

Also by
TOM CLANCY

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

RED STORM RISING

PATRIOT GAMES

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN

CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

WITHOUT REMORSE

DEBT OF HONOR

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

NONFICTION

SUBMARINE

A Guided Tour Inside a Nuclear Warship

ARMORED CAV

A Guided Tour of an Armored Cavalry Regiment

FIGHTER WING

A Guided Tour of an Air Force Combat Wing


MARINE

A Guided Tour of a Marine Expeditionary Unit

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Into the Storm


A Study in
Command



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with

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U.S.-only headquarters capable of commanding two or more U.S. corps. These decisions to abandon the field army were made by Army leadership well before AirLand Battle doctrine, and were driven by NATO considerations, yet were essentially revalidated in the 1982 and 1986 versions of the U.S. Army's doctrine. Thus, in the fall of 1990, there were no provisions for a U.S.-only field army or army group headquarters.

Though the Army ran into initial problems in theater because of these last issues, AirLand Battle and operational art dominated the thinking and organization of U.S. mounted forces in Desert Storm: All arms, destructive effects on the enemy, battles in depth both by fires and maneuver, and the linkage of these battles to achieve the campaign result.

ORGANIZATION

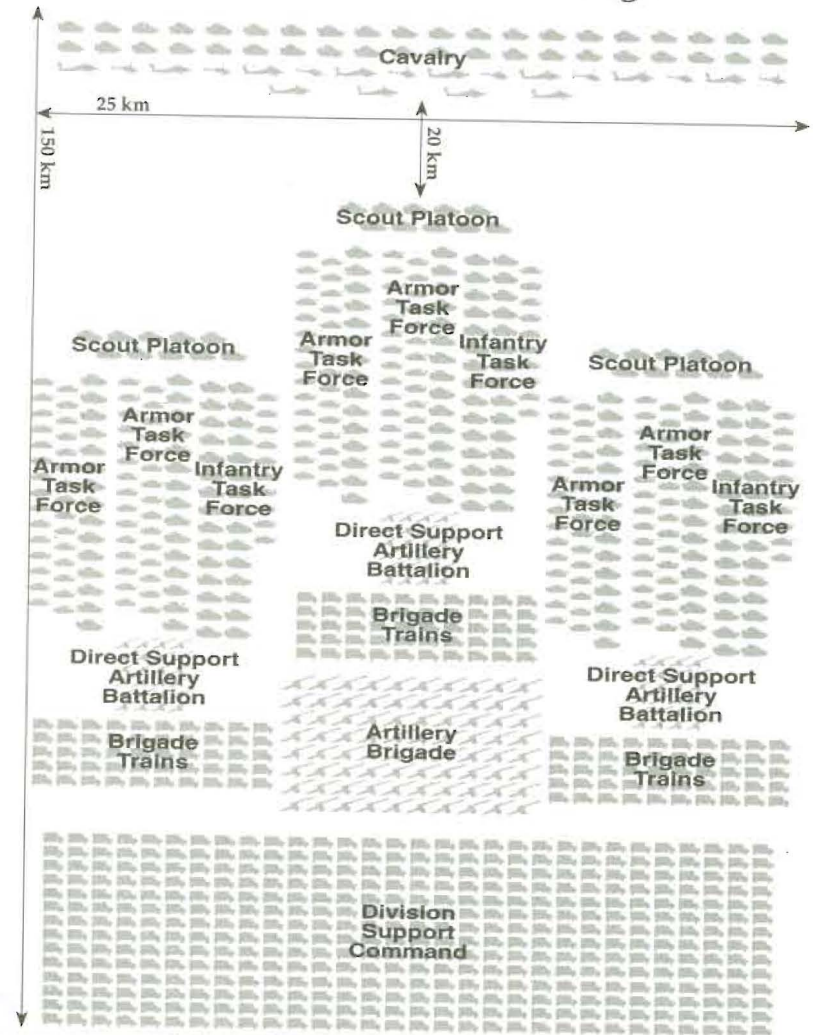
Role of the Corps

The corps bridges the strategic and the tactical levels of war. Using land, sea, and air forces, strategy decides the overall campaign objective. The operational level then devises a campaign plan of a linked series of battles and engagements that, when fought and won, will together achieve the strategic objective. The tactical level fights these battles and engagements successfully to achieve the operational results that in turn achieve the strategic objective. The corps participates in the design of the campaign and directly conducts the tactical operations to gain the campaign objectives.

The corps is the largest land formation in the U.S. Army. It is built with a mix of units that provides the commander a wide range of options. These options derive from the variety of combinations of units that he can put together to accomplish a given mission against a given enemy on a particular piece of terrain.

A mounted corps is a team of teams. The U.S. Army calls these teams echelons of command. They begin with the smallest entity, normally an individual vehicle and its crew, then build into echelons of command such as platoons (four to six vehicles), companies (four to six platoons), battalions (four to six companies), brigades (four to six battalions), divisions (six or more brigades), and a corps (two to five divisions, with up to eight to ten non-division brigades and a cavalry regiment). At each of those echelons is an officer chain of command, with a commander and subordinates, and a noncommissioned officer network that normally places a noncommissioned officer directly subordinate to each officer. It additionally places an NCO in direct command of individual crews and sections where there is no officer. The U.S. Army uses non-commissioned officers more extensively than any other army in the world, a

1st Armored Division "Wedge"



Division Strength					
Soldiers	22,500	Tanks	350	Bradleys	285
MLRS	36	Howitzers	115	Helicopters	80

This diagram, while not accurately portraying the space between units, all the support vehicles required, or the distances between vehicles in combat, gives an indication of the type of ground equipment in a rolling armored division and the amount of combat power in this force. During Desert Storm, General Franks controlled five of these types of combat units, plus additional combat, combat-support, and combat-service-support units.

proven practice going all the way back to the Revolutionary War. It is why the NCO corps is often called the “backbone of the Army.”

Each division in the corps is a carefully balanced combined-arms organization consisting of combat capabilities, direct combat-support capabilities, and logistics or combat service support, and is also a team of teams. The cavalry regiment has a similar organization. Each of the other non-division units in the corps is likewise a team of teams, with its own ability to support itself for short duration. But none of these is a balanced combined-arms organization. Rather they are single-function organizations of artillery, engineer, aviation, signal, intelligence, military police, medical, etc.

Even though all corps are different, they do have common organizational characteristics. Normally for a mounted corps, this mix of units will consist of from two to five armored and mechanized infantry divisions, usually eight to ten various non-division brigade-size units, and include armored cavalry and aviation, an artillery command of varying numbers of types of brigades, and a support command that will vary widely in terms of numbers and types of units for logistics support, depending on the theater of operation.

Tailoring a Corps

From this common organizational base, corps normally are tailored for a specific geographic theater of operations against a specific enemy. They are each tailored for their mission and anticipated use and they train for that specific purpose.

To accomplish this tailoring, the numbers and types of complete teams—or major command echelons to be included in the corps—are determined by examination of the factors of METTT (or Mission, Enemy, Terrain, Troops available, and Time to accomplish the mission). Commanders look at these factors and compile the right mix of combat units (armored divisions, cavalry regiment, air defense, aviation brigade, artillery, and engineer), combat-support units (military police, military intelligence, and signal), and combat-service-support units (personnel, finance, medical, transportation, maintenance, supply, etc.) to give the widest range of options or combinations to accomplish anticipated missions.

Depending on the results of a particular METTT analysis, the mix of units in a corps and their training will vary considerably. For example, a corps in Korea, given a mission there in that terrain, will be configured with units specially trained to conduct operations against the possible enemy there and on that terrain. It might have a mix of infantry, armor, and artillery quite different from a corps configured to fight on the deserts of the Persian Gulf region. During the Cold War, V and VII Corps in Germany were configured with units to operate in a NATO army group, in a relatively advanced civilian in-

frastructure of roads, railroads, and communications, on terrain that offered few restrictions to armored movement, and against the Warsaw Pact modernized armor formations. During Desert Storm, VII Corps was built sequentially as it arrived in the theater unit by unit, tailoring it for that theater and the mission there. Only approximately 42,000 of the VII Corps's 146,000 soldiers of Desert Storm had been in the NATO VII Corps. VII Corps was complete in theater only at the end of the first week in February, two weeks before the ground attack. It was only in the final move to attack positions on 14 to 16 February that Fred Franks had the one and only opportunity to train and maneuver that corps as a corps in the conduct of what would be a complex maneuver a week later to destroy the Republican Guards Forces Command.

Most differences between corps will be in the type of combat units involved (tank, infantry, artillery), support required (communications, engineers, etc.), and logistics (trucks, fuel, ammunition, medical, etc.). Each of these different corps will train according to its specific mission. That will include practicing with various combinations of units to ensure they can operate together.

Working with this basic mix of units, the commander then decides how to array them in time, space, and distance to focus combat power continually on the enemy in a moving zone about 150 kilometers wide and 175 kilometers deep. (The width and depth are functions of the terrain over which you are operating and the enemy forces you face—sometimes you are more condensed and sometimes you can expand even farther.) In other words, you begin with a basic mix of units in the corps that gives you the widest range of options against a particular enemy on a piece of terrain. It is then the commander's job to use effectively the power available to him by arranging those units in such a way that the right combination of units will be at the right place at the right time. And he will either keep them that way or will change the combination as needed to suit changing situations during the series of battles he chooses to fight to accomplish the campaign objective.

A commander also has to look at some inescapable physical realities. For example, each of the close to 1,600 tanks in VII Corps in Desert Storm was capable of firing a projectile at more than a kilometer a second over a range in excess of 3.5 kilometers and destroying whatever it hit. So on a relatively flat desert in confined space, you want to ensure that each of these 1,600 units is pointed in the right direction. Otherwise some of the fire, inadvertently, might not be directed at the enemy but at your own troops. In the desert, for example, on a corps front 150 kilometers wide with all 1,600 tanks on line (not a high probability), you would have a tank every 100 meters. Direction of attack and spacing between units become especially important in such a confined space.

