

U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991  
WITH THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION  
IN DESERT SHIELD AND  
DESERT STORM



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION  
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

*COVER: LAV-25 from Task Force Shepherd,  
February 1991. Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC*

# U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991 WITH THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION IN DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM



by  
Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton  
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION  
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1993

**Other Publications in the Series**  
**U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991**

*U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: Anthology and Bibliography, 1991*

*U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991:*

*I Marine Expeditionary Force in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, 1993*

**In Preparation**

*With the 2d Marine Division in Desert Shield and Desert Storm*

*With the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing in Desert Shield and Desert Storm*

*Marine Forces Afloat in Desert Shield and Desert Storm*

*Operation Provide Comfort:*

*U.S. Marine Corps Humanitarian Relief Operations in Northern Iraq, 1991*

---

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office  
Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328  
ISBN 0-16-041826-7



## Foreword

---

This monograph is a preliminary accounting of the role of the 1st Marine Division in the Persian Gulf War from August 1990 to April 1991. It is one of a series also covering the operations of I Marine Expeditionary Force, the 2d Marine Division, the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marines afloat in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and humanitarian relief operations in northern Iraq and Turkey.

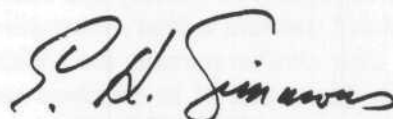
When the History and Museums Division began the historical collection effort concerning Marine activities in the Persian Gulf region, it called upon the members of Mobilization Training Unit (History) DC-7, of which the author, Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, has been a member since 1983. This small organization of Individual Ready Reserve officers is the Marine Corps Reserve unit that provides historians, combat artists, archivists, and museum specialists in support of History and Museums Division programs. Most of its members have standard military occupational specialties and have subsequently gained in their civilian pursuits the additional qualifications necessary to serve in the unit. About half of its members served in Vietnam. During the Persian Gulf conflict, seven MTU DC-7 officers were on active duty and five served in the Gulf.

The first Marine Reserve historians to arrive in theater were Colonel Charles J. Quilter, Commanding Officer of MTU DC-7, and Lieutenant Colonel Cureton, who landed in Saudi Arabia on 9 November 1990. Colonel Quilter was designated Command Historian of I Marine Expeditionary Force and Lieutenant Colonel Cureton became Deputy Command Historian. Over the next five months Lieutenant Colonel Cureton organized the document collection effort of I MEF headquarters, wrote the historical annex to the I MEF offensive operations plan, co-wrote I MEF Command Chronologies, and crisscrossed the entire Marine area of operations. As a result of his background as a tracked vehicle officer, Lieutenant Colonel Cureton transferred to the 1st Marine Division in mid-January to cover Marine land force operations. He participated in the first ground operation of the war (the artillery raid on the night of 20-21 January 1991), headed the division's combat camera element, and joined Task Force Papa Bear (1st Marines) for the drive to liberate Kuwait.

Lieutenant Colonel Cureton joined the Marine Corps in 1970. After completion of the platoon leaders course and graduation from Sonoma State College, California, with a double major in history and psychology, he was commissioned in 1972. Designated an assault amphibian vehicle officer in 1973, he served in Okinawa, the Mediterranean, and Camp Lejeune. He concluded active duty as a company executive officer in the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion. Reserve assignments included duties as training officer in Mobilization Training Unit 27, S-4 with the Reserve Support Unit at Camp Lejeune, and liaison officer with FMF Europe. He also completed Reserve Command and Staff College. In January 1993, Lieutenant Colonel Cureton headed the first deployment of a Joint History Team in support of Joint Task Force Somalia. His

MTU projects include consultant for the Marine Corps Museum's exhibit on Desert Storm and technical advisor to the Marine Corps Band on its historical uniform print series. Lieutenant Colonel Cureton's current project is a monograph on Marine Corps dress, 1827-1850. He has published several articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette* on nineteenth century Marine uniforms. In civilian life, Lieutenant Colonel Cureton earned master's and doctoral degrees in history. He has worked as a historian for the Air Force and been the director of the Army's 101st Airborne Division Museum and the Frontier Army Museum at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1990, he accepted an assignment as Chief of Museums and Historical Property, Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command.

The material in this monograph is based on personal observation, unit command chronologies 1 August 1990 - 30 April 1991 (located in the Archives Section, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C. Navy Yard), unit combat operations center journals, situation reports, and interviews.



E. H. SIMMONS  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)  
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

## Preface

---

Soon after Iraq invaded Kuwait I was on a staff visit to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, when I was notified by the MTU (History) DC 7 commander, Colonel Charles J. Quilter, to prepare for deployment to Saudi Arabia. Since I had previously deployed as a historian in support of a NATO exercise and was employed at a major Army command headquarters as a historian and museum specialist, I felt well prepared for my duties with I Marine Expeditionary Force. My instructions from the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, were to assist Colonel Quilter in establishing a historical collection program, conduct oral history interviews, write the I MEF command chronology, and ensure the quality of subordinate unit command chronologies. Because of my museum background I had the additional assignment to establish the historical property collection program for the Marine Corps Museum.

