The Phantom Corps' Counterattack: A Study of Doctrine, Language, & Operational Art

A Monograph

by

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14. ABSTRACT

Doctrine influences how the US Army fights, by guiding actions of individuals and units during the uncertainty of combat, and various other martial affairs in preparedness for the nature of war. The US Army fought World War II applying the doctrine of two key publications *Field Service Regulations, FM 100-5, Operations* (1941 & 1944)*, and 100-15 Larger Units* (1942). The conceptual framework created by these doctrines entailed strategy and tactics. Later in the Cold War, the US Army's AirLand Battle doctrine's conceptual framework partitioned war into three levels: the strategic, operational, and tactical. Operational art emerges into the US Army lexicon as a tool for creating a shared understanding in applying the new conceptual framework of the operational level of war. Commanders and their staffs apply operational art to bridge the strategic purpose with tactical actions. Today, *FM 3-0, Operations* demonstrates that doctrine continues to evolve to reduce uncertainty and is increasingly relying on the operational art lessons from the past, specifically in large-scale combat. Applying today's conceptual framework to the US Army's largest battle's counterattacking corps provides a new analysis on doctrine, language, operational art, and the relief of Bastogne, Belgium.

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Abstract

The Phantom Corps' Counterattack: A Study of Doctrine, Language, & Operational Art, by Major Brandon M. Ward, US Marine Corps, 73 pages.

Doctrine influences how the US Army fights, by guiding actions of individuals and units during the uncertainty of combat, and various other martial affairs in preparedness for the nature of war. The US Army fought World War II applying the doctrine of two key publications *Field Service Regulations, Field Manual 100-5, Operations* (1941 & 1944)*, and 100-15 Larger Units* (1942). The conceptual framework created by these doctrines entailed strategy and tactics.
Later in the Cold War, the US Army's AirLand Battle doctrine's conceptual framework partitioned war into three levels: the strategic, operational, and tactical. Operational art emerges into the US Army lexicon as a tool for creating a shared understanding in applying the new conceptual framework of the operational level of war. Commanders and their staffs apply operational art to bridge the strategic purpose with tactical actions. Today, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* demonstrates that doctrine continues to evolve to reduce uncertainty and is increasingly relying on the operational art lessons from the past, specifically in large-scale combat. Applying today's conceptual framework to the US Army's largest battle's counterattacking corps provides a new analysis on doctrine, language, operational art, and the relief of Bastogne, Belgium.

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Acronyms

2LT	Second Lieutenant
AAA	Anti-Aircraft Artillery
ABD	Airborne Division
AD	Armored Division
ADRP	US Army Doctrinal Reference Publication
CCA, B, R	Combat Command A, B, or Reserve
CPT	Captain
ETO	European Theater of Operations
FM	Field Manual
FSR	Field Service Regulations
GEN	General
ID	Infantry Division
LTG	Lieutenant General
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MG	Major General
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OOTW	Operations Other Than War
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TRADOC	US Army Training and Doctrine Command
US	United States

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Introduction

> To think clearly about the future, we need to clean up the language that we use in labeling the beliefs we had in the past.
>
> —Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*

The conceptual framework of the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomies that frame these doctrinal additions continues to evolve within the United States (US) Army. The 1982 *Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations* first recognized the operational level of war, followed by the 1986 *FM 100-5, Operations* publication's recognition of operational art.[1] Yet military history provides many examples of successful operations and application of operational art prior to the US Army's defining these terms in doctrine. More broadly, the operational level of war is the sinew that connects strategy and tactics. As the middle-level in a conceptual framework, it is wedged in the mercurial space between how to win wars and the destruction of the enemy. It also requires anticipating future operations, and applying operational art to link the current state to a desired future state. Doing so entails utilizing a doctrinal taxonomy that continues to evolve since the publication of the 1986 *FM 100-5, Operations*. As battlefields and operating environments expand, temporal advantages increase in importance while opportunities become more fleeting. The operational level of war and operational art thus have an integral role in generating, anticipating, and sustaining tempo relative to an adversary to achieve temporal advantages, tactical success, and the strategic military purpose of a battle, campaign, or war.

The latest publication of *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), places a new doctrinal emphasis for the US Army on large-scale combat operations.[2] This focus wants to ensure the US military is a

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[1] US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 2-3. US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 10.

[2] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), Foreword.

formidable deterrent against peer competitors, and build readiness for existential threats in an age of uncertainty. Except for the short Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, the US Army has not fought a peer adversary in conventional war since World War II. Therefore, it is essential to understand lessons from past conflicts to facilitate readiness for today's US Army for large-scale combat. The operational level of war and the application of operational art play essential roles in building the US Army's readiness for future conflict through the anticipation of requirements, and facilitating arranging success through the application of operational art. History provides the US Army examples of commanders who anticipated opportunities, then applied astute planning, and maneuver to achieve objectives of a battle, campaign, or war. The Battle of the Bulge was the US Army's largest battle during World War II, and the largest battle fought in its history. As the US Army continues to concentrate on large-scale combat operations in response to today's global security environment, the initial counterattacking corps during the Battle of the Bulge offers lessons in the operational level of war, and the successful use of operational art, against existential threats during a time of uncertainty.

Historical Context

The Battle of the Bulge has numerous storylines from the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) to the dogface soldiers serving in the desperately cold fighting positions. Beginning on 16 December 1944, the scale of Germany's counter-offensive and the size of the salient created in the Allied Front concerned the SHAEF, Supreme Allied Commander, General (GEN) Dwight D. Eisenhower. On 19 December 1944, GEN Eisenhower held a meeting in Verdun, France to discuss the Allied response options to Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's German forces.[3] Lieutenant General (LTG) George S. Patton, Jr., having anticipated a breakthrough in the Ardennes, haughtily conveyed the Third US Army's ability to counter attack

[3] Charles B. MacDonald. *A Time for Trumpets* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1985), 419-420.

with a corps by 22 December 1944 – to the surprise of GEN Eisenhower and others at this meeting.[4] Subsequently, LTG Patton tasked Major General (MG) John Millikin's III Corps on 20 December 1944, to attack north to St. Vith, maintaining contact with XII Corps on the east and VIII Corps on the west.[5] This mission positioned III Corps as the Allied Forces' primary counter attacking force against the German counter-offensive. Success required preventing the fracturing of the Allied Forces, reducing the salient created by Field Marshal Rundstedt's forces to restore the Allies' broad-front advance into Germany.

LTG Patton and the Third US Army clearly operated at the operational level of war by anticipating the breakthrough in the Ardennes Forest, and arranging operations to support a shift of the axis of advance north. However, the focus of most histories on LTG Patton and the US 4th Armored Division (AD) overshadows the contributions of the corps-level command commanding the counterattack. III Corps had to anticipate opportunities and apply operational art to support current and follow-on objectives after the relief of Bastogne, Belgium, and the 101st Airborne Division (ABD). III Corps solution to this complex problem is the focus of the monograph, by addressing how MG Millikin and his III Corps staff applied operational art as the Allied Force's counterattack corps during the Battle of the Bulge.

Ironically, when Rundstedt launched their counter-offensive, III Corps was not a combat-hardened headquarters. In fact, III Corps' headquarters had begun executing their first operational mission on 8 December 1944; their task was to control Metz, France.[6] LTG Patton had doubts about III Corps' Commanding General, MG John Millikin.[7] MG Millikin most importantly lacked

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[4] Paul G. Munch, "Patton's Staff and the Battle of the Bulge," *Military Review*, vol. LXX, no. 5 (May 1990): 50-52, accessed February 5, 2019, http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p124201coll1/id/536/rec/9.

[5] US Department of the Army, Third Army Headquarters After Action Report, Part 3: November 1944 – December 21, 1944. Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

[6] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS. This after action report is located in the historical archives section; internal file number N12029.

[7] George S. Patton, Jr., *War as I Knew It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995), 155.

division command in combat, and had an unpopular general officer connection that preceded his reputation. In 1917, MG Millikin married Mildred March the daughter of the ninth US Army Chief of Staff, GEN Peyton C. March.[8] When MG Millikin was a major after World War I, he was an aide to his father-in-law.[9] When GEN March retired from being the US Army Chief of Staff, his successor was General of the Armies John J. Pershing. There was tension and animosity between these two personalities and their supporters, Harold Winton writes, "With General John J. Pershing's appointment as chief of staff in 1921, Millikin became a "March man" in a Pershing army."[10] Despite not having division command in combat, and being labeled as a "March man" MG Millikin had a similar résumé as other corps commanders in World War II: he graduated from the United States Military Academy (1910), served in World War I, graduated from the Cavalry Officers' Advance Course (1924), graduated and taught at the Command and General Staff School (1926-1930), graduated from the US Army War College (1931), and commanded the 6th Cavalry Regiment (1939-1940), 1st Cavalry Brigade (1940-1941), 2d Cavalry Division (1941-1942), 83d Infantry Division (ID / 1942), and the 33d ID (1943) prior to assuming command of III Corps in August 1943.[11] Therefore, MG Millikin may have not been as popular and clear of a choice for corps command, his experience reflects the grooming of a World War II era corps commander. Ultimately, LTG Patton overlooked MG Millikin's apparent inexperience, assigning his corps the critical mission for responding to the German counter-offensive.

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[8] Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge: Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 44. Date of wedding cited from Millikin family papers.

[9] Edward M. Coffman, *The Hilt of the Sword: The Career of Peyton C. March* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 212.

[10] Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 45.

[11] Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders - A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 3-13, accessed March 13, 2019, http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16040coll3/id/132; Trevor N. Dupuy, David L Bongard, and Richard C. Anderson, Jr. *Hitler's Last Gamble: The Battle of the Bulge, December 1944 – January 1945* (New York: Harpers Collins Publishers, 1994), 213; Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 44-48.

During World War II, the corps-level headquarters modular design enabled efficiency in task organization changes, whereas the divisions were the principal fighting units.[12] Divisions thus developed strong unit identities, which has manifested into a richer collection of historical accounts of their actions. Larger units from the corps-level and above typically have histories told from the perspective of the commander. Understanding the story of a corps commander and staff in a fluid operating environment during a large-scale combat operation provides new analysis for using the conceptual framework of the operational level of war and the application of operational art in contemporary environments. As the US military prepares for peer competitors and with a focus on large-scale combat operations, analyzing the lesser-known actions such as III Corps headquarters during the Battle of the Bulge is a needed reevaluation of history.

Purpose and Framework of the Monograph

> Army commanders and staffs employ operational art to determine what tactics best achieve a strategic purpose.
>
> —US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017)

The purpose of this monograph is to demonstrate how III Corps' Commanding General, MG Millikin and his staff applied operational art as the counterattack force relieving Bastogne, Belgium and the 101st ABD during the Battle of the Bulge. III Corps' application of operational art in large-scale combat provides a rich example for today's warfighters preparing for tomorrow's conflicts. The conceptual framework of the operational level of war did not exist during World War II, nor did the lexicon of operational art and the supporting taxonomy. Since this is the language of today's US Army, the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy provide a methodological approach to understand III Corps' operation as the primary counterattack force during the Battle of the Bulge.

[12] US Department of the Army, *Field Service Regulations (FSR), (FM) 100-15, Larger Units* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 56-57.

The framework for this monograph starts with an understanding of the significant literature about US Army doctrine. It begins by highlighting the significant doctrinal publications used during III Corps' operations in the Battle of the Bulge, through today's *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017). It will not focus on the *FM 100-5, Operations* doctrinal publications from 1949 through 1968, as their significance is adequately addressed by discussing *FM 100-5, Operations* (1976). Next, the historiography examines the broader emergence of the operational level of war. Finally, this section will identify and assess key works on the Battle of the Bulge.

III Corps' counterattack is the case study for understanding MG Millikin and his staff's application of operational art, which follows the historical section. To provide context for the operational environment prior to the German Army's counter-offensive, it will begin with a brief overview of key factors affecting the European Theater of Operation (ETO) and influencing factors on III Corps' operational approach. The period 16 – 26 December 1944, will be the focus for understanding MG Millikin and his staff's application of operational art.

Historiography

> For in "mapping" the past, the historian too is laying down a grid, stifling particularity, privileging legibility, all with a view to making the past accessible for the present and the future. As is also the case with states, the effect is both constraining and liberating: we oppress the past even as we free it.
>
> —John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*

US Army Doctrine: An Evolutionary Process

From the time of GEN George Washington, Baron von Steuben, and the Continental Army's *Regulations*, doctrine has influenced how the US Army fights.[13] Doctrine is a means to prepare an organization against the nature of war, and provides a common perspective for the organization for a theory of victory by preparing the organization for effectiveness in future combat. During World War II, two doctrinal manuals governed the actions of soldiers fighting against the Axis Powers. *Field Service Regulations (FSR), FM 100-5, Operations* (1941 & 1944), and *FSR, FM 100-15 Larger Units* (1942), provided the systemic framework for how to fight divisions and smaller units fought, and large units organized for operations during World War II. Anchored in lessons from World War I, they attempted to prepare the US Army for anticipated operating requirements of World War II.

The 1941 *FM 100-5, Operations* shaped US Army training and execution for most of World War II. Walter E. Kretchik writes in *U.S. Army Doctrine*, "The Normandy invasion of 6 June 1944 and the subsequent breakout and pursuit across France beginning in July characterized the 1941 doctrine's conceptualization of combined arms warfare."[14] The impact of its replacement, published in June 1944, for subsequent operations during the war is difficult to qualify. However, the new content in *FM 100-5, Operations* (1944) reflected the lessons learned from the sweat and blood of the soldiers in preceding campaigns. Examples from the latter *FM*

[13] Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 115-116.

[14] Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 152-153.

100-5, Operations (1944) that demonstrated doctrinal progression from former included the use of the air forces, the role of military intelligence and reconnaissance, sealift, amphibious operations, and the use of airborne troops.[15] This re-write of doctrine during World War II reveals the importance the US Army placed on doctrine for fighting effectiveness and creating readiness.

The *FM 100-15, Larger Units* (1942) guided the organization and employment of army groups, armies, and corps. It is particularly crucial for understanding how corps-level headquarters and larger units in the US Army operated in World War II. This doctrinal publication highlights the requirement of a larger unit to anticipate, "In planning the advance of the corps, a careful study should be made of the critical areas where contact with the enemy is likely to occur. These areas should be determined for each day's advance….The advance must be so planned that the corps will be in the desired formation when each of these critical areas is reached."[16] Another example: "The corps plans must be projected well into the future; they must envisage action days in advance."[17] *FM 100-15, Larger Units* discusses the importance of intelligence and reconnaissance to the employment of large units, especially with armored formations.[18] Early signs of the application of mission command are in *FM 100-15, Larger Unit*s: "Most effective and decisive application of the mobility and power of large armored and motorized combinations will often necessitate decentralization of control to the appropriate commanders who will be guided only by the broad general plan of the higher headquarters."[19] This doctrinal manual is important to understand how MG Millikin and the III Corps staff viewed their role as the corps headquarters, including how to plan and lead a corps-size counterattack.

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[15] US Department of the Army*, FSR, FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), III-V. US Department of the Army, *FSR, FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944), V-IX.

[16] US Department of the Army*, FSR, FM 100-15, Larger Units* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 58-59.

[17] US Department of the Army*, FSR, FM 100-15, Larger* Units, 62.

[18] Ibid., 94.

[19] Ibid., 94.

