

DESERT STORM:

A Different Look

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Theme:

What Did They Intend To Do?

What Were They Able To Do?

SOURCES

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A short side trip to the land of doctrine:

Doctrine:

"Fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of national objectives."

(U.S. Army FM 100-5, *Operations*, June 1993, Glossary-3)

The Spirit of '76

- 1976 Version of U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Operations:

First Post-Vietnam revision of doctrine placed emphasis on:

Firepower and Attrition

Force Ratios as a predictor of success

As General William E. DePuy, author of 1976 doctrine put it:

"...stick to the arithmetic of the battlefield."

5:1 favorable ratio for a successful attack

No more than a 3:1 unfavorable ratio for a successful defense

Head-on assaults

"The chief mission of these forces must be to fight with sufficient strength and tenacity to force the enemy to disclose the size and direction of his main attack, and to buy time while defending forces **concentrate in front of the main thrust** ... In mounted warfare, armored and mechanized elements (tanks and armored personnel carriers) must be set in motion toward the battle positions **in the path of the enemy thrust**." (emphasis added) p. 3-6. Paragraph had box around it for emphasis.

AirLand Battle Doctrine

- 1982 Major Revision to FM 100-5

After years of serious criticism from within and outside the Army, the 1976 firepower-weighted doctrine was discarded.

Replaced with AirLand Battle Doctrine which embraced maneuver warfare.

Four tenets:

Initiative

Agility

Depth of Operations

Synchronization

Key Events

- August 2, 1990

Saddam invades Kuwait

UN Resolution 660 calls for withdrawal - First of 12 resolutions

- August 5

U. S. National Policy Objectives established

1. Immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal
2. Restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government
3. Security and stability for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Region
4. Safety and protection of American citizens abroad

U. S. offers troops to defend Saudi Arabia -- offer accepted

- August 7

U. S. troops begin arriving in Saudi Arabia

Desert Shield -- the Defense of Saudi Arabia -- Begins

Desert Shield

- Objectives:

1. Deter Saddam from further attacks.
2. Defend Saudi Arabia if deterrence failed.
3. Build a militarily effective Coalition.
4. Enforce the economic sanctions of UN Resolutions 661 & 665.

- Forces:

XVIII Airborne Corps

Four Army Divisions

1st Marine Expeditionary Force

Three Aircraft Carrier Battle Groups

An Amphibious Task Force

Five equivalent Fighter and Bomber Wings

- Deployment completed mid-October

Approximately 200,000 Coalition troops with equipment.

18 Inf. Batlns, 763 tanks, 1,494 AFV's, 525 Arty, 227 Attack Helo's

Considerable armor, but not armor-heavy.

- August 10, 17: Initial Air Campaign Planning

"Instant Thunder" briefed to Schwarzkopf

A six-day strategic bombing campaign designed to incapacitate Iraqi leadership and destroy its key military capabilities.

Target sets organized around so-called "centers of gravity".

Typical, historical strategic targets such as:

enemy leadership

command, control, and communications sites

chemical, nuclear, and biological facilities

electric power

oil facilities

railroads and bridges

airfields and air defenses

naval ports and facilities

military support facilities

Relative neglect of Iraqi ground forces in Kuwait.

150 attack aircraft proposed to do the job in 6 days.

"The text of the briefing viewgraphs stopped just short of declaring that Instant Thunder alone would force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait." (GWAPS, p. 12)

- Mid-August: Initial Ground War Thinking

Sitting in his office in the Pentagon, Powell asks Schwarzkopf:

"If you had to kick the Iraqi out of Kuwait right now, how would you do it?" (S, p. 315)

Schwarzkopf sketches plan outline on scrap paper.

Proposed plan involved a **single corps-sized head-on assault directly into the strength of the Iraqi defenses.**

Plan objective:

Capture and hold a key road junction northwest of Kuwait City.

Desired outcome:

Cutting supply lines to Iraqi forces would force them to withdraw and leave their equipment behind.

Powell immediately shows plan sketch to Cheney and Bush.

Powell and Cheney must have been unimpressed, for each launched his own independent planning effort involving an **envelopment through the western desert.**

Envelopment:

"An offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to **secure objectives in the enemy's rear**.
(emphasis added) U.S. Army FM 100-5, *Operations*,
Glossary-3

Key idea:

Get to the enemy's rear.

- August 25: Initial Desert Storm Concept Plan

Schwarzkopf briefs Powell on Four Phase Plan

Phase I:	Strategic Air Campaign
Phase II:	Air Supremacy in Kuwait Theater
Phase III:	Battlefield Preparation
Phase IV:	Ground Offensive Campaign

Phase I was essentially the final Air Staff version of Instant Thunder.

A special planning group - The Black Hole - established for Phase I.

Phase I target list set at 84 targets

Phases II&III less developed -- Republican Guards not targeted

Ground Campaign planning showed no progress

- Early September: Air Campaign optimism continues to grow

"When taken in total, the result of Phase I will be the progressive and systematic collapse of Saddam Hussein's entire war machine and regime."
(GWAPS p. 20; quote of CENTAF's ops order Sept. 2, 1990.)

- Early September: Continued lack of progress on ground plan

Sensing that Schwarzkopf's ground planning was foundering, Army Chief of Staff Vuono offered four graduates of School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS -- or Jedi Knights).

SAMS were purportedly well versed in maneuver warfare concepts.

