

**BATTLE COMMAND IN THE STORM:
LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRANKS AND
VII CORPS**

**A MONOGRAPH
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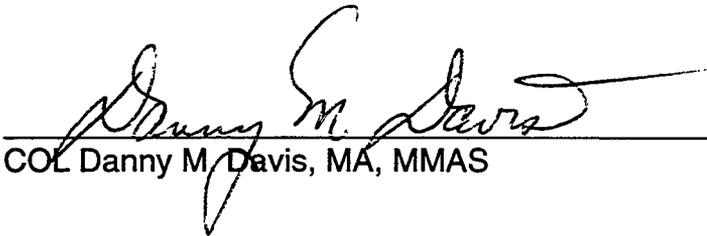
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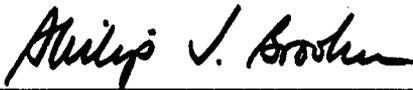
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ABSTRACT

Battle Command in the Storm: Lieutenant General Franks and VII Corps, by Major John T. Ryan, U.S. Army, 76 pages.

This study examines the concept of battle command from a modern historical perspective. It analyzes the decision making and leadership displayed by Lieutenant General Franks during the planning, preparation and execution of Operation Desert Storm to determine if General Franks exhibited the principles of battle command. Decision making and leadership are the two major components of battle command, a concept championed by Franks following Desert Storm, and, as such serve to frame the discussion. As the commander of the U.S. VII Corps during Operation Desert Storm, General Franks made decisions that had tactical, operational, and strategic implications. These decisions directly affected the lives and actions of the over 142,000 U.S. and British service-members assigned to his command. The results were overwhelmingly successful but many criticized him for being too cautious and conservative. This study investigates if the criticism founded in fact or whether General Franks was merely striking the best balance possible between decision making and leadership on the battlefield.

To accomplish this, the paper is divided into four parts. The first part briefly describes why the Army made a doctrinal shift from the previous term, "command and control," to the current concept of "battle command." The next section recounts how General Franks set the stage for VII Corps' later actions during the planning and preparations for the ground offensive. Third, is an outline of the major events involving VII Corps during the conduct of the ground war and an analysis of the key decisions General Franks made during each of the four days. The discussion focuses on the complexity of decision making at the senior tactical level and uses the aspects of decision making and leadership as points of analysis. The final section draws conclusions about General Franks' performance as a battle commander during Operation Desert Storm. It reviews the decisions General Franks made and assesses *if* a decision was required, *when* the decision was required and *what* decision General Franks made. Further, the conclusions address the leadership attributes demonstrated by General Franks in carrying out his decisions. It evaluates how well he *directed* the forces under his command and the moral *character* he demonstrated while leading VII Corps. The paper closes with the conclusion that General Franks did measure up to the paradigm of battle command. The decisions he made, although not perfect, were the most prudent choices among a list of imperfect options.

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I. Introduction.

For as long as there have been professional armies, professional soldiers of all backgrounds have studied warfare and the art of commanding soldiers in battle. Capturing the hard-earned wisdom gained by successful battlefield commanders has long been the object of military thinkers. This quest resulted in lessons learned from a variety of notable figures: Sun-Tsu of ancient China; 19th Century Europeans Napoleon Bonaparte and Helmut von Moltke; and America's own George S. Patton, Jr. of World War II fame, to name a few. Although studies of these figures in military history and many like them continue to illustrate the enduring principles of battlefield command, their experiences do not fully address the issues that face commanders today and in the future.

Today's battlefield is more complex and faster paced than ever before. Modern, hi-tech weaponry, instantaneous communications, and the ever-present media have placed new demands on commanders. The sheer magnitude of available information provides benefits but also poses challenges. Commanders must assimilate a mountain of information, visualize the battlefield, assess the situation, and direct actions to accomplish the mission at a pace not seen before.¹ However, much of what the modern-day commander does—moving forward to feel the pulse of the battle, making decisions, and motivating troops, among many other things—is no different from what his historical predecessors did. How does today's large unit commander balance the old and the new—particularly when faced with the vast size and complexity of an army corps? To discover this, it is necessary to study the actions of a commander who has overcome these demands in combat on a modern battlefield. The list of those who meet these qualifications is rather short, however.

There is only one person since World War II who has commanded a heavy U.S. Army corps in battle, General Frederick Franks. As the commander of the U.S. VII Corps during Operation Desert Storm, General Franks made decisions that had tactical, operational, and strategic implications. These decisions directly affected the lives and actions of the over 142,000 U.S. and British service-members assigned to his command. The results were overwhelmingly successful but they did not go without criticism. Is the criticism founded in fact? Did General Franks make sound decisions and display proper leadership? To determine this, it is necessary to study his experiences during Operation Desert Storm; to analyze the decisions he had to make, the factors that influenced them, and the leadership he had to exhibit as a senior tactical battlefield commander. Decision making and leadership are the two vital components of the Army's post-Cold War philosophy of "battle command"—a concept put forth by Franks himself. Therefore, it is only appropriate to assess his actions using his own paradigm. Thus, the intent of this study is to determine if General Franks exhibited the principles of battle command while commanding VII Corps during Operation Desert Storm.

To accomplish this, the remainder of the paper is divided into four parts: Genesis of Battle Command, Setting the Stage for Combat, Battle Command in the Storm, and Conclusions. The first part briefly describes why the Army made a doctrinal shift from the previous term, "command and control," to the current concept of "battle command." The next section recounts how General Franks set the stage for VII Corps' successes during the planning and preparations for the ground offensive. Third is an outline of the major events involving VII Corps during the conduct of the ground war and an analysis of the key decisions General Franks made during each of the four days. The narrative includes data collected from VII Corps orders, FRAGOs, interviews of those involved, and books on the subject. The discussion serves to show the

complexity of decision making at the senior tactical level and uses the aspects of decision making and leadership as points of analysis. The final section draws conclusions about General Franks' performance as a battle commander during Operation Desert Storm. It reviews the decisions General Franks made and assesses *if* a decision was required, *when* the decision was required and *what* decision General Franks made. Further, the conclusions address the leadership attributes demonstrated by General Franks in carrying out his decisions. It evaluates how well he *directed* the forces under his command and the moral *character* he demonstrated while leading VII Corps.

The paper will close by addressing some additional questions that will tie the analysis and conclusions together: Did General Franks measure up to his own paradigm of battle command? Are those who criticize him as the commander of VII Corps for being too slow and deliberate right; or, was he merely striking best balance possible between the requirements of decision making and leadership on the modern battlefield? Lastly, of what relevance are the battle command lessons learned from Operation Desert Storm for the leaders of the future? Before answering these and other questions, it is necessary to come to a clearer understanding of what battle command is and how it came to replace command and control in U.S. Army doctrine.

II. Genesis of Battle Command.

After leading VII Corps to victory in the Persian Gulf, General Franks realized the importance of capturing the post-Cold War leadership experiences gained during Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm. So, while completing his career as commander of the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) from 1992 until his retirement in 1994, General Franks devoted many of his efforts toward this end. While at TRADOC, General Franks directed the writing and publication of several documents intended to capture the essence of command on the modern battlefield. Among these documents were TRADOC Pamphlet 525-100-1, *Leadership*

and Command on the Battlefield: Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm, and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-100-2, *Leadership and Command on the Battlefield: Battalion and Company*. As their name implies, these pamphlets captured some of the techniques and procedures used by successful tactical commanders in combat so they could be infused back into the force. Another of Franks' projects, and probably the most important, was re-writing of the Army's capstone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, *Operations*. With the re-publication of FM 100-5 in 1993, came a revision of the old cold-war battlefield command concept of "command and control" (C2). In its place a new term, "battle command," was introduced. This concept reflected many of General Frank's personal beliefs about the essentials of battlefield command.

So what is "battle command" and how does it differ from command and control? Battle command centers on the commander, rather than the command post. Like its predecessor, it too includes a command and a control aspect but, battle command places its emphasis on the *art of command* and battle leadership versus staff processes and communication architecture and hardware.² Army manual FM 100-5, *Operations* describes it as "the art of motivating and directing soldiers and their leaders into action to accomplish missions. (It) means visualizing the current and future state of friendly and enemy forces and then formulating concepts of operations to accomplish the mission."³

This shift in focus grew out of a re-examination of our military strategy following the end of the Cold War and wars in Panama and Southwest Asia. Out went the defensively oriented "set-piece" General Defense Plans of Cold War Era Europe. In came an offensively oriented doctrine of force projection and increased battle tempo. The differences manifested themselves during both *Operation Just Cause* and *Desert Storm*. On these post-Cold War battlefields, as General Franks points out in his article "Battle Command: a Commander's Perspective," commanders were

“being required to ‘read’ new battlefields, put together new tactical teams where they had to determine the right mix of units and ‘read’ new enemies...”⁴ As a result, commanders had to become more adaptable to variety of situations than ever before. Although the former concept of command and control could have addressed these issues, as Franks points out, C2 had “picked up some intellectual baggage and association along the way that was no longer helpful.”⁵ Thus the need to doctrinally re-emphasize the art of battlefield *command* rather than the more *control* oriented emphasis of command and control as it existed on the battlefields of Western Europe.⁶

According to FM 100-5, the command aspect of battle command has two vital components—decision making and leadership. Decision making includes not only the act of deciding, but also knowing *if* the situation requires a decision, *when* to make the required decision, and *what* to decide when the time is appropriate. To do this, the battle commander must be able to visualize the current and future state of the battlefield in order to anticipate the consequences and outcomes of his decisions.⁷ No commander is a decision making “free agent,” however. The limitations placed on his organization by higher orders, the friendly and enemy information available, and just as important, the time available, all shape the commander’s vision and the decisions he makes. As a result, few decisions are clear-cut. Usually, the commander must select one imperfect solution from a list of imperfect options. Then, he must make the decision work as well as it possibly can through sheer force of personal will. Thus, deciding is not enough, effective battle commanders must provide the leadership necessary to ensure his organization carries out his decisions.

Leadership is “providing the vision that both focuses and anticipates the future course of events”⁸ and the moral and physical courage to see it through. In short, leadership requires providing *direction* and exhibiting moral *character*. Commanders provide direction by establishing a climate of teamwork and “assigning missions; prioritizing and allocating resources;

assessing and taking risks; deciding when and how to make adjustments; committing reserves; seeing, hearing, and understanding the needs of subordinates and seniors; and guiding and motivating the organization to the desired end.”⁹ Often, the decision making aspect of battle command requires a commander to make difficult choices, choices that may cause extreme hardship for those involved or will knowingly cost the lives of fellow soldiers. Some decisions may not have a clear right answer and many will question the answers given after the fact regardless of the course taken. Thus the moral character required of leaders includes taking responsibility for decisions and being loyal to subordinates.

There is no exact formula for determining what the right decision is for any situation or for the right leadership style. Commanders gain an intuitive feel for decision making and leadership through years of experience. As such, command is more of an art than a science.¹⁰ Just as painters study the masters of their discipline to learn the many ways to mix the paints on the palette, the military artist is also well served by the study of the masters. General Franks is one of those masters of the military art. To begin to learn from how he mixed the vital elements of people, equipment, time, and space, on the canvas of Southwest Asia, it is first necessary to return to the winter and spring of 1990-1991 and review the events.

III. Setting the Stage for Combat.

Of all the commanders involved in Operation Desert Storm, General Franks undoubtedly faced the greatest challenges of command. The sheer magnitude of the task was daunting. VII Corps was the largest concentration of armor and mechanized vehicles combined for an attack in U.S. history.¹¹ The Corps was composed of 142,600 personnel, 5,237 tracked vehicles, 41,663 wheeled vehicles, and 690 helicopters.¹² Under his command were: the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, 1st Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division(-),¹³ 1st (UK) Armored Division, the 2nd

Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), 11th Aviation Brigade, Corps Artillery (three brigades), and the Corps Support Command. Once fully deployed, this formation covered up to 75 kilometers in width and 150 kilometers in depth. During the Ground Campaign, VII Corps fought approximately thirteen Iraqi Divisions in close combat, including their elite heavy divisions, and maneuver over 260 kilometers in 90 hours.¹⁴ This section briefly examines the planning and preparation required to accomplish such an undertaking, with an emphasis on those decision making and leadership tasks required to set the stage for success.

Before discussing the evolution of the VII Corps plan, it is important to understand the operational framework within which Franks and his staff developed their plan. In theater, the Commander in Chief (CINC), Central Command (CENTCOM) General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, had responsibility for the direction and planning for all land, sea, air and special operations forces in the international coalition. General Schwarzkopf chose to organize his forces into service component commands. That is, his major subordinate commands were: Army Central Command (ARCENT), Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF), Marine Central Command (MARCENT), and Navy Central Command (NAVCENT). Also under his command was Special Operations Command, Central Command (SOCCENT), which included selected forces from all of the separate services. Schwarzkopf exercised influence over the coalition forces from the Middle Eastern countries involved through the Joint Military Committee, which he and Saudi General Hammad co-chaired. Later, Prince Khalid Bin Sultan was appointed as a parallel Arab Force Commander in Chief. Command of the Army forces in theater (ARCENT) fell to the U.S. Third Army Commander, Lieutenant General John Yeosock. The major forces at his disposal for the conduct of the ground war were the VII Corps, and the XVIII Airborne Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Gary Luck. The XVIII Airborne Corps consisted of the 24th Infantry Division,

82nd Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, French 6th Light Armored Division, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 18th Aviation Brigade and the 18th Corps Artillery Brigade. During the ground war, the XVIII Corps would operate on the west flank of Franks' VII Corps and the Egyptian Army forces in Joint Forces Command-North were to the east. ¹⁵

Planning

After receiving official notification of their deployment on 8 November 1990, the VII Corps staff and General Franks began analyzing the corps mission and developing a plan that would later become "Operation Desert Saber." The basic operations plan (OPLAN) would go through many machinations during the following months as the details of the CENTCOM and Third Army plans changed and commanders worked out compromises. In order to better analyze the decisions General Franks would make later, one must understand those things that shaped his basic plan: his mission, the enemy that opposed him and the terrain on which his corps operated.

Given the task of orchestrating the knock out blow, Third Army Commander General John Yeosock focused his army's efforts toward the destruction of the Iraqi operational center of gravity: the Republican Guard Forces Command (RGFC). He expressed his focus on this object in his commander's intent.

Victory will be achieved through the destruction of the RGFC, preservation of the combined forces offensive capability, and restoration of the sovereignty of Kuwait. ARCENT forces will penetrate and bypass static defensive forces to complete the physical and psychological isolation of Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The first operational echelon reserves will be fixed and blocked to secure flanks and LOCs. Follow-on operations will then be conducted to complete the destruction of the RGFC. ¹⁶

The unit tasked to accomplish the lion's share of this intent was General Yeosock's main effort, VII Corps. In turn, General Franks orchestrated his own plan with his sights set on the RGFC (Refer to Figure 1 at the end of the paper). When formulating his own intent and concept,

Franks believed it was essential to maintain a controlled tempo through the initial engagements and battles so the corps was in the right stance when the time came to deliver the knock-out blow to the RGFC. Franks planned to quickly create a nonlinear situation for the enemy and defeat his tactical reserves, thereby setting the conditions for the main event, and then to get at least a two, and preferably a three division "fist" formed to hit the RGFC with the fatal blow. Because of the unpredictability of the future situations, General Franks continually insisted that the VII Corps plan maintained the flexibility to exploit any unanticipated successes.¹⁷ This flexibility had bounds however. General Franks had to execute within the framework of the orders given to him by Yeosock and ultimately General Schwarzkopf. Therefore, the boundaries and objectives imposed by ARCENT and CENTCOM, their release of resources such as 1st Cavalry Division, the physics of moving over 48,000 vehicles around the battlefield, and political considerations, all shaped Franks' flexibility to execute freely, as later study will show.

The actions taken by the enemy also affected the options available to General Franks. Many forget that the enemy gets to "vote" on the outcomes as well. Unlike so many other endeavors in life that lend themselves to critical analysis and exacting planning prior to execution, the military art is different precisely because the object against whom one plans is largely uncooperative by his very nature. Therefore, execution is difficult to predict and plan for. In this case, General Franks and his staff had to predict the effect the Coalition Air Force attacks would have on the Iraqis during the weeks preceding VII Corps' ground attack. The total number of possible scenarios was infinite. So, Franks and his staff had to make some assumptions about enemy strengths, actions and reactions at the time of the VII Corps attack, then revise those assumptions later as more information became available. The critical assumptions General Franks gave to his staff to guide their planning were as follows: (1) Iraq will employ chemical weapons; (2) The Corps will attack

against prepared positions and there will be echeloned enemy obstacle belts across the Corps front; (3) The air campaign will reduce the RGFC to 50% strength; (4) The enemy will not commit mobile reserves until obstacle belts have been penetrated.¹⁸ These assumptions continued to shape General Franks decisions during the prosecution of the ground war.

Finally, the terrain had an effect on the shape of the events to come. Many erroneously believe that the terrain in the ARCENT area of operations was entirely featureless, leaving the commander the freedom to maneuver as he pleased. While the bulk of the terrain was exceptionally flat, there were several terrain features the planners had to consider. First, tactically, "the berm," an approximately fifteen-foot high and twenty-foot thick continuous berm of dirt that marked the boundary between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, required deliberate breaching to get through and it limited units to a column formation when passing. This meant that each potential course of action had to allow for the time required to assemble on one side of the berm, breach, pass, and re-form on the far side.

Another consideration was the very rocky terrain in the western portion of the CENTCOM area of operations. Although not impassable, the terrain was sufficiently restrictive to cause General Luck of the XVIII Corps to request that the boundary between his corps and Franks' be shifted east. This request was made and later granted to better accommodate the movement of 24th Infantry Division and the 3rd ACR in the eastern portion of the XVIII Corps' zone of attack. This shift east, coupled with Franks' desire to shift his zone of attack west to allow his main attack to conduct an envelopment around the western end of the Iraqi defenses, had a restrictive effect on the formations that both 3rd Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions would use later. The decision to go around the Iraqi defenses was brought on by the desire to avoid a time consuming breach of the berm, followed by a penetration of the Iraqi defenses and the forward passage of lines of the three

divisions through the breach force.¹⁹ Further, Franks could not just send his whole force around the end of the Iraqi defenses for several reasons. First, he had to pin the Iraqi left flank down to allow his attack in the west freedom of maneuver. Next, he needed for the British to penetrate the defenses far enough to the east so they could quickly engage the Iraqi reserves. Last, and maybe most important, he needed the 1st Infantry Division to breach the Iraqi defenses to open and secure shortened logistic routes between logistic bases in Saudi Arabia to where he believed the corps would attack the RGFC.

