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MILITARY

Bright Star

BRIGHT STAR is a biennial, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed, USCENTCOM scheduled joint/coalition exercise designed to increase regional involvement in pursuit of improved security and defense capabilities. It is a multi-national exercise conducted in Egypt and co-hosted by Egypt and the United States. This exercise is ARCENT's largest, and USCENTCOM's premier, OCONUS exercise. The numerical designation of the biennial Bright Star exercises can be confusing, since it is based on the American fiscal year in which the exercise is conducted, which begins on 01 October of the preceeding calendar year. Thus, Bright Star 2000 was conducted during the September-November 1999 timeframe.

Bright Star is a joint / combined exercise involving tactical air, ground, naval and special operations forces field training. Conducted every two years, Bright Star is designed to enhance military cooperation among U.S. and coalition partners, by strengthening joint commitment to regional stability and mutual interests. Participants include forces from: Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The exercise is an important part of U.S. Central Command's theater engagement strategy, and is designed to improve readiness and interoperability and strengthen relationships between US, Egyptian and participating forces. The exercise began in the early 1980s and is one of many military exercises Central Command conducts in its area of responsibility, which validates training and demonstrates U.S. capability to respond to various contingencies.

3d Medical Command Forward deploys to Egypt and provides command and control for all Army Forces non-divisional medical units and serves as TSC Medical Services Directorate. Coordinates area combat health services support for Bright Star forces in the area of responsibility. Serves as executive agent for theater joint forces for Class VIII, and veterinary service support. Conducts affiliation training and provides liaison with the Egyptian host nation and combined forces as directed.

The biennial Bright Star exercise traces its roots back to Egypt's signing of the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord. It was shortly after this that the United States military began to train side-by-side

Units

- 75th Aerospace Expeditionary Group

Facilities

- [Beni Suef AB](#), EG
- [Cairo West AB](#), EG
- [Mubarak Military City \(MMC\)](#), EG
- Numbered Fleet Command Center (FTX), Ras El Tin Naval Base, Alexandria, Egypt
- Coalition Visitors Bureau--Cairo, Egypt
- COMUSNAVCENT Hq Staff, Manama BAHRAIN
- Joint Exercise Control Group--Shaw AFB, Sumter, SC for CAX/CPX
- Numbered Fleet Command Center (CPX), Shaw AFB, Sumter, SC

[References](#)

Links

with their Egyptian military counterparts in the Egyptian desert. What began as small unit training has now evolved into a Joint/Combined Coalition computer-aided command post exercise and a tactical air, ground, naval and special operations forces field training exercise involving 10 countries and more than 70,000 troops.

Bright Star was first conducted in the summer of 1980 as a single service bilateral ground maneuver event involving only ground forces from the United States and Egypt. In 1981, similar bilateral ground maneuvers were conducted with a larger force from both countries. With this increase in troop size the logistics involved in conducting the exercise grew as well. As a result, in 1983 a decision was made to make Bright Star a biennial event, which it has been ever since. However, it remained only a bilateral ground forces event. Also in 1983, the newly formed United States Central Command in Tampa, Fla., became the U.S. command directly responsible for planning and coordinating all future Bright Star exercises.

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Bright Star began to evolve in 1985 as air forces of both the U.S. and Egypt were added to this ground forces exercise. This marked the beginning of Bright Star as a joint endeavor for the US. This marked the beginning of Bright Star as a joint endeavor – meaning more than one U.S. service was involved. Special forces and naval forces of both countries joined the exercise in 1987.

At the conclusion of Bright Star 1989, it was decided that the exercise would be held during the fall months instead of the summer which resulted in the exercise being conducted in the even numbered years since then.

Bright Star 92

The fall of 1991 found U.S. forces still committed to the Arabian Gulf Region following the Gulf War, which forced the cancellation of Bright Star 1992. The exercise resumed biennially during the 1994 fiscal year and Bright Star 94 went off larger and better than ever.

Bright Star 95

BRIGHT STAR 95 included nearly 60,000 AC and RC troops from the United States, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, France and the United Kingdom, as well as observers from numerous Middle East and Western countries. Air, naval and land combined operations were highlighted by the first-ever coalition deep attack with Apache helicopters from the United States, United Arab Emirates and Egypt

The Bright Star exercise grew again in 1996 when the US and Egypt added the NATO nations of France, United Kingdom, and Germany, along with the United Arab Emirates. In 1998, these countries added Kuwait as the seventh participating nation, turning what started as a small unit in training event to one of the largest exercises involving U.S. troops anywhere in the world.

