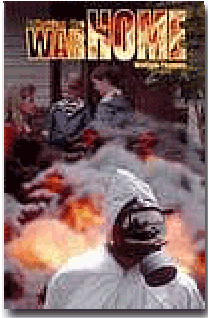


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From Chapter 3:

Radioman Tommy Harper had just left the command post bunker to get some sleep when the two ground-shaking blasts which had so rudely woken Brady sent him hurrying back to the CP with numb lips and burning skin. He arrived in the bunker in time to hear an incoming message over the radio net: "Alpha Bravo Six, Alpha Bravo Six, we have a confirmed chemical agent." Then Harper's own camp net broadcast an urgent alert: "MOPP level four. This is not a drill."

Just as Schwarzkopf feared, Iraqi ground forces in southeastern Kuwait were also firing salvos of FROG rockets across the border into the area where the 644th Ordnance Company was trying to catch some sleep. Rocket-firing Apache gunships destroyed some of those FROG batteries soon after their first salvos.

Harper recalls more people running into the CP to report that "a fine mist had fallen over the camp." Some soldiers "were complaining of numbness in their lips and fingers. One man even pulled off his mask, complaining of not being able to breathe."

The radio net was jammed with frantic messages requesting orders and a decontamination team, or relaying messages "downwind." Harper kept busy donning his bulky MOPP gear while taking messages and trying to "keep from panicking."

Brady and Harper's 644th Ordnance Company remained at MOPP level 4 for five or six hours. When 16th Support Group Headquarters gave the "all clear," the shaken soldiers were informed that they had heard a "sonic boom." Brady's M9 litmus paper signified exposure to "diesel fumes." Later that morning, an officer trailed by the unit's NBC man came into the bunker and told Harper: "Not a fucking thing happened last night - is that clear? No MiG bombed us, and it's not lying belly up in the Gulf. No decon teams. Not a fucking thing happened."

At a little past 0330 on the 19th, Mike Tidd of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 24 was standing security in Tower 6. From his post about 20 feet above the port of al Jubayl, Tidd heard a sudden, percussive *boom! boom!* off to the northwest. The double explosion was followed by a brilliant flash of light reflected against the overcast. Minutes later, general quarters sounded. Approximately 750 Seabees donned gas masks and ponchos. Minutes later, when the call for a chemical attack came through, they went to MOPP level 4.

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The construction specialists of the 24th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion were housed in two camps. Camp 13 was situated about seven miles west of the commercial port, while a smaller Air Detachment was located south of the Saudi harbor at King Abdul Aziz Naval Air Station. The double-explosion that followed the red flash delivered a shockwave powerful enough to knock over tents at Camp 13. At least one soldier was thrown to his knees.

As Tidd watched the light show from tower 6, shipmate Sterling Symms witnessed a "real bad explosion" overhead. The alarms went off. Petty Officer Symms joined everybody else running toward their bunkers. As Roy Butler later related: "All of my exposed skin was like it was on fire. It was burning like crazy. I couldn't breathe. I had to take my mask off and clear my nose. I immediately thought we got gassed."

As he sprinted for shelter, Symms smelled a sharp odor of ammonia. His eyes burned and his skin stung. Like the other Seabees around him, Symms donned full chemical gear for nearly two hours until the "all clear" was given.

Mike Moore was also in Symms' unit. Around 0300 he too was awakened by a loud double explosion. Before the sound of the bangs had faded, the alarms went off. "Go to MOPP level 4," a voice ordered over the unit intercom. Everyone inside Moore's tent donned their gas gear. Garbed like deep-sea divers in the desert heat, the men proceeded quickly to the bunker, where they stayed at MOPP-4 chemical alert until about 0700.

When the all-clear sounded, the Seabees emerged from the bunkers and ran to storage tanks dubbed "water buffaloes" to wash their reddened, burning skin. Though many men were convinced they had been exposed to a chemical attack, their commanding officer told them the explosion had been a "sonic boom" from a passing jet fighter. He ordered them to stop discussing the incident and return to barracks. Radio operators were later ordered to burn their log pages covering the incident.

Symm's unit was also told that they had heard a sonic boom. They too were ordered not to discuss the incident. But many of the Seabees were skeptical. Shortness of breath, and the instant numbing and burning felt by many of the Seabees were symptomatic of nerve, blister agent and mycotoxin exposure. Such symptoms were not indicative of the extremely corrosive red fuming nitric acid of SCUD missile propellants, said by their superiors to be the cause of their complaints.