School was established in early 1980's in conjunction with major doctrine change of 1982 when doctrinal emphasis on force ratios, firepower, and attrition was replaced with maneuver concepts.

SAMS arrive Saudi Arabia September 15-18.

- September 25: Schwarzkopf Guidance to SAMS

Using only Desert Shield Force, drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

Avoid attacking directly into strongest defenses.

Destroy Saddam's so-called "operational center of gravity":

The Republican Guards.

Initial Ground War Plan

- October 6 - SAMS' first cut:

Three options presented to Schwarzkopf: a direct head-on straight up-the-middle attack and two variations of a left-hook envelopment.

SAMS argued against any left-hook envelopment for following reasons:

- a. Insufficient forces.
- b. Long distances involved, not enough heavy transport.
- c. Supply lines might be too long to support.
- d. Fear of exposing long supply lines to counter attack.

IN OTHER WORDS; NOT ENOUGH MASS OR LOGISTICS, AND FEAR OF EXPOSING A FLANK.

SAMS sought 3:1 force ratio advantage before attacking, hoped for 6:1 or better at the point of penetration. (CV, p. 122)

"Favorable force ratios can be achieved in two ways. An attacking force can concentrate an overwhelming mass in front of a weak spot, or the force can wear down the enemy's defenses before close combat begins. The campaign sought to do both." (CV, P. 122) -- **mass and attrition.**

Phase III (Air Campaign) would have to attrit Iraqi armor by 50 percent.

Initial Plan (continued)

- SAMS preferred option:

Attack straight north into Kuwait; seize and hold the key highway junction northwest of Kuwait City, cutting the road to Basra.

Coalition forces would still be short of Republican Guards.

If ordered to proceed after taking highway junction, Coalition forces would continue north to secure Kuwait-Saudi border, thereby cutting off Republican Guards in the KTO. (CV, p. 126)

Unfortunately, the Republican Guards were positioned north of the border, in Iraq, so it is not clear how the second phase would work.

Line of advance was approximately 100 km east of Wadi-Al Batin.

- According to Schwarzkopf:

"... it was a straight-up-the-middle charge right into the teeth of the Iraqi defenses." (S, p. 356) Nevertheless, he accepted the preferred option for further study and rejected the left-hook options. (CV, p. 126)

- October 10, 11 -- Plans briefed to Powell, Cheney, and Bush

Air Campaign plan well received and accepted.

Ground Campaign plan ridiculed and rejected.

Typical of the reception, Brent Scowcroft asked:

Why was the American Army attacking into the strength of the Iraqi defenses?

Why wasn't the Army hitting the Iraqis on the western flank?

The answers and responses were not convincing.

Adding to the calamity, Schwarzkopf's briefer ended the briefing with the message that he, Schwarzkopf, did not support his own ground plan.

To ensure success, Schwarzkopf wanted a second corps assigned, doubling the size of his force. How he would use them was not clear, and not presented to the NCA.

Bush asked what it would take to launch an attack from the west.

Powell answered: One more corps -- doubling the commitment.

Following the briefing to Bush, Cheney told Powell:

"I can't let Norm do this high diddle diddle-up-the-middle plan"
(The Generals' War, p. 140)

" Two months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, CENTCOM still did not have a clue how ground forces should be used to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait." (The Generals' War, p. 140)

Initial Impressions:

A. Schwarzkopf's and SAMS's emphasis on:

- force ratios
- massed firepower
- 50 percent attrition prior to attacking
- fear of exposing a flank
- focusing on terrain objectives instead of enemy forces

appear more consistent with 1976 firepower and attrition doctrine than 1982 and 1986 maneuver doctrine.

B. Contrast Schwarzkopf's apparent fear of exposing a flank with Patton's philosophy: "Let the enemy worry about his flank!"

C. Contrast Schwarzkopf's preference for heavy bombardment and 50 percent enemy attrition prior to launching an attack with Guderian who did not want even artillery barrages to announce his initial attacks.

High Diddle Diddle Gives Way To

The Great Wheel

- Mid-October

Cheney pursues his own plan: The Western Excursion

Goal: Invade and occupy western Iraq -- denies SCUD sanctuary.

Powell's staff develops a western envelopment plan.

Approach based upon overwhelming brute force.

Powell's instructions: plan on having whatever it takes to win.

Scheme: a massive roundhouse punch, sweeping farther west than SAMS were planning but not as far as Cheney was thinking.

Schwarzkopf reacts to Washington events by instructing SAMS to concentrate on a two-corps plan.

SAMS' preferred option was a **two-corps massed attack** straight up "the bowling alley", a natural chute approximately 100 km west of the Wadi Al-Batin running north to the Euphrates -- sort of a short left-hook directly into the Republican Guards. (The Generals' War, p. 148-150.)

SAMS saw no reason to move farther west, since **there were no Iraqi troops out there to fight** -- a very telling rationale. (Generals' War, p. 149.)

- October 21, 22-23: SAMS Brief Schwarzkopf, Powell

Schwarzkopf initially accepts SAMS' preferred option: two-corps massed attack.

Powell argues for a left-hook farther west to placate Cheney.

Schwarzkopf changes his position and agrees with Powell.

The Great Wheel takes shape.