Bright Star 97

During Bright Star '97, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force deployed at two primary locations, Pyramid Log Base at Mubarak Military City, and Cairo West Air Base. In accordance with the "single fuel on the battlefield" doctrinal concept, the Services blended Jet A-1, with additives supplied by NSPO, to make JP-8. Interestingly, small requirements for diesel, mogas, and JP-5 emerged, sometimes unexpectedly. The U.S. Air Force at Cairo West consumed the greatest quantity of fuel with consumption totaling over 2 million gallons. Working side-by-side with Air Force fuels personnel, the Egyptian Air Force provided into-plane support to all U.S. aircraft. The Egyptians pumped Jet A-1 from underground storage tanks, blended in additives to produce JP-8, and finally delivered it to U.S. aircraft in their own R-11s. The U.S. Army consumed much less fuel but operated under more challenging conditions. The 226th Quartermaster Company, 87th CSB, operated a 100,000 gallon Fuel System Supply Point (FSSP) in the desert at the Pyramid Log Base. They received Jet A-1, blended in additives, and ultimately issued 500,000 gallons of JP-8.

Bright Star 98

Bright Star 98, the ninth in the series, took place 12 October through 03 November 1997. Members of the U.S. Central Command's Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine and special operations components, and members of the Air and Army National Guard, conducted a joint/combined coalition tactical air, ground, naval and special operations forces field training exercise with Egyptian and select forces from other coalition nations in Egypt.

The George Washington Battle Group relieved the John F. Kennedy Battle Group 16 October 1997. No sooner had they turned over, the George Washington Battle Group began joint and coalition training in Exercise BRIGHT STAR 98. This exercise featured naval, tactical air, amphibious assault, undersea, special forces and ground combat training to improve readiness and interoperability between U.S. and coalition forces. It brings together forces from Egypt, The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The George Washington Battle Group and the Guam Amphibious Ready Group comprise 11,000 of the 18,000 US personnel participating in the exercise which also includes Army, Air Force and Air National Guard units.

Bright Star 99/00

Bright Star 99/00 -- the eleventh in the series and the most significant -- set the foundation for future ambitious coalition operations. United States Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted Bright Star 99/00 in Egypt during October and November 1999. The coalition has increased with the addition of the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, and Jordan and now includes the armed forces of 11 nations and more than 70,000 troops. The US component includes more than 2,000 Marines and 18,000 total U.S. military personnel training in the exercise. Thirty-three observer countries also are represented. While these countries do not have troops actively participating in Bright Star, they all have representatives on site to learn and see how the coalition operates. The nations with observer status are: Algeria, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, China, Congo, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Bright Star consists of three main segments: affiliation training, a computer-aided command post exercise, and a field training exercise. Affiliation training includes small unit training to familiarize participants with equipment, tactics, and training procedures in preparation for the field training exercise. The computer-aided command post exercise is designed to test the coalition leadership's command-and-control standard operating procedures at the operational level of war. The field training exercise is designed to practice coalition staff coordination with troops. The focus of this year's training is to improve readiness and interoperability among U.S., Egyptian, and other coalition forces.

Coalition forces helped defend Egypt as "hostile forces" tried to take control of the Nile river during the Oct. 27 through Nov. 1 field training exercise of Bright Star '99. The overall exercise scenario, involved "Orangeland" (the enemy) located in the western half of Egypt, and "Greenland" (an ally), in the eastern half. Orangeland, which has been hostile toward Greenland for several years, invaded Greenland a few months ago so that they could have access to the waterways of the Nile. They got halfway to the Nile before Greenland could stop them, but Greenland couldn't push them back out of the country. The coalition, came to help. During the air combat affiliation training, a three-day air campaign was conducted in which the coalition air forces took out some of Orangeland's defenses using simulated weapons. Meanwhile, friendly forces pushed Orangeland out of Greenland, with the exception of a small pocket of resistance near Mubarak Military City, Egypt. Near Mubarak Military City is where the field training exercise was conducted, with U.S. Marines and Egyptians acting as Orangeland forces, and the other ground troops there being Greenland. During the final "battle" of the war Nov. 1, Greenland successfully pushed Orangeland out of the country.

There are several training exercise events during Bright Star, and the largest joint coalition event is the Amphibious Assault Demonstration. In October 1999 six amphibious units from Egypt, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States participated in the demonstration, forming the Combined Amphibious Task Force commanded by Commodore Niall Kilgour, Royal Navy, United Kingdom. They received support from surface and air elements from five other nations.

The coalition forces trained together for a little over a week to conduct this precise demonstration by sea, air, and land units. It began with an inflatable raiding craft launch from amphibious units at sea as Egyptian F-16s soared overhead engaging French Mirage 2000 aircraft representing hostile intruders. The forces began their beach landing with Egyptian Rangers, Naval Special Operations Forces from the Egyptian Navy, and forces from the

U.K./Netherlands Landing Force hitting the sand, first, to carry out reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition. Close air support followed the landing with Harrier aircraft from the U.S. Marine Corps' 22nd MEU (SOC) (Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable) from the USS BATAAN. Then, aviation patrols with a pair of AH-1W (Huey) Cobra helicopters swept in from the 22nd MEU (SOC), followed by a Gazelle Light Observation helicopter and a Lynx TOW armed helicopter from the U.K./Netherlands Air Force.