FM 100-15, Larger Units described how World War II corps-level headquarters understood their role. It is also important to understand the broader conceptual framework of the US Army during World War II. No single doctrinal source clearly defines such a framework of warfare. However, one can aggregate key ideas from *FM 100-5, Operations* (1941), *FM 100-10, Administration* (1943), and *FM 100-15, Larger Units* (1942) to demonstrate how officers in various units coordinated actions, and understood their roles within the US Army during World War II. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the US Army during World War II, and offers insight into how MG Millikin and his III Corps staff understood as their role in preparing for and conducting the counterattack during the Battle of the Bulge.

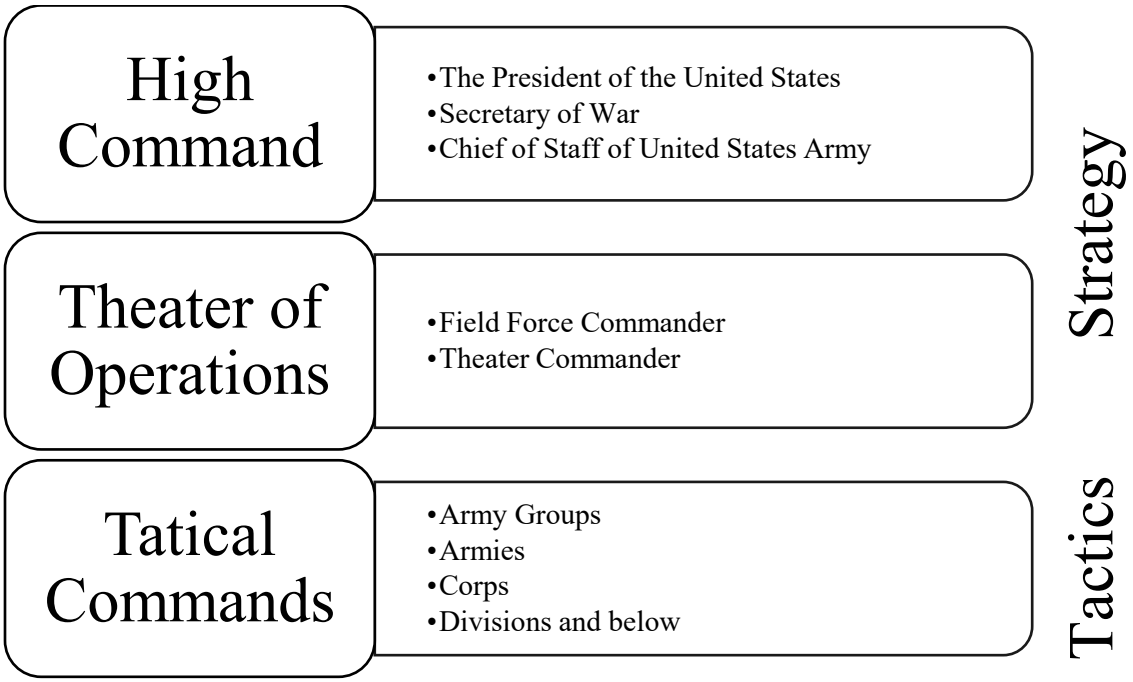

Figure 1. World War II US Army Conceptual Framework. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FSR, FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), 1-4. US Department of the Army, *FSR, FM 100-15, Larger Units* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 1-7. US Department of the Army, *FSR, FM 100-10, Administration* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), III-IV, 1-14. *FSR*, *FM 100-15, Larger Units* provided the framework for the High Command; *FSR*, *FM 100-10, Administration* provided the framework for the Theater of Operations; *FSR*, *FM 100-5, Operations,* and *100-15 Larger Units* provided the framework for the units labeled Tactical Commands.

As noted previously, current US Army doctrinal definitions of the operational level of war and operational art did not exist in World War II. These stem from, and been evolving since,

the 1982 publication of *FM 100-5, Operations* (see Appendix A). The evolution of the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy is good, but the constantly fluctuating changes to language cloud the clarity of purpose for applying mission command. To understand the emergence and shifts of this lexicon in US Army doctrine first requires an appreciation for the 1976 publication of *FM 100-5, Operations*. Tracing the etymological study of these operational terms from that point reveals that doctrine and language have a symbiotic relationship, and as meanings change history offers new lessons to learn.

Various factors pushed the US Army to reconsider its doctrine in the 1970s. One stemmed from its failures in the Vietnam War. Another reflected ongoing Cold War concerns. Vietnam had turned the United States' focus away from Europe and the Soviet Union for over a decade. The result was Soviets made significant advancements in nuclear capability, conventional warfare technology that improved their readiness against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States.[20] As the Vietnam War ended, the US Army's Chief of Staff, GEN Creighton W. Abrams established the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and the first commander was GEN William E. DePuy.[21] The 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the speed and lethality of this war made a significant impression on the US Army's leadership, specifically GEN DePuy, soon reinforced the need for an organization to consider doctrinal issues.[22]

The establishment of TRADOC was a catalyst for energizing the US Army to re-conceptualize warfare to address the expanding threats from the Soviets and Warsaw Pact in a Nuclear Age. However, its first major attempt to do so, *FM 100-5, Operations* (1976), ignited a debate on how the US Army trains, fights, and wins wars. The *Operations* doctrine (1976) focused on winning the first battle, and integrating advancements in technology and weaponry

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[20] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982* (Fort Monroe, VA: US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984), 2-3.

[21] Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, 194.

[22] Bert Chapman, *Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 18.

into the 'active defense' (by which the doctrine soon became known) against the Soviet threat in Europe.[23] The ink on the new manual was hardly dry before challenges arose. Arguments from within the US Army were on the lack of offensive maneuver, the purpose of the reserve, and addressing only the first of the Soviet echelons in their operational maneuver doctrine. In the US Congress, Senators Sam Nunn and Dewey Bartlett cited growing Soviet threats facing the European continent and questioned the NATO alliance's deterrence credibility.[24] Among these concerns were how advancements in Soviet technology enabled a perceived nuclear parity, and how the Soviets' material and manpower capability gave them the operational maneuver to overwhelm NATO's defenses in Europe.[25] Overall, these critiques questioned the US Army's readiness and perceived effectiveness to fight and win the next war.

GEN DePuy's *FM 100-5, Operations* (1976) re-kindled a healthy debate on how the US Army trains, fights, and wins wars, but the active defense doctrine was reactive and made narrow assumptions of future operating environments, and the problem set the Soviet doctrine gave the US Army and the NATO alliance in Western Europe. For the August 1978 issue of *Military Review*, GEN Donn A. Starry wrote an article titled "A Tactical Evolution -- FM 100-5" in which he defended active defense, but challenged the US Army to continue to the rigorous dialogue that keeps the Army's readiness healthy for the next war.[26] He shortly assumed a prominent role in this regard, as he was appointed Commanding General of TRADOC in July 1977.[27] Here his chief challenge was to harness the debate over active defense into a doctrine that addressed the future

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[23] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 6-9.

[24] NATO and the New Soviet Threat, Committee on Armed Services, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, S. Rept. 95-12, 2, accessed February 5, 2019, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015077941923;view=1up;seq=1.

[25] NATO and the New Soviet Threat, Committee on Armed Services, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, S. Rept. 95-12, 2-8.

[26] Donn A. Starry, "Tactical Evolution -- FM 100-5," *Military Review*, vol. LVIII, no. 8 (August 1978): 7-8, accessed February 5, 2019, http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p124201coll1/id/372/rec/2.

[27] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 23.

operating environment broadly, maximize the application of technology, use offensive capability as a strength, overcome the Soviets' capabilities after the first echelon, and have a doctrine flexible enough to overcome other global threats. This challenge required the US Army to create a new conceptual framework of warfare.

GEN Starry led the thinking and collaboration in the development of *FM 100-5, Operations* (1982), also known as AirLand Battle doctrine. First, he began a Division 86 study for the purpose of reorganizing the US Army heavy division structure; the success of this study led to additional studies of corps and larger headquarters, the result generated new doctrinal ideas on how the US Army fights.[28] Additionally, GEN Starry believed that history should inform doctrine development, and created the Combat Studies Institute from the US Army Command and General Staff College's staff.[29] GEN Starry's studies into new ways to fight with larger US Army formations, aided by the Combat Studies Institute's support in providing a historical context to the new *Operations* doctrine, coalesced to provide the internal energy for dramatic doctrinal change. The external energy remained from debates and scholarly articles about the *FM 100-5, Operations* (1976) active defense doctrine. In August 1981, GEN Starry turned over command of TRADOC to GEN Glen K. Otis. [30] Despite, GEN Starry's initiatives as the TRADOC Commanding General the US Army's new *FM 100-5, Operations* doctrine would not be published for another year. According to John L. Romjue, the new commander GEN Otis pushed for the addition of the operational level of war to the AirLand Battle doctrine, a change that introduced a prescient concept with enduring impact.[31] Shortly after publication in August 1982, the AirLand Battle doctrine was recognized for its efforts to coordinate the US Air Force and the

[28] Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, 202-3.

[29] Roger J. Spiller, "War History and the History Wars: Establishing the Combat Studies Institute," *The Public Historian*, vol. 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 69, accessed March 3, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3377834.

[30] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 61.

[31] Ibid., 61.

US Army.[32] But more significantly, the revised doctrine began a discourse within the US Army, and the United States military as a whole, of what is the operational level of war, and what is an appropriate conceptual framework for war that fosters understanding and readiness for future conflict (see Figure 2). [33]

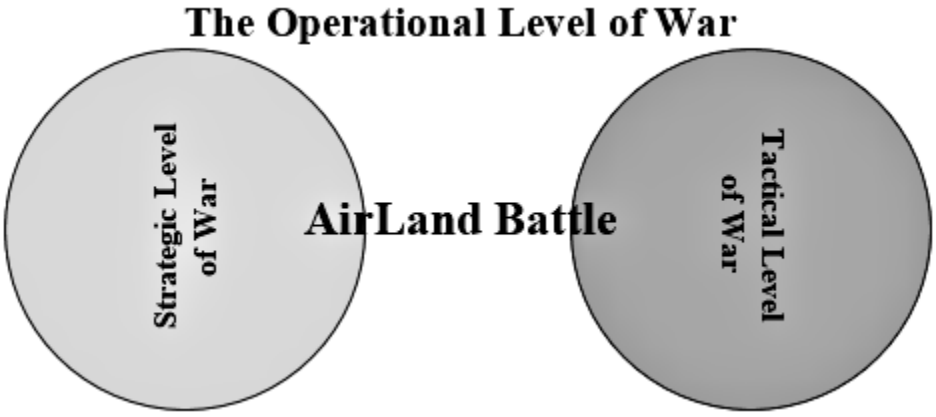

Figure 2. *FM 100-5, Operations* (1982) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 2-3.

AirLand Battle doctrine first appeared in *FM 100-5, Operations* (1982). This document introduces the concept of three levels of war, and links strategy and tactics with a conceptual framework of an operational level of war. Initially, *FM 100-5, Operations* (1982) stated that the recognition of the operational level of war was a "theory of larger unit operations… [that] involves planning and conducting campaigns. Campaigns are sustained operations designed to defeat an enemy force in a specified space and time with simultaneous and sequential battles."[34] In 1986, the US Army replaced the 1982 version of its AirLand Battle doctrine with an updated version of *FM 100-5, Operations*. The 1986 version began building on the concept of an operational level of war, and introduced the US Army's conceptualization of operational art.

[32] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 61.

[33] Figures 2–7 demonstrate how the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy change with doctrine, resulting in a new conceptual framework. Each doctrinal publication, supporting lexicon, and conceptual framework provides new lenses to reevaluate history.

[34] Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, 204-205.

The 1986 manual began to identify elements of operational art in Appendix B, Key Concepts of Operational Design.[35] The US Army's original definition of operational art was, "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in, a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."[36] The original taxonomy of elements in the US Army's operational art lexicon were center of gravity, lines of operation, and culminating points (see Figure 3).[37] According to the 1986 manual, "The concept of centers of gravity is key to all operational design."[38] The evolving conceptual framework for war in the 1986 AirLand Battle doctrine, proved its effectiveness and relevance in the 1991 Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard was perceived as Iraq's center of gravity; therefore, the coalition's Anglo-American VII Corps was tasked organized with "five heavy divisions, an armored cavalry regiment, and aviation brigade, and four artillery brigades" to defeat the Iraqi dictator's best unit.[39] Prior to this decisive operation, an air phase of the campaign crippled Iraqi command and control, the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade conducted a demonstration in the Persian Gulf, and the 1st Cavalry Division conducted a feint in the Wadi al Batin.[40] These operations spread across the Iraqi, Kuwaiti, and Saudi Arabian borders, and were sustained by an operational design, through a prudent understanding of lines of operation and culmination points to achieve the military endstate and political objectives in Operation Desert Storm.

[35] US Department of the Army*, FM 100-5, Operations* (1986), 179.

[36] Ibid., 10.

[37] Ibid., 179-182.

[38] Ibid., 179.

[39] John S. Brown, "The Maturation of Operational Art," in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, edited by Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), 462.

[40] John S. Brown, "The Maturation of Operational Art," 460-461.

Figure 3. *FM 100-5, Operations* (1986) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 179-182.

The 1993 publication of *FM 100-5, Operations* reflects the effect of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, and Operation Desert Storm on the US Army and Joint Force's conceptual framework of war (see Figure 4).[41] The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act was the most significant change in the US military since 1947. Focusing power into the Chairman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff aimed at reducing service rivalry, and increasing inter-service coordination. This change to the reporting structure in the Department of Defense changed how the US Army plans for future conflict, joint force solutions no longer were novel but required. But it was also a reaction to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bi-polar world, which left the United States without an existential adversary. The absence of a global challenger led some scholars to believe the defeat of communism would produce a peace dividend.[42] These events demonstrated that US Army leaders needed to understand how to prepare the force without a pacing Soviet threat to provide a trajectory for doctrinal development. The results generated changes in doctrine that created readiness, as part of a joint force, with the role of the US Army's to sustain capacity for land

[41] US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), vi.

[42] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 262-264.

dominance in warfare. However, *FM 100-5, Operations* (1993) also acknowledged missions that were not conventional conflicts, where soldiers would be tasked to support operations other than war (sometimes designated OOTW). Ultimately, the 1993 manual offered a doctrine that attempted to build readiness without a clear existential threat, conventional warfare readiness waned. The 1993 *Operations* doctrine applied recent history to support operational perspectives in which the joint force had proven itself effective, but for which no foreseeable conventional existential challenge remained.

Figure 4. *FM 100-5, Operations* (1993) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 179-182.

During the 1990s, the United States military conducted operations across the globe that was not war, but OOTW wherein service members fought and died. These included Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans. This reality and categorization created tensions across the US Army and the joint force.[43] A trend that began with *FM 100-5, Operations* (1993) and continued with the 2001 publication of *FM 3-0, Operations* was an attempt to have one doctrinal source for operations across the entire spectrum of war.[44] The logic of full spectrum operations was that

[43] David Fastabend, "The Categorization of Conflict," *Parameters*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 80, accessed February 20, 2019, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/articles/97summer/contents.htm.

[44] Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, 248. The numbering system from 100-5 to 3-0 was to align the US Army's doctrinal numbers with the joint doctrinal manual numbering system.

offense, defense, stability, and supporting operations could occur simultaneously in larger unit areas of operation.[45] Therefore, anticipating and planning for the transitions among them would enable the US Army to win decisively on land as part of unified action.[46] The latter would encompass land campaigns, major operations, battles, and engagements.[47] *FM 3-0, Operations* (2001) doctrine was expanded on the concept of operational design, the center of gravity was no longer the keystone for operational design.[48] This was an evolution of the language that linked operational art to operational plans through operational design; without designed campaigns, major operations, battles, and engagements would not serve the operational purpose (see Figure 5).