Finally, the Euphrates River and its flood plain to the north of Kuwait shaped the planning options available to Third Army for the employment of VII and XVIII Corps. This marshy plain, which was largely unsuitable for mounted maneuver, placed a limit on how far north the attack could go before turning east and around the flank of the RGFC. If the enemy situation called for a coordinated VII Corps and XVIII attack east toward Basrah, later developed and named CONPLAN 6 (VII Corps FRAGPLAN 7), Yeosock had to leave the XVIII Corps with some trafficable terrain to the north of VII Corps to execute their portion of this envelopment. Also, to the east, and eventually to the south of VII Corps after they turned east, the Egyptians also needed maneuver space extending north into Kuwait to accomplish their mission. These two requirements limited the amount of space available for a VII Corps zone of attack to the east and left Franks and his planners with a narrower zone than they would have liked.

This very real constraint again limited Franks' ability to bring the full weight of the over 3000²⁰ available tanks and fighting vehicles in the corps to bear on the Iraqi defenses. Even with these relative space limitations, the VII Corps area of operations, including its logistics tail, was still roughly half the size of the state of South Carolina.²¹ Thus, the enormous distances involved with respect to logistical matters placed an enormous strain on the units trying to keep this huge

armored beast sated with fuel and ammunition. So, in the end, the terrain did have more of an influence on the decisions that Franks would make during the planning and execution of Operation Desert Saber than many think.

On 13 January, General Franks and his staff presented Operation Desert Saber to his subordinate commanders, some of whom still had major portions of their organizations and equipment on the sea. The mission for Operation Desert Saber was stated quite simply as: "On order, VII (US) Corps attacks to penetrate Iraqi defenses and destroy the Republican Guard Forces in zone. Be prepared to defend northern Kuwait border to prevent re-seizing Kuwait."²² From there, Franks provided his intent statement, outlining his intentions for the conduct of the campaign.

We will conduct a swift and violent series of attacks to destroy the Republican Guard Forces Command and minimize our casualties. Speed, tempo, and a continuous AirLand campaign are key. We want Iraqi forces to move so we can attack them throughout the depth of their formations by fire, maneuver, and air. The first phases of our operation will be to get maximum forces moving toward RGFC with minimum time. These phases will be deliberate and rehearsed; the later phases will be METT-T dependent and will be battles of movement and depth. We will get maximum forces through Iraqi positions by conducting a deliberate breach and an envelopment around the western flank through gaps in the obstacle system concurrently, to force the enemy to fight a non-linear battle. The deliberate breach will be done with precision and synchronization resulting from precise targeting and continuous rehearsals. Point of main effort initially is to ensure success of the penetration and passage of the 1 (UK) AD through to defeat the tactical reserves to the east. Point of main effort then shifts north to the enveloping force consisting of 2 ACR, 1 AD, and 3 AD moving in zone toward the RGFC. Initial movement of combat support/combat service support elements through the breach must be kept to an absolute minimum to allow for rapid build-up of combat power on the far side. Once through the breach, we will defeat forces on the east rapidly with an economy of force, and pass the point of main effort to the west of that action to destroy the Republican Guard Forces Command in a fast moving battle with zones of action and agile forces attacking by fire, maneuver, and air. Combat service support must keep up because there will not be a pause. We must strike hard and continuously, and finish rapidly.²³

To fulfill his intent, the staff described a six-phased plan that began with the movements from the ports and airfields to tactical assembly areas and concluded with the defense of northern

Kuwait after the destruction of the RGFC. Phases III, IV, and V warrant further discussion here as they describe more specifically how General Franks decided to use the forces he had available to achieve his intent (see Figure 2).

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

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

Phase V: Destruction of the Republican Guard Forces Command. Phase V begins with the Corps maneuvering from Phase Line Smash through Objective Collins. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment will conduct an offensive cover forward of the two armored divisions and either the 1st Cavalry Division or the 1st Infantry Division as they maneuver across Objective Collins. Subsequent maneuver schemes are dependent upon the course of action chosen by the Republican Guard. If the Republican Guard attacks toward VII Corps, VII Corps will conduct a meeting engagement/hasty defense to find and envelop the enemy in conjunction with XVIII Airborne Corps attacks from the northwest. The Republican Guard will have three other options: delay and defend from current positions or withdraw north towards Highway 8 or east toward Basrah. VII and XVIII Corps will conduct coordinated attacks to fix and destroy the Republican Guard. Which Corps will fix and destroy will be determined by positional advantage.²⁴

Some of the key premises upon which General Franks and his staff based this original plan on were: (1) that the Corps would meet stiff resistance when they fought the RGFC, (2) Corps success would likely draw Iraqi use of chemical weapons, (3) the Corps needed to be deliberate in its actions leading up to the attacks on the RGFC so as not to stumble into the main event on a bad footing, (4) that VII and XVIII Corps (or at least the 24 ID and 3 ACR of the XVIII Corps) would

conduct a coordinated attack to envelope the RGFC, and finally, (5) that 1st Cavalry Division would become available as the Corps reserve shortly after the passage of the 1st (UK) Division.

On 16 January, President Bush announced the initiation of the Desert Storm theater campaign plan, which signaled the beginning of forty-two days of air operations against strategic targets in Iraq and operational targets in the Kuwait theater of operations.²⁵ It also marked the beginning of a period of intensified planning by both ARCENT and VII Corps. Both staffs continued to develop and refine contingency plans for branches and sequels to the base plan. Called fragmentary or "frag" plans, because they only changed portions of the original plan, these plans addressed the possible Iraqi reactions to the continuing air attacks and the eventual ground attack. In all, the VII Corps staff developed eight of these fragmentary plans.²⁶ Each of these plans were based on the location and intentions of the RGFC at the time a decision was required. Essential to each plan was ensuring that the Corps left the breach area in the appropriate posture to most effectively meet the existing threat.

The plan that General Franks and his staff believed was the most likely the corps would execute was FRAGPLAN 7, which they published on 20 February. This plan postulated that the RGFC would establish a positional defense southwest of Basrah to block coalition attacks from the west and allow the withdrawal of the remainder of the Iraqi Army from the eastern part of Kuwait. Conceptually, FRAGPLAN 7 differed little from the concept of operations outlined in the original base plan. On order, the Corps would turn 90 degrees and attack east against the defending RGFC. 2nd ACR would cover the advance of the attack, followed by the two armored divisions; the British would protect the right flank of the Corps with their attacks to the east. The key decision involved with the execution of FRAGPLAN 7 was which division to use as the third element of the armored fist: 1st Cavalry or 1st Infantry. Based on his analysis, Franks estimated that

he would have to make this decision by the afternoon of Monday 25 February.²⁷ Before 1st Cavalry Division could be used, General Schwarzkopf had to release it from theater reserve. If it was not available, the 1st Infantry Division would have to go in their place. However, use of the 1st Infantry depended on low casualties during the breach and a solid posture at the conclusion of that operation. To use 1st Infantry in an attack against the RGFC though, they would have to leave the breach as soon as the 1st (UK) Armored passed, move over 100 kilometers north, and conduct a supporting attack on the right flank of the two armored divisions—not an easy task, even if the division was in good shape.²⁸ The eventual decision to execute FRAGPLAN 7 was, by his own admission, the most important decision Franks made during the war.²⁹

Preparations.

“Meet, plan, visit, assess, and make adjustments,”³⁰ were among the notes General Franks made in his journal in early January. He had to quickly assess the capabilities of the force, form teams, and provide them direction to focus their preparation. While General Franks and his staff continued to plan during January and February, the ingredients for his armored “fist” continued to arrive in theater. One of Franks’ biggest challenges during the months preceding the ground attack was to form and prepare a warfighting team ready to execute the plans he and his staff devised. This took leadership and force of will on the part of the commander. Part of the art of leadership is gaining an intuitive sense for the level of preparation of the forces which will execute the plan decided upon. It also requires knowing, through constant contact with subordinates, their strengths and weaknesses to make wise decisions during execution.

The VII Corps that eventually carried out Operation Desert Saber was much different from the one General Franks took command of in Germany. This new force was an amalgamation of U.S. and British forces from active, reserve, and National Guard units that had prepared to go to

war as part of many different organizations during the Cold War. Complicating these matters more, the team members were from bases in both the U.S. and Europe and had varying skills and training experiences. It was, to continue the metaphor, a team of all stars; but, it was a team that had never played together. Of the major ground units, only the 1st Armored Division and the 2nd ACR were original members of VII Corps before Desert Storm. The 3rd Armored Division was from Germany and V Corps, the 1st Cavalry(-) and the 1st Infantry (-)³¹ were from the U.S. and III Corps, 2nd Armored Division (Forward), 1 ID's 3rd Brigade was also a former III Corps unit in the event of war in Europe, but they had been under V Corps control while based in Germany. The leadership challenge that confronted General Franks was how to form his team and prepare it to become the CENTCOM main effort in less than four weeks.³²

Although the squads, platoons, companies, and to a lesser degree the battalions, assigned to VII Corps were quite practiced at moving and fighting together before deployment, the same cannot be said for the larger units. One of the key training shortfalls that the divisions had to overcome involved large-scale movement. Most, if not all, the brigade and division commanders had moved *all* of their forces in formation during computer simulations. None had done it for real. No heavy division commander since the World War II had moved his force in a formation *in toto*—few brigade commanders had either—no training area is large enough to allow for it. Further, very few brigade or battalion commanders had ever conducted a full scale night attack in their current duty position; none had ever orchestrated a brigade or larger night live fire attack. This fact weighed heavily in General Franks' decision making later.

To overcome these shortfalls, VII Corps instituted a thorough but brief in-country training program. This training focused on the traditional fundamentals of: *shoot, move, and communicate*, at the brigade, division and corps level. On 2 January 1991, Franks noted in his journal: "Must

shoot. Must get some batting practice. Night moves. CSS on the move... Have to get the troops to work at night."³³ To ensure that each soldier and crew was able to test fire and zero their weapons thus gaining confidence, General Franks directed the construction of JAYHAWK range. This was a massive undertaking given the number of individual and crew served weapons in the Corps.

The training in large unit movement and control required a more innovative approach. The trick was to allow the large formations to train without decreasing the security of the force or tipping the Iraqis off to the plan. VII Corps did this by cleverly integrating their rehearsals into the deception plan and into their movement. One example of this involved the 1st Infantry Division's breach rehearsals. The 1st Infantry constructed a full scale set of trenches, obstacles and fortifications based on photos of the actual breach site. Then, the 1st Infantry Division and British division conducted a full scale mounted rehearsal of the breach operation, complete with live explosives. This ensured that units worked out the details of this large and complex operation before the actual attack. The rehearsals also complimented the theater deception plan. Conducted to the south of the 1st Cavalry Divisions' deception position near the Wadi Al-Batin, they reinforced the Iraqi perception that the main attack would occur in that area.

As a means to rehearse the movement of the Corps as a whole, Franks directed that pre-attack troop movements west were to be used as rehearsals. "We laid the Corps down from north to south," General Franks said later, "just the way the Corps would be from west to east (during the actual attack). So when we moved from the tactical assembly areas to our attack positions, we moved in the same formations that we were going to use later to attack the Iraqis."³⁴ The bulk of the VII Corps units moved the 160-180 kilometers west to their attack positions between 14-16 February (see Figures 3 and 4). The rehearsal provided several important lessons. It gave the division commanders and their staffs an appreciation of the time and space requirements necessary

to move their division with all of their attachments. Also, it gave VII units the opportunity to test and refine their command and control system and structure. Finally, it gave the commanders a more accurate idea for fuel consumption rates and how much time to allow for refueling.³⁵

The move placed units in their final stance prior to execution (see figure 5). In the west, 2nd ACR occupied Forward Assembly Area (FAA) RICHARDSON. In the center, 1st Infantry Division occupied positions just south of the line of departure. In the east, 1st Cavalry Division remained in its forward defensive position in the Wadi al-Batin, now on the east flank of the Corps formation. 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions occupied FAAs GARCIA and BUTTS, respectively, behind 2nd ACR and 1st (UK) moved into FAA RAY south of 1st Infantry Division.³⁶

On 20 February, General Cal Waller (in temporary command of ARCENT while General Yeosock underwent surgery in Germany) visited Franks and his staff to discuss the last minute details of the operation. He made it clear that the Corps must avoid getting into any engagements that would force a strategic decision to go to war while the last-minute diplomatic maneuvering was going on. He also confirmed that the intent for the upcoming operation was to conduct a coordinated XVIII and VII Corps attack to destroy the RGFC, adding that the Corps should not get in any hurry while conducting the attack. Later, at 2200 on 21 February, Waller called Franks and told him that the 24th would be G-Day (initiation of the *ground* portion of the campaign plan), and, as planned, VII Corps would conduct their attack on G+1: 25 February.³⁷ The stage was now set for the “mother of all battles.”

IV. Battle Command in the Storm.

The VII Corps attack against the Iraqi Republican Guards covered over 260 kilometers, caused the destruction of 1,981 Iraqi tanks, 1,938 personnel carriers, 713 artillery pieces, 658 air defense systems, 2,893 trucks, and led to the capture of over 22,000 prisoners in 90 hours.³⁸ This

overwhelming success came at a cost to VII Corps of 49 killed and 192 wounded.³⁹ This section will review the events that occurred within VII Corps during the period of 24-28 February 1991 and the decisions made by General Franks to shape those events. In order to fully appreciate the decisions he had to make and the leadership required to put them in to action, it is necessary to first understand what he wanted to happen, or his vision. From there, a discussion of the decisions he anticipated, the events that actually occurred and the factors that influenced his decisions when made, will provide for a basis from which to understand the decisions he did make and the leadership he used to implement them.

G-Day- 24 Feb: *The Breach.*

At 0400 24 February, the ground assault to liberate Kuwait began. CENTCOM executed a combined arms attack in three places. In the west, the XVIII Corps conducted an air assault north halfway to highway 8 to secure the Coalition western flank and establish operating bases deep in Iraq. In the center, the 1st Cavalry Division, under CENTCOM control, conducted a feint up the Wadi al-Batin to fix Iraqi reserves. In the east, MARCENT and Joint Forces Command-East attacked due north toward Kuwait City. The attacks in the east and the feint in the Wadi al-Batin in the center were designed to cause the Iraqi command to have to react to two attacks at once, thus freezing their operational reserve, the RGFC, in place, oriented south or east. With these conditions set, the VII Corps and Joint Forces Command-North would begin their attack in the west on G+1 into the flank and rear of the disoriented Iraqis.⁴⁰

Because of the directive from General Waller four days earlier warning him not to force a strategic decision before G-Day, Franks had deliberately kept the Corps back from the border, away from possible contact. Thus, for General Franks and VII Corps, the main issue of the day was to move the enveloping force (2nd ACR, 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions), the breach force (1st

Infantry), and all of the associated artillery and support into position to allow for a rapid start the following morning.⁴¹ These initial moves also included a limited attack by the 1st Infantry into the Iraqi 26th Infantry Divisions' security zone. This attack was to eliminate enemy reconnaissance and security outposts and to make room for the Corps' artillery on the north side of the "berm". Franks said later that he wanted to make sure that all the pieces were in the right place for the initial attacks, so the Corps did not "stumble out of the starting blocks" enroute to the main event, the destruction of the RGFC.⁴²

All across the front, the Coalition attacks achieved rapid success. By 0840, General Schwarzkopf called General Yeosock (recently returned from surgery) and asked if Third Army could attack early with the heavy forces.⁴³ After conferring with Franks and Luck, General Yeosock replied to Schwarzkopf that it was possible. Franks wanted the attack to begin by at least 1300 so he could maintain the original sequencing of the attack with respect to daylight and dark. This way, he did not have to disrupt the continuity of the plan they had rehearsed and induce unnecessary friction in the early stages of the campaign. Major General (MG) Tom Rhame, the 1st Infantry Commanding General (CG), assured Franks that the 1st Infantry's artillery would be in place by 1230 and he could begin the breach at 1300.⁴⁴ After a flurry of preparations to make the 1300 timeline, Schwarzkopf delayed the attack until 1500 so the Joint Forces Command-North could attack simultaneously with Third Army's heavy forces. The call from Yeosock to ask if VII Corps could attack early, and the cease-fire decision four days later, were the biggest surprises Franks experienced during the war.⁴⁵

At 1430, 1st Infantry fired almost 6000 rounds of preparatory artillery on the Iraqi defenses and at 1500 began breaching –the VII Corps plan was 15 hours ahead of schedule from the start⁴⁶ (see Figure 6). The 1st Infantry cleared lanes through the complex obstacle belt of wire, mines, and

infantry trenches, with little resistance. Within two hours, the lead brigades of 1st Infantry had established twenty-four lanes through the fortifications. By nightfall, the division was on Phase Line Colorado, its intermediate objective. To their west, 2nd ACR, leading 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, had pushed more than 30 kilometers into Iraq by the time 1st Infantry crossed their line of departure. 1st Armored, on the left, would become the main effort at the conclusion of the breach; 3rd Armored, on the right, was the corps reserve until Franks made his decision on which FRAGPLAN to execute. Casualties up to this point in the Corps were one KIA and four WIA.⁴⁷

Seventy-five kilometers south of the 1st Infantry's breach, in FAA RAY, the 1st (UK) Armoured Division were loading their armored vehicles on heavy equipment transport trucks (HETTs) when the word to attack early came. They had planned to use the HETTs to save wear on their vehicles moving up to the rear of 1st Infantry before beginning their attack. As there were not enough HETTs to move 1st (UK) in one lift, MG Rupert Smith, 1st (UK) CG, decided immediately to send units as they were: some on HETTs, some not, and some both ways. This had the effect of shuffling the deck on the well-thought-out and rehearsed movement plans for the 5000 plus vehicles in the division. Much of their divisional logistics preceded the maneuver units earlier that morning and were positioned north of the "berm," forward of 1st Infantry Division's reserve brigade by mid-day. The combat units moved forward by the most available means at hand to the rear of the 1st Infantry Division. The effect of this was that by nightfall, according to MG Smith, the 1st (UK) was "pretty strung out."⁴⁸ Yet, they still had to regroup for the twenty-four-lane passage through the breach, coordinate that passage, link up, and get fires coordinated with the U.S. 142nd Artillery Brigade of the Arkansas National Guard, before they would be ready to pass through the 1st Infantry.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the approaching darkness and the desire to maintain a balanced stance coming out of the breach began to shape the decisions Franks made. The 1st Infantry, without the two additional hours of daylight lost due to Schwarzkopf's decision to delay the attack until 1500, was faced with the prospect of exploiting the breachhead in the dark. Split by the enemy's defenses, the division's two lead brigades were north of the enemy fortifications and its 3rd Brigade (2nd Armored Division (Forward)) plus three brigades of supporting artillery and logistics were south of the breach lanes. Intermixed with the 1st Infantry formation were the British logistics and arriving maneuver units. Sporadic small-arms fire continued along the front and troops had yet to proof and mark the lanes and exits and organize the assembly areas in the dark.