- November 8: Bush announces VII Corps deploying to the Gulf
- November 14: Schwarzkopf briefs his commanders on ground plan

Marines feint amphibious landings

Marine and Arab forces attack directly into Kuwait

XVIII and VII Corps envelop through western desert

XVIII Corps block western escape route, then help
VII Corps destroy Republican Guards

Two memorable quotes from Schwarzkopf's briefing to commanders:

"We need to destroy - not attack, not damage, not surround - I want you to *destroy* the Republican Guard. When you're done with them, I don't want them to be an effective fighting force anymore. I don't want them to exist as a military organization."

"I want to pin them with their backs against the sea, then go in and wipe them out."

- Schwarzkopf's comments imply:
 - a. Destroying the Republican Guards was a prime operational objective.
 - b. Apparently, the envelopment was intended to prevent the Republican Guards from escaping that destruction.
- There were two escape routes out of the theater:
 - a. Westward from Basra along the Euphrates valley.
 - b. Northward from Basra around the eastern side of the Hawr al'Hammar over the causeway northwest of town, or over bridges north out of town.

What was the plan regarding these escape routes?

Title V, FM 100-5, Certain Victory, and GWAPS should provide an answer.

"Based on guidance from the Secretary, CINCENT subsequently directed his planning staff to consider an envelopment by two US Army corps west of the Wadi Al-Batin. The purpose of the envelopment was **to get behind the main Iraqi forces** while supporting attacks were conducted into Kuwait. The main attack's objective was the destruction of the Republican guards forces." (emphasis added) Title V, p. 230

" The main attack was designed to avoid most fixed defenses, **drive deep into Iraq, envelop Iraqi forces from the west** and attack and destroy Saddam Hussein's strategic reserve -- the Republican Guard armored and mechanized infantry divisions augmented by several other Iraqi Army heavy divisions." (emphasis added) Title V, p. 245.

Key quotes (continued)

" Its [XVIII Corps' 101st Airborne Division] mission was to penetrate rapidly by air assault to the Euphrates River, cut the LOC between Bagdad and Iraqi forces in the KTO, destroy all enemy forces along those routes, and turn east to block north of Al-Basra." (emphasis added) Title V, p. 260.

"VII Corps conducted the theater main attack with the mission of destroying the armor-heavy RGFC. The VII Corps plan of advance paralleled that of XVIII Corps -- a thrust north into Iraq, and a massive right turn toward the east. Once the turn was completed, both corps were to coordinate their attacks to trap the Republican Guards divisions. They were then to press until the RGFC was eliminated." (emphasis added) Title V, 262.

"The major ground operation began in the early morning hours of 24 February. The objective was to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait, requiring defeat of the Republican guard divisions in southern Iraq. The plan for achieving this envisioned a deliberate attack north along the Kuwaiti-Saudi Arabian border by the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and Arab coalition forces. Included in the plan were deceptive operations to fix Iraqi forces **while the VII Corps and XVIII Airborne Corps swept around to the west to envelop them, to strike deep into Iraq to sever Iraqi LOCs, and to isolate and defeat the Republican Guard.**" (emphasis added) U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, 14 June 1993, p. 6-16.

Summing this up:

- Key Phrases from Title V and 14 June 1993 FM 100-5:

"Envelop"

"get behind"

"isolate"

"trap"

"destroy Republican Guards"

- The intent seems to be clear:

Both western and northern escape routes would be blocked by ground forces.

Certain Victory, the Army's official account of the war (pp. 146-147):

"...The distraction caused by the Arab and Marine thrust [directly into Kuwait] would give XVIII Airborne Corps time to push largely unopposed into Iraq to close off any chance that the Republican Guard might escape. The plan for the main attack called for five armored divisions to form the spoke of the **Great Wheel**. If these divisions were to maintain alignment along the spoke, those near the hub would have to advance slowly while those near the rim would have to charge very far, very fast. Alignment was important to avoid piecemeal engagement once contact with the Republican Guard was made. If the rotation went according to plan, **all five divisions would turn shoulder to shoulder** and slam into the Guard simultaneously in a collision of unprecedented violence and shock effect. Audacious, ambitious, and complex, the **Great Wheel** would be ready to start turning in mid-February." (emphasis added)

In <i>Certain Victory</i>, concern for blocking the northern vent does not surface until Iraqi forces are observed streaming out that vent.

Adding to the confusion:

"The operations order [Ops Order 91-001] directed that the roads and rail lines south of Basra be blocked to prevent the withdrawal of the Republican Guards forces." GWAPS, p. 22.

This implies that the Air Force was supposed to block the northern vent.

If true, I would expect the Army to make more of this point when explaining why most of the Republican Guards escaped.

Since the Army does not openly blame the Air Force, I suspect that the northern vent was not viewed as an escape route until the senior leaders actually saw Iraqi forces streaming north out of the Basra pocket in the final stages of the war.

- If we believe Title V, FM 100-5, and Schwarzkopf's memoirs, the ground plan intent was to get to the Republican Guards' rear, cut off the escape routes, trap, and then destroy the Guards.
- If we believe Certain Victory, there was no original intent to get behind the Guards and cut off the northern escape route. Rather, the intent was to first block the western escape route, then attack to the east out of the western desert in a line abreast formation **like a giant push broom sweeping the sands free of Iraqi forces.**
- If we believe GWAPS, the Air Force was supposed to block the northern escape route so that the push broom could sweep everything into the sea.

- Returning to the key questions:

What Did They Intend To Do?

What Were They Able To Accomplish?