Other inescapable physical realities involve continued support of such a

large, moving organization. In VII Corps on Desert Storm, there were almost 50,000 vehicles and close to 800 helicopters, and some 20 fixed-wing two-engine intelligence-gathering aircraft. They needed fuel. Daily fuel consumption was about 2.5 million gallons of diesel for ground vehicles and about half that much aviation fuel for aircraft. With their turbine engines switched on, tanks use the same amount of fuel, moving or stopped. The rule of thumb was to refuel tanks every eight hours. After one refueling, the fuel trucks accompanying units would have to travel to a resupply point, fill up with fuel, then return to their units. Meanwhile, while the fuel trucks were resupplying, their units were moving away in the opposite direction from the resupply run. In medium to heavy enemy contact, the corps used about 2,500 tons of ammunition a day. Normally, tanks and other direct-fire systems carried enough ammunition to last them several days, so they did not need immediate resupply. On the other hand, artillery and mortars firing at a much higher rate required resupply from accompanying trucks. These would then have to make the same resupply runs as the fuel trucks. Some corps units also needed places to operate from—airfields, forward operating bases (for helicopters), staging areas (for logistics support, etc.). This required some real estate management and some need for roads (even in the desert), and priorities had to be established for use of those areas and roads.

PRINCIPLES OF APPLICATION

Orders and Intent

Since, as stated earlier, battle is chaos on a grand scale, with chance intervening continually, you try to create chaos for the enemy by giving him more situations than he can handle in a given time frame and to keep him in that state. At the same time you must keep a certain amount of control and focus on your own operation.

To create and instill this sense of order to their own side, commanders use “intent” and “orders.” They then rely first on the disciplined translation and then on the execution of these by each echelon in their organization. In other words, at each succeeding echelon of command—corps, division, brigade, battalion, company—that commander must understand what the next higher commander ordered, then figure out what his echelon must do to accomplish his part in the overall mission. The idea here is not to stifle initiative in subordinate echelons, but to ensure unity of effort in the entire organization and maximum use of available combat power.

To attain this unity of effort through intent and orders, there is communication, both written and oral. After communication, interpretation and

problem solving follow, at each echelon of command, to determine what has to be done at that echelon. During this process, commanders allow room for their subordinates to exercise initiative and to operate with the freedom to adjust to local conditions (in those cases where these local adjustments don’t also require adjustments by the whole organization). This need to adjust to local conditions is both the reason why there are so many command echelons and why U.S. Army doctrine demands that each of these exercise local initiative. All this takes time. If orders are not clear, or if they are constantly changing, it takes more time.

In VII Corps, Fred Franks’s order as corps commander had to be received by division commanders. Once it was received, each of them had to understand and then decide what they needed to do to comply with it. Then they would translate Franks’s order both into their own words and into terms that fit their particular situation. As soon as this was done, they would pass the order to their subordinate echelons. This process would be repeated at each echelon until all members of the corps had their orders.

A commander’s “intent” is quite simply his vision of how he sees the operation working out. It is his concise expression of the means, of the end, of the main effort, and of the risks he is prepared to take. Because of its importance in putting the commander’s personal stamp on the operation, commanders usually write the intent themselves. Often in battle, if a commander’s intent is well understood, subordinate commanders can continue to operate even in the absence of written orders or when communications break down. Late on 27 February 1991, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Wilson and the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, in the 1st INF Division lost communications with his higher headquarters. But because Wilson understood division’s and corps’ intent of earlier that morning, he and his squadron continued to attack east across Highway 8 between Basra and Kuwait City, where they captured large numbers of prisoners.

An “order” takes that intent and lays out the complete written set of instructions for the entire operation. It is a formal publication that is normally written by the staff using decisions by the commander that contains the commander’s intent, a more detailed concept of the operation, and a detailed list of instructions to each of the subordinate echelons, which they in turn use to do their own plan. The order normally has a number of annexes that detail how the combat-support and combat-service-support units will harmonize their operations according to the commander’s intent. Characteristically, it is long.

The organization of an order in the U.S. Army follows a five-paragraph organization originated at the turn of the twentieth century. These five paragraphs are:

1. enemy situation, friendly situation, and attachments and detachments in terms of organizations of the major unit;
2. mission;
3. operations—including a concept for the major unit, a concept for maneuver, a concept for fires to include a whole fires annex, a detailed list of tasks to subordinate units, and a list of major coordinating instructions;
4. logistics;
5. command and signal (i.e., the command arrangements), including key radio frequencies for command radio nets and succession of command in case of death or evacuation of the commander.

Annexes will include details of intelligence, engineer, signal, airspace command and control, air defense, logistics, and any other special considerations, such as psychological operations, special operating forces, and deception operations. A complete corps order might total 200 or more pages, complete with graphic drawings and overlays to depict unit boundaries, phase lines, and objective areas used as control measures to ensure coherence of the operation. At more senior tactical echelons, such as brigade, division, and corps, it is also the practice in the U.S. Army to include a matrix—called a “synchronization matrix”—that seeks to synchronize all major activities with battlefield events and time.

In order to achieve focused energy, each subordinate plan must be in harmony with the plan of the next higher echelon. General Bill DePuy used to call such harmonized plans “nested concepts.” In U.S. Army doctrine, enough variance is permitted, even demanded, at each subordinate echelon so that commanders can exercise their own initiative as situations develop in their area of operations. Yet, in order to achieve the necessary cohesion in the chaos that is land battle, this initiative must always be exercised within the overall intent of the higher headquarters. Determining how much leeway to allow subordinate echelons is a matter of command judgment, and it is influenced by many factors, including the complexity of the mission, the size of the operating area, and the personality and capabilities of subordinate commanders. Nonetheless, to take full advantage of the leadership and talent available in soldiers and leaders, and thus reach full combat potential, initiative is required and demanded in U.S. Army doctrine.

When VII Corps received an order from its next higher echelon (Third Army in Desert Storm), the corps would make its own analysis and devise its own plan, then issue that plan to the corps as an order in the format described above. This process would have to be repeated seven times to reach a tank crew in one of the divisions in VII Corps. All this, of course, takes time. The rule

of thumb in the Army is that you should use one-third of the available time yourself and allow your subordinates to use the other two-thirds. This gives your subordinates time to figure out their own actions (which can be rather complex in and of themselves: a division has about 8,000 vehicles and in Desert Storm had up to 22,000 soldiers), to issue their own orders to their echelons (normally in writing and with sketches and map diagrams), to do some war gaming and other preliminary testing to ensure the plan will work, and then to conduct some rehearsals to ensure that all commanders understand what is expected of them and their organizations. Sometimes these rehearsals suggest changes to the plan.

In a corps the size of VII Corps, the rule of thumb is that this entire process takes as much as seventy-two hours to travel from the commander down to, say, a tank crew. In other words, from the time Franks got his orders from his own next higher echelon (in Desert Storm, Third Army), the orders process was done seven times before that tank crew started moving toward its new objective.

In an attempt to remove as much chance of misunderstanding as possible, this communications process of intent and orders has been refined over the years. Military terms are used, each with a specific meaning, and maps and other graphic symbols are also used, each with its own specific meaning. In spite of this, normal human dynamics, chance occurrences, and enemy actions lead to misinterpretations, and these are often exacerbated by dynamics of fatigue, physical danger, and on occasion by personality and character distortions. In his great classic, *On War*, the German theorist Clausewitz called the cumulative effect of all this “friction.” Such “friction” is quite simply a code word for everything that gets in the way of perfect understanding and perfect execution. Some elements of friction are physical and external, such as effects of weather on soldiers and material, cold, heat, sandstorms, light, or lack of it. Others are human, such as fatigue, imprecise language and thus misinterpretation, personality traits of various commanders, etc. Some others are due purely to the kinds of chance events that inevitably occur when so many people and machines operate in confined spaces: map-reading errors, wrong turns, breakdown of key equipment, unexpected enemy actions, etc. Commanders try to be aware of all of these and to minimize their effects.

Since the entire process of battle command—problem solving, dissemination of the solution, and actual physical execution—tends to take a long time, commanders are always looking for ways to reduce that time. They also look to minimize friction, in order to ensure that their own organization can make necessary battle adjustments faster than the enemy. Franks and his commanders worked and drilled this hard in VII Corps.

Battle is always two-sided. As you are working on your problem, your enemy

is working on the same problem you are and has his own solution. Thus, while you want to begin with a basic plan or idea of what you want to get done, you always have to tell yourself that plans are never static. Your enemy—and friction—will see to that. That is why plans frequently change after contact with the enemy is made.

After that, you are literally in a fight. In battle, you and the enemy are each constantly looking for the edge to win. You are each looking to gain the initiative. Often it is the side that can adjust most rapidly that will eventually gain the initiative and go on to win. You and your commanders try to outthink the enemy commanders, and thus give your troops all the advantages to outfight the enemy. You try to give him more problems to solve in a given time than he and his organization can possibly handle. You try to run him out of options, break the coherence of his operation, and thus force him to fight you on your terms. Then you physically defeat or destroy him.

Senior commanders must therefore decide far enough in advance of a planned action for their subordinate echelons to do their own problem solving, communicate the solution, and execute it. One of the greatest skills of senior commanders is the ability to forecast. The more senior you are, the farther into the future you have to force yourself to look. You must be able to see beyond what others see. You must be involved in the present to know what is going on, but you must also discipline yourself to leave those actions for your subordinates to handle while you forecast the next battle, and the one after that. And at the same time, you must see that all of these battles are linked in purpose. Then you must decide—leaving sufficient time for subordinates to react both intellectually and physically.

—Intellectually, so they can do their own problem solving and communication to their organizations;

—Physically, so they can get the right combination at the right place at the right time, and with soldiers and units motivated and fit for battle.

Smart commanders share their thoughts. They think “out loud.” In the Army, there are terms, and even procedures, for this. For instance, commanders can give subordinates a “heads-up”—“this is what I am thinking of doing”—to put their subordinates into their own head space. A “heads-up” requires no action. They can also issue a “warning order,” which does require action. A “warning order” is a shorthand but official communication that tells a subordinate, “I will order your unit to do the following; I’ll send the formal, more detailed order shortly.”

Once they have forecast and decided, senior commanders must resist the temptation to tinker at the margin of orders they’ve issued. Tinkering will only contradict and confuse the process. (An emergency caused by an unexpected opportunity or an unexpected enemy action requiring immediate action to

preserve the force will of course require a change in orders.) Orders issued are difficult to impossible to retrieve, especially when units and leaders are tired and in physical danger. So decide, make it stick, and leave it alone.