The decision that faced General Franks at this point was whether or not the 1st Infantry should exploit the breach and pass the British that night, or wait and do so the following morning. For the night option to occur, 1st Infantry would have to pass its 3rd Brigade through the unproofed and unmarked lanes into a position between 1st and 2nd Brigades. Then, they would have to conduct a night attack with three brigades abreast, an operation not executed in any form since at least WWII, to expand the initial semi-circle breachhead out to Phase Line New Jersey. Following this, the 1st (UK) would have to link-up with and pass through the recently committed 3rd Brigade, again in the dark, before beginning their attacks the following morning. Continuing the attack that night might speed the timeline up by four or five hours, at best, if all went well. The alternative was to wait until 0500 the following morning and begin the execution during the daylight, as originally planned.

General Franks weighed his options. If he gave the order to execute, he could induce confusion and friction needlessly into an already complex breaching-passage operation. On the other hand, without the British passage and subsequent attack east to protect the flank of the

Corps, the 2nd ACR and the armored divisions could not continue to the north without exposing their flank and risking the chance of stumbling into an unfavorable situation prior to reaching the RGFC. This meant they would have to remain in place during the night and lose some of the tempo gained by attacking early. If he ordered just the 2nd ACR, who were well into Iraq already, to continue, they could easily get into decisive contact while out of supporting range of the remainder of the Corps. This could tip the RGFC off that the main attack was coming from the west and allow them time to re-orient to the attack.⁵⁰

Franks flew forward and talked to his lead commanders: Colonel Don Holder of 2nd ACR, Rhame of 1st Infantry, and Smith of 1st (UK). The consensus of the three commanders was that it was best for 2nd ACR to remain in place and to hold 1st Infantry on PL Colorado. MG Rhame argued that 1st Infantry could exploit the breachhead from PL Colorado to PL New Jersey with their 3rd Brigade more effectively the following morning. This, rather than risking an enemy counter attack in the dark or worse yet, fratricide.⁵¹ Rhame had reservations about committing the 3rd Brigade, a unit not organic to his division and whose ability to conduct night operations was unknown, into a three brigade attack in the dark. He assured Franks that he could have PL New Jersey, the final objective for 1st Infantry, secured and set to pass the 1st (UK) by noon on the 25th.⁵² Also weighing in on Franks' decision was the reality that his aviation brigade would be unavailable to block expected enemy counter attacks during the passage. Earlier in the day, word of the early attack caught 11th Aviation Brigade moving both of their FAARPs (Forward Arming And Refueling Points) and aircraft forward in anticipation of their originally planned execution of CONPLAN BOOT attacks the night of 25 February.⁵³ As such, the night attack, if Franks chose to execute, would have to go without corps aviation support.

Franks considered the decision he had to make. His operation was still well ahead of any planned schedule.⁵⁴ There was no indication from higher that the CINC or General Yeosock was anything but pleased with the pace of the attack or that there was a need to rush and take additional risks this early in the offensive.⁵⁵ In fact, in his memoir, General Schwarzkopf noted: "That night (24 February), about twenty hours into the ground war, I went to bed contented."⁵⁶ Also in Franks' mind was the question of whether, after their abrupt start, the British would be ready to pass through the breach before the following day anyway.⁵⁷ At 1810, General Franks called General Yeosock and told him that he had decided to suspend offensive ground maneuver operations for the night. The corps would continue other combat operations, such as aviation and artillery, and complete the movement of the two armored divisions across the "berm" and into Iraq.⁵⁸

Although he was heavily criticized later for this decision, Franks noted in his book that he did not agonize over the decision or second guess himself. In his judgment, the third day of the operation was the most important of the campaign: the attack against the RGFC. Everything else had to set the conditions for this event. As such, he felt he had to allow the Corps to build on its early successes on days one and two. Further, he knew he had to make the decision about how to attack RGFC on the second day. Therefore, the options available to him on the second day would be determined by the posture of the Corps after the conclusion of the conduct of the breach. With his focus on the RGFC, Franks did not want to do anything early that would throw the Corps off balance before reaching that decisive point in time.⁵⁹

G+1- 25 Feb: "*Slow is smooth, smooth is fast*".

Early morning of the 25th brought a continuation of the previous day's success all across the front. To VII Corps' east, MARCENT and Joint Forces Command-East continued to eat away at

the underbelly of the Iraqi defenses as they progressed toward Kuwait City. In the west, XVIII Corps continued north, relatively unopposed, toward AO Eagle on Highway 8 in the Euphrates River valley. For Yeosock and Third Army, it appeared as if there was clear sailing toward the destruction of the RGFC, but storms of two different types were about to descend on the troops at the front.

The CINC's elation with the progress of VII Corps the previous day soon evaporated. When Schwarzkopf arrived in his war room in the basement of the Saudi Ministry of Defense in Riyadh at 0800 the morning of the 25th and found VII in the same place as the night before, he called Yeosock and unleashed his legendary temper.⁶⁰ It seems that difference between what the CINC envisioned happening from his bunker well over 150 miles away from the front lines and the realities of the ground tactical commander were beginning to grow. This situation was highlighted in Riyadh by the difference in the movement rates of the 24th Infantry Division and the 3rd ACR, immediately to VII Corps' west, and that of VII Corps. In the west, MG Barry McCaffrey had continued to drive his reinforced mechanized division of over 8000 wheeled and tracked vehicles and 20,000 personnel⁶¹ throughout most of the night of 24-25 February. The continued movement by the 24th Infantry across empty but difficult terrain, opened a gap between the flanks of XVIII and VII Corps. This gap became painfully obvious on briefing charts at CENTCOM and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The gap was real. However, what the CINC failed to consider when comparing the movement rates of the two organizations was that Franks had to move a corps with the equivalent of five divisions, including its three brigades of artillery. In contrast to McCaffrey's single division, Franks had over 47,000 vehicles and 142,000 personnel⁶² to move—a much more complex task. He also had infinitely more enemy in front of him than McCaffrey. Perceptions

being reality in the rear, however, the CINC's displeasure continued to grow throughout the operation.⁶³

The second storm brewing was the making of mother nature. "The weather wasn't just bad (during the operation)," Colonel Don Holder commented later, "it was awful. (It was) worse than the seasonal averages and worse than our expectations."⁶⁴ By mid-morning, the high winds and blowing sand, followed by rain and fog, grounded Franks C2 helicopter and began to increase the friction on every action taken by VII Corps.

All of this notwithstanding, General Franks' agenda for day two was to set into motion the key decisions necessary to set the corps up for the attack on RGFC the following day. The most important of these decisions was whether or not to commit to FRAGPLAN 7.⁶⁵ Essential to this decision was locating a third division for the "fist" already being formed by 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions or to do without, and use the 2nd ACR.⁶⁶ As yet, the CINC still retained control of the 1st Cavalry to hedge against what he must have perceived as an uncertain enemy situation. Whatever the decision, Franks knew he did not want to give the Iraqis any more time to re-orient and set their defenses.⁶⁷

The events planned for the day to get into position to execute FRAGPLAN 7 included the forward passage of the 1st (UK) through 1st Infantry and their subsequent attack east toward Objective Waterloo to destroy Iraqi 52d Armored Division, the tactical reserve⁶⁸. The 1st Armored Division was to attack Objective Purple, an Iraqi logistics base at al-Busayyah on the boundary between VII and XVIII Corps to secure it as a logistics base for XVIII Corps. 2nd ACR would continue to move north-east to Objective Collins, covering the Corps' advance, to find and fix the RGFC; and 3rd Armored Division would follow, protecting the east flank of the corps until the British attacks could take effect⁶⁹ (see Figure 7). One of the most important actions that the Corps

had to complete in conjunction with the passage of the British, was the establishment of Log Base Nelligen forward of the 1st Infantry's breachhead. Without these supplies, especially fuel, and the shortened supply lines their forward position allowed, the attacks on the RGFC over 150 kilometers away would literally 'run out of gas'.⁷⁰

On the left flank of the corps, 2nd ACR began its movement north-east before daybreak on the 25th and uncovered the 1st Armored Division which resumed its mounted movement toward Objective Purple shortly after daybreak. By mid-day, the lead brigade of 1st Armored made contact with a brigade of the Iraqi 26th Infantry some 50 kilometers south of their intended objective. MG Griffith bypassed the enemy formation with two of his brigades and left his trail brigade to clean-up the situation while the division continued toward Objective Purple at al-Busayyah. Forward of the division, Griffith maintained constant pressure on the enemy with close air support (CAS) and aviation attacks against counter-attacking and repositioning enemy forces. By late afternoon, 1st Armored Division's lead units encountered resistance from dug-in infantry and tanks in al-Busayyah. As the day progressed the weather became increasingly worse and the terrain around al-Busayyah was laced with four- to six-foot deep wadis which, combined with the weather, served to disguise the Iraqi positions. With the approach of darkness, Griffith had two options: conduct a hasty night attack against a dug-in Iraqi commando battalion, infantry battalion, and a tank company, and risk heavy losses, or wait until morning and conduct a coordinated attack after preparing the objective with artillery all night.⁷¹

At 1800 Griffith called Franks and asked to delay the attack on Objective Purple until the morning. The corps commander considered the situation and decided to defer the decisions about the specific timing and tactics of the attack up to the commander on the ground. Franks reasoned that since the RGFC and the Jihad Corps (reinforcing unit to the RGFC) were moving into

defensive positions rather than maneuvering against VII Corps, the urgency to seize Purple by the end of the 25th and then get 1st Armored into a position on the north flank of the RGFC was not that great.⁷² Although he was aware of the CINC's earlier "concerns" about the pace of the VII Corps attack, Franks was also told by General Yeosock earlier that day that the CINC still wanted VII Corps to "fight smart, deliberately, with small casualties, develop the situation, and fix by fires."⁷³ This, led him to conclude that in light of the situation and the CINC's guidance, that it did not make sense to risk the casualties and possible fratricide likely to occur if 1st Armored conducted a mounted attack into a dismounted defense in a town. He also trusted Griffith to make a tactically prudent decision. As a result, Franks told Griffith he was free to orchestrate his own operations so long as 1st Armored completed their mission and were in the northern portion of Objective Collins ready to attack east by 0900 the following morning.⁷⁴

In the center of the VII Corps attack, the 3rd Armored Division followed the 2nd ACR throughout the day and destroyed the fragments of Iraqi units, by-passed by the cavalry screen. The widely spread 2nd ACR formation had by-passed scattered elements of the Iraqi 26th Division earlier in the day, but by 1240, they were firmly in contact with security forces of the Tawalkana Division of the RGFC.⁷⁵ The regiment remained in almost continuous contact with the enemy heavy forces for the next 36 hours. To their southeast, the 1st Infantry completed the exploitation of the breach by 1100 on the 25th and began passing the British through at 1200. The 1st (UK), led by the 7th Brigade, "Desert Rats" of North Africa fame, began attacking east toward Objective Copper by 1515, their 4th Brigade followed beginning a 1930.⁷⁶ This action sealed the right flank of the Corps' attack north against the RGFC. The passage of the 1st (UK) continued until about 0200 on the 26th and prevented the 1st Infantry from moving until the British had cleared the passage lanes.

The 2nd ACR's contact with security zone forces earlier in the day told Franks that the main attack was about to begin—the time had come to decide on FRAGPLAN 7 and which division would become the third in the “fist”. To confirm his thoughts on the subject, Franks flew forward, as he did throughout the operation, to meet face to face with the respective commanders on the ground. By doing so, he experienced the sights and sounds of the battles his subordinates were involved in, felt the blowing dust and rain, and took the pulse of his forces. This allowed him to make decisions based on ground-truth-reality rather than hours old data posted on a map in some far away command post. His circulation on the battlefield that day went something like this: 0725, met 3rd Armored's commanding general MG “Butch” Funk at the Tactical Command Post (TAC CP); flew forward, met with MG Griffith at 0830; flew east, studied the terrain, enemy and friendly situation enroute to the breachhead; met MGs Rhame and Smith at the breach at 1100; noon, flew to “jump” TAC CP and called Colonel Stan Cherrie, VII Corps' operations officer (G-3) to get an update on the overall 3rd Army and CENTCOM situation; 1400, flew north 80 kilometers to 2nd ACR's TAC CP to get an assessment of the enemy situation; 1630, flew south to the TAC CP Forward, co-located with the 3rd Armored's TAC CP, met with VII Corps chief of staff, G-2 (intelligence), G-3, G-4 (logistics), 11th Aviation Brigade commander, and corps fire support coordinator and got an update on the situation.⁷⁷ What he found out was, the RGFC was fixed in its defensive positions, 1st Cavalry was still under CENTCOM control, and Log Base Nelligen would be ready on the 26th. Throughout the day, Franks had gathered and assimilated the information he needed to make his decision. This was typical of Franks' daily battlefield circulation.

Armed with this information, Franks made his decision: the corps would execute a revised FRAGPLAN 7 (see Figure 8). In this revised plan, the corps would turn 90 degrees east and

attack with the 2nd ACR fixing the RGFC, 1st Armored in the north facing the Medina Division, 3rd Armored in the center versus the Tawalkana, and 1st Infantry, rather than 1st Cavalry, would pass through the 2nd ACR on the afternoon of the 26th and become the southern-most division in the 'fist' facing parts of the Tawalkana and the 12th Armored Division. The decision also activated a new Third Army boundary between VII and XVIII Corps, leaving the XVIII Corps a zone of attack leading toward Basrah between VII Corps and the Euphrates River. This boundary split the RGFC into two sectors and assumed mutually supporting attacks between VII and XVIII Corps; the mutual support on the north flank was not forthcoming, however. The boundary also meant that movement on the northern flank of the corps would be restricted. At 1645, Franks held brief orders group attended by the division commanders or their representatives to inform them verbally of the decision.⁷⁸

G+3 - 26 Feb: *Forming the Fist and Using It.*

That night, the weather continued to worsen. The alternating rain and sandstorms precluded VII Corps' use of 11th Aviation Brigade in deep attacks against the RGFC. It also wrecked communications throughout the corps, making it difficult to disseminate the plans Franks had decided on. The actual order to execute FRAGPLAN 7 did not make it to the subordinate major commands until between 0300 and 0530 on 26 February.⁷⁹ However, because of the constant movement, fighting, and weather, and just plain old friction, it would take over twenty-five hours for Franks' directives to filter through the seven levels of command that existed between the corps commander and the tank gunner who had to actually execute the plans.⁸⁰

At 0135 on the 26th, Baghdad radio announced an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.⁸¹ This event exacerbated a storm that was already brewing in Riyadh. The concern of the CINC and General Powell, back in Washington, D.C., was that the overly cautious and slow VII Corps attack, (in

their opinion, compared to the largely unopposed 24th Infantry Division) was going to allow the Iraqis to escape back into Kuwait before VII Corps could destroy them.⁸² Ironically, after assessing the situation from his headquarters, and using twelve to twenty-four hour old reports—made even more inaccurate by poor communications,⁸³ the CINC issued guidance for Third Army units to change from deliberate operations to a pursuit just when VII Corps was preparing to attack the firmly defending RGFC.⁸⁴ Again, as Third Army historian Richard Swain comments in his book, *“Lucky War,” Third Army in Desert Storm*, “like Schwarzkopf’s knowledge of what was taking place on the battlefield, his tantrum (about the slow movement of VII Corps) was far behind events in the field.”⁸⁵ In reality, what the CINC failed to realize was the XVIII Corps’ mechanized units were not ahead of, but between 30 and 50 kilometers behind VII Corps by mid-morning on the 26th—leaving the 1st Armored Division with an open left flank.⁸⁶

During the previous night, the 1st Armored Division showered Objective Purple with artillery rounds and attacked at dawn with 1st and 2nd Brigades. 3rd Brigade linked up with the division during the night after fighting by-passed elements of the Iraqi 26th Division. After refueling, 3rd Brigade moved out again at 0500,⁸⁷ by-passed Purple to the east, and continued to the northern portion of Objective Collins to set the base line for the division to fall in on. The division had moved over 140 kilometers in a day-and-one-half.⁸⁸ To their east, the 2nd ACR continued to strip away the security zone of the Tawalkana throughout the 26th of February. Although it had gone into a hasty defense during the middle of the night as a result of the miserable weather and the need to re-supply after fighting all of the previous day, the 2nd ACR also kept the pressure on the Iraqis during the night with a generous use of artillery and MLRS rockets. At 0730, they were again in direct-fire contact with the Iraqis’ security zone. 3rd Armored Division units moved most of the night and were poised to pass around to the north 2nd ACR into Objective Collins and

attack east abreast of 1st Armored by late morning. The lead elements from 1st Infantry Division began movement north from the breachhead at Phase Line New Jersey by 0430. Over the next 48 hours, the division moved and attacked continuously, covering over 200 kilometers before stopping on the 28th of February.⁸⁹ At H+53 (0920 on 26 February), twelve hours later than Yeosock and Franks had originally estimated as the latest possible time the 1st Cavalry could be released and still be of use in the fight against the RGFC, the CINC released it to VII Corps from theater reserve.⁹⁰ In a valiant effort to catch up, the division passed through the breachhead and began a 250 kilometer move north to get into a position for a fight on the northern flank of 1st Armored Division—they would not make it into the fight before the premature cease fire.