Between 0300 and 0440, at least one and perhaps two loud explosions split the sky directly over the King Abdul Aziz Naval Air Station, three miles south of the port of al Jubayl. Near-panic broke out as Seabees from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion's Air Detachment struggled to pull on their masks and rubberized suits. As the troops emerged from their tents and ran to the bunkers, the men who failed to mask in time or achieve a tight seal smelled a sharp, acrid odor. Many saw a dense yellowish mist floating over the camp. Some Seabees began to choke. Others experienced such profuse nasal secretions, mucus fouled their masks.

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Seabee Fred Willoughby of Columbus, Georgia was "hanging out" outside his tent when he heard a prolonged, loud explosion. He dashed inside to get his gas mask. When he came back outside, pandemonium had gripped the camp. People were yelling, "MOPP-4, MOPP-4, not a drill!" A sired sounded. Willoughby thought the numbing of his mouth, lips and face felt just like the Novocain at his dentist's office. Shipmate Nick Roberts felt his exposed skin burn. A strange metallic taste felt "like sucking on a penny."

Miles away, in the north of the Saudi emirate, a driver/mechanic with the 601st Transportation Company was trying to ignore the war. Michael Kingsbury had taken leave to visit Riyadh for six hours' "rest and relaxation" when the first missile attack on that city took place. Three SCUDs came roaring in to explode almost simultaneously overhead. Kingsbury saw prismatic rainbow colors glisten in the sky as the chemical alarms sounded and everybody went to MOPP-4. By the time he had his suit on, Kingsbury was feeling nauseous. His nose began to run, his eyes burned a little, his skin felt prickly, and he had a sore throat...

Later that night, a sergeant with another Transportation Company - the 1113th - was outside the "Expo" building just north of Dhahran with about fifteen other troops, preparing to redeploy to Tent City. Suddenly the unit heard two or three loud explosions close enough to feel the concussion.

As Randall Vallee and his buddies ran for cover in school buses parked nearby, their officers began yelling for everyone to get back inside the Expo center and go to MOPP-4. Vallee dashed back to the building. Alarms were going off in the distance; nearby air raid sirens sounded after he had entered the building.

Vallee struggled into his chemical gear and sat down heavily, feeling nauseous and weak. His head throbbled and swam. His vision blurred and he began sweating profusely,

From Chapter 5:

The American army preparing to slam into Iraqi forces entrenched in Kuwait was the same Seventh Cavalry that had once followed a long-haired dandy after "redskins" into a place called Little Bighorn. Certainly the cavalry troops pushing canvas-topped Humvees hard across the Saudi desert were as malodorous as their forebears, whose hard riding and rough living had taken the fierce appellation "Dog Soldiers" from the Cheyenne they pursued.

Custer's elite troopers never saw the Great Spirit come riding over the South Dakota plains astride a coal black pony. What was one more assailant among whooping warriors warpainted with fork-tailed swallows and dragonflies? Seeking vengeance for cavalry massacres of women, children and elders across the Southwest, braves from six lodges overran five companies of dismounted troopers in a fierce fight that lasted just 20 minutes.

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Schwarzkopf was no Custer. This time, the Dog Soldiers were going into methodically scouted terrain whose defenders had been disheartened by 38 days and nights of bombing. But the general continued to worry about an opponent who had not hesitated to use chemical weapons against superior forces in Iran. Was he about to send his troops into a trap?

The ancient land of Sumeria and Mesopotamia was no stranger to war. But as the cradle of all civilizations reeled under the first gusts of a gathering desert storm, the scale of destruction quickly eclipsed any bombardment the world had ever seen. Ironically, the dark-skinned desert descendants of Earth's first city-builders who had given the West its first laws, its alphabet, the notion of zero which made arithmetic possible, the modern calendar, even "Western" notions of time divided into units of 60 now bowed under explosive concussions born from those 2,000 year-old concepts.

Lifting a page from General Sherman's crop-burning march to Atlanta during the American civil war, Schwarzkopf's aerial "scorched earth" campaign targeted at least 21 power generating plants and hydroelectric dams. Some targets were hit by more than 20 bombs.

Power failures crippled the world's first city. Short-circuits and power surges also burned out irrigation pumps which could not be easily replaced in a country whose ports were blockaded. As low-flying jets attacked croplands, barns and grain silos, irrigation floodgates were torn apart in cataclysmic combustions. Seawater poured in from the Gulf, once again sowing that fertile crescent under a mantle of salt.

At least four nuclear facilities had also been struck on the first night of bombing. Though they declined to release their test data, US government officials confirmed the presence of radioactivity in Baghdad following the bombing of a nuclear power plant in a northern suburb.