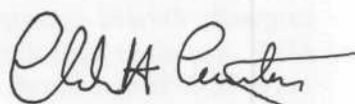
The historical program grew as I MEF expanded. Colonel Quilter and I originally divided oversight of I MEF headquarters and anticipated covering I MEF operations according to our military specialties. As an aviator he was to cover 3d Marine Aircraft Wing operations. My background as a tracked vehicle officer made it obvious that I should cover ground operations. Accordingly, in late November 1990, I began a series of visits to the 1st Marine Division to test the feasibility of our plan. I quickly concluded that the distances between ground units and the pace of mechanized operations made it clear that I needed to remain "forward deployed" to properly follow events. In late December, I conducted our historical coverage plan as the historical annex to the I MEF offensive plan and worked on the assignment of a third historian, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski, to manage coverage of the newly arrived 2d Marine Division. I transferred to the 1st Marine Division in January 1991.

The 1st Marine Division had been in Saudi Arabia since August 1990. For its Marines, the months continuously in the desert were well spent getting trained and conditioned for any contingency. Division Marines and sailors had become lean, sun-tanned, and confident, and they were anxious to defeat the Iraqi Army so they could go home. Yet, there was an awareness that an attack into Kuwait would go up against forcible defensive positions, large concentrations of artillery, and hundreds of thousands of heavily armed Iraqi soldiers supported by tanks, heavy machine guns, personnel carriers, and attack aircraft. Any force assaulting the Iraqi positions was believed doomed to suffer very heavy casualties.

There existed in the division a great sense of history in the making. All were aware that they were a part of one of the largest deployments in Marine Corps history and that the eyes of the world were on them. They knew their loved ones were anxious for the job to be finished and for them to return. For those reasons they were determined to make the nation proud of them.

There was also a great feeling of unit pride. The division was a family. It was a family built from shared trials, from friendship, and from a pervasive sense of loyalty to each other. Major General James M. Myatt, the division commander, and Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, the assistant division commander, were integral parts of that phenomenon. General Myatt encouraged commanders at all levels to look for better ways to accomplish the mission. Both listened to every Marine's opinion and encouraged team building through the comradeship of ideas.

I wish to thank Colonel Quilter and Lieutenant Colonels Mroczkowski, Ronald G. Brown, and Kenneth W. Estes for their assistance in the preparation of the manuscript, and Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns and Mr. W. Stephen Hill, of the Marine Corps Historical Center's Editing and Design Section, for the published appearance of the monograph. I would also like to thank Major General Myatt, Brigadier General Draude, and the officers and Marines of the 1st Marine Division for their hospitality and friendship. This work is dedicated to my wife, Caroline, my children, and to all the wives, sweethearts, and families who suffered the trials and uncertainties of the war without being able to do anything except wait -- they too served.



Charles H. Cureton



# Table of Contents

---

Foreword . . . . .	iii
Preface . . . . .	v
Deployment of the 1st Marine Division to Southwest Asia . . . . .	1
Organizing and Deploying the Division . . . . .	6
The 'Cement Factory' Defense Line . . . . .	21
Training with the Saudi Army . . . . .	22
The Mobile Defense; October through November Training Exercises . . . . .	24
The Movement North . . . . .	24
The War Begins:	
The Fight for Observation Point 4, 29-30 January 1991 . . . . .	26
The Engagement at Khafji, 30 January-1 February 1991 . . . . .	42
Final Preparations . . . . .	47
G Minus 3, 21 February 1991 . . . . .	50
G Minus 2, 22 February 1991 . . . . .	54
G Minus 1, 23 February 1991 . . . . .	58
G-Day . . . . .	68
G Plus 1, 25 February 1991: 'Possible enemy attack' . . . . .	90
G Plus 2, 26 February 1991 . . . . .	103
G Plus 3, 27 February 1991 . . . . .	118
G Plus 4, 28 February 1991 . . . . .	120
Notes . . . . .	123
Appendix:	
A. 1st Marine Division Commanders and Staff . . . . .	129
B. Major Weapons Systems . . . . .	137
C. Combat Engineer Breaching Equipment . . . . .	138
D. Uniforms in the 1st Marine Division . . . . .	140
Index . . . . .	149

