the results of the air raids on the southern sector, where a tactical launcher belonging to the second battalion of Brigade 225 was hit. Two officers and two men were martyred and other fighters were injured.

(U) The director of the air force intelligence provided me with a precise map of Hafr al-Batin, which he found in the possession of a captured enemy pilot. The map proved very useful in my work.

(U) The commander in chief declared 29 and 30 January as rest days for the missile units. I got the order through the president's aide-de-camp at night.

(U) 29 January 1991

(U) At 1000 hours, I ordered the return of Brigade 224 to its shelters in Baghdad. And at 1200, I ordered Brigade 223 to deploy in Ba'qubah. I also ordered the missile maintenance commander to vacate the belongings and stores of the First Maintenance Unit from al-Ramadi to safer areas.

(U) At 1230 hours, two enemy helicopters approached Kilometer 160 area in the western region. At 1600 hours, the first battalion of the first commando brigade of the 1V Army Corps was prepared to open the road between al-Muhammadiyah and al-Rutbah as the enemy occupied a position 10 kilometers east of al-Rutbah. I ordered the battalion to accomplish the task by 2000 hours. We estimated the hostile force at a battalion minus a company.

(U) The president's aide-de-camp brought a message containing an order to resume the attack on enemy targets after the two-day rest, but also stressing the need to be more careful and to use only one or two missiles at a time.

(U) 30 January 1991

(U) At 0100 hours, the first commando brigade informed us that it searched the road from Kilometer 190 to al-Rutbah without tracing the enemy.

(U) The security authorities informed us once again that hostile reconnaissance vehicles were

sighted five kilometers east of al-Rutbah. The second battalion from commando brigade was ordered to search the region between the old road and the highway.

(U) I sent a follow-up to the instructions I issued the past two days to Brigade 224 and the commander of the first special task force on the camouflage of launchers, deception methods, protection, and coordination on protecting and camouflaging units, and laying ambushes for enemy aircraft with Strella missiles to shoot them down. (more) 5 nov (b)(3)

(U) I issued orders for preparation to fire one missile on Tel Aviv at 1730 hours on 31 January.

(U) I submitted a report on our strikes from 18 to 28 January, as well as other details as follows:

- (U) The number of missiles were 52--28 on the Zionist entity and 24 on hostile targets in Saudi Arabia. I explained the targets.
- (U) The average daily firing in general was four and one quarter missiles; one and one quarter missiles by Iraqi launchers and three missiles by other launchers daily.
- (U) The firing was carried out from 11 launching sites in five different parts of the country and on three axes.
- (U) Our units were subjected to hostile air and missile bombing and infiltration operations. Seven infiltrators were captured.
- (U) Our losses were: One officer and five soldiers martyred and seven officers and 41 men injured.
- (U) The enemy hit nine fixed bases -- which were not in use, since we depended on mobile bases only -- out of a total of 28 bases; 17 vehicles; and 3 anti-aircraft guns. It took the enemy 43 full days to hit the fixed and camouflage bases. Still, it did not hit them all. Yet, the accursed Schwarzkopf claims that they destroyed them all along with other mobile launchers on the first day.
- (U) The balance of our missiles and warheads.
- (U) I presented the problem of protection and the need for more units to insure a suitable environment for action, since our operations covered a very long axis of 1,180 kilometers. The western region alone is 530 kilometers long. It was also exposed to hostile landing and infiltration attempts.

(U) I inquired from the Military Intelligence Directorate about the information they obtained from the infiltrators who were captured on the night of 26-27 January concerning our positions and bases in the western sector.

(U) We transferred some batteries belonging to anti-aircraft Battalion 852--which were placed at our disposal by the 11th Division--from our command to the command of Brigade 223 to protect its units.

(U) The number of Ra'd (Luna) Missiles and Tariq (Astras) Missiles fired to this day in the sectors of the various army corps in Kuwait was 40, and 925 respectively.

(U) 31 January 1991 [subtitle]

(U) The Military Intelligence Directorate said that the task of the enemy infiltrators was to rescue enemy pilots and monitor, observe, and gather information on Iraqi weapons. It added: There are three British groups in the desert areas in Iraqi territory. Each group consists of eight persons. The one captured is the northern one. The search is continuing to track down the central and southern groups. Our units have been instructed to be more careful.

(U) We seized a Land Rover with weapons and equipment in al-Anbar Base after wounding its driver. The vehicle, which belonged to a British patrol, was handed to the Military Intelligence

Directorate. (more) 10 nov

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(U) I raised the receiver to hear the voice of chief of staff, General Husayn Rashid, loud and clear from the south.

(U) How are you Abu-Muhammad?

(U) Fine, sir. May God give you strength.

(U) How about the men?

(U) Fine, sir, and the morale is high. We wish you well.

(U) Don't forget the fan, he remarked cryptically.

(U) Yes sir, how could I forget!

(U) Staff Lieutenant General Sultan Hashim, the assistant chief for operations, then took the phone from the chief of staff and asked me to take care of my men and be careful. He then said laughingly: As the chief of staff said, be like a fan.

