

# *TF Tarawa*



## *Battle of An Nasiriyah*

*22 Mar – 02 April 2003*

# Mission and Intent

**MISSION:** On order, TF Tarawa secures MEF OBJ C (JALIBAH) IOT facilitate establishment of LSA VIPER. On order, conduct relief in place with 3ID at western crossing site vicinity Hwy 1 and Euphrates River. BPT secure crossing sites on the eastern side of An Nasiriyah and continue attack north to seize MEF OBJ E (QALAT SIKAR) IOT facilitate the main effort's rapid attack towards Baghdad.

**PURPOSE:**

- Facilitate I MEF's rapid attack north
- Preserve main effort's combat power for the decisive fight.

**METHOD:**

- Enable MEF main effort to attack north rapidly.
- Execute tasks that range from combat through humanitarian operations.
- Focus on I MEF's rapid movement north to hasten the collapse of the Iraqi regime.
- Economy of force effort.
- C4I maximize combat power at critical decision points.
- Use 3d MAW as a force multiplier.
- Employ IO to affect capitulation or minimize effects on combat operations.

**END STATE:**

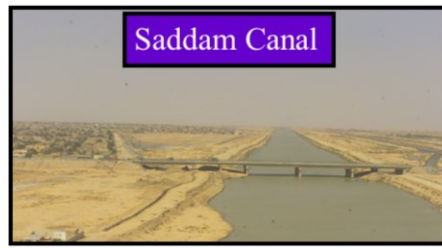
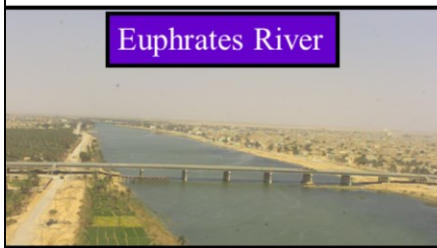
- I MEF advancing towards Baghdad.
- Flanks secured along MSRs in zone,
- Logistics throughput unhindered
- TF Tarawa poised for follow-on combat operations to the north.

The mission statement was developed and refined aboard ship enroute to theater. The BPT portion of the mission was not executed, however Qalat Sikar did prove significant for TF Tarawa operations.

The Commander's Intent served its purpose of focusing the force during execution of operations.

## Anticipated Enemy Situation

- 11<sup>th</sup> ID expected to capitulate. No longer able to conduct a coherent defense
- Strength and composition of paramilitary forces unknown
- Expect paramilitary to put up an initial defense and then withdraw north along Hwy 7



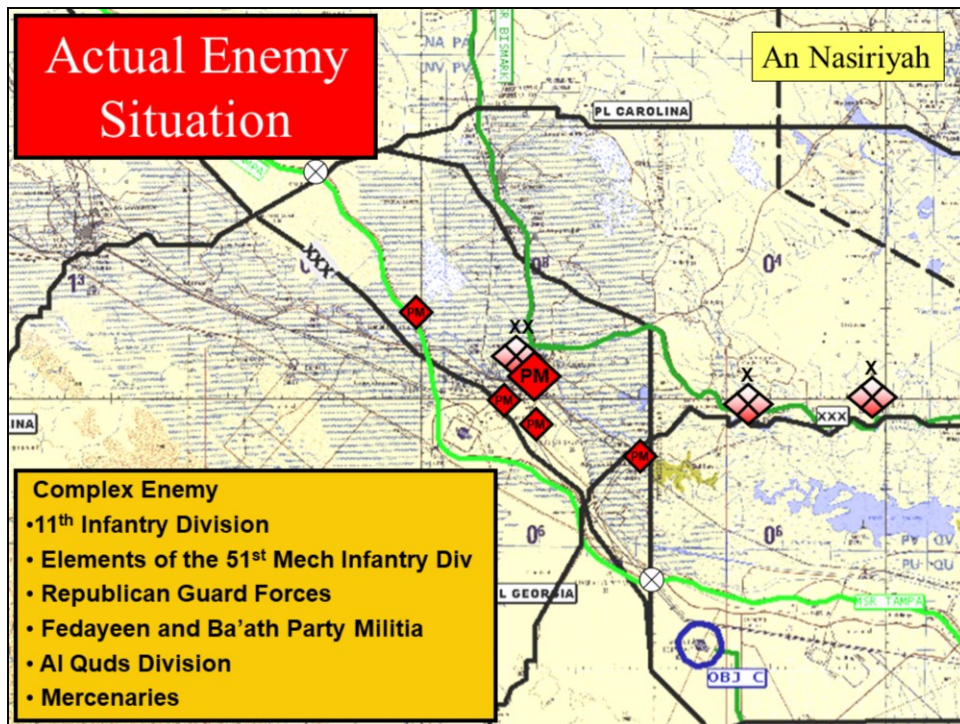
Purpose of slide: Depict the Q-Route and TF Tarawa Objs 1 (Eastern bridge crossing site over the Euphrates River) and 2 (Eastern bridge crossing site over the Saddam Canal).