Further north of that stricken city, the diary-jotting Iraqi lieutenant grabbed an opportunity to wash up inside an armored troop carrier. He didn't linger over his ablutions, however, since "these vehicles are usually targets for aircraft." On the 9th, the war-weary soldier noted in despair: "The air raids began, and with them began my descent into the grave."

From February 8 to the 10th, chemical weapons storage sites were bombed at Kirkuk, H-3 Airfield, Nasiriyah, K-2 Airfield, Qayyarah West Airfield, Taji and al Qaim. CW stockpiles at Tikrit were bombed on February 13, followed by Habbaniyah-1 and -2 again on February 17. According to official military announcements made in the latter half of January (and subsequent on-site inspections), coalition air attacks blew up thousands of tons of bulk chemical nerve agents and mustard gas, as well as tens of thousands of pieces of chemical munitions. The amount of chemical warfare agents dispersed on high altitude winds vastly exceeded Saddam Hussein's wildest fantasies of a sustained chemical attack against his adversaries.

As the air war continued, satellite photos showed dense smoke plumes visible over western, eastern, and southeastern Iraq, as well as Kuwait. Gun camera videotapes of exploding bunkers, as well as imagery beamed from orbiting satellites, showed debris from the bombings dispersing upwards into the upper atmosphere, where south-flowing winds disbursed trace amounts of CBW fallout over allied ground forces operating miles away downwind.

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From Chapter 8:

On March 4, the three line companies of the 37th Engineer Battalion, assisted by the two teams of the 60th EOD, were each assigned 12 to 14 bunkers to inventory, wire with high explosives, and demolish. According to Charlie company's commander, "the explosive ordnance guys came through and said, here's what you're looking at. These are safe to destroy." About 770 troops from the 505th Infantry secured the area as the engineers rigged their demolition charges for conventional munitions. Among the 38 bunkers they strung with primacord was Bunker 73. The Wall-Mart size bunker was stuffed with Iraqi chemical munitions.

At approximately 1400 hours, the engineers blew 37 bunkers with a roar that rocked the surrounding area. A faulty time-fuse spared Bunker 92. The weather was clear, with the flag on a nearby "hummer" pointing southeast directly toward US positions in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

About 45 minutes later, one of Bravo Company's M8A1 chemical alarm sounded at an observation point set up by the engineers about a mile away.

On March 7, as the American engineers puzzled over unfamiliar lettering, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Gerald Jones was checking out a former Iraqi chemical brigade headquarters located near a cement factory in the vicinity of the Kuwait International Airport. As Jones scoured the area, his FOX sounded the alarm for lewisite. A close search soon revealed empty containers used for chemical mines. Jones also found 55-gallon drums filled with chemical warfare precursors. The MM1's operator, SSG Lawless, obtained mass spectrometer tapes for lewisite.

But four days later, Jones was blocked when he tried to obtain the results of his soil samples in order to determine his FOX's effectiveness. As Eddington relates, "The samples had been handed over to a highly centralized and secretive Joint Staff chemical warfare analysis cell, which refused to share the results of their analysis with troops whose equipment had repeatedly detected chemical agents during their reconnaissance mission."

On March 9, the Khamisiyah Operations Officer discovered crates containing more than 1,000 Kaytusha rockets transferred by Iraqis on February 26th and stacked in a huge open air pit situated in the southeast corner of Khamisiyah. The officer did not know the rockets contained sarin. Nor did he know that 6,000 artillery shells moved from An Nasiriyah to the "pit" on February 17th were chemical rounds. A noncommissioned officer was ordered to destroy all 13 stacks of rockets.

The next day, at approximately 1540 hours, approximately 859 5-inch rockets rigged with demolition charges were detonated, along with Khamisiyah's 60 remaining bunkers and additional warehouses. Overcast skies and poor visibility were suitably gloomy for the tragedy about to unfold.

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The wind was blowing almost due south as the 37th Engineers completed their mission at Khamisiyah and began driving south on Main Supply Route 8 toward the US and British positions. Stopping after about half an hour, the engineers closed the switch on a radio-detonator. An epic explosion rattled windows in Tallil. Khamisiyah's last stupendous detonation sent the contented contingent driving south towards Saudi Arabia for another four hours. Mission accomplished, they were looking forward to winging their way home to Fort Bragg.