Yet adjustments are necessary, so commanders can and do plan ahead to give themselves and their subordinates choices during changeable situations. For example, if the enemy stands still, you do one thing. If he retreats before you, you do another. If he moves toward you, you do something else. If he tries to maneuver around you, you do still something else. In such cases, you want to be able to make adjustments without going through an entire seventy-two-hour cycle. These adjustments frequently resemble the “audibles” used in football. When a quarterback looks over the defense and sees a situation that’s different from what he anticipated when he called the original play, he can call an “audible”—a play from a previously rehearsed list of possibilities. Commanders also develop “plays” to call in certain anticipated future situations. The formal name for these in doctrine is “branches and sequels.” (Branches are variances off the original plan; sequels are follow-on actions to continue the original plan.) In VII Corps in Desert Storm, the branches and sequels were called FRAGPLANS. These FRAGPLANS were each contingent on a future battlefield situation. You forecast the future. If it looks like this, you adjust to do this. Meanwhile, each of your echelons will also have developed its own set of FRAGPLANS for execution when or if you call one of yours. No forecast will ever be perfect, so at best some minor adjustments are normally required.

Missions

Missions for a mounted corps are normally either terrain or force oriented. The corps will take certain actions principally to occupy or defend terrain, or else they will take other actions principally to defeat or destroy enemy forces. These types of missions are not mutually exclusive, but they are fundamentally different. In NATO, for example, VII Corps had the mission of defending NATO territory. To do that they had to defeat any enemy force that came into their area . . . and maybe even attack to throw such a force out. But the main aim was preservation of territory. Defeat or destruction of the enemy force was a means to that end. Theoretically, if no enemy had come into their area, they could have gone elsewhere to help someone else. In the offense, terrain orientation means that you want possession of what is called key terrain. If you have key terrain and deny it to the enemy, that will contribute to the defeat of the enemy by giving you positions of advantage. Many times, of course, the enemy has the same appreciation of key terrain that you do and will do his best to occupy it or fight you for it. In that case, you’ll have to attack that enemy force in order to occupy or otherwise control the ground.

Korea was a good example of terrain orientation on the 38th Parallel. After Chinese intervention and the beginnings of armistice talks, UN forces attacked to gain ground that would put them on or above the 38th Parallel and thus restore the original Korean status quo. In the Gulf War, XVIII Corps had a terrain orientation to interdict Highway 8, in order to prevent Iraqi forces from reinforcing from Baghdad or escaping the Kuwaiti theater to Baghdad. Their mission was to get to Highway 8 fast. Enemy forces were a target only as they got in the way of interdicting Highway 8. Since in fact few enemy forces stood in their way, and since their terrain orientation gave them a fixed geographic spot to reach, measuring how fast they traveled from their start point to Highway 8 made eminent sense.

Force orientation is another matter. In a force-oriented mission your essential task is to aim your force at the enemy force in a posture and in a direction that allows you to accomplish your mission at least cost to your troops. Except that it must be negotiated to get to the enemy, terrain is not of much consequence. Sometimes that is a real problem, requiring considerable effort in the use of bridges and limited road networks, and in bad weather. A mission to conduct a force-oriented attack is time- and space-independent until the commander assigns an area within which to conduct the mission and then adds time or distance constraints if they are required. Though you will have to cover space in order to close with and defeat or destroy the enemy force you are aiming at, your orientation does not directly depend on how fast you go or on the physical distances you cover. In other words, unless your mission requires specific time parameters, you focus on the enemy and operate at the speed and over the distances that allow you to defeat or destroy him. A further priority is to retain physical cohesion and protection of your own force, so that when you strike the enemy you do it with all the advantages to your side. Normally, the enemy force is either stationary in known locations or capable of moving. Thus you are not quite sure where they will be when you reach them.

Because of the greater number of variables involved, aiming your own moving force at a moving enemy force, and hitting it, is the height of skill required in maneuver warfare. Some sports analogies—such as open field tackling or blocking on a screen pass—come to mind. But with a corps you are not talking about a few players on either side but about tens of thousands of vehicles and aircraft. Not only must each of these change direction and speed, but—to generate focused combat power—each of them must also remain in the right physical relationship to the others. Since battles and engagements in land warfare are usually decided by destruction of the enemy, it is vital for you to maneuver the various parts of your force to positions where they can either do that or threaten to do it, and thus cause the enemy to quit or go

away. So where you position your tanks, artillery, intelligence collectors, and logistics all determines how much physical combat power or firepower you will be able to focus on the enemy. Thus, even as the two forces are in motion relative to each other, you are looking hard at the capability of your own forces and their disposition, while judging the capability and disposition of enemy forces. Because there is no fixed target to aim your force at when the enemy is moving, after you find him, you try to fix him. The art in this is to make your final commitment to a direction of attack and an organization of your forces that will hit the enemy at a time and place that will result in fixing him at a relative disadvantage, or so that the enemy cannot adjust to your attack in your chosen configuration and direction. Then your troops outfight him and you win.

The success of a force-oriented mission is achieved by the defeat or destruction of the enemy force, as measured against your own losses, within the time you are given, if that is a criterion. The success of a terrain-oriented mission is judged by the occupation of the ground, again within whatever time you are given, if that is a criterion. When comparing unit performance to the sole standard of the amount of ground covered in a given period, the unit with a force-oriented mission will always come out second best.

A mounted corps moving and aimed at a moving enemy force can put itself into any number of configurations on the ground. When you are certain the enemy will be at a place and time and in a known configuration, you can commit your own forces early to the exact attack formation you want and leave them that way. When the enemy is less predictable and has a few options still available to him, then you want to move initially in a balanced formation, and commit to your final attack scheme as late as possible. You want your own forces to be able to execute, but you don't want to give your enemy time to react. That is a matter of judgment and a—much misunderstood—art form that takes much skill, brains, intuition, and practice to develop well. It is the essence of senior-level tactical decision making. To commit to an attack maneuver prematurely is to give the enemy time to react. To commit too late is to prevent your own forces from accomplishing the maneuver.

Principles

A commander will also pay attention to traditional military principles.

The principles of war—so called—were derived late in the nineteenth century, but they are still applicable today. They usually characterize any successful operation. They are:

- *Mass*—physical and firepower concentration on the decisive point;
- *Maneuver*—ability to gain position advantage over the enemy;

for myself that my intent and orders to the corps were still the right ones. These thoughts had been on my mind constantly, and they remained on my mind until the battles with the Iraqis ended. I looked at them from every possible angle, again and again:

I had planned a rolling attack through Objective Collins into the flank and rear of the RGFC. We were not in pursuit of a retreating enemy, but preparing to attack a hastily defending enemy armored force.

I had not considered any maneuver except to aim VII Corps directly at that force. That was our mission: to destroy the RGFC, not surround them. The only way to do that, in my judgment, was to hit them in such a way that they could not contend with us, and to keep hammering them until they quit or we had destroyed them. I remembered again what George Patton III had said in Vietnam, in the Blackhorse: "Find the bastards, then pile on." After we had found them and fixed them, I wanted to maneuver VII Corps into a position from which we could not only attack them, but pile on.

In all of our briefings, it had been made clear that if the RGFC defended from where they were, the theater plan was for CENTAF—the Air Force—to isolate them. In Colin Powell's words, they were the ones who would "cut them off." We were the force that would "kill them."

After I thought about the mission, I thought again about the time it would take. From the first, I had thought the campaign would last eight days: two days to get to the RGFC, four days to destroy them, and two days to consolidate what we had done. Those first two days were not only a function of the Iraqi army, but of time/distance, the coherence of our formations, and the freshness of our troops for the anticipated fight. From our line of departure to Collins, our way point just past Phase Line Smash, it was about 150 kilometers. If I decided on FRAGPLAN 7, I wanted a three-division moving fist of reasonably fresh troops at Collins, with enough fuel to sustain the attack until the RGFC was destroyed.

Third Army had its own campaign timing figured out and it was well known to CENTCOM and to us. Third Army's planning had us taking seventy-four hours after H-Hour (i.e., BMNT on 24 February) to reach the RGFC. Our timing was in harmony with theirs.

And then there was the issue of "operational pauses." I wanted to go over that again as well.

As we saw earlier, my staff had estimated that if the corps moved continually to Objective Collins, we would need to make a preplanned halt so that our units could replenish themselves before they resumed the attack, and they were correct. The physical endurance limitations of soldiers and the need to fuel our vehicles meant that we could not move constantly for forty-eight

hours, and then shift right into a major attack that might go on for up to four days.

While Cal Waller was acting Third Army commander, I had briefed him in a four- to six-hour "rock drill" at the VII Corps CP. All my senior commanders had been present, and they had moved their own markers around on the flat 1:100 000 map board. During the drill, Waller had suggested needing a twenty-four-hour operational pause at Collins as we shifted from a north-south to an east-west attack. But I did not want to stop at Collins, directly in front of the RGFC—I wanted a rolling attack right into them: "no pauses." Therefore, I adjusted the tempo during the first two days to meet that goal.

To get in the right attack formation without stopping meant a number of adjustments as we approached Smash. It also meant finding a third division for the fist. Today I would pick the third division or decide to use the 2nd ACR. As for the tempo adjustments, I had already begun making them the night before, and others would be made by my subordinate commanders as they maneuvered their units. For example, Don Holder was maneuvering the 2nd ACR at a tempo that would keep him about thirty minutes ahead of the divisions, and Butch Funk and Ron Griffith would do the same. Rupert Smith would move his division rapidly through the breach, then attack aggressively to the east. If I thought they needed to change their tempo to keep the corps physically balanced for our attack, I would tell them.

When Butch left the TAC, the weather had cleared enough for me to fly forward. By now I was getting antsy about remaining too long at the CP. I hated to listen to the battle in the CP. I did not belong there. The inputs I needed to make decisions were not all there. They were forward.

RENDEZVOUS WITH MAJOR GENERAL GRIFFITH SOMEWHERE IN IRAQ ABOUT 0830

Though the wind had slowed down enough to fly, the sky was overcast and the temperature was fifty degrees.

First, I went forward to meet Ron Griffith.

