

MAILED FIST OR PURSUIT OPERATIONS: AN OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS
OF VII CORPS DURING THE GULF WAR

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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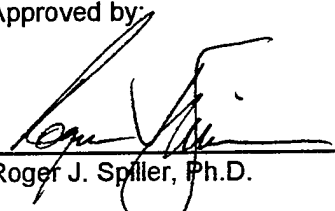
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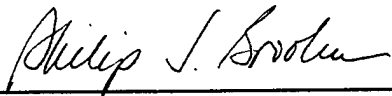
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study include the following statement.)

ABSTRACT

MAILED FIST OR PURSUIT OPERATIONS: AN OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS OF VII CORPS
DURING THE GULF WAR, by Major Steven Mark Zotti, U.S. Marine Corps, 208 pages.

This study analyzes the decisions of Lieutenant General Frederick Franks during the planning and execution of the ground campaign of Desert Storm. Franks has been criticized for being consumed with the synchronization of his multi-division attack to crush the Republican Guards. Criticism centers on the perception that his synchronization efforts over-complicated the plans and Franks' conservative command style delayed the fight. The study focuses on the magnitude and complexity of maneuvering an armored corps of six division equivalents over terrain one-half the size of South Carolina. Factors considered in the study are the command climates from CENTCOM through Third Army to VII Corps, correlation of forces, and time-space considerations. The plan development at the three levels, decisive points, and Franks' decisions throughout the ground war are also considered. At the tactical level, the three critical points analyzed are the decisions surrounding the breach of Iraqi front lines on 24-25 February, the massing of forces along Phase Line SMASH on 26 February, and the attempt to conduct a double envelopment of remaining Iraqi forces 27-28 February. This thesis concludes that Lieutenant General Franks was prudent and tactically wise to mass his divisions. Three factors contributed to the inability to destroy the Republican Guards. The dysfunctional theater command climate and the corresponding confusion in mission and intent. The lack of coordination and synchronization throughout the theater and Army plans. Finally, the inability of VII Corps to revise its plan to react to their overwhelming initial success.

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INTRODUCTION

Closing the Gate

During the now famous Hail Mary briefing, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commanding General of Central Command, answered numerous questions on the destruction of the Iraqi *Republican Guard* in the vicinity of the Basra pocket.¹ It was 27 February 1991, the eve of the cessation of hostilities for Operation DESERT STORM. A significant issue was whether the "gate" in the vicinity of Basra had been closed on the retreating and defeated Iraqi forces, most notably, the *Republican Guard* armored and mechanized units. A reporter asked Schwarzkopf, "How many divisions of the *Republican Guard* have you been fighting and how long will it take to destroy them?" . . . "We originally started with five armored and mechanized divisions," Schwarzkopf responded. "We probably destroyed one yesterday. We probably destroyed two today. I would say that leaves a couple that we're in the process of fighting right now."² Schwarzkopf was questioned repeatedly about how effectively the gate had been closed on these retreating Iraqi forces on whom the Coalition was focusing their last efforts. General Schwarzkopf stated:

When I say the gate is closed. I don't want to give you the impression that absolutely nothing is escaping. Quite the contrary. What isn't escaping is the heavy tanks. What isn't escaping is artillery pieces. I am talking about the gate that has been closed on the war machine that is out there . . . (pointing to enemy forces in the area of the Basra pocket).³

However, within 36 hours, General Schwarzkopf was fuming and in a rage in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Headquarters when he found out that VII Corps had not seized the Safwan road junction.

General Schwarzkopf immediately called the commander of VII Corps higher headquarters, Third Army, and verbally dressed down Lieutenant General John J. Yeosock, for

the perceived failure to accomplish a mission and what he (Schwarzkopf) took to be an offense against integrity. The CENTCOM Commander had already told General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President, that the cease-fire terms were to be dictated to the Iraqis at Safwan on 2 March. More important than the embarrassment of not owning that ground, larger implications loomed in his mind. Safwan was just a small road intersection, but it was the key to a whole sector that was, in Schwarzkopf's mind, "crucial to our ability to block the escape of the Iraqi heavy equipment from Kuwait and root out any remaining SCUD storage bunkers."⁴ Schwarzkopf screamed at General Yeosock for not having secured an objective that he had been ordered to seize by 0800 on 28 February with VII Corps. He demanded to know in writing why his orders to seize Safwan had been willfully disobeyed.⁵ After the cessation of hostilities, critics asserted that DESERT STORM was not the complete and decisive victory the nation and, more specifically, the military had espoused. Many commanders, politicians and the media immediately reacted and tried to lay blame and dissect who did and did not do what.

The major question of this paper: Should Lieutenant General Frederick M. Franks, Commanding General of VII Corps, have ordered VII Corps to conduct Fragmentary Plan 7 or conduct pursuit operations on 26 and 27 February 1991? Why or why not? Fragmentary Plan 7 was a deliberate attack on the *Republican Guard* if they stood and defended southwest of Basrah. The secondary question is whether VII Corps conducted Fragmentary Plan 7 aggressively to achieve the decisive defeat of the *Republican Guard*? Why or Why not? This paper is not intended to lay blame, nor will it attempt to. It is a research effort to help explain why the ground and air operations unfolded as they did between 24 and 28 February 1991. During the ground phase of DESERT STORM, VII Corps was the main effort of Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) and of the entire Coalition.⁶ This would mean that VII Corps should have been weighted with combat power and resourced before and above the remainder of the Army and other Coalition forces in theater. There is a great deal of debate in professional journals and military books concerning what VII Corps should and should not have done between 26 and 28

February 1991. The principle debate concerns Lieutenant General Franks' decisions to continue the attack east with the mailed, three-division fist towards the Wadi al-Batin, instead of attacking north and northeast with all or a portion of his corps, to cut off the Iraqi escape routes in zone west of Basra. Military critics assert that after cutting off Iraqi forces in the Basra pocket, VII Corps could have easily destroyed a greater majority of the *Republican Guard's* units or equipment and more completely satisfied the higher commander's mission and intent. These critics assume that Schwarzkopf's mission and intent clearly defined what he wanted accomplished.

The thesis research will address the decisions at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels to conduct the planned envelopment and frontal attacks in the two-corps plan, instead of the pursuit operations Schwarzkopf claims he personally ordered Franks to execute on 26 February. From the primary thesis question flows an entire series of questions that will be addressed to an extent in this paper. How did this problem occur? What was the doctrinal command and control relationship that should have existed between CENTCOM and Third Army? Why was Schwarzkopf so critical of Franks, whose corps had taken on and defeated the majority of the *Republican Guard*? Why would so many authors criticize VII Corps, Third Army and CENTCOM for poor execution of the Army's AirLand Battle Doctrine? Is anyone or any unit to blame for the perceived failures of Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM? Was Lieutenant General Franks too cautious and conservative? Were Generals Schwarzkopf and Yeosock too far removed from the battle in their Riyadh headquarters?

The research will focus primarily on Lieutenant General Franks, his VII Corps staff, and his major subordinate commanders in regards to how they influenced his decisions. The analysis of the decisions of 25-28 February will be made to ascertain why the eastern movement and frontal attack occurred instead of pursuit and exploitation operations northeast to cut off the Iraqi escape routes and destroy the *Republican Guard Forces Command*. The study of Lieutenant

General Franks, his decisions and those that affected him and his corps will be analyzed in a historical study of command.

The thesis objective is to recreate the battle command environment of Franks and his staff during the period of 25-28 February, and what they knew, when they knew it, and why they made decisions. There are numerous factors which influenced Lieutenant General Franks and his staff: synchronization, weather, fratricide, confusion in command relationships, and logistical resupply. Moreover, Franks and his staff faced enormous difficulty in orchestrating and leading the operations of the largest armored and mechanized combat organization in theater. These factors will be evaluated in light of their impact on the decision making process and outcome.

Then, the relationship between the VII Corps Commander and his higher commanders will be analyzed to determine how modern command relationships, and the joint and coalition style of warfare, impact on the commander. In this regard, the role of personalities and past relationships will be analyzed to determine their impact on decisions made between 25-28 February.

The scope of the thesis will be broad in its consideration of the critical factors that affected Lieutenant General Franks and the decision makers of VII Corps during the period in question. The thesis research is limited by classified boundaries in some areas, but should be able to glean the most critical information from open sources.

This thesis will offer insights into the commanders' decision-making cycle on the modern battlefield using DESERT STORM as a case study. This thesis should provide a picture of why decisions were made and analyze their ramifications. The thesis will be important to others who will benefit from any revealed clarity of the controversies surrounding the conduct of Lieutenant General Franks and VII Corps during DESERT STORM.

¹Norman H. Schwarzkopf, "Central Command Briefing: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Wednesday, 27 February 1991." Military Review 61 (September 1991): 96-108.

²Schwarzkopf, "Central Command Briefing," 101-102.

³Ibid., 107.

⁴H. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, (New York: Bantam Books, 1992):
475.

⁵Swain, Richard M. Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm, Fort Leavenworth, KS:
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 296-300.

⁶Ibid., 92 and 103.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The historical and political setting of the Gulf War significantly affected its conduct. This chapter addresses the nature of the Iraqi threat, initial theater plan development, and a description of applicable AirLand Battle Doctrine. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was motivated by limited objectives. This affected his defensive posture and committed forces. CENTCOM's basic theater campaign was modified significantly between August and November of 1990. Those modifications and subsequent planning reflect the intent of General Schwarzkopf and competing service interests. AirLand Battle Doctrine provides a means in which to analyze Lieutenant General Franks and VII Corps operations. These four areas provide a foundation for further analysis of CENTCOM and Third Army in chapter two, VII Corps and its planning in chapter three, and VII Corps execution of the ground war in chapter four.

The Iraqi Invasion: Saddam's Gamble

The nature of the Iraqi leadership, the strategic historical setting, and the initial Iraqi force commitments significantly affected initial CENTCOM plans. Saddam Hussein was a bold, audacious gambler, confident in his abilities to outthink the timid Americans. On 25 April 1990, Saddam met with April Glaspie, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. He boasted that the U.S. did not have the stomach for casualties.¹ He estimated that despite the anticipated size of any American deployment of forces, the Americans would withdraw from the conflict once 10,000 casualties were inflicted by his defense.² He based his estimate on experience when former President Reagan and the American public, had changed their mind about a national

commitment to Beirut, Lebanon, after 241 Marines and sailors were killed in a terrorist incident in October 1983.³ Saddam also saw Vietnam as an indication of the American lack of will to sustain casualties. He refused to accept continued U.S., United Nations, Russian and fellow Arab overtures for the prevention of hostilities with Kuwait because he was a proud leader who was idealistic and vain enough to believe that through an indomitable will, and unquenchable pride, he could persevere and be victorious.⁴

Saddam's anger and frustration extended beyond the immediate region. Saddam delivered a virulent anti-American speech at the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in February 1990. In the speech, he condemned the U.S. for their continued support of Israel and the monarchical Arab States. Two months later, he also threatened Israel with weapons of mass destruction to eat up "half of Israel if it tries to do anything against Iraq."⁵ The threats caught American and regional attention because they feared that Saddam had acquired the weapons of mass destruction that analysts had predicted would take another five years to develop. These verbal attacks alerted the attention of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency regional specialists who began to follow more closely the military and diplomatic activities of Iraq. Despite peace overtures and negotiated efforts by President Mubarek of Egypt and other Arab heads of state, Iraq began significant troop deployments to the southern Iraq-Kuwait border in mid-July 1990.

Some believe that Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait for numerous short-term and long-term purposes. In the short term, his motivations were to reduce the enormous debt owed Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, to provide an opportunity to seize and exploit Kuwaiti oil, to intimidate other Arab nations to relieve his war debts, and to displace the internal frustration faced in his country by the social unrest caused by the extremely poor economic conditions. In the long term, Saddam hoped that the Kuwaiti invasion would provide punitive leverage for increased influence throughout the Arab world, galvanize Arab resolve to confront and rectify other

regional problems, like the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and punish the arrogant oil monarchies who had over-produced and thus drove down the oil prices.⁶

On 30 July 1990, 120,000 men in eight of twelve divisions of the *Republican Guard Forces Command*, and numerous special operations units, were poised on the northern border of Kuwait as the spearhead of the Iraqi Army's invasion of that country.⁷ At 1900 on 2 August 1990, the army of Saddam Hussein invaded the small Persian Gulf Kingdom of Kuwait. In a matter of four days, the eight *Republican Guard* divisions slashed through minimal Kuwaiti defensive forces, devoured the country, and were poised on the northern border of Saudi Arabia threatening to invade that nation. If Saddam had defeated Saudi Arabia in a similar fashion, he would have ultimately controlled 20 percent of the world's oil production and 40 percent of its reserves. By the end of September, Saddam's forces numbered 430,000 with some thirty-six divisions in Kuwait and southern Iraq.⁸ The Iraqi attack was an obvious threat to regional stability, violated the Kuwaiti national sovereignty and territorial integrity, threatened the oil flow from the Gulf Region, and was a moral challenge to the United States to pay the cost, in human terms, and intervene in the conflict.

The United States ultimately responded to the challenge by unleashing the war machine that had been created to defend against the Soviet Armed Forces in Europe. By February 1991, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) would have under its control the largest deployed force of American and European allied forces the world had witnessed since World War Two. The U.S. VII Corps was the main effort in the Coalition's attack during the ground phase of the operation.⁹ Prior to the Gulf War, the VII Corps was one of the two crown jewels of the American forces arrayed defensively in Europe, opposite the Soviet Army. The deployment of VII Corps to the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations and its successes and failures is the topic of this study. (See figure 1.)

A primary factor in the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, like so many in the Persian Gulf, stemmed from post-World War I boundaries drawn principally by Great Britain. The 1922

British boundaries gave Kuwait 310 miles of Gulf coastline, while Iraq received only thirty-six. Iraq's only Persian Gulf port was on the Shatt al-Arab waterway. This had been closed after 1988 due to sunken ship clutter of the Iran-Iraq War. Kuwait refused to renew leasing rights to the Warbah and Bubiyan Islands which Iraq had used extensively to export its oil out of the Gulf after the Iran-Iraq War.¹⁰ Iraq accused Kuwait of slant drilling from Kuwait into the Rumalia oil fields in Iraq, robbing them annually of \$2.4 billion in revenues.¹¹ Moreover, Kuwait was exceeding its annual Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quotas, driving down prices and cutting Iraq's oil revenues by \$1 billion a year. Cumulatively, Iraq had spent \$500 billion in the war against Iraq and had accumulated an \$80 billion debt with Arab nations, 150 percent of Iraq's gross national product.¹² Iraq owed Kuwait \$10 billion and over \$30 billion to Saudi Arabia.¹³ Saddam felt that he had stemmed the tide of Islamic fundamentalism in the region by draining Iran of its manpower and resources and now he wanted compensation from his Arab brothers.

Tension increased throughout the late 1980s as the Iraqi economic situation deteriorated. The principal conflict was over oil prices and production quotas. By 1990, the price of crude oil was selling for \$14 a barrel because several OPEC nations, specifically Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait, had exceeded their export quotas, driving down prices.¹⁴ Saddam Hussein demanded \$25 per barrel and threatened the ruling monarchies with war throughout the spring and summer of 1990. Saddam angrily accused Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and UAE of pointing a dagger in the back of Iraq on the oil production issue during the July 1990 anniversary celebration of the Baath Party takeover of Iraq in 1968.

Saddam spearheaded the invasion of Kuwait with three heavy *Republican Guard* divisions and numerous amphibious and special forces units. The Iraqi forces easily overran the Kuwaiti armed forces consisting of only 50,000 men, 245 tanks, and 430 armored personnel carriers.¹⁵ By mid-October, Saddam had an estimated 430,000 troops on the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, and his total strength surpassed 500,000 by January 1991.¹⁶

The *Republican Guard* divisions withdrew from the Saudi Arabian border between 7 and 16 August and established defensive positions south and southwest of Basra.¹⁷ This redeployment could have been taken as an indicator that Saddam did not intend to invade Saudi Arabia, but it was not. What he would do next was completely uncertain and unpredictable. Regional and global alarm bells were ringing because an Arab nation had attacked and brutalized a fellow Arab nation. This was not just a local dispute; it became a regional and national contest for control of the flow of oil.

The Iraqi army in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations was organized into five corps with an estimated total of forty-three or fifty-four divisions by January of 1991.¹⁸ The defenses were modeled after the successful tactics of the Iran-Iraq War and organized into three belts. The first echelon consisted of minimally trained regular Army infantry divisions who were "the least professional and motivated forces."¹⁹ The echelon was organized in a defense in depth built around dense minefields, obstacles, and strong point defenses, supported by heavy concentrations of artillery and reinforced by tactical and strategic reserves.²⁰ The majority of the front-line units were conscript infantry divisions. As the air war progressed, these units would have to be held in place by *Republican Guard* execution squads. The second echelon of the defense was the tactical reserve comprised of the regular army mechanized and armored divisions. Their mission was to blunt any local penetrations of the first line of defense. The third echelon was the *Republican Guard Forces Command* which was made up of eight heavy and medium divisions.²¹ The *Republican Guard* divisions were the cream of the Iraqi armed forces. These units were the best trained and lead. They had proven themselves repeatedly to be tenacious fighters in the Iran-Iraq War. They were Iraq's operational center of gravity and would become the primary target for destruction. The *Republican Guard* was made up of two armored divisions, one mechanized division, four infantry divisions, and one special forces division.²² The *1st Hammurabi* and *2nd Medinah* were the armored divisions. The *3d*

Tawakalna was mechanized. Four motorized infantry divisions and one special forces division rounded out the *Republican Guard*. (See figure 2.)

In summary, the Iraqi Army was the fourth largest army in the world and the controlling military power in the Gulf. It had emerged from the Iran-Iraq War as "the dominant power in the region, and Saddam Hussein wasted little time making it clear he intended to exact his dues."²³ Iraq had displayed formidable military skills in the Iran-Iraq War. Iraq had matured militarily during the war and waged increasingly sophisticated warfare; incorporating large armored and mechanized attacks supported by dense artillery concentrations, long range SCUD missile attacks, sophisticated fixed and rotary-wing air attacks, naval warfare, and the ominous use of chemical weapons. Iraq had demonstrated an ability to be deadly; they killed as many as 20 to 30 thousand Iranians per campaign and 65 thousand in the last battle of the war.²⁴ The four key centers of gravity for Iraq were Saddam Hussein and Iraqi weapons of mass destruction at the strategic level, *the Republican Guard Forces Command* at the operational level, and the regular army armored reserves at the tactical level.

Initial Theater Plan Development

Significant American involvement in the Middle East began in 1958 when Great Britain began withdrawing from the region. Initially, the U.S. had built its Middle East strategy on the "twin pillar" foundation of Iran and Saudi Arabia. During the 1970s, the U.S. made significant inroads into the region; however, the 1979 Iranian Revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah and replaced him with a militant Islamic Fundamentalist regime. The U.S. subsequently shifted its support to Iraq throughout the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. The 1970's witnessed the growing importance of the Middle East due to the increased world dependence on oil, the growing threat of Islamic Fundamentalism and its associated terrorism, regional power struggles, and territorial disputes, which attracted American and Soviet meddling in Middle East affairs.²⁵

In late 1979, President Jimmy Carter identified the lack of a coherent U.S. policy in the region. His Presidential Review Memorandum-10 acknowledged that the U.S. was unprepared to respond to a crisis in the third world, most notably in the Persian Gulf.²⁶ President Carter defined U.S. interests in the region during his 1980 State of the Union Address in which he focused on articulating a no-tolerance clause against those who would meddle in the region, stating: "Let our position be absolutely clear. Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf Region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. Any such assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military forces."²⁷ The Carter Doctrine, applied to the entire Arab region, would be used as the diplomatic rationalization by Presidents Reagan and Bush to conduct significant military exercises in the area and to commit over 80 percent of our global foreign and military aid to the region.

Shortly after assuming command of CENTCOM in November 1989, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf directed his staff to revise the theater war plan using Iraq as the invading force of both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.²⁸ The next month he requested and was granted permission from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to wargame an Iraqi invasion during exercise INTERNAL LOOK in July 1990. INTERNAL LOOK-90 was to evaluate the supportability and acceptability of Operations Plan (OPLAN) 1002-90. OPLAN 1002-90 was the standing contingency plan CENTCOM had formulated for the defense of Saudi Arabia. As the Commander-in Chief, Schwarzkopf had laudable insight to identify the new threat on which his staff began focusing. Schwarzkopf highlighted Iraq's status as the fourth-ranked army in the world with ominous capabilities. In January 1990, he testified before the Senate Armed Forces Committee that Iraq was the pre-eminent military power in the Gulf and that it was assuming a broader leadership role throughout the Arab world. Iraq had the capability to coerce its neighboring states should diplomatic efforts fail to produce the desired results.²⁹

In July 1990 CENTCOM wargamed and conducted command post staff exercises of Operations Plan 1002-90 in an exercise designated INTERNAL LOOK 1990.³⁰ The defensive plan had a limited offensive component.

Should deterrence fail, the strategy is to rapidly deploy additional U.S. combat forces to assist friendly states in defending critical ports and oil facilities on the Arabian Peninsula. Once sufficient combat power has been generated and the enemy has been sufficiently attrited, the strategy is to mass forces and conduct a counteroffensive to recapture critical port and oil facilities which may have been seized by enemy forces in earlier stages of conflict.³¹

The July version of OPLAN 1002-90 designated the following units as the CENTCOM contingency force: 82nd Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), 197th Separate Infantry Brigade (Mechanized), a brigade from the 9th Division (Motorized), and two brigades of the 5th Infantry Division (Motorized). Additionally, two reserve roundout brigades would complete the 24th and 5th Divisions.³² The OPLAN, to be updated annually, served as a wargaming template for the respective national and regional staffs. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) provided guidance for an approval of OPLAN 1002-90. The Iraqi invasion in August of 1990 eventually caused the deployment of VII Corps to the Persian Gulf.

Between 16-21 July, a significant buildup of Iraqi forces was detected along the Iraq-Kuwait border. Saddam moved nine divisions of 100,000 troops into southern Iraq in this period.³³ Regional specialists at the CIA and DIA noted the deployment of corps-sized mechanized and armored units with significant logistical support. CIA and NSC regional specialists predicted an Iraqi invasion.³⁴ CENTCOM's intelligence staff noted that it was not a training exercise and that everything was there for an invasion except corps artillery.³⁵ On Monday, July 30, DIA noted artillery, aircraft, and increased logistics moving south.³⁶ Despite continuous diplomatic efforts to prevent the conflict, Saddam invaded Kuwait at 1900 on 2 August.³⁷ On the day of the invasion, President Bush's National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft was preparing Bush's Aspen, Colorado, speech for 2 August. The speech was a combined effort by President George Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to

discuss the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and the future of the global national security concerns of the major powers.³⁸ Thatcher, at the time, was the British Prime Minister.

The invasion initially shocked the Bush Administration, but the President responded quickly by indicating that the occupation of Kuwait "would not stand."³⁹ On 4 August the key national security personnel of the Bush Administration and General Schwarzkopf met at Camp David to discuss the options available to address the Iraqi invasion. OPLAN 1002-90 was reviewed and the defensive nature of the plan was discussed. General Schwarzkopf briefed that it would take four months to get the 200 to 250,000 military personnel in the region to support a viable defense and limited offense.⁴⁰ In the short term, he briefed that the division ready brigade of the 82d Airborne Division could be on the ground in twenty-four hours, and it would take three weeks to build up to the 40,000 ground troops with limited armor capability to establish a thin defense. President Bush authorized the mobilization of forces and the execution of OPLAN 1002-90 on 10 August 1990.⁴¹

Immediately, after the Camp David meeting, President Bush gave indications of his evolving desire to correct this international wrong. To the press corps, he stated his determination to reverse the aggression against Kuwait.⁴² Later, on 8 August, he explained to the American public in a televised address. "We seek the immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait."⁴³ President Bush stressed the defensive nature of the deployment and pointed out that the primary purpose of deploying forces was "to assist the Saudi Arabian government in the defense of their homeland."⁴⁴ After the Iraqi invasion, President Bush was quick to identify and articulate the American national security policy objectives relative to the crisis. The objectives were four-fold: (1) The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait; (2) The restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait; (3) The re-establishment and maintenance of the security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf; (4) The safety and protection of Americans and American nationals abroad.⁴⁵ When CENTCOM eventually translated these national objectives

into offensive military tasks, they created perceptions and expectations of victory that post-war critics argued were unfulfilled. After the war, these critics argued that the victory was not decisive or complete since significant portions of the *Republican Guard Forces Command* survived and Saddam Hussein remains in power.⁴⁶ The force options and deployments of units to repel the Iraqi threat set the seeds for VII Corps deployment.

The buildup of forces in the Gulf was at first a trickle, but ended in a great flood of men and equipment which exceeded everyone's initial expectations. In July 1990, two naval surface combatants were sent to the Persian Gulf to increase maritime presence and surveillance. Additional KC-130 support was sent to provide aerial refueling for the Kuwaiti Air Force to conduct combat air patrols over Kuwait.⁴⁷ On 6 August, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, with General Schwarzkopf in tow, convinced King Fahd of Saudi Arabia that if the invasion of Kuwait was not countered, there would be grave consequences for Saudi Arabia.⁴⁸ King Fahd promised: unprecedented Arab support, a U.S. authorized defensive deployment to Saudi Arabia, and hinted that he would support future offensive operations.⁴⁹ At 1600 on 6 August, General Thomas Kelly, J-3 for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, received the mission to order forces to the Gulf to "defend against an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia and to be prepared to conduct other operations as directed."⁵⁰

Throughout the fall, the forces originally identified in OPLAN 1002-90 were replaced with newly designated units who deployed into the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. OPLAN 1002-90 included the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and the supporting Air Force, Navy, and Marine units.⁵¹ The 5th Mechanized Division was deleted. Changes to the OPLAN included adding two brigades of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Armored Division and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment with supporting combat support and service support units.⁵²

By 8 August the Division Ready Brigade of the 82d Airborne Division was on the ground with support from the deployed 1st Tactical Fighter Wing. The brigade from the 82d

Airborne Division was little more than a speed bump for the mechanized and armored Iraqi units. However, the message was clear; the U.S. was willing to employ American soldiers to defend Saudi Arabia.⁵³ The first substantial ground combat force in theater was the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade which deployed on 15 August.⁵⁴ By 24 August, 35,000 U.S. troops were in Saudi Arabia and a more viable defense had been established.⁵⁵ By mid-October, the major components of XVIII Airborne Corps, to include the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Cavalry Division, and respective combat and combat support units completed their arrival in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations: A survivable defense was established along the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border. On 8 November, following Congressional elections, President Bush announced creation of an offensive option for employment if required. The VII Corps mobilized and deployed from Europe with the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions and the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment. Additionally, the 1st Infantry Division deployed from Fort Riley, Kansas, to form the third U.S. heavy division of the VII Corps. These forces were in Saudi Arabia by mid February. At this point CENTCOM had the overwhelming combat capability to conduct offensive operations.⁵⁶

Between 8 August and 10 October 1990, the CENTCOM staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff planners in the Pentagon, and various national security staffs were furiously organizing plans for potential contingencies. Despite the myriad of diplomatic efforts and the initial impact of the UN economic sanctions, it became apparent that Iraqi forces would have to be removed forcibly from Iraq. Saddam's conditions for withdrawal were unacceptable to President Bush. A significant political-military conference was convened in Washington, DC, on 10 October to discuss the offensive courses of action and the state of planning for a U.S. commitment to defend Saudi Arabia. At the conference, Major General Robert B. Johnston, USMC, CENTCOM's Chief of Staff, and other key staff members briefed the President and his key national security advisors on existing air and ground offensive concept plans.⁵⁷

On 11 October, Major General Johnston briefed the one-corps offensive plan that CENTCOM planners had developed with the allocated defensive forces. The basic plan was resoundingly criticized by many who attended the brief key figures like Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor; Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense; and Paul Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. In his defense, General Schwarzkopf said later that he had merely provided the brief via Johnston of what he would, if he had been ordered to, execute with the forces in theater. It was not his intended plan; he had already formulated the idea of adding a heavy armored corps to the Coalition to provide the combat punch needed for decisive offensive operations.⁵⁸ The original one-corps plan was essentially an assault up the middle of Kuwait with a fixing attack by amphibious forces in the vicinity of Kuwait City, preceded by a month long air campaign. (See figure 3.) The CENTCOM staff estimated coalition casualties to be 30,000 of 250,000, with 10,000 killed. In fact, the Pentagon shipped over 16,000 "body remains pouches" to the Gulf in preparation for the expected casualties.⁵⁹

Scowcroft argued that it was too costly to attack frontally into the Iraqi defense and recommended a sweeping wide envelopment from the west. It was during this meeting that Major General Johnston argued on behalf of General Schwarzkopf for an additional armored corps to provide the combat power needed for offensive operations.⁶⁰ General Powell reinforced and supported CENTCOM's position by telling the President that, "The ground campaign lacked the forces to guarantee success and relied too heavily on the air campaign and collapse of Iraqi forces. It ran the risk of not accomplishing the mission and generating unacceptable casualties."⁶¹ The ground brief was so unsuccessful that elements of both the JCS and NSC staffs began to develop their own courses of action to sell to the President with broad-sweeping envelopment from the western portions of Iraq. Their plans would ultimately have some influence on CENTCOM's use of VII and XVIII Corps.⁶²

The initial air campaign was also briefed by CENTCOM's Brigadier General Buster Glosson, the USAF Component Command J-3 for operations. The original air campaign

consumed four weeks with the principal design of targeting and decapitating the Iraqi command and control architecture, destroying 50 percent of the *Republican Guard*, and fixing and destroying 50 percent of the front-line defensive units. The Air Force officers argued that the air campaign alone could force Iraq to withdraw from the theater. The Air Force agenda and associated efforts had a significant effect on the execution of the ground campaign, destruction of the *Republican Guard*, and the ability to close the back gate on escaping Iraqi units from 26-28 February.⁶³

When Major General Johnston and other CENTCOM planners returned to Riyadh from Washington DC in mid-October, the one-corps offensive plan was revised significantly to an attack requiring two corps. Schwarzkopf received a two-corps concept brief on 21 October. (See figure 4). This concept called for the main effort, consisting of two Army corps, to attack west of the Kuwait border, beyond the Wadi-al Batin. The central purpose of outflanking the bulk of the Iraqi defenses was to destroy the *Republican Guard Forces Command*. In this early two-corps option XVIII Airborne Corps was to attack east of VII Corps. The I Marine Expeditionary Force and other coalition forces would conduct supporting attacks to fix and orient the Iraqis south along the southern Kuwait-Saudi Arabian border. After the two-corps Army attack, these forces would advance to liberate Kuwait City. The intent of the supporting attacks was to fix the Iraqi forces while the main attacks outflanked, unhinged, and destroyed the Iraqi tactical and strategic reserves.⁶⁴

The early attack schemes west of Wadi-al Batin were not the wide sweeping attacks that were developed later in November. There were two primary reasons wide western flanking attacks were avoided. The terrain west of Wadi-al Batin was a great expanse of featureless desert with numerous rocky wadis and washouts that would hinder armored and mechanized movement. The terrain east of the Wadi-al Batin was much better for wheeled and tracked vehicles. Additionally, a wide sweeping movement to the west would critically strain and probably break the back of the logistics support bases that would have to displace and support

forces over some 700 miles from the eastern support bases in Saudi Arabia, through Rafha then around to the final objectives near Basrah.⁶⁵

As a direct result of the disastrous 11 October briefing, General Powell flew to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 22 October to confer with General Schwarzkopf to determine what forces were needed to have an overwhelmingly offensive capability.⁶⁶ Powell personally favored the one-corps plan and had to be convinced to support the two-corps approach. His motivation towards a more conservative approach was that fewer personnel would be committed to the conflict, less mobilization and reserve call-ups would be required, and potentially the ground war could start sooner. As a result of these briefings, the Chairman was convinced of the need for additional forces to ensure overwhelming force ratios and ultimately success. Secretary Cheney and General Powell briefed President Bush on 30 October on the forces required and three different courses of action for the offensive ground campaign. The courses of action were the consolidated efforts of the CENTCOM plans, and those of the JCS J-3. Robert Gates, Assistant for National Security Affairs, commented that "What was striking about the episode was that the military put their gigantic requirements on the table-moving the VII Corps from Europe, repositioning six carrier battle groups, adding another Marine Division and activating more reserves--and Bush did not blink."⁶⁷ General Powell had convinced the President that they were preparing to win as quickly and overwhelmingly as possible with minimal casualties.⁶⁸

On 8 November, President Bush authorized the mobilization and deployment of forces capable of offensive operations. The additional forces comprised a reconfigured VII Corps from Europe, three additional carrier battle groups, the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) and an armored brigade from the U.S., the 2d Marine Division and II Marine Expeditionary Force air component, 400 additional Air Force aircraft, and the subsequent mobilization and deployment of 188,000 selected Reservists.⁶⁹

The U.S. forces deployed to fight Desert SHIELD and STORM constituted the largest American deployment since the Vietnam War. The Air Force ultimately deployed twenty-one squadrons and five bomber wings of 550 combat aircraft and 450 support aircraft, deployed at twenty-one bases. The U.S. Marine Corps deployed two Marine Expeditionary Forces with a total of 104,000 Marines and 222 fixed-wing and 318 rotary-wing aircraft. The Navy forward deployed 100 ships, 75,000 sailors, and six carriers to the region with 550 aircraft aboard. The Coalition was rounded out by armored and mechanized forces from Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Syria. Thirty-eight countries contributed military forces or assistance to the UN sponsored, U.S. lead organization.⁷⁰ Before the ground campaign commenced on 24 February, the total Coalition strength was 745,000 soldiers, airman, and sailors supported by 2,780 aircraft. Arrayed against this force stood the forty-three to fifty-four divisions of the Iraqi Army in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations.⁷¹ The air and ground campaign summaries provide an interesting summary of the magnitude of the perceived Coalition victory.

The American strategy evolved into a four-phased theater campaign plan. The components of the campaign plan were: Phase I--Strategic Air Campaign, Phase II--Kuwaiti Theater of Operations Air Supremacy Operations, Phase III--Battlefield Preparation of Kuwait and the RGFC, Phase IV--Offensive Ground Campaign.⁷² The air and ground campaigns of the Gulf War were initially determined to be extremely successful by defense analysts. However, revisionists have since questioned the effectiveness of Coalition forces. The air campaign lasted thirty-eight days and was sequenced in three phases. Phase I was the strategic air campaign, designed to decapitate Iraqi command and control, destroy Iraq's infrastructure, degrade the weapons of mass destruction production and delivery capabilities, and establish air superiority. Phase II was designed to fix and destroy 50 percent of the *Republican Guard* and establish air supremacy in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. Phase III's objective was 50 percent destruction of the front line defending Iraqi forces. The air campaign integrated 2,700 Coalition aircraft, representing fourteen separate or national service

components.⁷³ During the period of 17 January to 23 February, 94,000 combat, reconnaissance, and electronic countermeasures missions were flown. Total Iraqi losses due to air power were estimated at 1,685 tanks, 925 armored vehicles, and 1,450 artillery pieces.⁷⁴ The air campaign had a significant psychological impact on the Iraqi Army. It is estimated that approximately 100,000-200,000 Iraqi soldiers deserted during the air campaign as a direct result of the constant air attacks.⁷⁵ Iraqi tank crews took up the practice of sleeping hundreds of meters from their tanks because of the effectiveness of Coalition air attacks.⁷⁶ The Coalition's air forces clearly demonstrated the ability to destroy Iraqi columns at will. Their inability, however, to completely support the closing of the back door out of Basra from 26-28 February and associated coordination problems will be discussed in chapters two and three.

The ground campaign, DESERT STORM, was deemed initially to be equally successful. The Coalition massed twenty plus divisions with over 3,200 tanks at critical points along the Kuwait Iraq border on 23 February.⁷⁷ The relative combat ratios between Coalition and Iraqi forces was 2.7 to 1 in the west for the main attack by VII and XVIII Corps and 2 to 1 for the supporting attacks by the Joint/Combined and Marine forces in the eastern portion of the theater.⁷⁸ During the 100 hours of the ground campaign, the ground maneuver units were supported by another 100,000 air sorties. The combined effect was the rendering of twenty nine, of an estimated forty-three to fifty-four, Iraqi divisions combat ineffective. Iraqi losses in DESERT STORM amounted to approximately 3,008 tanks, 1,856 combat vehicles and 2,140 artillery pieces.⁷⁹ In the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, the Iraqis lost 76 percent of their tanks, 54 percent of their APCs and 90 percent of their artillery pieces.⁸⁰

The total collapse of the Iraqi Army within the first thirty-six hours highlights the success of the boldness and audacity of the campaign. However, post-war analysis indicates that as many as four of the nine *Republican Guard* divisions escaped relatively intact, with more than 842 T-72 tanks.⁸¹ Additionally, Saddam maintained and protected twenty-six divisions in Iraq throughout the war. He remained a viable military power, able to squelch the

Shiite revolts in southern Iraq and the Kurdish civil war in the north within months of the war's end. Many military and foreign policy critics asserted negatively that the Coalition had failed to achieve decisive victory, since one of the key Iraqi centers of gravity, the *Republican Guard Forces Command*, had not been completely destroyed as a military unit. Why the *Republican Guard* were not completely destroyed and how so many escaped will be a the central issue of this paper.

AirLand Battle Doctrine

AirLand Battle doctrine was the operational doctrine that formed the educational and training foundation of the Army forces committed in the Gulf War. The basis of Army doctrine is articulated in Field Manual 100-5, Operations. This manual has become the Army's capstone war-fighting manual.⁸² The 1982 version introduced the new and evolving concept of AirLand Battle, which would revolutionize the Army and Sister Services thinking on the conceptualization of operational art. The 1986 version provided the intellectual and practical framework for orchestrating the theater operational campaigns of the Gulf War. The definitions and concepts used in the 1982 and 1986 versions will be described and used in this paper since that is the publication that was the backbone of Army Doctrine for the commanders in Southwest Asia. AirLand Battle was the product of evolutionary and revolutionary thought, conceptualization and articulation, of how the Army should think, talk, and execute operations.

Morale and professionalism in the Army and the other services hit an all time low in the post-Vietnam War era. The armed services suffered because of the traumatic effect of losing the war, the domestic resentment of the military as a physical manifestation of American foreign policy, and the struggles of training in the resource scarce environment of the 1970s. The Army had professionally and intellectually "disintegrated into an undisciplined organization without tactical or organizational standards."⁸³

General William E. DePuy, Commanding General of TRADOC, led the revolution in military thought that helped transform the Army and subsequently the other services between 1974 and 1986 as part of the effort to overcome the Vietnam stigma. Army doctrine evolved through several stages during this period, as key military and civilian intellectuals grappled with bridging the gap between strategic objectives and small unit tactics. The overarching concept of operational art became the medium between strategy and tactics. "Operational Art is the employment of military force to attain strategic goals in a theater of war through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."⁸⁴ Campaigns were defined as the conduct of sustained operations to "defeat an enemy force in a specified space and time with simultaneous and sequential battles."⁸⁵ Operational Art provided a method to progress from fighting individual battles to orchestrating the sequence of battles and committing forces precisely to achieve decisive results.⁸⁶

The umbrella term for the total strategic, operational and tactical integration in the Army was AirLand Battle. AirLand Battle is "Centered in the combined-arms team, fully integrating the capabilities of all land, sea, and air combat systems, and envisions rapidly shifting and concentrating decisive combat power, both fire and maneuver, at the proper time and place on the battlefield."⁸⁷ The essence of AirLand Battle is that operations must be

rapid, unpredictable, violent, and disorienting on the enemy. The pace of operations must be fast enough to prevent the enemy from taking effective countermeasures. Operational planning must be precise enough to preserve combined-arms cooperation though battle . . . It must be sufficiently flexible to respond to changes or to capitalize on fleeting opportunities to damage the enemy.⁸⁸

CENTCOM, Third Army and VII Corps operations will be described and analyzed using elements of this AirLand Battle Doctrine since it governed how they organized and fought in Southwest Asia.

The four basic tenets of AirLand Battle Doctrine are initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization. Initiative, the first tenet, requires surprise in the selection of the time and place of attack. It uses speed, concentration, audacity, violence of action, flexibly shifting the

main effort, and prompt transition to exploitation. A critical aspect of initiative is the balance required between centralized and decentralized control. If operations are centralized, there may be less inertia or initiative; if decentralized, there may be a loss of precision in execution. Agility, the second tenet, is the means by which a commander gains and maintains initiative by successive force concentrations against weaker enemy positions. A commander must continuously read the battlefield, decide quickly, and act without hesitation and complete information. The third tenet, depth, focuses attention on the preservation and sustainment of combat power. The three subcomponents are space to maneuver effectively; time to plan, arrange, and execute operations--positioning; and the effective flow of resources to win. Depth implies protecting the force and maintaining momentum by thinking about the battlefield in terms of deep, close, and rear operations and areas. To exploit operations in depth, a commander must be imaginative, bold, decisive, and have foresight. Synchronization, the last and most complex tenet, ties together the three previously mentioned tenets. Synchronization is the "arrangement of battlefield activities in time and space, and purpose of which is to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point and time."⁸⁹ It first takes place in the mind of the commander, and then in the actual planning and coordinating movements, fires, and supporting activities. Effective and efficient synchronization requires "anticipation, mastery of time-space relationships, and a complete understanding of the ways in which friendly and enemy capabilities interact. Most of all, it requires unambiguous unity of purpose throughout the force."⁹⁰ The tenets of AirLand Battle Doctrine have several complementary subcomponents that will also be used in this paper to analyze the planning and execution of DESERT SHIELD/STORM.⁹¹

The three subcomponents that will be used in describing operations are battlefield geometry, command and control, and leadership. First, the battlefield and battle itself is discussed and described in terms of three geographic areas: deep, close, and rear. The deep fight focuses efforts to isolate the current fight and to influence "where, when, and against

whom future battles will be fought."⁹² The deep fight shapes the future battle by defeating the enemy's ability to dominate the close fight. The close fight, or main battle area, is where tactical formations close with the enemy and win battles, optimally at the decisive point and time. The rear area fight is behind the main battle or close fight. The focus of effort in the rear area is force and logistics protection, command and control, assuring freedom of maneuver, and emphasis on sustainment.⁹³ These battlefield divisions will be used to discuss the taskings of the respective corps and service components during the ground campaign.

The second subcomponent of AirLand Battle that will be used to describe operations is that of battle command and control. The means and ways a commander communicates the mission and his intent to both higher and subordinate commanders is critical to success in combat. The system of command is made up of command posts of various sizes, geographically located throughout the battlefield, standard unit operating procedures, and the commander's leadership style.

The system must be reliable, secure, fast, and durable. It must collect, analyze, and present information rapidly. It must communicate orders, coordinate support, and provide direction to the force in spite of enemy interference, destruction of command posts, or loss and replacement of commanders.⁹⁴

One of the most dominant factors in command post operations in the commander's personality and leadership style. This study will analyze the flow of orders, information, and intent between and among the command posts of CENTCOM, Third Army, and VII Corps.

Leadership is the third subcomponent that will be used to describe operations. According to the 1986 version of FM 100-5, the commander is the critical link on the modern battlefield, more so than ever before because of his broad ability to command and control and the depth at which his weapons can strike the enemy. FM 100-5 specifically relates that: "The fluid nature of modern war will place a premium on leadership, unit cohesion, and effective, independent operations. The conditions of the next battlefield will be less forgiving of mistakes and more demanding of leader skills, imagination, and flexibility than at any time in history."⁹⁵

Battlefield geometry, battle command, and leadership as defined in FM 100-5, Operations, and the four AirLand Battle tenets will be the prisms through which operations will be analyzed.

The concepts will be applied to answering three principal questions relative to the operational planning and execution.

1. What military conditions must be produced in the theater of war or operations to achieve the strategic goals?

2. What sequence of actions is most likely to produce the combination?

3. How should the resources of the force be applied to accomplish the sequence of actions?

The two higher commands and their respective missions will be described and analyzed relative to their successful application of the principles of Operational Art. The focus of the analysis will be on these commands and how they effected the actions of VII Corps. The essence of Operational Art is the "identification of the enemy's center of gravity . . . and the concentration of superior combat power against that point to achieve decisive success."⁹⁶

The strategic environment was wrought with many problems. The competing agendas of the CINC, the Army, the Air Force, the Marines, and their various subordinate commands set the tone for the dysfunctional command environment that existed in Southwest Asia. The development of the air and ground campaign, revisions to OPLAN 1002-90, and hints as to the problems and weaknesses in the CENTCOM organization and its form of command and control, will be discussed in chapter two.

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¹³Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, Vol 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 1991): 6.

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²⁵Triumph Without Victory, 47.

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- ³⁴Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 5-17.
- ³⁵Triumph Without Victory, 30.
- ³⁶Woodward, The Commanders, 196.
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- ³⁸Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 25.
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- ⁴⁰Triumph Without Victory, 68.
- ⁴¹Swain, Lucky War, 4.
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⁸³Swain, "Filling the Void," 148.

⁸⁴U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations - Operational (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1986): 10.

⁸⁵Ibid., 10.

⁸⁶Swain, "Filling the Void," 160.

⁸⁷Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, Vol 1, 238.

⁸⁸U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations - Operational (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1982): 2-1.

⁸⁹U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations - Operational (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1986): 16.

⁹⁰Ibid., 1986, 16.

⁹¹Ibid., 1986, 16.

⁹²Ibid., 1982, 2-213.

⁹³Ibid., 1986, 19-20.

⁹⁴Ibid., 1982, 7-3.

⁹⁵Ibid., 1982, 1-3.

⁹⁶Ibid., 1986, 19, and Swain, "Filling the Void," 165.