- Answers:

After four years, the answer to the first question is unclear.

If there was a plan to trap the Guard, it appears quite muddled.

Key Events (continued)

- November 29:

UN Resolution 678 authorizes the use of force to evict Saddam's forces from Kuwait if he has not voluntarily withdrawn them by January 15, 1991.

- December - Early January: Final Air and Ground Plans

Glossom briefs Schwarzkopf that achieving 50 percent attrition of Republican Guards by air will take 5 days; 12 days to attrit the remaining forces.

Schwarzkopf settles on:

Phase I Strategic:	6 days
Phase II Air Supremacy:	1 day
Phase III Battlefield Preparation	8 days
Phase IV Ground War	14 days

Lengths are approximate, as some phases overlap and conditions may change.
Schwarzkopf anticipated approximately 32 days total for all four phases. (Title V, p. 100.)

- December - Early January (continued):

Air Campaign:

Phase I targeting concentrates on 8 core categories:

command, control, and communications

leadership facilities

NBC capabilities and facilities

military support facilities (ammo storage, logistics sites, etc.)

ballistic missile launchers and infrastructure

electric power

oil refineries

key bridges and railway facilities

Specific targets in these categories grew from 84 in the August Instant Thunder briefing to 295 in January to 535 by February.

The number of aircraft required grew from 150 in August to over 2700 for all four phases by the end of the war.

- CENTCOM final analysis of projected outcome -- December

" The overall force correlations by attack axis were (Coalition forces/Iraqi forces): supporting attack 1.3/1; main attack 1.4/1; Egyptian/Syria attack 1.4/1; and MEF 0.75/1. The force correlations at the final objective (RGFC) for the supporting and main attacks were 2.7/1 and 2.2/1 respectively. These force ratios were believed to be sufficiently favorable to ensure success." Title V, p. 84.

(Note that Marines had the least favorable force ratio, yet started the rout.)

What is the difference between force ratio calculations and Vietnam body counts?

Both represent an attrition mindset.

- January 15 -- UN deadline for withdrawal passes
- January 17 Desert Storm begins:

CENTCOM Ops Order 91-001 states military objectives:

Attack Iraqi political-military leadership and c²

Gain and maintain air superiority

Sever Iraqi supply lines

Destroy known biological and chemical (NBC) production, storage, and delivery sites

Destroy Republican Guards forces in KTO

Liberate Kuwait City

Strategic air campaign focus on:

Iraqi National Command Authority

NBC capability

Republican Guard Forces Command

Ops Order 91-001 (Continued)

Progressively shift air ops to; and conduct ground ops to:

Isolate KTO - Sever Iraqi supply lines

Destroy Republican Guard Force

Liberate Kuwait City with Arab Forces

(Title V, pp. 74-75)

Forces involved:

600,000 Coalition troops from 37 nations

330,000 Iraqi troops (erroneously reported as 540,000 at the time. GWAPS, pp. 6-8).

2,700 fixed wing Coalition aircraft from 14 separate national or Service components (Title V, p. 101.)

The War Begins

- H-Hour: 0300 January 17, 1991

Nine minutes before H-Hour, an F-117A drops the first bomb of the war, striking a hardened air defense intercept operations center in southern Iraq. At H-Hour, 0300, two F-117As drop the first bombs on Bagdad.

For the next 39 days, air bombardment of targets in Iraq and Kuwait fail to cause the Iraqi regime to fall or Iraqi troops to withdraw from Kuwait.

Anticipating the need for ground action, XVIII and VII Corps shift hundreds of kilometers west behind Saudi border and under cover of heavy air bombardment. Westward shift continued 24 hours per day and took three weeks to complete. (Title V, p 246.)

During the middle of the shift westward, VII Corps rehearsed its **Great Wheel maneuver**. It took two days (Feb16-18) to turn the corps 90 degrees to the right and form the 3-division armored fist which would be thrust at the Republican Guards. (CV, p. 153.)

G-Day: February 24, 1991

- 0400:

Marines attack into Kuwait.

"On extreme western flank almost 400 kilometers from the coast, XVIII Airborne Corps attacked northward **to seal off the theater**." (emphasis added, CV p. 216. The implication is clear.)

French 6th Light Armored Division and 82nd Airborne head for the Euphrates Valley.

- 0600:

101st Airborne launches helicopter assault to Forward Operating Base Cobra, approximately half-way to Euphrates.

- Mid-morning:

Schwarzkopf, realizing that Iraqi resistance is crumbling, calls Yeosock and Luck to see if VII and XVIII Corps heavy forces can launch attack on the afternoon of 24th instead of morning of 25th as originally planned.

Both agree. Main attack launches 15 hours early.

G-Day (continued)

- Mid-afternoon - 1500:

XVIII Corps heavy forces, 24th Mech, and 3rd ACR, head north.

VII Corps:

Eastern flank:

1st Cav feints attack towards bulk of defensive forces.

Center sector:

1st ID begins breaching operations through defensive line.

Franks felt a breach was necessary to open a shorter path for logistics columns that would follow.

Western flank:

2nd ACR leads 1st and 3 Armored Divisions around enemy defenses and head north relatively unopposed.