### Orientation:

- An Nasiriyah – pop. 535,000
- Objectives
- Euphrates River and Saddam Canal
- Hospital

### Potential Discussion Items:

- Proximity of the urban areas to the objectives
- Trafficability of the ground
- RCT scheme of maneuver – Secure Obj 1; discover route to Obj 2 east of the urban area; secure Obj 2
- Enemy tactics
- Civilians on the battlefield
- Use of artillery series along Q-Route to allow force passage
- Friendly fire by A-10s
- 18 Marines KIA during battle for the bridges



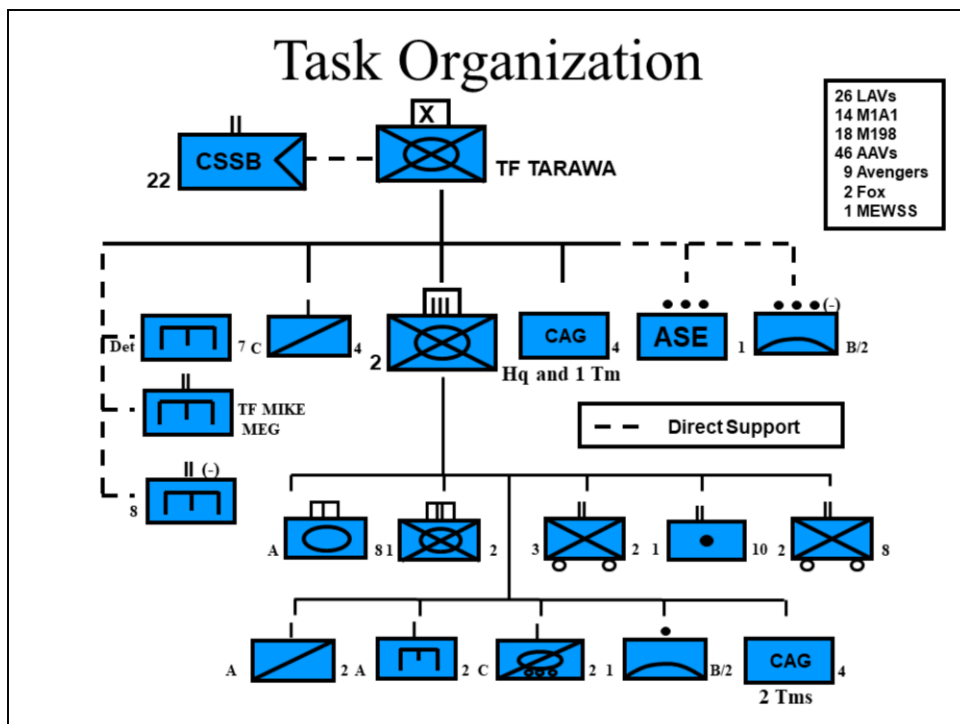
Purpose of slide: Orientation and linkage between Obj C and An Nasiriyah

#### Orientation:

- An Nasiriyah and eastern bridges
- Western crossing site at Hwy 1 and the Euphrates River
- MSR Tampa
- Hwy 7
- Q-Route (across eastern bridges)
- Tallil Airfield

