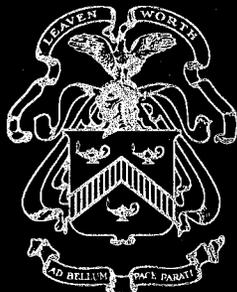


# *Certain Victory:* *The US Army in the Gulf War*

by

*General Robert H. Scales*



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**UNITED STATES ARMY IN THE GULF WAR**

# **CERTAIN VICTORY**

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*Desert Storm Study Project*

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
WASHINGTON, D.C., 1993

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# FOREWORD

During World War II, General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, introduced a series of short books by writing:

*American Forces In Action* is a series prepared by the War Department especially for the information of wounded men. It will show these soldiers, who have served their country so well, the part they and their comrades played in achievements which do honor to the record of the United States Army.

In the same spirit, General Scales and his team wrote *Certain Victory* to provide both the public and the military a clear picture of the Army's role in the Gulf War. The breadth and speed of Desert Storm operations left many participants unaware of the larger context in which they acted. This book is for them. To capture their story, General Scales essentially interweaves three distinct themes, each of which stands apart.

First, *Certain Victory* tells the story of the young men and women who, in the heat and blowing sand of Iraq and Kuwait, took the fight to the enemy and won a compelling victory.

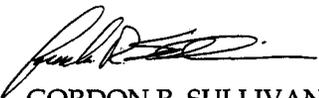
Second, that victory vindicates the tireless and often unheralded work of a generation of Army leaders who forged a new Army from the dispirited institution that emerged from Vietnam.

Third, *Certain Victory* provides a window on the future as well as a chronicle of the past. The reader, reflecting on the overarching sinews that General Scales extracts from the story, will gain insight into how future American wars might be fought.

We leave it to scholars with broader perspectives to write the definitive history of the entire period from summer 1990 to summer 1991. This account shows but one facet of a complex, interdependent effort, over many years, by Saudi, American, and other nations' forces who formed the Coalition. Together they shouldered the responsibility for defending against naked aggression, and together planned and conducted operations in Iraq and Kuwait. Although these pages are filled with US Army exploits, "certain victory" was predicated on many nations' ground forces working together and teamed with similarly combined air and naval elements.

The ability to develop such joint and combined teams rapidly and far from home was never tested so dramatically as it was in August 1990. We should remember that "certain victory" was not assured for long, worrisome weeks in the autumn of 1990. In the future, we must maintain the training and the readiness of every aspect of our nation's capability to meet a similar challenge whenever and wherever it may be thrust upon us.

Washington, D.C.  
1993



GORDON R. SULLIVAN  
General, United States Army  
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# PREFACE

*Certain Victory* is a unique report of the Army's performance during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. It was researched and written under my direction by a group of eight officers drawn from many different combat specialties and backgrounds. Most are veterans of the Gulf War.

Our only instructions from the Army leadership as we did our research for this book were to uncover what soldiers term "ground truth." As such, *Certain Victory* is the first depiction of the war built exclusively on combat interviews and reports from units returning from the theater. The frankness and candor, as well as the color, derived from these sources have been carefully preserved.

In order to reach the widest possible audience, the study group went to extraordinary lengths to declassify intelligence and after-action reports as well as operations orders and overhead photography. We have also expunged as much of the Army jargon and acronyms from the book as possible. Many observations and insights are presented as part of personal stories or combat narratives. We hope this will help readers to better understand the issues and draw their own informed conclusions.

The focus of *Certain Victory* is the operational and tactical level of war. The political and diplomatic decision making that resulted in the Army's deployment to Southwest Asia is mentioned incidentally and only to the degree that it sets the stage for the war-fighting aspects of the conflict. *Certain Victory's* treatment of other Services and other nations' contributions to the defeat of Saddam Hussein intentionally focuses on those Services and countries that most directly and immediately impacted on the Army's mission. Regretably, time and space did not permit us to include all units and key personalities. For example, Colonel John Sylvester's 1st Brigade of the 2d Armored Division, the "Tiger" Brigade, receives very little coverage for its outstanding exploits, although its place in history is no less important than the other units we have covered. I hope to see the joint warfare aspects of Desert Storm taken up more thoroughly in another work.

No single Service or nation won the Gulf War on its own. The Army recognizes its dependence on the other Services and other nations in this and any future conflict. As early as 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, explaining that separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever, stated, "...we will fight with all Services, as one single, concentrated effort. Strategic and tactical planning must be completely unified, combat forces organized into unified commands, and each equipped with the most efficient weapons systems science can develop, singly led and prepared to fight as one...." Eisenhower's vision, vindicated in the Gulf, continues to be an important historical legacy.

My special thanks to General J.H. Binford Peay III, the former Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, US Army, for the latitude he gave

my team to pass on the ground truth as we saw it to the public. The work could never have been assembled in such a limited time without the exceptional work done by Major General (Retired) Thomas Tait and the officers of his Desert Storm After-Action Report Study Group, who followed the Gulf War from initial deployment during Desert Shield to redeployment after Desert Storm. General Tait's team amassed thousands of documents and lessons learned that tell the story of Desert Storm with more detail and candor than any war in history.

The precision and focus of *Certain Victory* were enhanced significantly by an editorial board that conducted a detailed and objective review of the final draft. Lieutenant General Ronald Griffith and General Peay chaired the board. Members included Major Generals Jay Garner, Daniel Christman, and William Stofft; Brigadier General Hal Nelson; Colonels Robert Doughty, Michael Harper, Thomas Leavitt, and Jack LeCuyer; Colonel (Retired) Raoul Alcala; Dr. Roger Spiller; and our three principal authors, Lieutenant Colonel Terry Johnson, Major Tom Odom, and myself. Major Eli Alford from General Peay's staff also participated in the board and in clearing the book for publication.

The writing and publication of *Certain Victory* was accomplished by a very small but extremely dedicated staff. Mrs. Bonnie Nealon was the lead editor and all graphics were done by Mr. Stan Erwin. Mrs. Amye Stephenson typed much of the manuscript and assisted with copyediting. Ms. Jean Cerve assisted in editing and proofing the final manuscript. Mrs. Linda Christensen typeset the entire book. Specialist Valorie Johnson assisted with typing and filing. The quality of their work is evident in the pages that follow. Most of all, the Army is indebted to a group of eight officers, ranging in grade from major to colonel, who put their souls into these pages. These men came to the project as combat officers, not writers or historians. The quality of their work is just another testament to the exceptional body of talent that comprises the American Army today.

ROBERT H. SCALES, JR.  
Brigadier General  
United States Army

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**In war, then, let our great object be victory,  
not lengthy campaigns.**

**Sun Tzu, *The Art of War***