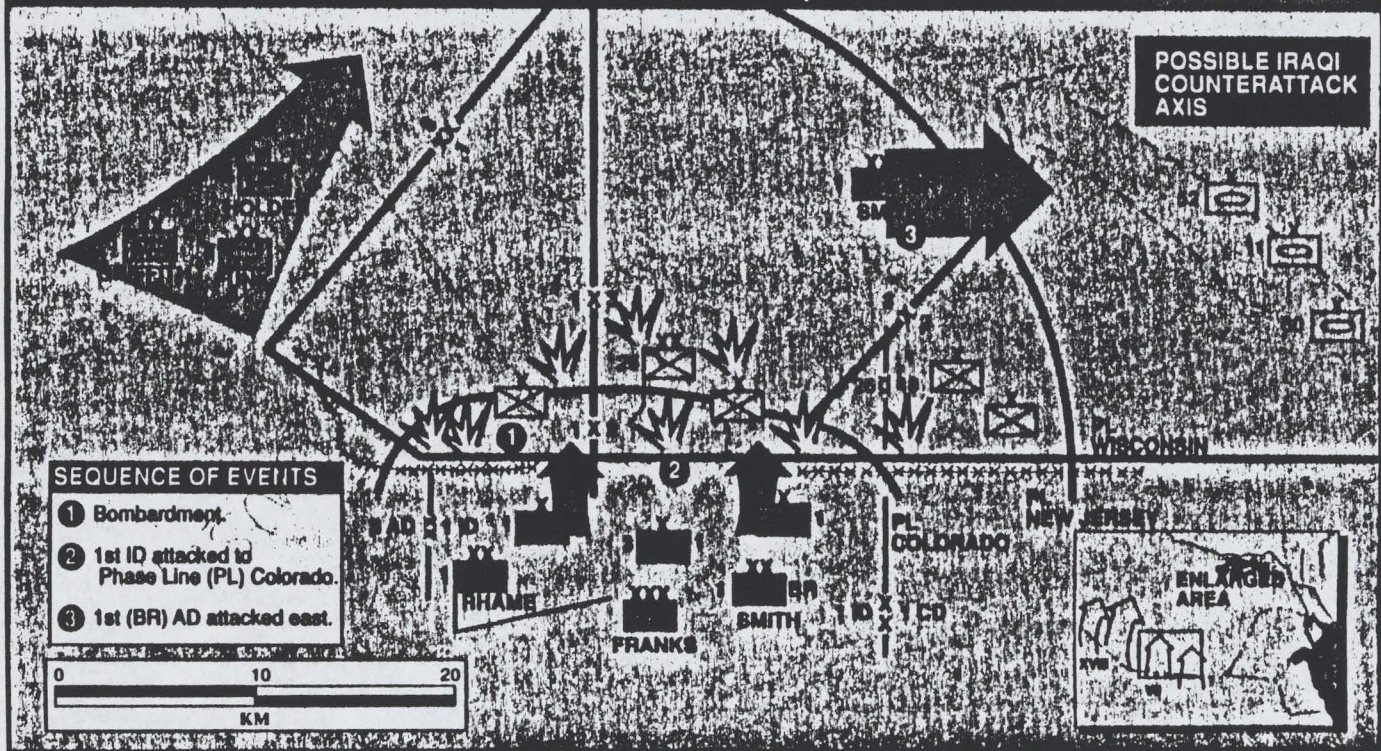
No breaching was necessary.

"Franks mission to the regiment [2nd Cav] was two-fold: to clear the zone in front of the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions and **most importantly, to discover the exact outline of the Republican Guard's main line of defense so that the two following divisions could aim directly toward it.**" (emphasis added) CV p. 223.

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BREACH AND ATTACK TO PIN IRAQI TACTICAL RESERVES G-DAY, FEBRUARY 24 - G+1, FEBRUARY 25



The Great Wheel

G-Day (continued)

- Evening:

1st ID breaching operation not completed by dusk.

Franks halts the entire VII Corps advance until the next day.

Reasons for stopping for the night:

1st ID had not practiced night breaching operations.

Concern that enveloping forces (2nd ACR, 1st and 3rd AD) would get too far ahead (out of alignment) during the night.

Fear of exposing flanks to by-passed enemy troops.

(Kindsvatter, pp. 24-25.)

G+1, February 25, 1991

- XVIII Corps:

101st Airborne established a brigade-sized blocking position astride Highway 8 in Euphrates Valley. All other XVIII Corps units advanced rapidly against relatively light opposition.

- VII Corps:

Schwarzkopf furious with Franks for having stopped for the night.

1st UK Armoured Division began passing through breach at 1200.

Mid-afternoon 1st AD (on left flank) approached small town of Al-Busayyah.

1st AD Commander Griffith requested permission to stop for the night to bombard town with MLRS and artillery before taking town in daylight on Feb 26.

Franks reluctantly agreed to a second overnight stop, but instructed Griffith to be on the move by 0900, 26th since he had the farthest to go when the **Wheel** turned.

After bombarding the town all night, 1st AD took the town the next morning in what Army records describe as "**little more than a skirmish**" against a few commandos. (CV. p. 243.)

G+1, February 25 (continued)

- Morning:

Late Feb 24 or early Feb 25, Republican Guards commanders became aware of Coalition forces in western desert. Madinah and Tawakalna Divisions set up blocking positions.

- Late Afternoon:

Third Army orders Franks to destroy Guards by evening Feb 27.

Rather than continue northeast to get behind Guards, Franks orders (1730) VII Corps to turn eastward into Guards' heavy divisions which have set up blocking positions.