In the early afternoon, the driving rain changed over to a blinding sandstorm, limiting visibility to less than 100 meters at times. However, this may have been to the advantage of the VII Corps. With their thermal sights to see through the weather and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for navigation, the U.S. forces were able to achieve the element of surprise by attacking the Iraqis in such bad weather. After fighting through the RGFC's security zone for twenty-four hours, the 2nd ACR emerged out of a sand storm from an unexpected direction mid-day on the 26th and made quick work out of Iraqi T-72s and BMPs in the main defenses of the Tawalkana Division. This battle would become known as the "Battle of 73 Easting" because of the Iraqi defenses were oriented along the 73 north-south grid line on the map.

Franks knew that this contact with the main body forces of the RGFC meant that the time to decide when and where to pass the 1st Infantry Division through 2nd ACR was quickly approaching. Before making that decision, he wanted the 2nd ACR to continue to develop the situation and find the seam between the Tawalkana and 12th Armored Division, a reinforcing unit from the Jihad Corps.

While forward keeping his finger on the pulse of the current fight, General Franks began formulating his concept for the finishing blow against the RGFC. In his estimate, the Iraqis faced VII Corps with two complete RGFC divisions (Tawalkana and Medina), one brigade of the Adan, and one or two brigades of the Hammurabi, and the 10th and 12th Armored Divisions of the Jihad Corps.⁹¹ In addition, two complete RGFC divisions along with one or two brigades of the Hammurabi Division were north of the new VII/XVIII Corps boundary that paralleled the northern border of Kuwait and extended to the Persian Gulf.⁹² With the release of 1st Cavalry earlier that day, the availability of 1st Infantry after the breach, and the healthy shape the British were in on the southern flank, Franks realized that he had the tools to conduct a double envelopment of the RGFC.

After exploring several possibilities, Franks' final concept involved using 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions to maintain pressure on the Tawalkana in the center of the corps zone, the 1st Infantry passing through the 2nd ACR and enveloping the Tawalkana, then either the 1st Infantry or the British continuing around the remainder of the RGFC from the south, and the 1st Cavalry Division passing around 1st Armored and enveloping the RGFC from the north.⁹³ The problem Franks faced was not one of resources, it was one of time, space, and distance: the time necessary to get 1st Infantry and 1st Cavalry into place, the lack of space required to bring five heavy divisions on line in the narrow corps zone, and the enormous distance (200-300 km)⁹⁴ 1st Cavalry had to travel around the outside of the corps turn before getting into the fight.

While developing his concept, General Franks ordered the *coup de main* against the RGFC to begin. From north to south he had 1st Armored, 3rd Armored, 2nd ACR pitted against the RGFC while the 1st (UK) secured the southern flank by destroying Iraqi front line reserves (see Figure 9). While forward with the 2nd ACR during the conclusion of the "73 Easting" fight, Franks ordered

1st Armored and the remainder of his 'armored fist' to "move east, gain contact," at 1509.⁹⁵ 1st Armored attacked with three brigades abreast against the Tawalkana's 29th Mechanized Brigade and later directed deep attacks against the RGFC's Medina Division farther to the east.⁹⁶ As their attack progressed, the gap between their left flank and the 24th Infantry Division/ 3rd ACR grew to at least 60 kilometers.⁹⁷ This left Griffith's northern flank exposed to a motorized brigade of the RGFC's Adnan Infantry Division, positioned 20 kilometers north of the Tawalkana.⁹⁸ Fires from the division's artillery, aviation, and close air support removed the threat, but not before the Adnan exacted a toll on the division's cavalry squadron with its own artillery.⁹⁹ Well to the rear, direct fire from a 3rd ACR unit that had crossed over into the VII Corps zone took the lives of two 1st Armored Division soldiers and wounded two more shortly after the attack began. These were only the first of several fratricidal incidents to occur before the sun rose the following morning.

In the center, at approximately 1600, 3rd Armored Division began its fight with the Tawalkana in what they later called the "Battle of PL Bullet." Restricted to 27 kilometers of attack frontage between 1st Armored and eventually the 1st Infantry, MG Funk aimed his concentrated firepower at the center of the Tawalkana defenses. Funk's two lead brigades concentrated the fires of as many as 50 artillery pieces and rockets apiece, reinforced by every sort of close air support available, to methodically pave their way through the Iraqi defenses.¹⁰⁰ The fight continued throughout the night and at 0400 the following morning, Funk passed a fresh brigade forward and continued to press the attack.

Throughout the afternoon of the 26th, the 1st Infantry continued to move north through a blinding sandstorm. It was becoming evident to Franks that the 1st Infantry would not be in a position to pass through the 2nd ACR and attack before dark as he had expected earlier. Now, General Franks had to make his most difficult decision of the war: when to commit the 1st

Infantry.¹⁰¹ His options were to send 1st Infantry straight off the march and into a night passage and attack, each complex operations in their own right, with little or no planning or preparation, or to wait until morning and conduct a daylight passage and attack. He considered the situation. The 2nd ACR was fully engaged with the Tawalkana's main defenses and had found a seam in the defenses to exploit. The RGFC was moving forces forward as quickly as possible to backstop their defenses. This meant that if the 2nd ACR continued the attack, they might have run out of combat power in the middle of the RGFC defenses and force a night passage anyway, but under less favorable conditions. If he waited, the Iraqis would only get stronger. "If they showed any skill," Franks said later, "it was if you gave them any time, they could move and hurt you."¹⁰²

On the other hand, he knew that the 1st Infantry had been moving since before dawn. A decision to attack straight off the march meant 1st Infantry would have almost no time to coordinate or establish any control measures for the night attack. This meant the chance of fratricide was exceptionally high. He decided the benefits outweighed the risks. He needed the 1st Infantry's 522 tanks and Bradleys to break through and to sustain the corps' knock-out blow by pursuing the enemy across Kuwait the following day. At 1700, Franks called MG Rhame and gave him the order to attack that night and seize Objective Norfolk.¹⁰³ The sketchy details of the passage and subsequent attack filtered down to the company level via radio by approximately 2100 hours for a 2200 passage fifteen kilometers away—there was no time to plan as units spent most of this time moving forward.¹⁰⁴

1st Infantry began their passage through 2nd ACR at approximately 2200. In four hours, the eight thousand vehicles of the 1st Infantry passed through the 2nd ACR, and joined the attack "with no maps, no graphics, no rehearsal, (and) no talk through."¹⁰⁵ They picked up the Regiment's thirty kilometer wide zone of attack along the 72 easting with 1st Brigade in the north, 3rd Brigade

in the south and 2nd Brigade in reserve. The run and gun “Battle for Norfolk” began shortly before midnight and continued until dawn the following morning.

Attacking 1st Infantry Division units soon found themselves in the middle of one of several defensive belts, each with a combination of actively occupied vehicles and fortifications, burned out hulks from the air war, smoldering hulks from the 2nd ACR’s 73 easting fight, burning vehicles from the current fight, abandoned but operable vehicles—by-passed by forward units, friendly vehicles, and tracers going in every direction. Add to this tired troops trying to distinguish friend from foe in a situation where both friendly and enemy forces are intermixed in the dark throughout the battlefield, and the situation is ripe for fratricide. The division experienced three separate “blue on blue” incidents during the six-hour night fight, resulting in six KIA, over thirty wounded, and the loss of five MIA1s and five BFVs to direct fire battle damage from “friendly fire”.¹⁰⁶ It was an ugly fight, but, Franks’ decision had paid off. The 1st Infantry was through the southern flank of the RGFC’s defenses and in a position to deliver a knock-out blow across Kuwait toward the coast (see Figure 10).

G+3 - 27 Feb: *Knock out.*

As dawn broke over the wreckage wrought by the previous night’s attacks, General Franks estimated that he had two decisions to make that day.¹⁰⁷ The first was to determine what force to commit as the southern arm of the his double envelopment, the 1st Infantry or the 1st (UK). Franks reasoned that if the 1st Infantry Division needed more time to complete the fight at Objective Norfolk, the British, who had completed the destruction of the tactical reserves, could get to Objective Denver at Highway 8 and cut off the retreating Iraqis faster than 1st Infantry could. On the other hand, if the 1st Infantry’s fight was over, they were currently situated between 80 and 100 kilometers closer to Objective Denver than the 1st (UK), making them the most logical choice. The

second decision facing Franks was not if to use 1st Cavalry in the north against the Hammurabi, but how? There was not enough maneuver space with the new boundary to simply send them around to the north of the 1st Armored Division. They could conduct a forward passage of lines. However, passing 1st Cavalry through 1st Armored would probably require the latter to break contact and thus destroy the momentum of the attack.¹⁰⁸

To gather the information required to make these decisions, Franks again went forward to see the battlefield and to look into the eyes of his commanders and the eyes of the captured enemy. What he saw told him that the soldiers of the 1st Infantry were tired, they had been in the attack for over sixty hours by now, but they were ready to finish it.¹⁰⁹ The enemy and his defenses were broken. The 1st Infantry had exploited the seam between the Tawalkana's 9th Brigade¹¹⁰ and the 12th Armored Division's 37th Brigade on the southern flank of the RGFC defenses. Franks knew the time had come to begin the pursuit. With this information, he made his first decision. The 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions would be the "direct pressure force" and the 1st Cavalry and 1st Infantry would act as the northern and southern encircling forces of the double envelopment; the British would drive due east and cut Highway 8 on the southern flank of 1st Infantry.¹¹¹ The issue now was how to get the 1st Cavalry in a position to execute.

Franks then flew north to the 1st Armored Division, where he arrived by 0815, and was greeted with an unexpected problem: the division had an estimated two hours of fuel left.¹¹² By this time, the 1st Armored Division's northerly movement had stretched the lines of communication back to Log Base Nelligen to the point of breaking. The turnaround time from Nelligen to the lead of 1st Armored was now over twenty-four hours. This made it difficult for the 2,500 and 5,000 gallon fuel tankers to satisfy the division's 500,000 to 750,000 gallon per day fuel requirement.¹¹³ Franks had two choices: stop 1st Armored Division and pass 1st Cavalry through to

pick up the fight, an action that would take the rest of the day and into the night and cause a loss of momentum; or, keep 1st Armored in the fight and take the risk that more fuel would arrive in time. The former option would take the pressure off the Iraqis for twelve or more hours, the later option risked running out of fuel atop the world's largest supply of oil. He could not take the pressure off. He trusted his logisticians and subordinate commanders to find some fuel. Franks ordered 1st Armored Division to continue the attack. His leaders did not let him down.¹¹⁴ Even before he could make his decision, 3rd Armored Division had thirty 2,500¹¹⁵ gallon tankers enroute to 1st Armored. Others would soon follow from throughout the VII Corps area.¹¹⁶

As this situation was sorting itself out, Griffith's 1st Armored continued attacking east with three brigades abreast.¹¹⁷ By 1130, they began the largest tank battle of Desert Storm: "The Battle of Medina Ridge." During the course of the battle in which 1st Armored Division engaged the RGFC's Medina Division, a brigade from the Adnan, and a brigade from the 12th Armored Division,¹¹⁸ the division destroyed 286 tanks, 127 armored personnel carriers, and 38 artillery pieces.¹¹⁹ The battle lasted until dark.

To their rear, the 1st Cavalry Division moved into Assembly Area Horse by 1100.¹²⁰ After moving his division over 250 kilometers in a little over 25 hours, Brigadier General (BG) Tilelli was anxious to contribute to the fight.¹²¹ Franks too wanted 1st Cavalry in the fight, but how? With 1st Armored Division already wedged up against the northern boundary and fully in contact with the Medina Division, Franks had two options. One was to request a boundary shift north to allow the 1st Cavalry to pass around 1st Armored to attack toward Objective Raleigh and the Hammurabi Division. The second option was to narrow or "neck-down" 1st Armored Division's zone and have 1st Cavalry pick up the fight against the Medina along the northern boundary, then continue east to

attack the Hammurabi at Objective Raleigh. In either option, Franks wanted 1st Cavalry in the fight before dark because the Hammurabi were beginning to withdraw to the north.¹²²

The first option was the preferred choice, but he could not directly coordinate with General Luck of XVIII Corps because they were out of communications, and CENTCOM denied the boundary shift with XVIII Corps.¹²³ This left Franks with the ‘neck-down’ option, but it too began to unravel that afternoon. At approximately 1400, Franks directed Griffith and Tilelli to execute before dark on the 27th. However, just after 1700, MG Griffith called to inform Franks that his 3rd Brigade, on the northern flank, was in contact, had some casualties, and that he could not execute the move to narrow his zone without serious risks to his unit.¹²⁴ Franks was then left with three options: 1) to order Griffith and Tilelli to execute the ‘neck-down’ option before dark regardless of the situation, 2) to order the two units to execute a complete passage of lines in contact and let 1st Cavalry take up the entire fight, or, 3) to wait until morning and execute the ‘necking-down’ option.¹²⁵ After considering the risks involved, the potential loss of momentum involved and the time available, Franks decided to exercise his third option: wait until morning to commit the 1st Cavalry. He still believed that he had plenty of time to catch the Hammurabi. What he did not know then, was that his time was running out.

Farther south, the 3rd Armored continued to attack through the remnants of the Tawalkana and 12th Armored Divisions throughout the morning and into the afternoon. With an additional battalion of the VII Corps’ 11th Aviation Brigade under their operational control, the 3rd Armored maintained both close and deep pressure on the Iraqis, secured Objective Dorset by 1540, and reached its limit of advance at Phase Line Kiwi at 2130.¹²⁶

To their right, the 1st Infantry crossed into Kuwait at 1000 hours,¹²⁷ assumed an attack azimuth of 90 degrees, due east, and were “go(ing) for the blue on the map”—the Persian Gulf.¹²⁸

By mid-afternoon, the division was well out in front of the remainder of the corps and had outrun effective FM radio communications with the VII Corps TAC CP. Franks sent his G-3 Stan Cherrie forward with the attack plans and graphics for the following day. But Cherrie had been unable to catch up with MG Rhame and brief him personally.¹²⁹ Rhame, well forward in his tank, was now driving his division's pursuit axis on a north-easterly azimuth of 45 degrees toward Objective Denver.¹³⁰ This turn, eventually put them in the path of the oncoming 3rd Armored Division and would precipitate some later decisions made by Franks. The 1st Infantry Division's cavalry squadron crossed Highway 8 shortly after 1630 and set up defensive positions blocking the Iraqi escape route. On the southern flank of the Corps, the British continued their successful attacks east into Objective Varsity, completing the destruction of the 52nd Division and trapping the remainder of the "Saddam Line" in Kuwait (see Figure 11).

During the day, as enemy resistance began to crumble from south to north, units found themselves executing any one of the four forms of offensive operations. In the south, the 1st Infantry and the 1st (UK) were in pursuit of a fleeing enemy; in the center, the 3rd Armored was exploiting their initial breakthrough, and in the north, the 1st Armored continued to hammer away at the RGFC with a series of movements to contact and hasty attacks against a defending enemy in prepared positions.

Franks' believed his vision of the double envelopment plan would all come together on the 28th. The 1st Cavalry would pass around 1st Armored at dawn and begin to destroy the Hammurabi division in the vicinity of Objective Raleigh (near the Rumaila oil fields 30 km away) by late morning. The 1st Infantry and the 1st (UK) would continue to pursue both northeast and east to cut Highway 8 at Objectives Denver and Cobalt respectively, to trap any remaining units in Kuwait. 1st Armored and 3rd Armored would destroy anything that remained between the arms of the

envelopment. Franks predicted that by nightfall on the 28th, VII Corps would have the RGFC completely cut off and the mission accomplished.

However, his vision would not come to full fruition. At 2100 on the 27th, General Schwarzkopf gave the “mother of all briefings” to the assembled media in Riyadh. In his briefing, he alleged that the escape door for the Iraqis was essentially shut.¹³¹ After seeing the briefing, General Powell called Schwarzkopf at 2230 (local) from the Oval Office in the White House and asked him if there was any reason not to stop the attack immediately.¹³² Schwarzkopf polled his component commanders, including Yeosock, at 2300, discussed the subject, and told them the President and Secretary of Defense were considering a cease-fire at 0500 local the following morning.¹³³ Yeosock called Franks at 2310 on the 27th, *warned* him of the potential cease fire, told him that the corps was authorized to use fires until 0500, that it should not conduct deep operations, and that the corps should be prepared to resume offensive operations on order.¹³⁴ The emphasis of the order was to stop the attacking forces and to minimize the opportunity for further casualties.¹³⁵ At 2337, Franks received what he interpreted as an official written order from Third Army that confirmed a 0500 cease fire time the following day. Believing that the cease fire was a done deal, Franks subsequently issued an order to the same effect as the one he received from Third Army.¹³⁶ By 0130 on the 28th, VII Corps forces had received Franks’ order and had assumed a hasty defensive posture.¹³⁷

G+4 - 28 Feb: Cease Fire.