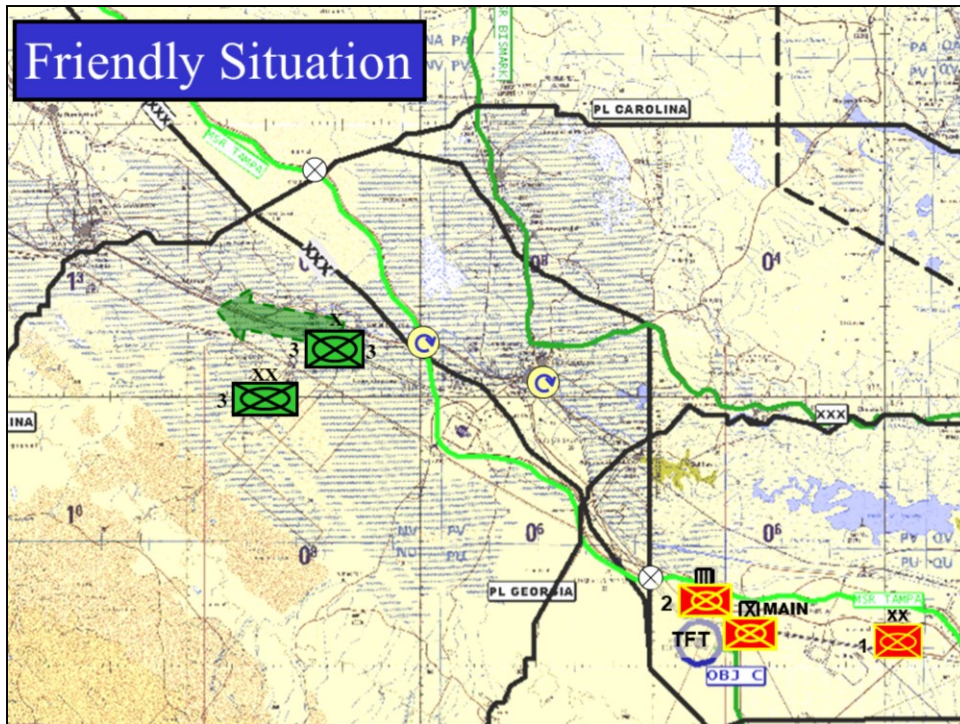
#### Potential Discussion Items

- RIP w/ 3ID at the western bridge (Hwy 1); 3ID movement west
- 3ID not getting near An Nasiriyah
- First contact by TF Tarawa
  - Recognizing the enemy (Who were we fighting?)
  - Learning the enemy's tactics
  - What worked and what didn't?
  - Use of CAS and artillery (to include CBR)
- Rescue of the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company
  - Disorientation of the 507<sup>th</sup> the previous night
  - Capture of PFC Lynch
- Abandoned vehicles:
  - Functional tanks
  - AAA
- Capitulation?



On the left side of the screen, the task organization of I MEF forces is depicted. I MEF was OPCON to the CFLCC with V Corps being I MEF's adjacent unit.

The right side of the screen depicts the task organization of TF Tarawa the day prior to the commencement of combat operations.