CHAPTER TWO

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS: DEVELOPMENT OF THEATER AND THIRD ARMY GROUND CAMPAIGNS

Once President Bush authorized the expanded force commitment on 8 November 1990, CENTCOM and subordinate staffs began aggressive plans to formulate and articulate an offensive option using two corps. President Bush's 8 November decision to double the size of the U.S. commitment also began the movement of VII Corps to the Gulf. The principle mission of VII Corps was to destroy the *Republican Guard Forces Command* in theater. The subsequent deployment and employment of forces, and the progressive formulation of the theater ground campaign plan must be understood to determine why Lieutenant General Frederick Franks made the decisions he did between 25-27 February 1991.

Between November 1990 and February 1991, CENTCOM and ARCENT developed the concept of operations for the ground campaign using two corps. General Schwarzkopf modified the ARCENT concept of operations to conform to his vision of the execution of the battle in several of these briefings. Based on the guidance received from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense, Schwarzkopf's staff developed six primary military objectives for the conduct of the air and ground campaigns. The objectives were:

1. Attack Iraqi political-military leadership and command and control.
2. Gain and maintain air superiority.
3. Sever Iraqi supply lines.
4. Destroy known nuclear, biological and chemical production, storage and delivery capabilities.
5. Destroy Republican Guard forces in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations.
6. Liberate Kuwait City.¹

General Schwarzkopf further articulated his intent as follows: "Maximize friendly strength against Iraqi weakness and terminate offensive operations with the [*Republican Guard*] destroyed and major U.S. forces controlling the lines of communication in the KTO."² The air campaign would focus on achieving the first three objectives singularly, and join with the ground forces to achieve the last three. The ground campaign would focus on achieving the last three objectives. Decisions made on 4 and 8 January 1991 were especially important to the theater planning. Once General Schwarzkopf approved the ground concept of operations and scheme of maneuver on 8 January, it did not change substantially through execution.

This chapter will focus on the critical factors that shaped the planning and the execution of the ground war for VII Corps. First, the chapter will contrast the command climates of CENTCOM and Third Army and highlight the consequences for Lieutenant General Franks. Next, a discussion of the theater battle plan will illustrate the constraints, restraints, and freedoms that influenced Franks and VII Corps. While describing this plan, the chapter will present the enemy force array and their capabilities against which the plans were conceived. Last, this chapter will analyze the consequences of the theater planning and the decisions that created the parameters within which VII Corps planned and executed its ground war.

The Command Climate at CENTCOM and Third Army

This section will contrast the command experience and styles of General Norman Schwarzkopf and Lieutenant General John J. Yeosock as well as the structure of CENTCOM and Third Army in DESERT SHIELD/STORM. The contrasting styles of these two commanders influenced how the VII Corps staff planned their fight, but would have minimal impact on how Lieutenant General Franks commanded during the ground war.

CENTCOM traced its roots to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, that was created in response to the 1979 Iranian Hostage Crisis. The next year, President Ronald Reagan converted the Rapid Deployment Force to CENTCOM, with an authorized 800-man standing

headquarters. Initially, the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, and 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division were earmarked for deployment with CENTCOM.³

For the Gulf War, U.S. Central Command was an organization of 675,000 men and women. The headquarters coordinated the efforts of twenty-eight coalition countries with hundreds of ships and thousands of tanks and airplanes.⁴ The Coalition was directed by a split command and control structure. Schwarzkopf commanded American, French, and British forces, while Lieutenant General Khalid bin Sultan, senior Saudi Arabian commander, commanded the Arab Coalition forces. The Arab Coalition consisted of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, the Arab Islamic Corps, consisting of the Egyptian and Syrian divisions, and all other Persian Gulf and regional allies organized in two primary commands, Joint Forces Command North and East.⁵ (See figure 5.) Most of these Arab units lacked the capabilities to fight on par with the American and Allied forces. Consequently, the Egyptian divisions were reluctant to fight without American reinforcements. This was to impact on VII Corps operations.

As the CENTCOM Commander-in-Chief (CINC), General Schwarzkopf had enormous authority and responsibility. He could delegate some of his responsibilities to his component commanders. A component commander has command and control over a particular service in theater and is a subordinate commander to the CINC. For example, in CENTCOM, General John Yeosock, as the Third Army commander, was the Army component commander. When appointed, a CINC's two primary warfighting commanders that can be designated are a Joint Force Land Component Commander and a Joint Force Air Component Commander. Each has overall operational control of allocated forces. During DESERT STORM, however, General Schwarzkopf retained the role of Joint Force Land Component Commander for himself. He did this for three reasons.⁶ One, the American forces straddled the Arab Corps, which made a unified command difficult. Two, he appears to have lacked confidence in Lieutenant General Yeosock. Three, he egotistically believed he personally was the only commander who could

orchestrate Allied, Arab, and American units. In short, General Schwarzkopf directly commanded and controlled both the Third Army and 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

Norman Schwarzkopf's personality and his command climate had impact on how Third Army and VII Corps planned and executed the ground campaign. His fame as the CENTCOM commander during the Gulf War propelled him to international center stage as a figure of almost mythic proportions. The composite picture of this physically dominant--6'4" and 240 pounds--figure is one of a complex man with "raw courage and an overriding ambition, but with a hair-trigger, explosive temper that often got him into trouble."⁷ In stark contrast, the "Bear" was also a charming, caring officer, who went to great lengths to look after his men. Schwarzkopf was "a superb briefer, talented speaker, and consummate actor" prone to use the media to his advantage.⁸

A 1956 graduate of the United States Military Academy, as a young lieutenant Schwarzkopf envisioned himself as a modern successor to Alexander the Great. He saw himself one day leading a grand American Army that would fight a decisive battle for the nation.⁹ Early in his career, he served two tours in Vietnam, earning three Silver Stars and two Purple Hearts.¹⁰ Moreover, his command experience was extremely broad and enviable. He commanded a brigade in Alaska and was Assistant Division Commander of the 8th Infantry Division in Germany. He commanded the 24th Infantry Division and served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Department of the Army. While serving as the Deputy Commander for Operation URGENT FURY, he became a national figure for publicly criticizing the poor Pentagon planning for the operation, describing it as having a "keystone cops quality about it."¹¹ He later commanded I Corps.¹²

Schwarzkopf took command of CENTCOM in November 1989. CENTCOM was considered a backwater, "the Pentagon's ugly duckling command."¹³ Schwarzkopf was "a terror as a boss, often furious when unhappy or dissatisfied."¹⁴ He consistently reinforced his reputation as "Stormin' Norman." General Carl Vuono, the Army Chief of Staff, considered him

one of the most "difficult, stubborn and talented men in the Army."¹⁵ Schwarzkopf had a uncommon combination of command experience that spanned decades and included Vietnam and Grenada. "That experience," commented Colonel Douglas Craft, "combined with a superior intellect permitted him to understand the totality of unified ops and their link to the strategic and political goals of the coalition nations."¹⁶

Schwarzkopf's relationship with Lieutenant General Yeosock was ambivalent. Often, he was critical of Yeosock in front of his CENTCOM staff.¹⁷ Nevertheless, he chose to leave Yeosock in command of Third Army when given an opportunity to replace him with Lieutenant General Calvin A. Waller after a ten-day absence for surgery in mid-February.¹⁸ At times he remained aloof from among his generals. He often stood back "while his commanders clashed, establishing a pattern that would come back to haunt the command when it [CENTCOM] planned the offensive."¹⁹ When Schwarzkopf was angered, he leaped down the chain of command and over supervised division commanders.

Lieutenant General Yeosock commanded the Third Army which was the Army Component Command headquarters for CENTCOM, tasked with support of contingency operations in the region.²⁰ During DESERT STORM, Third Army contained over 330,000 soldiers organized in two corps of seven divisions, two armored cavalry regiments and augmented by French and British divisions. Yeosock and his staff defined the army's three military objectives as 1) cut off and destroy the Iraqi offensive military capability, 2) destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and 3) minimize coalition military, Iraqi, and Kuwaiti casualties.²¹

One of the greatest impediments to the organization and employment of Third Army, according to its commander, was the lack of a coherent Army doctrine in 1990 for Army level of command. Yeosock said:

The United States Army does not understand the role and missions of echelons above corps units and theater armies. Theater armies, during force projection [operations], allow tactical units to train and fight. Theater armies take care of all else. This includes: developing host nation agreements, establishing logistical and administrative bases, developing a transportation network capable of port and airfield operations, transportation assets etc. The

Theater Army will assume inherent responsibilities such as POWs, medical, transportation, etc. These inherent missions will include support for other services.²²

Without a doctrinal foundation, Yeosock had to build a headquarters in the image of what he viewed as important.

Yeosock determined that the Third Army would fill three primary roles: component army command, theater army command, and field army. As the component command, it served as the Army coordinator and commander for CENTCOM. As a theater command, it resourced and supported deployed forces. As a field army, it coordinated the army fight at the corps level.²³ This trinity of roles, and Yeosock's personality and experience, had significant impact on how conflicts between CENTCOM, Third Army, and the VII Corps staff and commander were resolved, how information and intent were disseminated between commands, and how Schwarzkopf, Yeosock, and Franks would interface and work through problems in the execution of DESERT STORM.

At the time of the Gulf War, Lieutenant General Yeosock was a fifty-three year old with over three decades of service in the Army. Raised in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, he had graduated from Pennsylvania State University.²⁴ A cavalymen, Yeosock had commanded a squadron of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 194th Armored Brigade, and the 1st Cavalry Division. He also served as chief of staff, and assistant division commander of the cavalry division. He had also served as the deputy to Schwarzkopf when the later was the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. Through this assignment, Yeosock became acquainted with Schwarzkopf's personality and temper, allowing him to see through his superior's temperamental outbursts and get the information he needed. In an attempt to avoid direct confrontation, he used the Third Army staff personnel--primarily Brigadier General Steve Arnold, his operations officer--to interact with Schwarzkopf on a daily basis. Yeosock used personal access for private conversations and disagreements with the CINC.²⁵

In The General's War, Gordon and Trainor criticized Yeosock's lack of dynamism and quiet command style.

He had been assigned to head 3rd Army precisely because the Army had not expected a Middle East War. Running Third Army was a job the Army doled out to officers on the verge of retirement. Yeosock seemed to acknowledge the limited skills he brought to the job. He lived in fear of Schwarzkopf's temper and often sought to get Waller to run interference for him on minor issues. Yeosock also deferred to his Corps commanders on strategy and tactics, each of whom reinforced the conservatism of CENTCOM's strategy.²⁶

The reluctance of Yeosock to confront Schwarzkopf and his propensity to avoid frequent conflict significantly influenced the command environments of both Third Army and VII Corps.

The blend of Yeosock's personality, command style, and the roles he chose to fill as Third Army commander significantly shaped the two-corps fight. Yeosock defined his role as 'unencumbering' the two corps so that they could concentrate on training and fighting. He saw himself as a problem solver rather than a field army commander.²⁷ Dr. Richard Swain, in "Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm," captures Yeosock's overall command climate:

Restructuring the army HQ had to accord with a fundamental belief on the part of Yeosock that as a commander he commanded two corps commanders, not two corps. He believed his principal role was ensuring the sustainment of the force and the allocation of the force multipliers not otherwise accessible to the corps, especially logistics, air power, and intelligence . . . Yeosock was determined to deal only with the major issues and only with large units. So long as ARCENT, as the operational headquarters, could assign missions, allocate forces, set objectives and boundaries, conduct deep fires, and monitor progress, it was in Yeosock's view, synchronizing the operations of the two corps.²⁸

The CENTCOM and Third Army command environments reflected their commanders' characters and personalities. "Where Schwarzkopf was mercurial, forceful, and dynamic," noted Dr. Swain, "Yeosock was thoughtful, thorough, and circumspect."²⁹ The Third Army commander saw himself as a facilitator, while Schwarzkopf was an aggressive hands-on commander. Where Schwarzkopf was direct, Yeosock could be ambiguous. These differences helped shape the development of the theater battle plan.

Development of the Theater Ground Campaign

The development and refinement of the theater ground campaign from October 1990 through February 1991 was often highly contentious because beyond sound tactical and operational considerations were the competing interests of national pride, U.S. service competition, the never ending conflicts between senior officers' egos, and the pursuit of unit and individual glory. The single-corps theater campaign changed dramatically with the introduction of a second heavy corps and the realization that most likely the Iraqi forces would not continue to press the attack south into Saudi Arabia. The execution of the air campaign critically affected planning for the ground campaign. The CENTCOM and Third Army planners focused their efforts principally on how to counter Iraqi defenses

To focus the CENTCOM planners, General Schwarzkopf identified three Iraqi centers of gravity: 1) the command and control of the regime; 2) the enemy capability to use weapons of mass destruction, and 3) the *Republican Guard Forces Command* divisions in theater. He believed that the destruction of these centers of gravity were essential to destroying the Iraqi ability to remain in Kuwait and conduct future offensive operations.³⁰ The planners for the ground campaign focused on the destruction of the *Republican Guard*.

The Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti theater of operations had established a defense in depth by mid-November 1990 that would remain essentially unchanged until the commencement of the ground war on 24 February 1991. Saddam Hussein committed between thirty-nine and forty-three divisions by mid-November of a total pre-war strength consisting of approximately seventy divisions.³¹ In theater, Saddam had organized the divisions into five corps and arrayed them in depth from the Saudi Arabian-Kuwait border to Basrah. The total Iraqi assets in theater, by the time the ground war commenced, were estimated at 545,000 personnel, 4,280 tanks, 3,100 artillery pieces and 2,800 armored personnel carriers.³² These figures were severely challenged after the Gulf War. Revised figures are discussed in chapter 4.

The Iraqis based their defensive concept of operations on their successes in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-89. During that war, the Iraqis developed defensive tactics in which they had tactical and strategic reserves in layers behind front line divisions. These reserves were intended to block penetrations, or delay and defend to preserve combat power. In 1990-91, the Iraqi planners focused on five primary avenues of approach: 1) an amphibious assault on the Kuwaiti coastline in the vicinity of Kuwait City; 2) the coastline road from Al Khafji to Kuwait City; 3) Al Wafra to Kuwait City; 4) the Elbow; and 5) up the Wadi Al-Batin.³³ Accordingly, the Iraqis employed six corps in a defense in depth to cover these avenues.

The six Iraqi corps in theater were the *4th*, *6th*, *7th*, *2d*, *Jihad*, and the *Republican Guard Force Command*. The placement of the corps formed a terrain-oriented positional defense that was based on an erroneous analysis of the avenues of approach and an underestimation of Coalition air and ground capabilities.³⁴ The Iraqis assumed that Coalition forces could not navigate in the desert and that U.S. forces would be as road dependent as they were. The six corps were organized in three successive belts. (See figure 6.) In the first belt, just north of the Kuwaiti border, conscript infantry divisions occupied prepared defensive positions of mutually supporting trench systems with pillboxes, barbed wire, mines, and oil-filled ditches. Large artillery groups reinforced the infantry.³⁵ Behind the front-line, the first belt's tactical reserves, typically mechanized and armored divisions, were positioned to conduct local counter or spoiling attacks. Three Iraqi corps manned the first defensive belt. From east to west, the *6th Corps* defended along the Kuwaiti coastline; the *4th Corps* defended from the coastline to the Wadi Al-Batin; and the *7th Corps* established positions extending west from the Wadi to mid-Iraq.

The second belt was the operational reserve comprised of the *Jihad Corps* and *2nd Armored Corps*, located southwest and southeast of Basrah, respectively. These positions allowed them to counterattack significant penetrations of the front-line divisions. (See figure 6.) The *Jihad Corps* consisted of two armored divisions, while the *2nd Armored Corps* had one armored and one mechanized division. In the third and final belt, the *Republican Guard Forces*

Command, southwest of Basrah, presumably was tasked to counterattack and defeat the coalition main attack, once it was definitely identified. In the Iraqi grand defensive plan, the forward deployed divisions, corps reserves, and theater reserves would attrit and delay the Coalition attacks while the *Republican Guard* counterattacked to destroy the Coalition main effort.³⁶

The quality of the Iraqi forces varied widely. Some units were well equipped and proven veterans of the Iran-Iraq War. However, the preponderance of the front-line divisions were conscript units with minimal training and no mobility.³⁷ On the other hand, the *Republican Guard* had the best equipment, best training, and most professional and loyal officers. It also had established a reputation as the most fanatical. The destruction of the *Republican Guard* would cripple Iraq's ability to defend Kuwait, or pose a future offensive threat.³⁸

Once they had determined the essential enemy positions and probable courses of action, the CENTCOM and Third Army planners refined their plans with the intent of defeating these forces decisively, specifically the *Republican Guard*. Three factors played a role in the development of the theater battle plan: First, existing Army doctrine and how it shaped the decisions of the planners; second, theater level considerations from Schwarzkopf and CENTCOM on how the fight would unfold; third, the planning considerations of the Third Army staff and the competing interests of the VII and XVIII Corps staffs.

AirLand Battle doctrine was the base used to formulate a plan built on the balance of shock, attrition, and maneuver, to minimize casualties, exploit success, and overwhelm Iraqis. In the 1986 version of FM 100-5, the operational objective is described in this way:

The object of all operations is to impose our will upon the enemy...to do this we must throw the enemy off balance with a powerful blow from an unanticipated direction, follow-up rapidly to prevent his recovery and continue operations aggressively to achieve the higher commander's goals. The best results are obtained when powerful blows are struck against critical units or areas whose loss will degrade the coherence of enemy operations in depth.³⁹

According to the AirLand Battle doctrine, a commander must set the conditions to strike decisively and impose his will. He must shape the battlefield, weight the main effort, synchronize

the efforts of supporting attacks to ensure success, and maintain a flexible mindset towards sustaining initiative and momentum. The maneuver commander needs maneuver space that will give him freedom to shape the battlefield. The concept of weighting the main effort means reinforcing the designated force with maneuver units and combat support, like artillery, to significantly multiply their combat capability. Synchronization implies orchestrating the various systems and units on a battlefield to mass to destroy the enemy at the right place and time.

A critical subset of synchronization is a clear and responsive command and control architecture. Within this architecture, commanders receive and pass on timely information and decisions so that problems are anticipated and resolved before enemy contact. Less physical and more ambiguous are the concepts of initiative and momentum that must be fostered, groomed, and encouraged so that commanders can be bold and audacious in execution.

The CENTCOM and Third Army staffs began developing and refining the respective defensive and offensive two-corps plans once the initial mobilization and deployment of VII Corps began. Theoretically, in this type of environment, large armor and mechanized formations need vast distances to maneuver and the freedom to do so. For example, an armored division can consume a sixty kilometer frontage, and a division in column will run for 100 kilometers.⁴⁰ The American-led Coalition had the advantages of modern sophisticated armor, mechanized, airborne, air assault, amphibious divisions, and overwhelming naval and air forces. The two staffs had to develop a theater ground plan that maximized the growing Coalition strength while minimizing Iraqi strengths.

The development of the ground campaign was dependent on the success of the planned air campaign. Ground commanders would measure success of the air campaign by how many Iraqi forces were destroyed. In essence, the air campaign should have focused on the tasked attrition of the enemy so that the ground forces would be free to maneuver. Because the air campaign aimed at reducing Iraqi ground strength, it helped shape the ground campaign.

The CENTCOM air staff designed the air campaign strategy to meet Schwarzkopf's intent to "open a window for initiating the ground offensive operations by confusing and terrorizing Iraqi forces in the KTO and shifting combat force ratios in favor of friendly forces."⁴¹ The air campaign was divided into four phases: Phase I—Strategic Air Campaign to decapitate the Iraqi command and control structure; Phase II—Air Supremacy to destroy Iraqi air power and establish clear coalition air supremacy; Phase III—Battlefield Preparation to attrit the Iraqi forces to 50-percent of their pre-war strength; Phase IV—Ground Offensive Campaign to fix any reserve units who tried to counterattack the attacking forces.⁴²

The air campaign began on 17 January and had enormous success. Air supremacy was established immediately; however, the expected attrition of the Iraqi front-line and reserve forces did not occur as planned. On the eve of the ground campaign, the air campaign had destroyed 50-percent of front line Iraqi forces, but Iraqi reserves, to include the *Republican Guard*, remained above 75-percent.⁴³ The doubt on the part of army planners that the Air Force would achieve destruction of the enemy to the levels desired would affect the planning at CENTCOM differently than at Third Army and its subordinate corps.

On 14 November, Schwarzkopf briefed the initial two-corps concept of operations to corps and division commanders. Although VII Corps had only been officially notified of their deployment six days before, Franks and his division commanders were present.⁴⁴ During his briefing, Schwarzkopf unequivocally identified the primary mission of the ground units as the destruction of the *Republican Guard*. "We need to destroy," Schwarzkopf stated, "not attack, not damage, not surround—I want to destroy the *Republican Guard*. When you are done with them I don't want them to be an effective fighting force anymore. I don't want them to exist as a military organization."⁴⁵ To the VII Corps commanders, the CENTCOM Commander's intent was clear: They believed that the destruction mission intended to deny Saddam Hussein the future use of modern equipment with which he had armed his *Republican Guard*.⁴⁶ Schwarzkopf identified both VII and XVIII Corps as the main attacks at this time. Noteworthy, during this meeting,

General Franks requested operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division which was CENTCOM's theater reserve.⁴⁷ Franks' corps had been assigned a mission to destroy the bulk of the *Republican Guard* armor and mechanized divisions as well as the *Jihad Corps*.⁴⁸

Schwarzkopf's focus of effort had significant effect on the Coalition as a whole because it was clear that the primary mission of ground forces was the destruction of the *Republican Guard* forces in theater. The destruction could mean outflanking the Iraqi forces and then destroying them, or clearing in zone as the Iraqis were destroyed. Outflanking the Iraqi units would require faster, more aggressive and higher risk operations. Clearing in zone would mean a more complete destruction of the enemy. Each variation would have a significant impact on the tempo, momentum, and audacity of the subordinate commanders' plans.

After 14 November, the CENTCOM planners envisioned a two-corps attack modified so that the XVIII Airborne Corps attacked west of VII Corps to cut off the Iraqi escape routes out of Kuwait. The plan positioned the two corps west of the Wadi al-Batin, up to 400 kilometers from their eastern Saudi Arabian positions. The two corps would then conduct attacks to fix Iraqi westernmost defenses and outflank the bulk of the Iraqi army and destroy the *Republican Guard*.⁴⁹ Planners expected the CENTCOM ground scheme of maneuver to take up to two weeks. The plan assumed that coalition fixing attacks would begin at daylight on Ground-Day (G-day), with the main attack following on the next day to maneuver deep to destroy the *Republican Guard* and cut off the lines of communication to Iraqi forces in the KTO. A consolidation phase of up to four weeks would follow the initial offensive; in this phase, coalition forces would defeat any Iraqi forces remaining in Kuwait.

Joint Forces Command East, the easternmost of the four main coalition commands, was to attack north along the Kuwaiti coast towards Kuwait City to deceive the enemy and fix his reserves. The Marine component was to attack near the elbow of Kuwait to penetrate forward Iraqi defenses, and fix the tactical reserves south of the As Salem airfield, in order to draw the Iraqi operational and strategic reserves towards Kuwait City. The Marines' next task was to

isolate Kuwait City and conduct consolidation operations in conjunction with Joint Forces Command North. In the center, Joint Forces Command North, including both the Egyptian and Syrian forces, was to penetrate the enemy defense, drive to the north of the As Salem airfield. Next, they would join with Third Army, occupy a blocking position north of Kuwait City on the north-south Kuwait City-Basrah highway. The two Arab commands would liberate Kuwait City.

To the west of Joint Forces Command North, the VII Corps was to conduct the Third Army's main attack to penetrate the enemy's forward defenses and attack in zone to defeat the *Republican Guard*. On VII Corps' western flank, the XVIII Corps would conduct a supporting attack to block the Highway 8 valley. The corps would be prepared to continue the attack to the east down the valley in order to assist VII Corps in the destruction of the *Republican Guard*. Both corps would prepare for consolidation and occupation of sectors in the western and northern Kuwait and southeastern Iraq.⁵⁰ (See figure 7.)

Third Army planners constantly refined the ground plan between 23 November 1990 and 4 January 1991 as forces continued to deploy into theater. CENTCOM hosted a series of briefings between 4-8 January to obtain Schwarzkopf's approval of the ground concept of operations. The CENTCOM commander, however, did not approve the Third Army plan on 4 January for three primary reasons. First, he believed that the XVIII Corps' attack in the western portion of its zone towards As-Samawah did not support VII Corps' scheme of maneuver. Of note, Schwarzkopf had personally directed the XVIII Corps to attack in that direction. Second, Schwarzkopf believed the Army commander's plans were too conservative and cautious.⁵¹ Last, he was completely dissatisfied with the concept of an operational pause along Phase Line SMASH to refuel elements of VII and XVIII Corps. He predicted that if the corps slowed for an operational pause and did not keep constant pressure on the enemy, they would allow the enemy--specifically the *Republican Guard*--to escape. The CENTCOM Commander stressed that the key to success was maintaining the initiative and momentum. Unfortunately, Lieutenant

General Franks was not at this briefing. Nor was he made aware of General Schwarzkopf's views concerning the operational pauses, tempo, momentum, and Iraqi force strength.⁵²

The ARCENT plan of a wide western sweep by the 24th Infantry Division met with Schwarzkopf's disapproval since he thought it would not properly support the VII Corps attack. The ARCENT planners had the 24th Infantry Division attacking north in the vicinity of As-Salman to As-Samawah. (See figure 7.) After interdicting Highway 8 and moving east through Area of Operations EAGLE, XVIII Corps would secure Jalibah Airfield, Objective ORANGE and proceed east in order to clear Highway 8 from Jalibah to Basrah. The western route would allow the XVIII Airborne Corps to use the As-Salman to As-Samawah road as a resupply route once it had moved east along Highway 8. A more eastern advance, immediately west of VII Corps sector, would place the corps's mechanized units in rough terrain. The ARCENT planners feared that delays would be excessive, especially if the Iraqis choose to defend in this area. Moreover, if the 24th Infantry Division maneuvered on the eastern portion of the airborne corps zone, they would be constricted to a narrow maneuver area west of VII Corps zone. A fourth and less publicized reason for the 4 January direction of attack was that General Schwarzkopf had personally told the XVIII Corps Commander on 14 November to seize the western objectives along Highway 8.

ARCENT eventually shifted the axis of advance for the 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment east so that the two units, in effect, became the left most portion of the VII Corps wheel to destroy the *Republican Guard*. In fact, early in the ground war, CENTCOM and Third Army would check the 24th Infantry Division's movement to coincide with and support VII Corps' movements.⁵³

General Schwarzkopf also disagreed with ARCENT's and VII Corps' estimation of Iraqi strengths and capabilities. The ARCENT and VII Corps plans assumed that the Iraqi divisions would not be 50-percent destroyed. On the other hand, Schwarzkopf fully expected that the Iraqi front line and reserve divisions would be at 50-percent on G-day. Indeed, one of the primary objectives of the air campaign was 50-percent attrition of those forces. He wanted the corps to

plan for rapid advances to overwhelm the Iraqi defense. He was convinced that the two corps had to plan and execute boldly to cut off collapsing and retreating Iraqi units. He thought that both Yeosock and Franks were not aggressive enough in planning and executing the fight.⁵⁴ Although events during the ground campaign may appear to reinforce General Schwarzkopf's opinion, he was unable to convince his commanders to significantly modify their plans to achieve the type of rapid, overwhelming attack he had envisioned.⁵⁵

Both ARCENT and VII Corps plans included an operational pause along Phase Line SMASH, which Schwarzkopf did not want. Schwarzkopf said that if Third Army units halted for an operational pause along Phase Line SMASH, they would miss the war that he predicted would be over in twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Schwarzkopf believed at this point that the initial fight with the *Republican Guard* would be over quickly. The ARCENT planners, however, saw a need for the operational pause so the two corps could refuel and rearm before closing with the *Republican Guard*. The original plans used a rate of advance of five kilometers per hour at the corps level to determine that they would need to refuel in the vicinity of Phase Line SMASH.⁵⁶ Additionally, most of the enemy mechanized and armor units were positioned only twenty kilometers east of Phase Line SMASH. Thus, it made sense to the Third Army's armor and mechanized units that they would refuel and rearm prior to the anticipated and critical engagement with the bulk of the *Republican Guard Forces Command* divisions. This debate over the operational pause would never be fully resolved.

The preceding arguments revolved around an assessment of how fast units would move, estimations of the enemy's strength, and the battlefield division in terms of supporting attacks, boundaries, and command and control issues. The constricted nature of VII Corps boundary would influence General Franks' ability to maneuver, contingency plans chosen, and the ability to cut off the retreating *Republican Guard*.

As a result of the 4-8 January meetings, Third Army altered some aspects of their planning and developed a refined battle plan. The revised plan tasked the 24th Infantry Division

and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment to attack in the general direction of An Nasiriyah to better support the VII Corps' movement. In effect, they became the left wing of the VII Corps wheel. However, the planned rates of VII Corps closing with the *Republican Guard* was not changed.

In the revised plans, General Yeosock was clear in his mission assignments to his corps commanders. However, the approved plan motivated each corps to fight differently. VII Corps was a force-oriented force in contrast to XVIII Airborne Corps which was terrain-oriented. The VII Corps was assigned the mission to destroy all the heavy *Republican Guard* forces in zone. This force orientation would drive Lieutenant General Franks to orchestrate and focus his forces on maneuvering his three heavy divisions to converge on the *Republican Guard* at the decisive point and time southwest of Basrah.⁵⁷ This force-oriented mission implied battle as process, a rolling fight, rather than a discrete event. In light of anticipated force ratios, it demanded that the VII Corps Commander conduct a highly controlled, carefully sequenced and articulated attack.⁵⁸

Other the other hand, XVIII Airborne Corps had a terrain-oriented mission. The corps was to cut Highway 8 in the vicinities of Areas of Operation EAGLE and Objective GOLD. Each of the corps divisions, with space to maneuver, would almost operate independently. None of them would require nearly the same control or coordination as the VII Corps divisions. The French 6th Light Armored Division would take As Salman, free main supply route Virginia, and protect the ARCENT left flank. The 82nd Airborne Division would support the French on the western flank, and then cleanup bypassed pockets of Iraqi soldiers. The 101st would conduct multiple air assault "leap frogs" to interdict and block Highway 8 until the 24th Infantry could assume the task. The 101st would then shift its attacks across the Euphrates River to prevent Iraqi forces from escaping across the Basrah lakes. The 24th Infantry Division was to attack north to the Euphrates River, disrupting the enemy rear, and then attack eastward to reinforce the VII Corps effort. The 3rd Armored Cavalry would begin the operations by maintaining contact with the VII Corps on the east, and then shift west to support the 24th Infantry Division. (See

figure 7.) XVIII Corps' execution would be highly decentralized, and the corps headquarters would be involved primarily in sustaining the respective advances of its autonomous forces.⁵⁹

Impacts on VII Corps Planning

The CENTCOM and Third Army plans defined how VII Corps would plan its operation. From the plans, five major issues emerged. First, the staff planning process identified the potential need for an operational pause in the vicinity of Phase Line SMASH. Second, the XVIII Corps desire for an early start for their operation possibly endangered the VII Corps attack. Third, VII Corps wanted operational control of 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment to control the attack against the *Republican Guard*. Fourth, Lieutenant General Franks wanted a rapid release of 1st Cavalry Division from CENTCOM reserve to VII Corps. Last, the corps commanders lacked a defined endstate.

Despite the objections of Schwarzkopf, Yeosock, and Frank's, an operational pause at Phase Line SMASH continued to be a point of conflict. Phase Line SMASH was a lateral road that ran generally from the southeastern point vicinity of Kuwait City northwest through As-Salman and Al-Busayyah, Iraq halfway between the line of departure and the Euphrates River. (See figure 7.) In and around this line, VII Corps and 24th Infantry Division staffs planned to conduct a short tactical halt to refuel and resupply, and then continue their respective missions. For VII Corps divisions, Phase Line SMASH was the terrain feature from which they would pivot right in a great wheel to destroy the *Republican Guard* heavy divisions.⁶⁰

How CENTCOM timed and synchronized its corps attack influenced VII Corps planning. CENTCOM designed the ground campaign to deceive the Iraqis into believing that the main attack would come from the east, north toward Kuwait City. The Marines and both Joint Force Commands were to fix the Iraqi's first echelon defenses and second echelon tactical reserves. The plan was to draw the *Republican Guard* counterattack south towards these supporting attacks. Twenty-four hours afterwards, ARCENT's main effort--the heavy forces of VII and XVIII

Corps--would outflank the Iraqi tactical reserves from the west to fix and destroy the *Republican Guard* and cut off the escape routes along Highway 8 and north out of Basrah.⁶¹ (See figure 8.)

However, XVIII Airborne Corps was concerned about the logistics resupply issues along their western sector. The XVIII Airborne Corps planning staff requested and Third Army authorized the attack on G-Day with their three light divisions. The mission was to secure and cut off a portion of Highway 8 and clear that major resupply route from west to east through As-Salman. However, conducting these attacks on G-Day could have been counterproductive to the deception efforts because it could potentially orient the *Republican Guard* west instead of south. Thus, VII Corps would face a better prepared and stronger enemy. Logistical considerations for gaining and maintaining open lines of communication seemed to outweigh the overall maneuver considerations.⁶²

Lieutenant General Franks wanted operational control over the XVIII Corps' heavy forces when it came time to engage the *Republican Guard* south of Basrah. There are, however, several reasons why the 24th Infantry Division did not come under the operational control of VII Corps. First, XVIII Airborne Corps had been in theater for seven months, and to pull 24th Infantry Division from them would have gutted the corps of its only heavy force. This would have left a XVIII Corps Commander in charge of only two American light divisions and a light French armored division. This was politically unacceptable in the higher echelons of Army command in the desert.⁶³ Second, the span of control for VII Corps was already four heavy divisions and an armored cavalry regiment with the potential of a fifth division if and when the 1st Cavalry Division was released to it for the destruction of the *Republican Guard*. Both Generals Yeosock and Waller, during his short tenure of command from 13-23 February, refused to approve the change.⁶⁴ The result was that VII Corps units would have to maneuver in a constricted zone at the decisive point of critical combat without direct control of the units to its immediate left.⁶⁵

The responsibility for coordinating this effort thus rested with the Third Army Commander and his staff. The planning placed the 24th Infantry Division in the critical position of having to

attack north in zone, clear three major objectives, secure Objective GOLD, and then if possible, clear along the highway to reach Objective ANVIL. These efforts were further complicated at the onset of the ground war because the three *Republican Guard* infantry divisions were positioned along this axis of advance.⁶⁶ This orchestration of the coordinated 24th Infantry Division and VII Corps attacks would prove to be a significant challenge between 26-28 February.⁶⁷

Franks also wanted the rapid release of the 1st Cavalry Division to his control so he could adequately plan and synchronize the VII Corps' fight with the *Republican Guard*. CENTCOM maintained the 1st Cavalry Division in reserve to support the Joint Forces Command North--primarily comprised of Arab divisions--on ARCENT's right flank.⁶⁸ The Joint Forces Command North was to attack and penetrate the first echelon defenses and seize objectives west of Kuwait City in their zone. If their penetration was more than 1st Infantry Division's advance, their left flank would be exposed to counterattack by the Iraqi tactical reserve--an armored and mechanized division--in their area.⁶⁹ Fearing that their Egyptian 4th Mechanized and Armored Divisions would be exposed as they attacked north, the Egyptians placed political pressure on Schwarzkopf to delay the release of the 1st Cavalry Division as CENTCOM reserve. The CENTCOM commander promised to hold the cavalry division in reserve until the Egyptian-lead joint forces had achieved initial success and their flanks were secure. The ARCENT planners had calculated that VII Corps needed to have the 1st Cavalry Division released thirty-seven hours after crossing the line of departure in order for it to arrive in time for the battle with the *Republican Guard*.⁷⁰

The impact of this decision was that General Franks had to rely on 1st Infantry Division as the third knuckle in the American fist. The problems associated with dependence on the 1st Infantry Division for success are numerous. First, the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions attacks would have to slow to allow 1st Infantry Division to catch up after conducting the initial breach of the Iraqi front-lines and a successful forward passage of lines with the 1st Armored Division (UK). Second, there was a strong possibility that 1st Infantry Division would need to resupply, refuel

and refit after their initial operations, causing further delays and potentially prolong the operational pause at Phase Line SMASH. Cumulatively, the end result was that General Franks would approach the initial ground campaign cautiously because he did not want to take on the three heavy *Republican Guard* and associated regular army divisions divisions with only two U.S. heavy divisions and a cavalry regiment.⁷¹

In terms of force disposition and boundaries around Basrah, Third Army and VII Corps lacked a defined endstate. In fact, the exact scheme of maneuver for the destruction of the *Republican Guard* was not determined until 26 February. The lack of a clearly defined endstate in terms of geographical location of forces, boundaries, fire support coordination measures also had significant negative effects on the mission of the complete destruction of the *Republican Guard* divisions in theater on 27-28 February.

During the theater planning process between November 1990 and January 1991, VII Corps began its reorganization and mobilization efforts in Germany as preparation for deployment to the Persian Gulf. The corps would organize to fight the type of battle conveyed to Lieutenant General Franks on 14 November at the commander's conference in Riyadh.

VII Corps Notification and Deployment

The deployment of the VII Corps was critical to the success of the ground campaign. The VII Corps was organized, trained and equipped to fight the Soviet Army in central Europe. Meticulous planning and deliberate synchronization characterized the Army's battle plans against the Soviets. The VII Corps staff was no exception. Its previous tactical training focused on synchronizing every movement to maximize combat power in defensive battle against a larger force.⁷²

General Crosbie Saint, Commander-in-Chief European Command, and Lieutenant General Franks decided to build the deploying VII Corps around two armored divisions. Consequently, the 3rd Armored Division from V Corps replaced the organic 3rd Infantry Division

of VII Corps. The armored division was further along in tank and infantry fighting vehicle modernization programs than the infantry division. Moreover, since one of the 1st Armored Division brigades was not completely modernized, Franks replaced it with a heavy brigade from the 3rd Infantry Division. Battalion replacements were conducted at the brigade level to reinforce the corps with the heaviest and most modern weapons systems. The rationale for mixing the two corps were twofold: First, the mission necessitated armor divisions, and second the speed at which both corps could deploy elements of each other while filling gaps within deploying units was faster and simpler than deploying everything from the VII Corps alone. The U.S. based 1st Infantry Division, reinforced by an armored brigade (2nd Armored Division Forward) from Germany, completed the corps.

The largest deficiency in the VII Corps involved logical requirements. The VII Corps had a corps support command designed for a defensive posture in a mature theater. Deploying to Saudi Arabia would require an additional 19,800 soldiers to round out the support unit, representing a 300-percent increase.⁷³

On 12 November, VII Corps began deploying to Saudi Arabia.⁷⁴ The deployment ended on 17 February when the 3rd Armored Division closed on their tactical assembly areas. The scope and magnitude of the deployment was phenomenal. The European-based units--73,369 personnel and their equipment--required 465 trains, 119 convoys, and 312 barges to move them to their aerial and seaports of debarkation. From Europe, 435 aircraft and 109 ships lifted them to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. based units--49,008 personnel and their equipment--required an additional 143 aircraft and 31 ships. In total, the VII Corps would ultimately consist of 145,000 personnel, including 21,000 Army National Guard and Reserve personnel and 24,000 British soldiers.⁷⁵ As the forces closed on the theater in late November, the VII Corps' planning staff began their initial planning for the ground campaign.

¹Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, Appendices A-S, (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 1992), I:18.

²Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, Vol. 1, (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 1992), 231 and Robert A. Sterling, Desert Storm: The War the Coalition Almost Lost, Research Project (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993), 12.

³U.S. News & World Report, Triumph Without Victory: The Unprecedented History of the Persian Gulf War (New York: Times Books, 1992), 45-47.

⁴Jesse Birnbaum, "the Commander: Stormin Norman at the Top," Time (4 February 1991): 29.

⁵Douglas Craft, Strategic Studies Institute Report, An Operational Analysis of the Persian Gulf War (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1992),23.

⁶Steve Arnold, Key Decisions for Desert Storm, 1 August 1991. Memorandum for the Commanding General Third Army. Transcript. (Notes in possession of author. Also available from the personal papers of Dr. Richard Swain, School of advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS),1.

⁷David Lamb, "Norman of Arabia," The Virginia Post,(26 February 1991), B1 and quote from Bruce Palmer, "But it Does Take a Leader: The Schwarzkopf Biography," Parameters, 23, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 22.

⁸Bruce Palmer, "But It Does Take a Leader: The Schwarzkopf Autobiography," Parameters, vol. XXIII, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 24.

⁹Triumph Without Victory, 110.

¹⁰Jesse Birnbaum, "the Commander: Stormin Norman at the Top," Time (4 February 1991): 30.

¹¹Triumph Without Victory, 110.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Triumph Without Victory, 211 and Swain, Lucky War, 17-18.

¹⁴Bob Woodward, The Commanders, (New York: Simon and Schuster), 181.

¹⁵Woodward, The Commanders, 287.

¹⁶Craft, An Operational Analysis of the Persian Gulf War, 10.

¹⁷Rick Atkinson, Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993): 248.

¹⁸Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 446.

¹⁹Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 74.

²⁰John J. Yeosock, "Army Operations in the Gulf Theater", Military Review, 71, no. 9 (September 1991), 3.

²¹Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option 9 November (C+94)-16 Jan(C+162). Gulf War Collection. Unit Histories, Scales Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 27.

²²John J. Yeosock, interview by George F. Oliver, 5 February 1992, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL.

²³Yeosock, "Army Operations in the Gulf Theater", 3-15 and John J. Yeosock, interview by George F. Oliver, 5 February 1992, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2-3.

²⁴"Leadership of US Troops," USA Today (17 January 1991), 9A.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 18-23.

²⁶Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 300-301.

²⁷Yeosock, "Army Operations in the Gulf Theater", 3-15.

²⁸Swain, Lucky War, 143-144.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 19.

³⁰Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, vol. 1, 84.

³¹*Ibid.*, 83.

³²*Ibid.*, 254.

³³U.S. Army, The 100-Hour Ground War: How the Iraqi Plan Failed, Headquarters, G-2, VII Corps, 20 April 1992, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CARL, 13.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 25.

³⁵Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 163.

³⁶U.S. Army, 100-Hour Ground War, 6-16.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 6.

³⁸Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, Vol. 1, 72 and Paul W. Trotti, "The Persian Gulf War: A "Storm" Too Short?". Research Project, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993), 12.

³⁹U.S. Army, FM 100-5 Operations (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 1986), 93.

⁴⁰Stan Cherrie, interview by Richard Swain, 29 August 1991, transcript, Gulf War Collection, CALL, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 7.

⁴¹Swain, Lucky War, 73.

⁴²Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War: vol. 4 The Gulf War (London: Mansell Pub., 1991), 390-394.

⁴³U.S. Army, ARCENT Briefing Slides, Operation Desert Shield/Storm Summary Report, 2 January 1992. Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Unit Histories, THR-061, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 32.

⁴⁴Frederick M. Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 2 April 1991, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

⁴⁵Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 383-384.

⁴⁶Ronald H. Griffith, Mission Accomplished-In Full," Proceedings (August 1993) : 65.

⁴⁷Swain, Lucky War, 90.

⁴⁸Ibid., 91-93.

⁴⁹Jesse Birnbaum, "the Commander: Stromin Norman at the Top," Time (4 February 1991): 30.

⁵⁰Swain, Lucky War, 92-93

⁵¹Ibid., 112-117.

⁵²Ibid., 112-116.

⁵³Dan Gilbert, interview by author 4 February 1997, tapes in possession of author.

⁵⁴Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 455-457, 474-476.

⁵⁵Cherrie, interview by Richard Swain, 29 August 1991, 18-23.

⁵⁶Swain, Lucky War, 112-118.

⁵⁷Ibid., 207.

⁵⁸Ibid., 207.

⁵⁹Ibid., Lucky War, 209.

⁶⁰Cherrie, interview by Swain, 29 August 1991, 18-23.

⁶¹Gilbert, interview by author 4 February 1997.

⁶²Swain, Lucky War, 192-194.

⁶³Gilbert, interview by author 4 February 1997.

⁶⁴Swain, Lucky War, 193-194.

⁶⁵Frederick M. Franks, interviewed by author 23 February, tapes in possession of author and Frederick M Franks, interview by Richard M. Swain, 6 March 1992, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 18.

⁶⁶Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option 9 November (C+94)-16 Jan(C+162). Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 26.

⁶⁷Swain, Lucky War, 193-194.

⁶⁸Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option 9 November (C+94)-16 Jan(C+162). Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 39.

⁶⁹Ibid., 26.

⁷⁰Franks, interviewed by author 23 February.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 301.

⁷³Swain, Lucky War, 163-164.

⁷⁴Peter S. Kindsvater, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Deployment and Preparation for Desert Storm," Military Review, (January 1992), 3.

⁷⁵VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-006, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2.

CHAPTER THREE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FREDERICK M. FRANKS AND VII CORPS DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPS PLAN AND PREPARATIONS

Lieutenant General Frederick Franks arguably had the most difficult command and control challenges in the Coalition. The VII Corps was the largest concentration of armor and mechanized vehicles massed for a single attack in American history.¹ In total, VII Corps was comprised of 142,600 personnel, 5,237 tracked vehicles, 41,663 wheeled vehicles, and 690 helicopters.² This massive concentration of soldiers and equipment was organized in five heavy divisions, one armored cavalry regiment, one aviation brigade, a corps artillery organization and a corps support unit.³ (See figure 9.) The VII Corps would fight an estimated thirteen Iraqi divisions in ninety hours while maneuvering 260 kilometers.⁴ The corps would fight the bulk of the Iraqi elite heavy divisions in close combat. Once the corps passed through the breach and crossed Phase Line SMASH, the mass of the corps covered a frontage of sixty to seventy-five kilometers with units and support organizations extending one hundred and fifty kilometers in depth. This chapter addresses the planning for Operation DESERT SABER and Fragmentary Plan 7, the VII Corps plans for DESERT STORM. The development of Operation DESERT SABER was influenced by the personality and command style of Lieutenant General Franks, the nature of the opposing forces in the Persian Gulf, the correlation of the VII Corps and the Iraqi armored forces, and the missions assigned and plans from higher headquarters.