Many of the officers involved in the demolishing of Khamisiyah figured that any chemical agents present would be incinerated by the ensuing explosions and fires. If they had consulted the US Army's Materials Data Safety sheet, they would have learned that instead of neutralizing this nerve agent, flames convert sarin to an easily dispersed aerosol. Under the heading "Waste Disposal Methods" for sarin, the manual specifies: "Open pit burning or burying of GB or items containing or contaminated with GB in any quantity is prohibited."

It was already too late. Like an evil jinn released from its bottle, an invisible cloud of sarin nerve gas mixed with talc-like desert sand was already pursuing the engineers south. The silent plume drifted over elements of seven US Army divisions. These included the 1st Mechanized Infantry, the 82nd Airborne, the 24th Mechanized Infantry, the 1st Cavalry, the 1st Armored, 2nd Armored and 3rd Armored Divisions, as well as support units comprised of reservists and state national guard units. More than 130,000 front-line American troops who had routed Saddam Hussein from Kuwait wound up being exposed to the most unfriendly fires of all.

CIA computer models later showed that the sarin fallout may also have passed over parts of the British 1st Infantry, as well as unsuspecting civilian populations as distant as Saudi Arabia...

Not far from Khamisiyah, a full-scale Shi'ite rebellion was underway. Street fighting was reported in six southern Iraqi cities, where Islamic fundamentalists battled Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard. On March 6, the uprisings spread from southern Iraq to the north, where Kurdish rebels claimed they had seized several towns.

As they tramped down a soggy road past burned out Iraqi tanks, a young soldier named Jabar and his buddy Hussein shared a bag of spoiled dates. "Food for cattle," Jabar called it. Jabar, Hussein and the other defectors had shed their uniforms and joined the revolt in bomb-blasted Basra. They joined another 5,000 or so Iraqi Army defectors and Shi'ite fundamentalists waving photographs of Iran's top cleric. Arrayed against them were perhaps 6,000 troops still loyal to Saddam...

Fearing American intervention in the uprising, Iraqi Air Force headquarters in Baghdad ordered helicopter pilots to take their choppers dispersed along a road near Army Aviation School number 5187 at as Suwayrah and attack "US airborne commandos" operating at Nasiriyah. As nearby Khamisiyah burned, the Iraqi Army pilots took off as ordered. But instead of American troops, they found only local residents of An Nasiriyah. In following President Bush's exhortations to rise up against Saddam Hussein's regime, the Nasiriyahns were considered enemies of the state. But they were still Iraqi citizens. When the fliers realized they had been tricked into attacking their own people, they held fire, returned to base and immediately departed their leader's employ.

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The order went out again. This time, other elements of the 84th and 106th helicopter squadrons carried out the attack missions. Flying light Alouette helicopters and a handful of Soviet built Mi-8 Hind helicopter gunships, Iraqi air force pilots began firing what were reported to be chemical rockets at the Shi'ite civilians.

From Chapter 11:

When Julia Dyckman went to war, she never expected to become a casualty herself. Even though Fleet Hospital 15 was the most forward-deployed Navy hospital, its location just west of the Saudi city of al Jubayl seemed safely removed from the front-lines. ..

Before Dyckman's tour ended in April, 1991, her hospital would administer 8,211 out-patients, as well as 697 in-patients and 90 combat admissions. Before Fleet Hospital 15's tents were folded, more than 8,000 Medical Encounter Data Sheets would be filled out and submitted to the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego.

During this time, battle-damaged Iraqi and US tanks were cleaned near the hospital. Oily "black rain" occasionally fell as she made her way to her tent. Sometimes, mysterious clouds passed directly overhead.

Dyckman's duties took her to the Casualty Clearing company at Camp 53, south of al Jubayl. She also traveled to other areas and hospitals in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to assist with discharge physicals, which she still considers "inadequate." Her unit handled its own "sick call," treating a troubling series of respiratory problems, inexplicable fevers, vomiting and diarrhea, persistent rashes, heart problems, and undiagnosable stomach and abdominal pains. There were also numerous adverse reactions among her staff to various unspecified vaccinations, as well as the pyridostigmine bromide tablets everyone was ordered to take.

This array of constant medical complaints would have been worrying back home. But the patients they were seeing were young soldiers who had been in top physical condition when they arrived in the Gulf.

Then Dyckman sickened, too. Soon after the first SCUD attacks shook the hospital tents, the navy nurse began experiencing strange rashes, stomach problems and flu-like symptoms. Blisters opened on her right foot. She contracted bronchitis, and developed high blood pressure and a rapid heart rate. Despite these disabilities, Dyckman and other sick members of her staff continued to work long shifts.