As the British put it, VII Corps "**turned directly into the thick of the hedge.**"

- Evening:

Radio intercepts indicate, and aerial reconnaissance confirms, that a general retreat is in effect for all Iraqi forces.

VII Corps forces, except 1st AD which had stopped for the night, begin turn to the east.

2nd ACR makes contact with southern flank of Republican Guard's blocking forces.

The Great Wheel Turns East

"VII Corps would meet the Republican Guard with the three heavy divisions on-line turning clockwise shoulder-to-shoulder to form the giant radial arm of the **Great Wheel** ... the fourth heavy division, the British 1st Armoured Division, would turn more slowly at the hub to anchor the corps' right flank [read: guide-on] ... Traveling up the spoke away from the British 1st Armoured Division, the 1st Infantry Division would blast through Objective Norfolk and then continue east. The 3rd Armored Division would attack through Objective Dorset and on toward Objective Minden. On the northern tip of the radial, the 1st Armored Division would attack and secure Objective Bonn. All of these objectives were stacked one atop another and superimposed over the main fighting positions of the republican Guard." (emphasis added. CV. p. 251.)

G+2, February 26, 1991

- Marine front:

Marines push elements of Iraqi III Corps back into Kuwait City.

Schwarzkopf describes Iraqi retreat in front of Marines as a "rout".

By late night, 1 MEF had secured all of its war objectives.

Marines wait for Arab forces to enter Kuwait City the next day.

- XVIII Corps:

24th Mech and 3rd ACR reach Euphrates Valley, cut Highway 8 and turn east to join VII Corps's attack on Republican Guard.

"The XVIII Airborne Corps had achieved all of its objectives; interdicting the LOC in the Euphrates River Valley, blocking reinforcement of Iraqi forces in the KTO, and **completing the envelopment of Saddam Hussein's forces in southern Iraq and Kuwait.**" (emphasis added. Title V, p. 278.)

This quote implies the northern vent was not considered a viable escape route for Iraqi forces.

G+2, February 26, 1991 (continued)

- VII Corps:

Powell expresses anger to Schwarzkopf at VII Corps's slow pace.

In their only direct conversation during 4-day war, Schwarzkopf urges Franks to pick up the pace. He too was concerned that Republican Guard as well as bulk of Iraqi army fleeing in front of Marines might escape before VII Corps engaged enemy.

"Their [RGFC] commanders - using the cover of the storm - were organizing a classic battlefield retreat." (S, p. 462.)

How could RG commanders organize and execute a battlefield retreat if air power had destroyed Iraqi C³?

Franks tells Schwarzkopf that he is considering turning 1st UK division back to the south to clean up any by-passed enemy units.

Schwarzkopf objects and urges Franks to go east after the Guard.

Schwarzkopf tells Franks that radio intercepts indicate that transports have been ordered to help with Hammurabi Division withdrawal.

Time is running out.

G+2, February 26, 1991 (continued)

"At all costs, **the back door had to be shut before Saddam's best soldiers escaped.** Weather remained a problem and the CINC **could not count on air power to put the cork in the KTO bottle.** From his distant position, Schwarzkopf had already formed the image of the ground operation as a pursuit rather than a movement to contact. In his view, the only viable course of action to prevent the Republican Guard from getting away was to increase the tempo of the ground attack and to destroy the enemy before he fled." (emphasis added. CV, p. 252.)

This *Certain Victory* account of Feb 26 events represents **the first concern that escape out the northern vent was a real possibility.**

Franks did not share Schwarzkopf's view of the battlefield.

Franks saw Republican Guard preparing to do battle with VII Corps, not preparing to withdraw.

Franks sticks to his pre-war plan to form a specific, synchronized 3-division fist.

It appears that Franks was determined to follow a plan that was independent of the enemy's actions.

G+2, February 26, 1991 (continued)

- Morning:

Following telecon with Franks, Schwarzkopf released 1st CAV division to VII Corps. 1st Cav had been held in strategic reserve back in Saudi Arabia.

Franks must have realized that he had turned VII Corps eastward prematurely and would not cut off northern escape route, for he ordered 1st Cav **to race 250 km north** from Saudi Arabia, leaving at 1100, Feb 26, to arrive on the extreme left flank on the afternoon of Feb 27.

Apparently the spoke of **The Great Wheel** was not long enough and a 1st CAV extension needed to be added. There is no other rational explanation for the 1st CAV's last minute mad dash north -- VII Corps had turned east prematurely.

- Afternoon:

VII Corps begins assault on Republican Guards with Franks's envisioned 3-division fist.

"As the assault gained momentum, the VII Corps, for the first time, deployed its full combat power." (Title V, p. 287.) **Synchronized at last!**

G+3, February 27, 1991

- Kuwait City liberated.
- VII Corps, 0700:

Franks considers a last-minute double envelopment to cut off northern escape route as it becomes apparent that Iraqi forces are streaming out the back door.

1st CAV, once it arrives at left flank that afternoon, will form the left, or northern prong, to cut off the Basra vent, while 1ID on right flank will form the southern prong attacking east, then north up the coast.

Once again, this is tacit admission that VII Corps had turned east prematurely.
--

- Afternoon:

1st CAV arrives at left flank, but front is too crowded for it to pass through.

Franks postpones double envelopment until next day, Feb 28.