# Table of Contents

1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
13	13	13
14	14	14
15	15	15
16	16	16
17	17	17
18	18	18
19	19	19
20	20	20
21	21	21
22	22	22
23	23	23
24	24	24
25	25	25
26	26	26
27	27	27
28	28	28
29	29	29
30	30	30
31	31	31
32	32	32
33	33	33
34	34	34
35	35	35
36	36	36
37	37	37
38	38	38
39	39	39
40	40	40
41	41	41
42	42	42
43	43	43
44	44	44
45	45	45
46	46	46
47	47	47
48	48	48
49	49	49
50	50	50
51	51	51
52	52	52
53	53	53
54	54	54
55	55	55
56	56	56
57	57	57
58	58	58
59	59	59
60	60	60
61	61	61
62	62	62
63	63	63
64	64	64
65	65	65
66	66	66
67	67	67
68	68	68
69	69	69
70	70	70
71	71	71
72	72	72
73	73	73
74	74	74
75	75	75
76	76	76
77	77	77
78	78	78
79	79	79
80	80	80
81	81	81
82	82	82
83	83	83
84	84	84
85	85	85
86	86	86
87	87	87
88	88	88
89	89	89
90	90	90
91	91	91
92	92	92
93	93	93
94	94	94
95	95	95
96	96	96
97	97	97
98	98	98
99	99	99
100	100	100

## With the 1st Marine Division in Desert Shield and Desert Storm

In the early morning of 24 February 1991, the 1st Marine Division pushed into southern Kuwait and began the long-awaited allied ground offensive aimed at ending Iraq's six-and-one-half-month occupation. The division's successful breach of the first obstacle belt triggered a timed sequence of attacks by coalition forces arrayed along the entire northern border of Saudi Arabia. The attack followed 38 days of constant allied air attacks and the ground offensive swept everything before it in an almost bloodless campaign. It would take only 100 hours for the coalition forces to rout the Iraqi army and retake Kuwait.

It was fitting that the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, selected the 1st Marine Division to lead the attack. In August 1990, division units were among the first dispatched by President George Bush to assist the defense of Saudi Arabia. Until the United States Army's VII Corps began its movement towards Iraq, the division was the northernmost deployed American ground force. It had been continuously in the field since the beginning of Operation Desert Shield. Its units had spent the long months in the desert training and rehearsing for an anticipated ground war against the Iraqi Army and division Marines were physically, psychologically, and professionally ready. Following the start of hostilities, the 1st Marine Division proved its capabilities in a series of artillery raids, deception operations, combined arms raids, and screening operations, that made it the first to bring the ground war to the Iraqi army.

### *Deployment of the 1st Marine Division to Southwest Asia*

The movement of 1st Marine Division units to Saudi Arabia began with the deployment of the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (7th MEB) and Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2 (MPS 2). The successful initial deployment of Marine forces hinged on the combination of personnel airlift, aircraft ferry, and depot ships embodied in the MPS concept. On 8 August 1990, President Bush responded to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia's subsequent request for American support by directing the deployment of United States forces to Southwest Asia.<sup>1</sup> The desert-trained 7th MEB immediately went on alert and on 7 August the brigade commander, Major General John I. Hopkins, requested operational control of contingency force units from the 1st Marine Division. He got these units the following day. On 10 August the United States Commander in Chief Central Command (USCINCCENT), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, directed General Hopkins to begin deploying the brigade. Two days later, after a period of intense effort readying personnel, weapons, and equipment, the brigade began its movement to the port of Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia. The mission General Schwarzkopf gave the 7th MEB was to prepare to protect critical oil and port facilities and delay any advancing Iraqi force as far north as possible.<sup>2</sup>



*Armed and combat-loaded Marines of the 7th MEB board a charter 747 bound for Saudi Arabia, August 1990.*

First to depart were 143 Marines of the surveillance, liaison, and reconnaissance party (SLRP). A group of offload preparation personnel departed shortly afterwards with the mission to join MPS 2 before it sailed and prepare the equipment for use upon arrival at Jubayl. MPS 2, stationed at the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, immediately set sail.<sup>3</sup>

The squadron departed so quickly that it left before 7th MEB's offload preparation personnel arrived. This set the stage for a sequence of delays getting M60A1 tanks, LVT-P7A1 and LVT-C7A1 assault amphibian vehicles, HMMWVs, trucks, and 155mm M198 guns into the field.<sup>4</sup> In addition, because of the initial belief that the brigade might be going into a "non-permissive environment"--the port of Jubayl was within 12 hours of the border of Kuwait and might soon be under direct enemy attack--General Hopkins decided to stage the combat units before the service support units arrived. This put too few service support personnel at the port, which complicated the process of preparing and issuing equipment. Nevertheless, by 17 August 1990, General Hopkins reported all of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, at Jubayl, and he expected elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines; the 3d Tank Battalion; the 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion; the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion; and the headquarters of the 7th Marine Regiment (referred to as Regimental Combat Team 7 [RCT 7] in 7th MEB messages) within the following 24 hours.<sup>5</sup>