I spent the twenty minutes of flight time staring at the map. It was coming together. The time and distance factors, as well as the position of VII Corps's units resulting from last night, gave me the mental picture I needed. If the RGFC stayed fixed, we were in an excellent position to turn ninety degrees east with our main attack—FRAGPLAN 7.

With the intelligence indicating that the RGFC was staying in position—or perhaps beginning a movement that might denote an offensive maneuver—I felt it more important than ever for Ron to move 1st AD fast to Objective

Purple, and achieve a positional advantage on the northwest flank of the RGFC in case they came toward us. With that done, I wanted him to be in the northern part of Objective Collins by midmorning the next day. By this time, I felt sure enough of the RGFC indicators that I could now give that order to Ron. Even though I could still maneuver 1st AD in a different direction if intelligence on the RGFC changed during the day, this order would essentially start us into the ninety-degree turn east. However, since the conditions for the FRAGPLAN 7 decision were still not completely certain, for the rest of the day I looked for information that either would confirm my hypothesis or cause me to decide to do something else.

Either way, I knew I would make the go/no-go decision later in the day.

Ron and I met somewhere in the east of his sector, about fifty kilometers into Iraq. It was flat, empty desert, with no vegetation. Some of his units were visible moving forward.

Ron had landed his helo and was in radio contact with the division. His aviators had rigged up a portable generator so that they could set up quickly to power the radios. With him in his helo were his G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Keith Alexander; his G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Tommie Straus; and his aide. It was a good setup that allowed Ron both to move around the division and be present up front. While he was moving around, his ADC, Brigadier General Jay Hendrix, stayed on the ground at his TAC CP, while his chief of staff, Colonel Darryl Charlton, ran his main CP. Brigadier General Jarrett Robertson, ADC for support, moved around the division sector, making sure he and the DISCOM* commander, Colonel Verne Metzger, were on top of the division's considerable logistics challenges.

I did not care how the commanders arranged things as long as they were personally up front and knew what was going on and I could find them. I always tried to go to them rather than have them come back to me.

Ron was clearly on top of the situation and feeling good about his operation—I could see it on his face and hear it in his tone of voice. That was the way I liked to find my commanders, and it was also the way I felt about the entire corps just then. Up to now, they'd been facing parts of a brigade (and other units in the area, Ron estimated) of the Iraqi 26th Division in depth, but they'd had no problem defeating them (they had many prisoners).

In fact, he reported, their main problem so far wasn't the Iraqi army, but the Iraqi terrain in the forward parts of their sector (that is, for the first fifty kilometers or so after their line of departure). They had encountered boulder fields, *sabquas* (soft sand), and blowing sand on the previous day, which had

*Division Support Command, of four battalions, responsible for the resupply of the division.

made it difficult to maintain unit integrity and had caused them to consume more fuel than they had anticipated. Fuel vehicles had gotten stuck in the sand, and some rocky terrain had proved more difficult to get through in coherent formations than we had thought. (My staff had predicted—quite accurately—that the going would be tough early on in 1st AD sector. I had largely ignored this estimate!) As it happened, CENTCOM/ARCENT had earlier read this terrain as impassable for armored formations. The Iraqis had read it the same way. Thus, not only did the Iraqis not occupy it, they thought it would help their defense refuse the left flank.

Once through this area, the 1st AD tempo picked up dramatically. Its navigation challenges were exacerbated by the lack of GPS—the division mainly had LORAN* navigation devices. It sometimes took as long as two or three minutes to get accurate readings from LORAN towers (the Iraqis left these towers standing the whole war!). Because of the two- or three-minute lag time of readings, units wandered around some, and made some “S” maneuvers through the already difficult terrain. It was even more difficult for logistics to keep up. In other words, up to now, navigation, refueling needs, and changing division formations had regulated the 1st AD's tempo more than any Iraqi action.

Meanwhile, in order to maintain the momentum of his attack, Ron was about to shift the division formation out of its wedge. What he wanted to do was destroy the brigade of the 26th Division that had been out there refusing the flank while he bypassed with the other two brigades and moved rapidly to al-Busayyah. His third brigade got the mission of destroying the Iraqi brigade.

Finally, all along, he had kept his cavalry squadron well out in front of the division, much the same as I had the 2nd ACR out in front of the corps. He continued to do that now.

“Ron,” I said, when he had completed his update, “I want you on Purple before it gets dark today. I'll get 2nd ACR out from in front of you.”

“Roger, I understand and do not think that will be a problem,” Ron answered.

I recalled then my own original estimate of eight hours from LD (line of departure—in this case, the border) to Purple. After I learned about the navigation problems the division had been facing, as well as the enemy action they'd run into along the way, I realized that my estimate had been overly optimistic.

*LORAN is a commercially available system used mainly by the oil people in Iraq. It depends on signals sent from towers and uses triangulation to get accurate readings. There are, however, delays in getting signals back from towers.

Still, they had done very well, considering the problems they'd faced. On the twenty-fourth, 1st AD had moved all day. They'd started before 0500, after 2nd ACR had vacated the terrain in front of them, and they'd continued until well after 2100 (the process of collecting and refueling vehicles, plus local security and reconnaissance operations, went on all night). Then the troops were back into it at first light that day. The leaders got even less rest. Now they were about halfway to Purple—maybe seventy kilometers. So when I left Ron, I had every reason to believe they could be there and seize al-Busayyah by dark.

"I also want you to have 1st AD in the northern area of Collins by mid-morning tomorrow," I went on to tell him. "It looks as though the RGFC will remain fixed. If that is the case, then our FRAGPLAN 7 will work. You are the northern part of that attack."

Ron gave me a WILCO and said they could do both. They would seize Purple and be in the northern part of Collins by midmorning the next day.

★ As he and I were meeting, Ron's division cavalry squadron was beginning a series of actions that went on for the rest of the day. At this point, they were about 20 kilometers in front of the division, close to 80 to 90 kilometers from the border, and about 50 to 60 kilometers from al-Busayyah, and they were already in a fight. During this early action, they destroyed a BMP and captured more than 200 prisoners, then, passing the action over to the newly arriving 1st Brigade, they had pressed on. Soon their Bradleys and Cobras had destroyed several more armored vehicles, including two T-55 tanks, and they had captured additional prisoners, bringing their total to more than 500 in a little less than three hours. More action followed. It kept up until they reached the outskirts of al-Busayyah just before dark.

Al-Busayyah, or Objective Purple, was a key in our planning. It was the major Iraqi VII Corps logistics base—thousands of tons of equipment and ammo there—and an airfield was nearby. After 1st AD took it, Third Army planned to use this area as a logistics base for XVIII Corps and to push supplies up to XVIII Corps through the 1st AD zone in order to avoid the circuitous and much longer route to the west. Getting it also secured XVIII Corps's flank.

In order to protect the follow-on logistics units of both XVIII Corps and 1st AD, I told Ron Griffith to clear the zone of all Iraqi combat units, which he did. Al-Busayyah was a significant battle. Ron attacked it with his 2nd Brigade (Colonel Monty Meigs, commander) and bypassed with the rest of the division so that they would arrive in Collins to the east by midmorning of the twenty-sixth, as I had ordered. Later, Ron told Meigs to leave a task force behind to clear al-Busayyah, and Meigs left Lieutenant Colonel Mike McGee

and his Task Force 6/6 Infantry to accomplish that mission, which they did by killing the defending commando battalion after they refused to surrender.

I had given a lot of thought to assigning this mission and this sector to 1st AD. Assigning particular missions to particular units is one of the ways senior commanders influence the outcome of battles and engagements. Who do you put where in the formation and what objectives do you assign? Who is on the outside? Who is in the center? Who can move the fastest? Who needs detailed instructions and who does not? Who exercises initiative and who needs continuing instructions? You also consider the combat power available, the equipment and troops, and the state of training. A big factor is the condition of the troops. Are they tired? Have they been in the lead and in constant combat for some time? What success have they had recently? And have they taken losses? It is no small decision. All units are not the same.

The choice had been between the 1st AD and the 3rd AD. Whichever one it was, the division had to be able to move fast to Purple and to stay in contact on our west with XVIII Corps (to preclude cross-border fratricide and to prevent the escape of Iraqi units). Then, from Purple, I needed them to be able to rapidly turn ninety degrees east into the northern part of the RGFC, if that is what I decided, or else to accomplish such other maneuvers as the situation might demand. Of all my units, they would have the longest move (and maybe an open flank if we turned east, and XVIII Corps did not move east with us). Either division could do these missions, but of the two, I had commanded 1st AD; I knew them; they were a VII Corps division and used to our FARs; and, most importantly, they had been in Saudi longer than 3rd AD. So I picked 1st AD.

That meant I would put 3rd AD in the middle, and because they were getting into theater last, I would initially keep them as corps reserve and give them a wider number of contingencies to plan.

After I left Ron Griffith, I flew about forty kilometers to the jump TAC, manned by Lieutenant Colonel Dave McKiernan and Major Ron McConnell, which was now forward with the lead elements of the 3rd AD, or almost due east of the place where Ron Griffith and I had met. By this time, Stan Cherie had the main TAC breaking down in Saudi Arabia south of the border and was starting to relocate toward the 3rd AD. Meanwhile, the jump TAC was with the lead elements of the 3rd AD. When I reached the jump TAC, they had no word on the release of 1st CAV, no change of mission from Third Army, and no change in intel from what I had gotten a few hours earlier.

At this point, I made a decision: 1st INF would be the third division in our fist. Now I needed to get them free of the breach and forward behind the 2nd ACR.

My aircraft and two M577s were by then at the jump TAC with its line-of-

sight comms, but I anticipated that my main TAC, with its better comms, would be well into Iraq and set up by the time I finished moving around the corps that day and was ready to make the decision on FRAGPLAN 7. That did not happen.

1100 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION BREACH

After the quick stop at the VII Corps jump TAC, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Greenwald, my command pilot, an SOF veteran* and a ten-year Blackhawk pilot, flew us at about fifty feet over the forty to fifty kilometers to link up with Tom Rhame and Rupert Smith.