G+3, February 27, 1991 (continued)

"Now the VII Corps could send five divisions and an ACR against the Republican Guard. From left (north) to right, VII Corps deployed the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), 2nd ACR, and the 1st UK Armoured Division. **GPS receivers helped keep unit flanks aligned** with one another and helped avoid friendly engagements." (emphasis added) Title V, p. 287.

"The 101st and the 24th formed the outer rim of **the Great Wheel**. Like the outermost skater in a line forming a whip, the 101st and the 24th would have to move faster than the VII Corps divisions **to maintain any semblance of geometric cohesion within the Wheel**." (emphasis added. CV, p. 254.)

VII Corps marches eastward shoulder-to-shoulder, the spoke of the Great Wheel acting like a giant push broom shoving Iraqi forces along in front of it - actually pushing them out the back door.

G+3, February 27, 1991 (Continued)

- Morning:

XVIII Corps moves FSCL north of Euphrates to allow AH-64 attacks on causeway and roads north of Basra.

By afternoon, only a handful of AH-64 attacks had occurred. AF General Horner complains that Iraqi forces traveled roads for 8 hours with impunity, as air power was forbidden to strike inside FSCL without ground controllers. Reportedly, ground controllers were not up front because headquarters wanted them and their GPS receivers at headquarters.

VII Corps moves its FSCL east of the coastal highway leading north from Kuwait City.

Army claims irrelevant Air Tasking Order had scheduled only 12 bombs per hour against fleeing columns the evening before, thus VII Corps would be better off employing and controlling its own air.

- Evening:

CENTCOM settles FSCL dispute and clarifies boundaries:

North along coastline, up the Euphrates and then west.

After the war, Army and Air Force criticize each other over the FSCL placement, each blaming the other for Iraqi forces escaping. This dispute represents a failure of helicopter and aircraft forces to work together despite years of claiming that they can.

G+3, February 27, 1991 (continued)

- 101st plans to air-assault a brigade north of Basra on Feb 28 to finally block the northern escape route. Plan never executed on 28th because of cease fire.
- As VII and XVIII Corps forces converged on a shrinking Basra pocket, phase lines and grid lines were used more often to maintain alignment and limit advance.

"Attacks halted more frequently to allow units to sort themselves out before advancing. Distant targets, most surely Iraqi, were allowed to escape without engagement." (CV p. 303.)

- Evening:

Franks orders 1st CAV, 1st ID and 3rd AD to halt for the night for fear of fratricide -- **the third night (out of four nights) some or all of VII Corps forces halted.**

Recall:

Feb 24 -- entire VII Corps halted for the night

Feb 25 -- 1 AD halted at dusk for the night

Feb 27 -- 1st Cav, 1st ID, and 3rd AD halted

- February 27 Evening continued:

Schwarzkopf gives his now famous press conference in which he implies that the war is in essence over; that the Republican Guards have been trapped and all but destroyed.

He states that the rear gate is closed and, even when challenged by a reporter, claims that escape is not possible.

Following press conference, Powell pressures Schwarzkopf about calling a cease fire the next morning, Feb 28.

Schwarzkopf resists, stating he needs another 24 hours.

After continued pressure from Powell, Schwarzkopf agrees.

Cease fire called for 0800 local, February 28.

Cease Fire Too Soon?

Many have argued that if Schwarzkopf had held out for another 24 hours, most of Republican Guard and other forces that escaped would have been destroyed. This is highly doubtful, since VII Corps's double envelopment and 101st air-assault north of Basra were not to begin until sometime on the 28th. By then, most of the Iraqi forces had already escaped.

The Army agrees.

"Schwarzkopf's correct assessment of the Guard as the Iraqi center of gravity assured overall victory once the Guard was eliminated as a viable threat. That moment was reached by midnight, February 27, when al-Rawi [Commander] realized the magnitude of his defeat at the battle of Wadi al-Batin and ordered an immediate withdrawal of the remnants of the Republican Guard out of the KTO to positions designated for the defense of Iraq. With the exception of the Hammurabi Division, the majority of the remaining Guard armor had already reached or passed through the Basra sanctuary en route to positions well inside Iraq." (emphasis added. CV p. 314.)