First, it is critical to understand Frederick Franks as an officer with certain professional experiences and a well formed style of command that would not change in the short time space of this war. It is also necessary to analyze the VII Corps command and control architecture as a

physical manifestation of Frank's command style. Second, consideration of the organization of the VII Corps, the Iraqi forces in zone, and the relative force ratios, provides insight into what planners and commanders knew before the ground war and how these factors shaped their planning. Third, planning considerations, time-space considerations, and subsequent orders prepared by CENTCOM and Third Army influenced how VII Corps planned and executed its operation. An analysis of the development of Operation DESERT SABER and Fragmentary Plan 7 sets the final stage for an analysis of VII Corps actions between 24-28 February.

Lieutenant General Franks and the VII Corps Command Environment

A Vietnam veteran, amputee, and armored cavalryman, Lieutenant General Frederick M. Franks commanded VII Corps with a conservative, easy going command style developed over a varied and successful thirty-year Army career. He grew up in a small western Pennsylvania town. He was nominated to attend West Point in 1954. He was commissioned in 1959. Early in his career he served in several different billets in the 11th Cavalry Regiment, including a tour in Vietnam from 1967 to 1970 as the 2nd Squadrons' operations officer.⁵ He was severely wounded during combat operations with the 2nd Squadron and ultimately lost half of his left leg. To recover, he spent twenty-two months in the Valley Forge Army Hospital, something which had a significant effect on his view of his men, his dedication to service, his personal values, personality, and professionalism.⁶ Despite the loss of his leg, he chose to remain in the active Army and pursue a military career. As a result of this experience, Franks became extremely sensitive to the costs of war in human life, pain, and suffering associated with combat operations. Subsequently, he became a conservative and cautious commander.

Prior to assuming command of the VII Corps, Franks' had commanded the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 7th Army Training Command, and the 1st Armored Division, all in Europe.⁷ He had been deeply involved in the formulation of army doctrine. In the late 1970s and early 1980s he worked with Generals Carl Vuono and Donn Stary at the Training and Doctrine

Command. These generals, particularly Donn Starry, were the pioneers of Army AirLand Battle doctrine development. In the early 1980s, Franks also served as Deputy Commandant of the Army Command and General Staff College; there he was instrumental in writing the 1986 version of FM-100-5, the Army's operational guidebook.⁸

In their book, The General's War, retired Marine Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor and New York Times reporter Michael Gordon describe Franks as "Quiet, cautious, and a consensus builder." They note that, commanding VII Corps in Germany Franks had assembled a staff that reflected his own training and outlook.⁹ Franks' career was split between command and troop billets, and the Army doctrine and training commands. At the age of fifty-two, he assumed command of VII Corps in August 1989.¹⁰

The essence of Franks' personality and command style is captured in the personal notes and observations of Lieutenant Colonel Peter S. Kindsvatter, the VII Corps historian. Kindsvatter had the unique opportunity to observe Franks closely over an extended period of time before and during the ground war. He paints a complete picture of the general's leadership style. He described Franks in the following manner.

He is a quiet, serious commander. He speaks softly, and rarely loses control or gets loud or angry. He is the antithesis of the rabble-rousing, hot-headed type of senior officer that I have seen too many of. No hollow rhetoric or phony camaraderie. He talks plainly and seriously to both officers and troops. No backslapping or false bravado - not his style. Good sense of humor, but not a great joke teller himself (except for his occasional jokes about his missing leg). Not comfortable making speeches, probably because he is not a dynamic, rabble-rousing orator. When talking to soldiers (which he does a lot of), he gets honest answers because he is straightforward and serious. Soldiers don't clam up or try to tell him "what he wants to hear." His pride in the corps is intense, but subdued.¹¹

Franks established a command climate in VII Corps which was one of quiet, determined confidence and professionalism. Although reserved and pragmatic, he had a vision of how he wanted to break the defensive mindset that had permeated all European-based units. He wanted VII Corps to be offensive minded and prepared for force projection contingencies.¹² After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Franks refocused the VII Corps on maneuver, movement to contact, and hasty attacks instead of the set piece, defensive mindset. He forced his staff to begin training for long

movements to contact, large armored formation maneuvers, and associated rapid staff planning. For example, in early February 1990, the VII Corps staff evaluated the 1st Infantry Division in their Battle Command Training Program Exercise. The VII Corps staff threw out their obsolete Coberg defense plans and put in its place a movement to contact and a mobile battlefield, offensive scenario. This training forced the commanders and their staffs to think about maneuver-oriented operations. The VII Corps staff used a similar scenario during a REFORGER with the 3rd Infantry Division in mid-1990. VII Corps planners and commanders were becoming practiced in a fluid battlefield that stressed agility and changing tactical alignments to quickly combine combat power in rapid operations.¹³

Lieutenant General Frank's favorite tactic was to mass armored columns as the Germans had done to overrun the Polish, French, and the Russian armies in early World War II. Franks patterned his philosophy of fighting after Heinz Guderian, the German Panzer commander who planned and commanded the extremely successful armored thrusts that penetrated, and overran the French armies in 1940.¹⁴ Additionally, he sought to model his command style on that of Guderian, though his personality was far milder than that of the hot-tempered German. Franks wanted to create a mailed fist of "three armored divisions and a cavalry regiment intact to attack and destroy the *Republican Guard*" east of Phase Line SMASH.¹⁵ Franks did not want to poke at the *Republican Guard* with individual fingers, piecemealing his divisions into the fight. His predominant philosophy was to gain the initiative by surprise, to fix and overwhelm the enemy with a shock of massed armor and mechanized divisions, and to defeat the enemy quickly to minimize American casualties.¹⁶

Schwarzkopf was critical of Franks' conservative tactical style of synchronizing to mass forces and his constant requests for additional forces. Gordon and Trainer, the authors of The General's War, described the Franks-Schwarzkopf relationship this way: "The CENTCOM commander felt Franks' appetite for additional combat power was insatiable. Like the Civil War General George R. McClellan, he always painted the enemy ten feet tall."¹⁷ Coincidentally, this

was the same charge made against Schwarzkopf by Presidential advisors in October. While Schwarzkopf was dynamic, bellicose, and dominating, Franks in comparison was unassuming, collegial, and a consensus builder. The stark differences between the command styles and personalities of General Schwarzkopf and Lieutenant General Franks put them on a collision course.

Franks chose a command and control architecture for VII Corps that suited his personality and up front, personal style of leadership. The command and control functions would be divided according to doctrine among the Tactical Command Post (TAC CP), the Main Command Post, and the Rear Command Post.¹⁸ The TAC CP moved in trace of the lead maneuver unit to maintain physical contact and forward communications capacity. The TAC CP facilitates the commanders' ability to move forward and talk personally with his commanders. The distance in depth and frontage between the maneuvering divisions ran from between 100 and 214 kilometers in the Gulf War. To communicate over the long distances, expected in the desert, Franks also configured two non-traditional jump CPs that consisted of a M113 armored personnel carrier escorted by two Bradley fighting vehicles.¹⁹ A jump CP was a small, survivable command group that was tailored to allow the commander to move forward on the battlefield while maintaining connectivity with larger, slower CPs. The VII Corps set up to operate with a Forward CP, Main CP and a Rear CP. The two Jump CPs came out of the Forward CP and followed in trace of the armored divisions and the breach force.²⁰ The commanding general and his operations officer were the key decision makers in the staff with the TAC CP.

Lieutenant General Franks rehearsed the doctrinal command and control arrangement when the corps displaced from the initial defensive positions in the vicinity of Hafar Al-Batin, to the forward assembly area south of the line of departure.²¹ (See figures 10 and 11.) The vast distances created considerable problems which exceeded the capabilities of the systems relative to the electronic reach of voice communications. Franks decided then that unless his presence was needed somewhere on the battlefield in a mechanized CP vehicle, he would command by

Black Hawk helicopter, visiting his commanders for face-to-face talks where he could better sense the battlefield.²² Franks wanted to move with the main effort in each phase so that he could move to the point of friction, if required, and talk to his commanders to sense the battle before making critical decisions. Franks desire was to lead from the front. In his own words he,

tried to get where the action was the heaviest, at the point of main effort of the corps, where the units were most heavily engaged, to get an assessment from the commanders, a feel for the battlefield, see it, smell it, hear it, talk to commanders, look in their face, take a look around at the soldiers and just get a good feel, intuitive feel, for the battlefield.²³

He would depend heavily on Colonel Stanley E. Cherrie, the VII Corps Operations Officer, to coordinate the corps wide fight and to communicate with and report to higher and adjacent commands in his absence. Colonel Cherrie was located in the TAC CP throughout the ground war and was the critical link for Franks to higher and adjacent headquarters.²⁴

Opposing Forces and Combat Ratio Comparisons

In the Persian Gulf War, VII Corps' major subordinate elements were the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) with a brigade of the 2nd Armored Division (Forward) attached, the 1st Armored Division, the 3rd Armored Division, the 1st Cavalry Division (minus one brigade), and the 1st Armored Division (United Kingdom). The combined strength of VII Corps was twenty-five armored battalions, sixteen mechanized battalions, three regimental cavalry squadrons, five divisional cavalry squadrons, nine attack helicopter battalions, nineteen 155-millimeter howitzer battalions, three heavy eight-inch artillery battalions, and five multiple-launchers rocket systems (MLRS). (See figure 9.) When compared to XVIII Airborne Corps, VII Corps had two times more heavy combat power.²⁵ It had three times more combat power than the Marine component and the Arab coalition forces combined. Additional units were the Corps Artillery with four field artillery brigades, the 11th Aviation Brigade with two attack helicopter battalions, and the 2nd Corps Support Command.²⁶ The breakdown of major corps weapons system is reflected in figure 9. Cumulatively, VII Corps would consist of 1,584 tanks, 1,442 Bradley fighting vehicles, 76 Apache attack helicopters, 162 Apache attack helicopters,

522 155-millimeter self-propelled howitzers, and 138 multiple rocket launchers systems.²⁷

Manning the respective units were over 142,000 American and British soldiers. The detailed manpower breakdown is depicted in table 1. A by-division detailed equipment breakdown is depicted in table 2.

Within the corps, the ratio of tanks and mechanized vehicles to soft-skinned wheeled vehicles was 8502 to 27,652, or 1 to 3.25.²⁸ The ratio of soft-skinned vehicles would have significant impact on the planning and execution of the VII Corps ground plan. The planned rate of movement of the corps' forward divisions were reduced by the fear of by-passed Iraqi infantry operating behind the front-line divisions destroying combat support units.²⁹ This mentality was reinforced by the CENTCOM tasking to *clear all equipment in the zone*; allowing no fighting Iraqi units to be bypassed.³⁰

Once deployed for combat, VII Corps would be squeezed into a narrow zone of action. An armor or mechanized division typically occupies a frontage of 25 to 45 kilometers and trails back 90 to 150 kilometers in a desert environment. The three-division fist envisioned by Lieutenant General Franks would, on average, occupy a frontage of ninety kilometers trailing back up to 150 kilometers.³¹ Maneuvering forces of this size, that consumed this much space, would develop a momentum all its own. Lieutenant General Franks believed that a corps required at least twenty-four hours to respond to an order that required significant change other than stop or start.³²

Lieutenant General Franks would maneuver five divisions with more combat power and vehicles than all of the Third Army in World War II, an army that consisted of three corps totaling nine divisions.³³ In ninety hours, VII Corps would attack across 160 kilometers from the attack positions south of the Iraqi first-echelon defenses to Al-Busayyah and another 114 kilometers to Basrah. In comparison, Patton's World War II Third Army raced 250 kilometers after the breakout from the Normandy beaches to positions south of Paris at Orleans, but took a month to accomplish the task.³⁴ However, Patton's Third Army killed 16,000, wounded 55,500, and

captured 65,000 Germans, destroyed 4,353 tanks, artillery, and vehicles while losing 956 of their own assets.³⁵

The Iraqi forces arrayed across from VII Corps, close and at depth, were mixed forces of poorly trained conscript infantry in prepared defensive positions, regular army armored forces of varied capabilities, and the well equipped and highly motivated *Republican Guard*. The Iraqi disposition prior to Ground-Day, 23 February, reflected Saddam's significant reinforcement efforts between early September and late December of 1990.³⁶ The total Iraqi deployment and dramatic build-up reflected the presence of a credible force.

The Iraqi Buildup³⁷

	2 August	8 November	18 December
Personnel	54,865	400,000	500,000
Tanks	848	3600	4100
APC/IFV	603	2300	2580
Artillery Pieces	342	1300	2830
Divisions	4	27	32

Although the *Republican Guard* had spearheaded the initial invasion, by mid-September they had pulled back from the Kuwait-Iraq border and established defensive positions southwest of Basrah. The three-echelon belt system described in chapter two was established. In the VII Corps zone the Iraqi first echelon divisions were employed linearly sixty kilometers west of Wadi Al-Batin.³⁸ Each first echelon line infantry division had an armored brigade in reserve to blunt local penetrations.³⁹ Coincidentally, the Iraqi corps facing VII Corps was the Iraqi *VII Corps*.⁴⁰

The Iraqi *VII Corps* were comprised of six divisions arranged from west to east: *26th*, *48th*, *31st*, *25th* and *27th Infantry Divisions*. The *52nd Armored Division* was the tactical reserve for the *VII Corps*.⁴¹ The *Jihad Corps*, comprised initially of the *12th* and *10th Armored Divisions*

was the operational reserve, the second echelon of the Iraqi forces in VII Corps zone. It was not until after the war that General Franks knew that the *Jihad Corps* existed as a separate entity subordinated to the *Republican Guard*. At the outbreak of the ground campaign the *Jihad Corps* was reinforced by the *17th Armored Division* from the *II Corps*.⁴² The *Jihad Corps* positioned southwest of Basrah below the preponderance of the *Republican Guard*. (See figure 6.)

The composition and quality of the forces in each echelon significantly affected how VII Corps planned their operations. The front-line infantry units were of minimal threat once the initial defensive belts were penetrated. The Iraqi artillery reinforcing these divisions were expected to destroy 25 percent of the penetration forces.⁴³ Artillery preparatory fires and aviation brigade attacks were planned to neutralize these threats, while the exploitation force passed through the breach and fixed the tactical reserves, the *52nd Armored Division*. The principal threat to the VII Corps and Coalition's success was posed by the Iraqi operational and strategic counterattack forces the *Jihad* and *II Corps* and the *Republican Guard*, respectively.⁴⁴ See table 3 for a detailed Iraqi divisional breakdown.

Cumulatively, the *Republican Guard* and the *Jihad Corps* had 1,581 tanks, 1,134 fighting vehicles, and 450 artillery pieces.⁴⁵ The major qualitative equipment difference between the two was that the *Republican Guard* divisions had an extra tank and mechanized battalion per division relative to the regular Iraqi divisions.⁴⁶ However, there was a more significant qualitative difference between the *Republican Guard* units and the remainder of the Iraqi army. The *Republican Guard* divisions received the most modern equipment, the best training, and training support, and the first pick on men and officers to fill its ranks. The *10th* and *12th* and *17th Armored Divisions* had approximately the same numbers of major end items and relative combat power as the *Medinah* and *Hammurabi Divisions*. The three Iraqi *Republican Guard* motorized infantry divisions, *Al Faw*, *Adman*, and *Nebuchadnessar* were equivalent to light Army infantry divisions.⁴⁷

Before analyzing the development of the VII Corps base scheme of maneuver and subsequent branches and sequels it is important to understand the expected friendly and enemy combat force ratios. The VII Corps planning process began in mid-November after Lieutenant General Franks analyzed the guidance provided by Schwarzkopf and Yeosock.⁴⁸ Throughout most of the planning cycles VII Corps planners predicted they would have a cumulative force combat power ratio between 1.7 to 1 and 2.1 to 1.⁴⁹

Planners use relative force ratios as a method of comparing the combat capability of friendly and enemy units to determine which forces should fire and maneuver against which enemy. The computation of relative force ratios is an objective process that tabulates the combined combat power of a unit in terms of armor, mechanized units, personnel strength, and mobility, and fire support, both internal and reinforcing. Planners compute the relative strength of friendly and enemy forces and compare them to determine what the balance of combat power will be when the direct engagement occurs. Factored into this process is the attrition of enemy and friendly forces as a result of indirect fires. Additionally, planners compute the attrition expected for respective forces as they fight through initial battles before they close on the main fight.

Another factor that affects force capability is maintenance. Planners and logisticians compute expected losses through breakdowns. The combination of these factors provided a means to quantify combat losses from enemy action and maintenance problems. For example, VII Corps planners had to determine the expected strength of the respective divisions after they penetrated and passed through the initial Iraqi defensive positions. At the beginning of the ground war, VII Corps had direct control over four divisions and the armored cavalry regiment. The cumulative computed combat ratios for VII Corps was 223.4 with artillery reinforcement for each division. The figures were adjusted down to reflect the anticipated losses due to casualties to 90 percent and 80 percent, 201.6 and 178.7, respectively.⁵⁰ See table 4 for a detailed VII Corps division breakdown of combat ratios.

Force ratios were also calculated for the Iraqi forces in zone. The fifteen Iraqi divisions originally plotted in VII Corps zone had a combined combat power of 243.8 after taking into account the destruction attributed to the planned success of the air campaign. The front-line divisions and the operational and strategic operational and strategic reserves were to be attrited to 50 percent. Once VII Corps breached the first echelon defenses they would have to mass against the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps*. Their relative combat power was 180.9 This cumulative Iraqi number would require prudent planners and commanders to mass at least three heavy divisions to achieve local force superiority, against the operational and strategic reserves which ranged in combat power from 179.5 to 142.1.⁵¹ See table 5 for approximate force ratios for Iraqi divisions in the VII Corps zone.

The planners used these cumulative force ratios to determine the correlation of forces between VII Corps and Iraqi units. For example, the 1st Infantry Division reinforced with artillery had a coefficient of 28.8. Opposing the 1st Infantry Division in the initial defenses were the *26th 48th* and *31st Iraqi Infantry Divisions* reinforced by two brigades of the *52nd Armored Division*.⁵² Destruction of the front line and reserve forces would have been at least 50 percent, if the air campaign was as successful as advertised, with a total Iraqi strength of 39.05 opposite 1st Infantry Division.⁵³ However, 1st Infantry Division attacked along a one-division frontage massing their forces with a subsequent force ration of 40.1 against an Iraqi strength of 9.3. Thus the 1st Infantry Division would have a favorable force ratios of 4.3 to 1, much higher than the doctrinal 3 to 1 desired.

The VII Corps planners used these types of figures to orchestrate forces and fires to mass, overwhelm, and defeat the *Republican Guard* with 1.7 to 1 odds later in the battle.⁵⁴ Franks was determined to close on the Iraqi *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* with at least a 3 to 1 force ratio. The collective *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* force ratio in zone, taking into account the actual 25 percent destruction by the air campaign would be 150. Doctrinally this

would require a relative strength of at least 266, which would mean massing all of VII Corps, to include the 1st Cavalry Division against the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps*.

Cumulatively, VII Corps massed combat power would pit between three and five divisions against the forward brigades of two or three Iraqi divisions after crossing Phase Line SMASH. The force ratios in these cases were 3.8 to 1 enroute to Phase Line SMASH and 2 to 1 at the decisive point where the fight with the *Republican Guard* occurred.⁵⁵ Once VII Corps closed on the *Republican Guard* and the *Jihad Corps* they outmatched the Iraqi forces with overwhelming combat power.

Development of the VII Corps Battle Plan

The corps battle plan was based upon a number of factors. The assigned mission was key, as was the known structure of the enemy defenses, and the nature of the terrain over which the corps' attack would have been conducted. Franks was constrained by the geographic limits imposed by higher headquarters, but within those he was relatively free to arrive at his own solution. First and foremost in his mind was the need to hit the enemy's best forces with a concentrated fist, not an open hand.⁵⁶ Before he could do that he had to fight through the initial defensive echelon to establish maneuver room without his timeline being upset by Iraqi counterattacks. These parameters dictated the framework for VII Corps staff planning conducted in the weeks from receipt of their mission on the 14th of November until they moved up to the line of departure in the closing days of February.

The VII Corps staff began a refined mission analysis after formal notification of deployment on 8 November. The CENTCOM concept and intent was briefed to all the major subordinate commanders on 13 November, and a broad CENTCOM concept of operations was published on 25 November. The VII Corps staff convened on 27 November to begin refining the concept of operations. This corps planning group became the "Gang of Ten" and consisted of the commanding general, his deputy, the chief of staff, commander of 2nd COSCOM, primary

operations, intelligence, and fire support planners. The planning process in late November through December focused on two components of the operations: first, the movement from the port and airfields of debarkation to the tactical assembly areas in the vicinity of Hafar Al-Batin; second, the corps' scheme of maneuver to close with and destroy the *Republican Guard*.⁵⁷

Lieutenant General Franks directed and focused the staff on the following principles: (1) Fix enemy strength through deception and economy of force; (2) Develop options to simultaneously penetrate and envelope; (3) Get sizable heavy forces into the enemy's rear quickly; (4) Retain flexibility to shift forces to reinforce zones of success; (5) Initial point of main effort: penetration, on order shift to envelopment; and (6) Avoid Wadi Al-Batin.⁵⁸ Franks commanders' planning guidance was clear and concise.

The corps staff completed the basic movement planning by December, and then shifted their focus to the breach and penetration of the initial Iraqi defenses. The planners assumed the 1st Cavalry Division would be released as CENTCOM reserve within the first couple days of the ground offensive.⁵⁹ A primary concern was the length and depth of the initial and subsequent Iraqi defensive belts. In December 1990, the Iraqi first echelon defenses extended approximately sixty kilometers west of the Wadi Al-Batin. When President Bush announced the second armored corps reinforcement on 8 November, Saddam Hussein retaliated by reinforcing his forces in Kuwait with seven additional divisions. The VII Corps planners feared that the preponderance of these units would reinforce the Iraqi right flank extending the defensive line out to some one hundred kilometers west of the Wadi Al-Batin to a rocky outcropping in XVIII Airborne Corps' zone. Additionally, they expected that the Iraqis would build a second defensive belt by February to reinforce the first, significantly complicating VII Corps' breaching operations. The planners estimated that the Iraqis could extend the defensive lines by twenty kilometers a day.⁶⁰ They figured that by the time the ground offensive started on 2 February, the initial proposed Ground-Day, they would "face a well dug-in, prepared defensive of a minimum of one, perhaps two belts."⁶¹ Under these assumptions, the initial main effort was the breach and

penetration to fix the tactical reserves so that the corps could continue the attack to destroy the *Republican Guard* in zone.

The original corps plan designated the 1st Infantry Division as the initial main effort with the tasking to conduct the breach. The 3rd Armored Division would conduct fixing attacks on their eastern flank. During the December planning time frame Major General Rhame, 1st Infantry Division Commander, had asked for the breaching mission, arguing that a non-European infantry division had the most training experience and the infantry manpower to conduct the breach. Additionally, they had the adequate security forces to clear trenches and protect the breaching assets.⁶² The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Armored Division would attack through the penetration to close with the *Republican Guard*, about sixty kilometers east of Phase Line SMASH, vicinity of Objective COLLINS.⁶³ The 3rd Armored Division would follow in trace of 1st Armored Division after the breach was complete. By 14 December 1990, the VII Corps planning staff completed relocation to King Khalid Military City in Saudi Arabia from their European Headquarters.

Several factors significantly affected the shaping of the VII Corps plan during December-January 1991. The VII Corps ground plan shifted west with the assignment of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment to an enveloping mission around the Iraqi right flank. The initial task and purpose of the regiment was to envelop the front-line defense units in the VII Corps zone and block the tactical reserves from interfering with 1st Infantry Division's breach.⁶⁴ To provide the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment additional maneuver space, VII Corps planners coordinated with XVIII Airborne Corps staff and shifted the boundary thirty kilometers west. The XVIII Airborne Corps' plan in December called for an advance on the western half of their zone northwest towards Area of Operations EAGLE.⁶⁵ (See figure 7.) This allowed VII Corps to shift west without consequence for XVIII Corps.

On 8 January, General Schwarzkopf ordered the airborne corps to shift 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's axis of advance east to reinforce VII Corps' left

flank. As a consequence, the competition for the boundary between the respective corps became a debate between the respective corps staffs. The XVIII Airborne Corps planners were reluctant to give VII Corps any more area after the second week in January. In fact they wanted to shift the respective corps boundary east to include Objective PURPLE near the town of Al-Busayyah because this would give the airborne corps a more direct route from their forward assembly areas northeast towards their objectives along Highway 8.⁶⁶

The VII Corps plan in mid-January was centered on the 1st Infantry Division's breaching operations west of the Wadi Al-Batin, followed by the 1st Armored Division (UK) which was to conduct a forward passage of lines through the 1st Infantry Division and attack to defeat the Iraqi tactical reserves. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment would attack west of the 1st Infantry Division beyond the Iraqi right flank and was tasked to screen forward of the two armored divisions from the line of departure to Phase Line SMASH. (See figure 4.) 1st Armored Division followed the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. The 3rd Armored Division would conduct a feint east of the breach, and then move west rapidly to follow in trace of 1st Armored Division until they could deploy abreast of each other at some distance beyond the Iraqi defenses.⁶⁷

The 3rd Armored Division scheme of maneuver was discarded by VII Corps planners when it was determined this orchestration would significantly delay the advance to Phase Line SMASH and ultimately the destruction of the *Republican Guard*. Subsequently, the plan was modified so that the 3rd Armored Division immediately followed in trace of the 1st Armored Division.⁶⁸ These plans reflected a tendency of VII Corps planners to develop complex, time-consuming operations that would have negative consequences on future planning and execution.

The next major issue to be worked in the basic plan in mid-January was the alignment of the armored divisions. The two armored division commanders wanted to attack side by side even though it meant each division would have a fifteen-kilometer front. A division of brigades in-column stretches out to one hundred kilometers in the desert. This would mean that the lead elements would reach Phase Line SMASH while the rear elements of the last brigade were still

crossing the line of departure. The two commanders argued for a start configuration with the divisions abreast. They believed that they could deploy faster into their combat formations from brigades on line as opposed to in-column.⁶⁹ Lieutenant General Franks tasked the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment with evaluating the trafficability of the area and the feasibility of two armored divisions starting abreast of each other. The reconnaissance determined that the terrain and space was suitable. However, Franks initially sided with his staff and did not change the plan. The commanders of the armored divisions and the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment adamant that the scheme of maneuver was flawed and that they were "not confident in the general plan."⁷⁰ Franks subsequently changed his mind and sided with the commanders. The initial plan was set for the orchestration of the breach and the supporting attacks east and west of the breach.

On 27 January, General Schwarzkopf yielded to British pressure and formally assigned the 1st Armored Division (UK) to VII Corps.⁷¹ Prior to this change, the 1st Armored Division (UK) had been under the tactical control of the I Marine Expeditionary Force. The British government pressured Schwarzkopf to reassign the British forces to the VII Corps, which was the Coalition's main effort. First, the British army leaders felt more comfortable working with the European-based VII Corps, since they shared a common working experience and familiarity with NATO command and control structure. Second, they thought the terrain along the eastern Kuwaiti border was too restrictive and they could not maximize their mobility and shock value. Third, the British commanders feared that they would take heavy casualties fighting into the teeth of Iraqi defenses. Last, the British government did not want their major contribution to the Coalition fighting in a supporting attack with the Marines along the eastern flank towards Kuwait City. General Schwarzkopf yielded to the political realities and external pressures.⁷² Another armored division gave corps planners further tactical flexibility.

Lieutenant General Franks insisted that the VII Corps plan maintained flexibility to exploit any unanticipated success. Franks' vision of the orchestration of the fight was to establish a stance quickly to create a nonlinear situation for the enemy, defeat his tactical reserves, and get

at least a two-division force in a big fist to hammer the *Republican Guard*.⁷³ The quicker VII Corps units closed on the *Republican Guard*, the fewer casualties and the greater the surprise. The envelopment option with the two armored divisions and the armored cavalry regiment abreast gave VII Corps the minimal combat power required to defeat the Iraqi reserves. The critical question then became who would be the third division. The options were to use either the 1st Infantry Division out of the breach, leaving behind a small security element, or the 1st Cavalry Division, if CENTCOM released the 1st Cavalry to VII Corps early enough. The decision to deploy the 1st Armored Division (UK) against the tactical reserves and the decision to deploy the 1st Cavalry Division on the corps right flank as a demonstration force instead of the 3rd Armored Division were key. Franks wanted to shape the corps into a balanced stance so that he could breach the first echelon of defense, then simultaneously destroy the tactical, operational, and strategic reserves.⁷⁴

In Lieutenant General Franks' mind the initial plan had built in the necessary fluidity and flexibility required to exploit success.⁷⁵ The initial planning concluded on 27 January with the publication of VII Corps OPLAN DESERT SABER. Before analyzing the first operations plan, it is important to focus on two planning issues that would become serious points of conflict throughout subsequent planning and execution.

The synchronization of the attacks of the respective army corps was planned to allow the XVIII Airborne Corps the time it needed to establish logistics lines of communications from the line of departure through Objective WHITE and ultimately through the Area of Operations EAGLE. (See figure 7.) After General Schwarzkopf approved the Third Army's basic plan on 8 January, the respective corps planners met on 14 January to work out the details of the attacks. Lieutenant General Luck agreed to delay the 24th Infantry Division and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment attacks to coincide with the launch of VII Corps attack. The XVIII Airborne Corps' 101st Air Assault, 82nd Airborne, and French 6th Light Armored Divisions were planned to attack

on Ground-Day to quickly cut off the Iraqi ingress and egress routes along Highway 8 south of the Euphrates River.⁷⁶

There were only two enemy brigades located in the 24th Infantry Division's and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's zone of action. They were of minimal threat to VII Corps. But, both commanders believed it was prudent to delay the 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment to Ground-Day plus one to coincide with VII Corps main attacks to protect VII Corps left flank.⁷⁷ These decisions would tie the 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment rate of movement to VII Corps.

Another major planning factor that came out of the 14 January meeting was the concept of a coordinated Army two-corps attack to destroy the *Republican Guard* and the *Jihad Corps* south of Basrah. Lieutenant General Franks believed that both Army corps were needed to destroy the *Republican Guard*, if they chose to defend and delay east of Phase Line SMASH in an echelon right towards Basrah. Franks and Luck envisioned a hammer and anvil scheme of maneuver. VII Corps would turn east after Phase Line SMASH to fix and destroy the enemy in zone to the coast forming the anvil. The 24th Infantry Division, 101st Air Assault Division, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment from the XVIII Airborne Corps would attack from the west to the east along Highway 8 to Basrah to form the hammer.⁷⁸

Lieutenant General Franks did not want to fight alone through the entire zone to Basrah, effectively pinching the XVIII Airborne Corps out of the fight.⁷⁹ The correlation of force comparisons at this point in the battle planning indicated that the *Medinah* and *Tawakalna Divisions* of the *Republican Guard* and the *10th*, *12th*, and *17th Armored Divisions* of the *Jihad Corps* would be defending sixty kilometers southwest of Basrah. The *Hammurabi Armored Division* and the three infantry divisions of the *Republican Guard* were further north along Highway 8 from west to east.⁸⁰ (See figure 6.) It was tactically prudent to orchestrate a two-corps fight at this time to destroy this enemy even with the anticipated destruction due to the air campaign.⁸¹

Two unresolved issues remained. First, who would coordinate the fight. Lieutenant Generals Franks and Luck believed that Lieutenant General Yeosock, the Third Army Commander, would coordinate and orchestrate the fight against the *Republican Guard*.⁸² Second, and most important, for the ground units, was the question of where the boundary would be cut between the respective corps south of Basrah.⁸³ There were five possible boundaries developed to support Third Army's Contingency Plan 6 and VII Corps' Fragmentary Plan 7.⁸⁴ The intercorps boundary, wherever it was placed, would be a linear west to east control feature whose location would restrict the area of maneuver and freedom of action of both corps.

On 13 January 1991, VII Corps produced Operation Plan 1990-2 (DESERT SABER). The OPLAN was the document from which VII Corps would develop fragmentary orders and contingency plans for the execution of the ground campaign. The mission of Third Army, from which VII Corps developed its mission, was to "establish a defense well forward in sector, and on order, conducts offensive operations to destroy the *Republican Guard Forces Command* and defeat Iraqi forces in Kuwait."⁸⁵ Lieutenant General Yeosock's intent was stated as:

Victory will be achieved through the destruction of the RGFC, preservation of the combined forces offensive capability, and restoration of the sovereignty of Kuwait. ARCENT forces will penetrate and bypass static defensive forces to complete the physical and psychological isolation of Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The first operational echelon reserves will be fixed and blocked to secure flanks and LOCs. Follow-on operations will then be conducted to complete the destruction of the RGFC.⁸⁶

Of note, Yeosock's intent conveyed by Third Army implies an operational pause at some point in the ground war. XVIII Airborne Corps was tasked to attack in zone on the VII Corps left flank to "block Iraqi east-west LOCs along the Highway 8 and isolate Iraqi forces in the KTO. On Order, [they were to] continue the attack east to destroy the RGFC in zone."⁸⁷ The specific coordination of this two-corps fight to destroy the *Republican Guard* was addressed in several contingency and fragmentary plans. The key document was the VII Corps Fragmentary Plan 7 which was adopted by Third Army as Contingency Plan 6.⁸⁸

VII Corps critical assumptions for planning were stated as follows: (1) Iraq will employ chemical weapons; (2) The corps will attack against prepared (heavily fortified) positions and there will be echeloned enemy obstacle belts across the Corps front; (3) The air campaign will reduce the *Republican Guard* to 50% strength; (4) Enemy mobile reserves will not be committed until obstacle belts have been penetrated.⁸⁹ These planning assumptions drove VII Corps planners to plan a synchronized and deliberate attack to destroy the *Republican Guard* in zone.⁹⁰ Orchestrating forces to attack these defending armor and mechanized units would sacrifice time and speed and lead to less flexible, more rigid plans of execution.

The VII Corps mission was "On order, VII (US) Corps attacks to penetrate Iraqi defenses and destroy the Republican Guard Forces in zone. Be prepared to defend northern Kuwait border to prevent re-seizing Kuwait."⁹¹ Franks concept of operations and intent is conveyed very clearly in paragraph three of the plan.

We will conduct a swift and violent series of attacks to destroy the Republican Guard Forces Command and minimize our casualties. Speed, tempo, and a continuous AirLand campaign are key. We want Iraqi forces to move so we can attack them throughout the depth of their formations by fire, maneuver, and air. The first phases of our operation will be to get maximum forces moving toward RGFC with minimum time. These phases will be deliberate and rehearsed; the later phases will be METT-T dependent and will be battles of movement and depth. We will get maximum forces through Iraqi positions by conducting a deliberate breach and an envelopment around the western flank through gaps in the obstacle system concurrently, to force the enemy to fight a non-linear battle. The deliberate breach will be done with precision and synchronization resulting from precise targeting and continuous rehearsals. Point of main effort initially is to ensure success of the penetration and passage of the 1 (UK) AD through to defeat the tactical reserves to the east. Point of main effort then shifts north to the enveloping force consisting of 2ACR, 1AD, and 3AD moving in zone toward RGFC. Initial movement of combat support/combat service support elements through the breach must be kept to an absolute minimum to allow for rapid build-up of combat power on the far side. Once through the breach, we will defeat forces on the east rapidly with an economy of force, and pass the point of main effort to the west of that action to destroy the Republican Guard Forces Command in a fast moving battle with zones of action and agile forces attacking by fire, maneuver, and air. Combat service support must keep up because there will not be a pause. We must strike hard and continuously, and finish rapidly.⁹²

The VII Corps plan was planned in six offensive ground phases. Phase I covered the movement from ports and airfields of debarkation to tactical assembly areas. Phase II covered the corps movement from the tactical assembly areas to the forward assembly areas and

defensive sectors. The purpose of this phase was to posture the corps for offensive operations west of Wadi Al-Batin under the cover of the air campaign. Phases III through V addressed the penetration of forward defenses, defeat of the tactical reserves, and destruction of the *Republican Guard*. The three critical phases were articulated as follows in the Operation Plan DESERT SABER. (See figure 12.)

Phase III: Penetration of the Forward Defenses. After counter-reconnaissance operations and preparatory fires 1st Infantry Division will attack to penetrate Iraqi defenses, breach obstacle belts, defeat tactical reserves in zone, and then pass the 1st Armored Division (UK) in zone. Simultaneously, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment will cross the line of departure and initiate an offensive cover forward of 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions in zone towards Phase Line Smash to envelop the tactical reserves.⁹³

Phase IV: Defeat of the Tactical Reserves. The 1st Armored Division (UK) will conduct a forward passage of lines through the 1st Infantry Division breach and attack east to fix and destroy the Iraqi tactical reserves to protect the corps right flank. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment will lead the armored divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division, if under corps control, towards Phase Line Smash in order to defeat tactical reserves in zone. The point of main effort shifts north to the 1st Armored Division during this phase.⁹⁴

Phase V: Destruction of the Republican Guard Forces Command. Phase V begins with the Corps maneuvering from Phase Line SMASH through Objective COLLINS. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment will conduct an offensive cover forward of the two armored divisions and either the 1st Cavalry Division or the 1st Infantry Division as they maneuver across Objective COLLINS. Subsequent maneuver schemes were dependent upon the course of action chosen by the *Republican Guard*. If the *Republican Guard* attacked towards VII Corps, VII Corps would conduct a meeting engagement/hasty defense to fix and envelop enemy in coordination with XVIII Airborne Corps attacks from the northwest. The *Republican Guard* will have three other options: delay and defend from current positions or withdraw north towards Highway 8 or east towards Basrah. VII and XVIII Corps will conduct coordinated attacks to fix and destroy the *Republican Guard*. Which corps will fix and destroy will be determined by positional advantage.⁹⁵

Phase VI was the consolidation phase in which the corps would establish a hasty defense in northern Kuwait after the penetration and destruction of the *Republican Guard*. The five phases of DESERT SABER were partially defined by the amount of time computed to execute and move from the line of departure, through Phase Line SMASH, to an area where the *Republican Guard* destruction was planned.

The VII Corps planners calculated their time-space factors based on Operation DESERT SABER. The time required to penetrate, breach, and conduct the forward passage of 1st Armored Division (UK) and its defeat of the *52nd Armored Division*, was planned to take twenty-

six hours after crossing the line of departure.⁹⁶ The original plan allotted five hours to the conduct of the breach and nine hours to expand the breach. The 1st Armored Division (UK) could conduct a forward passage of lines and destroy the tactical reserve to protect the VII Corps right flank between eighteen and twenty-four hours after the forward passage of lines. The original plan designated the VII Corps attack hour at 0400 on 25 February which meant the breach, penetration, and exploitation was planned to occur in daylight, but the forward passage at night. After the breach and initial passage, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the two armored divisions would travel the 194 kilometers from the line of departure to Phase Line SMASH in twenty-six hours. The units at Phase Line SMASH allotted fourteen hours to rearm and refuel--in essence a planned operational pause--before crossing Phase Line SMASH to close with and destroy the operational and strategic reserves between thirty-eight and fifty-six hours after crossing the line of departure.⁹⁷ Although Franks did not want to acknowledge the need for an operational pause, one was required to maintain logistical sustainability.⁹⁸ The distance between Phase Line SMASH and the primary limit of advance, Phase Line KIWI was 115 kilometers.⁹⁹ VII Corps fought through the *Republican Guard* and the *Jihad Corps* between these phase lines.

After the Operation Plan DESERT SABER was published, the VII Corps planners continued to revise their plan to incorporate changes in the enemy and friendly situation. In VII Corps the refinement process produced fragmentary orders which provided a formal means to articulate and transmit changes to the basic plan. The VII Corps planning staff had refined this technique to promulgate branches and sequels to their basic plan or order while training in Germany. The fragmentary technique was a VII Corps staff means to convey future plans in a brief, but complete manner to minimize coordination and communications in the future when the fragmentary plan was chosen for execution. The fragmentary plan initiated future coordination and allowed for subordinate feedback on potential problems.¹⁰⁰

After 13 January, the VII Corps staff continued to refine their basic plan by writing branches and sequels to incorporate changes in taskings from Third Army or changes in enemy

dispositions or strengths. Eight different fragmentary plans were developed. Each fragmentary plan outlined different schemes of maneuver to defeat the *Republican Guard* depending on respective degrees of success of the air and ground campaigns and the changing enemy intelligence feedback to the planners.¹⁰¹

Fragmentary Plan 7 was developed in early February. The original approved fragmentary plan was published on 20 February and a refined fragmentary plan was published on 24 February after initiation of the ground campaign.¹⁰² Fragmentary Plan 7 was the sequel developed to destroy the *Republican Guard* if they chose to establish a positional defense southwest of Basrah. A modified version of Fragmentary Plan 7 and its associated graphics would serve as the basic scheme of maneuver for VII Corps and Third Army once forces crossed Phase Line SMASH. Third Army approved and adopted Fragmentary Plan 7 as Third Army's Contingency Plan 6.¹⁰³

A significant variable in the development of Operation Plan DESERT SABER and Fragmentary Plan 7 was the estimation of the casualties to the respective VII Corps divisions as a result of the initial breach and maneuver to Phase Line SMASH. In the development of Operation DESERT SABER in mid-January, the VII Corps planners did not have confidence in the effectiveness of the air campaign and anticipated corps unit losses of 20 to 25 percent. After the air campaign shifted its priority targets from the strategic targets to the front line and reserve Iraqi forces in the first week of February, the planners confidence grew and they revised the attrition figures up to 10 percent for Fragmentary Plan 7.¹⁰⁴ See table 6 for a complete breakdown of the by division planned casualty figures.

The VII Corps planners were more optimistic about the effectiveness of the air campaign in destroying the enemy and more confident in their abilities to defeat the *Republican Guard* with minimal casualties by the time Fragmentary Plan 7 was published. During the time lapse between 27 January and 23 February, the VII Corps staff witnessed the perceived success of the

air campaign destruction of the enemy front line and reserve forces. However, the planners did not alter or adjust their timelines accordingly.

The three basic components of Fragmentary Plan 7 were the mission, the concept of operations and the scheme of maneuver. The mission of VII Corps remained essentially unchanged.¹⁰⁵ The concept of operations was supported by an operations overlay which ultimately was used with small corrections to execute the ground campaign for VII Corps. The corps concept articulated in Fragmentary Plan 7 was to continue the attack to destroy *Republican Guard* forces in zone by attacking with maneuver forces to prevent their escape and destroying them with massed direct and indirect fires and air. The point of main effort was to destroy or isolate the *Republican Guard* in zone.¹⁰⁶ In execution, the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions would become the main effort.¹⁰⁷ The problems associated with this shifting of the main effort will be discussed in chapter four.

The scheme of maneuver was specific in the orchestration of the breach and subsequent destruction of the *Republican Guard* and their reinforcements, the *Jihad Corps*. The revised scheme of maneuver reflected the same mission for the 1st Armored Division (UK). Destroy the tactical reserves vicinity of Objective WATERLOO. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment would lead the armored divisions to fix the *Tawalkana Division* in the vicinity of Objective NORFOLK. The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions would attack through the regiment to sequentially destroy the *Tawakalna*, *Medinah*, and *Hammurabi Divisions* and supporting *Jihad Corps* divisions in the vicinity of Objectives BONN, DORSET, and DENVER. The 1st Armored Division was designated the main effort. The 1st Infantry Division would conduct a supporting attack on the southern flank of the armored divisions.¹⁰⁸ (See figure 13.)

The implementation of Fragmentary Plan 7 was one of the most critical commander's decisions that Lieutenant General Franks had to make in the course of the war. The entire Third Army plan, the coordinated XVIII Airborne Corps attacks, and the success of the coalition's main military objective of destroying the *Republican Guard* balanced on this decision.

The decision to execute Fragmentary Plan 7 was dependent on the Iraqi reaction to the VII Corps' advance to contact towards Basrah. Lieutenant General Franks believed that the *Republican Guard* would choose one of three options. Most likely, they would establish delay and defend positions to protect the withdrawal of the remainder of the Iraqi forces in theater. The VII Corps Fragmentary Plan 7 was developed to fight this option. This option was most likely because the heavy Iraqi reserves could not displace from their set defensive positions without heavy attrition or destruction by Coalition air units. Second, they would withdraw north of Basrah to preserve their force. In actuality, *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* units did not appear to retrograde northeast until 27 February. The least likely option, but the most dangerous, was that the Iraqi forces would counterattack and meet the VII Corps in the vicinity of Objective COLLINS.¹⁰⁹ The Coalition's air supremacy negated that option. Based on Franks' and his staff's time-space analysis, Franks' believed that he needed to make the critical decision between twenty-four and forty-eight hours before the planned execution.¹¹⁰ In the execution of the ground campaign, VII Corps crossed the line of departure at 1500 hours on 24 February and was completing the breach by mid-morning of 25 February.¹¹¹ This meant that Franks needed to make the decision to execute Fragmentary Plan 7 during the mid-morning to early afternoon time frame on 25 February so that the critical fight with the *Republican Guard* could be orchestrated on 26 February.¹¹²

The VII Corps plan consisted of two operations intended to be marked by striking differences of tempo, a penetration and movement to contact intended to be highly controlled and disciplined, and a battle phase intended to be relentless and irresistible, leading in the end to total destruction of the enemy forces in Franks' zone of operations.