With me in the helo were Toby Martinez, my aide; Lieutenant Colonel Pete Kindsvatter, the VII Corps historian and an old 3rd ACR mate; Sergeant Park, who was in charge of the TACSAT radio; and Sergeant John McInerney, who was there for local security, if we needed it. Toby also helped navigate, listened to the corps TACSAT radio net with Sergeant Park when we were on the ground, and sat in on my talks to the commanders, so he could feed the result back to Stan at the TAC.

In the back was a map stand that Toby had gotten two engineer NCOs to build out of scrap lumber with hand tools. They'd painted it a dark red, the only paint they could find. It was close to the width of the helo, about four feet high, and had an acetate cover, under which we slid the 1:250 000 map on which Toby kept the current enemy and friendly situation posted. On the map stand was a small shelf, also covered with acetate, where I could make notes. And there was a crude drawer where we kept all kinds of "stuff," such as granola bars and MREs. It worked, but again it was far from high-tech.

At this point, the main communication available to me in my helicopter was my FM line-of-sight radio (which had about twenty or thirty kilometers' range at the altitude at which we were flying), but Sergeant Park also carried a portable TACSAT radio, which he set up when we were on the ground; the antenna went up like an umbrella. He and Toby would eavesdrop** on the VII Corps SATCOM command radio net and make notes on a card for me. We had only one TACSAT in the corps that could be used while flying. Park did a magnificent job keeping the radio working and setting it up in the rain and wind; I decorated him after the war.

When the common folks wanted to put the single air-carried TACSAT on

*Special Operating Forces—Mark had flown with Task Force 160, an elite Special Forces unit.

**"Eavesdropping" is important, and should be constant during a battle. You "eavesdrop" by listening to a radio net for significant information passing between two other stations on the net; another technique is to turn to a subordinate radio frequency and listen to what is going on. That way you can get a feel for their situation without calling them.

my Blackhawk, I told them no, put it in the 11th Aviation Brigade. They needed the comms on the move for their deep strikes. I could wait until I got where I was going and use the portable, hand-carried TACSAT.

As we flew in, I could see evidence of success all around. Specifically, the 1st INF had pushed their third brigade forward in between their 1st and 2nd Brigades as they expanded left, right, and forward. The three brigades were now abreast of one another on a semicircular line that marked their expanded breach-head line, which they had named New Jersey, forty kilometers into Iraq. By doing this, they had cleared the breach so that the British could flow through it and attack to the east.

Moving a brigade in between two others that are simultaneously moving out of the way, moving forward, and fighting is a great feat of coordination. The 1st INF had done it in less than four hours without incident.

They'd also had additional combat: in expanding the breach head east and north, their 2nd Brigade had attacked into and destroyed the 807th Brigade of the neighboring 48th Iraqi Division.* In expanding west and north, their 1st Brigade had added to the destruction of the 26th Iraqi Division's 806th Brigade (the 3rd AD, 2nd ACR, and 1st AD also had run over elements of this Iraqi brigade). And I could see overrun Iraqi positions and destroyed Iraqi equipment.

I also could see a steady movement of 1st INF vehicles forward into the newly expanded breach-head area to make room for the British passage. Their biggest challenge, I knew, was handling the thousands of prisoners. Our combat units were just not able to spare the combat power to escort prisoners to the rear. Many times, all over our corps sector, prisoners were disarmed, given food and water, and sent south to the rear on their own. The 1st INF had started that practice here.

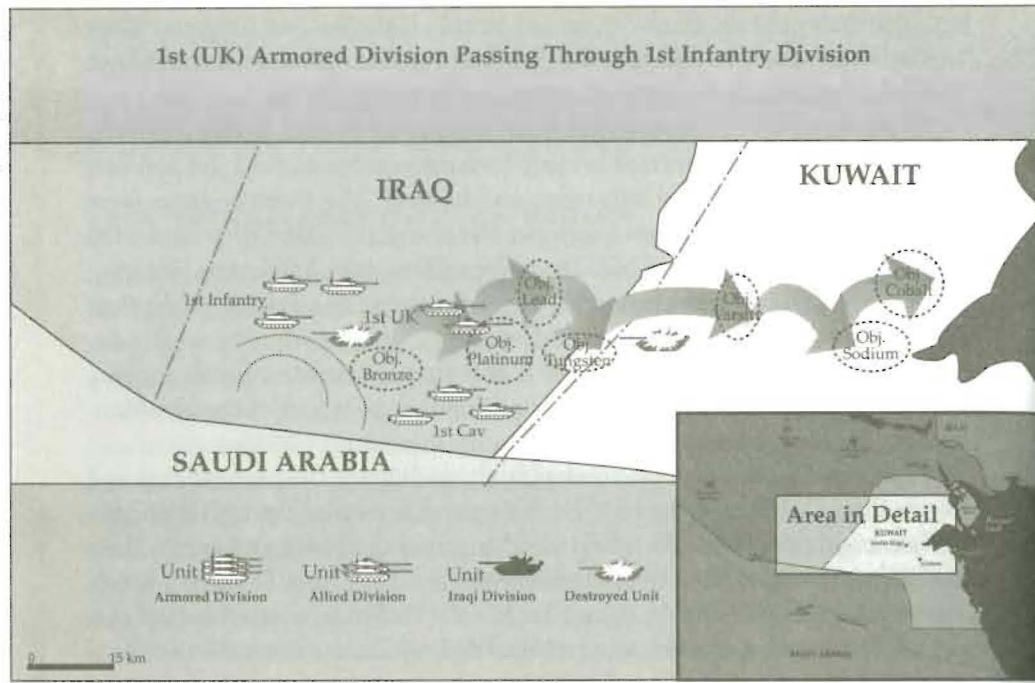
As we landed, I could not hear any firing.

Tom Rhame came out to greet me, cigar in hand, obviously animated. Rupert Smith was there as well, clearly ready and eager to get his division into the fight. Tom had a hastily set-up CP arrangement with two expando vans (one each for the G-2 and G-3) and a few other vehicles. His TAC CP was farther forward, closer to New Jersey. We went inside Tom's G-3 van and sat down.

"Boss, this operation is going great," Tom began. "We've pushed out to New Jersey, and Rupert is beginning his passage."

By this time, he went on to report, they had destroyed all of the Iraqi 26th

*In case you need your memories refreshed, here is the layout of the Iraqi frontline divisions: West to east were the 26th, 48th, 31st, 25th, and 27th Divisions, with the 52nd mostly positioned in reserve behind the easternmost divisions. One of their brigades was further west, however, behind the 48th.



With the breach successful, the 1st (UK) Armored conducted its passage of lines with the Big Red One, and then attacked to secure the east flank of VII Corps. These attacks would take it into Kuwait.

Division, which had been facing them, a brigade from the adjacent 48th Iraqi Division, all artillery in range of the breach, and other unidentified units in the area; and they had marked the twenty-four passage lanes through the breach. They were now clear of the breach lanes and well forward to New Jersey. Tom was really pumped . . . and I think a bit relieved that the breach had gone so well and at such a small cost. He was proud of his troops, and rightfully so. They had trained hard for this mission and had done it superbly.

I was glad to get his report and see it for myself. Because of what we had done so far, now further confirmed by Tom's report, I felt we were building a momentum of success that would fuse with our physical force just as we were hitting the RGFC. Such momentum lifts the whole unit—from platoon to corps. It is contagious. Here, and earlier with Ron Griffith, I was seeing exactly what I had anticipated, and that pleased me a lot.

As he finished, he added, with the same enthusiasm with which he had made his report, "Don't leave us behind, Boss." What a great team we had.

"No chance of that," I said, then told him what I'd come to tell him, that the Big Red One was to become the third division in our fist. "I want you to leave a task force"—a battalion—"in the breach for security, and after 1st UK passes, move your division forward here." Pointing to the map, I gave Tom a location I had picked just south and west of the place where 2nd ACR would be by that time. "Be prepared to make a forward passage through 2nd ACR sometime late tomorrow afternoon to attack the RGFC."

"WILCO." Tom was not one to waste words.

Meanwhile, the British had been moving forward most of the day before and into the night to an area just south of the border berm. Although they had originally planned to come forward on HETs (in order to save wear and tear on their vehicles), they'd realized they didn't have time to load onto the HETs, move forward, off-load, then reassemble the division, and so they had rapidly changed their plans and moved the sixty to seventy kilometers forward on their own power.

They had done a splendid job of adapting rapidly to changed circumstances: they had had to change their plans, get the orders out, move in formation, and get the leaders into huddles to talk about adjusted times for their attack. They'd also needed to talk about the usual "machinery" of passage, such as recognition signals, exchange of routes, fire plans, logistics, collocation of CPs, and face-to-face coordination. There had been many things to get done simultaneously and they'd done them.

Although they'd gotten themselves assembled and ready to move through the breach quickly, however, the quick change in plans had strung the division out a good bit more than they would have liked. In spite of these difficulties, though, they were ready to pass their 7th Brigade through the breach as soon as the 1st INF expanded it forward and cleared their units from the lanes the British needed. As Tom, Rupert, and I met, they had already begun forward movement. I now wanted to explain to Rupert his part in what I had just ordered Tom to do.

Major General Rupert Smith was a fast-thinking, decisive commander, who had his 1st UK Armored Division ready for action. Although he had not had a lot of time in mounted units, he had a nose for the fight and permitted his subordinate units maximum freedom of action at small-unit level to accomplish their mission. I had watched him prepare his commanders in war games. He always sketched out what he wanted done, drew in some basic control measures, then left his brigadiers, Patrick Cordingly in 7th Brigade and Christopher Hammerback in 4th Brigade, to execute. At the moment, they had a series of objectives: to move out of the breach to the east, which would put them into the rear of the Iraqi frontline divisions and into the front and flank of the Iraqi 52nd Division. During the next few days, they performed

those maneuvers skillfully, and they were in a series of stiff fights day and night.

I was proud and happy to have the British with us. They were fast off the mark, aggressive, and pressed the attack. I liked them. They were family.

"Rupert," I said, turning to him, "what I've just told Tom means your division must move through here as quickly as possible and clear out so that Tom can move forward."

As soon as he understood my intention, Rupert told me that he saw no problems, and that he and Tom would stay in communications and make it happen. They then estimated that it would take the Brits about twelve hours to make the passage through the breach—four hours longer than earlier staff estimates. But the estimates had not taken into account the number of vehicles now in the division. With the additional 142nd Artillery Brigade, U.S. Army National Guard from Arkansas, these now numbered about 7,500. Since the British had actual experience of two full-up rehearsals in our recent training, I figured Tom's and Rupert's estimate was accurate.

