**War in Afghanistan**

**Part 2- 2001 The War Begins**

**Overthrow of the Taliban**

* On October 7th 2001, the U.S. launched military operations in Afghanistan.
* Airstrikes were reported in Kabul, at the airport, at Kandahar (home of Mullah Omar), and in the city of Jalalabad.
* Bush stated that Taliban military sites and terrorist training grounds would be targeted.
* Food, medicine and supplies would be dropped to "the starving and suffering men, women and children of Afghanistan"
* British and American special forces joined the Northern Alliance and other Taliban opposition groups on the Ground.
* Canada and [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Slipper#Afghanistan) also deployed forces.
* Other countries provided support
* **Mohammed Atef**- Al Qaeda's third in command was tracked down and killed by an airstrike by November 2001

**Air Campaigns Devastate the Taliban**

* Training camps and Taliban air defenses were bombarded by U.S. aircraft
* he strikes initially focused on Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar.
* Within a few days, most Taliban training sites were severely damaged and air defenses were destroyed.
* By November 2nd, Taliban frontal positions were devastated and a march on Kabul seemed possible
* U.S. and Northern Alliance objectives began to differ.
* While the U.S. was continuing the search for Osama bin Laden, the Northern Alliance wanted to finish off the Taliban.

**Fall of Kabul**

* On the night of November 12th , Taliban forces fled Kabul under cover of darkness.
* Northern Alliance forces arrived the following afternoon, encountering a group of about twenty fighters hiding in the city's park.
* After these forces were neutralized, Kabul was in the hands of coalition forces
* The fall of Kabul started a cascading collapse of Taliban positions
* Within 24 hours, all Afghan provinces along the Iranian border had fallen
* By November 13th, al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, possibly including bin Laden, were concentrating in Tora Bora
* Nearly 2,000 al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters fortified themselves in positions within bunkers and caves

**Battle of Tora Bora**

* **Tora Bora**- A cave complex and major hideout of the Taliban and Al Qaeda situated in the White Mountains in eastern Afghanistan
* Al-Qaeda fighters fought on at Tora Bora.
* A tribal militia steadily pushed bin Laden back across the difficult terrain, backed by [Delta Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Force), [UK Special Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UK_Special_Forces), and U.S. air strikes
* The al-Qaeda forces agreed to a truce to give them time to surrender their weapons.
* The truce was apparently a trick to allow bin Laden and others to escape into Pakistan
* Fighting resumed, probably initiated by a rear guard buying time for the main force's escape through the White Mountains.
* By December 17th, the last cave complex had been taken and its defenders overrun.
* U.S. and U.K. forces continued searching into January, but no sign of al-Qaeda leadership emerged.
* An estimated 200 al-Qaeda fighters were killed during the battle
* No American or British deaths were reported