(U) The meaning was clear to me. They were emphasizing the need to keep the launchers moving from one place to another for protection.

(U) I have been following the situation in the western region since 0700 hours. Because the commander of the first commando brigade of the 1V Army Corps told me that there was air and artillery bombing on the area between the old al-Rutbah road and the highway, especially the area behind the telecommunications tower at Kilometer 190

(U) I inquired from him about the source of the artillery shelling. He said it came from the southwest and covered the entire Kilometer 160 area.

(U) I took steps to deal with the situation.

(U) At 1150 hours, I held a meeting with the commanders of the brigades, the commander of the technical battalion, and the movements officers. I explained the steps for the next missile strike as well as the necessary measures for air defense according to the potential areas for action.

(U) At 1810, the headquarters of Brigade 224 informed us that six enemy armored cars were attacking the first battalion of the first commando brigade. I ordered the third battalion plus two companies, which were seconded to Brigade 224, to immediately return to the first commando brigade for support, provided that they were fully mechanized; meaning motorized. I assigned additional vehicles for the task force. I also informed the general command of the situation and requested assistance by alerting nearby units to give support to the commando brigade.

(U) At 1900 hours, the enemy armored cars withdrew while enemy aircraft began bombing.

(U) At 2125 hours, the third battery fired a missile on Tel Aviv. It was the ninth strike on the Zionist entity.

(U) 3 February 1991 [subhead]

(U) At 0050 hours, the 15th battery fired one missile on hostile targets in Riyadh. At 0237 hours, the first battery fired another missile on Tel Aviv.

(U) I and the staff officers stayed awake tonight to work out next week's plan for attacking hostile targets in Dhahran, Riyadh, Haifa, and Tel Aviv. We gave a symbol to each target and were very pleased. But the communication officer, Qays Hasabalah Ahmad, suddenly fell ill. The resident doctor stayed with him. We, too, sat nearby to make sure that all was well. The officer was a real

professional. In fact, this goes for all the officers at headquarters. They were a homogenous group who cooperated with one another in the fulfillment of their duties. This experience has taught me command is not fear, but brotherhood, respect, and moral commitment.

(U) I issued the plan for the coming week. Then I prepared a strike chart for that week. I kept revising and amending the chart so everyone would know in advance what we planned to do and act accordingly. It is only fair to say that some commanders volunteered to take on even more strikes if they felt that they were in a better position to do so on certain days. (more) 10 nov

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(U) 5 February 1991 [subtitle]

(U) I looked for another place for my command headquarters.

(U) The president's secretary provided me with more up-to-date information on 12 targets in Israel received from the command of the Palestinian Force 17.

(U) At 2025 hours, the 17th battery fired one missile on hostile targets in Dhahran.

(U) 6 February 1991 [subtitle]

(U) At 1955 hours, the fifth battery fired one missile from al-Qa'im region on Haifa. It was the 11th strike on the Zionist entity.

(U) 8 February 1991 [subtitle]

(U) The time is 0045 hours. We continued to work hard, while the enemy was trying to find some trace of us in the western region. Someone told me that two hostile helicopters were searching al-Rutbah region for our units. I told my interlocutor: Rest assured we do not have missile units there other than the commando brigade.

(U) My interlocutor from the military movements command said: From which direction are you firing your missiles then?

(U) I spoke with the tone of a victor: God is with us. These missiles are God-sent weapons.

(U) May God give you victory and bless your efforts, the interlocutor said and hang up.

(U) I spent some time with Brigade 223 following the order to carry out the 10th strike on hostile targets in Saudi Arabia. At 0145 hours, the al-Husayn Missile shot up to pound the war machine assembled by the aggressors against great Iraq.

(U) At 1200 hours, I sat in the presence of President Saddam Husayn. Those were historic moments which continued for one whole hour. I sat before a leader who believes in the destiny of the nation and incarnates its eternal symbols by his sharp wit and astuteness.

(U) I wrote a message to all units of the Missile Corps Command conveying the president's greetings and best wishes for victory and honor, as well as the commander in chief's decision to honor their distinguished, heroic effort in striking the assembled forces of tyranny, evil, and aggression and fulfilling the will of goodness, justice, and equitability. The president was most generous as usual. He granted them 500 vehicles and bestowed on them 500 orders of courage. They really deserved this honor. The president was fully aware of the efforts exerted by the men in moving missiles, packing them, preparing them for launching, and hiding them from enemy monitoring. As for the men in my command headquarters, they worked day and night like a beehive. One group managed the affairs of the battle, another trained new soldiers, a third organized the honor lists, and a fourth followed up on our units in Kuwait. They all surrounded me and accompanied me in my visits. They displayed a great a spirit of camaraderie and fun, lifted up morale, and promoted the spirit of affection and respect.

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(U) [Description of source: Independent newspaper often critical of government policies. Internet version is also available at <http://www.alarab-alyawm.com.jo>]

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