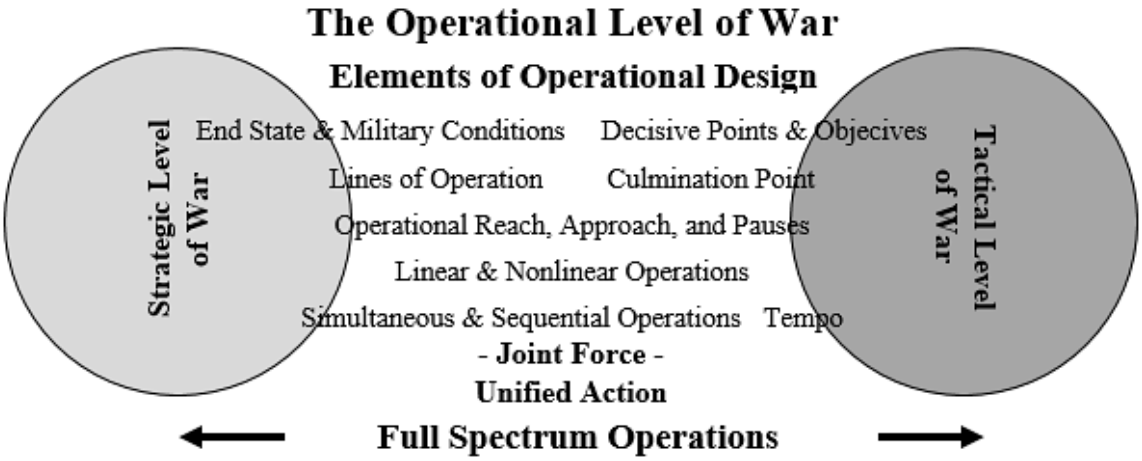

Figure 5. *FM 3-0, Operations* (2001) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 1-14 – 1-17, & 5-16 – 5-12.

The *FM 3-0, Operations* (2001) attempted to prepare the US Army for full spectrum operations. However, shortly after its release the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 happened, changing the assumption for building readiness in the US Army's doctrine. By 2008,

[45] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 1-17.

[46] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2001), Foreword.

[47] Ibid., 1-14.

[48] US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (1986), 179.

the collective study of hard lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom were incorporated into the revised *FM 3-0, Operations* (2008), which updated the conceptual framework for full spectrum operations. The 2008 *Operations* doctrine asserted that offense, defense, and stability or support to civil authority tasks occurred continuously and simultaneously throughout an operation.[49] "In all operations, commanders seek to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative while synchronizing their actions to achieve the best effects possible."[50] The idea of actions synchronized towards a purpose continued the evolution of the lexicon and taxonomy for the operational level of war. *FM 3-0, Operations* (2008) defined steps whereby operational art could create an operational design in support of planning operations across the spectrum of conflict. These steps were: problem framing, formulating the design, and refining the design (see Figure 6).[51] The complexity of full spectrum operations experienced in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations in support of the Global War on Terrorism thus pushed the US Army to publish doctrine to help foster understanding for a commander and staff to bridge strategic purpose with tactical action as part of a joint force.

[49] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 3-1.

[50] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2008), 3-1 – 3-2, & 6-5.

[51] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2008), 6-6 – 6-7.

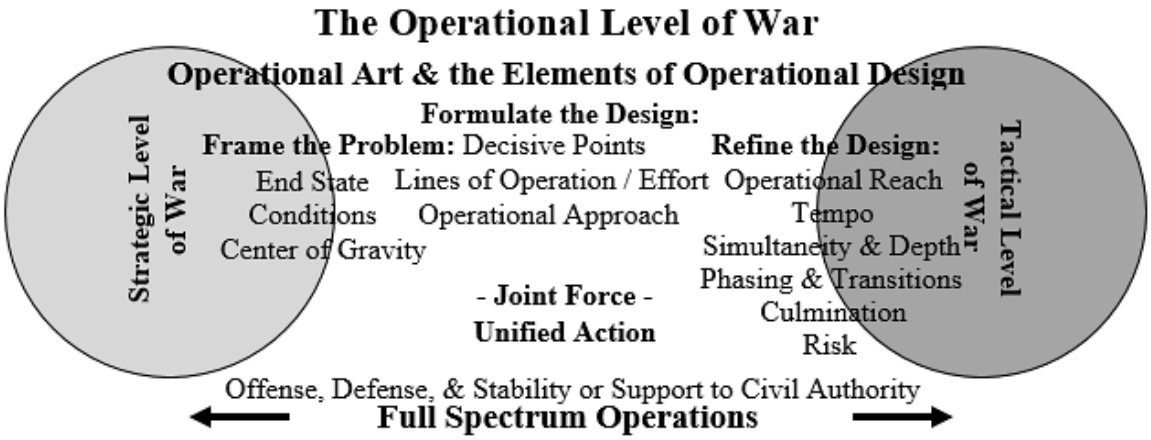

Figure 6. *FM 3-0, Operations* (2008) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 3-7, 6-6 – 6-7.

The 2017 release of *FM 3-0, Operations* brought a renewed focus to large-scale combat operations against peer threats, after two prior versions had focused on readiness across the range of military operations.[52] That focus, stemming from two conflicts defined by stability, counterinsurgency, and counter-terrorism operations, had distracted the US Army from preparing for potential existential peer threats. This transition of the US Army's priorities aligns with the recent United States' *National Security Strategy* (2018).[53] With the rise of great power competition and the US Army's focus on large-scale combat operations, the operational level of war and operational art are central concepts in *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017). This manual describes the operational level of war as "link[ing] the tactical employment of forces to national and military strategic objectives, with the focus being on the design, planning, and execution of operations using operational art."[54] It defines operational art as the "cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military

[52] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 3-1.

[53] US Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy for the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 1.

[54] US Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 1-5.

forces by integrating ends, ways, and means."[55] Today the US Army is building readiness for great power competition, which requires the commander and staff to operate in, with, or through all five domains: air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) Conceptual Framework of War. Created by author, US Department of the Army*, FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-5, 1-19, 1-20.

Today, operational art stresses the shared understanding, between the commander and staff, of a problem to develop an operational approach that links strategic purpose and tactical actions. In large-scale combat against a peer threat, anticipating requirements and the maintaining control of the tempo of a campaign, operation, or battle is vital when temporal advantages are increasingly fleeting, and an adversary has the capability to maneuver in five domains across the levels of war. These doctrinal emphases demonstrate that the US Army is a learning culture, and an organization experimenting with methods to increase readiness and effectiveness for future conflicts and operations. But that has arguably been the case for decades, stemming back to World War II.

The doctrine the US Army employed in that war provides insight to how MG Millikin and his III Corps staff understood their role as a corps-level headquarters, and influenced how III

[55] US Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 1-20. US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), II-3.

Corps understood their problem that drove decision making. The fact that III Corps did not have the language that today's US Army calls operational art does not mean they did not apply it to accomplish their desired future state. The later evolution of *FM 100-5, Operations*, and *FM 3-0, Operations* reflects learning from history, revising a theory of victory to update doctrine to build readiness today and create an effective force for tomorrow. The operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy has oscillated in their meanings since inception in the AirLand Battle doctrine. As doctrine changes, language changes, therefore with a new *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) doctrine that is re-focusing the US Army on large-scale combat operations, it is pertinent to re-examine case studies such as III Corps' counterattack to demonstrate operational art in large scale combat.

Essential Works on the Battle of the Bulge

The Battle of the Bulge reveals the grit of the American and Allied soldiers, and the adroit leadership of commanders at all echelons. As a result, there are numerous tomes written about this subject with wide-ranging perspectives. Many of these tomes focus on powerful personalities and leaders such GEN Eisenhower or LTG Patton, or focus on units at the division-level and below. These lower tactical-level works highlight the intensity of the conflict, the environmental effects on men, machines, and morale, and the leadership from the squad leader to the division commander where courage and resilience were tested by Hitler's counter-offensive. Few historical perspectives account for the corps-level perspective during the Battle of the Bulge. Historians do write on perspectives above the division level to explain why decisions were made at the army-level and above. Too often, these works generalize the actions below the army-level and do not mention III Corps, or MG Millikin when writing on the Battle of the Bulge counterattack – the credit for this attack is holistically given to LTG Patton and the Third US Army. The numerous works on the Battle of the Bulge do provide ample perspectives to assist in piecing together the events and actions leading up to and the execution of III Corps' counterattack from 22-26 December 1944.

One of the only works that focuses exclusively on the corps commanders in the Battle of the Bulge is Harold R. Winton's, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*. This tome analyzes and links actions of the six corps commanders who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Winton's approach is a holistic perspective of the battle from the northern and southern shoulders of the bulge, the relief of Bastogne, and the ensuing closure of the bulge. Writing from a corps commander's perspective Winton steps away from the tactical fight, and writes a narrative that is "meaningfully linked to the strategic and operational designs crafted by the men at the top."[56] Winton analysis of the corps commander's in general applies the lexicon, and taxonomy from the World War II era not from contemporary doctrine, his work attempts to fill a gap in the narrative about the Battle of the Bulge from the corps-level.[57] Winton's analysis of MG Millikin and his III Corps staff is they did well, despite "a green commander and green staff had performed credibly, competently, and with a nice touch of imagination" during a dynamic period in the ETO.[58] Most importantly, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge* provides thoughtful analysis of the decisions corps commanders made during the Battle of the Bulge.

Russell F. Weigley's, book *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* is a comprehensive analysis of the SHAEF's preparations for D-Day through Germany's surrender. An important perspective this tome provides is the dialogue between the high command, theater of operations, and the tactical commands. Key decisions made during these interactions contributed to the German counter-offensive on 16 December 1944, and how each level coordinated a response in the ETO. An example from the latter is the dialogue between GEN Eisenhower, LTG Omar N. Bradley, and LTG Patton in Verdun, France, after the initiation of the German's counter-offensive in the Ardennes. GEN Eisenhower wanted to know when a counterattack could occur and Patton replied that he could counterattack, "On December 22, with three divisions, the 4th Armored, the 26th,

[56] Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 347.

[57] Ibid., 3.

[58] Ibid., 235.

and the 80th."[59] The emphasis Weigley places on primary sources from unit reports, diaries, and interviews provides an insightful perspective of decision making during this dynamic time in ETO. *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* frames the strategic objective of the ETO broad front strategy, and demonstrates the strategic importance GEN Eisenhower placed on thwarting the counter-offensive by committing the SHAEF's reserve into battle.[60]

A classic work on the Battle of the Bulge is *A Time for Trumpets*, written by Charles B. MacDonald a company commander in the battle.[61] The personal connection to the battle makes MacDonald's pages flow with emotion and nervousness from the Allied perspective. The focus of his work is primarily on the north shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge. This is a trend in many works on the battle; the historical focus tends to be on St. Vith, and Bastogne. Despite this focus, MacDonald does provide an analysis on how the Third US Army's counterattack enabled the regaining of Allied initiative, and the subsequent clearing of the bulge.[62] Additionally, MacDonald's work provides a thoughtful analysis of the German Army's actions in the battle, and provides a detailed Order of Battle from all belligerents.[63]

The US Army's Center for Military History published volumes of works highlighting the actions of the US Army in World War II. Several of these volumes provide a detailed historical analysis of events leading up to, and during the Battle of the Bulge. Hugh M. Cole authored two books relating to the Battle of the Bulge: *The Lorraine Campaign* focuses on the Third US

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[59] Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 500, cited from EXFOR Main from Williams to SHAEF Main for GSI/G-2, Ref. No. GI-157, 27 Dec. 1944.

[60] Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 481. LTG Omar N. Bradley, 12th US Army Group, Commanding General received the SHAEF reserve XVIII Airborne Corps, which included the 82d and 101st ABD. GEN Eisenhower's decision to commit the reserve on 17 December 1944 reveals a concern for risk, and the importance to regain tempo in the ETO.

[61] Colonel Charles B. MacDonald (retired) was a captain, company commander for I and G Companies, 23d Infantry, 2d ID during the Battle of the Bulge.

[62] Charles B. MacDonald. *A Time for Trumpets*, 582-584, 594-600.

[63] Ibid., 630-655.

Army's operations prior to 16 December 1944, and *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge* is a detailed account of the battle from 16 December 1944 through early January 1945. However, Cole's works focus on decisions made at the SHAEF, Army Group, and Army levels then transitions the historical analysis to the division-level and below. Corps headquarters are discussed, but are not an emphasized level of command. Another US Army Center for Military History tome that provides an interesting discourse from the larger unit headquarters, to the SHAEF and national leaders is Forrest C. Pogue's, *European Theater of Operations: The Supreme Command*. Pogue's work provides a narrative for GEN Eisenhower's decisions concerning command relationships, objectives, and opportunities in the ETO during the Battle of the Bulge.[64] Unfortunately, these US Army Center for Military History works, like many other World War II works pre-date the declassification of Ultra in 1974.[65] Therefore, works preceding this declassification date were intentionally leaving out evidence to support their analysis of history, or their analysis of history had incomplete evidence. Despite these two authors' works pre-dating Ultra's importance to the ETO their works have relevance for understanding the interplay between strategic and tactical commands, and the pressures driving decisions during the Battle of the Bulge.

There are numerous works on the Battle of the Bulge, each offering a narrative that links to the decisions of GEN Eisenhower to the young soldier fighting along a fluid front. A common trend in these works is an understanding of corps-level headquarters and their impact on the

[64] Forrest C. Pogue, *The European Theater of Operations: The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), 376-378. GEN Eisenhower originally believed the 12th US Army Group could command the Allied response against the German counter-offensive. However, the results from the German Army's advance, left the First US Army increasingly isolated from the command and control of the 12th US Army Group. As a result, they were attached to the 21st Army Group. As GEN Eisenhower observed the effects the counter-offensive had across the Allied broad-front strategy, he established a limit of withdrawal on the Meuse River. He then began arranging options for a new SHAEF reserve from forces in England. Most importantly, GEN Eisenhower believed the counter-offensive exposed German weakness, and provided the Allies an opportunity to exploit it.

[65] Army Group commanders and above were some of the limited few decision makers with access to Ultra. Ultra did not provide details about Germany's build-up in the Ardennes in the fall of 1944.

Battle of the Bulge. In the case of III Corps Headquarters, the Third US Army overshadows their contributions in leadership, staff work, and experience. However, a closer examination of MG Millikin and his III Corps staff demonstrates how they applied operational art as the counterattack force relieving Bastogne, Belgium and the 101st ABD during the Battle of the Bulge.

III Corps' Counterattack & Operational Art

> The victory in the Ardennes belonged to the American soldier, for he provided time to enable his commanders—for all their intelligence failure—to bring their mobility and their airpower into play. At that point the American soldier stopped everything the German Army threw at him.
>
> —Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*

After the Allied Forces broke out from the bocage in Normandy, the German Army steadily fell back across the Siegfried Line along the Western Front. Along the Eastern Front, the Soviet Red Army and Germans continued compiling ghastly casualties, along with Red Army victories in their march towards Central Europe. Manic after a murder attempt on his life, Hitler tightened his far-reaching control over Germany. Desperate to blunt and fracture the advance of the western Allies towards Germany, Hitler made the decision to conduct a counter-offensive in the Ardennes. As Hitler was making final preparations for his personal decision to conduct a counter-offensive, the ETO was attempting to regenerate combat power, and transition to a campaign that would advance into Germany.[66]

December 1944, found the Allied Forces still in a slow and grinding battle of attrition, with GEN Eisenhower's broad front strategy experiencing varying degrees of success and failures. The opening of the Port of Antwerp in December 1944 reduced supply lines, and the logistical strain on motorized vehicle assets and rail infrastructure, but time was required for this opening to impact operations in the ETO. Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery continued publicly espousing consternation about GEN Eisenhower's strategy, but remained vocal he should advance towards the Rhine with his 21st Army Group and the Ninth US Army as his lead echelon.[67] South of Field Marshal Montgomery was LTG William H. Simpson's newly located Ninth US Army operating along the Roer River. LTG Bradley's Twelfth US Army Group largely had his armies dispersed primarily along the Siegfried Line. The subordinate armies'

[66] Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 2.