Just after 0300,¹³⁸ Franks received new verbal orders from Yeosock and Third Army changing the effective time for the cease fire at 0800 local, three hours later than the previous order. This three hour change would then bring the ground war to an end precisely 100 hours after it began. The emphasis of this order, in contrast to the force protection nature of the first, was on

inflicting the maximum amount of damage possible on the remaining Iraqi equipment prior to the cessation of hostilities. This verbal directive from Yeosock also included instructions for VII Corps to secure a road junction just north of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border near the town of Safwan. At 0330, ARCENT published FRAGO 68 ordering VII Corps to “attack in zone to destroy enemy armored vehicles and to seize the road junction vicinity QU 622368 [north of Safwan].¹³⁹ It is unclear whether Franks personally saw the written order before the cease fire.¹⁴⁰

Disappointed that VII Corps would not be able to complete the double envelopment, but none the less compliant to his orders as he understood them, Franks set out to issue directives to accomplish the orders given to him. He knew he had to keep it simple. Communications were bad, his units were strung out all over Kuwait and Iraq, it was the middle of the night, and after four hard days of fighting, his corps was dead on its feet. Much of his subordinate leadership had gotten less than eight hours of sleep since the ground war began.¹⁴¹ Franks called a weary Colonel Stan Cherrie to the map and the two assimilated the information necessary to develop a plan. For Franks, coming up with a plan that continued the destruction of Iraqi equipment was easy—that is what the corps had been doing all along. The real problem facing Franks was what to do about Safwan.

The first issue General Franks had to solve with respect to Safwan was to determine what the Third Army commander’s intent for its capture was. In his book, Franks states that his understanding of what Yeosock told was to get to the crossroads “to prevent any Iraqi units from escaping by that route.”¹⁴² However, the task given to VII Corps in FRAGO 68 was to *seize* the road junction, which when strictly defined, means “to clear a designated area and obtain control of it.”¹⁴³ First, as mentioned earlier, it is not clear that Franks saw the written order before issuing his orders, so it is unfair to say that he should have known what he was supposed to do based solely

on the task he was given in the written order. In either case, the intended purpose for achieving the task was unstated. Second, since Third Army had not given VII Corps a geographic objective at any other time during the war,¹⁴⁴ Franks interpreted the purpose of Yeosock's order as one to "stop movement through the road junction,"¹⁴⁵ rather than to physically seize the road junction. As a result, he believed that VII Corps needed only to *interdict* enemy forces in that area and he issued his orders in that same light.¹⁴⁶

The next issue Franks had to solve was who would do the Safwan mission. The crossroads of Highway 8 and the coastal road at Safwan lay just south of the corps' northern boundary near Objective Raleigh, the 1st Cavalry's planned objective for the day, and twenty kilometers north of Objective Denver, the 1st Infantry Division's objective. When Franks received the orders for Third Army, the road junction lay in the 1st Armored Division's zone of attack. However, they had just finished a long fight with two RGFC divisions and were between fifty and sixty kilometers from the road junction. They could not get there in time. The 3rd Armored would have been the next logical choice, but Franks had to halt them the night before along Phase Line Kiwi (roughly the 30 easting) to keep them from running into the flank of the northeasterly-heading 1st Infantry Division. This left the 1st Infantry Division as the only choice. Their northern-most brigade was between thirty and forty kilometers from the crossroads, but they were entangled in a vast complex of abandoned strip mines that made navigation in the dark exceptionally difficult.¹⁴⁷ After assessing the situation, Franks decided to order 1st Infantry to continue on a northeast axis toward Objective Denver, believing that seizure of Denver would achieve the effect the Army commander intended.

However, the friction of war had slowed things almost to a dead stop and Franks would have a hard time re-starting them on this short of notice. The order went out at 0406,¹⁴⁸ less than an hour before units originally expected the cease fire to begin. At 0515, the corps added a northward

extension to the 1st Infantry zone of attack which included the crossroads, but did not specify that they had to occupy the ground.¹⁴⁹ Franks had issued his third change of orders in less than twelve hours and he knew the chances for misunderstanding were great. The order now had to transcend seven layers of command in less than two hours in order for the 1st Infantry to cross its line of departure by 0545. This task was made even more difficult by the fact that MG Rhame and his G-3 were forward in their tanks at the time the message was sent, and out of radio contact with VII Corps.¹⁵⁰

The order did make it in time, and after crossing the line of departure at 0545, the 1st Infantry reported closing on Denver at 0615.¹⁵¹ However, they did not send ground forces north to Safwan. Consistent with their understanding of the corps commander's intent, the division remained focused on getting across the Basrah-Kuwait City highway (highway 8) south of Safwan (Objective Denver) to interdict Iraqi withdrawal routes out of Kuwait. Given that understanding, the division used only its aviation brigade to reconnoiter and interdict any escaping enemy in the northern and eastern limits of their "box," including Safwan, they found none.¹⁵² At 0800, when Franks ordered the cease fire, the 1st Infantry's ground units remained fifteen kilometers south of Safwan.

The ground war was over, but the controversy surrounding VII Corps' failure to physically seize the crossroads by the war's end was only beginning. At 2100 on the 28th the CENTCOM Chief of Staff called General Yeosock and asked for recommendation for a site to hold to cease fire talks with the Iraqi military commanders. Yeosock nominated three sites, none of which was Safwan. At some point prior to midnight, General Yeosock received a call telling him that none of the three sites were acceptable and asked for a further recommendation. Yeosock then recommended Safwan as the site, in belief that VII Corps held it. The CINC approved the

recommendation and set the date for the talks at 0800 local on 2 March.¹⁵³ Suddenly, the issue of whether VII Corps was to have seized Safwan or just to interdict forces moving near it became quite important to Franks. When the word that the 1st Infantry was not in control of the crossroads and the nearby airfield at Safwan made its way up the chain to the CINC, he exploded. Immediately, Schwarzkopf, by now over 600 kilometers away from the front (equal to the distance between London and Paris) in his command bunker, accused both Franks and Yeosock of willfully disobeying his direct and explicit orders regarding the failure to seize the road junction. He demanded a written account of their actions regarding the affair. Franks was stunned but complied dutifully.¹⁵⁴

Although the accusations of disobedience deeply troubled Franks personally, he did not allow the incident overshadow his commitment to his unit and his responsibility to accomplish the continuing mission. Over the next two days, VII Corps did gain physical control of the area surrounding the town of Safwan and set up the site for the talks. Again, the call to accomplish this task went to "The Big Red One," and after a one-day delay, the cease fire talks got underway on 3 March 1991. Although some in his situation might have immediately raced to the rear to defend themselves before the CINC or vindicate their actions in the media, Franks did neither. He remained forward, where he had been throughout the war, quietly congratulating soldiers for a job well done, attending memorial services for those who had made the supreme sacrifice, and looking out for the needs of those he led in combat.

V. Conclusions.

In the end, the VII Corps' attacks destroyed eighty percent of all the tanks, ninety percent of the armored personnel carriers, and forty-five percent of the artillery pieces destroyed by all coalition forces during the ground campaign.¹⁵⁵ The RGFC's entire Tawalkana and Medina

Divisions, a brigade each from the Adnan and Hammurabi, as well as the 10th, 12th, and 50th Divisions of the Jihad Corps, and five other Iraqi divisions ceased to exist at the hands of General Franks' VII Corps.¹⁵⁶ Further, Franks and his corps delivered this victory at an incredibly low cost in personnel killed and wounded in action. The decisions that General Franks made and the leadership he provided, both before and during the war, led directly to the successes experienced by VII Corps and ultimately to those of the coalition forces in the Gulf War. Still, the main question of whether General Franks exhibited the characteristics of battle command during Desert Storm remains unanswered. To answer this, it is necessary to come to some conclusions on the two subordinate questions related to the concept of battle command. First, did General Franks demonstrate effective decision making? and second, did General Franks display sound leadership during the conduct of the campaign?.

Decision Making.

Decision making includes not only the act of deciding, but also knowing *if* the situation requires a decision, *when* to make the required decision, and *what* to decide when the time is appropriate. It is the art of being able to visualize the current and future state of the battle and determine ahead of time what decisions will have to be made, the information required to make the decisions, and the options available. This discussion briefly examined five of the critical decisions General Franks made during the prosecution of the ground campaign in addition to his decision on the basic operations plan used to begin the war. These decisions were: (1) not to have 1st Infantry exploit the breach the night of G-Day; (2) not to order 1st Armored to seize Objective Purple the night of G+1; (3) to execute FRAGPLAN 7; (4) to pass 1st Infantry through 2nd ACR and into the attack the night of G+2 (a subset of the FRAGPLAN 7 decision); and, (5) to order the double

envelopment variation of FRAGPLAN 7.¹⁵⁷ Previous discussion provided the details surrounding each of these decisions.

Were these decisions representative of effective decision making? Army manual FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, points out that *effective* decision making is not just simple logic or routine synthesis and analysis. Effective decision makers must be timely, clear, and consistent with their decisions.¹⁵⁸ Leaders must make timely decisions to limit confusion in fast-paced situations. These decisions must be clear to provide subordinates certainty and enable them to better support the commander's decision, and the decisions must be consistent to provide subordinates the conviction to see the decision through. In this same vein, the 1933 German Army regulation on troop leading, *Truppenfuehrung*, states:

Without very good reasons a decision once made should not be abandoned. However, in the vicissitudes of war an inflexible maintenance of the original decision may lead to great mistakes. Timely recognition of the conditions and the time which call for a new decision is an attribute of the art of leadership.¹⁵⁹

All of these factors influence and become a part of a commander's analysis of *if* to decide, *when* to decide, and *what* decision the commander should make.

Using this framework as a tool for assessment, it is fair to say that General Franks did demonstrate effective decision making. First, he determined *if* a decision was necessary. In the case of the 1st Infantry Division's exploitation of the breach during the night of G-Day, for example, Franks stuck with a decision he made during his original planning for the operation—to conduct the breach-exploitation-passage operation during the daylight. The original decision was based on sound reasoning and nothing had indicated to Franks that those reasons had changed. In other situations, such as the timing of the attack on al-Bussayah, Franks' decision of *if* to decide was one of whether he should make the decision or delegate it to a subordinate commander. In this

case, Franks decided to allow the subordinate commander, MG Griffith, to make the decision within the confines of his intent. Part of decision making is knowing when not to personally make the decision.

Knowing if to make a decision is no good if the decision maker does not decide *when* to make decisions. Because of the time required to disseminate orders to the subordinate levels, there is a point in time after which an order sent will not be received at the subordinate level with enough time to allow for sufficient preparation prior to execution. This point is sometimes referred to as the “good idea cut-off point.” If a commander waits until after this point to decide, the lowest subordinate commands will not get the order until after the time for action has passed. Good commanders have a feel for when this time is—it varies with the situation, and the training, experience, and physical state of the troops.

In deliberate planning situations, the corps allowed between forty-eight and seventy-two hours for orders to filter to the lowest level before execution. When General Franks made the decision to commit 1st Infantry Division through the 2nd ACR at Objective Norfolk, the information took twenty-five hours to reach the company level, but, the orders barely made it before it was time to execute. By the end of the four days, the troops were more experienced at working with each other, thus allowing for brief, verbal, orders that were disseminated quickly, but the soldiers were exhausted. The stop, start and seize Safwan, stop again, series of orders between 1700 on 26 February and 0730 on 28 February represent at least three of the changes orders given by Third Army and VII Corps in the last fifteen plus hours of the war. Franks recognized this, and while keeping in mind the timeless idiom: *order, counter-order, disorder!*, he consciously sought to keep things as simple and as close to the original plan or previous orders as possible.

As for the effectiveness of *what* decisions General Franks made, the results clearly show that VII Corps did destroy the RGFC forces in *their* zone—the mission assigned by Third Army and the CINC. If any RGFC forces in the VII Corps zone of attack escaped destruction, it was because they moved out of the zone. It is not clear the General Franks could have prevented this escape without the ability to influence deep air interdiction—something the CINC controlled. Some are critical of Franks for his initial reluctance to risk night attacks (in the case of the 1st Infantry breach on G-Day and 1st Armored's attack at al-Bussayah on G+1) and his perceived obsession with fratricide avoidance. Despite all of the hyperbole about “owning the night,” few forces in the Army either then or now have had sufficient training to execute nearly as well at night as in the day—particularly not in large-scale live fire attacks. Franks and his subordinate commanders all recognized this as reality. Thus, they opted to limit ground attacks during the night but made up for it with aviation and artillery attacks. Franks believed that the risks associated with a hasty night attack early in the campaign would jeopardize the corps' ability to focus combat power when he really needed it—against the Republican Guards. Further, neither Generals Yeosock or Schwarzkopf gave Franks any instructions during the planning or first two days of execution that indicated that there was a need to speed up or take more risks before reaching the RGFC. If they had wanted him to move his corps faster or take more risks, they should have ordered to do so—they did not. It was not until the third day of execution that the CINC's displeasure with VII Corps' rate of movement was made clear to Franks. By then, the Corps was beginning to engage the RGFC and Franks had pulled out all of the stops.

Next, General Franks' decisions regarding fratricide avoidance showed prudence well beyond the simple, but important desire to keep the overall casualty figures low. Although fratricidal injuries and deaths have always been a part of warfare, one cannot view them in the same light as

deaths by enemy fire. Casualties caused by fratricide have a far different impact on the organization and the public back home than those resulting from enemy fire. Therefore, Franks was correct in considering them separately. Casualties at the hands of the enemy, although tragic, are somehow seen as being an honorable part of war. They can unify an organization's desire to fight harder and avenge the damage done by the enemy. In contrast, fratricidal casualties have a disorganizing effect on the units involved. They foster distrust and hatred between sister units and can ruin the cohesion and fighting effectiveness of the organization as a whole for days or weeks afterward.¹⁶⁰ Early reports of fratricide, and the resulting disorganization it would cause, flashed across the television screens of the world, could have had a seriously detrimental effect on the public's confidence and support for the operation—who knew then the ground war would only last four days? So, General Franks was right to factor in the disrupting effect that fratricide could have on the tempo of the operation during the first two days. He had to make sure his force did not stumble before the single most important event occurred: the destruction of the RGFC.

Leadership.

The second question to answer is whether General Franks displayed sound leadership during the conduct of the campaign. Again returning to the initial discussion on leadership from FM 100-5, leaders impart their will by providing *direction* and the *moral character* necessary to carry out their vision. Providing direction requires team building and “assigning missions; prioritizing and allocating resources; assessing and taking risks; deciding when and how to make adjustments; committing reserves; seeing, hearing, and understanding the needs of subordinates and seniors; and guiding and motivating the organization to the desired end.”¹⁶¹ Considering this and the accounts described in the previous chapters, the answer is yes, he did display sound leadership.

One of the first and most critical acts of direction that General Franks had to accomplish early on was to build an effective fighting team. Again referring to FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, it states that there are two important elements necessary for the leader to provide to set the stage for an effective team: focus and personal involvement.¹⁶² Throughout the deployment and prosecution of the ground war, General Franks remained singularly focused on the mission his corps had to accomplish and stayed in touch with the resources and the people he had to accomplish that mission. He took a very large collection of units with very diverse backgrounds and melded them into a team in a very short period of time. Through his close contact with his troops, he learned the personalities and capabilities of his subordinate division and brigade commanders and made decisions based on these human realities rather than some scientific correlation of forces.¹⁶³ General Franks imbued VII Corps with what organizational theorist Peter Senge calls a "shared vision."¹⁶⁴ Shared vision is not just an idea, such as victory or destruction of the Republican Guards, it is "a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities."¹⁶⁵ As a result of the clarity of direction Franks provided, the members of VII Corps knew what the organization had to accomplish and they got it done.

General Franks provided this personal direction from the front. He visited every divisional commander and his cavalry regiment commander, every day of the ground war, to maintain a finger on the current pulse of the corps. The less time he had to make decisions, the closer he stayed to the action to gather the most up to date information for his decision making. However, this forward command approach may have had some detrimental effects on Franks' overall ability to influence events. As General Franks conceded later, by spending so much time forward, visiting subordinate commanders, he was not always able to personally keep his higher commanders

updated on the corps' situation. Although it is the responsibility of the higher commander to insure communications with the lower commander, Franks later confessed that he should have gone to greater lengths to keep General Yeosock and especially General Schwarzkopf informed of the Corps' progress.¹⁶⁶

The second drawback of Franks forward command style was that it may have inhibited his ability to view the actions of the corps as a whole with respect to the remainder of Third Army and the coalition. This may have effected his ability to coordinate actions such as boundary changes, shifting of the fire support coordination line, securing earlier release of the theater reserve, etc. Again, these chores would normally have fallen within the scope of either General Yeosock or Schwarzkopf, particularly if they were looking out for the interests of the main attack in the theater. But, lacking their efforts, Franks could have done it had he spent a little less time forward. That said, it is unlikely that General Franks would have done things much differently in retrospect—his personal leadership style would not let him stray far from his troops and their commanders.

The next aspect of leadership to discuss is moral character. As alluded to earlier, decision making in combat consists of making choices between imperfect solutions. It takes moral character, knowing a decision must be made, to select an imperfect solution when time arrives and to see the decision through. Moral character is taking responsibility for imperfect decisions and remaining loyal to subordinates. General Franks showed these attributes on numerous occasions. His decision to delay 1st Infantry Division's exploitation of the breach on G-Day again serves a good example. Franks considered the needs of the mission, his troops, and the time available, and then told MG Rhame to delay the attack until morning rather than risk the almost inevitable fratricide and loss of momentum that would have occurred had they continued. Frank has been

heavily criticized for this decision ever since, but he has stood by it. The gains in time he could have achieved would have marginal, if any at all. The losses could have disrupted the entire operation. The decision was tactically and morally the right one.

A second instance also involved the 1st Infantry Division. When Franks ordered the division to conduct a forward passage of lines with 2nd ACR to conduct a night attack on 26 February, his tactical instincts told him that he had to press the attack that night. He also knew that his decision to send them at night and with no planning or preparation, was most assuredly going to increase the risk fratricide to the soldiers of 1st Infantry Division. His loyalty to his soldiers made the decision the most difficult he had to make. Many later criticized him for this decision also, (the fratricide deaths later became the subject of intense scrutiny in the media and the Congress), but in the end, it may have saved more lives than it cost. If Franks had given the Iraqis until the following morning to set their defenses, they might have inflicted more damage than “friendly fires” did. Such are the moral dilemmas battle commanders have to face in this age of high-tech night fighting weaponry and instant media communications.

Overall Synthesis.