Movement to Battle Positions

The corps repositioned from the arrival areas to their forward assembly areas while the VII Corps staff was refining plans and coordinating the upcoming fight. Once VII Corps

completed closure, to the ports and airfields of debarkation, they marshaled and prepared for movement to the tactical assembly areas. Additionally, VII Corps units began training in preparation for the ground war. Between 13 and 17 February they traversed on average 477 kilometers from their marshaling points at Ad Damman and Dhahran to their tactical assembly areas north and northwest of Hafar Al-Batin.¹¹³ This distance is equivalent to traveling from Orlando, Florida, to Atlanta, Georgia.¹¹⁴ The VII Corps established tactical assembly areas in the vicinity of Hafar Al-Batin with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Cavalry Division positioned north of Hafar Al-Batin, south of the first echelon Iraqi defenses. Their purpose was to protect VII and XVIII Corps forward defensive positions.¹¹⁵ (See figure 14.)

During the twelve weeks between initial units arrival in December and closing on the tactical assembly areas in January, the corps units focused on weapons training, land navigation, and breaching rehearsals. Additionally, units conducted regimental and divisional day and night movements to practice large tactical formations suited for the desert.¹¹⁶

After the air campaign started on 17 January, VII Corps would travel on average two hundred kilometers from their tactical assembly areas to their forward attack positions between 17 January and 23 February.¹¹⁷ The movement of the American Army corps was timed with the initiation of the air campaign so that the Iraqi forces could not counter to block the repositioning of the corps without significant casualties. The VII Corps movement from their initial defensive positions south of Tapline Line Road, to their forward assembly areas became the corps rehearsal for the movement across the line of departure to the point where they employed to fight the *Republican Guard* after crossing Phase Line SMASH. The distance from the tactical assembly areas to the forward assembly areas south of the Iraqi first echelon division was 160 kilometers. The distance between the initial line of departure and Phase line SMASH was 144 kilometers.¹¹⁸

The preponderance of VII Corps conducted the tactical move to the forward assembly areas between 15 and 17 February.¹¹⁹ The purpose of the rehearsal was to give VII Corps staff

and commanders the opportunity to work out the incredibly difficult command and control problems, time-space considerations, and to familiarize the corps with movements conducted on this scale.¹²⁰ In Franks' words, "We laid the corps down from north to south just the way the Corps would be from west to east, so when we moved from the tactical assembly areas to our attack positions, we moved in the same formations that we were to use later going to attack the Iraqi."¹²¹

The 1st Cavalry Division did not have to reposition, but remained in its forward defensive position west of Joint Force Command North, south of the Wadi Al-Batin. The 1st Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division moved northwest from Tactical Assembly Areas ROOSEVELT and KEYS, respectively, to position in the center third of VII Corps initial offensive stance prepared to conduct breaching operations. 1st Infantry Division was positioned forward, south of the line of departure. The 1st Armored Division (UK) occupied forward Assembly Area RAY. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment displaced west, then north, from its Tactical Assembly Area RICHARDSON to position on the left flank of the VII Corps offensive stance just south of the line of departure. The 1st Armored Division and 3rd Armored Divisions displaced west and north from their Tactical Assembly Areas THOMPSON and HENRY, respectively, to their adjacent forward Assembly Areas GARCIA and BUTTS.¹²²

Several important lessons were learned from the rehearsal. One, the rehearsal introduced the division commanders and their subordinate staffs to the time and space requirements necessary to move their entire divisions with attachments. Second, the rehearsal allowed the VII Corps units to test the original command and control architecture which did not work. Third, the rehearsal gave the commanders an estimate of fuel consumption and time requirement necessary to refuel.¹²³

The armored divisions occupied the forward assembly areas with fifteen-kilometers frontages, less than one third the desired frontage for a heavy division in open desert terrain.¹²⁴

By early 24 February, the Corps was refueled, positioned and prepared to commence ground operations on 25 February, Ground-Day plus one.

¹Richard M. Swain, Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), 162.

²U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL,5,9.

³Ibid.

⁴Swain, Lucky War, 212.

⁵Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2 April 1991.

⁶Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf (Canada: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995), 301.

⁷Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2 April 1991, 1.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 301.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations, 26 April 1991. (Text in possession of author. Also obtainable from the personal papers of Dr. Richard M. Swain, SAMS, Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.), 29.

¹²Frederick M. Franks, interview by author, (Tapes in possession of the author.) 23 February, 1997.

¹³Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 2 April 1991, 9.

¹⁴Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 302.

¹⁵Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 6 April 1991, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2.

¹⁶Stanley Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

¹⁷Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 383.

¹⁸Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 1-2.

¹⁹Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Tony Martinez, transcript, 4 September 1991, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

²⁰Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

²¹ Ibid.

²²Franks, interview by Tony Martinez, 4 September 1991, 4.

²³Ibid., 4.

²⁴Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

²⁵U.S. Army, Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option. Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 32-33 and U.S. Army, 1st Armored Division, Memorandum for the Record, 1st Armored Division in OPERATION DESERT STROM, 19 April 1991. Gulf War Collection, VII Corps, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, slide 37.

²⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5.

²⁷Ibid., 4.

²⁸Swain, Lucky War, 355.

²⁹ Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

³⁰Daniel Gilbert, interview by author, (Tapes in possession of the author.) 4 February 1997.

³¹Robert Scales, Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army an Command and General Staff College, 1994), 239.

³²Franks, interview by author, 23 February, 1997.

³³U.S. Army, XVIII Airborne Corps, Post-War Briefing Slides, July 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Scales Papers, SG Unit Histories, SSG ABC-002, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, slide 30.

³⁴Richard Overy, Why the Allies Won, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 172.

³⁵Carlo D'Este, Patton: A Genius For War, (New York: Harper Collin Publishers), 638.

³⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps G-2 100-Hour War Analysis, Gulf War Collection, VII Corps Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CARL, 20 April 1992, 76-79.

³⁷Ibid., 80.

³⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides: the Hundred Hour War by General Frederick Franks, 29 May 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-011, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

³⁹U.S. Army, VII Corps G-2 100-Hour War Analysis, 76-77.

⁴⁰Ibid., 16.

⁴¹U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides: the Hundred Hour War by General Frederick Franks, 29 May 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-011, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

⁴²Franks, interview by author, 23 February, 1997.

⁴³U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-078, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2.

⁴⁴Richard Rowe, interview by author, 13 March 1997.

⁴⁵U.S. Army, VII Corps G-2 100-Hour War Analysis, 80.

⁴⁶Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War vol 4: The Gulf War(London: Mansell Publishers, 1991), 115-125.

⁴⁷Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 124.

⁴⁸U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides Evolution of the Plan for General H. Norman Schwarzkopf 1 April 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-074, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 8.

⁴⁹Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

⁵⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 199, 7.

⁵¹U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 1991, 5-7.

⁵²U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides: the Hundred Hour War by General Frederick Franks, 29 May 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-011, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

⁵³U.S. Army, Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option. Gulf War Collection, Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 46.

⁵⁴U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides: the Hundred Hour War by General Frederick Franks, 29 May 1991, 4.

⁵⁵Swain, Lucky War, 106

⁵⁶Franks, interview by author, 23 February, 1997.

⁵⁷U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-071, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 1-2.

⁵⁸U.S. Army, VII Corps Briefing Slides Evolution of the Plan for General H. Norman Schwarzkopf 1 April 1991, 7.

⁵⁹Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

⁶⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 1-2.

⁶¹Ibid., 2.

⁶²Stanley Cherrie, interview by Richard M. Swain, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 29 August 1991, 3.

⁶³Franks, interview by author, 23 February, 1997.

⁶⁴Donald Holder, interview by author, (Tapes in possession of the author.) 21 March 1997.

⁶⁵U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 5.

⁶⁶Swain, Lucky War, 115-116.

⁶⁷U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 3-6.

⁶⁸Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹Frederick, M. Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, transcript. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5 April 1991, 1.

⁷⁰Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁷¹U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 5.

⁷²Gordon and Trainor, The General's War, 165-170 and Swain, Lucky War, 93-95.

⁷³Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁷⁴Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 5 April 1991, 4.

⁷⁵Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁷⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 5-10.

⁷⁷Ibid., 6.

⁷⁸Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁷⁹U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 5.

⁸⁰Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁸¹Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁸²Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Gilbert, interview by author, 4 February 1997.

⁸⁵U.S. Army, VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 13 January 1991. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 3.

⁸⁶VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 3.

⁸⁷Ibid., 4.

⁸⁸Gilbert, interview by author, 4 February 1997.

⁸⁹VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 5.

⁹⁰Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁹¹VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 9.

⁹²Ibid., 5-6.

⁹³Ibid., 8.

⁹⁴Ibid., 8-9.

⁹⁵Ibid., 9.

⁹⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 14-16.

⁹⁷U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991, 14-15.

⁹⁸Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March

⁹⁹U.S. Army, 1st Armored Divisions Memorandum for the Record for DESERT STORM, 19 April 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 22-23.

¹⁰⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps Summary of the Evolution of VII Corps Operations Order, 29 May 1991, 8.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 10.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹⁰⁴U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 1991, 2 and U.S. Army, VII Corps, Fragmentary Plan 7 , 1900 24 February 1991, (Transcript in possession of author and in personal files of Maj.Gen Donald Holder), 2.

¹⁰⁵U.S. Army, VII Corps, Fragmentary Plan 7 , 1900 24 February 1991, (Transcript in possession of author and in personal files of Maj.Gen Donald Holder), 2.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

¹⁰⁸U.S. Army, VII Corps, Fragmentary Plan 7 , 1900 24 February 1991, 3.

¹⁰⁹Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹¹⁰Frederick M. Franks, interview by Robert Scales, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 30 April 1992, 3.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹¹³U.S. Army, Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option, Gulf War Collection, 37.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 18.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 28.

¹¹⁶U.S. Army, VII Corps, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B, 29 May 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-007, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 3.

¹¹⁷U.S. Army, Third Army, Developing the Offensive Option, Gulf War Collection, 37.

¹¹⁸Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Tony Martinez, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4 September 1991, 3.

¹¹⁹VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 38-39.

¹²⁰Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹²¹Frederick, M . Franks, interview by Martinez, 4 September 1991, 4.

¹²²VII Corps Operations Plan 1990-2 (OPERATION DESERT SABER), 37-39.

¹²³Peter S. Kindsvatter, Personal Notes and Observations, 26 April 1991, 21.

¹²⁴Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESTRUCTION OF THE REPUBLICAN GUARD FORCES COMMAND: OPERATIONS OF 24 TO 28 FEBRUARY

VII Corps conducted a wide sweeping envelopment of the Iraqi *VII Corps* forward defenses to defeat the preponderance of the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* in the Gulf War. The corps crossed the line of departure running northwest of Hafir Al-Batin, parallel to the Tapline Road, at 1500 on 24 February. In the ensuing ninety hours, the corps would maneuver across 260 kilometers of Iraqi desert, fight the greater part of thirteen Iraqi divisions, capture 22,000 Iraqi prisoners and destroy 1,981 tanks, 1,938 armored personnel carriers, 713 artillery pieces, 658 air defense systems and 2,893 trucks.¹ Incredibly, the corps lost 49 killed and 192 wounded.² Although the VII Corps had unbelievable success, there have been those who criticized the corps' lack of aggressiveness and what they take to be the corps' slow rate of movement and maneuver.

This chapter will focus on actions and decisions taken during three decisive phases of VII Corps' operations between 24-28 February. Lieutenant General Franks made critical decisions during each phase that impacted on the perceived success or failure of his corps' performance. The first action to be examined was the breach operation conducted between the 24th and mid-day the 25th of February. The second set of actions involve the effort to mass the corps after it crossed Phase Line SMASH and Objective COLLINS to close with the *Republican Guard* between mid-day the 25th through mid-day the 26th of February. Finally, the attempt to conduct a double envelopment of the remaining Iraqi forces in zone on 27 and 28 February will be analyzed.

Prior to crossing the line of departure, Lieutenant General Franks assumed that the *Republican Guard* would stand and fight. VII Corps would have the time to fight, refuel, and then close with and destroy the *Republican Guard*. The prevailing mindset of the corps leadership was that they had ample time to do things right. Colonel Donald Holder, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Commander, recalled,

There was never a sense during that operation that there was a certain time in which it had to be conducted. There was time to get it right. Time to get the artillery properly positioned, bring up and mass the corps, and stage the fight on our terms.³

There was no sense of urgency at the beginning of the ground campaign. The British wanted to conduct a quick forward passage of lines with the 1st Infantry Division to fix and defeat the Iraqi tactical reserves, so that the Corps could enjoy freedom of action. The key operational decision to be made during the first phase was where and when to commit to a specific coordinated fragmentary plan. This decision might be prompted by Lieutenant General Franks, but ultimate responsibility and authority was vested in the Third Army commander, Lieutenant General John Yeosock.

Breach of Iraqi Defenses and the First Operational Pause 24-25 February

Afternoon 24 February

The weather on 24 February considerably reduced the Coalition's air capability. The skies in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations was overcast, with visibility ranging from one to two miles during most of the day. Light rain and winds began at 0700 and peaked at 1800 with steady gusts that reduced visibility to twenty kilometers.⁴ Colonel Holder remembered that the,

Weather was probably the greatest surprise. The weather wasn't just bad, it was awful, worse than the seasonal averages, and worse than our expectations. This ground war was planned with a clear weather air fight. As it turned out we could only use the air one half of the time.⁵

The synchronization of the Coalition campaign was timed to deceive the Iraqis as to the direction and timing of the main attack. The timing of the VII Corps attack itself was predicated on the success of the breach by the 1st Infantry Division. The breach was critical for two

reasons. VII Corps wanted a quick passage of the 1st Armored Division (UK) to protect the right flank of the VII Corp's main effort. Also, the Corps' planners wanted a shorter line of communication for logistical support. The planners wanted to create a direct route to the armored fist instead of a circuit sixty kilometers west to the point where the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment was to flank the Iraqi defenses, then a return to the east.⁶

The conduct of the breaching operations on 24-25 February set the tone for the remainder of the corps' operations. Three factors effected the conduct of the 1st Infantry Division's breach. First, the breach had been designated the main effort since mid-fall 1990 and been the focus of a great deal of planning and preparation.⁷ As the main effort and focus of attention, the breaching operations took on a life all their own and the evolution almost became an administrative event with twenty-four lanes, every step executed in excruciating detail against minimal resistance. Second, the general lack of training and experience for units in large scale maneuver, especially at night, proved to be very problematic.⁸ Third, Franks' conservative nature and desire to protect his forces caused delays.⁹

Between crossing the line of departure and massing to close with the *Republican Guards*, Franks made several critical decisions that set the tone and tempo of the corps and established movement factors that could not be overcome because of the size, inertia, and momentum involved in maneuvering a combat organization of VII Corps' size. During this period VII Corps did not anticipate or have a decisive engagement, but completed the breach with the 1st Infantry Division and conducted a forward passage with the 1st Armored Division (UK). The 1st Armored Division (UK) attacked east against the separated brigades of the *52d Armored Division* echeloned behind the first Iraqi belt of defenses. The British attack was intended to protect the right flank of the corps' future main effort.¹⁰ On the right flank, the 1st Cavalry Division, returned to theater reserve, conducted a feint along a forty-seven kilometer front to fix the eastern half of the Iraqi first echelon defense in the Army VII Corps zone. This feint reinforced the deception plan that the Coalition's main attack was coming up the Wadi Al-Batin to liberate

Kuwait City.¹¹ On the left flank, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment was to lead the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions around the Iraqi western flank to gain positional advantage.

Context: Theater Wide Operations for 24 February

On the VII Corps far right flank, the I Marine Expeditionary Force attacked at 0530 with 2nd Marine Division on the left and the 1st Marine Division on the right. The *4th* and *3rd Iraqi Corps* were defending on the elbow of Kuwait and on the southern Kuwaiti border, respectively. (See figure 6.) The *Iraqi 4th Corps* had been reduced to 50 percent effectiveness and the *3rd Corps* to 15 percent effectiveness, by the time the Marine attacks commenced. The Marine divisions were enormously successful. They advanced thirty-five kilometers into the defenses of the two Iraqi infantry corps by sunset.¹² Ironically, the early success of the Marine attacks may have been too great. It may have unhinged the entire CENTCOM plan to convince Saddam to commit his operational and strategic reserves south towards Kuwait City to counter-attack or block this force, thus reinforcing the enveloping affect of the VII Corps effort. Instead, Saddam Hussein waited a day and then began a general withdrawal which he announced in the early morning hours of 26 February. Attacks by Joint Forces Command North, on the VII Corps right flank, were not as successful as those of the Marines. Joint Forces Command North only breached the initial front-line defenses because they feared the oil burning ditches and were not confident that they could defend against local Iraqi counter-attacks. Of note, when the Joint Forces Command North attacked, of the four Iraqi divisions of the *4th Iraqi Corps* in their zone, two were combat ineffective and two had already begun to withdraw.¹³ (See figure 6.)

Schwarzkopf was forced to keep the 1st Cavalry Division committed to reinforcing this attack because of the Egyptian reluctance to attack without American help. Joint Forces Command East on the right flank of the I Marine Expeditionary Force had little trouble breaching the front line defenses and reaching their day one objectives, one third of the distance towards Kuwait City.¹⁴ (See figure 15.)

On VII Corps left flank, the XVIII Airborne Corps experienced equally unanticipated success. The 6th French Armored Division, reinforced by elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, secured Objective ROCHAMBEAU by noon. The 101st Air Assault Division secured their intermediate objective COBRA by 1039 hours. Seizure of COBRA was critical to establish an intermediate staging base for attack helicopter attacks across the Euphrates River and Highway 8. Army attack aviation would interdict the Iraqi escape route until the slower moving ground forces reached the river valley.¹⁵ (See figure 16.)

The Iraqi reaction to the unfolding of the ground campaign on 24 February was one of shock, dismay, and indecision.¹⁶ The Iraqi reaction to Coalition attacks was slow and reflected a degraded command and control architecture and an inept army. Overall, the Iraqi army was significantly reduced from the earlier predicted force strengths. At the beginning of the air campaign, desertions and poor Iraqi command and control reduced the theater personnel strength to 336,000, a significantly lower prediction than the CENTCOM estimation of 450,000-500,000. This force was equipped with 3,475 tanks, 3,080 armored personnel carriers, and 2,475 artillery pieces. On the eve of the ground campaign, the combination of the air campaign, deteriorating moral, and minimal discipline in the conscript forces witnessed a further reduction in Iraqi manpower in theater to between 200,000 and 220,000. These forces were equipped with 2,090 functioning tanks, 2,150 armored personnel carriers, and 1,320 artillery pieces. The air campaign up to this point consisted of 35,000 sorties of which 5,600 were flown against the *Republican Guard* which accounted for minimum heavy equipment destruction.¹⁷

The estimation of the actual Iraqi division strengths varied widely throughout the theater. In general, the Coalition acted on the figures provided by ARCENT. ARCENT predicted that the Iraqi *7th Corps* was at 42 percent effective with some front line divisions at less than 25 percent. The tactical reserves, the *52nd Armored Division* was reduced to 50 percent effective. More importantly, the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* were predicted to be at 64 percent and 58 percent effective, respectively. The enemy strength in VII Corps zone had been reduced

significantly by desertions and the air campaign.¹⁸ (See figure 17.) The perception among some CENTCOM subordinate commanders like Boomer and Horner was that the enemy had been significantly weakened. Franks and the VII Corps staff, however, planned his campaign on the exaggerated figures and capabilities of the Iraqi forces.¹⁹ See table 7 for a detailed breakdown of the predicted Iraqi strengths at the eve of the ground war.

At the tactical level, the integrity of the actual Iraqi defenses in the first echelon were irregular and erratic.²⁰ Many defensive positions were shallow, ditches were not filled with oil, strong points did not have mutually supporting fields of fire, and minefields were not concealed. The original intelligence picture painted a picture of an impregnable defensive line reinforced by a second line of reinforced brigade strong point positions. The defensive design was to allow initial penetration, but block the Coalition forces at the second belt and destroy them with local counter-attacks. A fatal Iraqi mistake was that they had developed a defense based on the lessons of the infantry intense Iran-Iraq War and not on the nature of a defense designed to stop or defeat massed armored formations. In essence, the Iraqi defensive belts became prisons from which the conscript divisions could not escape.²¹

The cumulative effect of the successes on VII Corps flanks was that General Schwarzkopf had to react and advance the time of attack for the VII Corps and heavy elements of the XVIII Airborne Corps attacks up to force the *Republican Guard* to meet this attack, or allow VII Corps to close on them before they could withdraw out of theater. Schwarzkopf called Lieutenant General Yeosock at approximately 0840 on 24 February and asked if the VII Corps and heavy elements of the XVIII Airborne Corps could attack ahead of schedule.²² Yeosock conferred with the respective commanders and conveyed to Schwarzkopf that Third Army could attack with two hours notice.²³ Franks immediately notified units commanders that the time of attack had been pushed up to early afternoon vice the 0400 planned attack time on 25 February.²⁴ At 1300, Schwarzkopf ordered their attacks to commence at 1500 on 24 February after further analysis and consultation with the National Command Authority.²⁵ Lieutenant

General Franks criticizes CENTCOM for taking so long to give the execute order on 24 February. He felt that VII Corps lost two to three hours of daylight, which significantly degraded their ability to complete the breach on 24 February.²⁶ This would accelerate the VII Corps attack time by fifteen hours.

For VII Corps, the decision to push the time line had three immediate effects. First, the three field artillery brigades supporting the 1st Infantry Division's breach would have to reposition immediately to support the breach effort. The artillery brigades would be positioned by 1230.²⁷ Second, the 1st Armored Division (UK) would have to reposition without heavy equipment movers. This would potentially risk time lost for future maintenance on systems with questionable reliability. Third, the 1st Infantry Division would have to conduct a breach at night. Schwartzkopf's revisions would have long term effects on VII Corps' operations.

The most significant consequence of the accelerated attack time line was that the 1st Infantry Division only had three hours of light before sunset on 24 February to initiate the breach. Additionally, 1st Armored Division (UK) would have to reposition throughout the night to conduct a forward passage of lines by first light on 25 February without the assistance of heavy equipment transportation to minimize wear and tear on the armored and mechanized assets.²⁸ The 1st Infantry Division had conducted all its breaching rehearsals in the daylight. The forward passage of lines with the British Armored Division was to occur throughout the first night, allowing twelve hours to reposition the British division from its forward assembly areas to the passage lanes.²⁹

The focus of effort on the breach force as the main effort, despite significant changes in the Iraqi situation, had a negative effect on the execution of the ground campaign between 24 and 28 February.³⁰ In preparation for the VII Corps breach, the 1st Infantry Division was reinforced with thirteen battalion sets of countermine equipment, eighteen mine plows, and seventy-five armored combat earth movers.³¹ The massive reinforcement reinforced the

mentality in which the breach became an end unto itself, not the means to out flank the Iraqi reserves.

The 1st Infantry Division reduced their preparatory fires from two and one quarter hours to thirty minutes.³² This was more than adequate against the *26th Infantry Division*, whose front line effective strength was below 25 percent.³³ (See figure 17.) The 1st Infantry Division attacked with two brigades forward and one back at 1500.³⁴ By 1654 the division had established twenty-four lanes, had breached about 50 percent of the obstacle belt, and had met negligible resistance.³⁵ The lead brigades established a breach line along Phase Line COLORADO at 1800.³⁶ (See figure 17.) However, as the night progressed several concerns arose that led to Franks' decision to stop the forward progress of his corps until 0600 on 25 February.

In the 1st Infantry Division breach itself, there was a degree of confusion and disorganization between the maneuver brigades and the reinforcing corps' artillery brigades which had reinforced the initial breach. Three of the four corps artillery brigades, the 42nd, 75th and 142nd, were tasked to support the breaching operations.³⁷ The corps's field artillery brigades had to displace north beyond the breach line to support the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the two armored divisions on the following day.³⁸ The haste in which units moved to the breach lanes caused mingling of elements of the field artillery brigades and the 1st Infantry Division combat service support units which caused confusion and congestion. The passage of the artillery brigades, the British division, and combat service support assets were three division equivalents of gear.³⁹ Major General Thomas G. Rhame, Commanding General for the division, believed that continuing the breach and attacks was too risky in light of what he perceived to be unknown Iraqi counter-attacks capabilities on the first day. He also feared having to clear the minefields at night.⁴⁰ Thus, Rhame recommended to Franks that the lead brigades hold their defensive line at Breach Line COLORADO until first light on 25 February.⁴¹

On the left flank of the 1st Infantry Division, the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment easily outflanked the Iraqi western flank and screened the maneuver of the 1st and 3rd Armored

Divisions. The 2nd Armored Regiment had cut through the Iraqi defensive berm the day before to establish an attack position fifteen kilometers into Iraq.⁴² They continued their attack at 1430 hours 24 February.⁴³ The regiment was followed by the 210th Field Artillery Brigade, which provided fire support for the regiment's cover mission.⁴⁴ The armored divisions were to maneuver to cross Phase Line SMASH abreast, early on 26 February, with either the 1st Infantry Division or the 1st Cavalry Division to form Frank's three-division fist.⁴⁵ The only northern sector tactical fight planned before crossing Phase Line SMASH was 1st Armored Division's seizure of Objective PURPLE at Al-Busayyah.

The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment succeeded in outflanking the western Iraqi defenses. The regiment penetrated forty-five kilometers beyond the line of departure by sunset with lead elements of the regiment ten kilometers short of Al-Busayyah by 1800.⁴⁶ The regiment conducted an aerial reconnaissance of Phase Line SMASH at 1800 and detected no enemy.⁴⁷ The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment encountered only one brigade size Iraqi outpost enroute to Phase Line SMASH which it easily defeated. Colonel Holder's concern at sunset was that he was not in good supporting distance with regard to the armored divisions which lagged thirty kilometers behind his main body. Holder felt he was very vulnerable to local Iraqi counter-attacks if they materialized.⁴⁸ He recommended to Franks that he halt until the breach could be continued to pass the 1st Armored Division (UK) forward. Holder assumed that the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions would continue their advance throughout the night so that by dawn they could continue the attack as a cohesive main effort attack.⁴⁹ This was not to be the case.

During their night movement the armored division's flanks became intermingled.⁵⁰ Additionally, the 3rd Armored Division had discovered an enemy unit between its right flank and 1st Infantry Division's breach.⁵¹ The prevention of fratricide became a predominant fear. Lieutenant General Franks ordered the divisions to halt, separate intermixed units, and establish a five kilometer buffer between the divisions. The buffer rule between divisions would stay in effect throughout the remainder of the conflict.⁵² The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions held in place

and reorganized through the night. The armored divisions had no enemy contact throughout the night in the zone already screened by the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.⁵³

Throughout the early evening Franks conferred with Major General Rhame and Colonel Holder to determine if he should stop the corps movement. At approximately 2200 hours he ordered the corps to halt its advance. The VII Corps attack would commence at first light on 25 February.⁵⁴ Franks later explained that he reached this decision for several reasons. He did not want to desynchronize the enveloping force from the breach force and tactical reserve attack force. He did not want his flanks exposed to potential counter attacks. Third, he wanted the time to bring his combat service support forward to "tuck it under the main effort."⁵⁵ Fourth, he feared that continuing the attack in the night would bypass enemy units that could harass his 24,000 wheeled combat support and combat service support elements as they came forward.⁵⁶ Finally, he did not think the 1st Armored Division (UK) could reach the breach lane by first light on 25 February. The British division was located between sixty and eighty kilometers south of the breach.⁵⁷ The decision to stop the corps on 24 February was prudent to a degree, but had some distinct negative effects.

Franks' decision to pause throughout the night and morning of 24-25 February slowed the momentum of the VII Corps' attack and set a tone of protracted, synchronized maneuver that would haunt the corps for the rest of the war. Franks' cautious nature had created further doubt in his abilities by Schwarzkopf.⁵⁸ Third, Frank's demonstrated caution was compounded by the respective subordinate commander's overestimation of the enemy in their zone. Their cautious approach to the enemy governed their subsequent execution of the ground campaign.⁵⁹ The weighting of the respective divisions, as main and supporting attacks, undermined Franks' flexibility when the Iraqi defenses proved to be easily penetrable.

Another problem associated with the nature of the breach was its designation as the main effort and the degree to which it was weighted despite the weakened enemy. As the main effort, 1st Infantry Division was weighted with three of the four corps artillery brigades. Two of

these brigades, the 75th and 42nd, were to pass through the breach before the 1st Armored Division (UK) and move to support the American armored division's movement across Objective COLLINS.⁶⁰ This movement and coordination drill would consume time and energy. The forward passage of the 1st Armored Division (UK) was supposed to have been completed by 1800 hours 25 February, was not complete until 2300 hours that evening.⁶¹ Because of the lack of a sense of urgency on the part of the 1st Infantry Division in the conduct of the breach, the field artillery brigades did not conduct a forward passage through the breach until 1030 on 25 February. The field artillery brigades did not close with the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions until early evening on 25 February, which contributed to the slow massing of the corps at Phase Line SMASH.⁶² Major General Rhame had volunteered to conduct the breach, but he was reluctant to push his inexperienced division in a complex operation such as a breach. Additionally, he lacked confidence in his new brigade, 2nd Armored Division forward, of which he knew little. This slow movement and the corresponding lack of fire support made coordination of massing the forces at Phase Line SMASH more burdensome and complicated.

As the main effort, the breach force was weighted with artillery support and intelligence collection assets. The primary focus of the corps intelligence collection efforts was on the breach site and surrounding Iraqi forces. This was at the expense of the collection efforts on the area up to and beyond Phase Line SMASH. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regimental commander felt that he was uncovering unknown terrain in his movement from the Phase Line APPLE to Phase Line SMASH.⁶³ There was an associated cost to focusing totally on the breach, despite the knowledge that the front line forces were reduced to less than 25 percent of their pre-war strength before the ground war started. Cumulatively, weighting the breach force as the main effort and preoccupation with this effort cost the corps valuable time and overly complicated the plan. The VII Corps SITREP reported by 1800 on 24 February that the breach force was encountering minimal resistance. The division had collected over 1,000 Iraqi prisoners by 0137 hours the next morning, with only one American killed.⁶⁴

The response to the VII Corps' artillery raids conducted on 7 and 13 February contributes to the picture of enemy already destroyed before the breaching operations. In an attempt to gauge Iraqi capability, VII Corps Artillery pummeled Iraqi artillery positions on those dates, dropping over 210,000 bomblets, rockets and shells on known Iraqi artillery positions. The Iraqi artillery did not respond, an indicator that the Iraqis did not have the indirect fire support technology and capability the VII Corps had assumed.⁶⁵ This lack of counter-battery fire could have also indicated a sophisticated defensive plan that protected its artillery from U.S. detection and targeting means.

Massing the VII Corps at Phase Line SMASH and the Decision to
Conduct Fragmentary Plan 7: 25-26 February
Morning-Afternoon 25 February

The ground campaign was proceeding much better than anyone had planned or anticipated when dawn broke on 25 February. The ground campaign was so successful that the concept of operations and its logistic support structure could not adapt quickly enough to completely support the flow and logistical pauses by VII Corps and XVIII Airborne Corps were necessary.

The next significant action to be analyzed is the massing of the corps between 25 February and 1500 hours on 26 February when elements of the corps closed with the Iraqi operational and strategic reserves, 100 kilometers southwest of Basrah. Once the corps cleared Objective COLLINS on the afternoon of 26 February, the entire corps was engaged with elements of five armored and mechanized divisions of either the *Republican Guards* or *Jihad Corps* southwest of Basrah, until the end of the war at 0800 on 28 February.⁶⁶

Throughout 25 February, the VII Corps had relative success in a coordinated movement from the second day's line of departure at Phase Line APPLE through crossing Phase Line SMASH early 26 February. (See figure 19.) The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment continued the attack at first light and made contact with the combat outposts of the *12th Armored Division* at

1240 and destroyed them with ease.⁶⁷ They continued their attacks and screened forward of Phase Line SMASH in force by mid-afternoon and reported no enemy contact.⁶⁸ They had crossed the 100 kilometers between Phase Line APPLE and Phase Line SMASH in six to eight hours.⁶⁹ By nightfall, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment had screened seven to ten kilometers forward of Phase Line SMASH.⁷⁰

The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions crossed Phase Line APPLE at dawn and reached Phase Line GRAPE, forty-five kilometers north, by noon. (See figure 19.) The armored divisions met and easily defeated the forward outpost of the *26th Infantry Division* along Phase Line GRAPE around noon. The 3rd Armored Division continued its advance towards Phase Line SMASH and stopped short at 1400 to refuel, refit, and organize.⁷¹ They would not cross Phase Line SMASH until 0824 on 26 February.⁷²

The 1st Armored Division had encountered a brigade of the *26th Infantry Division* at Phase Line GRAPE and defeated it decisively. The division continued its attack north and reached the outskirts of Al-Busayyah, Objective PURPLE, by approximately 1330 hours.⁷³ Objective PURPLE was the location of either a brigade or a division logistics base and supposedly the *26th Division* CP. It was defended by a battalion to brigade-sized force.⁷⁴ At 1240 a intelligence report at the VII Corps Main CP indicated a company of T-72s was dug in the vicinity of Al-Busayyah. This proved to be incorrect and the figure was corrected to a platoon size tank force.⁷⁵ When the 1st Armored Division reached the objective area they maneuvered to close proximity of the objective area but did not attack because they wanted to conduct preparatory fires on the objective prior to conducting the assault.⁷⁶ The 1st Armored Division spent the remainder of the day and night positioning to close with and destroy the Iraqi defenses in the vicinity of Objective PURPLE. To avoid casualties due to operations in urban terrain and the rough terrain at night, General Ron Griffith decided to coordinate the attack for first light on 26 February.⁷⁷ Griffith called to Lieutenant General Franks to receive approval to wait until the next morning to attack. Franks approved the attack as long as the 1st Armored Division could mass

on 3rd Armored Division's left flank vicinity of Phase Line TANGERINE by 0900 or 1000 at the latest on 26 February.⁷⁸ (See figure 20.) Originally, Franks wanted Objective PURPLE secured by nightfall on 25 February.⁷⁹ Franks was frustrated with the slow rate of movement of the 1st Armored Division, but he did not want to second guess the division commander's tactical decision.⁸⁰ Franks frustration was partly due to his own actions and decisions which had set the tone for his 1st Armored Division commander.

The 1st Infantry Division continued to open the shoulders of the breach and expanded the breach line to Phase Line NEW JERSEY by 1050. The field artillery brigades conducted forward passages at this time, and the forward passage of the 1st Armored Division (UK) began after 1200.⁸¹ The 1st Infantry Division was at 95 percent effective vice the 60 to 70 percent attrition anticipated earlier. Thus, General Franks had a unique opportunity to use his own division to form the third knuckle of the Corps punch against the reinforced *Republican Guard*. The *Jihad Corps*, unknown to Franks, had been placed under the operational control of the *Republican Guard*.

During the morning Lieutenant General Franks visited the 1st Infantry Division's Main CP to monitor their rate of advance through the breach and to determine the status of the division for later use.⁸² Franks asked Major General Rhame, about his potential use in the main effort attacks. Rhame was naturally more than eager to get into the fight and responded by pleading, "Don't leave me out of the fight. Don't leave me out of the fight."⁸³ As a result of the unanticipated success at the breach, Franks ordered Rhame to leave a small security element at the breach and to mass the remainder of the division on the right flank of the 3rd Armored Division. The 1st Infantry Division would have to pass through the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment to execute this maneuver.⁸⁴ The warning order was passed to the division to conduct the mission at 1521 on the 25th.⁸⁵ At the corps level, Colonel Cherrie had been notified by the Third Army operations officer, Brigadier General Arnold that Third Army was getting pressure from CENTCOM to pick up the pace of operations and accelerate the breaching operations.

Despite the lack of resistance, the 1st Infantry Division remained in the breach area securing the area for the 1st Armored Division's (UK) passage of lines which was not complete until 2340.⁸⁶ The lack of a sense of urgency, by now an administrative action indicated a lack of situational awareness on the part of the division commander. Franks had clearly conveyed to Rhame that the main effort and focus was to mass on the *Republican Guard* by mid-day on the 26 February, and not keep the bulk of the division tied up in finishing the breach. Rhame was reluctant to mass his division until the British division was out of his way.

The 1st Infantry Division did not complete consolidation and begin northward movement to conduct a forward passage of lines with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment until 0430 hours 26 February.⁸⁷ In retrospect, the 1st Infantry Division had become so consumed with the main effort breach assignment, regardless of the minimal enemy contact that it caused future delays. As a result, the division lost at least six to eight hours in completing the forward passage of lines with 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment which did not occur until 0123 on the 27 February.⁸⁸ The 1st Infantry Division began the division movement at 0430 from the breach area and made contact with 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment at 2200. The 1st Infantry Division took seventeen hours to travel the ninety kilometers between Phase Line NEW JERSEY and the eastern portion of Objective COLLINS at an average rate of five kilometers per hour. According to Lieutenant General Holder, armored and mechanized divisions should be able to travel at fifteen kilometers per hour, day and night, when not in contact with the enemy.⁸⁹ This slow rate of movement, when combined with the 1st Armored Division delays at Al-Busayyah, significantly slowed the VII Corps closure rate with the reinforced *Republican Guard*.

During the early afternoon on 25 February, Lieutenant General Franks convened a special orders group which consisted of his chief of staff, Brigadier General John Landry, operations officer, Colonel Cherrie, and the corps logistics and intelligence staff officers on the top of a HMMWV in the vicinity of the 1st Infantry Division's Main CP.⁹⁰ Franks wanted an assessment of the reinforced *Republican Guard* positions and intent southwest of Basrah.

Franks believed it would take at least twenty-four hours to disseminate the revised graphics, execute orders, and then begin to orchestrate units for the decisive fight with the *Republican Guard*.⁹¹ Franks' corps intelligence officer presented the enemy picture that provided the critical information to favor execution of corps' Fragmentary Plan 7.

The VII Corps latest intelligence indicated that the *Republican Guard* heavy divisions had established a series of defend and delay positions starting seventy kilometers west of Basrah. The Iraqi divisions were arrayed from west to east with the *Tawakalna Mechanized Division* forward, followed by the *Medinah* and the *Hammurabi Armored Divisions*. Reinforcing the heavy *Republican Guard* divisions were three armored divisions of what became the *Jihad Corps*. The *12th Armored Division* reinforced the *Tawakalna Division*. The *10th and 17th Armored Divisions* reinforced the *Medinah* and *Hammurabi Divisions*. The three motorized infantry divisions of the *Republican Guard* were positioned along Highway 8.⁹² (See figure 21.) One of the four *Republican Guard* options, the delay and defend course of action, was the one Franks felt was the most likely and he had mentally prepared for this fight. Franks believed that the Iraqi army would not be able to establish a cohesive defense against the entire coalition. He knew the coalition would be successful. It was a matter of how much time it would take to defeat the Iraqi army and what it would cost in American lives.⁹³

Franks made the decision at approximately 1400 on 25 February to execute a modified Fragmentary Plan 7 and tasked his staff to disseminate the appropriate orders.⁹⁴ He notified Yeosock of his decision later in the day and recommended that Third Army order the execution of Army Contingency Plan 6 which was the coordinated two-corps fight to destroy the *Republican Guard* southwest of Basrah. Contingency Plan 6 contained five possible east-west boundaries to split the two-corps zone between Basrah and the northern Kuwaiti border. The designated boundary would give one of the maneuvering corps more maneuver space relative to the other. The decision was made to use the 50 east-west grid line.⁹⁵ This boundary initially squeezed VII Corps' frontage to seventy kilometers with the XVIII Airborne Corps maintaining a forty kilometer

frontage. The primary consideration in favor of XVIII Airborne Corps was to provide the maneuver space for 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment to move around the Rumaylah oil fields.⁹⁶ Franks directed his chief of staff to implement Fragmentary Plan 7 modified by the incorporation of a deep attacks by the 11th Aviation Brigade.⁹⁷ Franks visited each major subordinate commander throughout the day and explained his intent and concept of operations for the revised Fragmentary Plan 7.⁹⁸

Night of 25 February and Morning 26 February-Execute Fragmentary Plan 7

At 1645 Lieutenant General Franks convened an orders group at the 3rd Armored Divisions TAC CP. Division commanders or their representatives attended. The concept for the execution of Fragmentary Plan 7 was discussed. However, the actual execute order would not be received by 3rd Armored Division until 0300 on 26 February.⁹⁹ Of note, the key planners at 1st Armored Division and 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment did not receive their execute orders until between 0300 and 0530 the morning of 26 February.¹⁰⁰ Apparently, the execute order was passed by electronic mail without a verbal warning order that it had been sent. At the time, none of the major subordinate elements had the revised graphics using the 1st Infantry Division in the south between the 3rd Armored Division and 1st Armored Division (UK) and had to improvise with the Fragmentary Plan 7 disseminated on 24 February.¹⁰¹ This fragmentary plan contained several sketches of different options that the corps envisioned and contained exact changes to the Fragmentary Plan 7 issued on 20 February.¹⁰²

During the orders group Franks called in the corps daily situation report in person to Lieutenant General Yeosock. After summarizing the days activities and his plan to destroy the *Republican Guard*, he stressed the coordination efforts he needed between his and XVIII Corps for the decisive fight during the next two days. He stressed to Yeosock the need for Third Army to exploit the situation and coordinate the advance of the two-corps fight.¹⁰³ Franks felt confident that Third Army and CENTCOM would facilitate his fight against the *Republican Guard*.¹⁰⁴

During the evening of 25 February, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment screened seven to ten kilometers forward of Phase Line SMASH. The regiment was low on fuel and had many vehicles that required maintenance. Colonel Holder ordered harassing attacks by both indirect fires and attack helicopters to block and blind the forward outposts of the Iraqi 12th Armored Division which was positioning west of the *Tawakalna Division* to determine VII Corps strengths and locations. Colonel Holder wanted to prevent the Iraqis from conducting probing attacks to locate his positions. Throughout the night the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment conducted refueling operations and vehicle maintenance.¹⁰⁵

The 3rd Armored Division had reached a position short of Phase Line SMASH by 1400. The bulk of the division was still spread out back to Phase Line APPLE. Major General Paul F. Funk, the commanding general, decided to spend the night consolidating his division, positioning the supporting field artillery brigades, and refueling.¹⁰⁶ Like Holder, he wanted to be able to cross the line of departure in the morning fully prepared to close with and destroy the *Republican Guard*.

During 24-25 February, the combination of the decision to stop breach operations, and the 1st Infantry Division's total consumption with the breach cost Franks and VII Corps valuable time and set a tempo of operations that was marked more by caution and synchronization than boldness and flexibility. The breach set the tone for a protracted, deliberate tempo of operations. The deliberate nature of the 1st Infantry Division's breaching operations, despite proddings from Franks and Cherrie to accelerate the pace, cost VII Corps valuable time and lost opportunity in closing completely with all of the *Republican Guard*.

Schwarzkopf was not happy with what he perceived to be the lethargic movement rate of VII Corps that night. During the evening, while Franks visited 3rd Armored Division, Schwarzkopf called the VII Corps Main CP to talk to Franks. In Franks' absence, Colonel Cherrie took the call from the CINC. Schwarzkopf stressed to Cherrie to keep up the pressure and in his own words, "I want you to keep a Bobby Knight press on them [the Republican Guard]. Keep pressing."¹⁰⁷

Third Army staff also called and queried Cherrie about the stall in VII Corps movement as compared to the rapid advances of XVIII Airborne Corps. Cherrie, frustrated by the constant harassment, provided the following terse explanation, "Because they don't have any enemy out in front of them, that's why! All they're doing is running over lizards."¹⁰⁸ Cherrie conveyed the higher headquarters' concerns to Franks who verbally pressured his respective commanders to be prepared to increase the operational tempo early 26 February.¹⁰⁹

Context: Theater Wide Operations for 25 February

On VII Corps' flanks throughout 25 February, Coalition forces were still successful. XVIII Airborne Corps units had seized the southern edge of Objective WHITE, As Salman Airfield, by 1600. The French 6th Armored Division, reinforced by the 82nd Airborne Division, had attacked across 100 kilometers in twenty-six hours and defeated a 75 percent strength *45th Iraqi Division*. The 101st Air Assault Division continued its consolidation in Objective COBRA.¹¹⁰ 24th Mechanized Division, reinforced by the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, had seized objectives BROWN, GRAY, and RED, penetrating 135 kilometers into Iraq by sunset.¹¹¹ (See figures 22 and 23.) The I Marine Expeditionary Force continued their attack north against moderate Iraqi resistance and finished the day ten miles outside of Kuwait City. They repulsed a major Iraqi counterattack in the vicinity of the Al Burgan oil fields by a brigade of the *3rd Armored Division*.¹¹²

Joint Forces Command East attacked adjacent to the Marines against minimal resistance and prepared to liberate Kuwait City on 26 February. Joint Forces Command North completed their breach of the front-line defenses and maneuvered northeast to support the Marine advance towards Kuwait City.¹¹³ However, their slow rate of advance resulted in a lost opportunity to cut off and capture a preponderance of the *3rd* and *4th Iraqi Corps* in southern Kuwait.¹¹⁴ (See figure 24.)