General Hopkins fully expected to have his maneuver battalions issued equipment and deployed to the field by 20 August. That proved impossible because of delays arising from the shortage of service support personnel and from a reluctance on the part of the Saudis to allow Marines to leave the immediate area of the port facility. With more units arriving every day, General Hopkins faced the brigade's first crisis. By 20 August, Hopkins had 9,307 Marines at the port, with most confined to four warehouses located on the pier, where they faced overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and temperatures above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The shock of unrelenting heat proved bad in itself, but it was the unexpectedly awful living conditions that caused immediate concern. Marines discovered that the warehouses lacked facilities for washing and the few available toilets broke down. Efforts to augment the non-functioning warehouse toilets with portable toilet facilities quickly failed due to overcrowding and inefficient contractors.<sup>6</sup>

Morale among Marines at the port plummeted and unit commanders grew desperate to get to the field. Major Michael F. Applegate of the 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion later said of this period, "The time we spent in those warehouses was the worst experience of my life. At least in the desert you can move around, and you have the morning and evening breezes."<sup>7</sup>

To alleviate the congestion, General Hopkins met with Major General Saleh Ali Almohia, Saudi Army commander of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, to get permission for moving combat units out of the warehouses and start establishing defensive positions north of the port. He succeeded and the first unit General Hopkins moved was the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, in the role as a camp security force. General Hopkins followed it with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. Likewise, individual tank and assault amphibian companies, as each received its respective equipment, joined the infantry battalions. Within a few days, Hopkins moved these units north of the port near the Al Jubayl Airfield. There they began constructing defensive positions as the brigade continued to build combat power. On 25 August 1990 General Hopkins declared the 7th MEB ready to assume responsibility for the defense of the Port of Al Jubayl as directed in CentCom OpOrd 003.<sup>8</sup>

The maritime prepositioning program proved its worth during the deployment for Desert Shield. Within two weeks it supported the successful deployment of an expeditionary brigade to a location halfway around the world ready for combat with sufficient stocks of ammunition and food to last 30 days. The availability of equipment and supplies enabled the brigade to expand at a phenomenal rate. On 15 August, General Hopkins reported 504 Marines at the port. Within two days, 43 aircraft flew in the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and advance parties from all major elements of the brigade for a total of 2,936 Marines. This number steadily increased with over a thousand Marines arriving daily. By 18 August 1990 the brigade had 6,548 Marines. A week later, General Hopkins reported the brigade nearly complete with 15,248 Marines stationed in and around the port of Al Jubayl.<sup>9</sup>

The arrival of the first planeload of Marines coincided with the arrival of MV *Bonneyman*, *Anderson*, and *Hauge* of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2.



As soon as the ships docked at the pier they began the unloading process. What would have been accomplished over a several-day period by the offload preparation party while the three vessels were at sea telescoped into a single night. At dawn, vehicles and equipment began coming off the ships. By 17 August 1990, 324 principle items of equipment were on the pier. A day later, this phase ended at 1,656 items. Marines of the ground combat element immediately began preparing the 31 M60A1 tanks, 2 M60A1 tankdozers, 5 LVTC7A1 and 62 LVTP7A1 assault amphibious vehicles, 13 LAV-25s, 20 M198 howitzers, 42 TOW HMMWVs, and 33 weapons carrier HMMWVs for deployment to the field.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the brigade's service support personnel began offloading containerized cargo. By 18 August, over 30 percent of its containerized cargo was on the pier. That rate continued and within three days the three ships had been cleared, thus completing the establishment of the brigade's supply base. The achievement enabled General Hopkins on 25 August to declare the 7th MEB combat ready and self-sustaining.

While the offload of MPS 2 went quickly, it had some problems which arose during the August off-load that plagued the 1st Marine Division throughout Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The prepositioning program was predicated on its ships being able to go into a benign port for the offload. That allowed for logistics personnel to properly inventory, prepare, service, and issue equipment and supplies. Yet, as the Desert Shield deployment got underway, MPS 2 went into what the MEB staff considered a non-benign port. Threat of a continuation of the Iraqi offensive dominated General Hopkins' considerations. He saw the brigade with its large supply and ammunition base as the only American ground force capable, or potentially capable, of prolonged combat operations. He

wanted it in the field quickly and established as a powerful counterforce against the Iraqi divisions occupying Kuwait. As a result, the few logistics personnel available moved equipment and supplies too quickly and without accurate accountability. Naturally, some individuals took advantage of the situation and a few units got more vehicles and equipment than others. Six months later, the division logistics officer (G-4), Colonel Jasper C. Lilly, still labored to sort out the imbalance.<sup>11</sup>

The second problem arose over the lack of adequate vehicle maintenance. When coming off its ship each vehicle needed extensive servicing to bring it from storage to operational status. Brigade logistics personnel discovered that the necessary lubricants, tools, and other maintenance items were not immediately accessible. Those items either were not in their proper places in the containers or had been removed to unknown locations during the offload. Working with whatever was available, maintenance personnel got vehicles and equipment as well serviced as possible and issued. However, unit mechanics also lacked proper lubricants and tools and maintenance problems began plaguing the battalions. Nevertheless, General Hopkins had the brigade deployed and combat ready. Once the initial crisis passed, there began a stream of vehicles into maintenance facilities to be repaired.<sup>12</sup> For Colonel Lilly, it meant that the division inherited a supply and maintenance problem that had to be rectified in the field.<sup>13</sup>