[67] Trevor N. Depuy, David L. Bongard, and Richard C. Anderson, Jr., *Hitler's Last Gamble*, 25.

headquarters were regenerating combat power and supplies for the ensuing drive into Germany. LTG Courtney H. Hodge's First US Army remained in a grim battle in the Hürtgen Forest, and his remaining corps spread thin along the Siegfried Line through the Ardennes. LTG Patton and his Third US Army's grinding victory in the Lorraine Campaign ended early December with the liberation of Metz. Only a few areas of resistance remained, and MG Millikin's III Corps were to clear these remaining pockets. The next planned operation for the Third US Army was to penetrate the western wall and attack east across Germany.

Additional III Corps tasks were to supervise the Third US Army's replacement program at the Dragoon Barracks. This program, directed by LTG Patton, created combat power for the Third US Army, but added to the dynamism of mid-December 1944. Succeeding in training replacements and integrating new arrivals from the United States allowed for the reconstitution of combined arms power of the infantry divisions, which the III Corps soon greatly benefitted.

Defeating the German Army's resistance in Metz was slow, and when III Corps relieved XX Corps in Metz on 8 December 1944, the last remaining German occupied position was Fort Jeanne d' Arc (see Appendix B, Table 2).[68] MG Millikin and III Corps' primary task was to control Metz, while continuing the pressure on the German Army east of Metz in preparation for the Third US Army's advance across the west wall. In support of III Corps' task to control Metz two French units the 16th and 30th Chasseur Battalions attached, and were responsible for guard duty and securing the forts throughout the city.[69] Initially, the 87th ID was MG Millikin's sole division to control Metz. Within four days of III Corps' relief in place with XX Corps, the 26th ID relieved the 87th ID. Further demonstrating the fluidity of task organization, on 11 December 1944 the 6th AD, 42nd ID, and the 6th Cavalry Group Reinforced attached to III Corps.[70]

[68] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

The external focus for MG Millikin and his staff was planning for the continuation of the Third US Army's campaign into Germany. III Corps received a warning order 14 December 1944, for operations to move towards Saarbrucken and the Saar River; this task included controlling multiple bridgeheads and seizing the city of Neunkirchen, Germany.[71] These plans, and the future plans across the ETO soon changed.

Hitler launched operation *Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine) on 16 December 1944 with *Oberbefehlshaber* West, in the Army Group B sector (see Figure 8).[72] Surprise, poor Allied intelligence, and weather facilitated early success for Hitler's counter-offensive. Leading the counter-offensive were two penetration forces the Fifth and Sixth Panzer Armies, and the German Seventh Army was for flank protection for the penetration forces. Consequently, the situation across the Twelfth US Army Group rapidly spiraled into crisis. The belief across the 12th US Army Group was Hitler would not attempt a third attack through the Ardennes and the second in four years. The First US Army believed they were in a quiet sector of the Twelfth US Army Group's area of operation. The thinly spread defenses of the V and VIII Corps held watch over the snow-laden ground of the Ardennes Forest, but were in short-order pushed back, creating a bulge in the Allied Forces western front. The counter-offensive by 21 December 1944 created a salient in the First US Army's sector between the V and VIII Corps. Even more alarming for the Allied Forces was the encirclement of the 101st ABD, and elements of the 9th and 10th ADs in the town of Bastogne, Belgium.

[71] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[72] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 21.

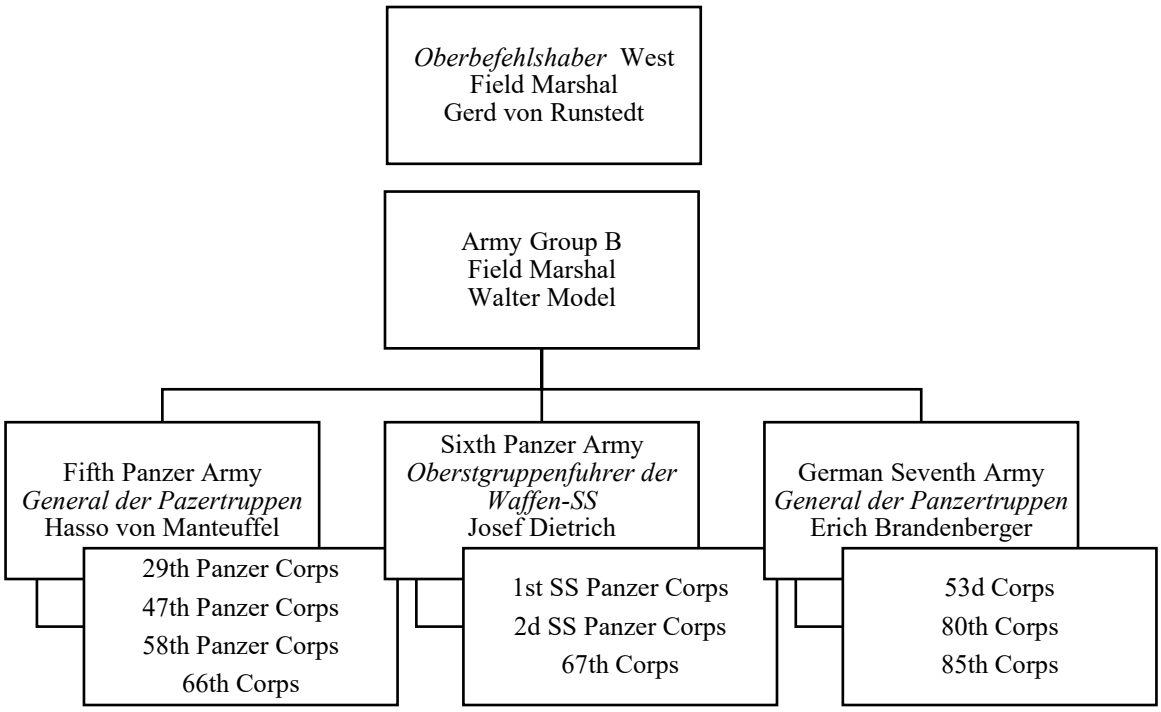

Figure 8. German Army Order of Battle in the Battle of the Bulge. Created by author, Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*, 644-655.

Hostility, cold and confusion infiltrated the headquarters of V and VIII Corps, the First US Army, and the Twelfth US Army Group after the initial two days of the counter-offensive. GEN Eisenhower, wanting answers from his commanders on addressing the salient now in the Allied Forces' front, held a meeting in Verdun, France on 19 December 1944 (see Figure 9). During the discussion GEN Eisenhower approved of LTG Patton's plan to counterattack with a corps on 22 December 1944. Approving the counterattack was not all that GEN Eisenhower adroitly shaped during the Verdun meeting. The Supreme Allied Commander gave his intent that German forces were not to cross the Meuse River. Additionally, he provided guidance on removing the salient by holding the north and south shoulders and attacking with the First and Third US Armies.[73] After receiving all the information from GEN Eisenhower, LTG Patton called his headquarters to initiate the Third US Army's planning in support of III Corps' counter attack.

[73] Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 376-378; Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 104-106; Russel F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 496-506.

Meanwhile, *General der Panzertruppen* Hasso von Manteuffel's 5th Panzer Army began tightening its pincers around the critical road network located Bastogne, Belgium.

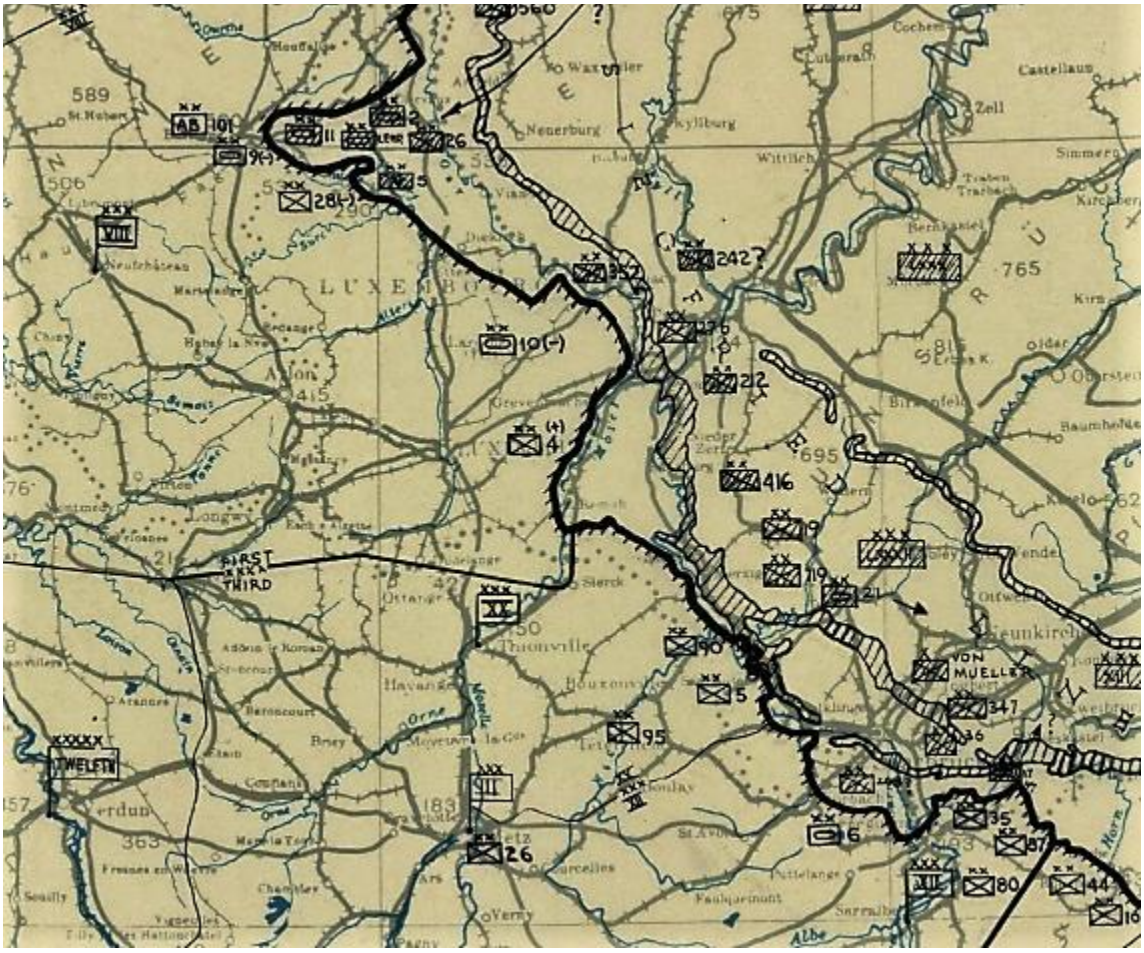

Figure 9. Map of the Developing Crisis in Bastogne, Belgium. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (20 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21199/?r=0.287,0.413,0.592,0.252,0.

Hitler's counter-offensive attempted to stymie the inevitable shadow falling over the Third Reich. The penetration in the Allies' Western Front created increasing uncertainty in the ETO. However, the deft application of doctrine in uncertainty by GEN Eisenhower and LTG Patton set conditions for clearing the salient through decisive action. Their counterattack would have a benefit greater than a localized destruction of the German forces; it would re-establish the Allied Forces' tempo against the German Army and support the drive into the heart of Hitler's Germany. GEN Eisenhower's intent was to exploit the opportunity the counter-offensive provided the Allied Forces. LTG Patton and his staff's anticipation of a counterattack requirement

met the Supreme Allied Commander's intent with the added benefit of surprise. Moreover, once the SHAEF gave permission for the execution of a counterattack plan, and the Third US Army's ninety-degree pivot, LTG Patton utilized the doctrinal flexibility in the modular corps structure to enable the rapid shift of III Corps' headquarters, and dynamically task new divisions in support of the corps' operations. Once planning began for the counterattack, the Third US Army planned for the counterattack as though it was an initial phase of a campaign to St. Vith and then across the Siegfried Line.

Third US Army's counterattack planning became more detailed on 17 December 1944. LTG Patton and MG Millikin discussed the potential of III Corps leading a counterattack if the situation continued to deteriorate.[74] Third US Army facilitated the movement of divisions in support of III Corps while LTG Patton, MG Millikin, and their staffs developed plans for the counterattack with the adjacent corps commanders, and corps-level principal staff members (despite being separated by the echelonment of command posts during this fluid and vulnerable time).[75]

At 2200 hours, 18 December 1944, III Corps began preparations to turn over the control of Metz to XII Corps, and re-locate the headquarters to Longwy, France the following morning. By 1600 hours, 19 December MG Leven C. Allen, Chief of Staff, 12th US Army Group, notified MG Millikin to move III Corps headquarters to Arlon, Belgium the next morning.[76] The Third US Army's dynamic shifts in unit missions and task organization meant accepting risk with minimal reconnaissance to support the counterattack. Not only did MG Millikin not have an awareness of the enemy, but his awareness of his friendly forces was minimal too. On 19 December 1944, the 4th AD was released from the XII Corps, assigned to III Corps, and road marched 160-miles in

[74] George S. Patton, *War as I Knew It*, 189.

[75] US Department of the Army, Third Army Headquarters After Action Report, Part 3: November 1944 – December 21, 1944. US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[76] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

blackout conditions to establish assembly areas near Arlon on 20 December 1944.[77] The 26th ID conducted a relief in place in Metz with XX Corps, and established an assembly area in Eischen, Luxembourg in the center of III Corps' counterattack axis of advance. The 80th ID released from XII Corps on 21 December, and established assembly areas between Buschdorf and Beringen, Luxembourg, taking responsibility for III Corps' right flank with XII Corps.[78] At 1300 hours, 21 December 1944, MG Millikin and his III Corps staff issued Field Order-1, along with verbal orders to the gathered subordinate commanders (see Figure 10).[79]

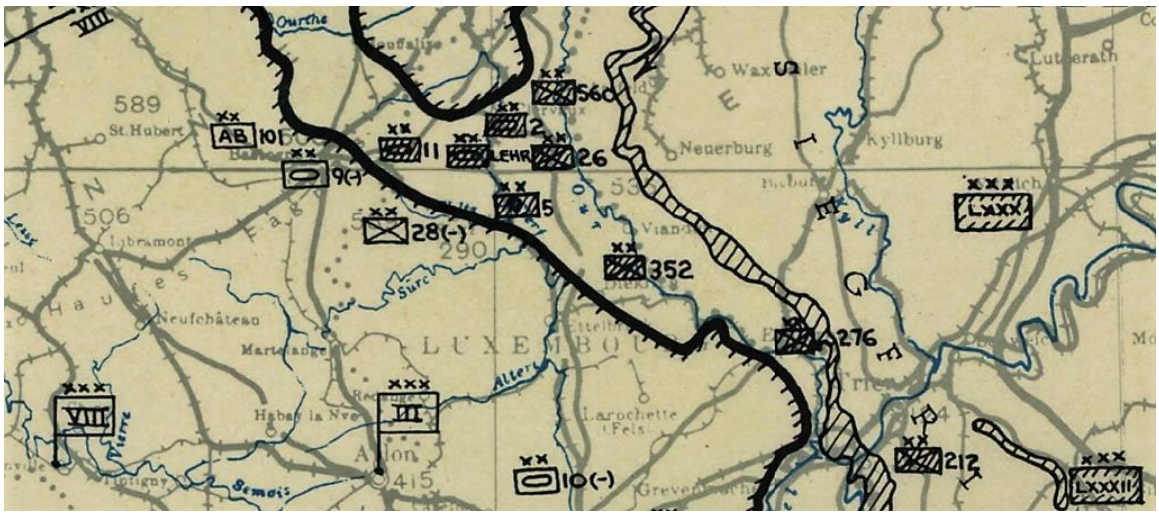

Figure 10. Map of III Corps' Axis of Advance Prior to the Counterattack. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (21 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21200/?r=0.446,0.413,0.265,0.113,0.