Today, like so many other veterans of that forgotten war, Dyckman's health continues to slide downhill. She still suffers from hearing loss, hypertension, aching feet, a recurring rash, a stomach ulcer, foot and abdominal pain. In addition to these ailments, chronic headaches, joint pain and diarrhea still dog Dyckman.

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"Each day starts with uncertainty," she later explained to a House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. "When you eat you are constantly sick and have intermittent diarrhea. Mobility is difficult due to swollen joints and muscle aches. Severe headaches are intermittent. Sometimes you forget what you are doing and what you were going to do. Pain and fatigue are constant companions. To complete your day you are forced to deal with constant denial from the Pentagon that `nothing happened' during the Persian Gulf war. These statements confuse medical providers who then doubt your credibility."

Joint pain, rashes, fatigue, severe depression and kidney problems are common among sick veterans, many of whom returned home aching, out of breath and too tired to carry out household or military duties. Despite painkillers and ointments, the headaches and rashes do not go away...

For more than 120,000 American GI's, as well as their spouses and families, the war is just beginning. Many victims of multiple toxic exposures share a constellation of seemingly unrelated symptoms including sudden weight gain, insomnia, incontinence, bleeding gums and rectums, sensitivity to light, chronic coughs, shortness of breath, hair loss, nausea, dizziness, blurry vision, blackouts and night sweats so heavy sheets had to be changed twice a night.

Valerie Sweatman, who felt a fine mist after hearing an explosion over the desert, currently suffers from headaches, exhaustion, fatigue, memory loss, nausea, muscle and joint pains, rectal and vaginal bleeding, and rashes. She has been diagnosed as having arthritis, headaches, and post traumatic stress disorder.

Patricia Williams, who was told by her superiors that a powerful explosion that shook her position was a sonic boom, currently suffers from headaches, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, memory loss, lumps on her arms and neck, night sweats, insomnia, urinary urgency, diarrhea, photosensitivity, gastrointestinal problems, deteriorating vision, shortness of breath, coughing, thyroid problems, abnormal hair loss, swollen lymph nodes, sinusitis, and chest pains.

Patricia Browning, who watched a Patriot hit a SCUD from her vantage at the Khobar Towers, continued vomiting until she stopped taking the pill. Now 38, Browning currently suffers from memory loss, severe recurring headaches, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, recurring rashes, night sweats, sleepiness, diarrhea, gastrointestinal problems, dizziness, blurry vision and photosensitivity, coughing and shortness of breath, two duodenal ulcers, chest pains, heart arrhythmia, and erratic blood pressure. Many of these symptoms originated while she was still in Saudi Arabia.

Mike Tidd, who had been on guard duty in Tower 6 when a double explosion lit the overcast above his head, now suffers from joint aches and pains, sinus infections, diarrhea, frequent urinary urgency, rashes, heartburn, dizziness, occasional low temperatures, occasional night sweats, chronic fatigue and small sores resembling mosquito bites.

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Terry Avery also heard the double explosion. Late in the summer of 1991, the demobilized navy veteran began feeling tired and having headaches. A private doctor told him he was probably working too hard in the sun. Avery, who says he has "good days and bad days," does not think he's as ill as the rest of the men in his unit. He currently suffers from fatigue, headaches, weight gain, itching, muscle and joint pains, memory loss and an inability to concentrate.

Rocky Gallegos, who remembers tasting "burnt toast" after a SCUD blossomed over the Saudi port, suffers from joint pains in his knees, elbows, and hands. He is also dogged by sinus infections and nose bleeds, narcolepsy, blackouts, dizziness, rashes, hair loss, dental problems, muscle pains and spasms, fatigue, night sweats, insomnia, nightmares and blurred vision.

Nick Roberts, who noticed a yellow talc-like powder coating vehicles and tents at al Jubayl, has since been diagnosed with a cancer of the lymphatic system. Roberts claims that several other Seabees who served at al Jubayl have developed lymphatic cancers.

Roy Morrow, who felt his skin burn and go numb after seeing a flash in the sky over al Jubayl, returned home with symptoms that have since grown progressively worse. Morrow currently suffers from swollen lymph nodes, fatigue, diarrhea, night sweats, low grade temperature, weight loss, aching joints, muscle cramps, rashes, blisters, welts and short-term memory loss.

Sterling Symms, who tasted ammonia after seeing a "real bad explosion" overhead has since experienced debilitating fatigue, sore joints, running nose, a chronic severe rash, and open sores which have been diagnosed as an "itching problem." He has also been treated for streptococcus infections.