★ After I left Rupert and Tom, I huddled for a few minutes at my other jump TAC, which was at the breach.

While I was there, I got a flash report from the 2nd ACR: at 1240, they reported that they'd found the security area of the Tawalkana Division, and identified the unit as the 50th Brigade of the 12th AD.

The security area is a zone of about fifteen to twenty kilometers (sometimes less) in front of a main defense, and is intended to deceive the attacker as to the location of the main defense and to break up the momentum of the attacking force by causing them to fight, deploy, and thus expose their intentions early.

Finding the RGFC security area was a big deal for me, for it indicated that our main attack was beginning. Once that zone had been found, I wanted the CAV to attack through it and into the main defense, while I simultaneously maneuvered the corps into a fist and kept them concealed from the RGFC as long as we could.

Other reports from the 2nd ACR indicated that their Troop I had destroyed twelve Iraqi personnel carriers, and soon after, 2nd ACR reported another contact and combat with an Iraqi mechanized battalion reinforced by tanks. All this was happening around our Phase Line Smash.

My orders to 2nd ACR were to press on to develop the situation, but not to become decisively engaged. I wanted the regiment to collapse that security zone and find where the main defense was. I did not want them stuck in a situation they could not handle while I was maneuvering the heavy fist of the corps against the Iraqis' main defense area.

But as of now, the timing seemed about right to me. The 2nd ACR had the combat power to continue east through the Iraqi security zone, while I turned the rest of the corps ninety degrees to take up the fight they were now beginning to develop for us.

By now it was getting close to 1400, time to go forward and get a firsthand, face-to-face assessment from Don Holder.

We lifted off from near the 1st INF CP and flew the seventy or eighty kilometers forward to link up with Don Holder. This flight gave me a chance to look over the 1st INF's accomplishments, then to fly over the 3rd AD and the empty stretch between the 3rd AD and the 2nd ACR.

What I saw were signs of Iraqi defenses, now destroyed. Some destroyed Iraqi equipment was also visible. Bunkers and trenches were everywhere, either abandoned or destroyed by 1st INF vehicles running over them. Though I had seen no prisoners while I was on the ground, Tom had told me there were so many they had almost overwhelmed their capacity to move them to the rear. (This information gave me some concern, for the breach lanes needed to be running south to north. We didn't need EPWs moving south and clogging lanes.)

Moving south to north, meanwhile, was a steady stream of equipment: the British. The whole scene was just as Tom and Rupert had described it.

We doubled back and flew over the incredibly massive 3rd AD formation that was moving forward—vehicles as far as I could see, about 10,000 of them, counting corps support units. And this was only one of the four divisions! By this time, they were stretched from south of the border forward by sixty to eighty kilometers. Though I wasn't aware of it at the time, the 3rd AD was having some combat actions of its own as we passed over, and taking prisoners. The area they covered was simply too big for me to see everything they were doing in a quick overflight.

After we passed their lead units, flying very low and fast, there was nothing but sand until we reached the 2nd ACR. It was a strange feeling, flying over this now mostly empty "no-man's-land" through which the 2nd ACR had attacked earlier. Though there were bypassed Iraqi units in this area, plus who knew what else, I was too focused on the 2nd ACR to pay too much attention to what lay beneath us.

1530 2ND ACR MAIN CP

Right now I needed to look at the current situation in front of the 2nd ACR before confirming the attack formation for the corps. I also needed to decide whether to push the 2nd ACR straight to Objective Denver or to pass the 1st INF through and put 2nd ACR in corps reserve. We landed at the regimen-

tal TAC CP, where there were three M577s and a scattering of other vehicles under some canvas extensions. Inside the CP, I immediately sensed that the regiment was engaged with the Iraqis. Radios were alive with almost constant battle reports. Maps were being posted and adjusted with new information. Small huddles were taking place as officers exchanged battle information.

I could tell from Don Holder's voice and his eyes that he was in a fight. I also sensed he had it firmly under control and needed no additional help from corps assets at this point. He quickly confirmed the earlier report that the regiment had found the RGFC security zone. His third squadron, he added, had been engaging tanks, APCs, and MTLBs around the regiment's Objective May, close to Phase Line Smash.

Here is the essence of the rest of Don's update:

At 1245, Troop P (aviation) reported numerous enemy contacts just west of Phase Line Smash, and aviation was continuing to push east across Smash. Troops I and K (of 3rd Squadron, on the south of the regiment's northeast advance) engaged an Iraqi mechanized infantry battalion reinforced with tanks about five kilometers west of that sighting and destroyed thirteen BTR60s (wheeled infantry carriers), four T-55s, one BMP, and captured a lieutenant colonel.

At about 1321, Troop L (of 3rd Squadron) crossed Phase Line Smash.

At 1343, 4/2 (aviation squadron) reported Iraqi armor almost twenty kilometers east of Phase Line Smash but out of 4/2's range. At 1400, Troop G (of 2nd Squadron, on the north of the regiment's advance) reported that they had attacked and destroyed an Iraqi infantry company of MTLBs. This meant that Don had not only both his leading squadrons engaged with Iraqi defending units, but reports that his aviation, out front by twenty kilometers, had spotted additional Iraqi tanks. When close air support was available, the regiment was employing it. That day it would use twenty-four close-air-support strikes against the targets being located by the ground and aviation units. Don also had the 210th Artillery Brigade from VII Corps artillery, and a battalion of Apaches out of 1st AD that I had put under his operational control. He was using them all now, except for the Apaches. Those he was saving for that night, because their night-fighting capabilities were much better than those of the Cobras in his aviation squadron. These he used during the day.

At this point, we were at the 29 grid line (29 Easting) and these fights were going on at the 41 grid line (41 Easting), twelve kilometers away.

The desert was featureless, just it had been at the spots where I had met Tom Rhame and Ron Griffith. There were small twenty- to fifty-foot rises and drops to which the small-unit commanders had to pay attention, but almost no vegetation. Despite the intermittent rain, where armored vehicles passed,

sandy dust still got churned up quickly. Though the weather now was mostly calm, the cloud cover indicated that the weather would soon turn bad.

Don's conclusion was exactly the same as mine: he had found the RGFC—the Tawalkana—defending and moving units into position, with a hastily formed security force of other units to its west. From all these battle events, the regiment's intelligence assessment and Don's judgment was that the Tawalkana Division was along the 65 Easting (about twenty kilometers east of our Phase Line Smash), covering the Iraqi army's withdrawal from Kuwait, and with a security zone that extended eight kilometers west.

That got my attention . . . though I was far more fixed on the location of the Tawalkana and the rest of the RGFC than I was on the possibility of the Iraqis leaving Kuwait. True or not (it turned out to be correct), I had no way to confirm Don's judgment at that point. Instead, I focused on our mission. If the Tawalkana was along the 65 Easting, then that was where we would fight them. It also meant they were fixed or had fixed themselves—either way was fine with me—and that the Medina and Hammurabi Divisions, as well as other armored units, also would be in the vicinity and part of this forming defense.

That battlefield report and Don's judgment confirmed the conditions for FRAGPLAN 7.

Here is how I was thinking: We had the Tawalkana fixed. Other armored and mechanized units in the same vicinity would probably join the defense, as would the two other RGFC heavy divisions. At this point I did not know how much they knew about our enveloping attack. When the regiment hit them, however, they had to realize that they were now facing some forces west of the Wadi. If they were expecting us up the Wadi, they now had to adjust rapidly. They were not good at that (though they could rapidly reposition). After their adjustments, their defenses would not be well coordinated, their obstacles and artillery would not be tied in . . . unless we gave them time to get set. I was not going to give them that time. The regiment had done what I asked. The Iraqis were fixed. It was time to swing into our attack formation.

★ One other question remained: If I passed the 1st INF through the 2nd ACR, then where and when should I do it?

In Don's judgment, the regiment did not have the combat power to attack through the Tawalkana and other forming Iraqi units to Objective Denver, and I agreed. That settled the if. As to the rest, it was a matter of a quick time/distance mental calculation. There was no time for detailed staff work. This was an in-your-head commander-to-commander mounted maneuver (and again, the reason why a mounted commander must be up front in the

attack with his finger on the pulse). The 1st INF was in the breach securing it, while the British passed through them and attacked to the east. Rupert and Tom had estimated it would take the British twelve hours. If they were correct, the 1st INF could begin moving forward sometime after midnight on the night of the twenty-fifth to the twenty-sixth. Given the almost 100 kilometers separating the 2nd ACR and the 1st INF, and given my imperative that the 2nd ACR keep the pressure on the Tawalkana (so that they would not have time to set their defense), I had much to consider. My first thinking was for the passage to happen late the next afternoon, but that was beginning to look doubtful. If they could not make it by then, I had another decision: should I continue to push the 2nd ACR and pass the 1st INF early in the morning of the twenty-seventh, or pass them forward tomorrow night? That decision was coming, but I didn't have to make it now.

I had a quick huddle with Don and his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Steve Robinette. Don was a superb commander, with a great feel for covering force operations and the tempo of the covering force in relation to the main body. A year before, during REFORGER 90, when he had been in a covering force mission in front of VII Corps, he had developed a situation that exposed an enemy vulnerability (an opening for a preemptive attack), but the main body (or follow-on force) had been too far behind them to exploit the vulnerability. Neither of us wanted that to happen again. I had known Steve Robinette in the Center for Army Tactics at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, and I had seen him in action at Hohenfels and in REFORGER in Germany. He was a superb tactician, who could picture the tactical situation in his head and accurately assess friendly abilities as well as any officer I knew. I trusted both their judgments completely. Tactically, we were in one another's heads.

What Don had in mind just then—based on my mission to him not to get decisively engaged, and on the expectation that the 1st INF was closer than they actually were—was that the regiment should go over to the defense very soon and let the 1st INF pass through the next day. (More accurately, he wanted to get into a stationary position that would allow the follow-on division to pass through the regiment with the fewest potential complications.) He was unaware that the British were just now only partway through their passage, or that the time/distance to get the 1st INF forward was greater than he thought.