The Iraqi reaction to the Coalition attacks on the 25 February was one of dismay and bewilderment. They did not have a clear concept of what the Coalition was doing. The front line

divisions of the *3rd*, *4th* and *7th Corps* had ceased to exist as combat effective units.¹¹⁵ (See figure 25.) However, there were some major unanswered questions on the battlefield. Would the Iraqis withdraw and defend around Kuwait City or attempt a major counterattack in theater? Would the Iraqis withdraw and defend in the vicinity of Basrah?¹¹⁶ Intelligence indicators did convey that the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps* positioned the *Tawalkana Division* and elements of the *12th* and *10th Armored Divisions* forward in delay positions to protect the escape route out of Basrah.¹¹⁷

Schwarzkopf, Yeosock, and Franks Channels

At 0215 on 26 February the Iraqis *III Corps* commander ordered a general withdrawal from the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations.¹¹⁸ Once he was made aware of the situation, General Powell called General Schwarzkopf almost immediately to confer on the matter. Schwarzkopf relayed his concern that the potential existed for a rapid withdrawal or collapse of the Iraqi forces which would mean a race to Basrah to cut off the *Republican Guard* before they escaped from the theater. Schwarzkopf called Lieutenant General Yeosock at 0830 and bluntly told him, "John no more excuses. Get your forces moving. We have got the entire goddamn Iraqi army on the run. Light a fire under VII Corps. I want you to find out what they intend to do and get back to me."¹¹⁹ Additionally, Schwarzkopf changed his operational guidance for the tempo of operations from deliberate operations to pursuit.¹²⁰ In the mean time, he called XVIII Airborne Corps and tasked them with his revised intent:

Now I want you to make sure you understand your mission from here on out. It is to inflict maximum destruction, maximum destruction on the Iraqi military machine. You are to destroy all war-fighting equipment. Do not just pass it on the battlefield. We don't want the Iraqis coming back at us five years from now.¹²¹

Yeosock conferred with Franks to determine when he planned to close with the *Republican Guards*. Franks told Yeosock he planned to close before noon on 26 February, which Yeosock relayed back to Schwarzkopf. Yeosock appears to have been pleased with VII Corps' rate of movement. Schwarzkopf became more definitive in his orders and tasked the VII

Corps to complete the destruction of the *Republican Guard* no later than the beginning of morning of nautical twilight on 27 February.¹²² By mid-morning, Schwarzkopf had decided to release the 1st Cavalry Division to VII Corps from theater reserve. Schwarzkopf decided that he did not need the 1st Cavalry to support Joint Forces Command North and that he needed to resource the VII Corps on whom the long-term success of DESERT STORM depended. He wanted to resource VII Corps with what Franks said they needed in hope that it would make Franks more aggressive.¹²³ Additionally, 1st Armored Division's (UK) initial seizure of its objectives and continued movement east relieved pressure on the northern flank of Joint Force Command North.¹²⁴ 1st Cavalry Division was released after fifty-four hours of operations vice the forty-one desired by Third Army and VII Corps.¹²⁵

In the midst of these changes in orders, General Powell again called Schwarzkopf and complained about the VII Corps' rate of movement asking "Can't you get VII Corps moving faster?"¹²⁶ Powell told Schwarzkopf to tell Yeosock that,

the Chairman is on the ceiling about this entire matter of VII Corps. I want to know why there're not moving and why they can't attack an enemy that has been bombed continually for thirty days. They've been maneuvering for two days and still don't even have contact with the enemy. It's hard to justify VII Corps's actions to anyone in Washington, but we should be fighting the enemy now.¹²⁷

Later that afternoon Franks called Schwarzkopf to explain his actions. With Yeosock's approval, Franks attempted to provide the CENTCOM commander with a tactical level of understanding as to what VII Corps was doing on the ground.¹²⁸ Franks explained that the initial movement had been slow because of the concern not to bypass enemy between the breach line and Objective COLLINS to prevent bypassed enemy from attacking the VII Corps combat service support trains.¹²⁹ Franks told Schwarzkopf that VII Corps would close on the *Republican Guard* by mid-day on 26 February. Franks told Schwarzkopf that he knew the approximate positions of the *Republican Guard* and found a seam in their southern defense through which he would pass the 1st Infantry Division to exploit this opportunity. Franks said, "Tomorrow, I'll have three divisions massed against the *Republican Guard*. I figure it will take forty-eight hours or so, with

these three divisions intact, to get through them. I don't think they see us coming. We're going to surprise them."¹³⁰ Schwarzkopf was satisfied and told Franks: "You should have good shooting tonight. Keep up the pressure. Don't let them break contact. Keep'em on the run. If we can get in under the weather we'll have the Air Force pound them as they pull back in front to you."¹³¹ At the CENTCOM headquarters it was known that the *Tawakalna Division* was positioning to block the VII Corps with the *Madinah* and *Hammurabi Divisions* in delay positions staggered northeast towards Basrah to keep the back door open for retreating Iraqi units.¹³²

Morning-afternoon 26 February-Crossing Phase Line SMASH

The weather throughout most of this day was the worst in the ground war yet. Temperatures were near zero, fog turned to rain and high winds turned rain and sand into a virtual sandstorm. By 0900 visibility was below 1,000 meters in the VII Corps zone and navigation was almost totally dependent on Global Positioning Systems. Most fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft were grounded for the day. Visibility was at times extremely poor, down to 300 kilometers at some points during the day.¹³³

The *Republican Guard's Tawakalna Division* was arrayed against the main effort forces of VII Corps. The *Tawakalna* was comprised of two armored and two mechanized brigades with authorized troop strengths of approximately 2,200 each. The armored brigades contained 134 T-72 tanks and 34 armored personnel carriers. The mechanized brigades contained 44 T-72s and 107 BMPs.¹³⁴ The *Tawakalna* was reinforced by brigades of the *Jihad Corps 12th Armored Division* which contained one quarter less of this equipment. Collectively, these forward Iraqi positions effective strength was down to 57 percent as a result of the air campaign.¹³⁵ Sweeping across Objective COLLINS was the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 3rd Armored Division. A cavalry regiment contains 123 M1A1 main battle tanks and 125 armored fighting vehicles. An armored division contains 375 tanks and 270 armored personnel carriers, and a mechanized division 317 tanks and 328 armored personnel carriers.

At the VII Corps level, two important events occurred on 26 February. First, the 1st Cavalry Division was released to the corps which gave Franks another option in how to defeat the *Republican Guard*. The 1st Cavalry Division came under the operational control of VII Corps at 0930 hours and began a marathon 250 kilometer march at 1100 to move up on the right flank of 1st Armored Division by mid-afternoon on 27 February.¹³⁶ Second, at 1354 CENTCOM approved moving the ARCENT-Joint Forces Command North south to give VII Corps more maneuver room.¹³⁷ These efforts facilitated VII Corps ability to fight the decisively. In part, CENTCOM was trying to give Franks the assets and room to maneuver to complete the destruction of the *Republican Guard* and the remainder of the Iraqi forces in his zone.

The 1st Armored Division used the night of 25 February to prepare for the execution of Fragmentary Plan 7, while its field artillery reduced the town of Al-Busayyah. The preparatory fires of 1,400 artillery shells and 300 multiple-rocket-launcher-system rockets were complete at 0615 when the three brigade assault commenced.¹³⁸ The division over-ran the Iraqi defense at 0900.¹³⁹ The division completed actions at Al-Busayyah at 1200 and continued its movement east through Objective COLLINS. They had destroyed between five and twenty six tanks and armored vehicles, numerous wheeled command and control vehicles, arms caches, and had taken 500 prisoners.¹⁴⁰ The exact number of vehicles destroyed is highly disputed, but post-conflict analysis indicates Al-Busayyah was defended by a battalion-sized force. In the division's after-action summary, a division soldier's quote captures the confidence builder that this small excursion gained for the division. "A great feeling of pride and certainty swept over us. We were no longer doubtful about our leadership or equipment. We were ready to face the 'elite' *Republican Guard*."¹⁴¹ The 1st Armored Division failed to make the designated time lines Franks had established for 26 February. Franks told his operations officer to speed up the 1st Armored Division and was personally unhappy with the time consumed to secure Objective PURPLE.¹⁴²

It seems hard to imagine why the 1st Armored Division did not detach a reinforced battalion to block the enemy from escaping from Objective PURPLE and move swiftly to close

with the remainder of VII Corps at Phase Line TANGERINE. As indicated by the soldier's comments, and their inclusion in the after-action report, this would appear to have been a baptism of fire for the division to sharpen their skills and build their confidence before closing with the *Republican Guard*. Although, a clear enemy picture was not available before the attack, it would seem logical that the minimal resistance offered by the Iraqis on the afternoon of 25 February reflected a minimal defense. The division massed on the objective at 1800 the previous night and waited twelve hours to conduct a coordinated assault of three brigades that consumed another three hours of precious time.¹⁴³ Aerial reconnaissance conducted two days after the war stopped indicated that the total battlefield debris in the vicinity of Objective PURPLE consisted of a few fighting vehicles, a few tanks, and some evacuated fighting positions.¹⁴⁴ This hardly seems like the size of force that should have slowed an entire armored division. Franks was not happy with the division commander's decision, but he approved the operational time line as long as the division closed with the remainder of the corps crossing Objective COLLINS by mid-morning 26 February.¹⁴⁵

The 3rd Armored Division crossed Phase Line SMASH at 0824 on 26 February. The division had been conducting refueling operations since 1645 the previous day and had laagered up for the night west of Phase Line SMASH, preparing for the execution of Fragmentary Plan 7.¹⁴⁶ The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment screened forward in zone up to Phase Line TANGERINE throughout the morning. Once the 3rd Armored Division reached Phase Line TANGERINE the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment continued its attack east. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment attacked with all three squadrons on line, while the 3rd Armored Division attacked with two brigades up and one back.¹⁴⁷ (See figure 26.) The 1st Infantry Division continued to close on the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment for their forward passage of lines which was not to occur until midnight.

On the corps right flank the 1st Armored Division (UK) was successful in the south. They easily defeated brigades of the *31st Infantry Division*.¹⁴⁸ The British division maneuvered

eastward to defeat elements of the *52nd Infantry Division* and secure Objective WATERLOO by evening.¹⁴⁹ (See figure 26.) Unfortunately, another fratricide incident occurred in which an American A-10 aircraft mistakenly engaged a British element killing nine and wounding eleven.¹⁵⁰ This event would complicate British movement on 27-28 February.¹⁵¹

Afternoon-Evening 26 February-Closing on the *Republican Guard* and *Jihad Corps*

Once VII Corps massed at Phase Line SMASH there were few options except to execute Fragmentary Plan 7 in the corps' zone. The operations, from 26 February through the early morning of 28 February, were for VII Corps a series of constant, continuous brigade and division battles at the corps level until the operational pause on the evening of the 27 February. During the period 27-28 February several factors affected VII Corps operations: the concerns to prevent fratricide, the fatigue factor, and the start-stop mentality caused by the possible cessation of hostilities. This final single event caused enormous confusion and curtailed VII and XVIII Corps ability to achieve their ultimate objectives.

At 1515 on 26 February the eastward bound 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment met the combat outposts of the *12th Armored Division*, who was positioning to protect the *Tawakalna Division*, in the vicinity of the 62 north-south grid line. The regiment was fully engaged by 1600, along its entire front vicinity of the 73 north-south grid line in what became the Battle of 73 Easting.¹⁵² The 3rd Armored Division passed through the left flank of 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and made full contact with the northern elements of the *Tawakalna Division* by 1600 along the 70 north-south grid line in what became the Battle of Phase Line Bullet.¹⁵³ Fortuitously, at 1515 Franks had relayed through the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment's Corps command net for the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions to quicken the pace and move east "with alacrity, and gain and maintain contact with the enemy."¹⁵⁴

Between 1515 and 1700 the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment decisively fixed and defeated elements of the *12th Armored Division* and the southern elements of the *Tawakalna*

Division.¹⁵⁵ The 3rd Armored Division continued to press its attacks in the north against the northern elements of the *Tawakalna Division* and attacked through the night to seize Objective DORSET. (See figure 26.) In support of the corps' eastward attacks, the 11th Aviation Brigade conducted successful attacks on the *10th Armored Division* at Objective MINDEN at 2145 on 26 February and at 0300 the next morning destroyed an armored battalion's set of abandoned equipment.¹⁵⁶ (See figure 26.)

The 1st Infantry Division began a forward passage of lines with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment at 2200. They completed passage at 0123 hours.¹⁵⁷ The forward passage of lines was a testimony to the two maneuvering forces. Holder describes the passage as, "A remarkable operation in fact. A night passage with unseasoned troop, in contact, and remarkably no fratricide."¹⁵⁸ It seems that the breaching operations and enemy contact had been the experience that increased the confidence and cohesion of the 1st Infantry Division.

The 1st Armored Division crossed Phase Line TANGERINE at 1800 with three brigades abreast.¹⁵⁹ Prior to crossing, corps intelligence indicated that a brigade of the *Adnon Division* was positioned south of Highway 8. The division attacked with attack helicopters at 1600 and artillery at 1900 and the enemy retreated.¹⁶⁰ During the night, at Al-Busayyah a 1st Armored Division engineer was killed in a fratricide incident as a result of cross boundary fire by the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.¹⁶¹ Additionally, earlier in the day an American aircraft mistakenly attacked the 1st Armored Division's Cavalry Squadron TOC, wounding twenty.¹⁶² The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, 1st Infantry Division, and the 1st Armored Division (UK) maintained pressure on the *Republican Guard* and *4th Iraqi Corps* throughout the night.

Lieutenant General Franks, as usual, had spent the entire day flying back and forth between his respective CPs and those of his subordinate commanders. During the nightly meeting at his TAC CP he briefed the VII Corps staff on his vision of the future fight:

The Iraqis are trying to pull major forces back into Basrah, with a covering force to protect them. We are going to drive the Corps hard for the next twenty-four to thirty-six hours, all day and night, to overcome any resistance and to prevent the enemy's smooth

withdrawal into Basrah. We will synchronize our fight, as we always have, but we will have to crank up the heat. The way home is through the RGFC.¹⁶³

Franks was obviously charged up and motivated as a result of the day's success. It is apparent that at this point he had a good appreciation for what his corps could accomplish against the enemy in the terrain before him. His estimation of how long it would take him to close with and destroy the remainder of the *Republican Guard* was almost perfect as it actually played out.

Time and Space: 25-26 February

The VII Corps was able to move quickly and mass against the *Republican Guard* as Franks had intended. The 1st Infantry Division delays in clearing the breach area and conducting a rapid forward passage of lines with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment cost the VII Corps valuable time and momentum. The 1st Infantry Division crossed the 130 kilometers between Phase Line APPLE and TANGERINE in about 16.5 hours, a closure rate of 7.8 kilometers per hour. This slow rate of advance is partially questionable since they were moving over ground that had been uncovered by the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the armored divisions.¹⁶⁴

The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions would take eighteen hours on average to maneuver across the same 120 kilometers from Phase line APPLE, north of the breach, to Phase Line TANGERINE. (See figures 19 and 26.) The average rate of movement, taking into account the time to refuel, was 9.5 kilometers per hour for the lead divisions from the time they crossed the line of departure on 25 February until they closed on and crossed Phase Line TANGERINE on 26 February. The VII Corps movement between Phase Lines SMASH and KIWI averaged an attack rate of between 3.0 and 3.6 kilometers per hour. For example, the 1st Armored Division covered 100 kilometers in thirty-six hours and the 3rd Armored Division in thirty hours. According to Army doctrine, the armor and mechanized divisions should travel fifteen kilometers per hour in the desert when not in contact with the enemy.¹⁶⁵ Colonel Holder believed felt that the rate of movement of the armored divisions was unnecessarily slow.¹⁶⁶

The 1st Armored Divisions' obsession with the seizure of Objective PURPLE and subsequent clean-up operations cost VII Corps additional time and momentum. Franks had planned to mass against the *Republican Guard* decisively by 1200 on 26 February so that he would have the entire afternoon to defeat the first two reinforced divisions, the *Tawalkana* and the *Medinah*.¹⁶⁷ His intent was to then mass on and defeat the *Hammurabi Division* before it escaped from theater on 27 February. Instead, VII Corps would not close with the *Tawakalna* until after 1500 on 26 February and the *Medinah* at 0800 the next morning. These combined delays would have negative affect on his desire to conduct the double envelopment 27-28 February. A double envelopment is a complicated and bold scheme of maneuver. A ground commander fixes an enemy with one force and maneuvers on both flanks of the enemy to collapse and encircle his force. Typically, this form of maneuver is used to completely destroy an enemy by a striking force which has dominated the battlefield and has the force, time, and maneuver space to complete the execution of the maneuver.

Context: Theater Wide Operations for 26 February

On VII Corps flanks throughout 26 February Coalition forces were extremely successful. XVIII Airborne Corps units had advanced north towards Objectives GOLD, ORANGE, and WHITE. The 6th French Armored Division finished securing Objective WHITE and remained in that area for the remainder of the ground war to protect the XVIII Airborne Corps left flank. The 24th Mechanized Division attacked towards its northern objectives along Highway 8. Unlike the previous 135 kilometers, the remaining 100 plus kilometers to the Euphrates River proved more problematic than the first half. The 24th Infantry Division encountered stiffened resistance as a result of the rear guard actions of the *47th* and *49th Infantry Divisions*. Additionally, the 24th Infantry Division was delayed by rough terrain and gullies that required engineer work to traverse. The 24th Infantry Division attacked north at 1400 to seize the Tallil airfield, the Juwarin logistics base, and the Jalibah airfield.¹⁶⁸ (See figure 26.) These objectives were the last XVIII Airborne

Corps blocking positions on Highway 8. Next, the 24th Infantry Division, reinforced by the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, attacked east to form the hammer of the two-corps attack to destroy the *Republican Guard* and remaining Iraqi forces in the vicinity of Basrah. Elements of the 24th Infantry Division seized Tallil airfield at 0100 and the Juwarin logistics base, Objective GOLD at 0330 on the 27 February.¹⁶⁹ The 101st Air Assault Division repositioned to Objective VIPER in the late afternoon to stage for a final air attacks on blocking positions in Engagement Area THOMAS north of Basrah to block the retreating Iraqi forces.¹⁷⁰ (See figure 28.) Against minimal resistance, XVIII Airborne Corps had demonstrated a preoccupation with seizing preplanned objectives and orchestrating maneuver that did not support VII Corps or cut off and destroy Iraqi forces retreating from theater.

The I Marine Expeditionary Force attacked north with the 2nd Marine Division and the Army Tiger Brigade to seize Al Jahar Airfield and the Mutlah Ridge. The 1st Marine Division attacked northeast to seize Kuwait International Airport. By the days end, they were positioned to support the Joint Forces Command East liberation of Kuwait City. Joint Forces Command East continued to advance up the coast road and reached the outskirts of Kuwait City by nightfall. Joint Forces Command North stepped up their rate of movement and attacked east covering sixty kilometers to close on the western side of Kuwait City to cover the Marines left flank. The Syrian divisions remained in a rear guard role and did not contribute to the fight.¹⁷¹

At 0100 hours on 26 February, the Iraqis announced a general withdrawal in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 660. The withdrawal became a rout during the day when the Iraqi units in theater realized that the Iraqi theater command structure had already withdrawn to Baghdad. Major elements of the 3rd and 4th Corps staffs escaped. Twenty-six of forty-three Iraqi divisions in theater were combat ineffective and the Iraqi army had no cohesive command, control, or communication capability. The *Republican Guard* still had tactical control of the *Jihad Corps*, however, and was the only enemy formation that maintained a viable defense.¹⁷² (See figure 29.)

Double Envelopment and Exploitation Operations: 27-28 February
Morning 27 February

The success of VII Corps during the afternoon of 26 February and the night of 26-27 February convinced Franks that a double envelopment of the remaining Iraqi forces was possible. Coordinating a five-division double envelopment would be an incredible challenge for Franks and VII Corps. Historically, the double envelopment has been used to deliver the decisive blow to completely and decisively destroy an enemy force. It appears that Franks and his staff saw an opportunity to recreate the conditions for another Cannae by completely encircling the Iraqi forces in their zone. A double envelopment with five divisions is a complex operation requiring immense coordination. It appears that it would have been more effective and simpler to continue the attack east in zone without enveloping forces.

During the morning, the four-division fist continued its progress eastward. The 1st Armored Division attacked on the left flank of 3rd Armored Division and engaged and destroyed two brigades of the *Medinah Armored Division* throughout the day.¹⁷³ 1st Armored Division's fight that morning and through the early afternoon became known as the Battle of Medinah Ridge, the most intense combat of the war. The division destroyed 286 tanks, 127 armored personnel carriers, 38 artillery pieces, and captured 839 Iraqis during the fight.¹⁷⁴ The 1st Armored was low on fuel when it attacked and spent the remainder of the day destroying Iraqi equipment in detail and refueling for future operations.¹⁷⁵ The 3rd Armored Division diverted thirty refuelers to hastily refuel the 1st Armored Division.¹⁷⁶ However, the 2nd Brigade of 1st Armored Division remained idle for twelve hours waiting for fuel.

The 3rd Armored Division continued to fight through elements of the *Tawakalna Division* and the *12th Armored Division* through the morning. The 3rd Armored Division had been in continuous combat throughout the night of 26-27 February. At 0800 it continued the attack east to destroy the remainder of the *Tawakalna Division* and elements of the *12th Armored Division*. The 11th Aviation Brigade was placed under the operational control of the division throughout the

day to provide deep air attack capability. The 3rd Armored Division secured objective DORSET shortly after 1540 and reached its limit of advance at Phase Line KIWI at 2130.¹⁷⁷ The deep air attacks by the Air Force were concentrated around Baghdad and were not focused on the retreating Iraqi forces.¹⁷⁸

The 1st Infantry Division continued to attack east along the 3rd Armored Division's southern flank against minimal resistance. At 0430 that morning they had seized Objective NORFOLK after conducting the forward passage of lines with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. At 0725 Franks visited the division TAC CP and told the division commanding general to press the attack towards Objective DENVER.¹⁷⁹ The division conducted refueling operations from 0430 until 1000 and commenced the attack towards DENVER in a classic pursuit and exploitation mode.¹⁸⁰ (See figure 13.)

In the south of the Corps' zone, the 1st Armored Division (UK) continued to have incredible success. The division completed the destruction of the *52nd Infantry Division* and trapped the remaining Iraqi infantry divisions, the *31st*, *25th*, and *27th*.¹⁸¹ Members of VII Corps staff requested that Third Army shift their southern boundary south to provide 1st Armored Division (UK) and the corps as a whole more maneuver space.¹⁸² The Joint Forces Command North was originally tasked to clear the zone north of Kuwait City. However, their inability to attack without credible Syrian support led Schwarzkopf to expand the VII Corps southern zone to the northern edge of the Al Jahara Airfield at 1334.¹⁸³ The 1st Armored Division (UK) was assigned Objective VARSITY as its easternmost objective north of Kuwait City. (See figure 13.)

At this point in the battle, the apparent success of VII Corps generated motivation to commit to conducting the double envelopment of the Iraqi forces west of the Basrah-Kuwait City highway. At 1030 Franks convened a hasty meeting at the Jump CP with representatives from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, and the 1st Infantry Division. The basic concept was to push the 1st Cavalry Division through the 1st Armored Division, which was again low on fuel, and envelop from the north through to Phase Line KIWI. The 1st Armored Division

had reported at 1100 hours that they were out of fuel.¹⁸⁴ The 3rd Armored Division was to continue to attack eastward through Objective MINDEN. The 1st Infantry Division would attack east through Objective NORFOLK and DENVER with the 1st Armored Division (UK) on its right flank.¹⁸⁵ (See figure 13.) Franks saw the opportunity to achieve decisive victory. Throughout the morning and remainder of the day he visited his division commanders and urged them to press their respective attacks to achieve decisive victory.

Afternoon 27 February

At 1250 Franks revised his plans for a double envelopment when the TAC and Jump CPs collocated. The 1st Cavalry Division would attack around the 1st Armored Division to secure Objective RALEIGH. The 1st Armored Division would attack east then southeast to seize Objective HAWK NORTH and the northern portion of objective DENVER in coordination with the 1st Infantry Division. They would attack from the southwest from Phase Line Kiwi to secure the southern two thirds of Objective DENVER and Objective HAWK SOUTH. The 1st Armored Division (UK) would continue east until they had seized Objective VARSITY.¹⁸⁶ (See figure 13.) Franks appeared confident that he could achieve decisive victory with this scheme of maneuver and was trying to seize the opportunity by changing the plan quickly to optimize the use of the units best positioned to maneuver around the Iraqi forces.

The 1st Cavalry Division reached its forward assembly area, Assembly Area HORSE, by 1100 after traveling 250 kilometers in a little over twenty-five hours at a rate of 11.8 kilometers per hour.¹⁸⁷ The 1st Cavalry Division was eager to get into the fight, but continued fighting in the 1st Armored Division's zone prevented that division from shifting south to provide maneuver room for the 1st Cavalry Division to attack east in the afternoon and evening of 27 February. The division was supposed to attack east to objective RALEIGH to ideally cutoff the retreating *Hammurabi Armored Division* or other Iraqi forces in theater before the corps ran out of maneuver space. The 1st Armored Division was decisively engaged with elements of the

Medinah Armored Division, the *12th Armored Division*, and even repulsed another counter-attack by a brigade of the *Adnon Motorized Infantry Division*. As a result of the enemy contact, eastward movement, and refueling issues, the 1st Armored Division could not shift south enough to allow the 1st Cavalry Division to pass eastward on their left flank. Griffith informed Franks and a heated discussion followed.¹⁸⁸ Franks was eager to get the 1st Cavalry Division into the fight and he felt that that Griffith was not doing all he could to make that happen.

The VII Corps had requested a northern boundary change from Third Army that afternoon, to facilitate the 1st Cavalry Division maneuver, which was denied by CENTCOM.¹⁸⁹ It would appear that the 3rd Army would have the authority to shift this boundary, but Schwartzkopf maintained control of these types of issues. General Franks told Brigadier General Cherrie recently that his greatest regret of the ground war was that he did not order the 1st Cavalry Division around the left flank beyond the corps boundary and extend the boundary ten kilometers north to the six zero east-west grid line and tell XVIII Airborne Corps to adjust accordingly.¹⁹⁰ Franks did not take this action partly because of his conservative, cautious command style. Secondly, to disregard an order and maneuver outside a boundary in a dynamic environment could have resulted in further fratricide.

Evening of 27 February and Morning of 28 February:
Culmination of the Attack

Throughout the early evening Franks worked hard with his respective commanders to coordinate the double envelopment. Fatigue and frustration began to creep into working relationships. For example, at 1800 Franks had a verbal battle of sorts with Major General Griffith to coordinate the passage of the 1st Cavalry Division around their left flank. Griffith opposed the move because he was still in contact with elements of the *Medinah Division* in the Vicinity of Objective BONN. It appears that Griffith won the verbal joust. Franks ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to wait until first light on 28 February to conduct the forward passage to seize Objective RALEIGH.¹⁹¹ Elsewhere, events were occurring at the national and theater level that

dramatically changed the perception of the nature of the success and decisive closure of the Gulf War.

Cessation of Hostilities

Around 2200 on 27 February, General Powell called Schwarzkopf to determine if the war could be ended the next day. There was growing political concern and pressure in Washington DC that the continued destruction of the Iraqi army would have long term, negative global political consequences. When asked if he believed he had accomplished the mission Schwarzkopf was torn because his commanders had been planning as though there was no time limits. They anticipated fighting through 28 February to completely destroy the Iraqi forces still in theater, specifically the *Republican Guard*.¹⁹² However, Schwarzkopf finally concurred with General Powell and stated: "I don't have any problem with it. Our objective was the destruction of the enemy forces, and for all intents and purposes we've accomplished that objective. I'll check with my commanders, but unless they've hit some snag I don't know about, we can stop."¹⁹³ Schwarzkopf relayed the warning order of a 0500 28 February cessation of hostilities to his subordinate commanders, including Yeosock, who conveyed it to Franks and Luck. Schwarzkopf encouraged Yeosock to continue to attack the retreating Iraqis with Apache attack helicopters, implicitly understanding that the ground units were no longer moving.¹⁹⁴ A few hours later Powell called and changed the end timeline to 0800 in theater, essentially to have a Hundred Hour War. The concern became how much of the Iraqi Army would get away and what could be done in the meantime.¹⁹⁵

Throughout the remainder of the evening VII Corps units consolidated the day's gains and continued to attack east towards Phase Line KIWI. At 1700 VII Corps staff was passing a warning order to the divisions to stop and consolidate for further orders on the planned double envelopment.¹⁹⁶ At 1900 Franks ordered 1st Infantry Division to orient east and attack beyond Objective DENVER to open up 3rd Armored Division's zone to the east.¹⁹⁷ During refinement

planning for the double envelopment, Franks was called by Yeosock at 2310 hours and told to be prepared for a cessation of hostilities at 0500 on 28 February.¹⁹⁸ The Third Army fragmentary order tasked VII Corps with being prepared to continue the attack, but in the mean time, "take all necessary measure to protect the force."¹⁹⁹ Franks ordered all VII Corps units to consolidate at their current positions and prepare for a cease-fire at 0500. In essence, the corps' divisions halted in place and established hasty defensive positions by 0130 on 28 February.²⁰⁰

Context: Theater Operations for 27 February

On VII Corps flanks throughout 27 February Coalition forces began to reach the extent of their maneuver space and attacks. All Coalition attention now focused on the planned and supposedly coordinated Third Army fight to cut off and destroy the *Republican Guard* and remaining *Jihad Corps* units. XVIII Airborne Corps units had seized consolidated positions along Highway 8 and turned their heavy forces east to support the VII Corps attack. The 24th Infantry Division had to refuel throughout the night so that it could commence the ground attack on 28 February. The 24th Infantry Division, reinforced with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment which had come under its operational control at 2000 26 February, attacked east to seize Objective ORANGE, Al-Jalibah airfield, by 1300 and continued the attack east to close on the VII Corps left flank by late evening.²⁰¹ The 24th Infantry Division was 60 kilometers west of 1st Armored Division's elements. During its advance east, the 24th Infantry Division encountered scattered elements of the *Republican Guard*, *Al-Faw*, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Hammurabi Divisions*, but bypassed them to maintain momentum. It should be noted the 24th Infantry Division's attacks on the Iraqi airfields netted a total of fourteen helicopters and fourteen fighters destroyed.²⁰² The utility of these attacks is questionable relative to the importance of supporting VII Corps' attack east. Franks believed that through the 26th and the afternoon of the 27 February his left flank was open as a result of the 24th Infantry Division's attacks on these valueless airfields.²⁰³ The 101st Air Assault Division conducted air attacks from Objective VIPER to destroy retreating Iraqi

units along the Al Basrah Causeway, across the Al-Hammar Lake west of Basrah, and targets in Engagement Area THOMAS.²⁰⁴ These deep air attack missions took place between 1430 and 1830.²⁰⁵ After 1830, retreating Iraqis in this area would not be interdicted by air attacks. The fire support coordination line which divided the deep Air Force attacks from the ground maneuver units had been shifted north of Basrah so that Army ground and air units could maneuver to close with retreating Iraqis with minimized coordination and fear of fratricide. The cost of this action was that the coalition did not mass ground maneuver and joint air attacks during the critical period when a majority of the retreating Iraqi forces were clustered around Baghdad.

In the Marine's zone, the 2nd Marine Division and Tiger Brigade consolidated positions on Mutlah Ridge and linked up with the Joint Forces Command North on the west side of Kuwait City for the city's liberation which began at 0900. The 1st Marine Division consolidated positions at the Kuwait International Airport and linked up with and supported Joint Forces Command East movement into Kuwait City.²⁰⁶

The Iraqi forces in theater by 27 February were a mere remnant of the force that started the ground war. Less than ten divisions remained and the majority of the Iraqi combat power rested in the defending *Republican Guard* in positions southwest of Basrah. Even in VII Corps zone the same enemy was retreating. The *10th Armored Division*, which was positioned east of the *12th Armored Division*, systematically evacuated and destroyed their bunkers, abandoned their equipment and joined the general retreat. Likewise, the *Hammurabi Division* had retreated to the confines of Basrah.²⁰⁷ As a viable theater force, the army ceased to exist. Iraqi soldiers were surrendering to anything that looked American, including television camera crews. (See figure 30.)

Morning of 28 February-Ending the Ground War

At 0300 an urgent call was sent from Third Army to commence the attack immediately because the cease-fire time had been shifted to 0800. Schwarzkopf wanted as much Iraqi

equipment destroyed as possible.²⁰⁸ At 0406 Franks ordered VII Corps divisions to attack and seize their objectives in zone to the best of their ability.²⁰⁹ It is remarkable that after nearly ninety hours of continuous movement, intermittent combat, and sleep deprivation anyone could expect that they could jump start that organization in a matter of hours. Unbelievably, VII Corps responded extremely well to the short notice call.

The 1st Infantry Division crossed their line of departure at 0545 and overran Objective DENVER by 0615, and destroyed several battalions worth of equipment and captured over 6,000 Iraqi prisoners.²¹⁰ The 1st Infantry Division bypassed the bulk of the equipment, initially, and attacked east towards the Kuwaiti coast until cessation of hostilities was ordered at 0723. The 1st Armored Division crossed their line of departure at 0630 and secured the western half of Objective RALEIGH by 0800. The 3rd Armored Division had reached its eastward limit of advance by 1930 the night before and remained in place. The 1st Armored Division (UK) attacked towards the east at 0630 and seized Objective COBALT by 0800.²¹¹ (See figure 13.)

In the middle of these hasty attacks another potential fratricide incident occurred when at 0724 a battery commander, call sign Smasher Blue 6, broke in on the corps command net and frantically relayed that he was receiving friendly fire. Franks placed the two armored divisions in a cease-fire and halted their advance to sort out the problem. It appears VII Corps was moving very cautiously and Franks was more concerned with the least amount of internal friction at a cost to maximizing the destruction of escaping Iraqi forces. The report by Smasher Blue Six turned out to be false. The incident highlights the incredible impact that potential and actual fratricide had on VII Corps. The Coalition had been so successful that a disproportionate number of killed and wounded were as a result of friendly fire which placed an enormous burden on commanders to ensure unit proximity, clear boundaries, and strict fire control measures were constantly monitored

Context: Theater Operations for 28 February

The last morning of the war was anticlimactic when compared to the previous two days. The XVIII Airborne Corps' 24th Infantry Division did not continue its attacks east along Highway 8. The 101st Airborne Division continued mopping up operations until the cease fire was called at 0800. The I Marine Expeditionary Force and both Joint Forces Commands consolidated in and around Kuwait City.²¹²

Summary Analysis of the Execution of Fragmentary Plan 7

The execution of the ground campaign by VII Corps was a testimony to the efforts and dedication of a green, but motivated and well trained force. VII Corps was victorious in many ways, but there are five areas that reflect problems across the operational spectrum. First, at the tactical level, some events of 24-26 February were problematic. Second, the time-distance analysis highlights negative aspects of the campaign. Third, at the tactical level the consuming desire to synchronize had associated costs. Fourth, at the operational level the lack of a coordinated two-corps effort contributed to a degraded opportunity to decisively destroy the *Republican Guard*. Fifth, the problems between the corps, army, and theater commanders highlights the different views of the enemy and realistic operational tempo that lead to confusion and missed opportunities.

The decisions to stop in the breach and the 1st Infantry Division's total focus with breaching operations cost VII Corps valuable time and set a deliberate vice a opportunistic tempo of operations. Why did Franks and his commanders not adjust their plan based on the apparent success of the Marines on the eastern flank? Maintaining 1st Infantry Division as the main effort, weighted with artillery and intelligence, through 25 February was at a cost of the remainder of the corps' ability to close on Phase Line SMASH quickly. Although it was impossible to reposition the artillery at this point, long range missiles and Army attack aviation could have been surged to support the armored division initial maneuver towards the *Republican Guard*. The decision to

divert an entire division to Al-Busayyah cost the corps valuable time in massing the corps across Objective COLLINS. Once the maneuver decisions were made, the lack of speed in execution would further degrade VII Corps' ability to achieve decisive victory.

Second, any analysis of the rates of movement must take into consideration the factors that effected the respective corps rates of movement. The original ground campaign was supposed to take up to two weeks and the logistics architecture was constructed to support this plan. The rate of advance against collapsing Iraqi forces stressed the whole coalition. Despite the criticisms about slow rates of movement, the criticism be must couched in the environment in which they were executed. In Cordesman and Wagner's The Gulf War, they capture the essence of the comparison,

It is easy to talk about the advantages provided by superior mobility, sustainability, and high technology systems like thermal devices. However, all of these elements of the AirLand Battle placed new demands on training, morale, and readiness, and every aspect of human factors. If the war seemed Nintendo-and Teflon-like to the media, is scarcely did so from the ground and air.²¹³

The continuous movement, night fighting, and daily strain of fighting in various degrees of severely limited visibility placed incredible strain on the soldiers and Marines who served on the ground.

However, in the VII Corps zone several divisions moved slower than was operationally desirable. In each case the divisions had to be prodded by Franks or Cherrie to pick up the pace. Examples of relatively slow movement are: the 1st Infantry Division move from the breach north to passage with 2nd Armored Cavalry Division on 26 February, the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions movement from Phase Line APPLE towards Objective COLLINS on 25 February, and the 1st Armored Divisions eastward advance from Objective PURPLE to Phase Line TANGERINE all cost the corps and Franks valuable time in closing with the *Republican Guard*.

Historically speaking, the rate of movements compare favorably with armor movements with organizations of a similar kind. For example, during the Battle of the Bulge Patton's Third Army's III Corps turned east and attacked north covering 181 kilometers at an average rate of

three kilometers per hour. At that time the III Corps consisted of 80,000 troops, 1713 armored vehicles, and 7691 trucks. The fastest division moved at rate of 6.8 kilometers per hour.²¹⁴ Later during the Korean War the army's 7th Division traveled 344 kilometers in three days with an average rate of speed at 4.8 kilometers per hour. The 7th Division consisted of 10,000 soldiers, 2,358 vehicles. Last, during a 1987 European Reforager III Corps covered 150 kilometers in thirty six hours at a rate of four kilometers per hour.²¹⁵

Third, Franks' focus on the synchronization effort potentially cost him the opportunity to take advantage of other opportunities. The sole focus on synchronizing the breach and massing at Phase Line SMASH resulted in a deliberate and complicated scheme of maneuver which was slower and less flexible than a more event driven operation. The constant pressure to mass and synchronize created the perception that it was the ends vice the means. Once Franks, his commanders, and his staffs became focused on synchronization they lost some opportunity to exploit other opportunities. Three examples illustrate this point. First, holding 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment at approximately Phase Line COLORADO for the evening of 25 February reinforced a mindset obsessed with synchronization. True, the Joint Forces Command North had not yet completed their breach, but on the eastern flank the Marines and Joint Forces Command East had blown through the Iraqi defensive lines on 24 February. Why would the defenses on the western flank be any different? Second, another example is when on 26 February, the 1st Infantry Division kept delaying its forward passage with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment it might have been better to push the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment around on the southern flank towards Objective DENVER and use the 1st Infantry Division as a reserve exploitation force.²¹⁶ Last, if the decision had been made early enough to conduct a hasty passage of the 1st Armored Division (UK) through the breach, this could have freed the 1st Cavalry Division up faster for use in the three division fist.²¹⁷

Fourth, the lack of a truly coordinated effort between the two Army corps had negative effects on the success of the ground campaign. Franks assumed that Yeosock would play a key

coordinating role and asked for that assistance on several occasions. However, as discussed in chapter two, Yeosock never intended to play that role and saw his role as unencumbering the commanders vice commanding the two corps. Yeosock has written extensively on the lack of sound army doctrine on how an army fills the myriad of roles at echelons above corps. There was no doctrine at that time that addressed how the Army headquarters interfaced with the theater command and corps commands. In this light it is understandable that the coordination efforts between VII and XVIII Airborne Corps were dysfunctional. XVIII Airborne Corps was consumed with blocking escape and reinforcement routes and destroying the *Republican Guard* with attack helicopters vice a coordinated ground attack with a reinforced 24th Infantry Division on VII Corps' left flank. Luck's main effort appeared to be attack battalions, not the 24th Infantry Division.²¹⁸ The 24th Infantry Division expended twelve hours securing the Tallil and Al-Jalibah airfields destroying fourteen helicopters and fourteen fighters from 1400 on 26 February until they were both seized by 1000 on 27 February. Valuable coordination time and effort was lost on the main effort while the *Hammurabi* and elements of other divisions escaped into the Basrah pocket.²¹⁹ The XVIII Airborne Corps independent operations to seize the Tallil and Al-Juhara airfields reflected a tendency to fight an independent corps fight instead of operations to support VII Corps, the Coalition's main effort. Last, the different views of the battlefield and the enemy from the tactical and operational levels created misperceptions and problems that would detract from the coordinated theater effort.

After the first day, Schwarzkopf viewed the theater in terms of a retreating enemy without a viable defense. His sense of time-space analysis was a from unit ICONS moving on wall maps in his Riyadh command center. Schwarzkopf's reluctance to release the 1st Cavalry Division reveals a lack of understanding of what was happening throughout the entire theater. He was quick to criticize Franks and the perceived VII Corps slow movement. Yet he waited until mid-morning on the third day of the war before he resourced VII Corps with the third division the corps and Third Army had argued for since early January.²²⁰ Franks, at the tactical level, was

maneuvering against the only enemy in theater who stood and fought. His time-space analysis was via face to face coordination with his commanders and staff and constantly roving the battlefield to feel the pulse of battle. Between these two men was Yeosock who was focused on resourcing the tactical commander and coordinating with the theater commander to keep within his intent. Yeosock's view of the enemy was through his corps commander's eyes. When the extent of their respective experiences and temperaments were combined a volatile stew formed that was pressurized by a short and frantic 100 hour war. The end result was that Franks was consumed with making his plan work at the cost of some opportunities. While Yeosock was trying to support that plan and facilitate his commander, but frustratingly for Franks not command in the way that he wanted. Schwarzkopf was frustrated because he could not make a corps of 145,000 men react like he wanted against the Iraqi reserves that were more formidable than he gave them credit for.

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²Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 13.

³Donald Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

⁴Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War vol. 4 The Gulf War (London: Mansell Pub., 1991), 592.

⁵Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁶Stanley Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

⁷Frederick M. Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

⁸Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁹Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 570.

¹⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps OPLAN (Operation DESERT SABER) 1990-2, 13 January 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 19.

¹¹U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-007, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

¹²Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 605-608.

¹³Ibid., 600-601.

¹⁴Ibid., 608.

¹⁵Richard M. Swain, Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 230.

¹⁶U.S. Army, ARCENT, ARCENT Daily Command SITREP, 25 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 1-4.

¹⁷Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 566-580.

¹⁸Ibid., 566-568.

¹⁹Ibid., 572-573.

²⁰Swain, Lucky War, 232.

²¹Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 573-575.

²²Swain, Lucky War, 230.

²³Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 18.

²⁴Stephen Bourgue, "Desert Saber: The VII Corps in the Gulf War," Doctoral Dissertation. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfiche Institute, 1997). Book pending publication, author granted permission to site, 306.

²⁵U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-007, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 6.

²⁶Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

²⁷Swain, Lucky War, 232.

²⁸Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997 and Peter S. Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991. (Notes in possession of author. Also obtainable from personal papers of Dr. Richard Swain, School of Advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.), 42.

²⁹Frederick M. Franks, interview by Peter Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991. Transcript. Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 3-4.

³⁰Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

³¹Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 574.

³²Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
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³³Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 567.

³⁴Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
36.

³⁵Swain, Lucky War, 234.

³⁶Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
38 and Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991. (Notes
in possession of author. Also obtainable from personal papers of Dr. Richard Swain, School of
Advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.), 4.

³⁷ Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 18.

³⁸U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29
May 1991, 7.

³⁹Swain, Lucky War, 236.

⁴⁰Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁴¹Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 4.

⁴²Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁴³Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
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⁴⁴Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 33.

⁴⁵Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁴⁵Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 4.

⁴⁷Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
37.

⁴⁸Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁴⁹ibid.

⁵⁰Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 38-39.

⁵¹Swain, Lucky War, 237.

⁵²Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 38-39.

⁵³Rick Atkinson, Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993),6-8.

⁵⁴Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 4.

⁵⁵Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 4 and Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 4.

⁵⁶Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 4.

⁵⁷Bourgue, "Desert Saber," 326.

⁵⁸H. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 461.

⁵⁹Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 570-571

⁶⁰Swain, Lucky War, D/1-3.

⁶¹Ibid., 240.

⁶²U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 39, 25 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 1.

⁶³Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁶⁴U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Tactical Command Post Staff Journals, 25 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, Unit Histories, SSG AAR8-049, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL,1 and U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 38, 24 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 2 and U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 39, 25 February 1991, 1.

⁶⁵Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 585.

⁶⁶Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 58.

⁶⁷Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997 and Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 4.

⁶⁸Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 44.

⁶⁹Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

⁷⁰Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997 and U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 39, 25 February 1991, 1.

⁷¹Bourgue, "Desert Saber," 374-375.

⁷²U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division Summary History: Subordinate Unit Histories. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR 4-127, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 8.

⁷³Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 4.

⁷⁴U.S. Army, 1st Armored Division, Memorandum for the Record, 1st Armored Division in Operation DESERT STORM, 19 April 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 6.

⁷⁵Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 44.

⁷⁶Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 5.

⁷⁷Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 613.

⁷⁸Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 4-5 and Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁷⁹Franks, interview by Kindsvatter, 11 April 1991, 6-7.

⁸⁰Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997 and Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

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⁸²Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁸³Frederick M. Franks, interview by Richard Swain, 6 March 1992, transcript, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 14.

⁸⁴Ibid., 14-15.

⁸⁵Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 5.

⁸⁶Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 4-5.

⁸⁷Ibid., 5.

⁸⁸Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 50.

⁸⁹Donald Holder, interview by author, 20 May 1997.

⁹⁰Bourgue, "Desert Saber," 385.

⁹¹Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁹²U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 38, 24 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 1-2.

⁹³Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Daniel Gilbert, interview by author, 4 February 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 24.

⁹⁸Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 42.

⁹⁹U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division's Summary History: Summary of Activities. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR 4-156, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 7-9..

¹⁰⁰Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

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¹⁰³U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division's Summary History , 7.

¹⁰⁴Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹⁰⁵Bourgue, Desert Saber, 375-378.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 374-375.

¹⁰⁷Atkinson, Crusade, 421.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

¹¹⁰Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 591-592.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, 612.

¹¹² *ibid.*, 615-616.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, 617.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 622.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 609.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, 610.

¹¹⁷ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps G-2, 100-Hour War Analysis. Gulf War Collection, VII Corps Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CARL, 96-99.

¹¹⁸ Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 461.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, 461 and Swain, Lucky War, 250.

¹²⁰ Swain, Lucky War, 252.

¹²¹ Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 462.

¹²² Swain, Lucky War, 273.

¹²³ Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 461-462.

¹²⁴ U.S. Army, VII Corps, The 100 Hour Ground War: How The Iraqi Plan Failed, 20 April 1992. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CARL, 107.

¹²⁵ Swain, Lucky War, 232.