It was then time to prepare the defense. The Royal UK and Netherlands Marines flew in on Royal Navy and Air Force helicopters, and the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) flew in a platoon of Marines from the 22nd MEU (SOC) on CH-46 Sea Knights. The coalition efforts were in full swing as an Egyptian Airborne platoon was inserted by a USMC CH-53 Sea Stallion. Finally, Italian soldiers of the San Marco Battalion and Greek Marines flew in on Italian Agusta 212s. The surface assault followed with U.S. combat rubber raiding craft and Italian and U.K. rigid raiding craft unleashing Greek, Italian, U.K. and U.S. forces from the sea. They were followed by a platoon of Egyptian Airborne Troops hitting the beach from a pair of British Landing Craft Vehicles from the helicopter carrier HMS OCEAN.

With the beach and immediate surrounding area secure, a wave of American and Egyptian Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs) landed. As the demonstration neared completion, several U.S. Navy Landing Craft Air Cushions (LCACs) parted the waters making huge water sprays. The LCACs hovered to the beach amidst a sandy cloud and revealed Egyptian M-60A3 Main Battle Tanks onboard ready to hit the beach. Finally, a USMC M-1A1 Abrams Tank completed the initial deployment of combat power in the assault.

MSC forces included the MPSRON One vessel MV Cpl. Louis J. Hauge. Additional sealift assets involved in the redeployment of exercise forces included USNS Capella, USNS Dahl, USNS Fisher, USNS Soderman and MV Asian Parade. The ships carried supplies and equipment for the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard, including rolling stock and containerized equipment from numerous U.S. East Coast ports to Egypt.

Bright Star 01/02

Bright Star 01/02 took place in Egypt 08 October 2001 through 01 November 2001 and involved about 60,000 troops. About 23,000 U.S. troops from all services participated. Bright Star 01/02 was not related to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. The main US maneuver unit was the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Carson, Colo., with an element from Fort Hood, Texas. Support forces included the 240th Quartermaster Battalion from Fort Lee, Va, and the 368th Cargo Transportation Company from Fort Eustis, Va. Other troops participated from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Spain the United Kingdom and Egypt. And computer-aided command post exercises took place simultaneously at places such as Shaw Air Force Base, SC. Ninth Air Force, located at Shaw Air Force Base, hosted the command and control portion of the exercise.

The 368th Cargo Transfer Company from Fort Eustis conducted port operations in Egypt, ran a cargo marshalling area and helped with airfield departure and control group operations. The A/DACG processed a total of 1,496 personnel and 700 pieces of equipment as of Nov. 1. The 240th Quartermaster Battalion from Fort Lee, Va., provided bulk and retail fuel for all U.S. participants deployed to Egypt for Bright Star. At Pyramid Log Base, the battalion's 58th Quartermaster Company operated a 300,000-gallon-capacity Fuel System Supply Point for JP-8 and a 30,000-gallon site for mogas. Fuel from these sites provided power for everything from the smallest of generators to the largest of weapons, such as the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's M1A1 Abrams tanks and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

Exercise BRIGHT STAR-02 was a JCS Sponsored, U.S. Central Command Executed, Field Training Exercise (FTX) coupled with a [Computer Assisted/Command Post Exercise \(CAX/CPX\)](#) to train the USCENTCOM and Service Component Staffs in Joint & Coalition Warfighting Doctrine and Procedures pertaining to The CENTCOM AOR (Middle East). It is the Worlds Largest Exercise with more than 11 Nations, and over 70,000 troops participating.

Bright Star 03

In August 2003 Department of Defense officials announced the United States will not participate in this year's Bright Star exercise scheduled for September. The decision was made in view of continued operations in the global war on terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere by the United States and other nations, said officials. The Bright Star exercise will not be held this year. "This was an extremely difficult decision," said Secretary of Defense

Donald Rumsfeld. "Given our current worldwide commitments, it seemed best to take a temporary break from this exercise, as we did after Operation Desert Storm. Bright Star is one of our most important exercises and reflects the value we attach to our strong relationship with Egypt." Bright Star is a combined exercise conducted biennially since 1981 in which more than 70,000 troops from more than 10 countries normally participate. The department regularly evaluates the potential impact of scheduled exercises on real-world operations. To date, 49 of 182 exercises originally intended this fiscal year have been canceled or rescheduled.

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