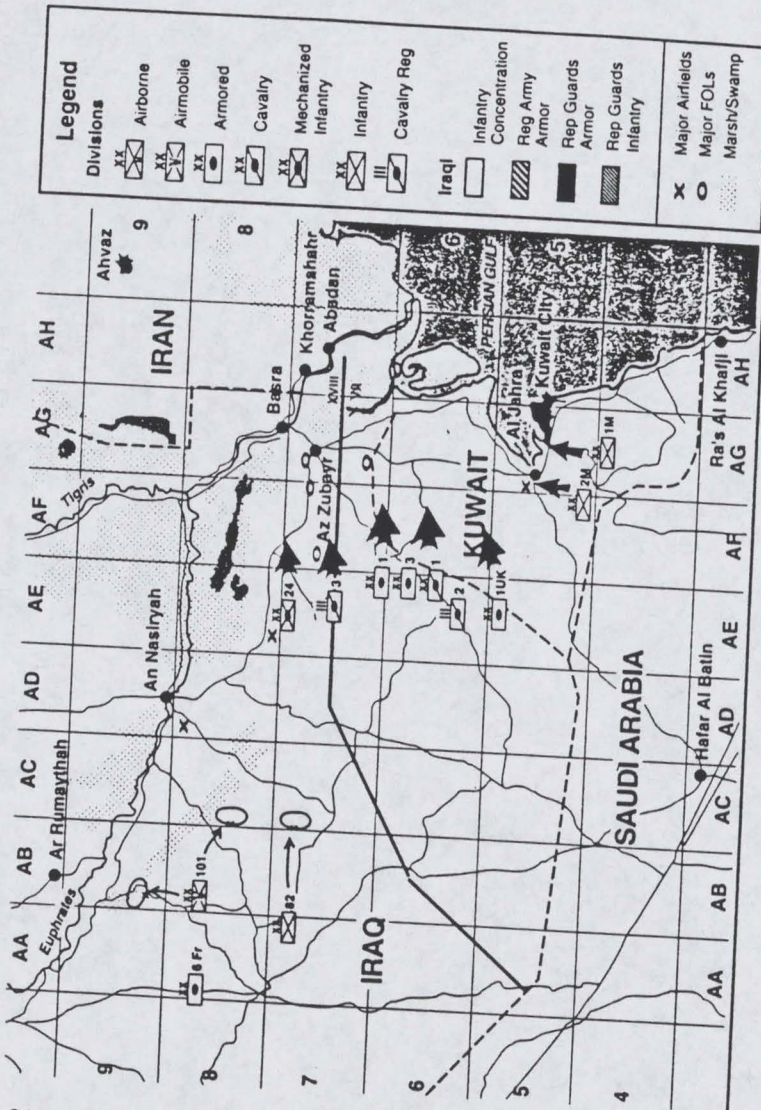
More Army Testimony:

"The only way to have stopped the escape of Iraqi armor at that stage would have been to completely seal the theater by closing all exits by air or blocking them with ground troops. An air assault by ground combat forces into EA [north of Basra] was not tactically feasible until the 28th. With more than 20 bridges and causeways leading out of the KTO, cutting them all and keeping them cut from the air proved impossible. By March 1, Republican Guard armored and mechanized units had reached as far north as al-Quarnah, **almost 100 kilometers north of Basra**. These units were not fleeing in disorder; their march order was disciplined. As they halted, tanks dug dispersed revetments with 360-degree security. They were leaving one fight to join another against the Shia and Kurds. **To have reached so far north on the 1st, the guard armor had to have moved into Basra on the 27th, if not the 26th.**" (emphasis added) CV, pp. 315-16.

Clearly, a 24 hour extension of the war would not have changed the results with respect to the Republican Guard.

And equally clearly, the northern vent was not considered a major escape route until Iraqi forces were observed streaming north from Basra -- too late to do anything about it.

Map 50
Ground Forces
28 February
1400 hours



Iraqis concentrating position to strike lu Coalition aircraft f extent.

Air interdiction in the first, Coalition enemy's ability to ground forces. Ho Iraqis were fleeing shifted to attacks o

The interdiction as air commanders was the case. The concentrations and reverse to the employment. City involved most soldiers. There was Basra, where Coalition the canals. However, one thing, bad weather through clouds on incident with Iran limits to air attack

During the last Army and Air Force (FSCL)—a dispute with FSCL represents an fratricide. Between the positive control in communication aircraft have carte

⁵¹For a more detailed report, Chapter 5.

⁵²(S) 'TSgt Bartlett TACC Log, entries for

Results

Air Campaign:

- Punished Iraqi ground units such that heavy divisions were not capable of conducting operations other than self defense and retreat.
- Failed to isolate and separate the Iraqi leadership from its forces. Command and Control was not destroyed; Communications were disrupted but remained sufficient to permit a coordinated retreat and to put down rebellions by shifting forces between two widely separated arenas.
- Failed to bring about the collapse of the Hussein regime.
- Failed to attrit 50 percent of enemy armor prior to ground war.
 - Like body counts in Vietnam, destroyed armor vehicles became an irrelevant measure of merit; Iraq never ran out of armor.
- Failed to destroy the NBC capability -- did not know where the targets were.
- Failed to isolate the KTO so that the Republican Guard was trapped.
 - Many bridges and canals were destroyed, but were repaired or by-passed so quickly that the northern vent was never closed.
- Failed to destroy a single mobile SCUD.
- Failed to provide coordinated ground support.

But on the other hand, even though air power did not obtain the paralysis it had hoped for, it did provide an umbrella for the ground forces so they could operate freely and contributed to the unnerving of Iraqi forces.

Results (continued)

Ground Campaign:

- Evicted Iraqi forces from Kuwait.
- Failed to destroy the Republican Guard.

CIA reports majority of Guard escaped taking approximately half of its major combat equipment.

Army and Air Force now concur.

Why did the Army fail to destroy the Republican Guard?

"The Iraqi Republican Guard got out the back door because General Norman Schwarzkopf -- whose concept of operations stressed the need to "destroy" the Republican Guard -- did not plan on the basis that to trap that force would be the best way to destroy it."

(Lieutenant General John H. Cushman, US Army (Retired), Naval Institute *Proceedings*, July 1993.)

In retrospect, it appears that General Cushman's assessment was on the mark.

Observations

- The primary national objective of evicting Iraqi forces from Kuwait was achieved.

None of the other stated objectives were achieved.

- Air Power did not win the war alone; it merely made it easier to win.
- The Army did not know how to conduct a deep thrust to the enemy's rear.
- Despite claims to the contrary, the Army has not abandoned its 1976 doctrine.