After I clarified the actual time/distance for 1st INF, I pointed out that I was not yet ready for him to go on the defense. "What I want you to do," I said, "is continue to maintain contact with the enemy. Keep pressure on the Tawalkana. Fix the RGFC. Locate flanks. And then be prepared to pass 1st INF to the east."

Don understood.

It was not an easy mission. He'd have to revise his formation alignment, then go into the teeth of the stiffening Iraqi defense in order to both fix and find the flanks of more than a division, and figure out the tempo to do all of that. And he'd have to do it all without getting so tangled up that I'd have to rescue him by committing combat units at a time and place dictated by the enemy and not by our own initiative . . . with the end result that I wouldn't be able to pass the 1st INF through. I trusted Don and the 2nd ACR to get the job done. And I knew I'd go back to see how they were doing it.

What I had just done with 2nd ACR was to reinforce the offensive cover mission. So far, 2nd ACR's mission had been to protect the movement of the main body from enemy action, and Don and the regiment had been adjusting their tempo to stay about thirty minutes in front of the main body. Now that was about to change.

I had now ordered Don on a reconnaissance mission—part of an offensive cover—which meant that he now had to orient himself more directly on the enemy in front of him than on the corps behind him. It also meant that the movement tempo could change, that is, he was no longer restricted to keeping about thirty minutes ahead of the lead elements of the rest of the corps. Don and the 2nd ACR were now focused on the enemy, while at the same time estimating a place where they could pass the 1st INF through. I would rely on Don's tactical judgment to decide the tactics and to adjust the tempo for this mission.

Estimating where to make the forward passage of two moving units is more art than science. You could attempt a passage of one unit through another while both are moving in the same direction, like a relay team in track, but in my experience that does not work. You must designate some battle handover point, a clear separation of the responsibilities for where the passing unit is to take up the fight.

In our NATO missions, all our passages of lines had been in the defense, called a rearward passage of lines, where a defending unit on the move backward had passed the fight to a stationary unit in a defensive position. We had done it many times when I had commanded the Blackhorse in the Fulda Gap from 1982 to 1984.

Those were easy compared to the maneuver facing us soon. For one thing, we were attacking. In the attack, I wanted the maximum out of the 2nd ACR, that is, I wanted them to find, fix, and locate the enemy flanks, and also to push as far east as they could go before passing the 1st INF. Sooner or later, however, the 1st INF would be ready to pass, and the 2nd ACR must stop, either of their own accord or because of enemy actions. As they tried to fix that point (judging both enemy resistance and the availability of the 1st INF to

pass), the 2nd ACR would almost surely have to go through some fits and starts, and there would also almost surely be some frustrations among junior leaders in the regiment who wanted to press east. I liked that aggressive attitude, but it was better for the larger 1st INF to keep moving steadily while the 2nd ACR did the fits and starts; a cavalry regiment is much more agile and able to handle the interruptions than an 8,000-vehicle, three-maneuver-brigade division.

All this was in my mind as Don, Steve, and I worked things out.

Based on his estimate that the Tawalkana security zone started at 65 Easting and extended about eight kilometers west, Don figured that from where they were, the 2nd ACR should attack to about 60 Easting in order to collapse the security zone. By that time, the 1st INF would be ready to pass through. However, if the RGFC turned out to be farther east than that, or if the 1st INF turned out to be farther behind than we expected, or if the 2nd ACR was able to go farther east than the 60 grid line, then they would continue to attack east.

I thought about that for a second—and about a larger issue that I had to keep forcing into my thinking. Just then I was intensely focused on the present. As tempting as that might be, I knew I had larger responsibilities. I could concentrate on the present only to the extent that its outcome affected future operations. It was not easy—I had commanded a cavalry regiment and there I was in the middle of combat with one—but I had to let that pass and force myself to look to the future—and especially at the decision on FRAGPLAN 7. It was up to Don to fight the regiment in the present.

After a quick look at FRAGPLAN 7 on the map, I looked ahead at both 3rd AD and 1st INF in relation to the 2nd ACR. We needed to pass both divisions through the 2nd ACR to take up the fight against the Tawalkana and the developing RGFC defense, but the two divisions were in different circumstances.

The 3rd AD was immediately available to execute, and was to the west-southwest of the 2nd ACR by about thirty minutes to an hour—just about right. It'd been a hell of a feat for them to get there only twenty-four hours after we had launched—they'd had to start fifteen hours early, and in a column of brigades; they'd had few cuts in the border berm to use, and so the tactical integrity of their formations had been fractured, forcing the units to go through single file, and then reassemble on the far side into two brigades forward and one back. The 3rd AD had taken hundreds of prisoners, some bypassed by the 2nd ACR, and they'd had some combat: Iraqis retreating away from the 1st INF attack had run into the 3rd AD's eastern flank. Because we were concerned about fratricide on that flank, I had placed a five-kilometer

buffer zone in between the two divisions. Some Iraqi units in that zone had been attacked by both divisions. In other words, it had not been an idle or combat-free twenty-four hours for the 3rd AD.

On the other hand, the 1st INF was in the breach about sixty to eighty kilometers away from the 2nd ACR, and fixed in place until the British could pass through. By the time the British finished passage, the 1st INF would be a good eight or ten hours behind the 2nd ACR. The next day I would need to make the tactical judgment about how to keep the 2nd ACR attacking east while moving the whole 1st INF forward to catch them, pass through, and take up the attack.

It was all coming together. I knew what I wanted to do. I would use FRAGPLAN 7—but with the 1st INF in place of the 1st CAV, who were still held in CENTCOM reserve. This would cause major adjustments to be made in the 1st INF and adjustments in graphics overlay at corps. To do both on the move would require many orders to be oral rather than written, and maps would have to be hastily marked. But it all could be done.

With the decision came an assumption: Since the Tawalkana was fixed, the other two RGFC heavy divisions would also doubtless fight in that defense. So far, I had the Tawalkana intelligence I needed from the 2nd ACR. I would soon confirm my assumption about the other two RGFC heavy divisions from the intelligence update from my G-2, and from Third Army. Earlier, I had figured with the Third Army G-2, Brigadier General John Stewart, that this was about the point in the fight when we would have to make a prediction about the disposition of the RGFC. I was confident they would have that intelligence for me when I rendezvoused a little later at the TAC with John Davidson, VII Corps G-2.

Meanwhile, the orders that set the plan in motion were clear. I had ordered Tom to move forward. I had ordered Don to continue to attack. I had ordered Ron Griffith to be in the northern area of Collins by midmorning the next day. Now it was time to get an update from my staff and see if Third Army had any orders for us before I gave FRAGPLAN 7 orders to the corps.

★ I left Don and the advancing 2nd ACR and flew about forty kilometers to the southwest to a spot in the desert where my jump TAC was co-located with the 3rd AD TAC CP. The sky was dark and the wind was picking up; it looked like rain.

Earlier, I had asked my chief, John Landry, to bring a small staff group forward so I could review the situation, compare what they had with what I had seen and gotten from the commanders, and confirm the deep attack by our 11th Aviation Brigade that night.

1630 SOMEWHERE IN IRAQ

After a few radio calls back and forth, and some flying that was in less than a straight line, we found the jump TAC, JAYHAWK Forward, located with the 3rd AD TAC CP. Waiting for me were John Landry, John Davidson (G-2), Colonel Johnnie Hitt (11th Aviation Brigade commander), Colonel Ray Smith (corps deputy fire-support coordinator), Colonel Bill Rutherford (G-4), and Stan Cherric. Much to my disappointment, the TAC CP were stuck somewhere in the sea of vehicles behind us that stretched all the way back to the Saudi border. Considering the 8,000 vehicles of the 3rd AD, plus those of the 42nd Artillery Brigade that had linked up with them, plus the corps support groups that were moving supplies behind the 3rd AD, it should not have surprised me. But it put me in a slow burn that I had only two M577s and one PCM line* with which to command an entire attacking armored corps.

In the fast-fading daylight, we huddled around a HMMWV hood, with a map spread over the top. The jump TAC was still setting up.

"The RGFC situation is about what we reported to you this morning," John Davidson began. "It looks as though they are forming a defense along here." He pointed to a location that was close to an estimate that the 2nd ACR S-2, Major Dan Cambell, had given to me earlier. "We talked to Third Army. Brigadier General Stewart knew you wanted to make a decision about now and that you needed his best estimate on the RGFC. The way it looks, he told me, the RGFC will defend from where they are now."

That was the final intelligence piece I needed, which confirmed everything I'd learned at the 2nd ACR.

Bill Rutherford, G-4, reported that our logistics situation was green for now, but that fuel would continue to be a close call. Log Base Nelligen, north at the breach, would be operational by sometime tomorrow and available to provide fuel to trucks returning empty from the divisions. He also reported an emergency resupply of ammo to 2nd ACR by CH-47,** because some of the CAV ammo vehicles had gotten stuck in soft sand. In major end items, that is, major pieces of equipment such as tanks, Bradleys, and the like, we were in excellent shape. Over 90 percent of them were available, as combat and maintenance losses had been few.

"That does it," I said, voicing the decision I had already made. "We execute FRAGPLAN 7. Get the orders out. I want 1st INF to pass through the 2nd ACR and continue the attack tomorrow afternoon. I want 3rd AD to pass

*Long-haul comms to Riyadh and the VII Corps main CP.

**We had a company of these large cargo helicopters in our aviation brigade that were used for emergency resupply.

through and around to the north of the 2nd ACR and attack east. I already told Ron Griffith I want him in the northern part of Collins by midmorning tomorrow to attack east from there."

VII Corps would now turn ninety degrees east and activate the new Third Army northern boundary between us and XVIII Corps, which would open an attack lane for them and make possible the mutually supporting corps attacks I thought we needed. It also meant that the RGFC was now in two sectors, ours and XVIII Corps's—or rather, in a Third Army sector, as drawn in the contingency plan of 18 February and amended just the day before, on the twenty-fourth.

I knew I needed to call John Yeosock right away to tell him what we were doing. It would confirm what I had told him that morning.