Purpose of slide: Orientation and linkage between Obj C and An Nasiriyah

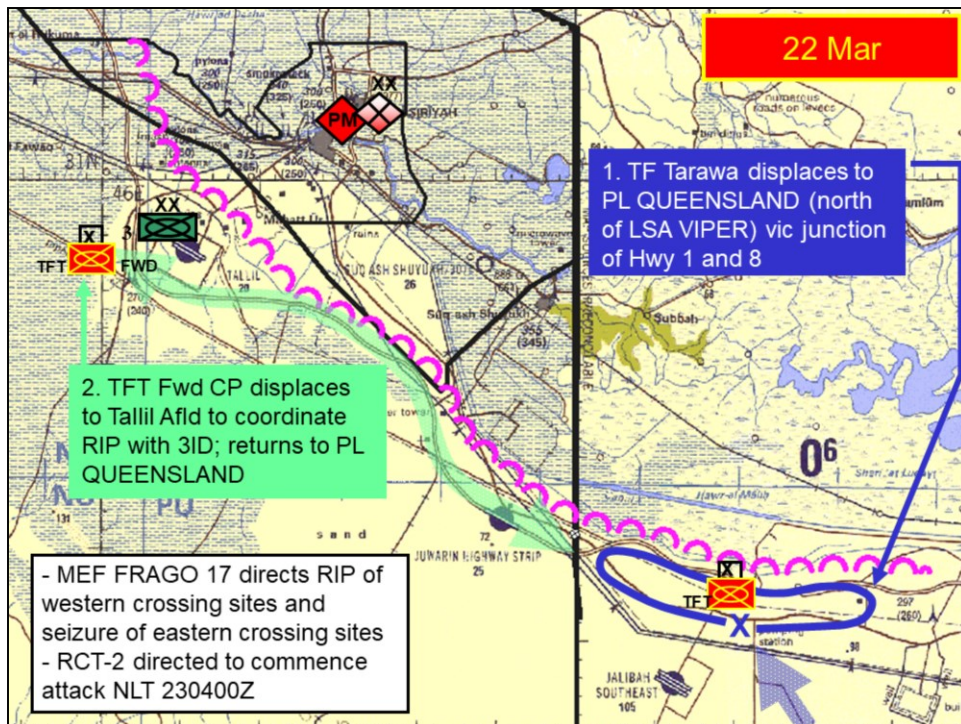
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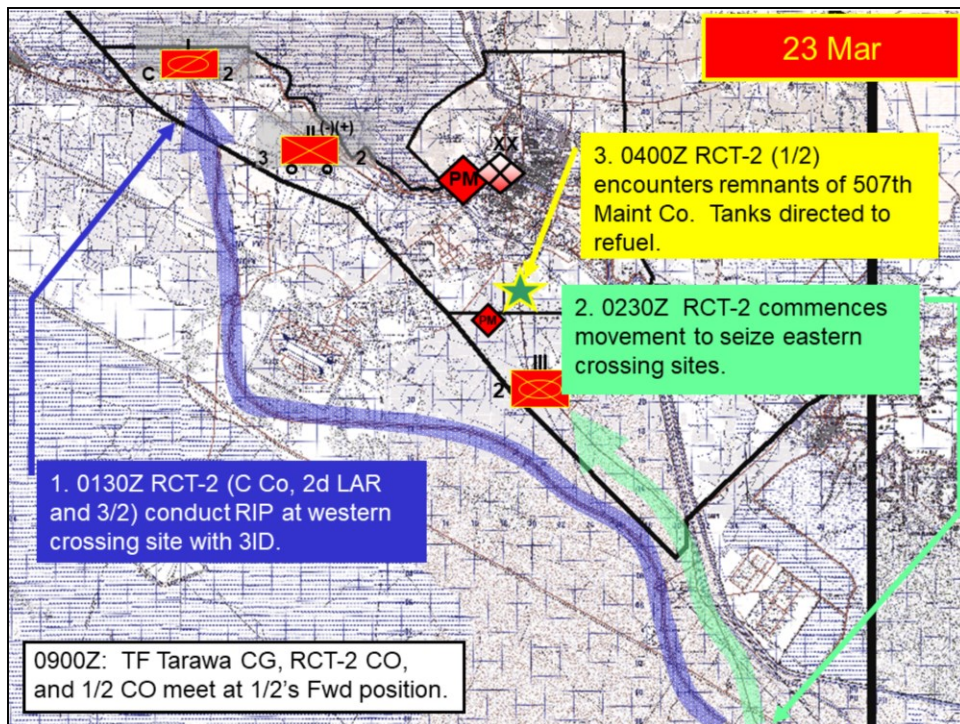
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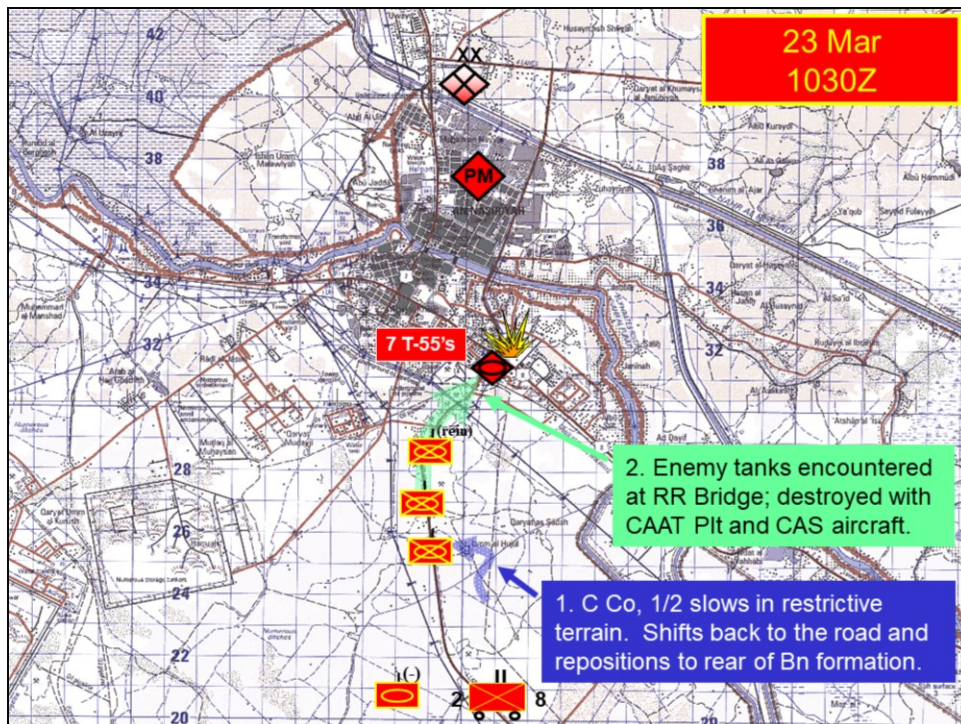
**22 Mar:** On the afternoon of 22 March, TF Tarawa displaced from the Al Luhays Oil Fields to the vicinity of the intersections of Highways 1 and 8. The Fwd CP traveled along Hwy 1 to the 3ID B TOC, west of Tallil AF, to coordinate the Relief in Place (RIP) that would occur the following day. Upon its return, TF Tarawa was in receipt of I MEF FRAGO 017-03 that directed them to conduct the RIP at the western bridge-crossing site and seize the eastern bridges of An Nasiriyah. An orders group was convened and the RCT was directed to effect a RIP with 3 BCT at the western bridge crossing site at 230200Z Mar 03 and to commence the attack to seize the eastern crossing sites at An Nasiriyah NLT 230400Z Mar 03. The RCT commenced movement to the western bridge crossing sites at 2130Z.