When III Corps began its counterattack on 22 December 1944, its desired end state was to relieve Bastogne and establish conditions to clear the enemy salient and resume SHAEF's

[77] US Department of the Army, 4th Armored Division (AD) After Action Report: December 1944, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS, historical archives section, internal file number N-12562.4A.

[78] US Department of the Army, 80th Infantry Division (ID) Operational History, December 1944, accessed March 14, 2019, http://www.80thdivision.com/80th-OperationalHistory/80thOperHist-Dec44_Pt1.pdf.

[79] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944, G-3 Journal, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS historical archives section, internal file number N-12562.4C; US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

broad-front advance into Germany. Attempting to maximize the surprise of III Corps' shift north, risk was assumed by the SHAEF through the division-level commands. MG Millikin began establishing mission command by using a clear purpose and endstate for the counterattack. Empowering subordinate commanders enabled MG Millikin and his III Corps staff to anticipate requirements of the counterattack, enable adjacent corps actions, and plan their operations beyond the relief of Bastogne (thus, setting conditions for the Third US Army's transition to the next phase of the campaign).

MG Millikin and his staff kept the III Corps' plan simple. Its lines of operation would include three divisions abreast: two infantry divisions advancing on the right and center through the rough terrain around the Alzette, Sûre, and Wiltz Rivers, leaving the 4th AD more avenues of approach and with less distance to travel to Bastogne (see Figure 11).[80] MG Millikin's placed the 4th AD, his concentration of power, along the two north-south highways leading towards the initial objective Bastogne. This accorded with doctrine of the era specified by *FM 100-5, Operations* and *FM 100-15, Larger Units*, and with LTG Patton's intent; it also conforms with the current understanding of center of gravity in today's *FM 3-0, Operations*.[81] As a cavalry officer Millikin understood the Arlon-Bastogne Road and the Neufchâteau-Bastogne Road were critical for both the counterattack and follow-on operations for the Third US Army. Due to concerns over protecting corps artillery in support of the 4th AD, the value of the multiple bridge

[80] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944; US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: Relief of Bastogne, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS, historical archives section, internal file number N-12562.4; US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944.

[81] III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944. Both *FM 100-5, Operations* (1944), 110 and *FM 100-15, Large Units* (1942), 7. "Sound tactical maneuver in the offensive is characterized by a concentration of effort in a direction where success will insure the attainment of the objective." Today, concentration is similar to the term main effort. *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 1-36. "Designating a main effort temporarily prioritizes resource allocation. When commanders designate a unit as the main effort, it receives priority of support and resources in order to maximize combat power. Commanders establish clear priorities of support, and they shift resources and priorities to the main effort as circumstances and the commander's intent require." In the case of the 4th AD they were III Corps source of strength to achieve their purpose. This made them a friendly force center of gravity.

crossings along the corps' left flank, and remaining in contact with the adjacent 28th ID on VIII Corps' southeast flank, MG Millikin created Task Force Lion, comprising of Battery D, Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) Automatic Weapons Battalion and the 178th Engineer Combat Battalion.[82] Task Force Lion protected corps artillery and corps-level support assets supporting the corps' lines of operation, and was positioned to support demolition of bridge crossings in anticipation of transitioning missions based on an unknown Germany Army disposition, and location. This task force supported GEN Eisenhower's intent of not allowing the Germans to cross the Meuse River.[83]

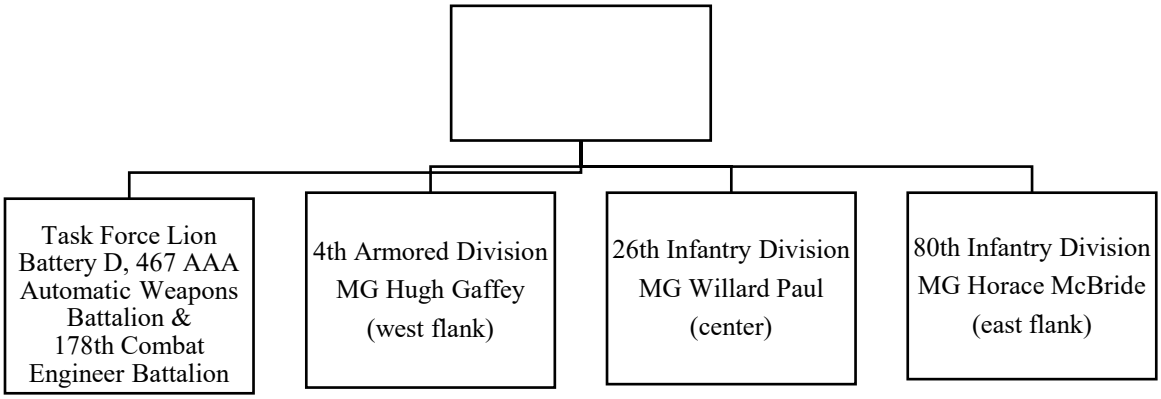

Figure 11. III Corps' Task Organization on 22 December 1944. Created by author, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

MG Millikin understood the pressures of having an uncertain enemy situation, the difficulties of the weather and the terrain presented to movement, and the criticality of III Corps' counterattack. Despite these glaring operational variables, LTG Patton told MG Millikin and MG Gaffey to "Drive like hell," and made other overly ambitious suggestions to them in Arlon on 22 December 1944.[84] The counterattack was a dynamic operation, whose outcome would set conditions for subsequent attacks into Germany. MG Millikin understood III Corps' counterattack

[82] III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[83] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 524. Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 376-378; III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[84] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 515; Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 220.

was an economy of force mission that already had accepted great risk. Consequently, from its onset he used doctrinal recommendations for the employment of large armored units, focusing on the "decentralization of control to the appropriate commanders who will be guided only by the broad general plan of the higher headquarters."[85] By applying what today's US Army doctrine calls mission command, MG Millikin empowered the divisions to attack, but not to take unnecessary risks for hubris reasons – MG Millikin effectively buffered III Corps from LTG Patton's aggressive inclinations, which could have adversely affected the purpose of the counterattack.[86]

The current operating environment's problem on the first day of III Corps' counterattack was twofold. First, the town of Bastogne, and the US Army units under siege needed to be relieved. Second, conditions needed to be set for the First and Third US Army to exploit as part of the SHAEF's broad front strategy to clear the salient and attack into Germany. The initial desired endstate for III Corps' counterattack was to relieve Bastogne, and to adopt a posture whereby it could continue offensive operations to clear the salient created by the German counter-offensive.

When the Phantom Corps began its attack at 0600 hours, 22 December, it struck elements of the 5th Panzer Army, catching them by surprise (see Figure 12).[87] The 80th ID reported nearly a battalion of German artillery was destroyed near Ettlebruck-Diekirch highway, established an initial position west/southwest of Ettlebruck and Mertzig, Luxembourg, with units preparing for an assault on Heiderscheid.[88] The 26th ID moved with prudence, many of the division's

[85] US Department of the Army, *FM 100-15, Larger Units* (1942), 94.

[86] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 1-19.

[87] The origins of the nickname "Phantom Corps" are not clear. However, today III Corps' nickname remains "Phantom Corps." When III Corps returned from World War II the headquarters created a booklet to highlight their contributions to Allied victory in the European Theater of Operations. In the front of this booklet the III Corps, Commanding General James A. Van Fleet wrote the Foreword. In the Foreword he writes, "It was called the Phantom Corps by surprisingly showing up at many critical places." US Department of the Army, *The Phantom Corps* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945), Foreword, accessed https://www.hood.army.mil/facts/FS%200701%20-%20III%20Corps%20History.pdf.

[88] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944.

infantrymen were stepping-off on their first combat mission.[89] Its axis of advance towards Wiltz, Luxembourg, it maneuvered along the road networks, cutting across the compartmentalized landscape and fighting elements of the 5th Parachute Division near Rambrouch and Grosbous, Luxembourg.[90] The 4th AD moved systematically from Arlon with Combat Command A (CCA) on the right flank of the division's axis of advance, Combat Command B (CCB) abreast on the left with TF Lion on III Corps' left flank, and Combat Command Reserve (CCR) protecting the flank exposed gap between CCA and the 26th ID.[91] Across the III Corps' area of operation, initial success through the night of 22 December 1944 sparked optimism in the Third US Army, and fed LTG Patton's determination to relieve Bastogne by Christmas.[92] But once the 5th Panzer Army and German Seventh Army identified the threat to its southern flank, the advance to relieve Bastogne slowed.

[89] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944. The 26th ID received 2,400 infantrymen from Metz, France Infantry Training Replacement Center.

[90] Trevor N. Depuy, David L. Bongard, and Richard C. Anderson, Jr., *Hitler's Last Gamble*, 218.

[91] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A).

[92] Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1940-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 604. On 22 December 1944, LTG Patton wrote a letter to his wife Beatrice and asserted "John Millikin is doing better than I feared."

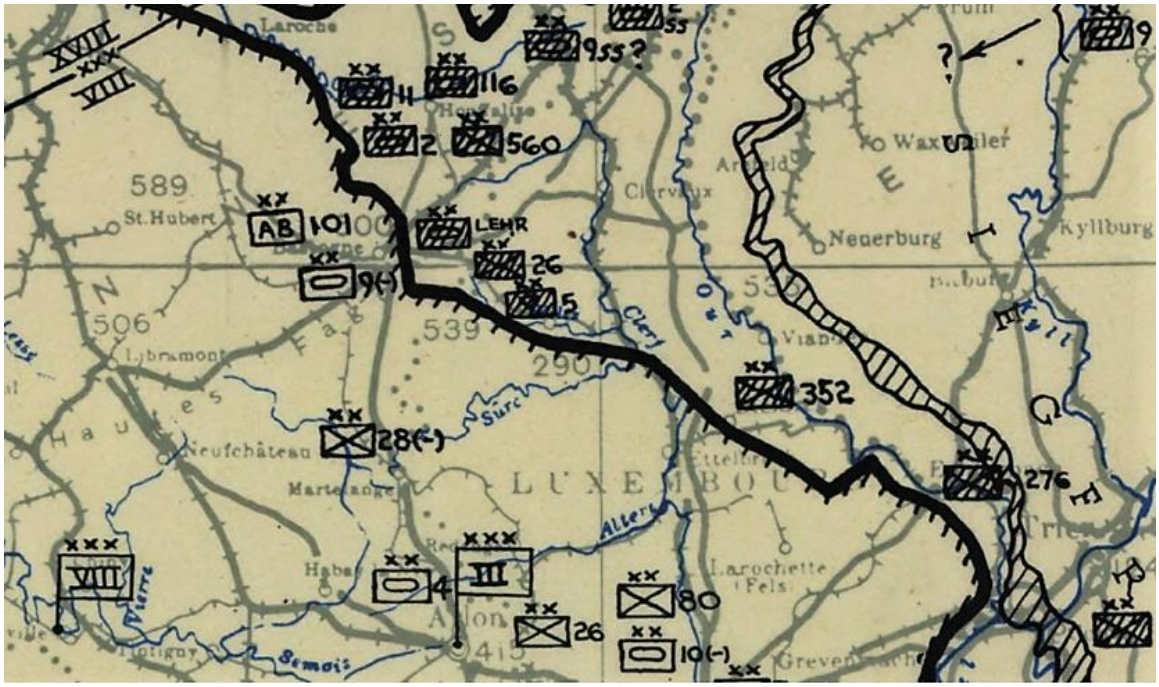

Figure 12. Map of III Corps on 22 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (22 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21201/?r=0.441,0.408,0.263,0.112,0.

III Corps achieved marginal advances through night operations from 22-23 December 1944 (see Figure 13). On the morning of 23 December 1944, the 80th ID cleared the town of Heiderscheid and Mertzig, Luxembourg, and attempted to secure the Heiderscheidergrund Bridge over the Sûre River – but it was destroyed by withdrawing German Army units.[93] Winton writes, "The 80th ID, though advancing steadily on the Sûre, had to contend with reserves that German *Seventh Army* was feeding into the battle."[94] The 26th ID gained little in the division's zone during the night operations. With the 26th ID units spread from east to west across the division zone of operations. The dense terrain and stubborn German infantry and armor stymied efforts to reach the division's initial objective of clearing German Seventh Army headquarters in Wiltz, Luxembourg.[95] The 4th AD's advance also slowed on 23 December 1944. CCA cleared

[93] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944.

[94] Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 221 (italics are in the original publication).

[95] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 522.

Martelange, Belgium by the early morning, but had to wait for the construction of a Baily bridge, which was completed by 1430 hours.[96] Then advancing only few kilometers north to Warnach, Belgium, fighting continued in this location until the following morning when the CCA established a tactical assembly area southwest of the town.[97] CCB advanced to Chaumont, Belgium encountering strong resistance. After taking the town, the elements of the German 14th Parachute Infantry Regiment counterattacked, forcing CCB to withdraw south of the town.[98]

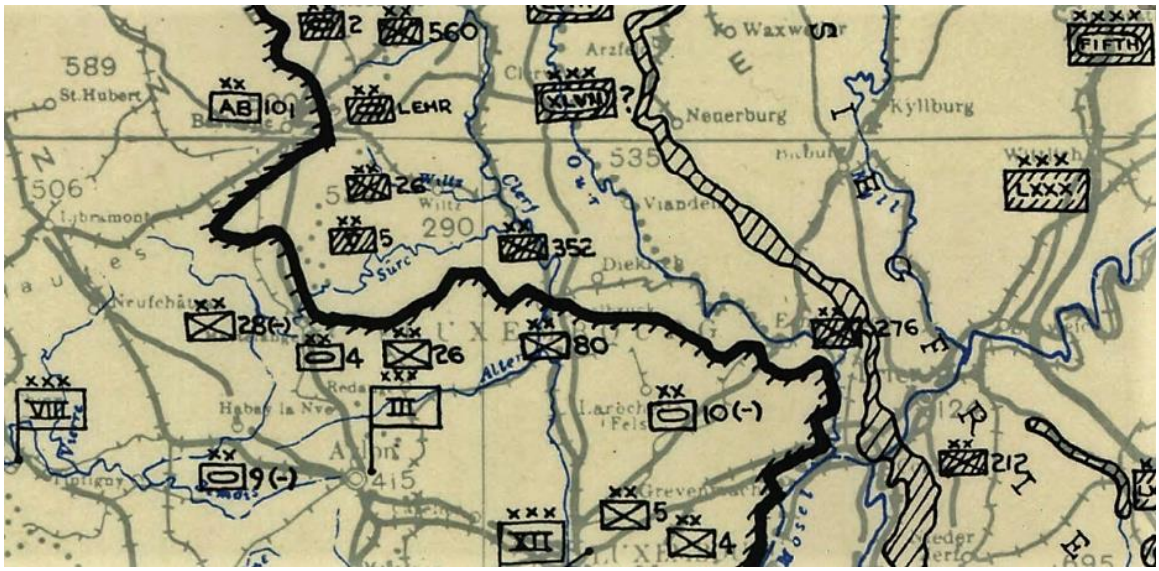

Figure 13. III Corps' Advance by 23 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (23 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21202/?r=0.471,0.425,0.266,0.113,0.