Earlier, there had been some differences over how and when to commit to this Third Army contingency plan. As we have already seen, while Cal Waller was Third Army commander, he had committed to it ahead of time—in fact, he had thought we might even have to pause to make sure we had a coordinated VII and XVIII Corps attack against the RGFC. When John Yeosock had returned, however, he was not ready to commit. Instead, he had published the plan, to be executed "on order." I knew, however, that it was his intent to order its execution if the RGFC stayed fixed, and so when I became convinced that the RGFC was indeed fixed, I thought I had the green light from Third Army to make this decision. And I did it.

Getting hold of him did not prove to be easy.

G+1 . . . THE REST OF THE THEATER

Meanwhile, many other things were going on in the theater of operations. On Monday morning, 25 February, this was the state of affairs in the Iraqi-occupied emirate that the Iraqis called Al Burqan Province and everyone else called Kuwait.

The Marines were in possession of the better part of the Kuwaiti bootheel, twenty to forty kilometers into the Iraqi defense. In the process of taking it, they had mauled three Iraqi divisions and captured 8,000 Iraqi prisoners. JFC-North, to their west, with only enough breaching equipment to open eleven lanes, had not by then made much of a dent in Iraqi lines. Even so, though they were deliberate, the Egyptians were getting the job done. And on the coast, the forces of JFC-East had advanced steadily, though not especially speedily, toward Kuwait City.

The Iraqis in Kuwait were in a wretched condition, and that was just fine, as far as the Marines and the Arabs fighting them were concerned.

Corps main CP—now more than 200 kilometers away—so that the main could keep its situation maps current for reports to Riyadh. Main also was giving us the latest intelligence from Third Army. I would want to hear that soon.

A few moments after I returned, I asked Stan to assemble the TAC crew so that I could brief them about what had gone on that day and outline what I had in mind for the next VII Corps maneuver.

“For the next twenty-four to thirty-six hours,” I told them, “we are going to drive the corps hard, day and night, to overcome all resistance and to prevent the enemy from withdrawing. We will synchronize our fight, as we always have, but we will crank up the heat. The way home is through the RGFC.”

I went on to thank them for their efforts so far, but, I added, we needed to run right through the finish line.

Since we were all getting tired—the TAC crew especially, after they’d moved all night and most of the day—I thought I needed to give us all some motivation, but I also wanted to outline some guidance for a plan of maneuver for the next day. I explained that we had the opportunity to engage in a double envelopment of the Iraqi forces to our front. We could close around them from the south and from the north, and trap the remaining Iraqi forces in our sector. From what we could see of the movement of XVIII Corps units, it did not appear that they would catch up to 1st AD for at least another twenty-four to forty-eight hours, as they had a long way to go after getting north to Highway 8 and then turning east. It was not an easy maneuver for them and one with significant logistics challenges, especially concerning fuel. So we’d better do what we could ourselves, in the time we had, to destroy the remaining Iraqi forces in our sector.

CONVERSATION WITH THE CINC

At around 1830, I called CENTCOM HQ and asked for General Schwarzkopf, but he was not in. They told me he would call back, and we finally connected sometime before 2000.

Since I have no exact notes on this call, I won’t try to quote our exact words, but this was the gist:

I’d wondered if he would raise the issue of the speed of our advance, but he didn’t, which pleased me. It seemed to indicate that the issue was closed. Otherwise my report was the same kind of SITREP that I normally gave to John Yeosock, though I hoped I could also communicate to him an awareness of the magnificent job our troops were doing under tough battlefield conditions. I just sensed he did not have an appreciation of all they were doing.

During our conversation, the TAC kept working hard. Radios continued

to crackle, and people went about their business as I pressed the phone close to my car so that I could hear. It was a straightforward, commander-to-commander discussion, and throughout he gave every indication that he understood what I was saying. I wanted to lay out what we were doing, and intended to do, and see if he had any further guidance for us, but I also wanted to let the CINC know that, in my judgment, the maneuver John Yeosock wanted to make with the British—to attack them south into the Wadi—was not a good idea. (I wanted General Schwarzkopf to be aware of this issue, because I wanted to use the British as the southern arm of the envelopment instead, and because we needed the CINC’s help to get an Army boundary changed. Otherwise I would have simply argued the whole thing out with John Yeosock.)

I began by reporting that we had turned the corps ninety degrees east and were attacking the RGFC, that 1st INF would pass through 2nd ACR that night and form the three-division fist of the corps to destroy the RGFC, that I had Apaches going deep that night, and that we were pressing the fight hard. He seemed to take it all in.

Because I assumed he already had a good picture of our activities, I did not give him details of the fighting, or of the battle damage to the Iraqis. As I discovered after the war, though, his HQ was twelve to twenty-four hours behind in tracking the fight. If I had known that then, I would have filled him in more completely. As it turned out, what the CINC apparently thought we were doing and what we were actually doing were worlds apart.

After I had taken him through our basic situation, I told him about our orders from Third Army to attack south with the British, and told him that instead we should continue east and maybe north with the British, and he agreed. He thought going south was a bad idea as well.

Once again, I thought we understood each other. Again, I discovered after the war that I was wrong. In his autobiography, General Schwarzkopf reports that he heard me say that I was worried about some bypassed Iraqi units that might hit us in the flank and that, in his words, I “wanted them destroyed” before his forces turned to the Republican Guards, and therefore was about to order an attack toward the *south*.

“‘Fred,’ I interrupted, ‘for chrissakes, don’t turn south! Turn *east*. Go after ‘em!’”

A few lines later, he chalked it up to understandable pre-battle jitters but what he seemed to be saying was that I intended to have the whole corps attack south before I got around to hitting the Republican Guards. Such a thought couldn’t have been further from my mind. I didn’t even want to attack south with the *British*, much less the whole corps. How he got that impression is almost unimaginable to me. I was stunned. Here we were in a fist;

we had been attacking relentlessly into the Tawalkana most of the day; we were also less than two hours from an Apache battalion attack about 100 kilometers east of those battles; and all of it heading due east! How could he think I was about to turn south? (That would have meant, for example, turning 1st AD and 3rd AD ninety degrees, which would have put them on the axis on which they had just attacked north for 150 kilometers! Plus, we were about to pass the 1st INF through the 2nd ACR at night!)

Lastly, I told him about our commitment of the 1st CAV in the north and our double-envelopment scheme of maneuver.

After he had listened to it all, he answered, "OK, Fred, good work, and keep it up," or words to that effect. He went on to add some compliments to the corps, yet he also left me with the clear intent that we should continue to press the attack hard . . . as we were in fact doing. Then he added some intelligence that was new to me: the Hammurabi Division were being loaded onto HETs and were trying to escape the theater. We had thought the Hammurabi would be defending in the vicinity of the Medina, or even up north in XVIII Corps sector. Now that they appeared to be trying to get out, my sense of urgency increased. However, since we were then close to 100 kilometers from the Hammurabi, they were split between us and XVIII Corps, and our troops were fully committed at this point, there wasn't much else we could do.

Finally, he thanked me for the update, added a "good luck," and that was it. I got no change in orders from General Schwarzkopf.

It was our only talk during those four days, and afterward, I could not help but conclude that he was satisfied with what we were doing. He also left me with the feeling that we had maybe another forty-eight hours to finish this war. It was nothing he said specifically, yet I put together the new intelligence about the Hammurabi with what we were doing to the Tawalkana, and that told me intuitively that time was running out. I still thought we had enough time to destroy the RGFC in our sector.

I felt I had had a clear meeting of minds with Schwarzkopf, and I chalked up the earlier reports of his displeasure to the usual ups and downs all commanders go through in a fight. We had maneuvered a large complex formation into a physical posture that in my judgment was perfect for the enemy and the mission. I had just finished pumping up the TAC and telling them we would drive this to completion. If ever I felt I had my unit in a position to have a decisive edge over an enemy, this was it.

I called John Yeosock to report the conversation, and my impressions, and also told him that I had raised the issue of the British attacking south, and that the CINC had agreed that it was not a good idea. John then released me from it (in all fairness to John, the mission south had not been a stupid or ill-considered idea: in addition to the possibility of getting the 1st CAV into the

fight earlier, he had also been thinking that, by clearing the area, he could more quickly establish a log base in Kuwait that would give us a much faster turn-around time for fuel, in case we and XVIII Corps continued fighting in and around northern Kuwait and near Basra).

ENEMY FORCES

During the day, our main CP had been developing a clear picture of the Iraqis' activities, and after my phone calls, our G-2 folks gave Stan and me a quick intelligence update. This is what they reported at 2030:

"Tawalkana Mech Division and one brigade of the 52nd Armored Division will continue to defend along Phase Line Tangerine until approximately 262100C"—that is, at 2100 on 26 February ("C" stands for local time)—"at which time, Tawalkana Division has been ordered to withdraw to a subsequent defensive position. This subsequent defensive position will probably be reinforced by the remainder of the 52nd Armored Division and possibly the 17th AD. On 26 Feb, elements of the Medina Division moved out of revetments to orient forces to the SW. Similarly, up to 9 bns of the Hammurabi Division moved to the NE about 10–20 kilometers in positions to defend the Rumaila oil fields." The oil fields were about thirty kilometers west and southwest of Basra, running north to south about ten kilometers; they were about half in our sector and half in XVIII Corps's. We thought they might be impassable for heavy tracked vehicles (it turned out we were wrong). "Other Iraqi forces in Kuwait will continue to withdraw to the north toward the Iraqi border. The Iraqi goal will be to delay VII Corps and MARCENT* along successive defensive lines, while withdrawing the bulk of his armored and mechanized units into Iraq. Iraqi forces, particularly RGFC units, will remain capable of maintaining a defense in depth and conducting up to brigade-sized counterattacks. He will become increasingly vulnerable to Coalition air strikes as he withdraws from prepared defensive positions, as well as to rapid and coordinated fires and maneuvers."

This statement was later included in the report that went to Third Army from our VII Corps main CP. What it meant to me was that the Iraqi strategic reserves were attempting to form a series of defensive lines between us and Highway 8, so that they could continue to move their forces out of Kuwait, that the RGFC was the HQ directing this defense, and that the Tawalkana and Medina RGFC divisions were still immediately in front of VII Corps.

The Tawalkana had their three brigades on line from north to south ap-

*We thought MARCENT was then attacking north, roughly on Highway 8. In fact, they had actually reached the end of their attack.