¹²⁶ Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 463.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ Franks, interview by Richard Swain, 6 March 1992, and Atkinson, Crusade, 440.

¹²⁹ Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹³⁰ Atkinson, Crusade, 440.

¹³¹ Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 464.

¹³² *ibid.*, 462-464.

¹³³ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, 4 and Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 623-624.

¹³⁴ Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 594.

- ¹³⁵Ibid., 568.
- ¹³⁶Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 26.
- ¹³⁷Swain, Lucky War, 254.
- ¹³⁸Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 623.
- ¹³⁹Ibid., 623.
- ¹⁴⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 39, 25 February 1991, 1.
- ¹⁴¹U.S. Army, 1st Armored Division, Memorandum for the Record, 1st Armored Division in Operation DESERT STORM, 19 April 1991, 7.
- ¹⁴²Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.
- ¹⁴³Kindsvatter, notes from Corps (VII) Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991, 9.
- ¹⁴⁴Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997 and Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 44.
- ¹⁴⁵Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.
- ¹⁴⁶U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division's Summary History, 6-7.
- ¹⁴⁷U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, 7.
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- ¹⁴⁹Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 27.
- ¹⁵⁰Peter De la Billiere, Storm Command (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 288-292.
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- ¹⁵²U.S. Army, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 2ACR Operations Summary Timeline. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG-2ACR, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 10.
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¹⁵⁹Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 27.

¹⁶⁰U.S. Army, 1st Armored Division, Memorandum for the Record, 1st Armored Division in Operation DESERT STORM, 19 April 1991, 8.

¹⁶¹Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991, 42.

¹⁶²Ibid., 52.

¹⁶³Ibid., 48.

¹⁶⁴U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Commander's Daily SITREP# 39, 25 February 1991, 3.

¹⁶⁵Donald Holder, interview with author, 20 may 1997.

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¹⁶⁷Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹⁶⁸Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 620-621.

¹⁶⁹Swain, Lucky War, 256.

¹⁷⁰Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 621-622.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 629-631.

¹⁷²Ibid., 617-618.

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¹⁷⁶Ronald H. Griffith, "Mission Accomplished-In Full." Proceedings, (August 1993), 47.

¹⁷⁷Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," 29.

¹⁷⁸Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 495.

¹⁷⁹Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
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¹⁸⁰Swain, Lucky War, 282.

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¹⁸⁴Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
54.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 54.

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¹⁹¹Kindsvatter, personal notes and observations compiled during the Gulf War 26 April 1991,
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¹⁹⁹U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Tactical Command Post Staff Journals, 27 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, Unit Histories, SSG AAR8-053, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 7.

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²⁰¹Ibid., 256.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

²⁰⁴Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 634-636.

²⁰⁵Swain, Lucky War, 258.

²⁰⁶Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 642-643.

²⁰⁷U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, 8.

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²¹⁰U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Tactical Command Post Staff Journals, 28 February 1991, 3.

²¹¹Ibid., 4.

²¹²Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 643-647.

²¹³Ibid., 634

²¹⁴Thomas C. McCarthy, "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: The Difficulty on Increasing Operational Movement Rates." Master of Military Art and Science. Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1995, 16-17.

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²¹⁶Holder, interview by author, 21 March 1997.

²¹⁷Swain, Lucky War, 210.

²¹⁸Gilbert, interview by author, 4 February 1997.

²¹⁹Swain, Lucky War, 334.

²²⁰Ibid., 254-255.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The VII Corps attacked over 260 kilometers in ninety hours to destroy seven Iraqi infantry divisions, four armored divisions, and a mechanized division. The VII Corps' contribution to the fight is undeniably significant when compared to what the rest of the Coalition accomplished. VII Corps' path of destruction during the ground war represented 80 percent of the tanks, 90 percent of the armored personnel carriers, and 45 percent of the artillery pieces destroyed during the ground campaign.¹ Most notably, they destroyed the *Republican Guards' Tawakalna* and *Madinah Divisions* and three armored divisions of the *Jihad Corps*.² Cumulatively, VII Corps destroyed 1,350 of 1,981 tanks engaged, 1,244 of 1,938 armored personnel carriers, and 285 of 713 artillery pieces. VII Corps also captured 22,183 Iraqi prisoners of war.³ The total strength of the Iraqi forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations in these areas before the air war started on 16 January was 4,280 tanks, 2,880 armored personnel carriers, and 3,100 artillery pieces.⁴ The air campaign reportedly destroyed 1,772 tanks, 948 armored personnel carriers, and 1,474 artillery pieces in the thirty-seven day air campaign. During the ground war cumulatively, 2,502 tanks, 1,932 armored personnel carriers, and 1,625 artillery pieces were destroyed.⁵ Despite these successes VII Corps is criticized for not seizing opportunities and decisively destroying the *Republican Guard*.

The air campaign heavily targeted the *Republican Guard* and significant portions of that force were destroyed by the VII Corps before the cessation of hostilities. However, an equally significant portion of the *Republican Guards* escaped from the theater. It is estimated that four and one half of the eight divisions in theater escaped.⁶ Figures from 1992 further indicate that

the Iraqi army that had escaped from the theater retained 2,400 tanks, 4,400 armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, 1,000 to 2,000 pieces of artillery, and 250 multiple rocket launchers.⁷ As time has passed, the destruction figures have decreased, further fueling the fires of criticism about the decisive nature of the Gulf War. See table 8 for an accurate assessment of Iraqi losses during the Gulf War. The decision to execute Fragmentary Plan 7 led to this path of destruction by VII Corps. How Franks came to that decision and subsequent decisions has been the focal point of this thesis.

Lieutenant General Franks' selection of Fragmentary Plan 7 was appropriate. He was executing the prudent plan against an enemy defending in his sector on 25 February. Franks was tactically sound in his approach to mass three divisions to defeat a fixed, defending enemy. Between five and six armored and mechanized divisions were positioned southwest of Basrah to establish blocking positions. These Iraqi forces were most likely tasked to delay the Coalition's main effort or were to be prepared to conduct a counterattack if the opportunity presented itself. The capability and exact intent of the Iraqi strategic and tactical reserves at that time remains unknown.

The relative force comparisons indicated that the VII Corps forces did not enjoy the desired three to one offensive superiority over the Iraqi forces. The combat ratios favored the VII Corps by a factor of 1.7 to 1 or 2 to 1 when Franks made the decision to attack using Fragmentary Plan 7 on 25 February.⁸ These figures reflected the total mass of the corps against the total mass of the Iraqi forces in their zone and not the overwhelming combat power of three massed divisions, reinforced with air and artillery to destroy the dispersed Iraqi forces. The Iraqi forces defended with two divisions forward at a time with only minimal artillery support. Franks decided to commit his forces to a specific plan at a time when the enemy posture was almost perfectly matched to optimize the potential success of Fragmentary Plan 7. Based on the fixed nature of the enemy, Franks hoped both army corps would be massed to destroy the Iraqi forces southwest of Basrah.

The second half of the thesis question is whether VII Corps should have conducted pursuit operations to cut off the retreating *Republican Guard* units? The VII Corps was not tasked to cut off the Iraqi forces in theater. That was the mission of the U.S. Air Force and the XVIII Airborne Corps whose conduct contributed to allowing portions of the *Republican Guard* to escape. Within his zone, part of Franks' corps conducted pursuit operations on 27 February, and even attempted a double envelopment to cut off the remaining Iraqi forces in his zone. However, when analyzing or answering the follow-on question--Should VII Corps have been more aggressive in their conduct of those operations--the answer is yes, they could and should have been.

In the execution of Fragmentary Plan 7 five critical issues prevented VII Corps from exploiting the early success of the plan and from achieving the kind of decisive victory that Schwarzkopf and Franks had envisioned. The command style and personality of Lieutenant General Franks shaped the operational tempo of his corps. The lack of coordination and synchronization above the corps level desynchronized the multi-corps option. Additionally, the failure of VII Corps to execute more aggressively at the division level contributed to the problem. Also, the sheer size and density of VII Corps and the cost in time and effort in having a force of that size in theater contributed to the problem. Last, the command and control environment contributed to less than optimal tempo of operations. The last four issues are listed in descending scale relative to their contribution to the problem. Franks' command style, and personality fall in the middle. He is placed first since he and his decisions were the focus of this paper. At the end of the chapter other unresolved and unaddressed issues will be highlighted to motivate other researchers into delving into this topic.

Before concluding this thesis the reader must be reminded that this analysis was conducted by attempting to visualize what VII Corps commanders and staff, and most importantly Lieutenant General Franks, knew when they executed the ground campaign. It is extremely difficult to determine what leaders knew when they made decisions because in combat it is nearly

impossible to make extensive and detailed notes. A great deal of criticism has been leveled on General Franks for his lack of aggressiveness and conservative command style. It is easy to sit back after a conflict and critique a commander's decisions and a unit's performance from the advantageous position of knowing the enemy organization, disposition, and what they were capable of doing after the conflict is concluded. Additionally, it is equally easy and unfair to be extremely critical of a commander and a unit's performance from the vantage point of knowing the consequences of the actions taken. For instance, when the ground campaign began, none of the commanders knew that they would have only four days to catch and defeat the *Republican Guard*. Had these commanders at Army, corps and division levels known that the enemy would conduct a general retreat quickly, the sense of urgency throughout the theater most likely would have been much higher. The VII Corps operational tempo and reputation was a product of the manifestation of Franks' leadership style and command presence exercised in light of his perception of the battlefield.

The combination of Franks' personality, military experience, and style of command manifested itself in several different ways in VII Corps. Lieutenant General Franks' nature was that of a conservative, methodical commander, whose concerns for force protection affected the operational tempo of his corps. Early in the planning in December and February, Franks focused on synchronization, which suited this mindset. He had matured professionally in an army where synchronization and had become the means and the ends of operational art. A majority of Franks' command and staff experience was in European-based units, which were defensively oriented, and used detailed and calculated planning processes. These units perceived that their level of success would be built on a precise, complicated, schemes of maneuver. European-based enemy force projections had predisposed the army to plan for a capable, monolithic Iraqi force that took on many Soviet characteristics with conflicting intelligence to support the claims of Iraqi superiority and parity. Although he tried to break this cycle of thought and action, he was only partially successful in transitioning himself and the remainder of his senior commanders and

planners from the synchronization mentality towards a less restricted maneuver-oriented force before the ground war.

Essentially, Franks' experiences and command style set the tone of the VII Corps and shaped the way his commanders processed information and orders, related to problems, and massed forces to defeat the enemy. The calculated and synchronized VII Corps efforts, from 24 through mid-day 26 February, reflect this mentality and its negative repercussions. On 26 and 27 February, Franks recognized the lack of a sense of urgency and overestimation of the enemy among his commanders had resulted in a slow, cautious operational advance. Generals Griffith's and Rhames' execution of their orders reflected this lack of urgency in the first three days of the ground war.

Additionally, Franks was not an overbearing, demanding commander, but one who chose a consensual leadership style. This is not to say he did not command with a firm hand, but he was a team builder who was prone to rule by committee. He visited every commander, every day of the ground war, to sense their view of the battlefield and to maintain a feel of what was really happening with his front line units. This leadership style is typically effective, but there are distinct disadvantages. There were three costs associated with this command style. First, when he began to pressure his commanders to respond more aggressively on 26 and 27 February, they did not respond immediately because they had become so accustomed to these visits they no longer generated special interest. Given a longer ground war, Franks might have modified his command visits to more selectively influence commanders when he saw there was a problem that required his attention. Second, by constantly operating forward out of the Jump CP every day, Franks wore himself out physically and dulled his respective commanders to his pressure and prodding. He lost a degree of objectivity.⁹ Franks' fatigue as a result of his shuttle leadership style drained precious energy. Some of this energy could have been dedicated to standing back and seeing the entire battlefield and its effect on his corps. Third, by spending so much time forward, visiting his commanders and transiting between CPs, he did not always have

a good feel for what higher headquarters needed or thought of what VII Corps was doing. To a degree, Franks' constant forward presence degraded his ability to see the whole battlefield, think of the future, and influence and shape the battle to achieve the decisive victory he desired. He relied too heavily on his operations officer and the multitude of CPs to maintain connectivity with higher commands. This contributed to the gaps in reporting and reinforced Yeosock's compartmentalization of the corps commanders from Schwarzkopf.

CENTCOM, Third Army, and VII Corps planning, coordination, and execution reflected the lack of a cohesive, unified effort to support the main effort and achieve decisive victory in a dynamic environment. Planning timelines were based on an initial ground fight expected to last seven days. After the breaching time line was accelerated the lack of focus on a single main effort and the lack of a well coordinated theater effort significantly detracted from the VII Corps ability to decisively destroy the *Republican Guard*.

Third Army and CENTCOM detracted from the ability of VII Corps to decisively defeat the *Republican Guard*. Three critical coordination issues set the conditions for partial success of VII Corps. Once the ground campaign started, the massive combat elements of the two army corps took on a momentum and initiative all their own. The two corps could be started and stopped, but major deconfliction and redirection could not be accomplished effectively in a timely manner. In essence, the short duration of the ground campaign denied the respective army and corps staffs the ability to learn from the operational movement and maneuver lessons they could only learn by actual planning and execution. One would have thought, with all the time for preparation the learning time would have been over. An important point: war refuses to arrange itself for those who are fighting it. However, in VII Corps case, units were still arriving in theater in February, only weeks before the ground offensive began.

In the planning phase, the northern boundary and operational control issues set the conditions for the partial success of VII Corps. The northern boundary between VII and XVIII Corps posed a problem for VII Corps as they attacked from west to east towards Basrah. The

corps boundary split the area between Basrah and Kuwait City, and severely cramped VII Corps' ability to maneuver. Trafficability and maneuver space were the driving factors in determining the east-west boundary between the two corps. The Rumallah Oil fields and its associated pipelines presented an obstacle and a significant trafficability concern. There was a desire, relative to maneuver space, to place only one division north of the oil fields. This would constrict VII Corps.¹⁰ General Franks, as a direct result, had to go to great lengths to synchronize and control the movement of five divisions across a sixty-five kilometer front in the northeast section below Basrah. A mechanized or armored division maneuvering in the desert doctrinally has a frontage of twenty-five to forty kilometers. The narrow maneuver space significantly influenced how Lieutenant General Franks orchestrated the ground campaign between 25 and 28 February.

Additionally, the boundary divided the critical objective area south of Basrah between the two corps. This proved to be a critical flaw in the ARCENT plan, because as the ground campaign proceeded, the Iraqi tactical and strategic reserves were pushed east and northwest out of Kuwait into the Basrah pocket. This escape route out of Basrah and over the Basrah canal crossings became the primary Iraqi means of escape. The fact that the two corps split the seizure of this decisive terrain violates the principles of simplicity and economy of effort.¹¹

A key issue that arose from this boundary discussion was the consideration of whether to place the 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment under the operational control of VII Corps as they closed on the final objectives of RALEIGH and ANVIL south of Basrah. The decision was made to not use this command and control option because it would take away the only real heavy forces of XVIII Airborne Corps and deny that corps a fair portion of the fight. This was politically unacceptable to XVIII Airborne Corps and 3rd Army commanders. The corps only heavy force capable of defeating armor and mechanized Iraqi divisions was the 24th Infantry Division. Without that division, XVIII Airborne Corps would have been subordinated in Luck's mind to a insignificant side-show. Luck's corps was the first viable American defensive force in Saudi Arabia. Luck was determined that his corps as a whole would play a major role in the

decisive fight.¹² Additionally, Franks did not want to push the issue with Lieutenant General Yeosock because he did not want to worsen the strained relationships as a result of all the other competing interests.¹³ If 24th Infantry Division was under the operational control of VII Corps to close the gate, unity of command, simplicity, and mass could have been achieved when the decisive fight occurred against the *Republican Guard*. However, the span of control for VII Corps was already four heavy divisions, with a fifth likely, and an armored cavalry regiment. The addition of another division and armored cavalry regiment may have pushed VII Corps' ability to effectively command and control that many units. Franks thinks he could have handled the additional forces in the fight.¹⁴

In execution, two factors contributed to VII Corps' inability to achieve decisive results. One, the fragmented nature of the respective two corps fights reflected a lack of unity of purpose and effort at the army level. In XVIII Airborne Corps zone the 24th Infantry Division and the 101st Air Assault Division operations on 26 and 27 February to secure Tallil and Al-Jalibah airfields and the Al-Jahara logistics base reflected non-complimentary, non-supporting actions that diverted combat power from closing with and supporting VII Corps as the main effort. In VII Corps' zone the excessive time and effort dedicated to the breach by 1st Infantry Division and the Al-Busayyah fight by 1st Armored Division reflect a lack of focused effort by VII Corps to close with and destroy the *Republican Guard*. Once the Iraqi front line defenses collapsed on 24 February, excessive time and assets were dedicated to the breach which cost the corps additional valuable time in closing on the *Republican Guard*. Likewise, the seizure of Al-Busayyah was of minimal operational value and consumed critical time and unnecessarily delayed 1st Armored Division's units. In both corps zone, the assignments of objectives and unit tasks reflected an attitude of trying to get everyone in the fight instead of truly massing forces to cut off the retreating Iraqis, and fix and destroy the *Republican Guard*. Compounding the problem of a lack of a mutually supporting, focused theater plan was the lack of experience and aggressiveness at the division level.

Both Major Generals Ron Griffith and Tom Rhame commanded green divisions. The division commanders of VII Corps had never maneuvered their entire divisions until the movement in mid-February from the Tactical Assembly Areas to the Forward Assembly Areas. This movement provided an appreciation of time-space considerations, but naturally, not complete confidence in the warfighting skills of the collective divisions. When the ground war unfolded on 24 February, 1st Infantry Division displayed a tendency to move excessively slowly from one event to the next without a sense of urgency. For example, the transition from completing the breach and massing for movement took sixteen hours from the time Franks told Rhame to begin moving north to join the main effort. As a direct result of this lack of experience among the respective commanders and their staffs, and poor time-space management 1st Infantry Division did not get into the fight until after midnight on 26 February instead of by noon when Franks had envisioned they would.¹⁵

Major General Griffith and the 1st Armored Division's Al-Busayyah fight is another example of a unit that needed a baptism of fire to gain the confidence and experience to force more rapid planning and execution. Griffith massed his entire division on a logistics and CP site and waited over ten hours to avoid urban terrain at night. Once he completed his division attack it took another eight hours before they could catch up to the corps and support the attack to defeat the *Republican Guard*. 1st Armored Division's movement and maneuver was slow, cautious, and did not meet Franks' expectations.¹⁶

The movements of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and 3rd Armored Division reflect a different operational tempo and attitude. By far the most aggressive and dynamic unit within the VII Corps was the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. They closed on Phase Line SMASH in one-third the time it took the remaining divisions, and they had to screen the zone through which they maneuvered. Of note, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment as a whole is one-third the size of an armored or mechanized division. The regiment does contain half the tanks and armored fighting vehicles of a heavy division. They were the first unit to engage and defeat *Republican*

Guard units. The 3rd Armored Division, in a supporting attack on the 1st Armored Division's right flank, was able to cross Phase Line SMASH in keeping with Franks' guidance. They were pinched out of the action on 27 February because they were in the center in the eastern movement and had reached their limit of advance. What made these elements of VII Corps more responsive to Franks mission-oriented requirements? It would appear that the command style and experience level of these two commanders enabled them to quickly assess the situation and adapt and change to overcome the problems they faced. Additionally, it appears that the unit commanders had a better sense of urgency and had trained and lead their subordinates accordingly. Aside from the orchestration of the theater attacks and the common problems associated with committing green divisions to combat, the sheer magnitude of deploying and employing VII Corps came with associated costs.

VII Corps was the largest concentration of armor and mechanized vehicles massed for a single attack in American history.¹⁷ This massive concentration of soldiers and equipment was organized in five heavy divisions, one armored cavalry regiment, one aviation brigade, a corps artillery organization and a corps support unit.¹⁸ (See figure 9.) The corps would fight the bulk of the Iraqi elite heavy divisions in close combat. Once the corps passed through the breach and crossed Phase Line SMASH, the corps covered a frontage of sixty to seventy-five kilometers with units and support organizations extending one hundred and fifty kilometers in depth.

The VII Corps consumed 1.5 million meals, 5.6 million gallons of fuel, 3.3 million gallons of water, and 6,075 short tons of ammunition, out of 56,000 available.¹⁹ It would appear that although the corps was in continuous contact from the afternoon of 26 February until cessation of hostilities at 0800 on 28 February only eleven percent of their distributed ammunition was expended. This was not a high intensity conflict in terms of Coalition casualties.

The VII Corps, in its entirety, destroyed a significant portion of the enemy. However, once VII Corps was employed as a heavy corps, they established a momentum all their own with the associated logistics burdens. The logistical trains could not possibly keep up with the

armored and mechanized units. On average the logistics vehicles could not move faster than seventeen to twenty-five kilometers per hour while the armor and mechanized forces moved at speeds of up to forty kilometers per hour.²⁰ VII Corps could not have changed its plan dramatically in execution because of the lack of a mobile, supportable logistics base. The heavy units in VII Corps could not continually sweep across the desert and fight Iraqi forces for long duration without periodic pauses to refuel and rearm. VII Corps commanders originally avoided acknowledging operational pauses because Franks wanted to fight a seamless fight without losing the momentum associated with logistically sustaining a corps. Colonel Cherrie, VII Corps operations officer, states that Franks did not want to publicly acknowledge the corps' need to stop periodically to sustain itself because it would endanger the unit's momentum.²¹

Additionally, the corps, army, and theater staffs overestimated the strength and capability of the Iraqi forces. In the Gulf War, Cordesman and Wagner state, "One should not lose sight of the fact that it is cheaper to properly assess the enemy, and only deploy what is required, than to conduct a massive build-up halfway around the world."²² The scale of the Coalition build-up and movements was based on highly inflated assumptions about the Iraqi warfighting capability. CENTCOM planners assumed the ground offensive would take two weeks, followed by another four weeks to consolidate. This overestimation of the enemy illustrates the costs in time and logistics that is paid when the enemy is improperly assessed.²³ This must be balanced however, with the cost in blood when underestimated.

The CENTCOM staff, lead by General Schwarzkopf, set the stage for the original estimates of the Iraqi army facing the coalition. Key indicators like the Battle of Khafji that demonstrated that the Iraqi inability to fight effectively above the brigade level and on a larger scale was reflective of the poor state the Iraqi Army. The estimates of the enemy were vastly different between Third Army and CENTCOM prior to the beginning of the ground war. The over estimation of the enemy, painting him ten feet tall, made some commanders more cautious and did not allow them to fully exploit their combat power.²⁴ The Battle of Khafji was an indicator of

the many weaknesses of the Iraqi army in theater. Two Marine companies supported by a battalion of LAVs effectively blocked a three brigade Iraqi attack. Marines learned from the Khafji experience and passed on the lessons to their subordinate commanders. A Marine historian stated after the war that " Commanders did know from the intelligence reports that the Iraqi units suffered from low morale, poor training, desertion, and bad living conditions."²⁵ Both Marine division commanders conducted detailed briefs to subordinate commanders to depict their view of the enemy. Lieutenant General William Keys, Commanding Officer 2nd Marine Division, stated that, "Our biggest overall intelligence shortcoming was in building Saddam Hussein and his forces into a monster that just wasn't there. Going into battle, this made us more gun-shy then we should have been."²⁶ Schwarzkopf saw the enemy as easily defeatable and became impatient with the slow rate of advance and pressured his respective commanders to pick up the pace. Franks and Luck overestimated the strength of the enemy and planned and executed cautiously. The cumulative result was that the VII and XVIII Corps and both joint force commands prepared for the ground campaign with a picture of enemy capabilities that far exceeded reality and thus drove them towards more conservative, synchronized tactics. The driving force in execution of these tactics was the nature of the command climate that existed between the respective commanders.

The command climate created by Generals Schwarzkopf, Yeosock, and Franks did not mesh well to form a unified command environment. Schwarzkopf's domineering and tyrannical personality deterred commanders and staff from approaching him and providing controversial or disagreeable information because of the fear of negative personal repercussions. Schwarzkopf preferred a distant, autonomous command image. Yeosock, in comparison, was a deliberate and cautious commander who provided Franks with a great of autonomy and avoided Schwarzkopf unless it was critical. As a 'unencumbering' facilitator and coordinator, instead of a warfighting commander, he did not orchestrate the fight that Franks desired between the two army corps. There was a lack of common understanding an view of the battlefield between the three

commanders because Franks believed, not without cause, he was well within the operational timelines established by Yeosock and his staff. Yeosock was not unhappy with Franks' progress and he thus believed he was on schedule. Additionally, Yeosock did not assume the principle command role of fighting the two corps as Franks requested. The combination of XVIII Airborne Corps autonomous operations and Yeosock's distant leadership style led to a destabilizing operational tempo and an inability to decisively destroy the *Republican Guard*.

Franks' interface with both commanders was dysfunctional. He was an independent commander who believed that as long as he knew and performed within command intent he did not need to obtain Schwarzkopf's or Yeosock's approval or explain all his actions. As long as he was meeting the respective time lines he did not feel a need to check in.²⁷ Franks was not significantly influenced by Yeosock or Schwarzkopf during the ground campaign. Initially, it appeared that Schwarzkopf would have significant influence on VII Corps. In execution, Schwarzkopf had minimal influence except for the conversations on 25 February, in which Franks argued that he was accomplishing the theater commander's intent. In retrospect, it is amazing how much and how little the personality and command style can influence is directly proportional to proximity. By and large Franks was only marginally influenced by Schwarzkopf and Yeosock in execution.

Lieutenant General Franks commanded a corps that was extremely successful during the Gulf War. He was a conservative commander by nature who was prone to approach problems methodically with complicated schemes of maneuver. He made some hard decisions during the ground war that are subject to debate today. His consumption for orchestrating and overly synchronized fight cost him the ability to close with and decisively destroy the *Republican Guard*. Before closing there are three other areas that require additional analysis and research.

The analysis of VII Corps and the associated relationships between the respective components is fascinating. There are three significant aspects of VII Corps fight that could not be completely incorporated in this paper. First are the issues relating to the establishment and

movement of the fire support measures, specifically the Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL). The movement of the FSCLs and the air component efforts to cut off and destroy the *Republican Guard* requires further isolated and indepth study. The CENTCOM operations order assigned the mission of isolation of the theater to the air component commander. The FSCL was moved several times during the ground war to free army aviation to attack deep targets during a brief window after which Iraqi forces escaped without air interdiction because the air force would not fly short of the FSCL.

A second issue is an analysis of the effect of human factors on the ground war. Although, the intensity of battle was not as emotionally crippling as previous wars, it would be interesting to determine how much effect fatigue, sleep deprivation, the fear of fratricide, and technology affected the individuals performance. An interesting vantage point would be a comparison between army and Marine units. Most notably, the influence of modern technology on human behavior in combat would be on an interesting area of study.

Finally, the question of whether the American military has really overcome the institutional failures and problems that plagued the services during and after Vietnam needs to be examined. The argument could be made that the services are still plagued by Vietnam era problems and that jointness is far from reality. Joint operations were certainly not the dominant feature of the Gulf War. The victory in the Gulf War has been used as evidence that the American military has learned from and overcome the problems that plagued the military during and immediately following the Vietnam War. However, objective operational analysis of the Gulf War reflects a tendency to advance only under heavy supporting arms, a trend of getting everyone involved to get their tickets punched, a penchant for bureaucracy, and a lack of joint, integrated warfighting philosophy.

¹U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides The Hundred Hour War by General Frederick M. Franks, 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-011, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 32-35 and Anthony H.

Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War vol. 4: The Gulf War (London: Mansell Publishing, 1991), 515 and 651.

²U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-007, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 9.

³U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides The Hundred Hour War by General Frederick M. Franks, 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-011, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 32-35.

⁴Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 151,651.

⁵Ibid., 515.

⁶Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War, (New York: Time Books, 1992): 405.

⁷Jeffery Record, Hollow Victory: A Contrary View of the Gulf War, (McLean, Virginia: Brassey's Inc., 1993): 156.

⁸Stanley Cherrie, interview by author, (Tapes and notes in possession of the author.), 27 March 1997.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰John M. Kendall, Key Decisions After-Action Comments. Memorandum for the Commanding General Third Army, 1 August 1991, transcript (Text in possession of author. Also obtainable from the personal papers of Dr. Richard M. Swain, SAMS, Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.), 3.

¹¹Richard M. Swain, Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), 112-118.

¹²Richard Rowe, interview by author, 13 March 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

¹³Frederick M. Franks, interview by author, (Tapes and notes in possession of author.), 23 February 1997.

¹⁴Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

¹⁵Donald Holder, Interview by author, 21 March 1997, Fort Leavenworth, KS. (Tapes in possession of author.)

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Swain, Lucky War, 162.

¹⁸U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL,5,9.

¹⁹U.S. army, VII Corps, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1B, 29 May 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR1-007, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

²⁰Cordesman and Wagner, The Gulf War, 635.

²¹Cherrie, interview by author, 27 March 1997.

²²Ibid., 564.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 565-572

²⁵Ibid., 572.

²⁶Ibid., 573.

²⁷Franks, interview by author, 23 February 1997.

FIGURES

KTO: COMPARISON TO EASTERN UNITED STATES

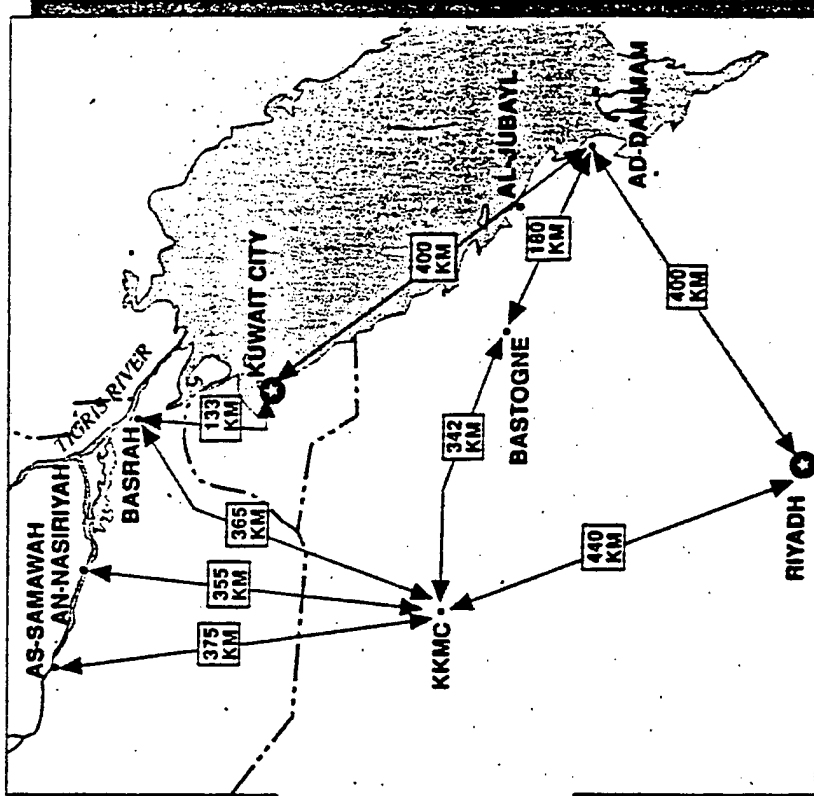
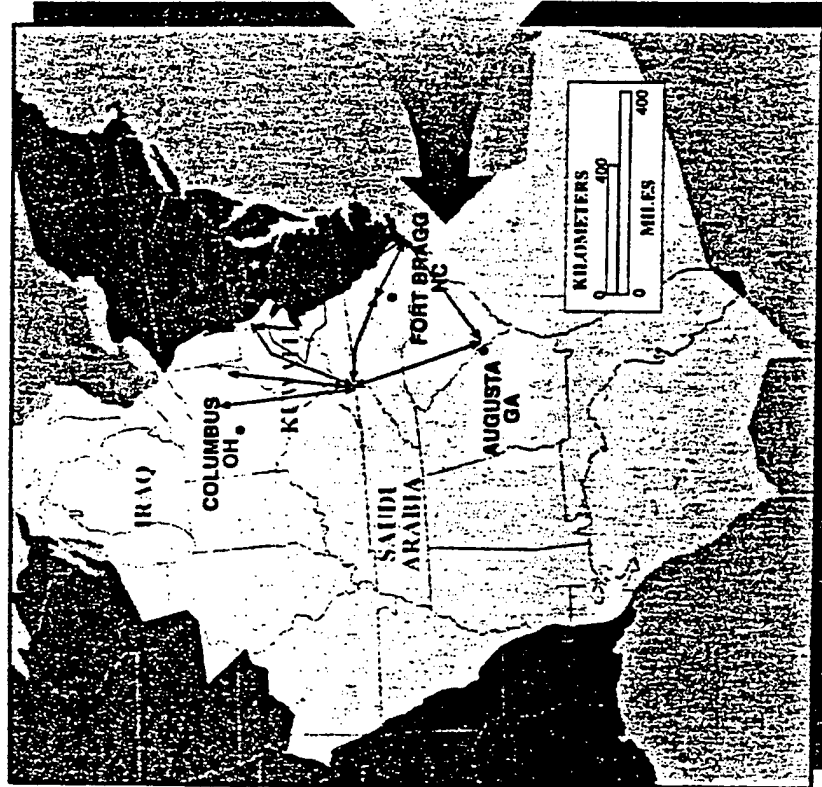


Figure 1. Kuwait Theater of Operations. Source: Scales, Robert H. *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War*. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 56.

	Inside the KTO	In Other Parts of Iraq
Republican Guards (12 Divisions)		
Armored Divisions	Hammurabi Medina	
Mechanized Divisions	Tawakalna Baghdad	
Infantry Divisions	Al-Faw Nebuchadnezzar Adnan	Al-Nida Al-Abad Al-Mustafa Al-Quds
Special Forces Divisions	Special Forces	
Subtotal	8	4
Regular Army (60 Divisions)		
Armored Division (6)	34rd, 6th, 10th, 12th, 17th, 52nd 1st, 5th, 51st	
Mechanized Divisions (3)	2nd, 7th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 15th 16th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st,	4th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 32nd 34th, 35th, 38th, 39th, 40th
Infantry Divisions (51)	25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 36th, 37th, 42nd, 45th, 47th, 48th, 49th	41st, 44th, 46th, 50th, 53rd, 54th, 56th
Subtotal	34	17
Total	42	21

Figure 2. Major Iraqi Units in KTO. Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4 The Gulf War. London: Mansell Pub., 1991, 123.

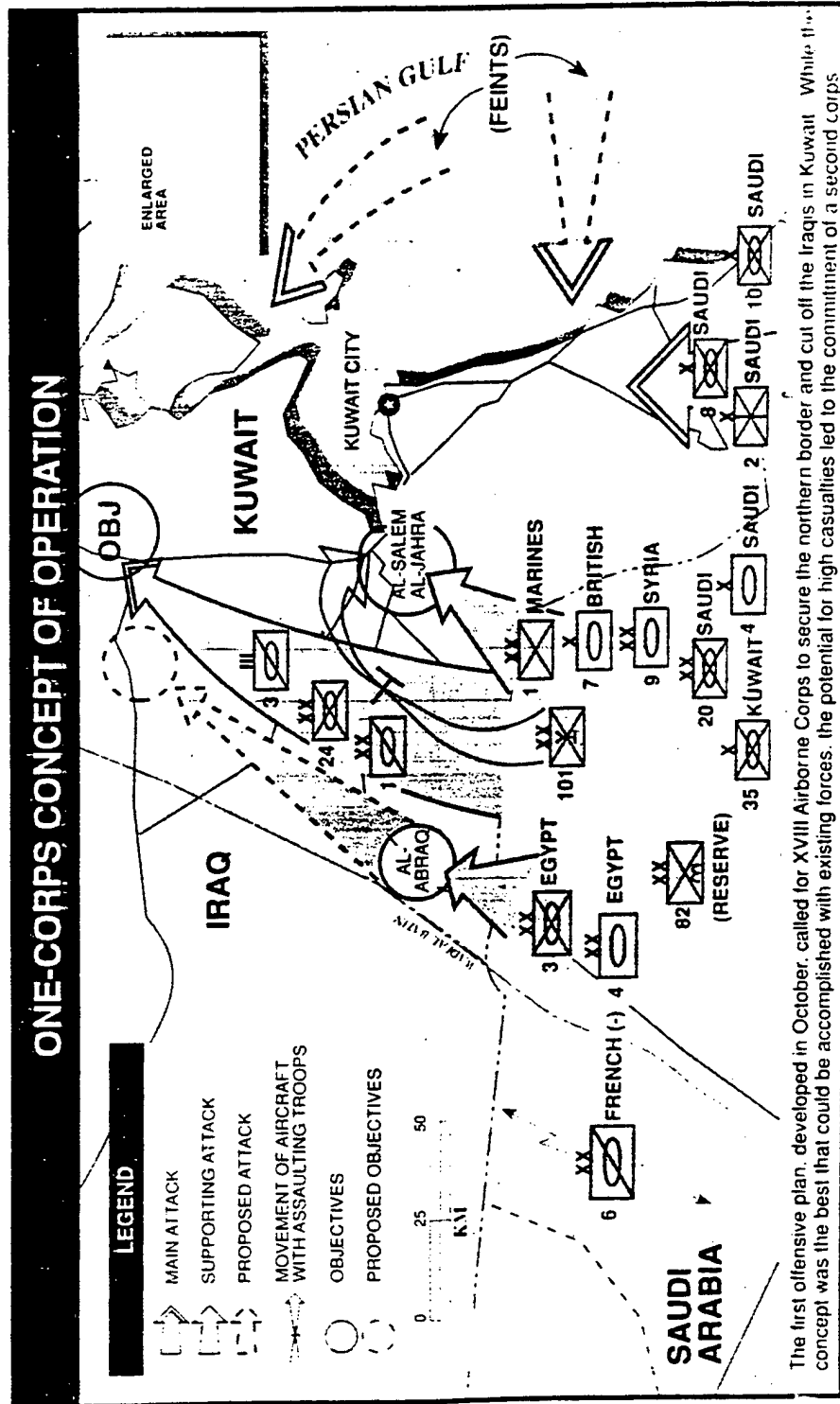


Figure 3. CENTCOM One-Corps Ground Concept. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 126.

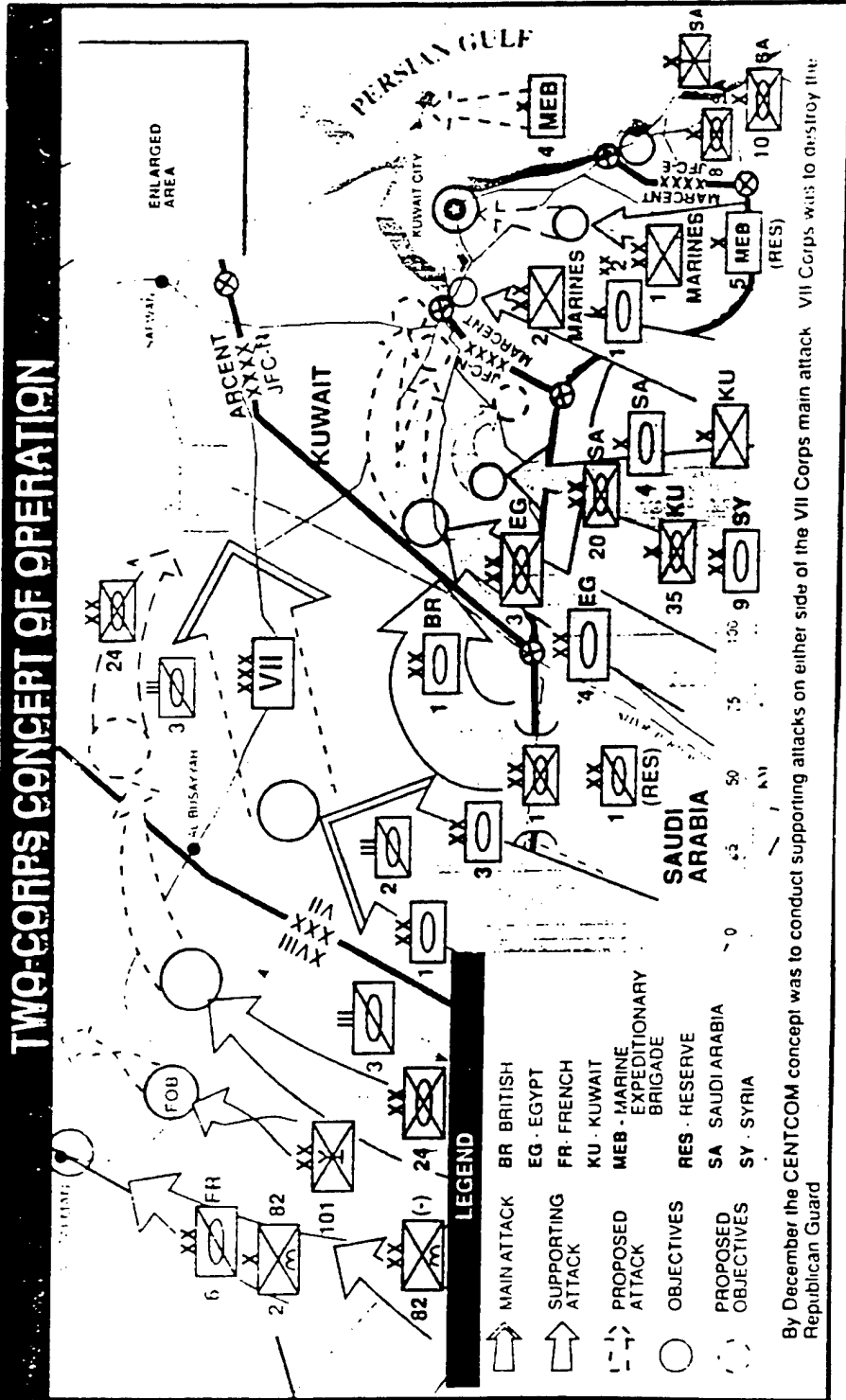


Figure 4. CENTCOM Two-Corps Ground Concept. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 130.

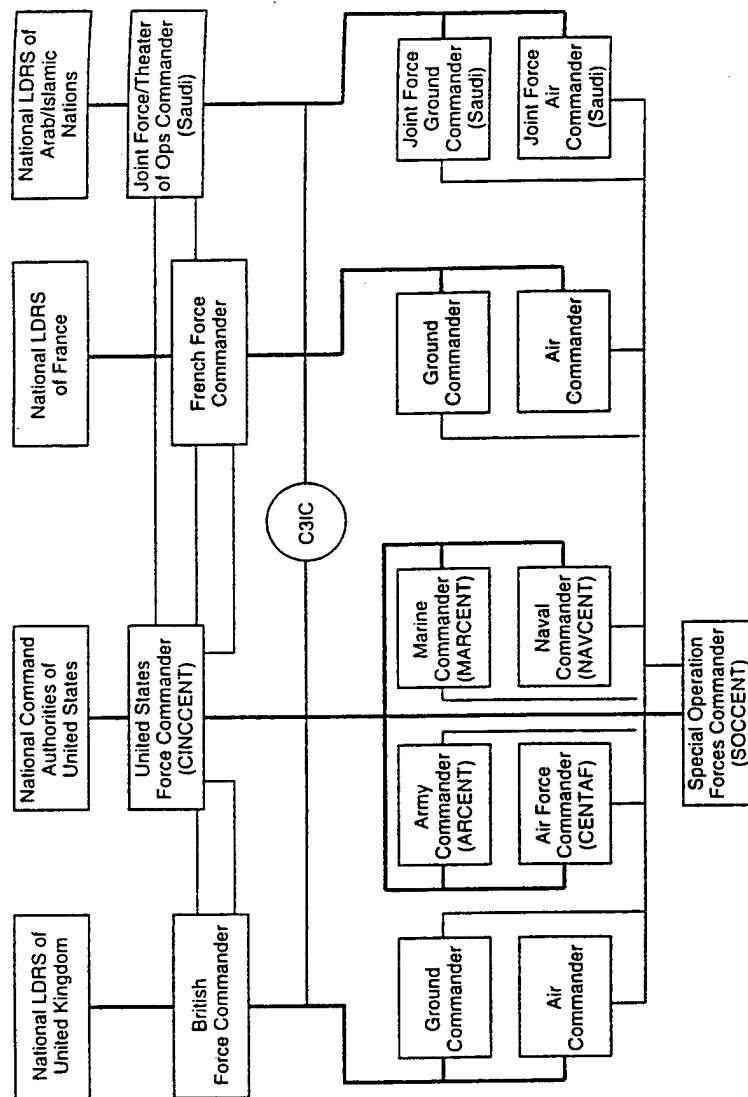


Figure 5. CENTCOM Table of Organization During the Gulf War. Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4 The Gulf War. London: Mansell Pub., 1991, 230.