Measured advances continued on Christmas Eve 1944, with intense fighting across III Corps' area of operation. The 80th ID faced fierce German counterattacks in Heiderscheid, Heiderscheidergrund, Tadler, and Kehmen, Luxembourg.[99] The division was fighting for control over bridges and bridgeheads along a 10-kilometers front to cross the Sûre River. At 1700 hours

[96] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A).

[97] Ibid., (N-12662.4A).

[98] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944, G-3 Journal (N-12562.4C); US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[99] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944. Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*, 646. The counterattacks in Kehmen and Heiderscheid were supported by a tank battalion from the Eastern Front, from the Gross Deutschland Panzer Division, who were assigned to the Führer Begleit Brigade, which was built around guard troops from Hitler's headquarters.

on 24 December, the 1st and 2d Battalions, 318th Infantry, from the 80th ID moved by truck to a 4th AD assembly area to reinforce III Corps' main effort, and restore tempo.[100]

Despite LTG Patton's frustration and calls for greater progress, MG Millikin supported his commanders' judgment and initiative.[101] On 24 December 1944, the 26th ID wanted to close the gaps along their flanks; MG Paul formed Task Force Hamilton to take the town of Eschdorf, Luxembourg (see Figure 14).[102] The fight for Eschdorf was intense, and lasted several days. The town was a blocking position for German Seventh Army, and the terrain favored the defender.[103] MG Millikin spoke with the 26th ID, Commander, MG Paul about closing the gaps created by his division's rate of advance across the Sûre River, and discussed options on developing the enemy situation combined with an ability to respond rapidly to support closing the gaps along the division's flanks.[104] After the conversation, MG Millikin understood that MG Paul's division could not close the gaps between the 4th AD, and III Corps began devising plans to mitigate risks from the 26th ID's delayed advance.

[100] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944.

[101] Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1940-1945*, 604-605.

[102] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge*, 541. "Unwilling to expand his division reserve, Paul took the 2nd Battalion, 328th Infantry, as the task force nucleus and turned it over to an officer with the division staff, Lt. Col. Paul Hamilton. A few tanks and tank destroyers were added."

[103] Ibid., 540-541.

[104] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944; Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge*, 222; III Corps chief of staff memorandum for record of Millikin's conversation with Paul as 26th ID command post, 231645 December 1944, III Corps G-3 files, RG 407, Box 3302, NAII.

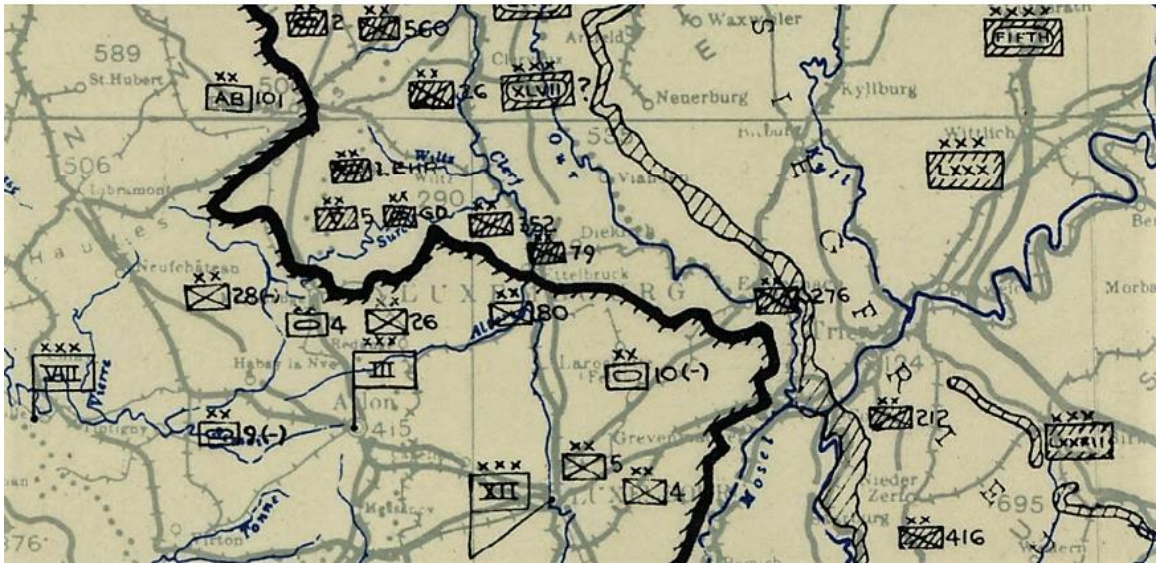

Figure 14. Map of III Corps on 24 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (24 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21203/?r=0.451,0.432,0.317,0.135,0.

To support the 4th AD's advance, III Corps assumed risk by expanding the 26th ID's zone to the west include the town of Rambrouch and Bigonville, Luxembourg, which had been cleared by the CCR on 23-24 December 1944.[105] Then later in the day, III Corps formed a new operating zone between the 4th AD and the 26th ID after the headquarters received Task Force Fickett, formed from the 6th Cavalry Group. Detaching from Task Force Fickett, the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron served as a screen between the 4th AD and 26th ID gap, enabling the CCR to reposition west along the Neufchateau-Bastogne Highway avenue of approach on 25 December 1944.[106] The remaining units of Task Force Fickett were the 28th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, with one engineer and tank destroyer company, which began screening the III Corps' left flank west of the CCR's advance.[107]

On 24 December 1944, the 4th AD's advance virtually halted towards Bastogne. LTG Patton' insistence on day and night attacks for the counterattack adversely impacted the advance,

[105] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

especially for armored units operating at night.[108] Exacerbating 4th AD's fatigue was tough fighting in the towns of Warnach, Belgium for CCA, and Bigonville, Luxembourg for CCR. CCB was ordered to hold their position in Chaumont, Belgium since they were 10 kilometers north/northwest of CCA.[109] To avoid culminating the 4th AD, III Corps ordered that CCA and CCB hold their positions on the night of 24 December 1944, as the CCR repositioned near Mâssul, Belgium west of the Neufchateau-Bastogne Highway, tasked by MG Gaffey to "destroy any enemy encountered, assist adv[ance] of CC "B" and protect left flank of Div[ision] and Corps."[110] CCA received dismounted reinforcements from 2nd Battalion, 418th Infantry, while CCB received reinforcements from 1st Battalion, 418th Infantry.[111]

With these changes, III Corps' continued its methodical advance on Christmas Day (see Figure 15). The 80th ID's task was to consolidate gains to the Sûre River, but not attempt to cross north of the river. Essential to the division's task was to clear the town of Tadler, Luxembourg, which enabled contact with the elements from the 26th ID on the opposite bank of the river. In order to strengthen the disposition of the division' zone, 2nd Battalion, 319th Infantry advanced from Heiderscheid to clear the town of Ringel, Luxembourg between Tadler and Kehmen. [112] The success established a strong posture for the 80th ID on III Corps' right flank by controlling key lines of communication from Heiderscheidergrund in the west of their zone, to Tadler, Ringel, Kehmen, and Ettlebruck, Luxembourg in the east/south east of the division's sector. Once the

[108] Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1940-1945*, 605. George S. Patton Jr., *War As I Knew It*, 201.

[109] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: Relief of Bastogne (N-12562.4).

[110] Ibid., (N-12562.4). US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A).

[111] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944; US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A). The after action reports from the 4th AD contradict how the 418th Infantry were assigned: 4th AD records state CCA was reinforced by 1st Battalion, 418th Infantry, and CCB was reinforced by 2nd Battalion, 418th Infantry.

[112] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944.

26th and 80th IDs established contact, their disposition across III Corps' area of operation reduced the risk to the main axis of advance, thus facilitating the tempo of the counterattack.

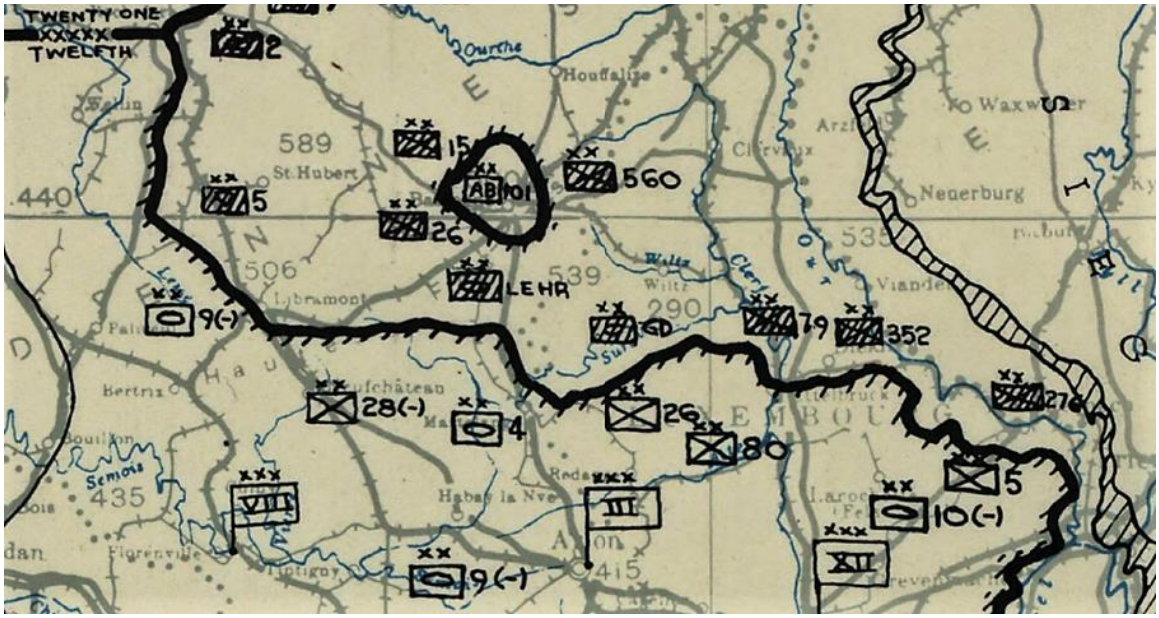

Figure 15. Map of III Corps on 25 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (25 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701s.ict21204/?r=0.431,0.416,0.265,0.113,0.

The 26th ID's fight against the German Seventh Army – as well as terrain, weather, time, and expectations – continued on Christmas Day. Despite some advance, 26th ID remained south of the Sûre River, delayed by fighting in Eschdorf and Ardorf, Luxembourg.[113] The 26th ID was positioned to cross the river in two locations, but the withdrawing Führer Grenadier Brigade blew the bridges at Heiderscheidergrund and Bonnal, Luxembourg. With German Seventh Army concentrating, the division was spread too thin to effectively conduct a river crossing.

Meanwhile, the 4th AD was aided by the gift of clear skies, allowing the XIX Tactical Air Command (TAC) to support III Corps with 599 sorties across its area of operation; these focused on 5th Panzer Army positions near Bastogne and on the German Seventh Army along the 4th AD's axis of advance.[114] CCR started maneuvering along the Neufchâteau-Bastogne Highway

[113] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge*, 544.

[114] US Department of the Army, Third Army Headquarters After Action Report December 1944 – January 1945, part 4, 181; US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report:

from Mâssul towards Vaux-les-Rosières, Belgium. Not encountering any significant contact, it continued to advance towards Remoiville.[115] After clearing the town and consolidating, a troop of CCR took position about three kilometers northeast to positions overlooking Remichampagne, Belgium – its first objective for 26 December 1944.[116] CCR was protecting CCB's west flank, which was fighting in Chaumont approximately three kilometers east. CCA attacked Tintage, Belgium two kilometers northeast of Warnach, utilizing dismounted infantry from the 80th ID, fighter-bomber support, artillery, and tanks; their advance continued to proceed north along the Arlon-Bastogne Highway.[117]

On 26 December 1944, the 80th ID continued to consolidate gains along the dispersed positions in their zone. They cleared Niederfeulen, Luxembourg between Heiderscheid and Ettlebruck, establishing the division's defenses south of the Sûre and west of the Alzette Rivers. At 2000 hours that day, the 80th ID was transferred to XII Corps, though it did not change its position in relation to III Corps' counterattack: LTG Patton wanted III Corps to have a reduced area of operation with a higher concentration of infantry to break the German's staunch defenses.[118] The 35th ID was then attached to III Corps, and prepared to conduct a forward passage of lines with 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron at 0800 hours 27 December 1944. It would become the middle division zone in III Corps' area of operation between the 4th AD and the 26th ID.[119]

December 1944.

[115] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A).

[116] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: Relief of Bastogne (N-12562.4). This portion of the after action report is from an interview by Captain (CPT) L. B. Clark on 5 January 1945 in Chaumont, Belgium. The interviewees are LTC Creighton W. Abrams (CO 37th Tank Battalion), MAJ Edward Bautz (XO 37th Tank Battalion), CPT William Dwight (S-3 37th Tank Battalion), and Second Lieutenant (2LT) John A. Whitehill (CO, Company A, 37th Tank Battalion).

[117] Ibid., (N-12562.4).

[118] US Department of the Army, 80th ID Operational History, December 1944; US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

[119] Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

On the morning of 26 December 1944, the 26th ID began to cross the Sûre River. III Corps' reserve regiment, the 101st Infantry, conducted a relief in place with the 328th Infantry, and began to cross the Sure in rubber boats west of Bonnal, Luxembourg.[120] MG Millikin believed the commitment of a fresh regiment would generate tempo for the 26th ID after crossing the river.[121] Shortly thereafter engineers placed a Bailey bridge at this crossing, which was then used by the 101st and 104th Infantry.

Meanwhile, 4th AD continued advancing along three avenues of approach towards Bastogne, and the gift of fair skies persisted. Paralleling the Arlon-Bastogne Highway, CCA cleared Honville, Hollange, Livárchamps, and Sainlez, Belgium.[122] That morning CCB had MG Maxwell Taylor, Commanding General, 101st ABD, join their unit, as it was expected to breakthrough to Bastogne first.[123] CCB first attacked Grandru, Belgium and then Hompré, Belgium before digging-in for the night approximately seven kilometers south of Bastogne. The CCR, having observed Remichampagne through the night, attacked and cleared the town by 1055 hours with the assistance from the XIX TAC.[124] It next took position on the high ground in Clochîmont in preparation for an attack on Sibret, a town west of the Neufchâteau-Bastogne Highway. But at 1500 hours, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Creighton W. Abrams, Commander, 37th Tank Battalion and LTC George Jaques, Commander, 53d Armored Infantry Battalion, decided to bypass Sibret and its defenders and dash through Assensois to Bastogne.[125] After orchestrating an artillery barrage to suppress German armor and infantry and assist this movement, their forces

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[120] Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge*, 544-546.

[121] Ibid., 544.

[122] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: Relief of Bastogne (N-12562.4).

[123] Ibid., (N-12562.4).

[124] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944 (N-12562.4A).