So, the final question remains: *did General Franks exhibit the attributes of battle command while commanding VII Corps?* After evaluating the subordinate aspects of battle command: decision making and leadership, the events of November 1990 through March 1991, and the environment he was working in, the conclusion drawn in this study is yes, General Franks’ actions more than adequately fulfilled the paradigm of battle command. Those critics who allege that Franks and VII Corps were too deliberate and over cautious are, considering the available evidence to the contrary, under informed of the facts bearing on the decisions he had to make. Could Franks have moved part of his force faster during the first two days of the ground war and

begun the battle with the RGFC 8-12 hours earlier? The answer is *yes*. But to what end? Franks could have moved the 2nd ACR and the 3rd Armored into the fight earlier, true, and many think he should have. However, what commander would have made the decision early on the second day of the ground war, which is when he would have had to have made it, to commit one division and an ACR in an attack with a 100 kilometer wide zone, no corps supporting artillery, and a tenuous supply line, against five well trained and equipped defending enemy divisions? The answer is: none. The corps was able to annihilate the RGFC because Franks brought the weight of the whole corps to bear against them, not because they were not a worthy opponent. Had the 2nd ACR and the 3rd Armored attacked alone, the results would likely have been much different. This leads to the conclusion of this study, which is, while no decision General Franks was perfect, there were no perfect solutions available to choose from. The decisions he made maintained the best balance possible between the requirements of decision making and leadership on the modern battle field.

Finally, one must ask: of what relevance are these lessons of battle command for the future? Although increased technology may allow for greater dispersion and lethality on the battlefield of the future, there will always be the need for commanders to come forward and maintain a true feel for the realities of the battle—no technology will ever provide a substitute for that personal presence. That said, however, forward presence has its costs. In a society and an army where instantaneous communications and up to the minute situation reports have become the expectation, the commander who is forward and in touch with the fight may loose out if he cannot convey that information quickly and accurately. This information is important not only for the purposes of decision making and public information during the war, but it is also important for historical purposes afterward. It is probably safe to say that most of the general publics' perception about the events of Operation Desert Storm have been formed by what they have seen on television.

What they saw on television was General Schwarzkopf and his sometimes inaccurate but compelling account of the events as the unfolded.¹⁶⁷ Many of the histories written since then are based on what the authors collected from media sources and are skewed toward this end. Franks and his subordinate commanders, rightly or wrongly, did not get their story heard or seen. Franks later said that one of the biggest mistakes he made during the war, aside from going to extraordinary lengths to keep the CINC informed, was his lack of personal emphasis to ensure that combat cameramen and reporters were integrated into each unit.¹⁶⁸ Had he done this he may have been able to set the record straight later. Keeping the commander and the world properly informed will continue to be of importance on the battlefields of the future.

Second, it is important to understand that battle command at the senior tactical and operational levels is different from battle command at the lower tactical levels. Battlefield command at the higher level is more of a matter of providing direction rather than control. Because the distance from the front and the difficulty of getting precise and accurate information, command at the higher level requires more anticipation than tactical command and control. Since the planning horizons are more distant, fewer decisions are better—Franks made less than a hand full during the four days. Also, an essential and defining characteristic of command at the operational and senior tactical levels is logistics. When General Franks summed up his philosophy on the principles that should guide a commander in battle a few years after Operation Desert Storm, he said: “Get the entire organization into the fight, stay in a balanced stance, maintain face-to-face (communication) with subordinates,” But, “. . . forget *logistics* and you will loose.”¹⁶⁹ These principles are not likely to go away anytime soon.

VI. End Notes.

¹ United States Army, FM 100-5, *Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-14.

² Frederick M. Franks Jr., GEN, interview with the author, 13 February 1998. Transcript in possession of the author, and Franks, "Battle Command: A Commander's Perspective." *Military Review* 76, no. 3 (May-June 1996): 5.

³ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 2-14.

⁴ Franks, "Battle Command," 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Franks, interview with the author, and "Battle Command," 5 - 8.

⁷ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 2-14.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-14 and 2-15.

¹⁰ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 2-15; and Franks, "Battle Command," 5.

¹¹ Richard M. Swain, *"Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm"* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 162.

¹² U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides, "Concept of Operations," for Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, 9 February 1991, Group: VII Corps, SG: Historian, SSG: AAR3-075; Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Ft Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5 and 9.

¹³ 1st Cavalry Division (-) was attached to VII Corps prior to G-Day (24 February 1991) and again after its release from theater reserve. 1st CAV had only two active duty brigades organic to it when alerted in 1990, thus the minus (-) symbol; its third combat brigade was supposed to come from the Louisiana National Guard, but they did not deploy into theater. In their place, the 1st "Tiger" Brigade from 2nd Armored Division deployed into theater from Fort Hood with 1st CAV, but they were later attached to the Marines.

¹⁴ VII Corps Briefing Slides "Concept of Operations," 9 February 1991, and Swain, *"Lucky War,"* 212.

¹⁵ Swain, *"Lucky War,"* 17-48.

¹⁶ U.S. Army, Third Army, Briefing Slide, "Commander's Intent," 6 January 1991. Group: Swain Papers, SG: "Lucky War," SSG: End Notes, Folder: EN-005, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

¹⁷ Steven Mark Zotti, MAJ, USMC. "Mailed Fist or Pursuit Operations: An Operational Analysis Of VII Corps During the Gulf War." Thesis, Master of Military Art and Science. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1997, comments based on an interview by Major Zotti and GEN Franks 2 February, 1997; and Swain, *"Lucky War,"* 17-48.

¹⁸ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Operations Order 1990-2 (Operation Order Desert Saber) 13 January 1991, Group VII Corps, Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 5.

¹⁹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 223-228.

²⁰ VII Corps Briefing Slides "Concept of Operations," 9 February 1991, CALL, 5. The actual number of U.S. and British M1 and Challenger tanks shown on the slide: 1584; total BFVs and Warriors: 1442 for a sum total of 3026.

²¹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 158. The distance from the VII Corps rear command post in King Kahlid Military City, Saudi Arabia to where the lead units in 1st Infantry Division finished the war near Safwan, Iraq is over 365 kilometers. This is equivalent to the direct distance from Knoxville, TN to Richmond, VA.

²² VII Corps, Operations Order 1990-2 (Operation Order Desert Saber), CALL, 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, CALL, 5-6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, CALL, 8-9.

²⁵ Swain, "Lucky War," 176.

²⁶ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides Evolution of the Plan for General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, 1 April 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative, Group: VII Corps, SG: Historian, SSG: AAR 3-074.

²⁷ Franks, interview with the author, 1.

²⁸ U.S. Army, VII Corps. VII Corps Fragmentary Plan 7, 1900 24 February 1991. Transcript (personal papers of Lt. Gen. Donald Holder).

²⁹ Franks, interview with the author, 1.

³⁰ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 209.

³¹ The 1st Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade, then forwardly deployed in Germany, had begun de-activation and equipment turn-in when the division was alerted to deploy. The unit was therefore unable to serve in a combat role. Instead, the brigade deployed into theater and had responsibility for supervising reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of units flowing into theater through the ports of ad-Damam and al-Jubyal.

³² Although VII Corps and most of its subordinate units were notified of the deployment 8 November 1990, the majority of the forces did not close on their initial assembly areas after leaving the ports until mid-January 1991. The last tanks and BFVs from 3 AD arrived on 6 February and the last VII Corps unit (142 FA ARARNG) arrived on 17 February 1991—one week from the beginning of the ground offensive. (Clancy, Franks: p 205)

³³ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 209.

³⁴ Frederick M. Franks, interview with Toby Martinez, 4 September 1991. Transcript Gulf War Collection, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 4.

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- ³⁵ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 237; and Peter S. Kindsvatter, Notes from Corps Commanders After Action Review, 11 March 1991 (Personal papers of Dr. Richard Swain, School of Advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.), 21. As noted by Zotti, p. 83.
- ³⁶ Swain, "Lucky War," 202.
- ³⁷ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*," 236-238.
- ³⁸ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides Combat Operations Summary 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Group VII Corps Papers, SG Historian, SSG AAR1- 009, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 6-9.
- ³⁹ Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review* 72, no. 2, (February 1992), 13.
- ⁴⁰ *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress*. Vol 1, Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 1991, 254-268.
- ⁴¹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 248.
- ⁴² Franks, interview with the author, 1.
- ⁴³ H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*. New York: Bantom Books, 1992, 451-453; and Swain, "Lucky War," 230.
- ⁴⁴ Swain, "Lucky War," 232.
- ⁴⁵ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 266.
- ⁴⁶ Swain, "Lucky War," 232; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 275; *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 264.
- ⁴⁷ Swain, "Lucky War," 233-234; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 276-282; *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 264.
- ⁴⁸ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 281.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁰ Swain, "Lucky War," 236-237; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 278.
- ⁵¹ Swain, 236; Clancy and Franks 248. On the night of 17 February, 3rd Brigade experienced the first fratricide incident in 1 ID. During a reconnaissance in force to destroy Iraqi outposts and to get U.S. artillery deep enough to reach Iraqi artillery within range of the breach, a division Apache fired on a 3rd Brigade Cavalry Fighting Vehicle and an M-113 (GSR). The engagement resulted in the deaths of two soldiers and the wounding of six others. The aviation battalion commander who personally fired the fatal missile was relieved by MG Rhame the following day.
- ⁵² Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 280-281.
- ⁵³ *Ibid*., 280.

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- ⁵⁴ Swain, "Lucky War," 233.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 239; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 291.
- ⁵⁶ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 455.
- ⁵⁷ Swain, "Lucky War," 236-237; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 276-282; *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 264-266.
- ⁵⁸ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 279.
- ⁵⁹ Franks, interview with the author, 1; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 289.
- ⁶⁰ Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor. *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*. Canada: Little, Brown and Company, 1995, 381.
- ⁶¹ Richard M. Swain, "Lucky War" *Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 238.
- ⁶² VII Corps Briefing Slides, "Concept of Operations," 9 February 1991, CALL, 5 and 9.
- ⁶³ Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 455-456.
- ⁶⁴ Donald M. Holder, interview by Steven Zotti, MAJ, USMC, 21 March 1997, Ft Leavenworth, KS.; as noted in Zotti, 92.
- ⁶⁵ Franks interview with the author, 1. Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 289.
- ⁶⁶ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 292.
- ⁶⁷ Franks interview with the author, 1.
- ⁶⁸ Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army and the Gulf War*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 245.
- ⁶⁹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 291-297.
- ⁷⁰ Franks interview with the author, 1. In the interview, General Franks emphasized that Log Base Nelligen was one of his most important resources for conducting the attack on the RGFC. The decision to place it forward of the 1st Infantry was a by-product of a directive to his logistics staff to make sure he did not run out of fuel during the attack. When the logisticians returned with their estimates and the proposed site for the log base, many scoffed because of its seemingly exposed position forward of the breach site. Franks told them that if that is where they needed to be to support his main attack, then he would support them with maneuver forces. As a result, the 1st Infantry was tasked to leave an infantry battalion task force in the breach area to provide security for the logistics assets transiting the area.
- ⁷¹ Swain, "Lucky War," 245. As noted from 1st Armored Division Operations Briefing, slides titled, "Battle for Al Busayyah." At the VII Corps after-action review, discussion focused on the abysmal weather the night of the 25th - 26th and the stiff enemy resistance which brought about the decision to attack on the 26th. During the conduct of the attack, 1st AD soldiers captured 451 EPWs, (Swain, 271).

⁷² Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 318.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁷⁶ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 245.

⁷⁷ Swain, "Lucky War," 244-247; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 291-313; Zotti, "Mailed Fist," 104-107.

⁷⁸ Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review*, 72, no. 2 (February 1992), 24.

⁷⁹ U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division's Summary History, Group: VII Corps, SG: Historian, SSG: AAR 4-156, 7-9.

⁸⁰ The author, "War! Soldier's Diary Describes Storm of Desert Tanks," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Asheville, NC, (Sunday, May 19, 1991), 1D, 8D. The article is a partial transcript of the author's tape recorded diary while serving as a tank company commander with 3rd Brigade (2nd AD (FWD)), 1st Infantry Division, during Operations Desert Shield/Storm. The entry on 26 February at 1746 hours (25 hours after Franks' decision) says: "We've just gotten the word again that we're going to continue to push – push all night to pursue the Republican Guard. Being that the sun is setting now and it's clouding back over, it could be a real messy fight."

⁸¹ Swain, "Lucky War," 249.

⁸² Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 463; Gordon and Trainor, *The General's War*, 395; Swain, "Lucky War," 250.

⁸³ By now, the VII Corps tactical communications systems were struggling to bridge the increasingly long distance between the CINC's immovable command post and the ever moving front line of troops. By war's end, General Schwarzkopf was over 600 kilometers from the front line of troops and never attempted to get any closer.

⁸⁴ Swain, "Lucky War," 250. A pursuit, as a form of the offense, is an operation undertaken when the enemy is fleeing from the battlefield. While some rear-echelon forces from the Iraqi Army were fleeing Kuwait City, the RGFC units were not. Thus, the CINC's order for VII Corps to begin a pursuit is indicative of how out of touch the CINC was with ground truth.

⁸⁵ Swain, "Lucky War," 273.

⁸⁶ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 352.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 334.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁸⁹ The author, "Soldier's Diary", 1D, 8D. Distances described are based on the author's battle map and actual operations graphics.

⁹⁰ HQ, 1st Cavalry Division, DTAC, Daily Staff Journal, 26 February 1991, Items 17 and 18. As noted in Swain, 274. Gordon and Trainor (398), states that the release was 15 hours later than originally planned.

⁹¹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 372.

⁹² Scales, *Certain Victory*, 266; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 372.

⁹³ The original concept devised used 1st CAV as the southern arm of the envelopment and counted on XVIII Corps to envelop in the north. General Yeosock convinced Franks that XVIII Corps would not be able to move up quick enough for that plan to work. Instead, Yeosock encouraged Franks to use 1st CAV in the north. Franks then planned to use the 1st (UK) Armoured Division as the southern arm of the envelopment with 1st Infantry as a direct pressure force. That plan was scrapped by Franks because the British did not have enough maneuver space to envelop without cutting off 1st Infantry. After 2nd ACR found the seam between the Tawalkana and the 12th Armored, Franks decided to pass 1st Infantry through the gap as the southern arm of the envelopment. Clancy and Franks, 372-380.

⁹⁴ It was between 200-300 kilometers from 1st CAV's lead units mid-day on the 26th to the Hammurabi Division, their intended target.

⁹⁵ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 354. This statement is as recorded in the 2nd ACR battle log.

⁹⁶ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 265, 270.

⁹⁷ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 361.

⁹⁸ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 270.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 271. The division cavalry, 1-1 CAV, suffered 23 WIA, and damage to 5 wheeled vehicles, 1 Bradley, and two armored command post vehicles.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 272. Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 360.

¹⁰¹ Franks, interview with the author, 1. When asked why the decision was his hardest, Franks replied, "I fully understood the complexity of what I was asking you (the author was in 1st Infantry during the attack) and your soldiers to do. That's why it was the hardest decision."

¹⁰² *Ibid.* Franks pointed out that before the ground war began, the Iraqis in the "Ruqi Pocket" near Hafir al-Batin, put up stiff resistance in their defense and dealt the 1st Cavalry several casualties during the various engagements there.

¹⁰³ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 361-362.

¹⁰⁴ The author, "Soldier's Diary," 8D.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 392.

¹⁰⁶ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 285. This also corresponds with the author's recollections of the events.

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- ¹⁰⁷ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 401.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 400-407.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.
- ¹¹⁰ The Scales account identifies this unit as the 18th Mechanized Brigade of the Tawalkana (272).
- ¹¹¹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 407.
- ¹¹² The Clancy and Franks account uses a two hour figure, the Scales version (p. 293) estimates that the lead battalions of 1st Armored had four hours of fuel remaining. At approximately a 50 gallon/hour fuel consumption rate, this equates to between 100 - 200 gallons remaining in each M1A1 (each holds 505 gal.).
- ¹¹³ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 412.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 412-413.
- ¹¹⁵ Ronald H. Griffith, "Mission Accomplished-In Full." *Proceedings*, (August 1993), 47. The Clancy and Franks account says 3rd AD sent 20 fuelers (413).
- ¹¹⁶ U.S. Army, 1st Armored Division, Memorandum for the Record, 1st Armored Division in DESERT STORM, 19 April 1991. Gulf War Collection, Group: VII Corps Papers, Unit Histories, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, 6, 8-10.
- ¹¹⁷ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 292.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 292-300.
- ¹¹⁹ 1st Armored Division, 1st Armored Division in DESERT STORM, CALL, 6, 9.
- ¹²⁰ Kindsvatter, "Ground Offensive," 31.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²² Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 420-428.
- ¹²³ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 300; Zotti, "Mailed Fist," 123, based on a personal interview with General Franks, 23 February 1997.
- ¹²⁴ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 426.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 427-428.
- ¹²⁶ Kindsvatter, "Ground Offensive," 29. Scales, *Certain Victory*, 301. The Scales account shows 2030 hours as the time 3rd AD reached PL Kiwi.
- ¹²⁷ The author, "Soldier's Diary," 8D. Diary account cites 0951 as the time his company crossed the border.
- ¹²⁸ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 407. Scales, *Certain Victory*, 301. The "blue" on the map referred to the Persian Gulf.

¹²⁹ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 426.

¹³⁰ Based on the author's recollection of the events, the change in direction occurred for 3rd Brigade at the 33 easting. Conversations with General Franks indicate that he was unsure why this change of direction occurred when it did. His vision of the envelopment had 1st Infantry heading straight east until they hit Highway 8, and then turning north to attack to Objective Denver. The author's theory is that once MG Rhame believed he was well forward of 3rd AD, he decided to angle the division's direction of travel to the northeast—taking the most direct route to Objective Denver.

¹³¹ CENTCOM news briefing, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Wednesday, 27 February 1991—1:00 PM (EST). As noted in Swain, 284.

¹³² Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 468-471. Swain, "Lucky War," 284.

¹³³ Swain, "Lucky War," 284. General Franks contends in his book with Tom Clancy that the poll General Schwarzkopf conducted "never got to the tactical battlefield" (443).