On 26 August, the airlift of the 7th MEB ended and General Hopkins had the brigade in defensive positions north of the port. Without firing a shot, the brigade accomplished its primary mission--the establishment of a secure operations area protecting vital allied logistical bases. That achievement gave General Boomer the time to establish the balanced and fully capable expeditionary force he needed. Later General Boomer stated that: "The quick arrival of the 7th MEB and the MPS squadron must have put Saddam Hussein on notice that our President was serious about defending Saudi Arabia."<sup>14</sup>

After declaring the MEB combat ready, General Hopkins deployed RCT 7 in accordance with 7th MEB Op Order 003. The mission given to the brigade tasked it to deploy forces north in its sector no earlier than 26 August. On order the brigade was to conduct operations to disrupt, delay, and destroy attacking Iraqi forces in order to protect vital facilities in the vicinity of Al Jubayl. The brigade's mission included coordinating with Saudi forces in the sector. General Hopkins intended to carry out the mission by using Marine air to attack and delay an advancing enemy. The ground defense was oriented to prevent the enemy from being able to come within artillery range of the important oil facilities at Jubayl. Hopkins wanted RCT 7 deployed to battle positions to create a screening and covering force. If the Iraqis attacked, General Hopkins expected the Saudi Army to delay the enemy and effect a passage of lines through the Marine defensive forces. The Marines would then employ long-range weapons and tank killer teams to further delay and channel the enemy's advance. A second handover would follow to the main defensive positions in the main battle area. The main battle area consisted of battle positions of tank hunter-killer teams, supporting arms, direct fire weapons, obstacles, and fixed strongpoints.



Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Marine artilleryman begins another day in Saudi Arabia, January 1991.*

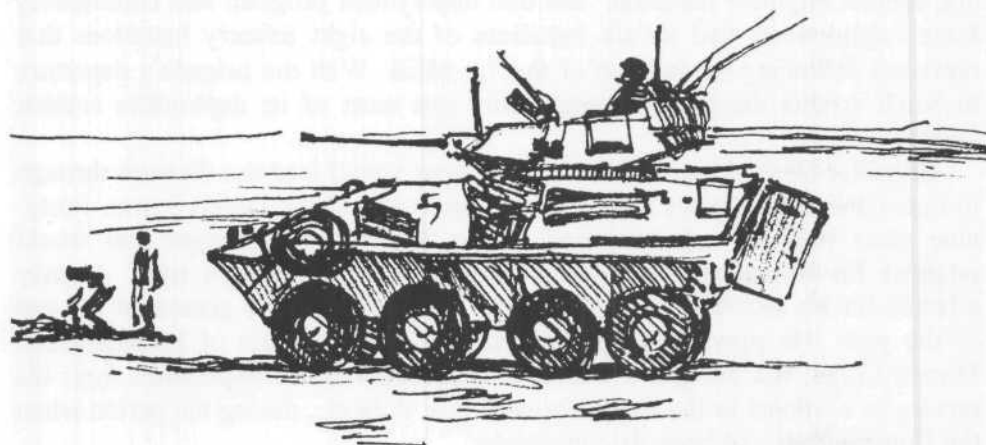
At the time of Op Order 003's writing, the main battle area was so close to Jubayl that no fallback positions existed. Hopkins informed the ground force that there would be no withdrawal. There was nowhere to go.<sup>15</sup>

The completion of 7th MEB's deployment no sooner ended than it was followed by the almost immediate arrival of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 3, and the remaining elements of the 1st Marine Division. They encountered a less frantic atmosphere, and in a short time the 1st Marine Division completed its deployment with the successful incorporation, called "compositing," of the ground elements of the 1st and 7th MEBs. General Boomer subsequently remarked that the rapid establishment of Marine combat power in Saudi Arabia cost the Iraqis their window of opportunity for a successful invasion of Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup> With its passing, the initiative shifted to the allies.

### *Organizing and Deploying the Division*

Not since the Vietnam conflict had an entire Marine division deployed overseas. The deployment of the division required organizational changes. In the summer of 1990, the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton was gathered around a nucleus of three infantry regiments totaling 12 battalions. They were supported by one regiment of artillery, one tank battalion, one assault amphibian





1 LAI BN 6 FEB 91

Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
Task Force Shepherd LAV-25.

The process had barely finished when the remainder of the division received movement orders. While not unexpected, the orders created a dilemma. Many battalions were significantly understrength after transferring personnel to the 7th MEB and it was at that juncture the consolidation of units began. The division Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Colonel Joseph R. Holzbauer, working with the Headquarters Marine Corps replaced the companies lost to consolidation and to the battalions assigned to the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade by using units drawn from Okinawa and Hawaii.<sup>20</sup> Even so, the division departed for Saudi Arabia with just 80 per cent of its authorized strength.