IRAQI DISPOSITIONS—MID-JANUARY

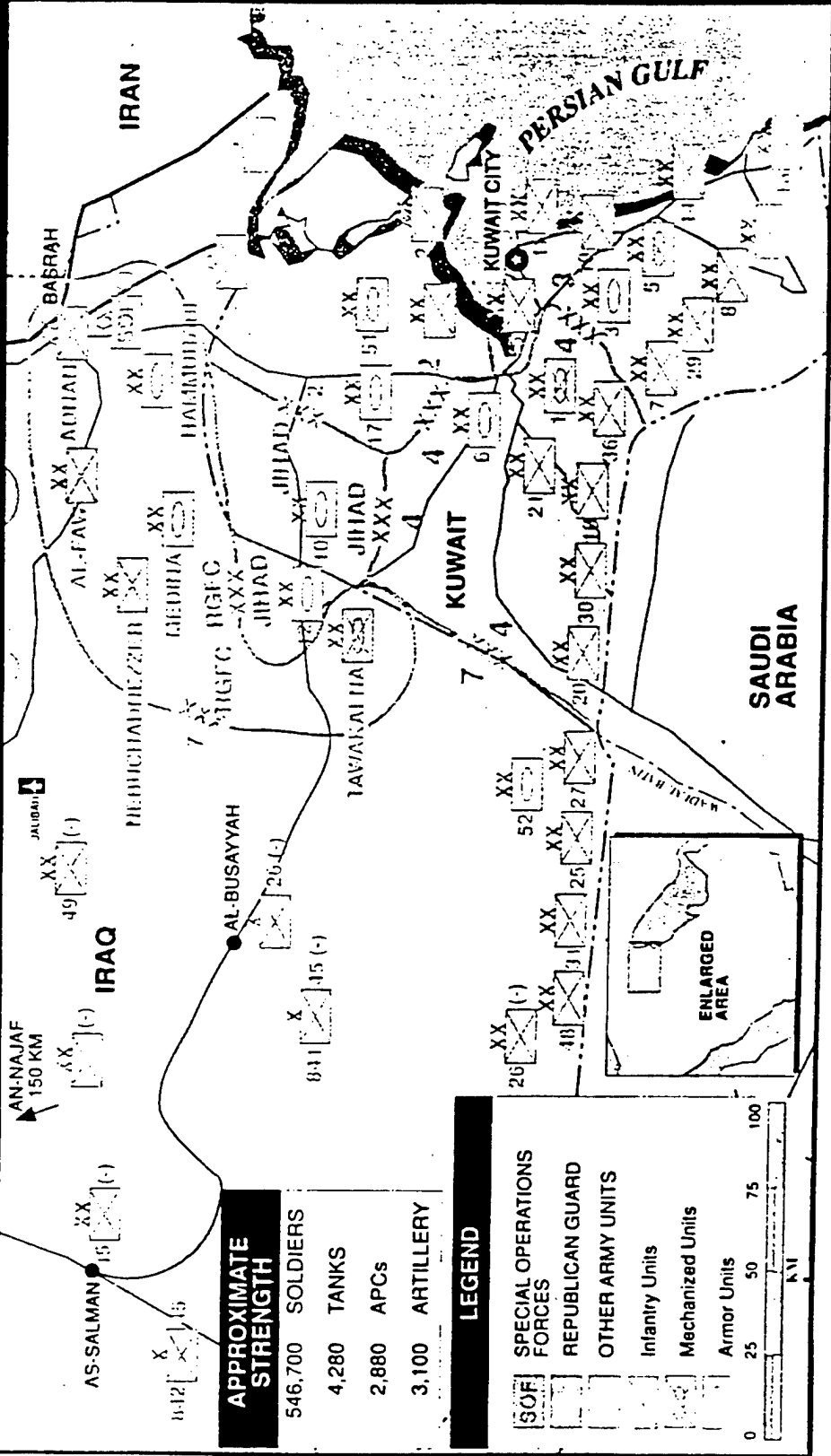


Figure 6. Iraqi Dispositions Mid-January. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 160.

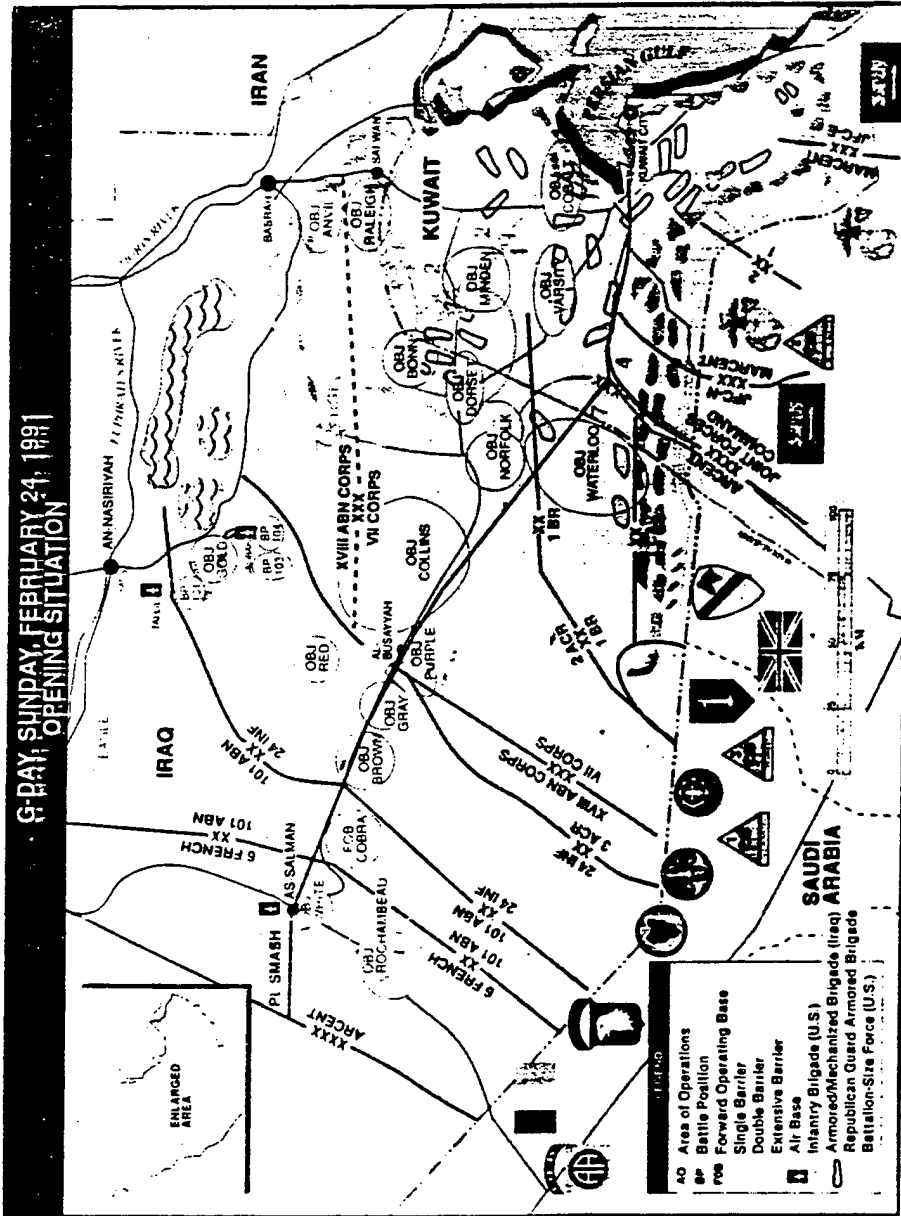


Figure 7. Theater Objectives and Sectors. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 208.

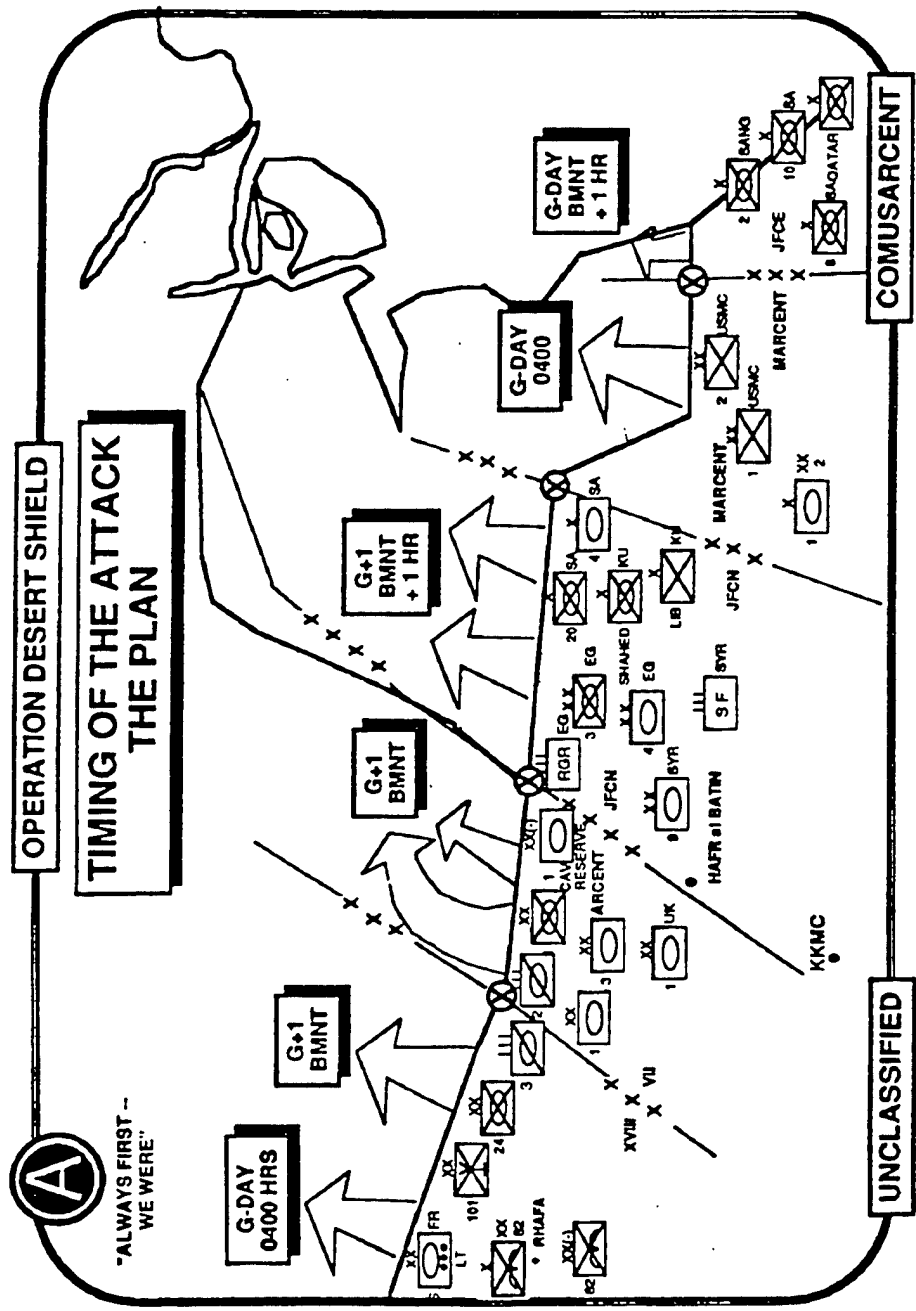


Figure 8. CENTCOM Timing of Corps Attacks. Source: U.S. Army, ARCENT Briefing Slides, Operation Desert Shield/Storm Summary Report of 15 July 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Scales Papers, Unit Histories, THR-061, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL.

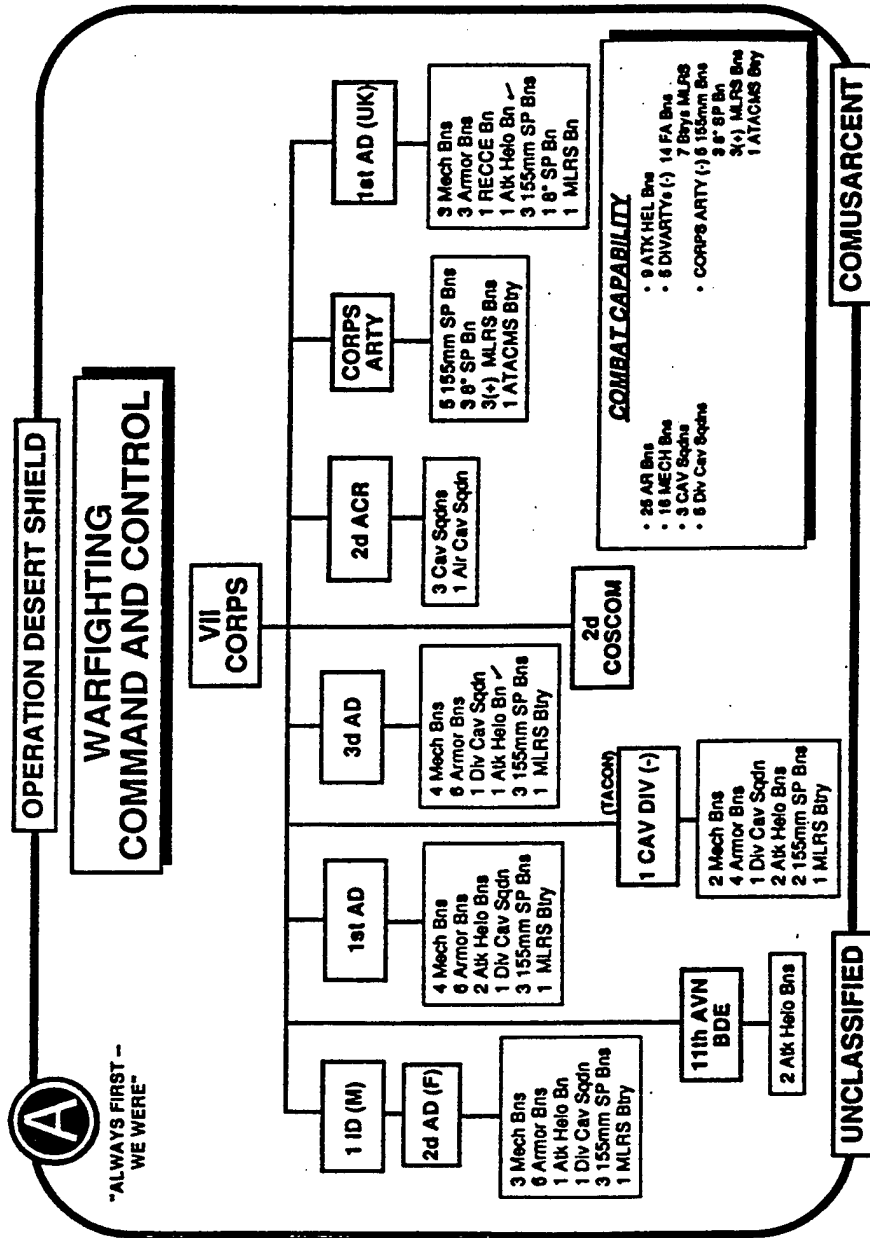


Figure 9. VII Corps Organizational Block Diagram. Source: Swain, Richard M. *Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 353.

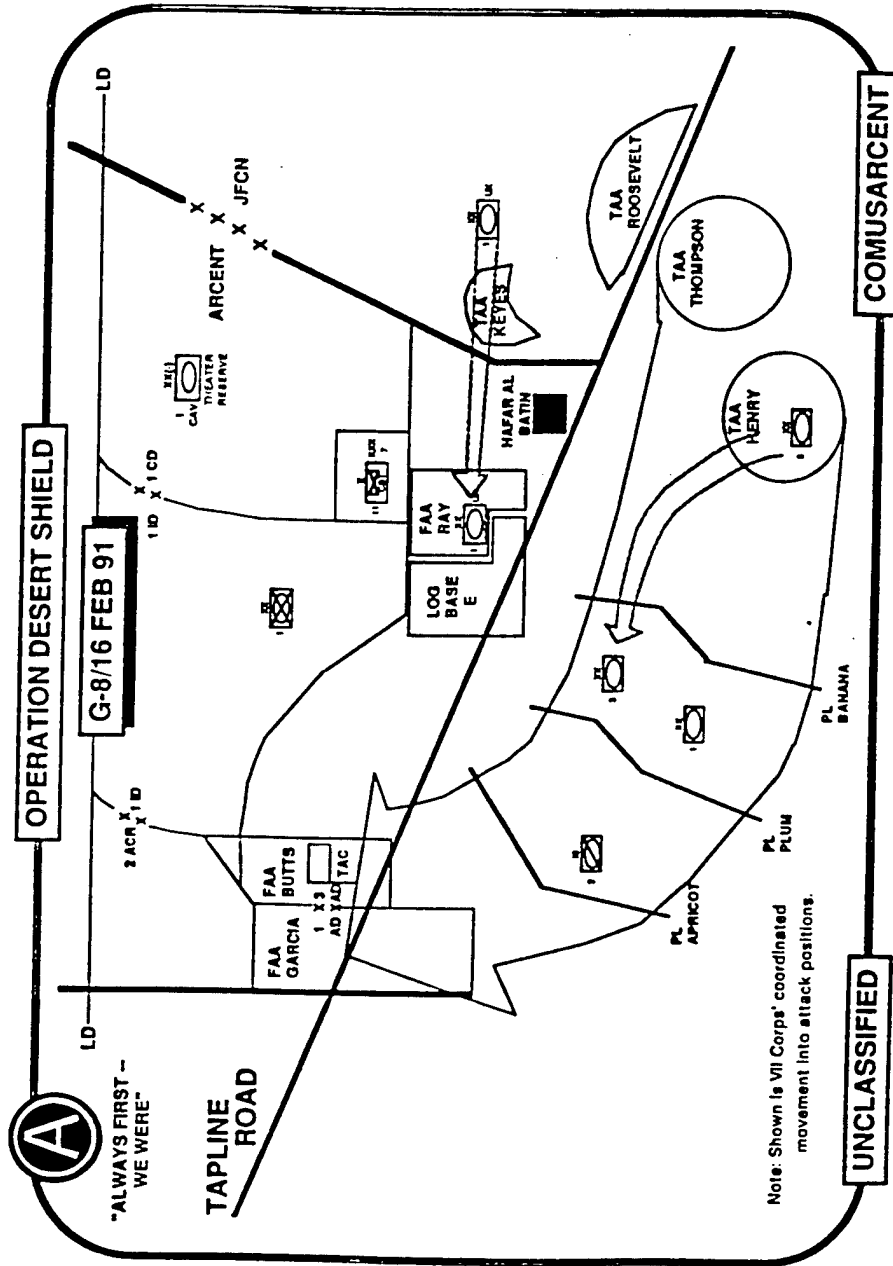


Figure 10. VII Corps Movement to Tactical Assembly Areas. Source: Swain, Richard M. Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 202.

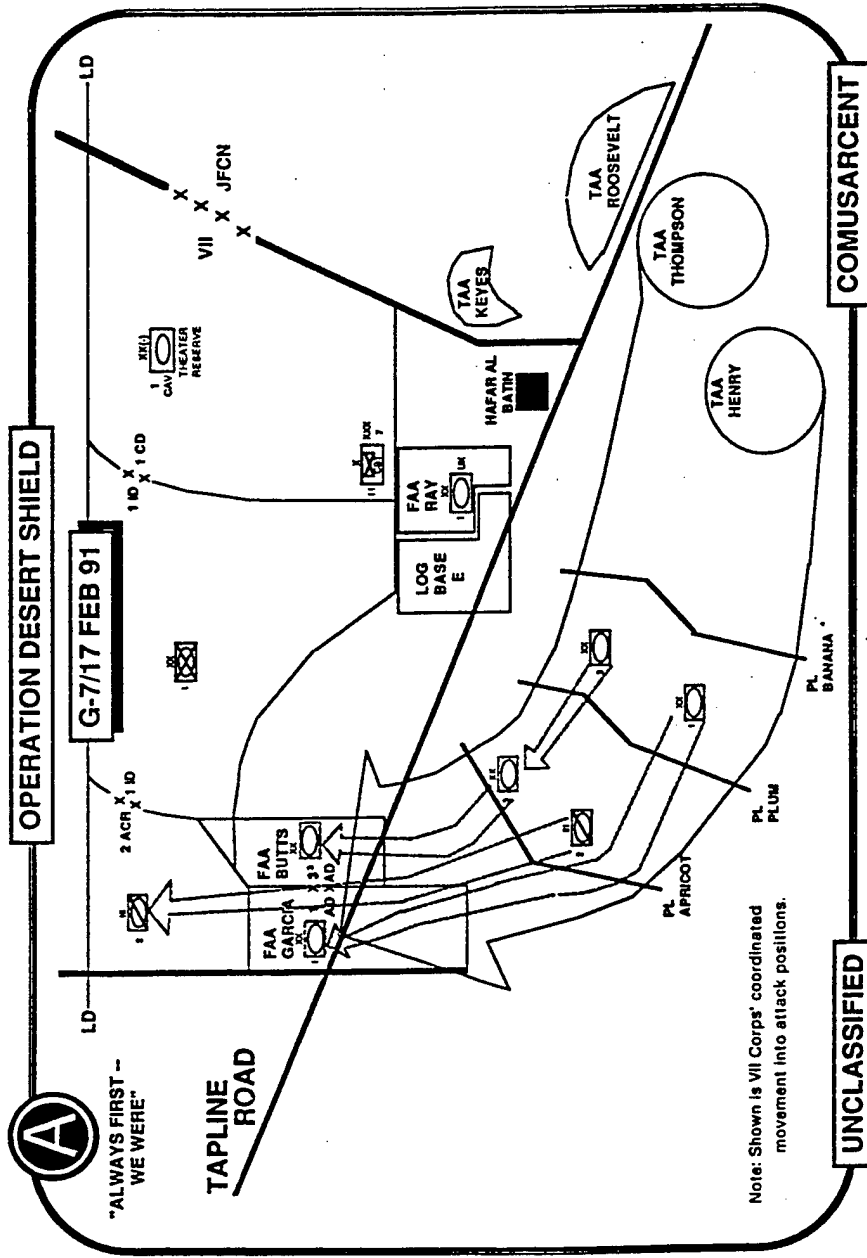


Figure 11. VII Corps Movement to Tactical Assembly Areas. Source: Swain, Richard M. Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 203.

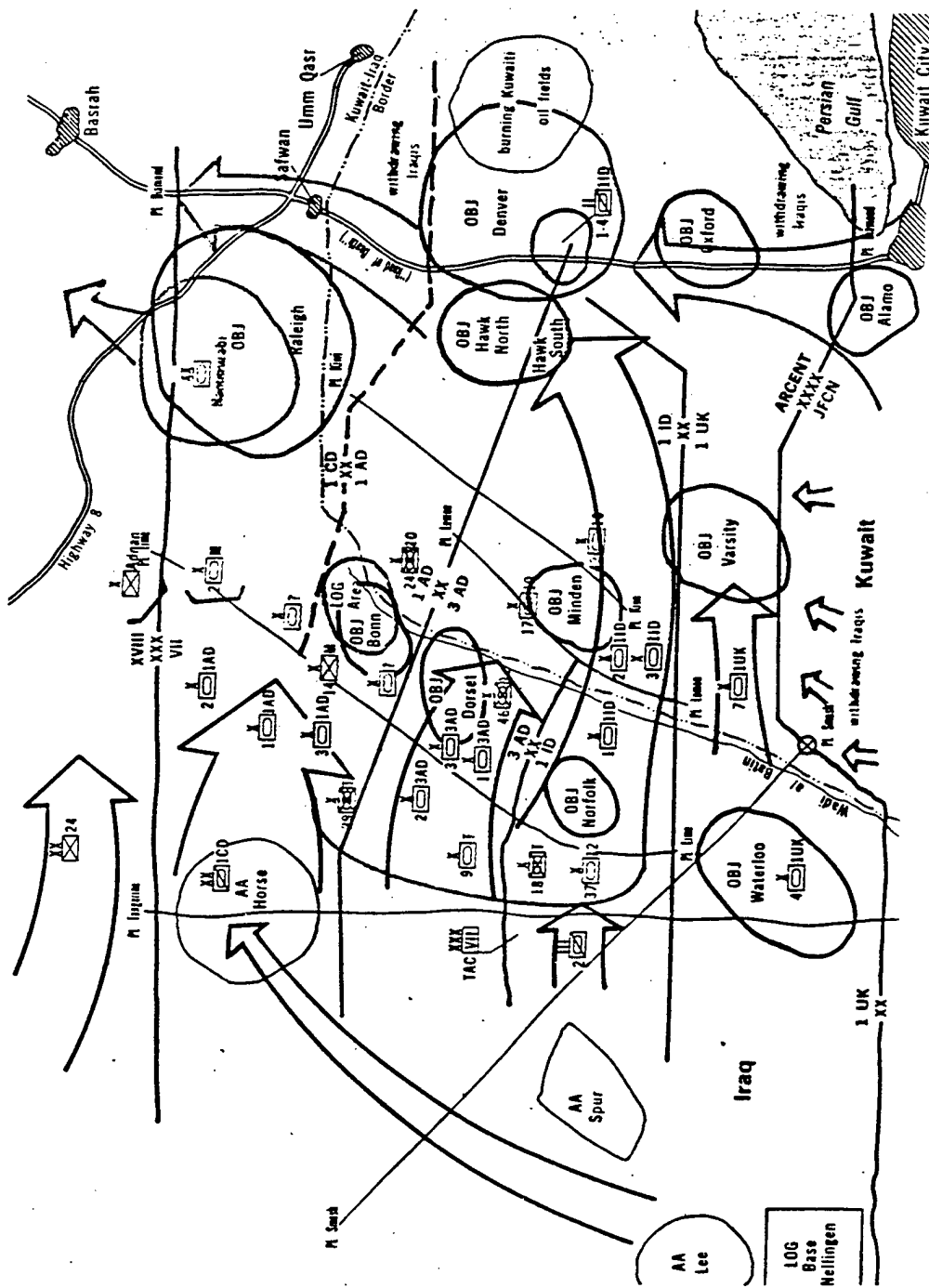


Figure 13. VII Corps Deep Plan to Close with RGFC. Source: Kindsvatter, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 30.

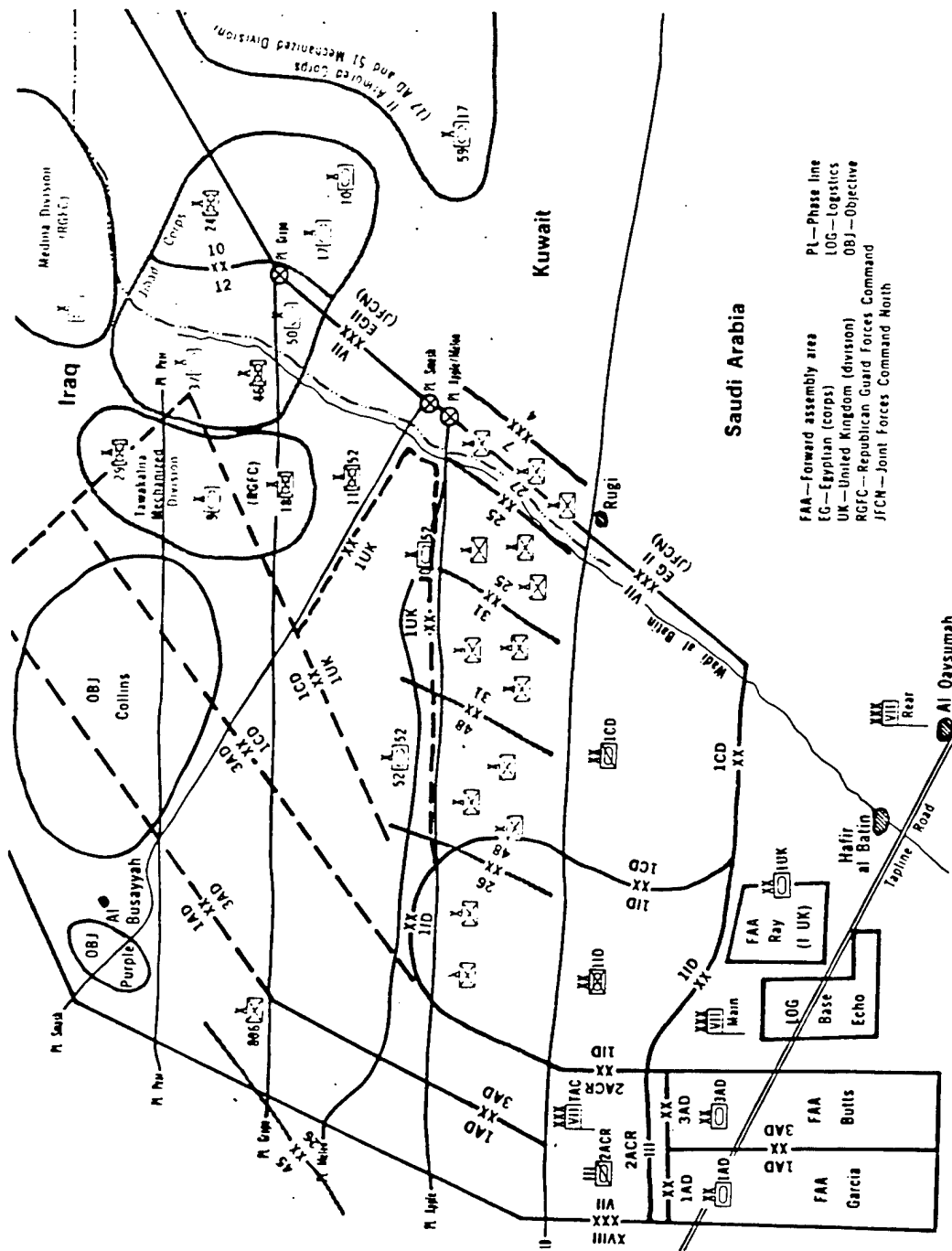


Figure 14. VII Corps Forward Defensive Positions. Source: Kindsvatter, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 14.

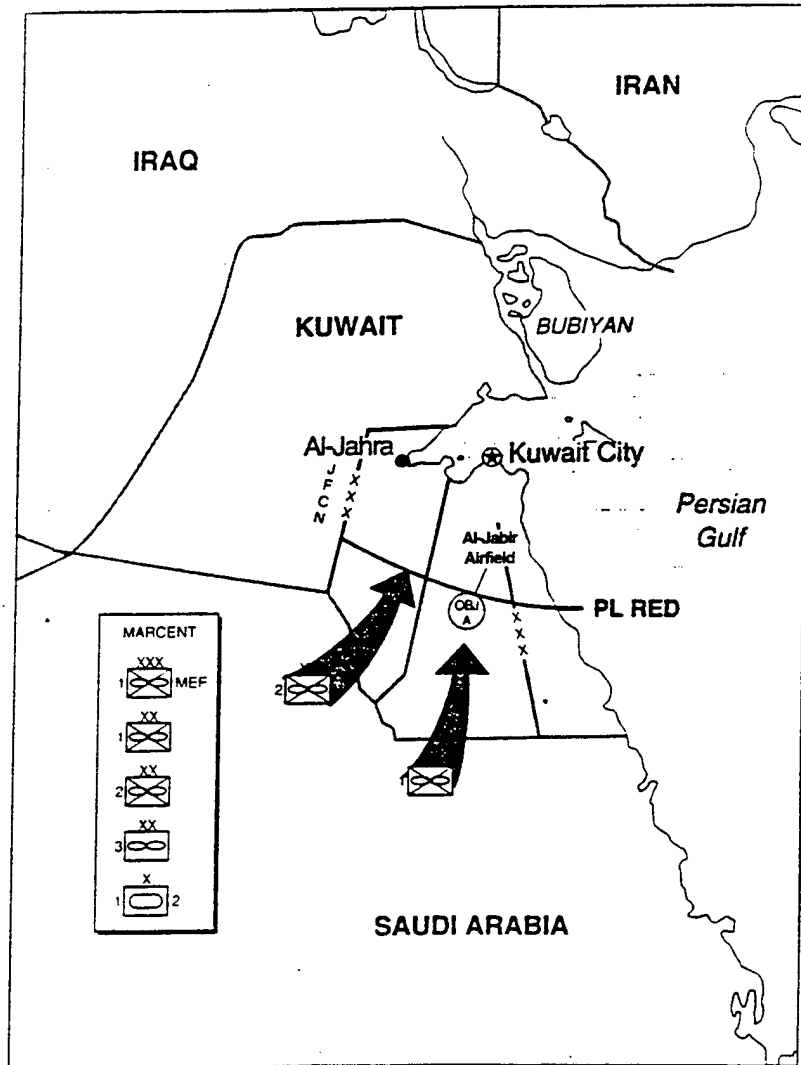


Figure 15. MARCENT Attacks 24 February. Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4 The Gulf War. London: Mansell Pub., 1991, 608.

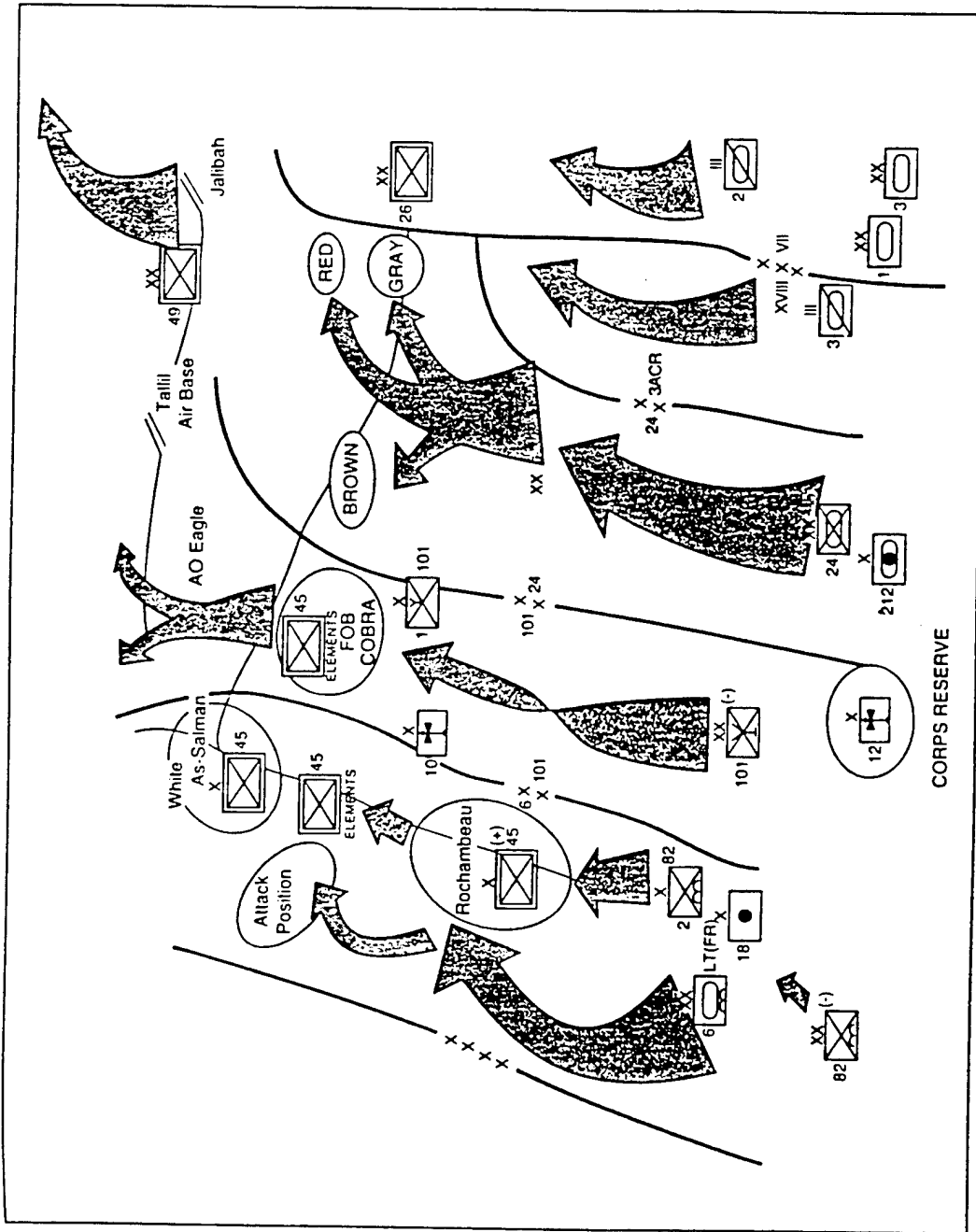


Figure 16. XVIII Airborne Corps Attacks 24 February. Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4 The Gulf War. London: Mansell Pub., 1991, 591.

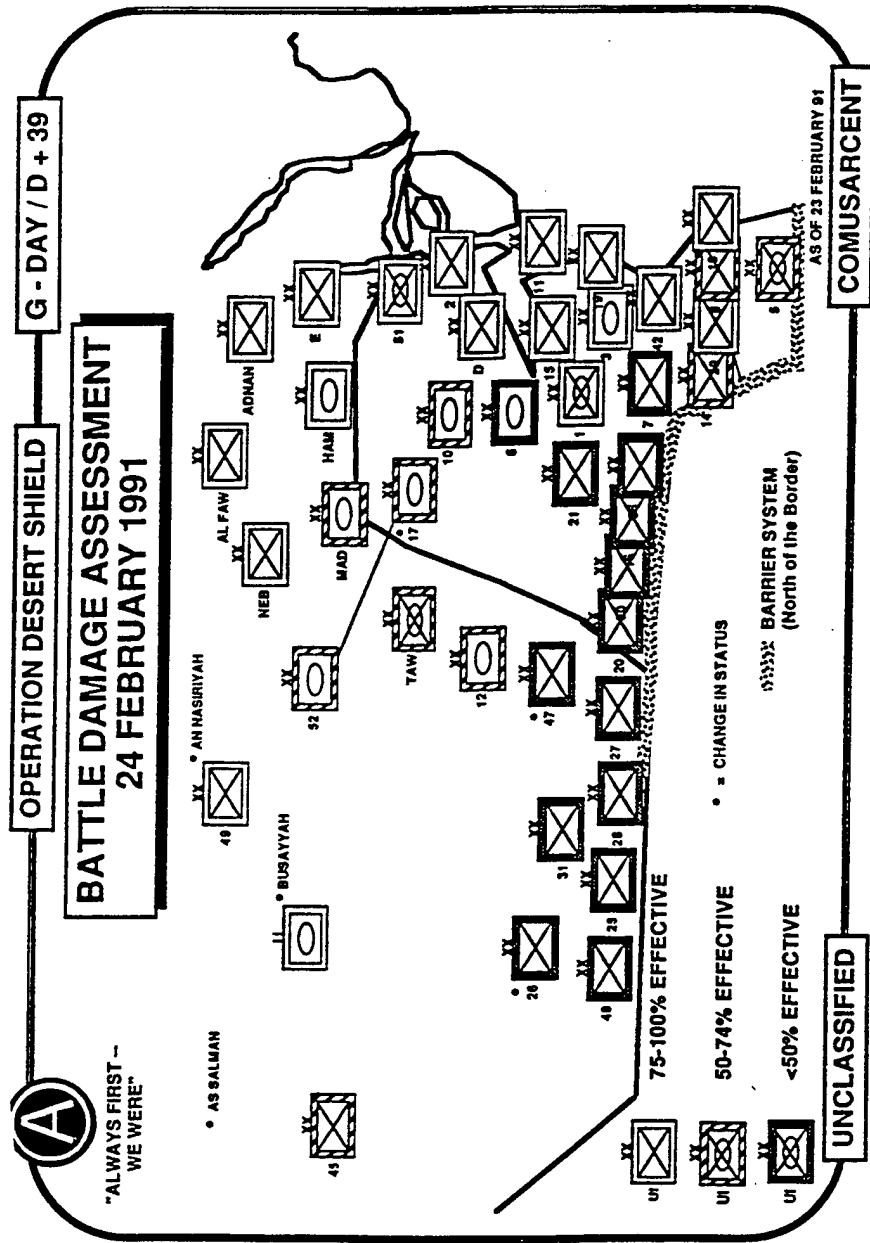


Figure 17. Iraqi Battle Damage Assessment 24 February. Source: Swain, Richard M. Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 226.

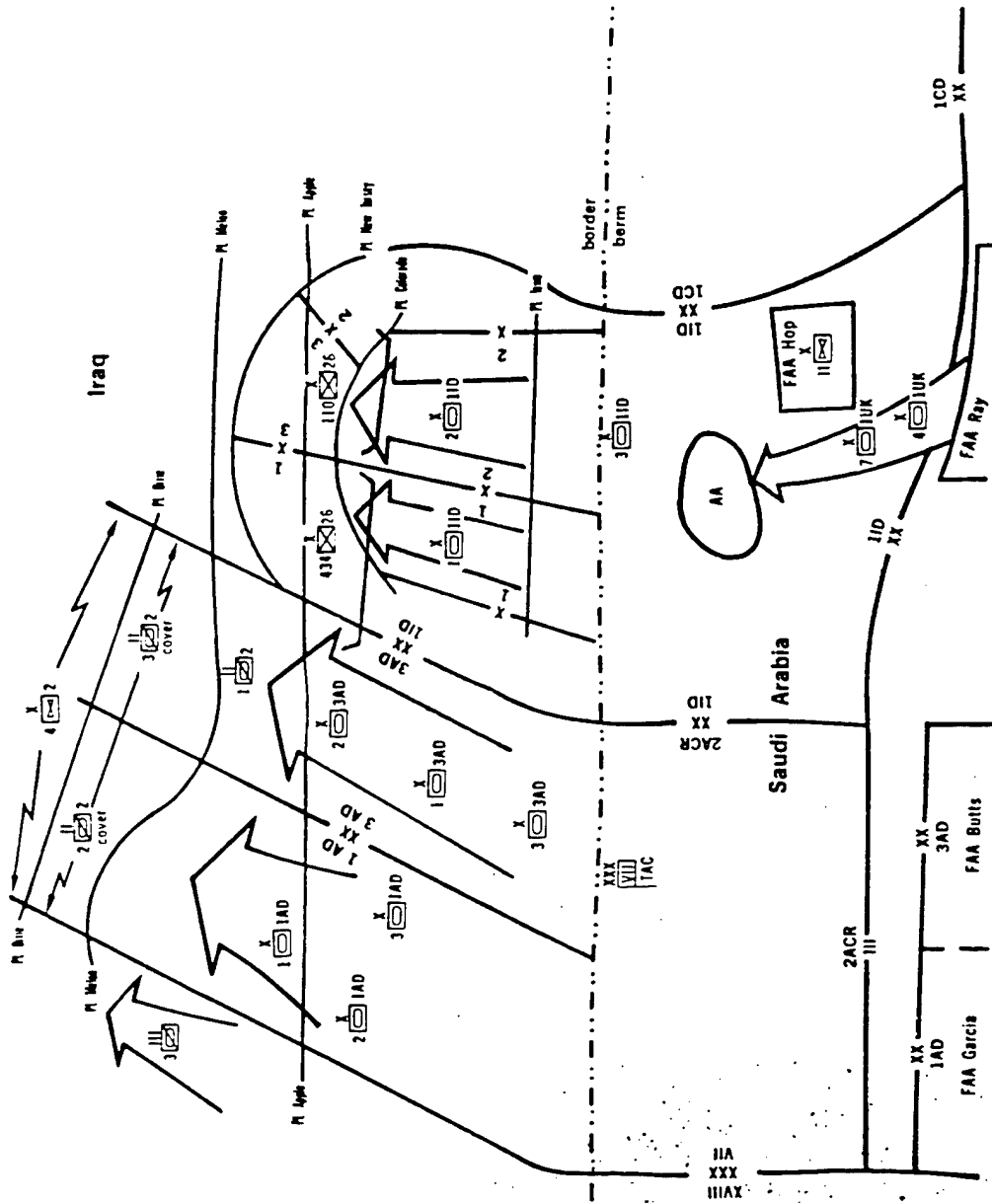


Figure 18. VII Corps 24 February. Source: Kindsvalter, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 18.

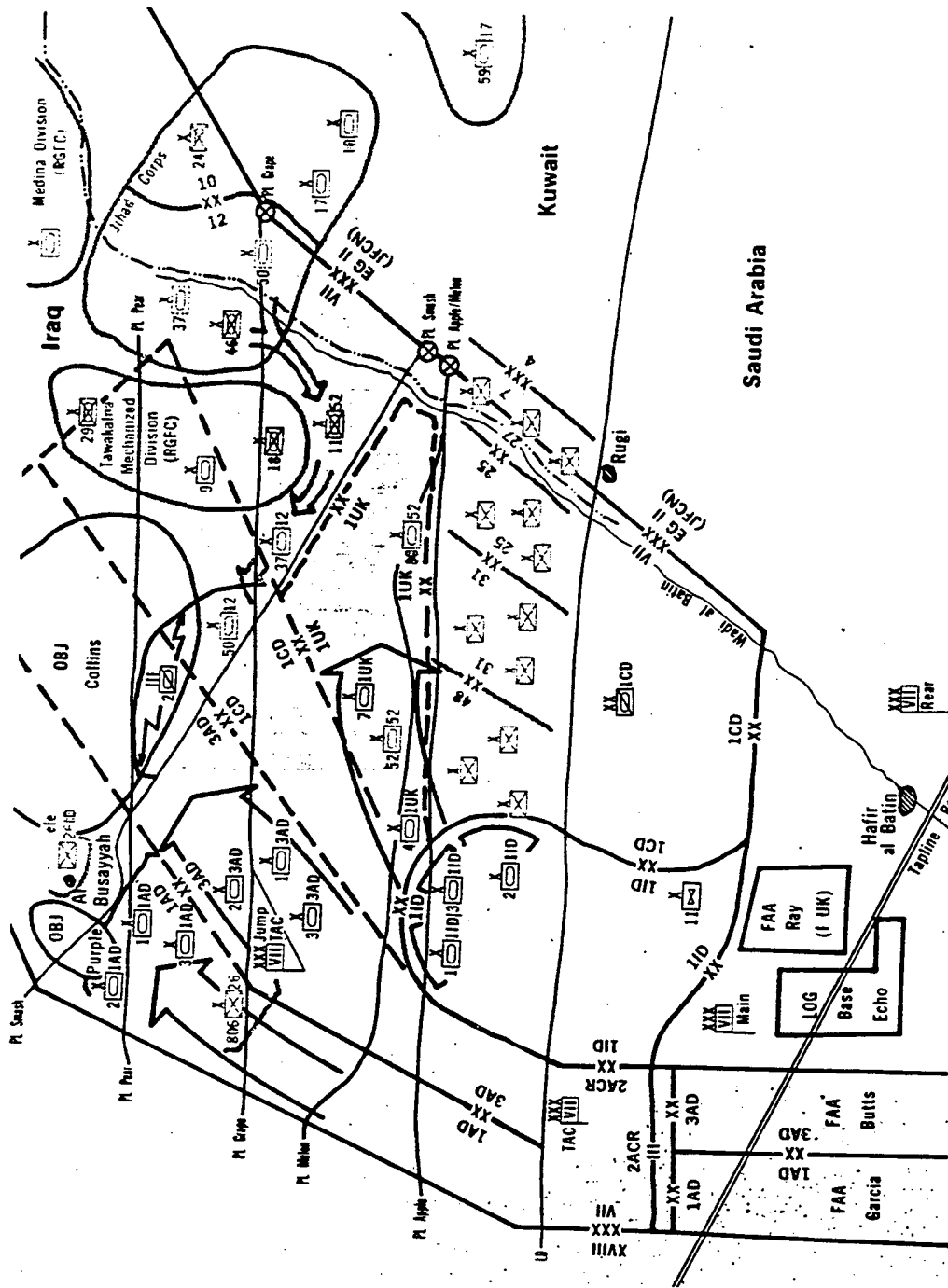


Figure 19. VII Corps 25 February. Source: Kindsvatter, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 22.