¹³⁴ Swain, "Lucky War," 284. This account emphasizes that Yeosock indicated that the order was only a warning order. However, in the Clancy and Franks account, Franks states: "At 2337, we got the official written order from Third Army that the cessation would take place the next day [the 28th] at 0500, and we put our own order out soon after that," (p. 438-439). This comment would indicate that Franks believed that the order was for execution.

¹³⁵ Swain, "Lucky War," 285.

¹³⁶ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 438-439. See: previous endnote.

¹³⁷ Swain, "Lucky War," 285.

¹³⁸ The Clancy and Franks, and the Swain account, agree on the 0300 time for VII Corps' receipt of the changed cease fire time, the Scales version says that Yeosock called the VII Corps CP shortly after 0200 with the change (308).

¹³⁹ Swain, "Lucky War," 286.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ This figure based on the author's personal experience and observations during the war. Supporting evidence comes from discussions during BCTP Battle Command seminar. In the seminar, Colonel Greg Fontenot (former commander of 3-34 AR, 1st ID) shows a slide illustrating the amount of sleep his leaders got during the war and discusses the effect it had on battle command. The author attended the seminar 17 February 1998.

¹⁴² Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 440.

¹⁴³ United States Army. FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Symbols*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, October 1985.

¹⁴⁴ The terrain oriented objectives that VII Corps did have, such as Al-Busayyah were assigned internally by Franks and VII Corps.

¹⁴⁵ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 440.

¹⁴⁶ Swain, "Lucky War," 287; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 440.

¹⁴⁷ Based on the author's 1:250,000 battle map and graphics. The Clancy and Franks account cites the distance as 20 to 30 kilometers which is probably about right for the northern most task force in the division. However, the mid-point between the two lead brigades of the division was in the vicinity of QU 4600, the Safwan crossroads is QU 622368, about 40 kilometers away. This area of strip mines later became known as "the valley of the boogers" by 1st ID soldiers because of the prevalence of Iraqis hidden in caves and wadis throughout the area.

¹⁴⁸ Swain, "Lucky War," 287.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 288.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid. Note from draft manuscript written by Brigadier General Bill Carter, assistant division commander, 1st Infantry Division during the war. The quote cited from BG Carter states that "the guidance from corps was to check the box east of the highway and interdict any escaping enemy—we found none—also to go north and look for enemy...no mention was ever made in any order to seize the RJ [road junction] north of Safwan."

¹⁵³ Ibid, 295.

¹⁵⁴ Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 455.

¹⁵⁵ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Briefing Slides The Hundred Hour War by General Frederick M. Franks, 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Group: VII Corps Papers, SG: Historian, SSG: AAR1-01, 32-35.

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Army, VII Corps, VII Corps Executive Summary and Historical Narrative Part 1 B, 29 May 1991, Executive Summary and Historical Narrative. Gulf War Collection, Group: VII Corps Papers, SG: Historian, SSG: AAR1-007: CALL, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Franks, interview with the author, 1.

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Army, FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, HQ Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 21 June 1987, 29.

¹⁵⁹ German Field Service Regulation. *Truppenfuhrung* (Troop Leading), 17 October 1933. Translated and reprinted at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1935, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Based on the author's observations of the inter-unit relationships within the 2 AD (FWD) following the fratricidal exchange between 2-66 AR and TF 1-41 IN during the battle for Objective Norfolk, 27 February 1991.

¹⁶¹ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 2-14- 2-15.

¹⁶² U.S. Army, FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, HQ Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 21 June 1987, 61.

¹⁶³ General Franks stated during a BCTP Warfighter seminar (13-18 Feb, 1998) that one way to weight the main attack was with individual personalities-assigning tasks in accordance with the commander's personality and capabilities. This is not a new idea, it is just often forgotten in this day and age of computer warriors. In a similar manner, Eisenhower assigned the aggressive Patton as the 3rd Army commander for the breakout of the Normandy beaches specifically because of his personality.

¹⁶⁴ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 206.

¹⁶⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 206.

¹⁶⁶ Franks, comments made during SAMS BCTP Warfighter seminar, 18 February 1998.

¹⁶⁷ Since General Schwarzkopf never came forward to meet with Franks, he viewed the VII Corps situation based on situation reports that were twelve or more hours old by the time they made it to his distant headquarters. In contrast, the enemy situation he saw was only a few hours old—enemy information was gathered with assets such as J-STARS that had a near real-time down link to the CINC's headquarters. This left a large time gap between what he saw the enemy doing and what he was told the friendly forces were doing. When posted on the map, the two situations did not add up to reality. Unfortunately, the CINC's perceptions of reality have been accepted by the media and the public at large as reality.

¹⁶⁸ Franks, interview with the author, 1.

¹⁶⁹ TRADOC briefing slide, "Planning is not Fighting," as shown in Swain, "*Lucky War*," 339.

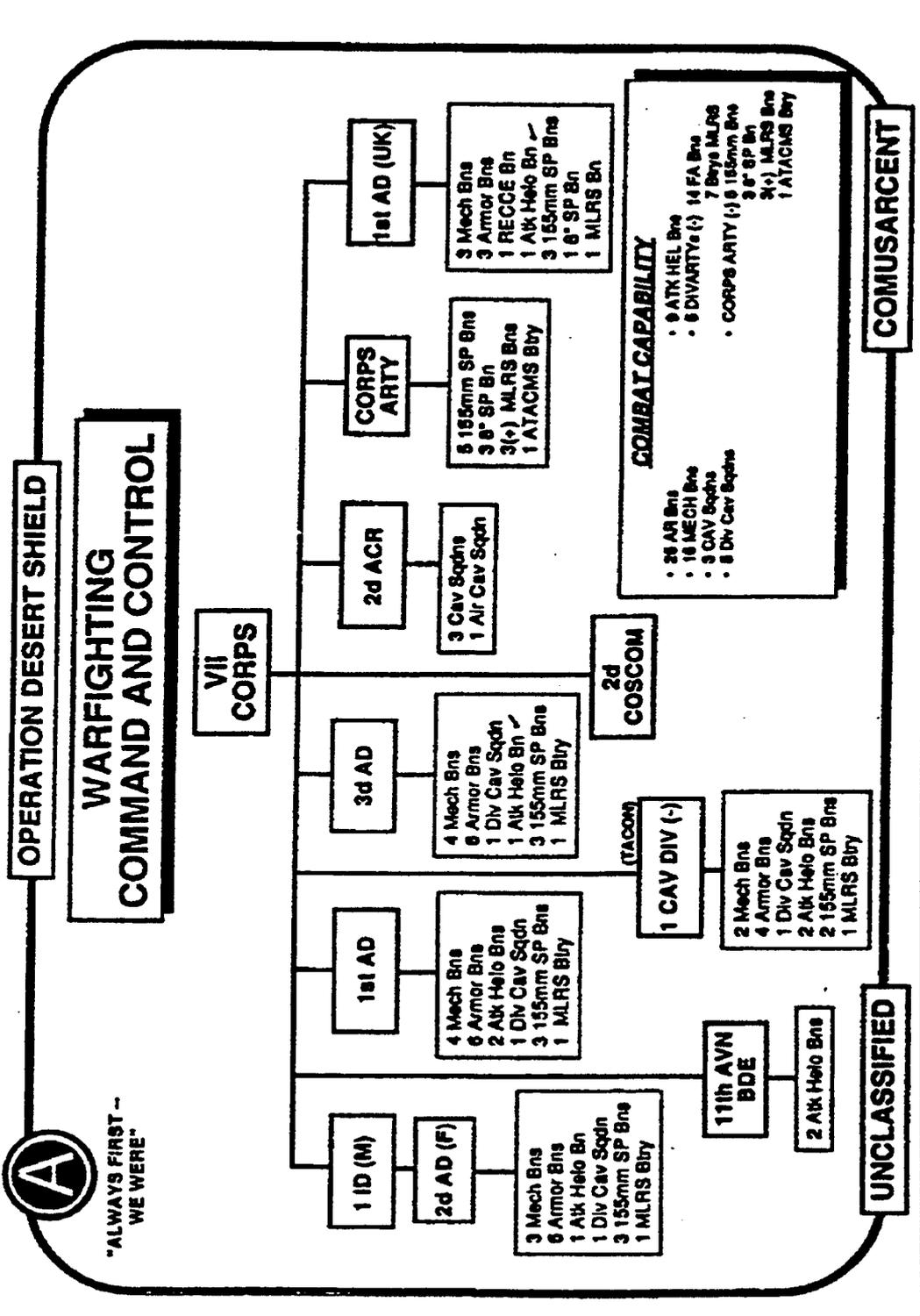


Figure 2. VII Warfighting and Command and Control. Source: Richard M. Swain, "Lucky War." *Third Army in Desert Storm*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 353.

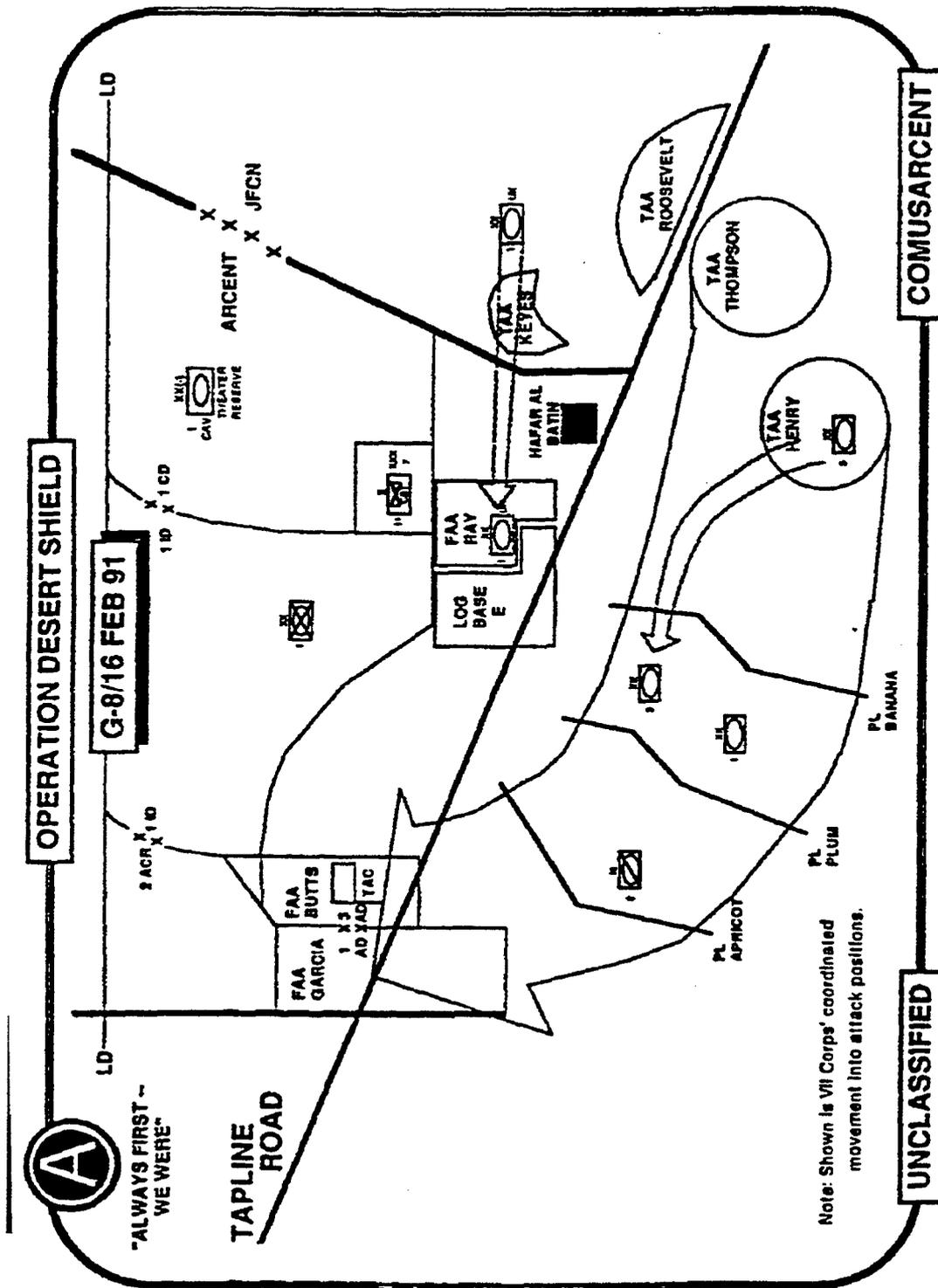


Figure 3. VII Corps Movement to Forward Assembly Areas (FAAs). Source: Richard M. Swain, "Lucky War." Third Army in Desert Storm. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and Staff College Press, 1994, 202.

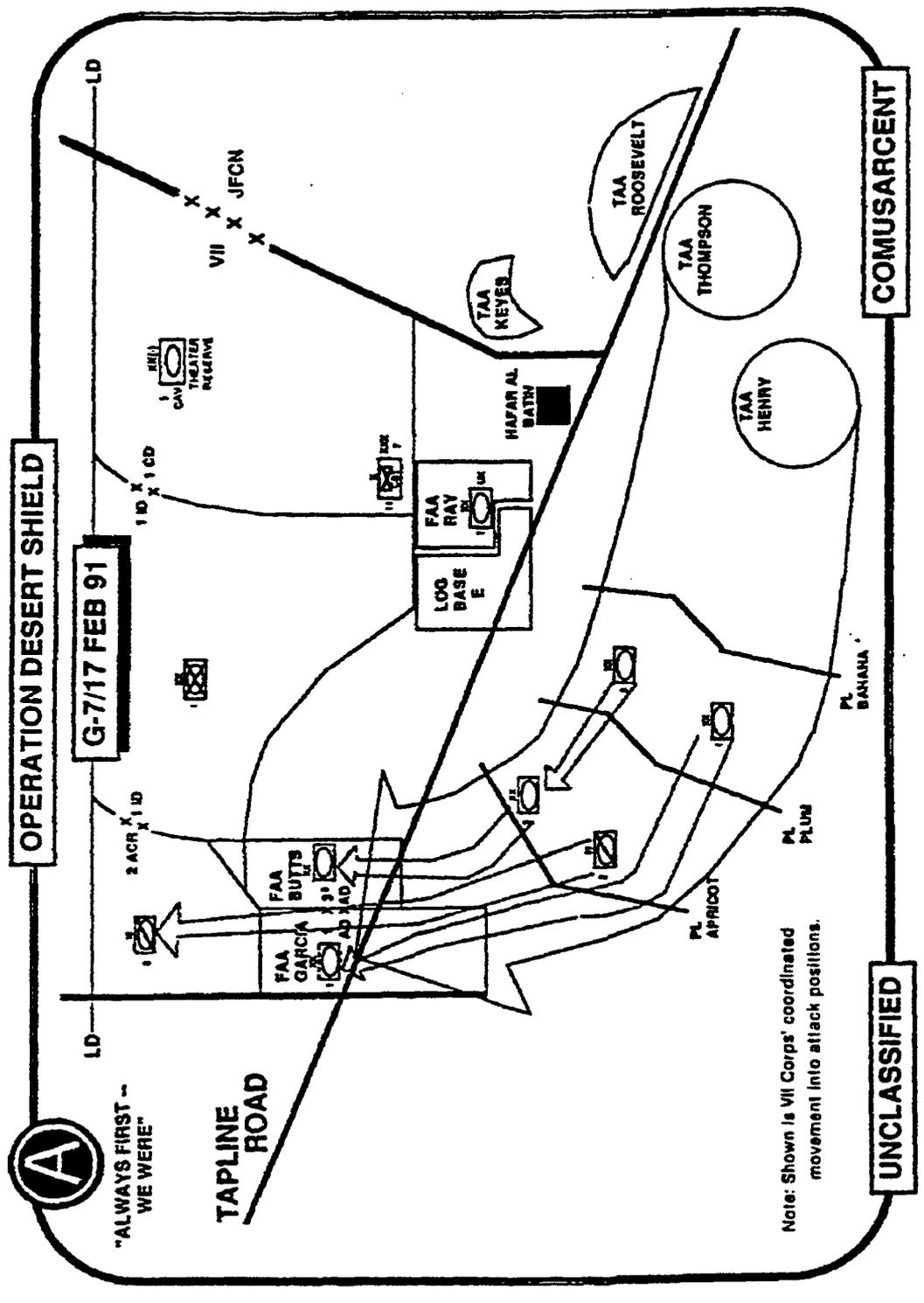


Figure 4. VII Corps Movement to Forward Assembly Areas (FAAs). Source: Richard M. Swain, "Lucky War:" Third Army in Desert Storm. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and Staff College Press, 1994, 202.