Regimental Combat Team 3 (RCT 3), for example, reflected the diverse origins of those units rounding out the division's organization. It consisted of two infantry battalions and a tank battalion. The 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, came with the regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, came from the 2d Marine Division, via Okinawa. Only the 1st Tank Battalion had been an element of the 1st Marine Division. Even so, additional augmentation to the battalion consisted of Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, which had been assigned to the 3d Marine Division.

The 7th MEB had preceded the division to Saudi Arabia. The ground combat element of the brigade was at that time designated Regimental Landing Team 7 (RLT 7), comprising five infantry battalions, one tank battalion, one assault amphibian battalion, one combat engineer battalion, one artillery battalion, and one light armored infantry company. On 6 September 1990, when the 7th MEB was absorbed by I MEF, RLT 7 reported to the division with:

Headquarters, 7th Marines  
Headquarters and Service Company, 7th Marines  
1st Battalion, 7th Marines  
2d Battalion, 7th Marines  
1st Battalion, 5th Marines  
3d Battalion, 9th Marines  
3d Tank Battalion  
3d Assault Amphibian Battalion  
1st Combat Engineer Battalion  
3d Battalion, 11th Marines  
Company D, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion

Still in California were the Headquarters, 5th Marines, and three of its battalions: 2d Battalion, 5th Marines; 3d Battalion, 5th Marines; and 2d Battalion, 9th Marines. Three battalions (3d Battalion, 1st Marines; 1st Battalion, 4th Marines; 1st Battalion, 9th Marines) belonged to the 1st Marines but had Western Pacific commitments and were not available at that time. That was also the situation with 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which was on unit deployment to Okinawa and would join the division later. Ultimately, all but the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, deployed to the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO).

As the 1st Marine Division commenced its deployment, General Myatt and his staff developed Division Op Order 2-90 and published it on 31 August. The mission given the division required it to deploy to the "CentCom AOR" (Central Command area) and establish command and control capabilities, assume operational control over available Marine ground forces, and deploy additional forces from the United States. The division continued the basic mission assigned to 7th MEB, protecting an area encompassing Jubayl, Aymah, Ras Tannurah, and Bahrain. General Boomer wanted the division capable of employment as soon as possible to "attrit and delay" an advancing enemy. Other tasks included conducting close air support and interdiction operations, and planning counteroffensive operations to restore the integrity of the Saudi Arabian border.

The 1st Marine Division underwent several reorganizations during its deployment to Saudi Arabia. Each reorganization was in response to changing operational plans, the arrival of additional infantry battalions, and increases in the number of tanks, assault amphibious vehicles, and combat engineer equipment. There was a great deal of experimentation within the division as General Myatt and regimental commanders worked to refine the organization for combat. The ultimate aim was the eventual creation of task forces that had the mobility, fire power, and engineer capability to penetrate Iraqi defensive lines and then defeat enemy mechanized and armored forces.<sup>21</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Clifford O. Myers, Commanding Officer, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, initiated the designation of task forces during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.<sup>22</sup> In August 1990, Lieutenant Colonel Myers faced the immediate commitment of the composite battalion to long-range screening operations. He needed to create a sense of pride and unit identity among the personnel from both the 3d Light Armored



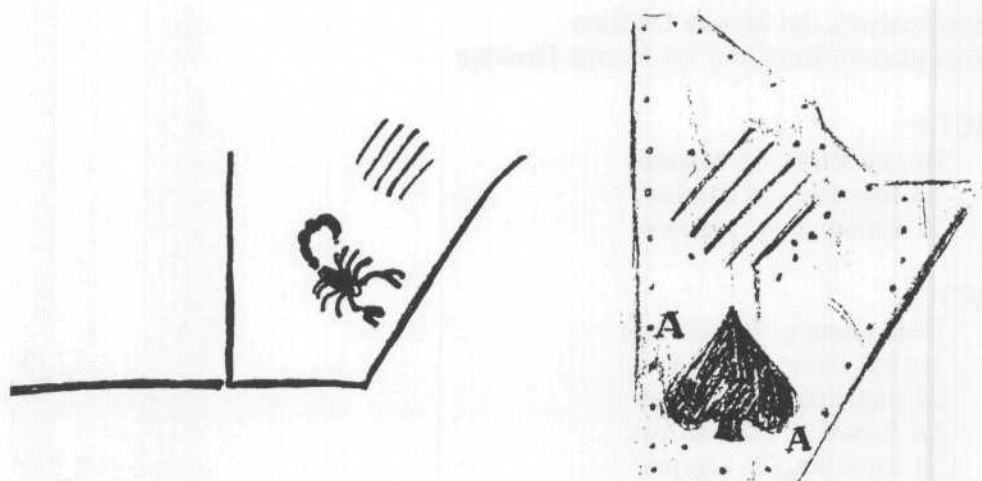
Photograph taken by author, December 1990

*Assault Amphibian vehicles showing system of unit markings for 3d Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Task Force Ripper.*

Infantry Battalion and the 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion. At first, he discontinued the use of battalion designations. The three companies from the 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion and the one company from the 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion made up the Light Armored Infantry Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Myers soon found the title to be neither inspiring nor accurate. He then dropped the battalion designation and replaced it with the more appropriate designation "task force" and a name every Marine could recognize. He chose "Task Force Shepherd" after former Commandant of the Marine Corps General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. The 7th Marines soon followed suit with "Task Force Ripper".