**23 Mar:** RCT-2 affected the RIP at the western bridge-crossing site over the Euphrates River at 0130Z. The remainder of the RCT commenced movement at 0230Z to seize the eastern bridges. The lead elements encountered an Army HMMWV from the 507th Maint Co with four wounded soldiers. A force, led by tanks, maneuvered forward to the position designated along Highway 8 and rescued wounded soldiers of the stricken company while under fire from Iraqi forces. The tanks, being low on fuel, retrograded to refuel. Enemy engagements, to this point, had been characterized by inaccurate indirect fire and light caliber small arms engagements.



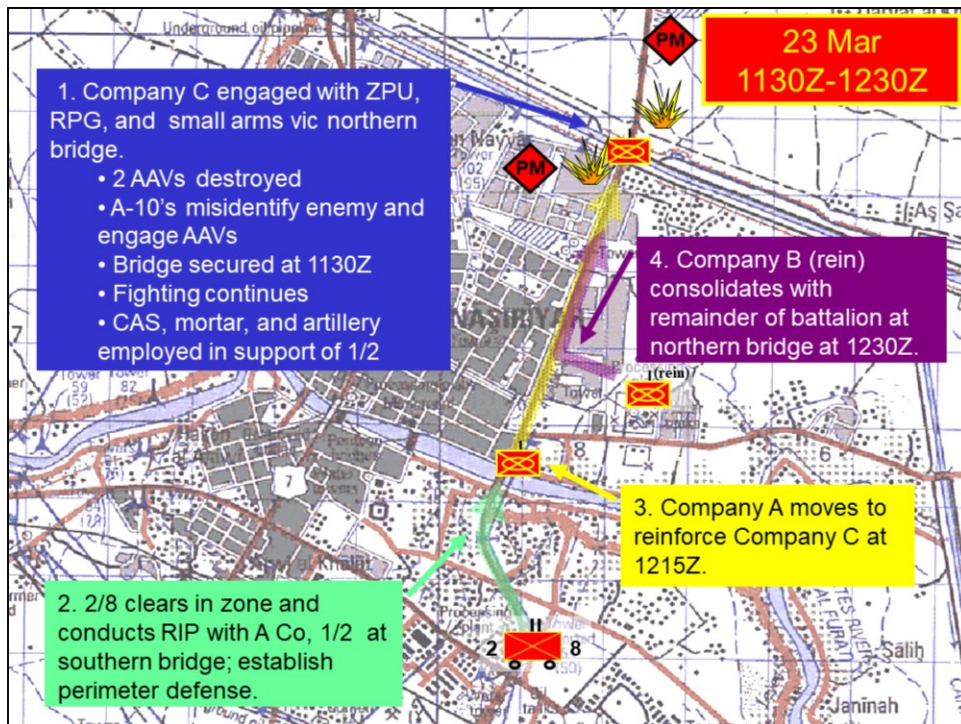




The eastern most company forward found the terrain unsuitable for movement and was forced to maneuver to the road and assume a position at the rear of the formation; the battalion was now in a battalion column. T-55 tanks were encountered upon reaching the railroad bridge immediately south of the Euphrates River Bridge. The CAAT Platoon was brought forward to destroy these tanks; RW CAS and artillery assisted in this effort. Of the seven tanks destroyed in this engagement, reports emerged that three of them may have been manned.

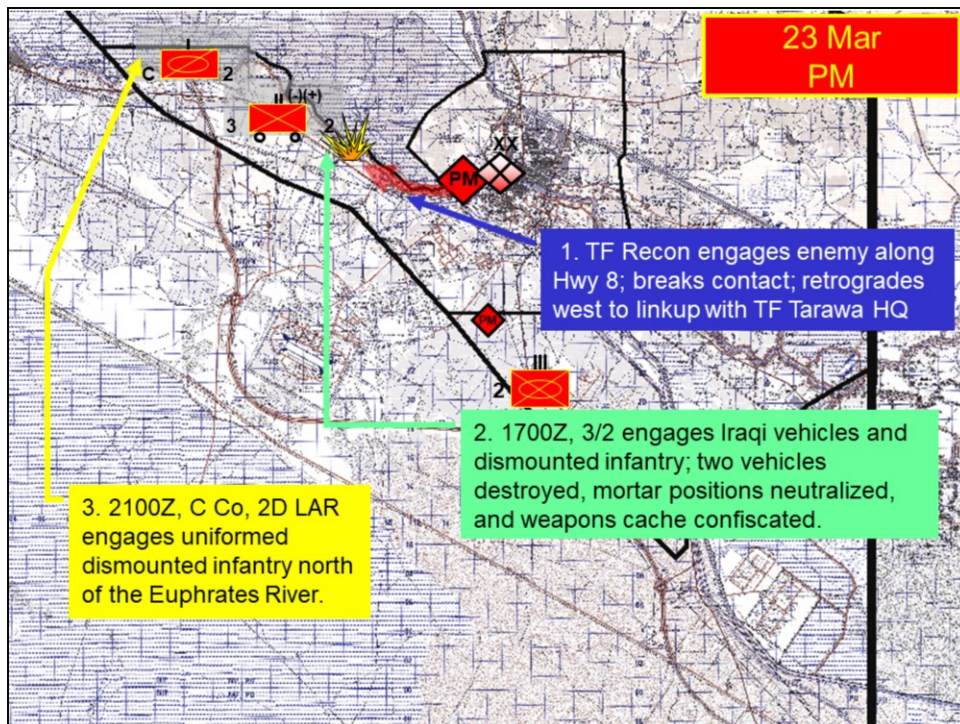






Upon nearing this objective, Company C was engaged by a small arms and an RPG barrage. Two AAVs received direct hits. The company continued to the north side of the objective where they continued to encounter enemy resistance from both the north and the east. During the engagement, FW CAS arrived on station to assist the battalion; several AAVs were inadvertently engaged by A-10s. The second objective was seized at approximately 1130Z. The remaining tanks, having completed their refueling evolution, moved forward to reinforce the companies with three tanks joining the company at the northern bridge and two tanks remaining with the company at the southern bridge. 2/8 arrived at the southern bridge at approximately 1100Z and conducted a RIP. The remainder of the day was spent consolidating the position, conducting an aerial resupply, and expanding the perimeter defense.





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