[125] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: Relief of Bastogne (N-12562.4). This portion of the after action report is from an interview by CPT L. B. Clark on 5 January 1945 in Chaumont, Belgium. The interviewees are LTC Creighton W. Abrams (CO 37th Tank Battalion), MAJ Edward Bautz (XO 37th Tank Battalion), CPT William Dwight (S-3 37th Tank Battalion), and 2LT John A. Whitehill (CO, Company A, 37th Tank Battalion).

reached the 101st ABD's outer-defense at 1650 hours and making contact with the 326th Airborne Engineer Battalion.[126] In the evening, on 26 December, forty vehicles with medical supplies, ammunition, and food entered Bastogne, relieving its citizens, the 101st ABD, and elements of the 9th and 10th AD (see Figure 16).[127]

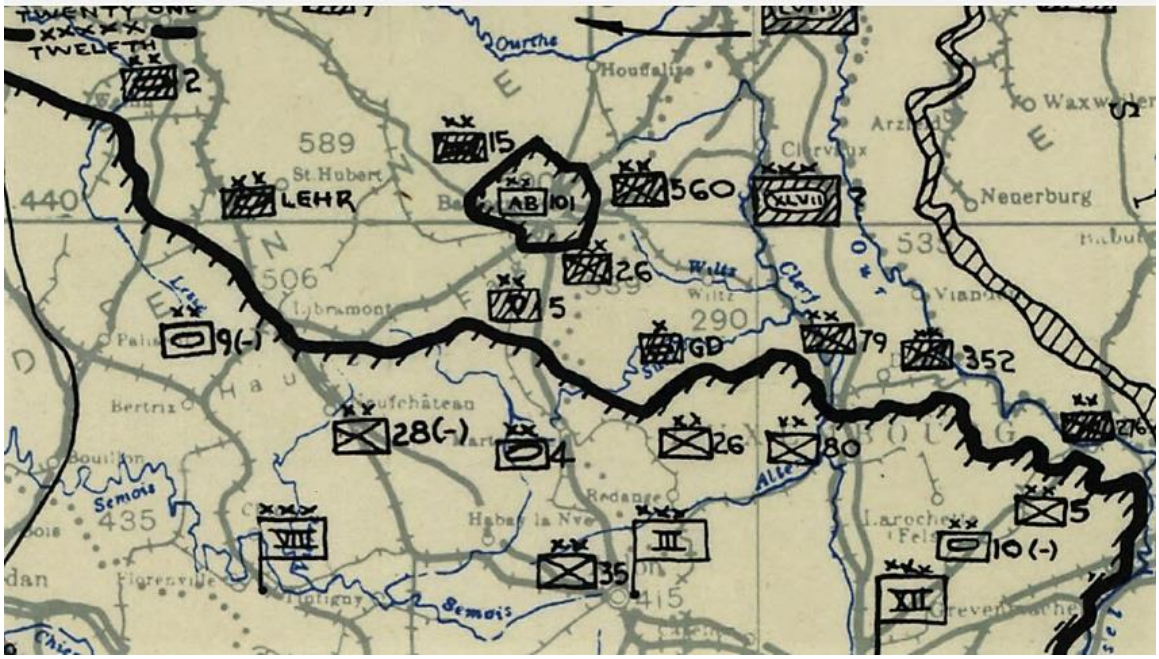

Figure 16. Map of III Corps at 1200 hours on 26 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (26 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701sm.gct00021/?sp=204&r=0.419,0.416,0.264,0.113,0.

Tough fighting remained for III Corps. The ground line of communication connecting Bastogne to III Corps was widened considerably on 27 December with CCA and CCB, but more importantly, it remained open to bring relief to the defenders of Bastogne and follow-on operations (see Figure 17). The Battle of the Bulge was not over, but determined soldiers and the skilled use of operational art by MG Millikin and his III Corps staff had accomplished the first objective of this campaign.

[126] Ibid. Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge*, 555.

[127] Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

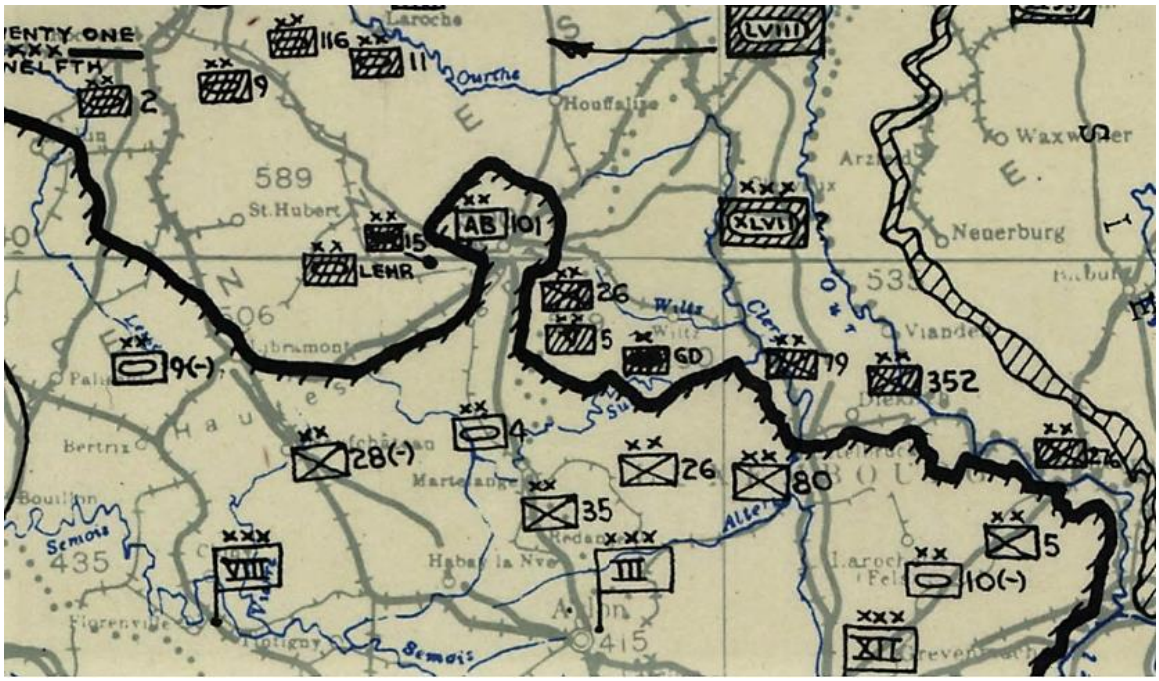

Figure 17. III Corps Expands Corridor Into Bastogne, Belgium on 27 December 1944. Section of the Headquarters Twelfth Army Group situation map (27 December 1944), from the Library of Congress, accessed 4 April 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5701sm.gct00021/?sp=205&r=0.431,0.411,0.265,0.113,0.

The Phantom Corps & Operational Art

During III Corps' counterattack, Milliken's most subtle but significant operational contribution was that he applied the tenets in *FM 100-15, Larger Units* for the employment of larger units – what *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) calls mission command. By decentralizing control, providing a commander's intent and a broad operational approach he created flexibility for the subordinate commanders, and his III Corps staff to respond appropriately to an uncertain enemy situation. By bridging trust with his subordinate commanders in the divisions, III Corps effectively responded to the multitude of dilemmas presented by the Germans, terrain, weather, and other operational variables. As a result, III Corps' counterattack remained coupled with its purpose, and enabled MG Millikin to shape actions beyond the current tactical fight for III Corps and the Third US Army.

FM 3-0, Operations (2017) defines operational art "as the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and

judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means."[128] This definition does not suggest that operational art is bound to a level of command, or that all the elements of an operational art taxonomy have to be applied. MG Millikin and his III Corps staff were provided an operational mission. Success required reducing the salient created by Field Marshal Rundstedt's forces by relieving Bastogne, and set conditions to restore the Allies' broad-front advance into Germany. This operational mission linked to a strategic purpose of preventing the fracturing of the Allied Forces by Hitler's counter-offensive. To achieve the endstate MG Millikin and his III Corps staff conducted their operational mission using various elements of operational art to link strategic purpose with their tactics, and means available.

MG Millikin and his III Corps staff operated effectively in the chaos created by Hitler's counter-offensive, and the ensuing operational requirements to conduct the Allied counterattack. First and most importantly, MG Millikin established trust within III Corps hastily formed counterattack force, the trust he provided the subordinate commanders enabled timely decisions across the corps. The decisions made by III Corps and the subordinate commanders were linked to III Corps' Field Order-1, and its purpose and endstate.[129] The simple arrangement of III Corps' lines of operations provided flexibility to anticipate changes in to area of operations, and changes within the corps task organization. The 4th AD's axis of advance on the west flank of III Corps area of operation maximized advantages the physical environment offered. The 26th and 80th IDs operations mitigated risk to the 4th AD by pressuring the Seventh and 5th Panzer Armies' southern flanks. As the two infantry divisions continued pressure on the Germans, III Corps deliberately paused 4th AD to reinforce it and enhance its capacity to sustain tempo along the two

[128] US Department of the Army*, FM 3-0, Operations* (2017), 1-20.

[129] US Department of the Army, 4th AD After Action Report: December 1944, G-3 Journal (N-12562.4C). US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944.

axis of advance into Bastogne. MG Millikin, by reinforcing the 4th AD, accepted risk in the 80th ID zone created by the detachment of two infantry battalions.

Placing 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in the gap between the west flank of 26th ID, and east flank of the 4th AD, mitigated the risk generated from a mobile division using improved avenues of approach advancing adjacent to a dismounted division fighting through restrictive terrain. This decision freed CCR to advance on the Neufchâteau-Bastogne Highway, an avenue of approach that proved to be decisive. Finally, MG Millikin and his III Corps staff provided infantry reinforcements to CCA and CCB at a critical juncture to maintain tempo and mitigate the risk created by armored vehicles fighting in urban terrain. This additional force protection for III Corps' main effort and center of gravity allowed it to maintain pressure on German positions south of Bastogne. Combined with the CCR's advance farther to the west enabled III Corps to achieve the desired endstate.

MG Millikin and his III Corps staff applied operational art as described in *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017 / see Appendix C). III Corps' application of operational art started with MG Millikin's deft application of what today is called mission command. His staff built flexibility into III Corps' operational approach, allowing subordinate division commanders greater initiative to act in a fluid combat situation, rather than constraining them with overly prescriptive and sequenced orders from a higher headquarters. This application of operational art anticipated opportunities to exploit tactical actions, or create opportunities for exploitations during the corps' counterattack. III Corps thus acted as the sinew between the broader strategic purpose and the accomplishment of tactical objectives during the Battle of the Bulge.

Conclusion: History Requires Constant Reevaluation

> It is a peculiarity of English-language military terminology that it long had no word of its own to describe the middle level of thought and action between the tactical and the strategic—the level that embraces battles in their dynamic totality, in which generic methods of war are developed, debated, and applied.
>
> —Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*

A search for meaning from past events is an iterative process. Otherwise, studying history would be futile. Equally as important is placing the lessons from the past in to a context that is applicable for a contemporary audience. Semantic changes over time can be to such a degree that warrants a fresh look at a period of history. In the case of US Army doctrine, there are times when doctrinal change sparks a new conceptual framework, producing a new lexicon and taxonomy. An example of this occurred with the categorization of war into the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war in *FM 100-5, Operations* (1982). From this emergent lexicon in doctrine, *FM 100-5, Operations* (1986) coined the term operational art and began developing a taxonomy to assist in understanding the operational level of war associated with the AirLand Battle doctrine. As AirLand Battle doctrine evolved the lexicon and taxonomy describing the operational level of war evolved. This symbiotic relationship between doctrine and language requires the study of history to be reevaluated constantly.

As doctrine evolves to create readiness for the US Army's next fight, and the existential threat that doctrine had been preparing for is no longer relevant, it changes. The original purpose of the operational level of war was to prepare the US Army to fight against the Soviet second echelon attack. But after the Gulf War there was no pacing threat for US Army doctrine development. Its absence created a shift in focus in US Army doctrine in *FM 100-5, Operations* (1993); see Figure 18. As the geopolitical environment changed over the next two and a half decades the US Army's *Operations* doctrine reflected these changes, and affected the meaning of the words to describe the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy (see Appendix A).

Figure 18. *Operations* Publications Focus Shifts. Created by author.

The constant evolution of doctrine helps ensure the US Army is building readiness for an anticipated future, based on the geo-political landscape and shifts in strategy. However, it should be no surprise that concepts such as the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy are nebulous terms within the US Army; the meanings change with each publication of doctrine. This affects the commander's ability to use mission command, and creates generational gaps between the commanding general, subordinate commanders, and their staffs. The self-imposed friction created by the shifts in meaning of the operational level of war, operational art, and the supporting taxonomy do not help the US Army's integration of mission command in the new age of great power competition. The language describing the operational level of war needs to clarify the mercurial space between how to win wars and the destruction of the enemy. Solidifying the lexicon and taxonomy for the operational level of war in doctrine will enable mission command, by supporting a shared understanding of the current state and the desired future state in future conflict.

Today's geopolitical landscape highlights the return of great power competition, and peer competitors for the US military. Consequently, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) identifies a renewed

focus on large-scale combat operations. Now that doctrine has returned to a focus on large-scale combat operations, historical case studies help identify successes and failures of the past. Therefore, III Corps' counterattack during the Battle of the Bulge focuses on a dynamic operating environment against a peer existential threat in large-scale combat. Using the lexicon and taxonomy from *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) provides a contemporary application from a historical case study. The power of placing a historical case study in a contemporary framework is that it helps bridge understanding between old conceptual frameworks and the emergent conceptual framework. Senior leadership, whose comprehension of applied doctrine and language will reflect older variations, can thus appreciate nuanced shifts in conceptual frameworks, facilitating shared understanding and avoiding failures in mission command.

Appendix A

The purpose of Table 1 is to show the evolution of the operational level of war and operational art lexicon and taxonomy in the US Army's *Operations* doctrinal publications. The excerpts listed in the table are quotes from the associated doctrinal publication. Using the direct language from each of the US Army *Operations* publications reveals how doctrine and language have nuanced changes overtime.

Table 1. The Evolution of the Operational Level of War and Operational Art

FM 100-5, Operations (1982)
Operational Level of War: - The operational level of war uses available military resources to attain strategic goals within a theater of war. Most simply, it is the theory of larger unit operations. (2-3) - The disposition of forces, selection of objectives, and actions taken to weaken or to outmaneuver the enemy all set the terms of the next battle and exploit tactical gains. They are all part of the operational level of war. (2-3) - The object of maneuver at the operational level is to focus maximum strength against the enemy's weakest point, thereby gaining strategic advantage (2-4)
Operational Art: N/A
Taxonomy: N/A

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 2-3, 2-4.

FM 100-5, Operations (1986)
Operational Level of War: - At the operational level, deep operations include efforts to isolate current battles and to influence where, when, and against whom future battles will be fought. (19) - At the operational level, rear operations focus on preparing for the next phase of the campaign or major operation. (20) - AirLand Battle doctrine distinguishes the operational level of war – the design and conduct of campaigns and major operations – from the tactical level which deals with battles and engagements.(27) - At both the operational and tactical levels, initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization are the essence of AirLand Battle doctrine. (27)
Operational Art: - Military strategy, operational art, and tactics are the broad divisions of activity in preparing for and conducting war. Successful strategy achieves national and alliance political aims at the lowest possible cost in lives and treasure. Operational art translates those aims into effective military operations and campaigns. Sound tactics win the battles and engagements which produce successful campaigns and operations. While the principles of war apply equally to strategy, operational art, and tactics, they apply differently to each level of war. (9) - Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in ,a theater of war or theater Of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. (10) - Operational art thus involves fundamental decisions about when and where to fight and whether to accept or decline battle. (10) - Reduced to its essentials, operational art requires the commander to answer three questions: 1. What military condition must be produced in the theater of war- or operations to achieve the strategic goal? 2. What sequence of actions is most likely to produce that condition? 3. How should the resources of the force be applied to accomplish that sequence of actions? (10)
Taxonomy: - Key Concepts of Operational Design – Centers of Gravity, Lines of Operation, and Culminating Point (179-182)

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 9, 10, 19, 20, 27, 179-182.