Gradually the practice extended throughout the division as its advantages became obvious. The task force concept allowed changes of organization and mission without a concomitant loss of unit identity. For example, Task Force Grizzly's command element was Headquarters, 4th Marines. However, its maneuver battalions consisted of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines, and, temporarily, the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines.

General Myatt believed the task force concept made it easier to keep the Marines properly focused. He wanted the task force commanders to be primarily concerned that they had the means to accomplish their mission rather than worry about unit integrity. Similarly, adherence to the designator "task force" enabled Myatt to move units from one task force to another, yet still get individual



*Examples of unit symbols as positioned on right fender in front of passenger door on truck: 3d Tank Battalion on left; Battery F, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines on right.*

Marines to identify with their task force mission rather than a parent regiment's tasks.

The emergence of task force names was accompanied by a system of task force or battalion tactical vehicle markings. Initially, these were little more than tactical symbols to indicate companies and elements within a battalion. For example, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, used a three-chevron "V" device to indicate the battalion commander, a "D" to designate the Dragon vehicle, a "W" for Weapons Platoon, and an "E" for engineers. Company markings consisted of ^ for Company A, > for Company B, and < for Company C. A second chevron indicated the company commander while a series of dots identified the platoon.

Both tank battalions adopted a similar system but also added a system of unit pictorial markings. By January 1991 the practice of pictorial markings came into extensive use. The 3d Tank Battalion used a scorpion symbol. The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines (with a large number of Boston Irish in its ranks) used a caricature of a fighting Irishman. Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Rivers, commanding the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, adopted playing card figures--diamonds, hearts, and spades--to indicate Headquarters, Battery C, and Battery F respectively. The 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, used chess pieces. A bear's paw print indicated elements of Task Force Papa Bear; however, it was the only task force organization to adopt a unit symbol.

Initially, the 1st Marine Division was organized around two infantry regiments designated as regimental combat teams. At the time, only RCT 7 was mechanized, while RCT 3 was still at Jubayl awaiting equipment. On 8 September 1990, the division was organized as follows:



Headquarters, 1st Marine Division  
Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division

RCT 3

Headquarters, 3d Marines  
1st Battalion, 3d Marines  
3d Battalion, 3d Marines

RCT 7

Headquarters, 7th Marines  
1st Battalion, 7th Marines  
2d Battalion, 7th Marines  
1st Battalion, 5th Marines  
3d Battalion, 9th Marines  
3d Tank Battalion  
3d Assault Amphibian Battalion  
1st Combat Engineer Battalion  
3d Battalion, 11th Marines

Task Force Shepherd

Headquarters  
H&S Company, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
2 companies, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
2 companies, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion

11th Marines

Headquarters  
5th Battalion, 11th Marines  
1st Battalion, 12th Marines

1st Tank Battalion

1st Reconnaissance Battalion

Within a week, the organization and tactical deployment of the division changed as General Myatt and his Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Colonel James A. Fulks, reacted to the completion of the 3d Marines' assembly. By mid-September, General Myatt felt comfortable enough with the buildup of forces to expand on the concept of operations for executing Division Op Order 2-90. In 1st Marine Division Frag Order 10-90 published on 11 September, the mission reflected the full capabilities of a division. General Boomer wanted the division to deploy forces to the north in defensive sectors. Those units were to protect Jubayl by disrupting, delaying, and destroying an attacking Iraqi force.

General Myatt envisioned accomplishing the mission by using Task Force Shepherd to screen the division's front from Safaniyah to a point about 60 miles west. Within the division's battle area, General Myatt wanted to establish a combined arms task force formed around a mechanized infantry battalion. A

heliborne combined arms team would be created to engage the enemy's flank and channel its advance, at which point Myatt would attack with an armor-heavy regiment against the enemy's flank. Though Myatt's plan took advantage of the improving mobility of the 1st Marine Division, it ultimately relied on a static defensive position toward which he wanted the enemy driven. The main defensive line was to extend from Hadriyah to the Cement Factory ridgeline.<sup>23</sup>

Colonel Fulks, the G-3, then realigned units to accomplish the necessary tactical deployment. Regimental Combat Team 3 retained its two infantry battalions and was designated the heliborne regiment. Regimental Combat Team 7 was reinforced by the addition of the 1st Tank Battalion and became the division's armor heavy regiment. However, RCT 7 lost the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines; Company C, 1st Assault Amphibian Battalion; Company B, 1st Tank Battalion; and the 1st Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 3d Tank Battalion. Those units combined to become the reinforced battalion mechanized combined arms force in the northernmost position in the division's sector.