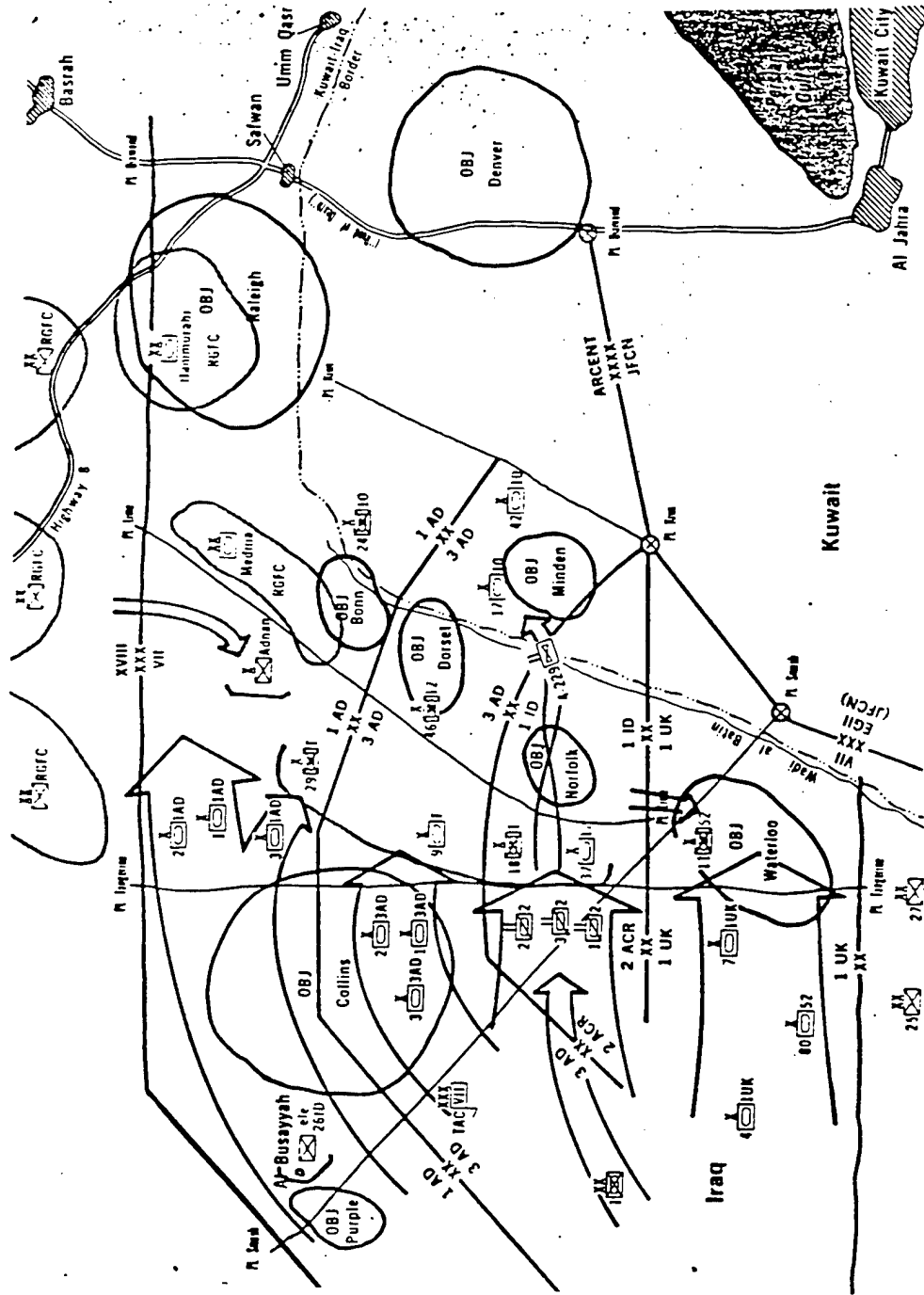


Figure 20. VII Corps 26 February. Source: Kindsvatter, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," Military Review, (February 1992), 25.

**THE IRAQI GENERAL HEADQUARTERS REACTS TO THE GREAT WHEEL
G-DAY, FEBRUARY 24, 21:30 : G+1, FEBRUARY 25, 12:00**

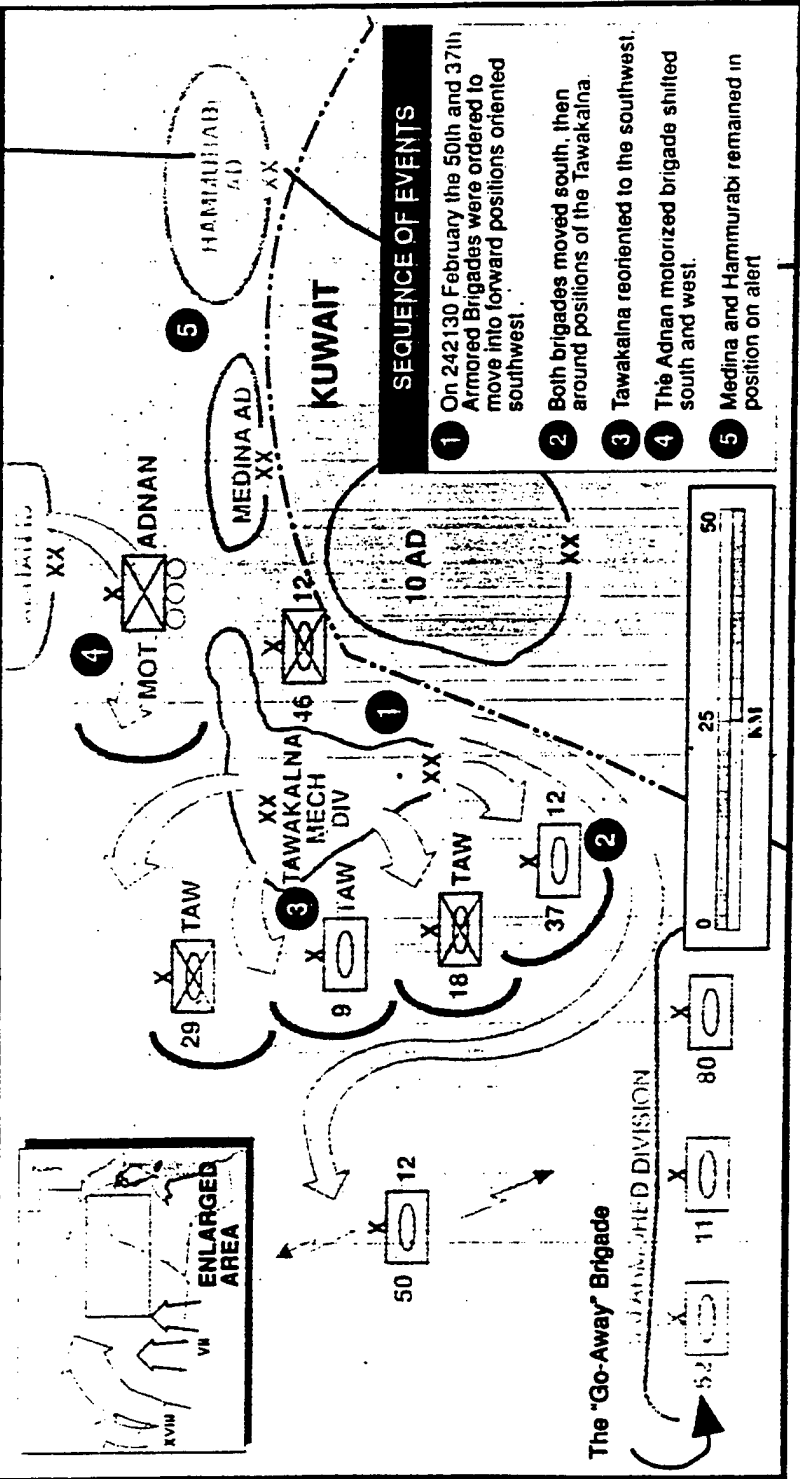


Figure 21. Republican Guard Repositioning 24-25 February. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 234.

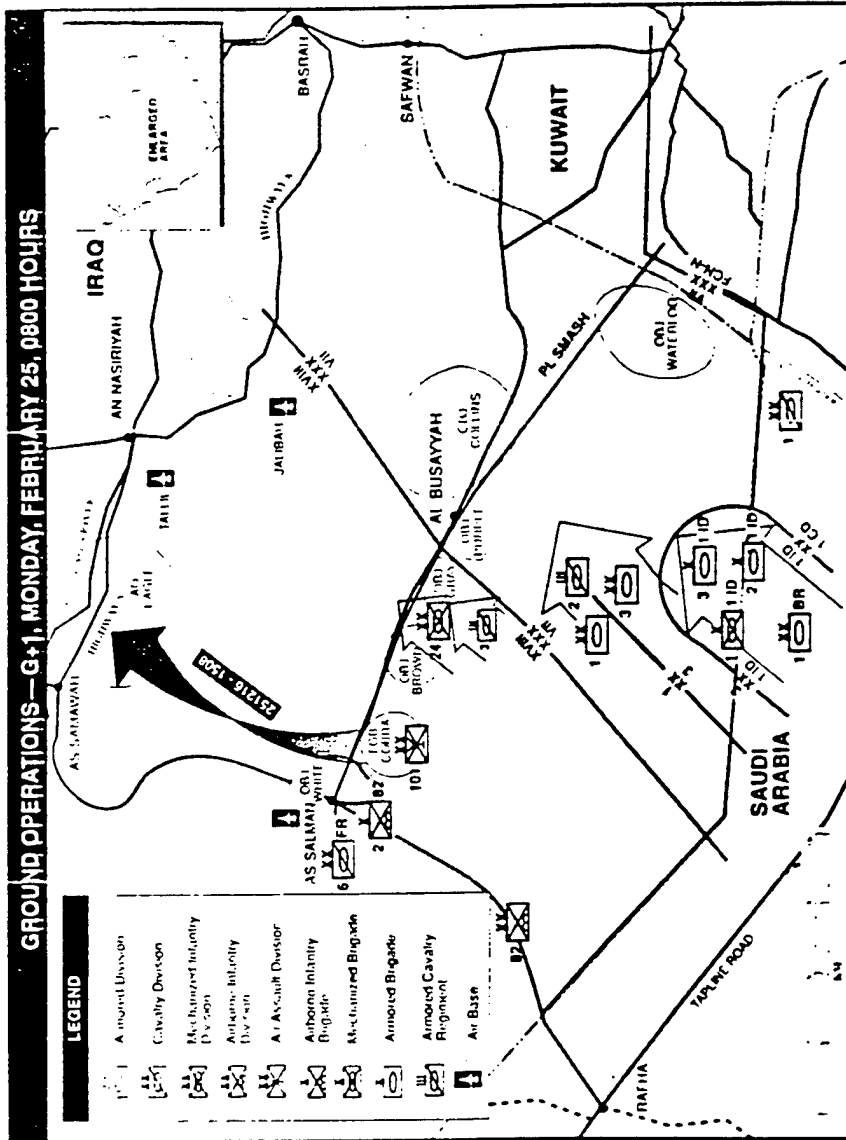


Figure 22. XVIII Airborne Corps Attack 0800 25 February. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, Fig S-2.

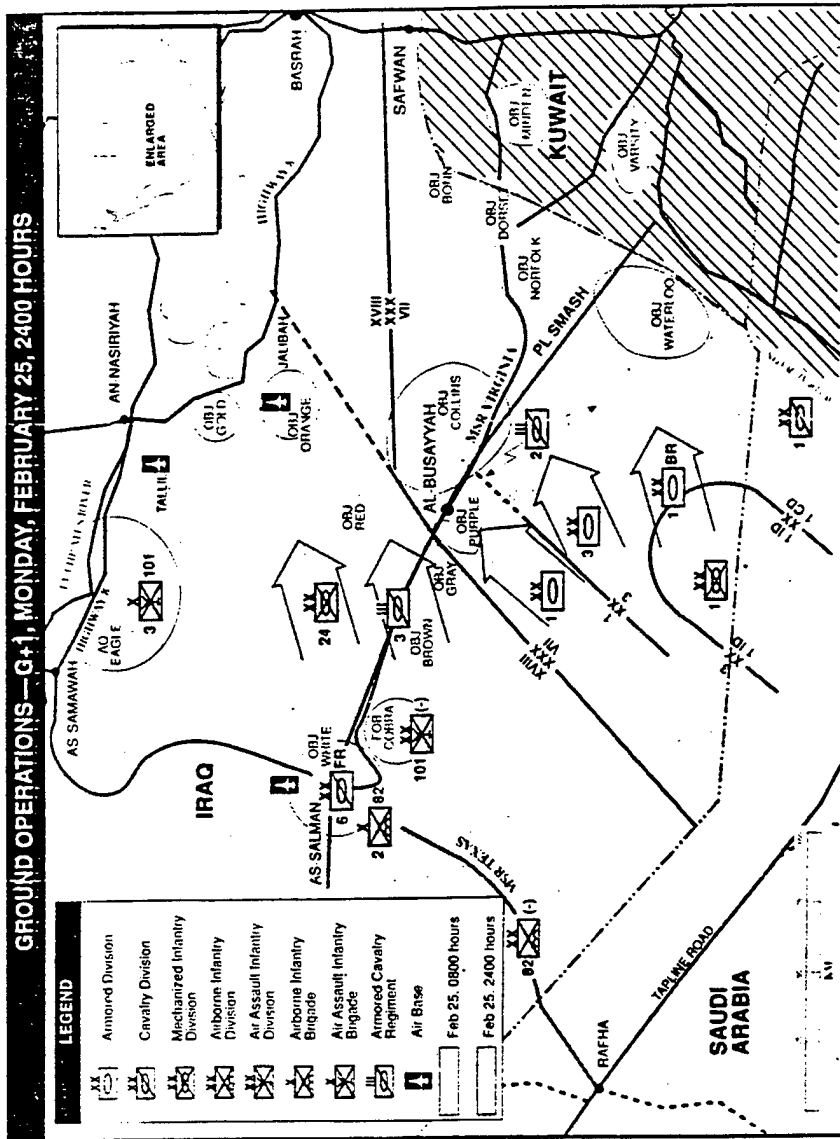


Figure 23. XVIII Airborne Corps Attacks 2400 25 February. Source: Scales, Robert H. *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War*. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, Fig S-3.

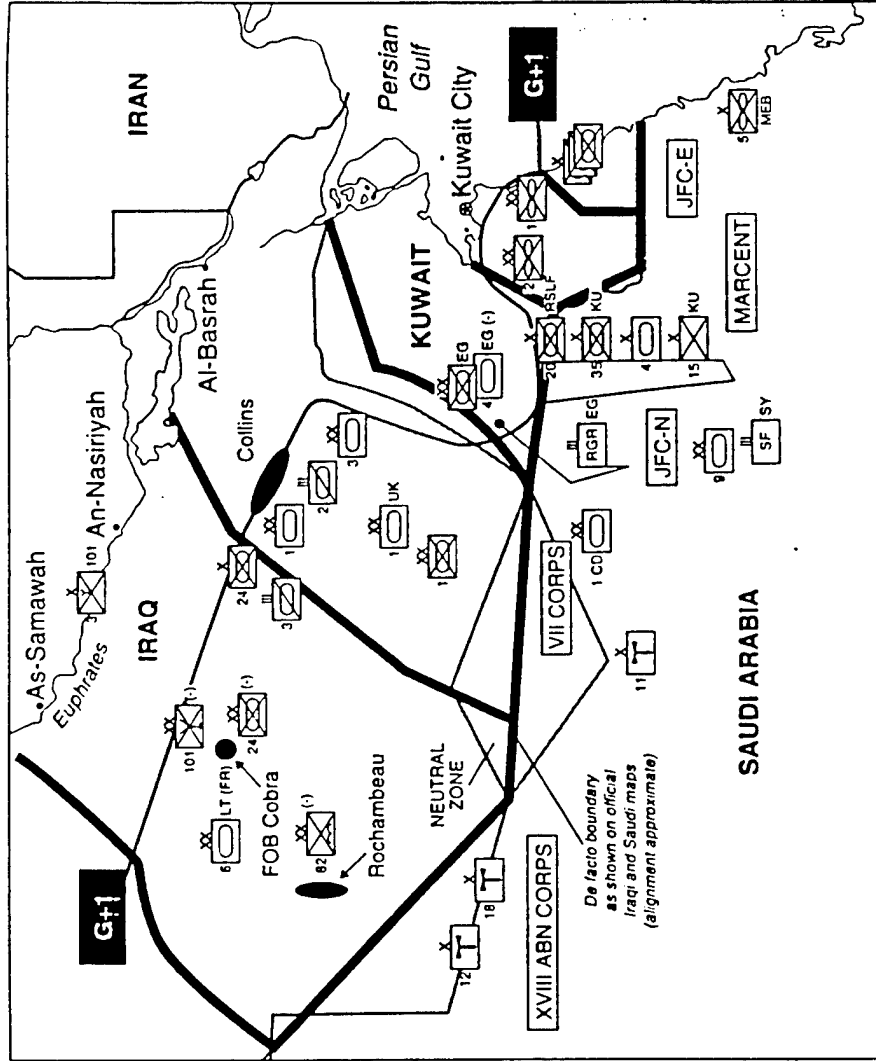


Figure 24. Theater Wide Attacks 25 February. Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4 The Gulf War. London: Mansell Pub., 1991, 610.

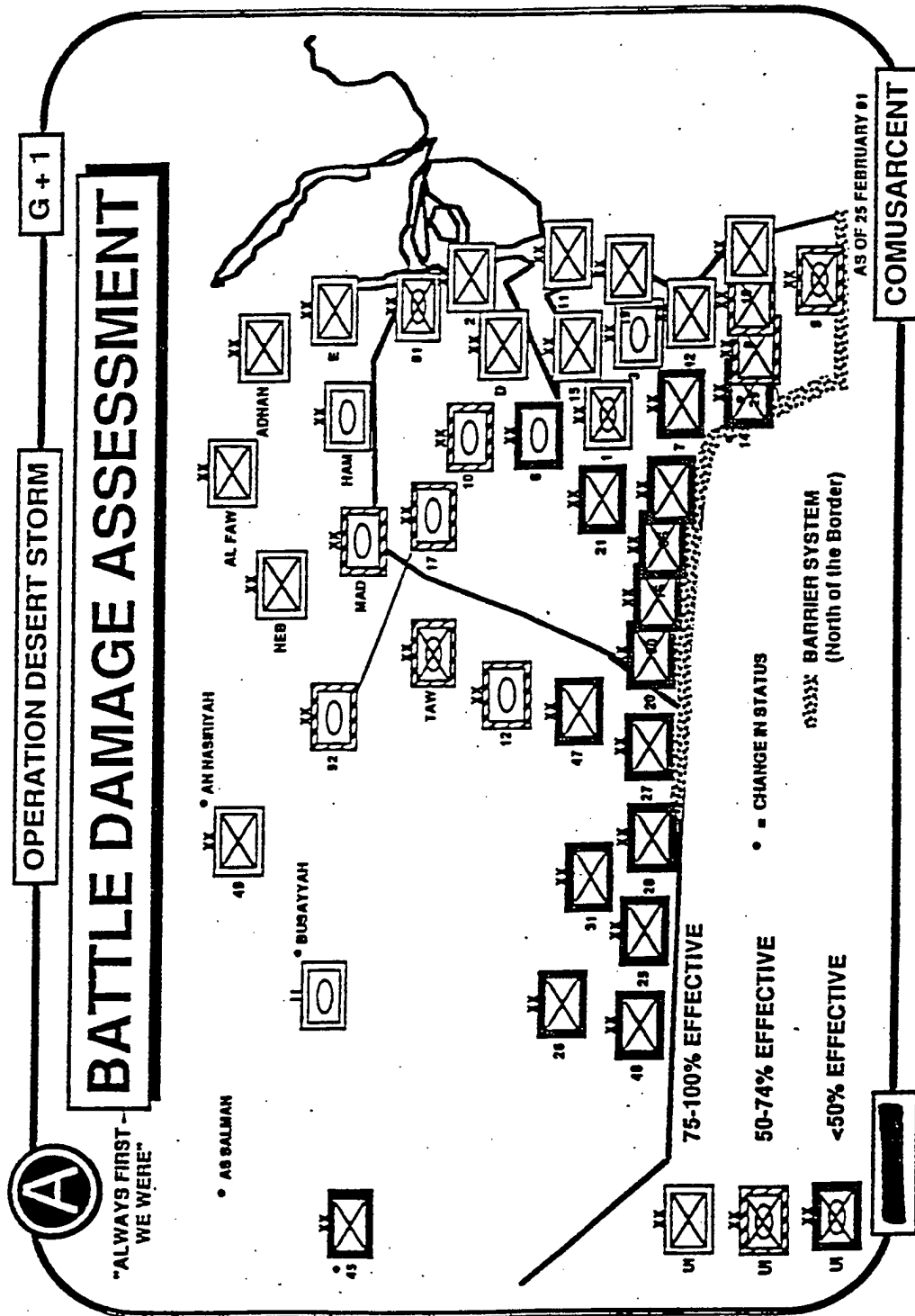


Figure 25. Iraqi Battle Damage Assessment 25 February. Source: U.S. Army ARCENT, ARCENT Morning Brief, 26 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Gulf War Collection, Group Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL.

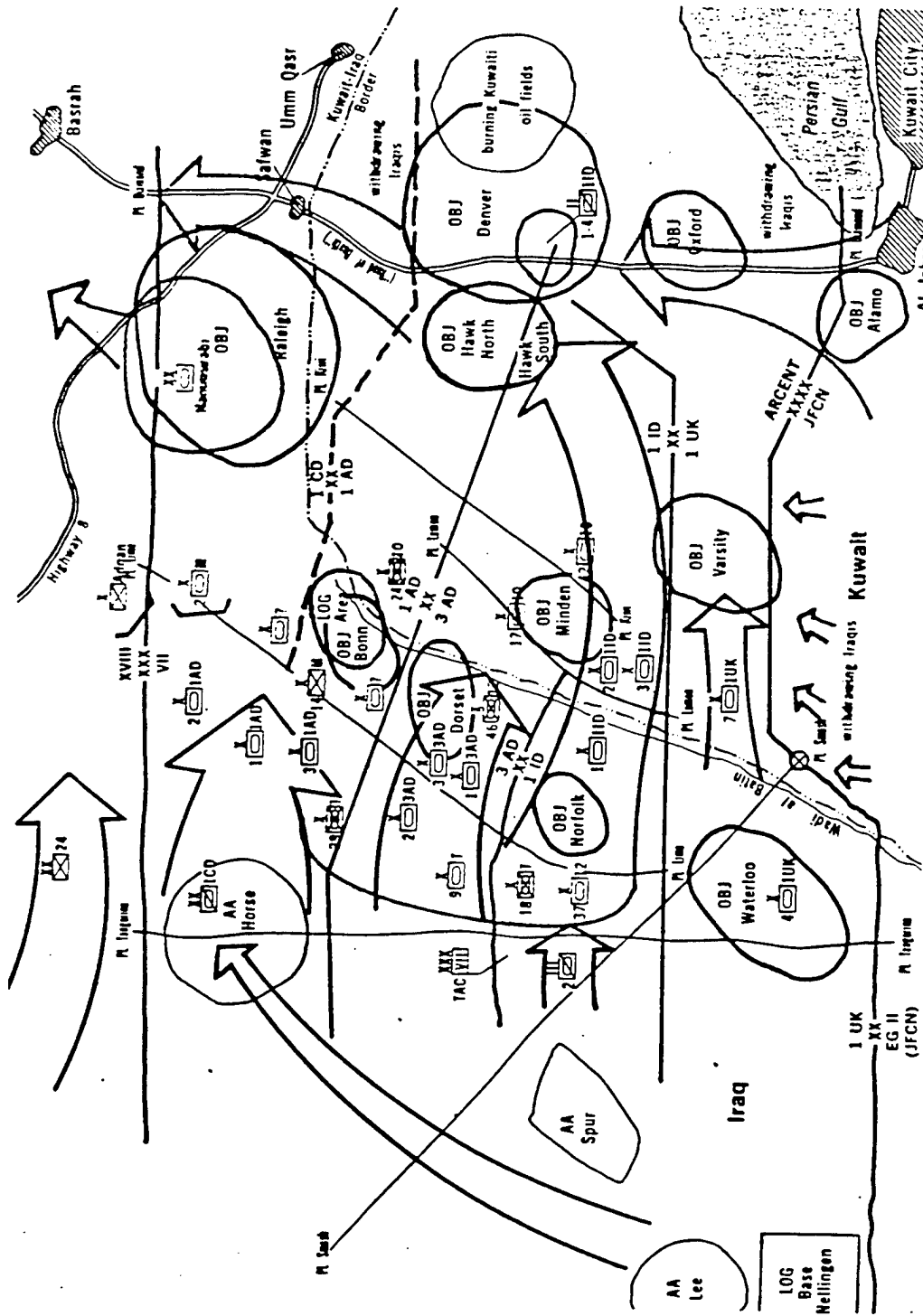


Figure 26. VII Corps 27 February. Source: Kindsvatner, Peter S. "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review*, (February 1992), 25.

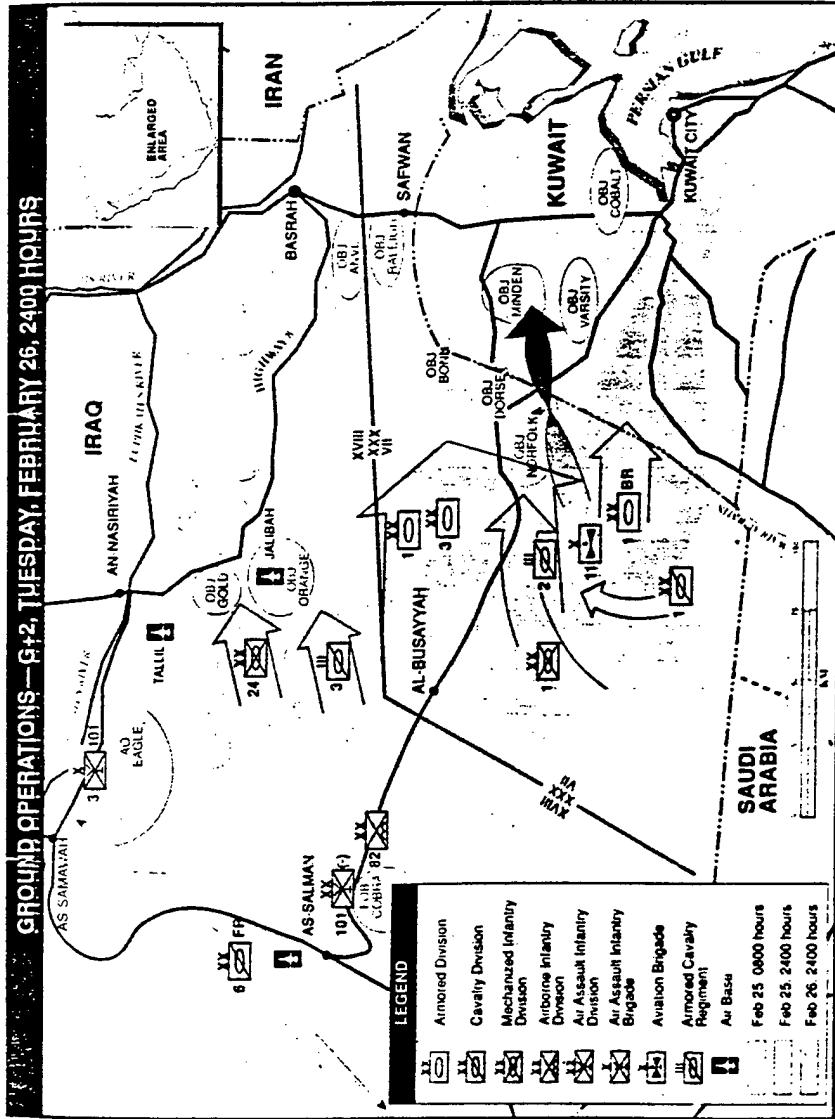


Figure 27. XVIII Airborne Corps Attacks 26 February. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, Fig S-4.

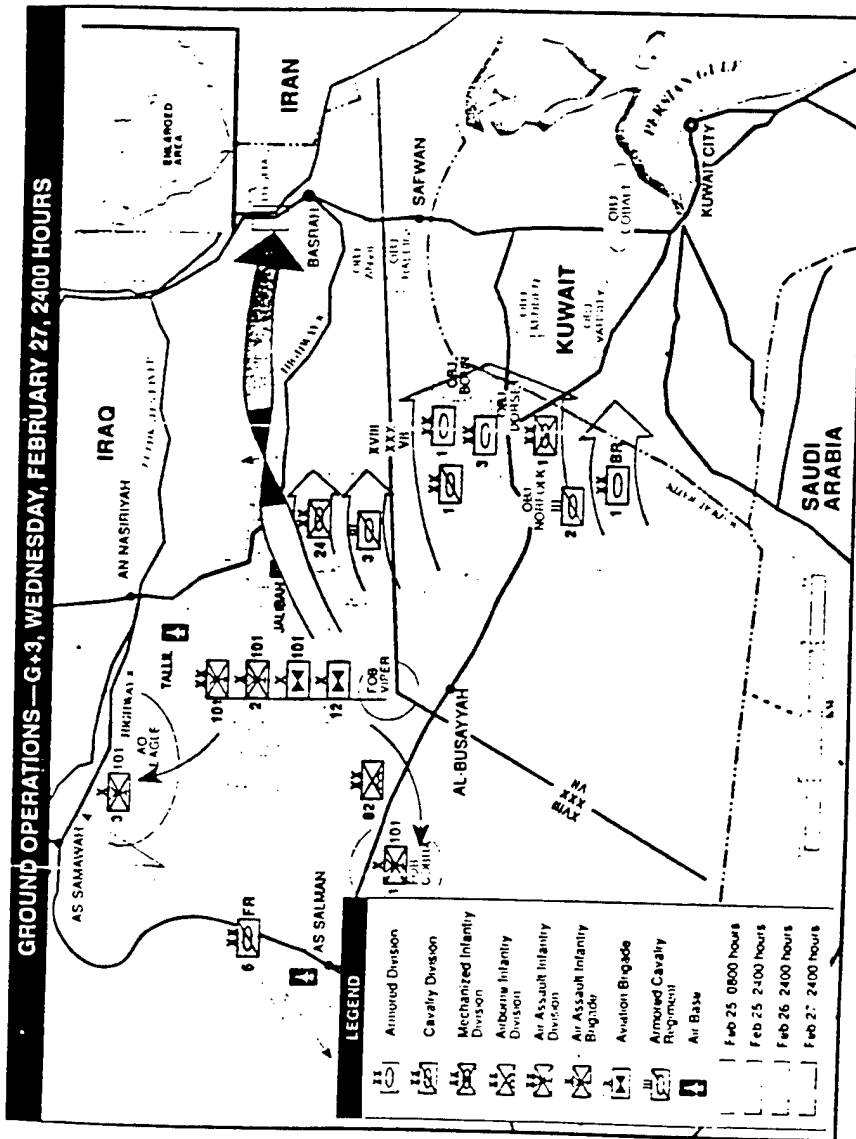


Figure 28. XVIII Airborne Corps Attacks 27 February. Source: Scales, Robert H. Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, Fig S-5.

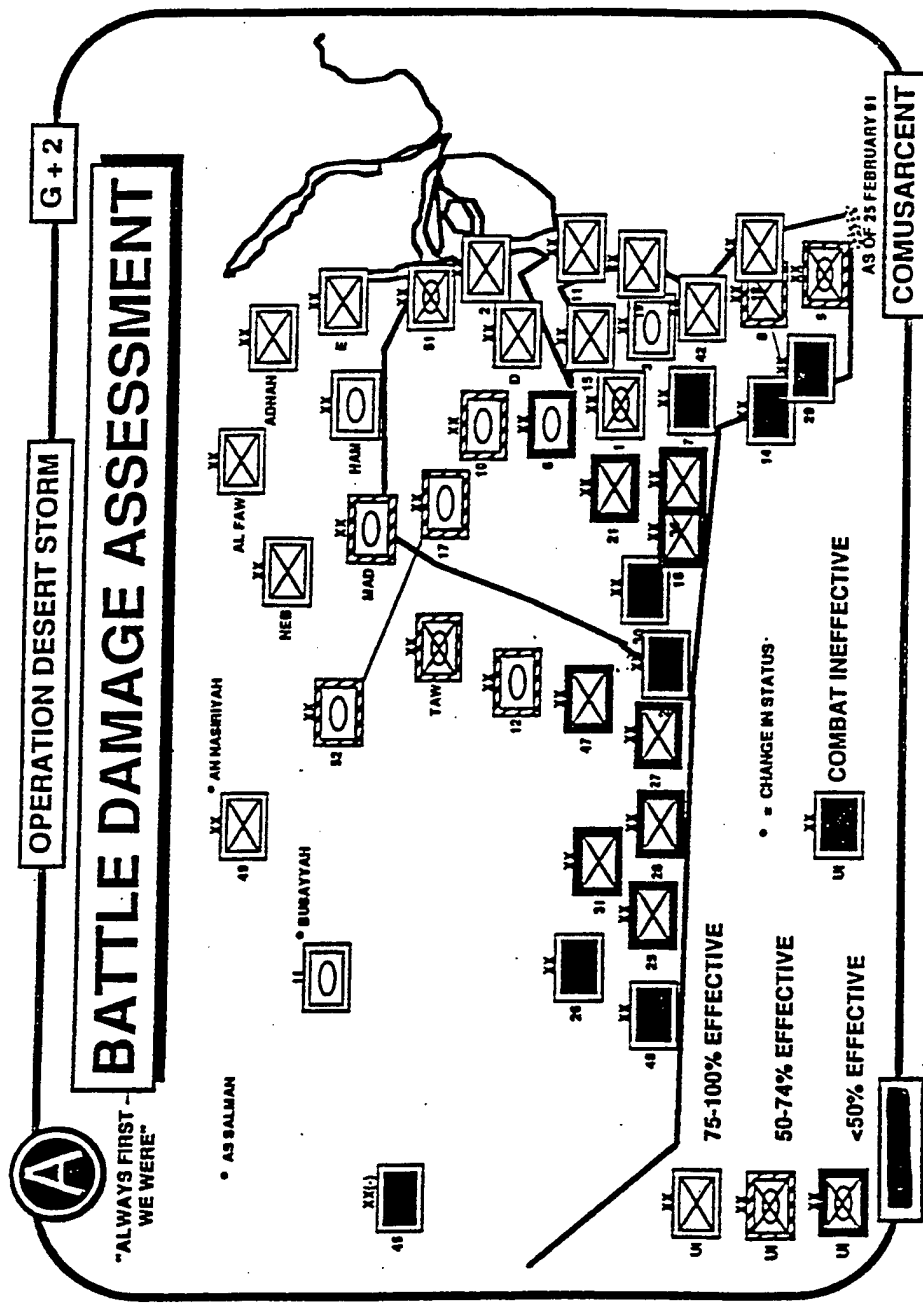


Figure 29. Iraqi Battle Damage Assessment 26 February. Source: U.S. Army, ARCENT, ARCENT Morning Brief, 27 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Gulf War Collection, Group Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL.

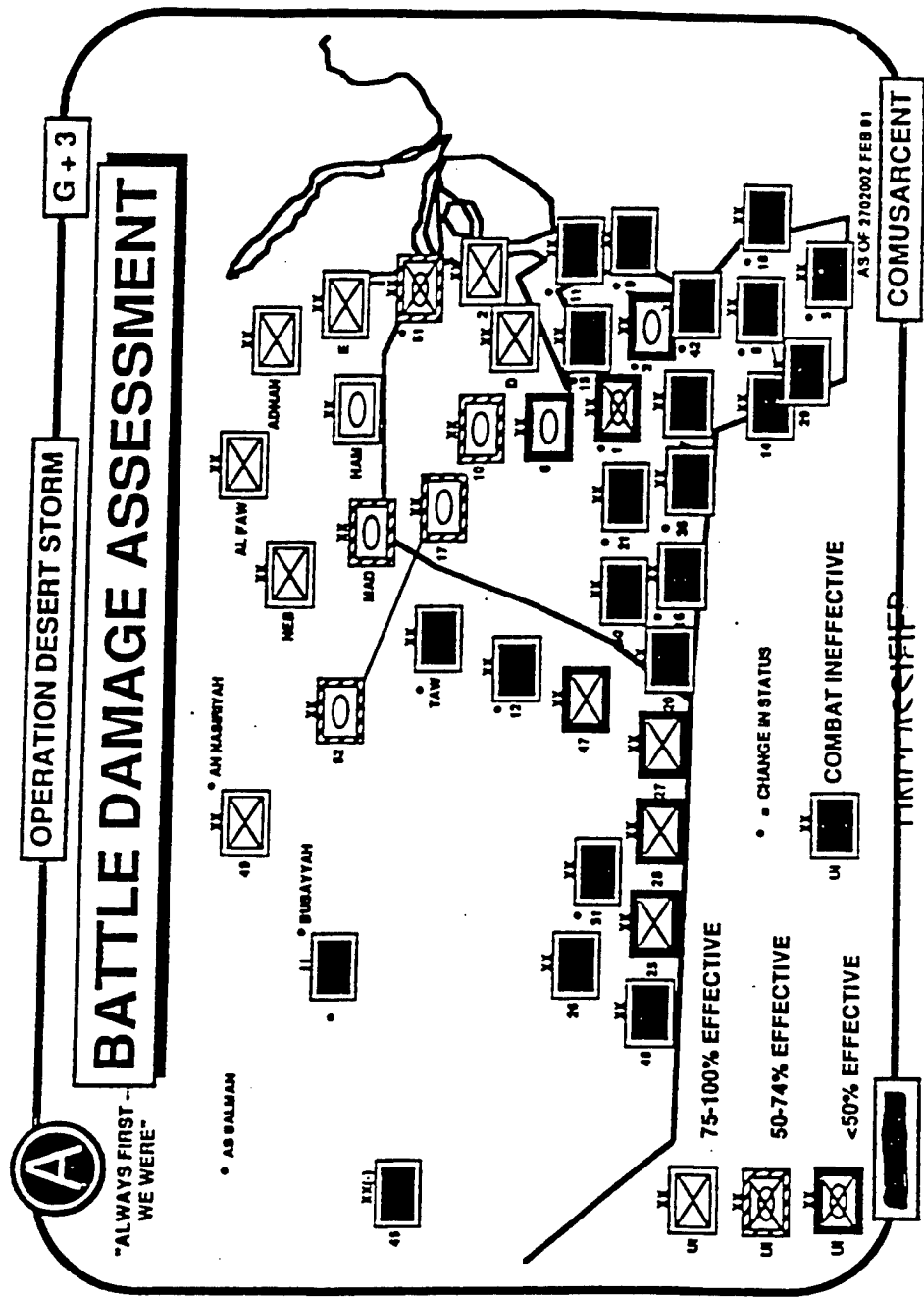


Figure 30. Iraqi Battle Damage Assessment 27 February. Source: U.S. Army, ARCENT, ARCENT Morning Brief, 28 February 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group Gulf War Collectino, Group Scales Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL.

TABLES

TABLE 1
VII CORPS DIVISION PERSONNEL STRENGTHS¹

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>MANNING STRENGTH</u>
1 st Mechanized Division	16,607
1 st Armored Division	17,269
3 rd Armored Division	17,289
1 st Cavalry Division	13,097
1 st Armored Division (United Kingdom)	22,000
2 nd Armored Cavalry Regiment	5,153
Corps Troops	47,745
Total	139,160

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

TABLE 2
VII CORPS AVAILABLE COMBAT POWER 8 FEBRUARY 1991²

UNIT	TANKS	BFVs	AH-1	AH-64	HOWITZERS	MLRS
1st ID	348	286	8	36	72	9
1st AD	357	256	8	36	72	9
3rd AD	348	310	8	18	72	9
1st CD	232	205	8	36	48	
1st AD (UK)	176	257	18		71	12
2nd ACR	123	128	26		24	
11th AVN BDE						
Corps Artillery				36	162	90
Corps Total	1,584	1,442	76	162	521	129

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps Concept of Operations Briefing Slides for Secretary of Defense on 9 February 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-075, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5.

TABLE 3

IRAQI REPUBLICAN GUARD AVAILABLE COMBAT POWER³

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>MEDINAH</u>	<u>HAMMURABI</u>	<u>TAWAKALNA</u>	<u>SF DIV</u>
	312	312	222	0
BMPs	177	177	249	0
Artillery	90	90	90	72
Personnel	14,375	14,375	14,825	11,290

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps G-2 100 Hour War Analysis, Gulf War Collection, VII Corps Papers, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CARL, 20 April 1992, 80.

TABLE 4

VII CORPS DIVISIONAL CORRELATION OF FORCE RATIOS⁴

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FORCE RATIOS</u>	<u>ARTILLERY</u>	<u>ATTRITION</u> to 90%	<u>ATTRITION</u> to 80%
1 st Armored Division	44.3	10	48.87	43.44
3 rd Armored Division	44.4	10	48.96	43.52
1 st Infantry Division	34.1	6	36.09	32.08
1 st Armored Division (UK)	24.8	0	22.32	19.84
1st Cavalry Division	22.8	6	25.92	23.04
2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment	17.0	4	18.9	16.8
	Sub Total = 223.4		Total= 201.6	Total =178.72

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 1991, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-078, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 7.

TABLE 5
IRAQI DIVISIONAL CORRELATION OF FORCE RATIOS⁵

Unit	Force Ratio	Planned Attrition	Remaining Cbt Power
26th Infantry Division	18.6	50%	9.3
48th Infantry Division	18.6	50%	9.3
31st Infantry Division	18.6	50%	9.3
24th Infantry Division	18.6	50%	9.3
27th Infantry Division	18.6	50%	9.3
52nd Armored Division	33	50%	16.5
12th Armored Division	33	75%	24.75
10th Armored Division	33	75%	24.75
17th Armored Division	33	75%	24.75
Tawakalna Mechanized Division	31	75%	23.25
Medinah Armored Division	35	75%	26.25
Hammurabi Armored Division	35	75%	26.25
RGFC Infantry Division times three	41.85 (18.6 each)	75%	30.9
Total	367		243.8

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Desstruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 199, Gulf War Collection, Group VII Corps, SG Historian, SSG AAR3-078, Execucutive Summary and Historical Narrative, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5-7.

TABLE 6

VII CORPS PLANNED ATTRITION FIGURES⁶

DESERT SABER FRAG PLAN 7

1st Infantry Division	75%	90%
1st Armored Division	80%	90%
3rd Armored Division	85%	90%
1st Cavalry Division	85%	90%
1st Armored Division (UK)	75%	90%
2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment	75%	90%

Source: U.S. Army, VII Corps Contingency Plan (Destruction of the Republican Guard) 27 January 1991, and U.S. Army, VII Corps, Frag Plan 7, 1900 24 February 1991, (Transcript in possession of author and in personal files of Major General Donald Holder), 2.

TABLE 7

IRAQ'S COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS ON THE EVE OF THE GROUND WAR⁷

Unit	ARCENT	CIA/DIA
7th Corps	42%	50%
52nd Armored Division	50%	50-75%
Jihad Corps		
10th Armored Division	58%	50-75%
12th Armored Division	58%	Same
17th Armored Division	58%	Same
Republican Guard Corps (Overall)		
Tawakalna Mechanized Division	57%	Same
Medinah Armored Division	57%	Same
Hammuraibi Armored Division	72%	Same
Mechanized Infantry Division	60%	Same

Source: Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner. The Lessons of Modern War Vol 4: The Gulf War. London: Marshall Pub., 1991, 567-568.

TABLE 8

STATUS OF IRAQI HEAVY DIVISIONS*

Totals	Armored Hammurabi Madinah		3rd	6th	10th/12th	17th	52nd	Tawakalna		5th	51st	
	RG	RG						1st	RG			
Tanks												
Prewar holdings	2,885	284	283	270	218	444	224	185	209	203	160	175
Remaining in prewar deployment areas on 1 March 1991	1,135	39	64	82	130	312	134	144	83	99	51	17
Moved to fight or flee during ground war	1,530	255	219	188	88	132	80	41	146	104	109	158
APCs												
Prewar holdings	2,824	236	240	205	157	394	160	195	260	248	245	288
Remaining in prewar deployment areas on 1 March 1991	827	63	39	102	41	184	58	122	101	78	50	9
Moved to fight or flee during ground war	1,797	173	201	103	116	230	102	73	159	168	195	277
SP Artillery												
Prewar holdings	305	25	65	18	18	72	36	0	36	35	0	0
Remaining in prewar deployment areas on 1 March 1991	175	11	17	18	15	67	0	0	23	24	0	0
Moved to fight or flee during ground war	130	14	48	0	3	5	36	0	13	11	0	0
Towed Artillery												
Prewar holdings	584	36	33	52	17	6	6	86	115	168	65	0
Remaining in prewar deployment areas on 1 March 1991	218	4	5	6	12	6	4	33	39	84	25	0
Moved to fight or flee during ground war	366	32	28	46	5	0	2	53	76	84	40	0

Source: Thomas A. Keaney and Elliot Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 296.

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