FM 100-5, Operations (1993)
Operational Level of War: - The operational level provides the vital link between strategic objectives and tactical employment of forces. At the operational level, military forces attain strategic objectives through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. Tactical battles and engagements are fought to achieve operational results. (1-3) - At the operational level of war, joint and combined operational forces within a theater of operations perform subordinate campaigns and major operations and plan, conduct, and sustain to accomplish the strategic objectives of the unified commander or higher military authority. (6-2) - The operational level is the vital link between national- and theater-strategic aims and the tactical employment of forces on the battlefield. The focus at this level is on conducting joint operations—the employment of military forces to attain theater-strategic objectives in a theater of war and operational objectives in the theaters of operations through design, organization, and execution of subordinate campaigns and major operations. (6-2)
Operational Art: - Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organization, integration, and execution of battles and engagements into campaigns and major operations. In war, operational art determines when, where, and for what purpose major forces will fight over time. (Glossary 6) - Operational art seeks to ensure that commanders use soldiers, materiel, and time effectively to achieve strategic aims through campaign design. Such a design provides a framework to help the theater and operational commanders order their thoughts. Operational art helps commanders understand the conditions for victory before seeking battle, thus avoiding unnecessary battles. Without operational art, war would be a set of disconnected engagements, with relative attrition the only measure of success or failure. (6-2) - Operational art requires broad vision, the ability to anticipate, a careful understanding of the relationship of means to ends, an understanding of the inherent risks that are under them, and effective joint and combined cooperation. It challenges the commander to answer three questions: 1. What military conditions will achieve the strategic objectives in the theater of war or theater of operations? 2. What sequence of actions is most likely to produce these conditions? 3. How should the commander apply military resources within established limitations to accomplish that sequence of actions? (6-2)
Taxonomy: - Concepts of Theater and Operational Design – Center of Gravity, Lines of Operation, Decisive Points, and Culmination (6-7 – 6-9)

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 1-3, 6-2, 6-7 – 6-9, Glossary 6.

FM 3-0, Operations (2001)
Operational Level of War: - The operational level of war is the level at which campaigns and major operations are conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations (AOs). It links the tactical employment of forces to strategic objectives. The focus at this level is on operational art— the use of military forces to achieve strategic goals through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of theater strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles. (2-2 – 2-3) - At the operational and tactical levels, the end state is the conditions that, when achieved, accomplish the mission. At the operational level, these conditions attain the aims set for the campaign or major operation. (5-6) - At the operational level, commanders arrange forces and resources to allow dispersion, responsiveness, protection, and sustainment, while retaining the ability to mass effects quickly. (7-26)
Operational Art: - Operational art determines when, where, and for what purpose major forces are employed to influence the enemy disposition before combat. It governs the deployment of those forces, their commitment to or withdrawal from battle, and the arrangement of battles and major operations to achieve operational and strategic objectives. (2-3 – 2-4) - Operational art helps commanders use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve strategic objectives. It includes employing military forces and arranging their efforts in time, space, and purpose. Operational art helps commanders understand the conditions for victory before seeking battle. It provides a framework to assist commanders in ordering their thoughts when designing campaigns and major operations. Without operational art, war would be a set of disconnected engagements with relative attrition the only measure of success. Operational art requires commanders who can visualize, anticipate, create, and seize opportunities. (2-4) - Operational art is translated into operation plans through operational design. A well-designed plan and successfully executed operation shape the situation for tactical actions. (2-4) - Operational art differs from tactics principally in the scope and scale of what commanders visualize, describe, and direct. Operational commanders identify the time, space, resources, purpose, and action of land operations and relate them to the joint force commander's (JFC's) operational design. (5-3)
Taxonomy: - The Elements of Operational Design – End State and Military Conditions; Center of Gravity; Decisive Points and Objectives; Lines of Operations; Culminating Point; Operational Reach, Approach and Pauses; Simultaneous and Sequential Operations; Linear and Nonlinear Operations; and Tempo (5-6)

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 2-3, 2-4, 5-3, 5-6, 7-26.

FM 3-0, Operations (2008)
Operational Level of War: - The operational level links employing tactical forces to achieving the strategic end state. At the operational level, commanders conduct campaigns and major operations to establish conditions that define that end state. (6-3) - Actions at the operational level usually involve broader dimensions of time and space than tactical actions do. (6-3)
Operational Art: - Operational art represents the creative aspect of operational-level command. It is the expression of informed vision across the levels of war. Operational design is a bridge between the strategic end state and the execution of tactical tasks. The elements of operational design help operational commanders clarify and refine their concept of operations by providing a framework to describe operations. (6-1) - Military operations require integrating creative vision across the levels of war. Military art pervades operations at all echelons. Although military art transcends the levels of war, operational art is distinct. Operational art is the application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience—to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces. Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war. It is applied only at the operational level. (6-1) - Through operational art, commanders frame their concept by answering several fundamental questions: 1. What is the force trying to accomplish (ends)? 2. What conditions, when established, constitute the desired end state (ends)? 3. How will the force achieve the end state (ways)? 4. What sequence of actions is most likely to attain these conditions (ways)? 5. What resources are required, and how can they be applied to accomplish that sequence of actions (means)? 6. What risks are associated with that sequence of actions, and how can they be mitigated (risk)? (6-4 – 6-5) - Operational art requires three continuous, cyclic activities. These activities define military and nonmilitary actions across the spectrum of conflict: 1. Framing (and reframing) the problem. 2. Formulating the design. 3. Refining the design. (6-6)
Taxonomy: - Operational Design: End State; Conditions; Center of Gravity; Operational Approach; Decisive Points; Lines of Operation; Lines of Effort; Operational Reach; Tempo; Simultaneity and Depth; Phasing and Transitions; Culmination; and Risk (6-7)

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 6-1, 6-3, 6-4, 6-5, 6-6. 6-7).

FM 3-0, Operations (2017)
Operational Level of War: - Operational environments include considerations at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of warfare. (1-5) - The operational level links the tactical employment of forces to national and military strategic objectives, with the focus being on the design, planning, and execution of operations using operational art. (1-5) - The levels of warfare model the relationship between national objectives and tactical actions. There are no fixed limits or boundaries between these levels, but they help commanders visualize a logical arrangement of operations, allocate resources, and assign tasks to appropriate commands. Echelon of command, size of units, types of equipment, and types and location of forces or components may often be associated with a particular level, but the strategic, operational, or tactical purpose of their employment depends on the nature of their task, mission, or objective. (1-5)
Operational Art: - Army commanders and staffs employ operational art to determine what tactics best achieve a strategic purpose. (1-20) - Operational art is the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means. Through operational art, commanders and staffs combine art and science to develop plans and orders that describe how (ways) the force employs its capabilities (means) to achieve the desired end state (ends) while considering risk. This requires commanders to answer the following questions: 1. What conditions, when established, constitute the desired end state (ends)? 2. How will the force achieve these desired conditions (ways)? 3. What sequence of actions helps attain these conditions (ways)? 4. What resources are required to accomplish that sequence of actions (means)? 5.What risks are associated with that sequence of actions and how can they be mitigated (risks)? (1-20) - Operational art is critical to leaders being able to organize the systemic defeat of an opposing force, first conceptually in their minds, and then translating their conceptual solutions into concrete execution. (1-20)
Taxonomy: - Elements of Operational Art: End State and Conditions; Center of Gravity; Decisive Points and Spaces; Lines of Operation and Lines of Effort; Operational Reach; Culmination; Basing; Tempo; Phasing and Transitions; and Risk (1-20)

Source: Created by author, US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-5, 1-20.

Appendix B

Table 2. III Corps' Timeline from 23 August – 26 December 1944

Date	Location	Event
23 August 1944	Monterey, California	- III Corps Headquarters, and Headquarters Battery depart for New York
28 August 1944	Utah Beach, Normandy, France	- III Corps advance party debarks at Utah Beach
15 September 1944	Cherbourg, France	- III Corps Headquarters and Headquarters Battery arrive in France
15 September 1944	Carteret, Normandy, France	- Assigned to the Ninth US Army - Establish HQ to support the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration for the Twelfth US Army Group
10 October 1944	Carteret, Normandy, France	- III Corps attached to the Third US Army
27 October 1944	Carteret, Normandy, France	- Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, III Corps Artillery was attached to the XX Corps near Onville, France
31 October 1944	Carteret, Normandy, France	- III Corps moved its Headquarters to Etain, France
6 December 1944	Etain, France	- III Corps Headquarters departed for Metz, France
7 December 1944	Metz, France	- III Corps received 3,000 soldiers from across the Third US Army to re-train as infantrymen for the 5th and 87th IDs. - The Infantry Replacement Training Center was located at Dragoon Barracks. - The 48th Replacement Battalion supervised the training.
8 December 1944	Metz, France	- III Corps became an operational headquarters and relieved the XX Corps. - 87th ID was replaced by the 26th ID.
13 December 1944	Metz, France	- The last German Army unit surrendered at Fort Jeanne d' Arc.
14 December 1944	Metz, France	- Third US Army issues warning order to prepare for operations east of Metz in the vicinity of Saarbrucken along the Saar River.
16 December 1944	Metz, France	- III Corps received 2,585 soldiers to re-train as infantrymen for the 26th ID.
17 December 1944	Merlebach, France	- Headquarters, and Headquarters Battery, III Corps Artillery was relieved from attachment in support of XX Corps.

18 December 1944	Metz, France Nancy, France	- 3,000 re-trained infantrymen join the 26th ID. - MG Millikin attends meeting at Third US Army Headquarters in Nancy to discuss the German Army's breakthrough in the First US Army sector in the Ardennes. - MG Millikin called his Chief of Staff to prepare moving the III Corps Headquarters the following morning to Longwy, France in anticipation of being employed against Hitler's counter-offensive.
19 December 1944	Verdun, France Longwy, France	- Meeting between the SHAEF, Twelfth US Army Group, and the Third US Army and GEN Eisenhower approves of counterattack plan. - III Corps headquarters moved again to Luxembourg City, Luxembourg - III Corps' attached divisions were the 4th AD, 26th, and 80th IDs. - 11 field artillery battalions and 3 tank destroyer battalions were attached.[130]
20 December 1944	Arlon, Belgium	- III Corps moved its headquarters to Arlon, Belgium.
21 December 1944	Arlon, Belgium	- III Corps completed plans for counterattack and published Field Order-1.
22 December 1944	Arlon, Belgium	- III Corps begins the counterattack at 0600.
23 December 1944	III Corps AO, Belgium	- III Corps rear echelon corps headquarters reached Longwy, France.
24 December 1944	III Corps AO, Belgium	- A 6th Cavalry Group Task Force protects the west flank of the III Corps. - CCR after being relieved Task Force Ficket moved to III Corps' flank along the Neufchâteau-Bastogne Highway.
25 December 1944	III Corps AO, Belgium	- XIX TAC supported the Third US Army with 599 sorties.
26 December 1944	Bastogne, Belgium	- The 80th ID remained in their zone, but attached to XII Corps. - The 35th ID attached to III Corps between the 4th AD and the 26th ID. - CCR reaches the 101st ABD's defensive perimeter around Bastogne. - The 9th AD attached to III Corps.

Sources: Created by author, source material from US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944; and Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 509-555.

[130] US Department of the Army, III Corps Headquarters After Action Report: December 1944. On 21 December 1944, III Corps published Field Order-1. This order described III Corps concept of operations for the counterattack.

Appendix C

> Not all elements of operational art apply at all levels of warfare…. The application of specific elements of operational art is situation and echelon dependent.
>
> —US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017)

The following table highlights the current US Army doctrinal definitions for the elements of operational art that MG Millikin and his III Corps staff applied during the Battle of the Bulge counterattack. The examples of III Corps are not exhaustive, but provide context linking doctrine, language, and operational art.

Table 3. MG Millikin & III Corps' Application of Operational Art

Mission Command: The exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower subordinates in the conduct of unified land operations (FM, 1-19).
III Corps Example – MG Millikin provided his subordinate commanders a steady leader in uncertain times. He gave them freedom and resources to make decisions based on commander's intent. The pressure to reach Bastogne was enormous; trusting his subordinate commanders once the success of the initial advance was forgotten by LTG Patton, MG Millikin did not waiver in trusting his subordinate commanders based on them operating with a clear purpose and endstate.
Endstate & Condition: A set of desired future conditions the commander wants to exist when an operation ends. Commanders include the end state in their planning guidance. A clearly defined end state promotes unity of effort; facilitates integration, synchronization, and disciplined initiative; and helps mitigate risk (ADRP, 2-4).
III Corps Example – The initial desired endstate for III Corps during the counterattack was to relieve Bastogne, and have III Corps postured to continue the offensive to clear the salient created by Hitler's counter-offensive.
Center of Gravity: The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. The loss of a center of gravity can ultimately result in defeat. The concept of center of gravity is only meaningful when considered in relation to the objectives of the mission (ADRP, 2-4).
III Corps Example – The 4th AD was III Corps' main effort, and their mobile armored capability was the corps' center of gravity. To support the main efforts advance, and to maximize the use of the corps center of gravity the division was placed on the left flank of the III Corps area of operations. The terrain was less restrictive, and there was more south to north avenues of approach leading towards Bastogne. Using the mobility and firepower of the 4th AD on the best axis of advance towards Bastogne created two advantages. III Corps' main effort had the shortest distance to relieve Bastogne, and this location would place them in position to transition to future phases of the campaign.

Decisive Points & Spaces: Geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success. Decisive points help commanders select clear, conclusive, attainable objectives that directly contribute to achieving the end state. A common characteristic of decisive points is their importance to a center of gravity (ADRP, 2-5).
III Corps Example – The Neufchâteau-Bastogne Highway avenue of approach that proved to be a decisive space was MG Millikin and his III Corps staff's intentional decision to support the center of gravity to achieve its purpose.
Culmination: A point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense. Culmination represents a crucial shift in relative combat power. It is relevant to both attackers and defenders at each level of warfare (ADRP, 2-9).
III Corps Example – After III Corps maximized the benefit created by their surprise counterattack MG Millikin and his III Corps staff did not push the advance beyond consolidating gains in order to avoid culmination their subordinate divisions.
Tempo: The relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. During other operations, commanders act quickly to control events and deny the enemy positions of advantage. By acting faster than the situation deteriorates, commanders can change the dynamics of a crisis and restore stability (ADRP, 2-7).
III Corps Example – MG Millikin and his III Corps staff managed the tempo of the counterattack well. They did this initially through day and night operations to maximize the benefit of surprise. Then through task organization changes and boundary shifts, III Corps enabled the 4th AD advance towards Bastogne.
Risk: the probability and severity of loss linked to hazards (JP 5-0). Risk, uncertainty, and chance are inherent in all military operations. When commanders accept risk, they create opportunities to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and achieve decisive results. The willingness to incur risk is often the key to exposing enemy weaknesses that the enemy considers beyond friendly reach. Understanding risk requires assessments coupled with boldness and imagination (ADRP, 2-10).
III Corps Example – There are numerous examples were MG Millikin and his III Corps staff accepted prudent risk in order to create opportunities for counterattack. The best example of risk is taking the 318th Infantry (minus) and attaching the two battalions to CCA and CCB in order to exploit opportunities created by III Corps' main effort, leaving the 80th ID diminished capability on the corps' east flank.

Source: Created by author, using the US Department of the Army, *ADRP 3-0, Operations* (2016), and *FM 3-0, Operations* (2017) publications, and material within the monograph.

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