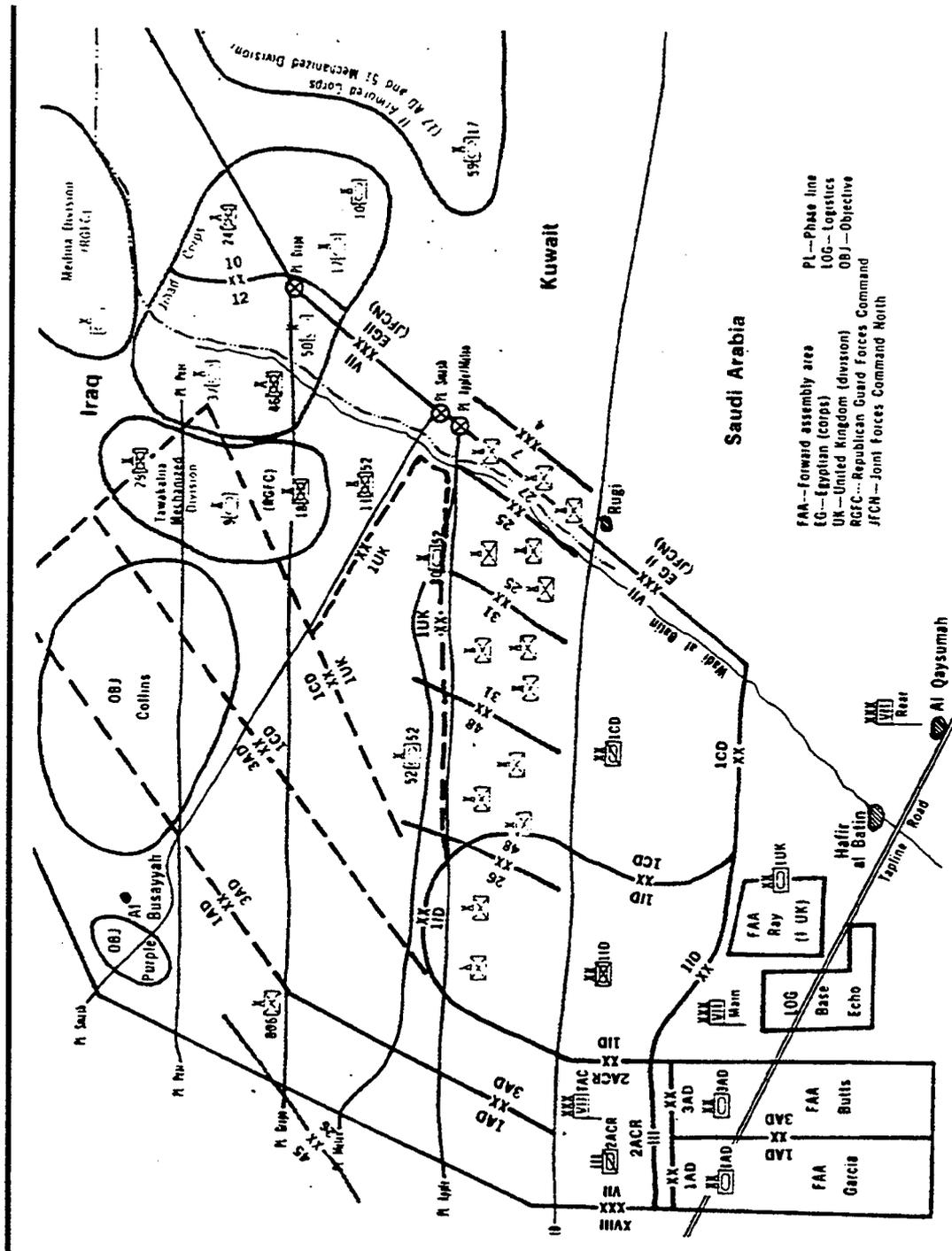


Figure 5. VII Corps Forward Defensive Positions, 17-24 February 1991. Source: Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review*, (February 1992), 18.

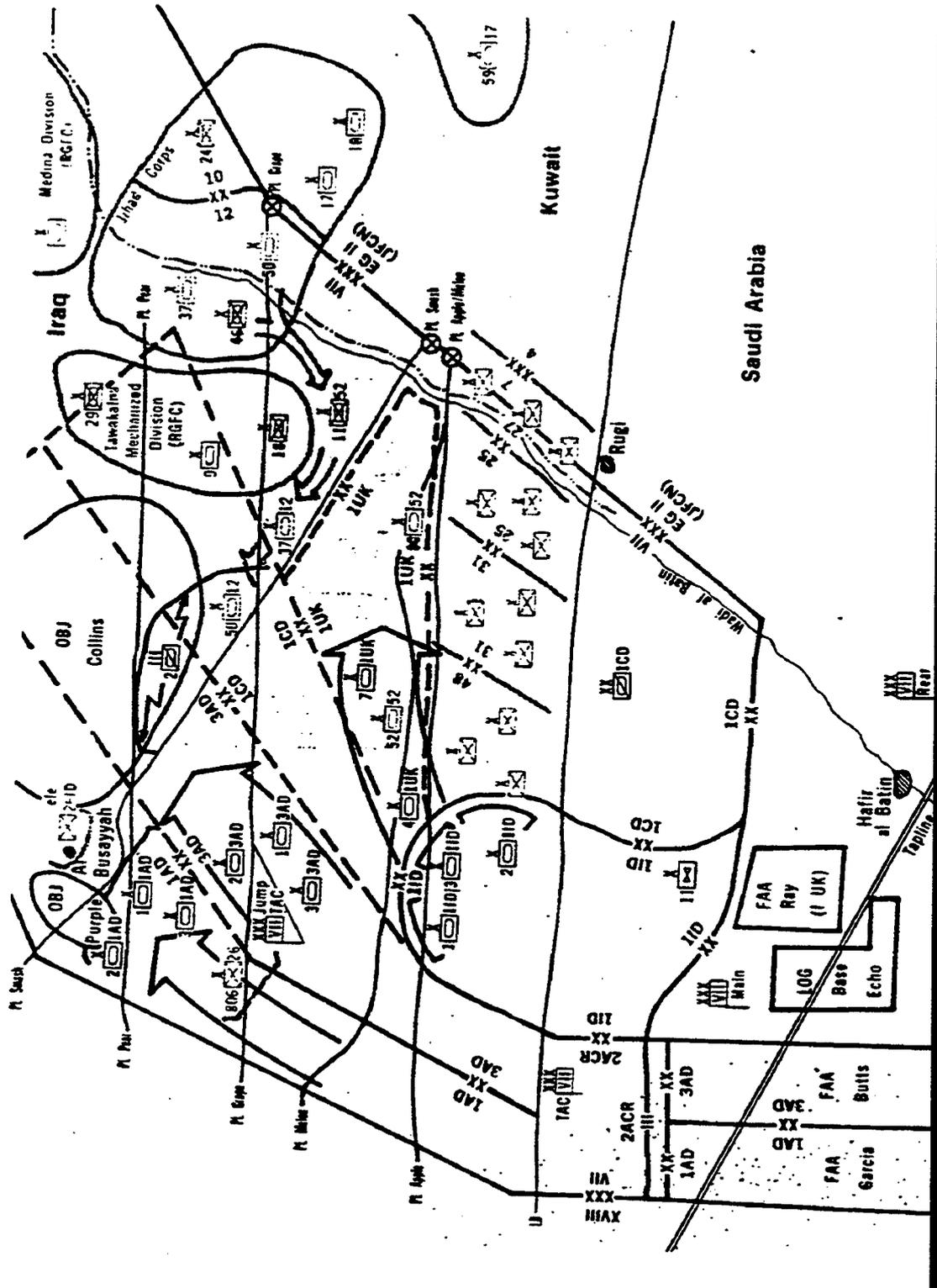


Figure 7. VII Corps Attacks 25 February. Source: Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review*, (February 1992), 18.

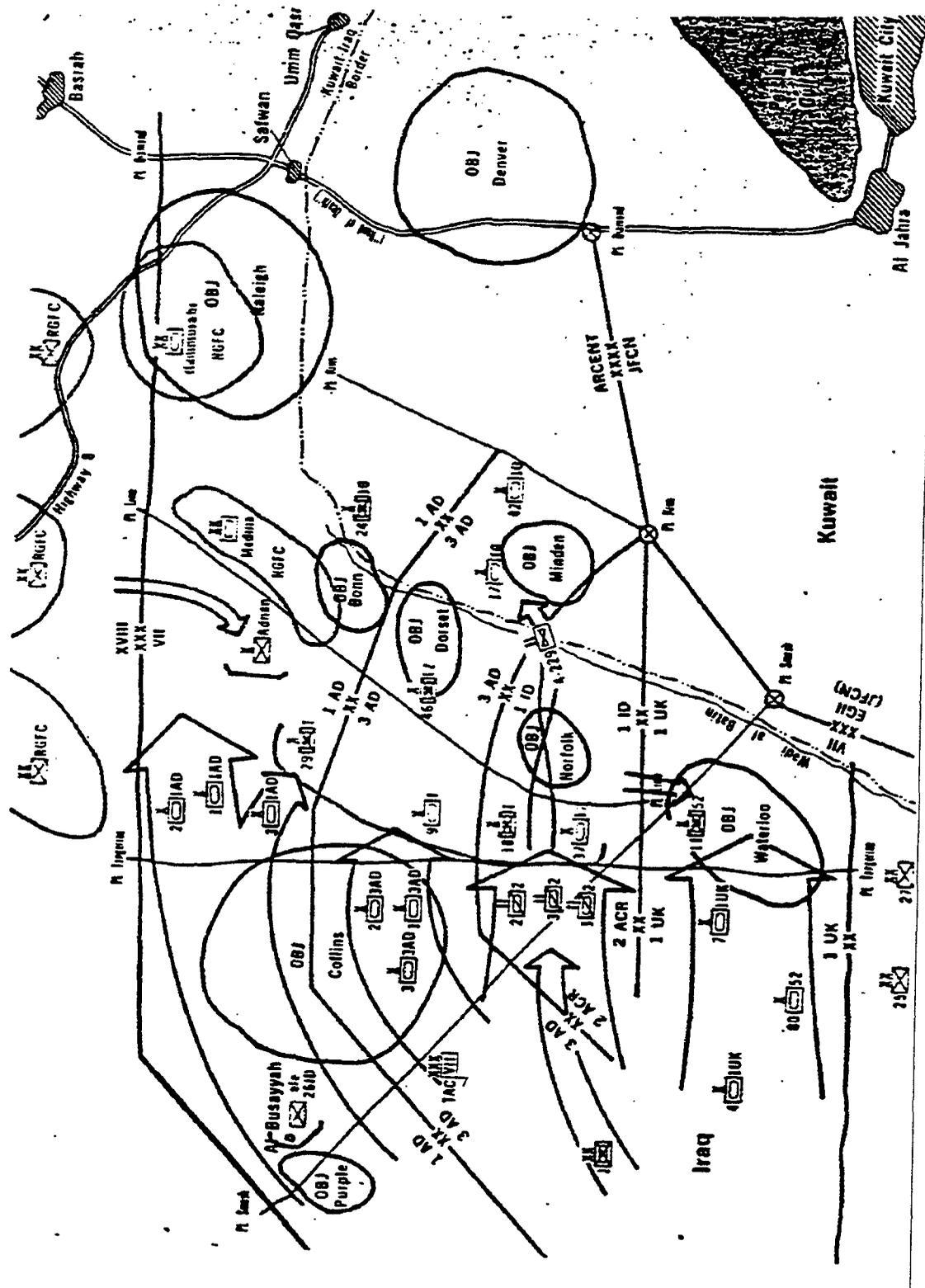


Figure 8. VII Corps Attacks 26 February. Source: Peter S. Kindsvatter, "VII Corps in the Gulf War: Ground Offensive," *Military Review*, (February 1992, 18).

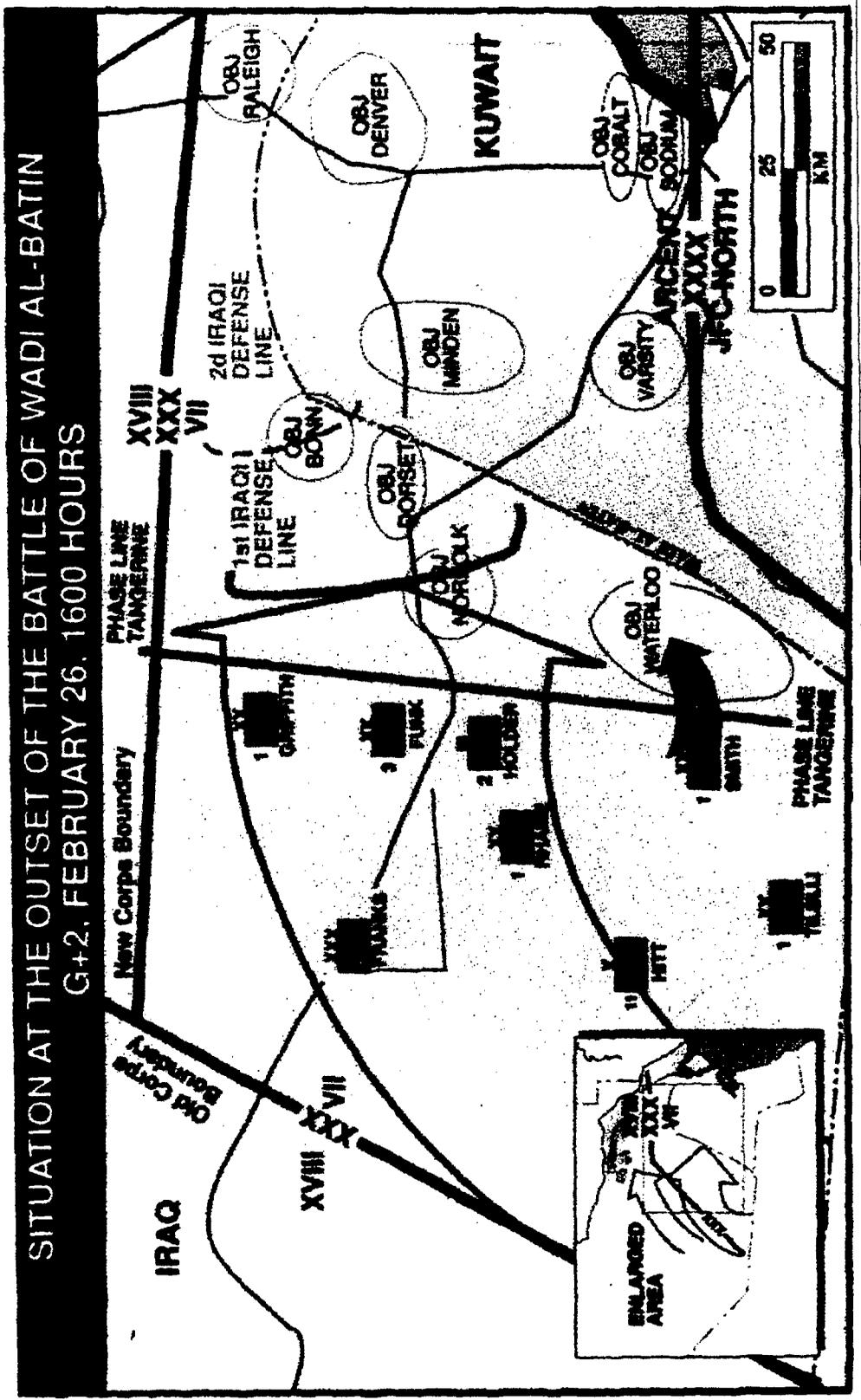


Figure 9. VII Corps Dispositions Prior to the Attacks on the RGFC, 26 February, 1600 Hours. Source: Robert H. Scales, Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 263.

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G+2, FEBRUARY 26 - G+3, FEBRUARY 27**

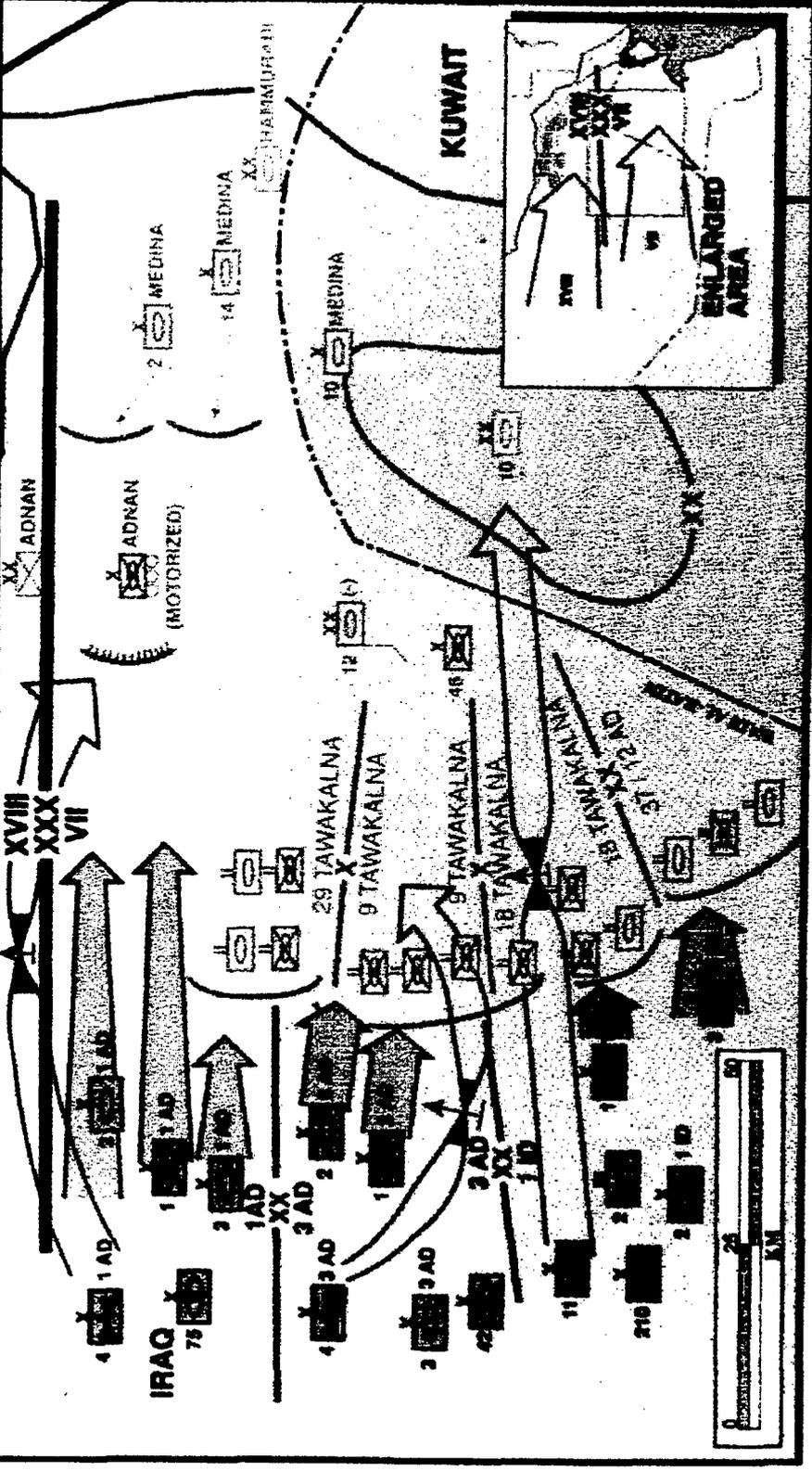


Figure 10. VII Corps on the RGFC, 26 - 27 February. Source: Robert H. Scales, Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 266.

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