The reinforced 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, successfully worked in conjunction with the light armored infantry battalion as the division's mobile rapid reaction force. Though the Marines in the task force understood the necessity of their mission to delay and channel an Iraqi attack, they were skeptical of their tactical value. They referred to themselves as a "speed bump" for all the impact one lightly equipped infantry battalion would have on the commander driving a multi-division armored attack.

In November, the 1st Marine Division's tactical posture shifted from defense to offense. The change took place throughout CentCom forces and President Bush announced the new allied resolve during his Thanksgiving visit to 1st Marine Division headquarters in the desert. Planning for such a contingency began sometime earlier. On 18 November 1990 Colonel Fulks published Frag Order 16-90 to Operations Order 2-90 which established a transitional defensive/offensive tactical plan. The mission given to the division was to continue defense in zone but begin conducting training exercises in preparation for offensive operations. The division was to be ready for sustained operations by 15 January 1991. In formulating a revised concept of operations, Colonel Fulks anticipated the joining by mid-December of an additional regiment which would become a mechanized task force. He also planned for the employment of the British 7th Armored Brigade and the increased tactical flexibility in armor strength the brigade brought with it.

According to the division mission, units continued operational training with an ever-increasing emphasis on offensive tactics. Close study of Iraqi defensive arrangement began in earnest, as well as efforts to develop effective counter-measures. The light armored infantry battalion continued to perform its covering role, while the remainder of the division began "creeping forward" and westward in its sectors. If the Iraqis attacked, General Myatt planned on having a mechanized task force positioned north across enemy avenues of approach. The division's defense would be conducted by a second mechanized task force along the coastal highway which was considered the main supply route for allied forces. The British 7th Armored Brigade would make up the division's armor-



Photograph from 1st Marine Division Combat Camera Unit  
*A M60A1 tank from 1st Tank Battalion training in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield.*

heavy task force that General Myatt intended to hold as division reserve for use against the enemy's principal attack.<sup>24</sup>

To achieve the necessary tactical structure envisioned in Frag Order 16-90, Colonel Fulks took advantage of the division's armored force of two tank battalions and a battalion of assault amphibian vehicles to reconfigure the division's combat power into two regimental mechanized task forces of equal size.<sup>25</sup> The "speed bump" 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, returned to RCT 7 and the recently arrived 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, went to RCT 3. However, by this point in operations, the designation of "regimental combat team" gradually went out of use and was replaced by task force name. Thus, RCT 7 became Task Force Ripper and RCT 3 became Task Force Taro. On 30 November 1990, the organization of the division was as follows:

#### Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division

##### Task Force Taro (formally RCT 3)

- Headquarters, 3d Marines
- 1st Battalion, 3d Marines
- 3d Battalion, 3d Marines
- 1st Battalion, 6th Marines
- 3d Tank Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (2 companies)
- Platoon, Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion
- Company A (reinforced), 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

##### Task Force Ripper (formally RCT 7)

- Headquarters, 7th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 7th Marines

- 1st Battalion, 5th Marines
- 3d Battalion, 9th Marines
- 1st Tank Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (2 companies)
- Platoon, Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion
- Company C (reinforced), 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

Task Force Shepherd (Composite Light Armored Infantry Battalion)

- Headquarters, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion
- 2 Companies from 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion
- 2 Companies from 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion
- Anti Tank Platoon, Headquarters Company, 3d Marines
- Platoon, Company C, 1st Combat Engineers Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

11th Marines

- Headquarters, 11th Marines
- 3d Battalion, 11th Marines
- 5th Battalion, 11th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 12th Marines

Combat Support:

- Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (-)
- 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (-)
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (24 AAVs)
- Rear Area Security: 2d Battalion, 7th Marines

Unlike the mechanized task forces of the 1st Marine Division, which consisted of two infantry battalions and a tank battalion, the British 7th Armored Brigade was built around two tank battalions and one infantry battalion.<sup>26</sup> The two units proved to be remarkably compatible and the employment of the brigade proceeded without incident. During November and December, 7th Armored Brigade was positioned generally on the division's left flank. It consisted of:

- Headquarters, 7th Armored Brigade
- Queen's Royal Irish Hussars (tank battalion)
- Scots Dragoon Guards (tank battalion)
- Staffordshire Regiment (infantry battalion)
- Queen's Dragoon Guards (reconnaissance squadron)
- 40th Field Artillery (artillery battalion)
- 21st Royal Engineers Detachment (engineer battalion)
- Brigade Maintenance Area (combat service support detachment)



The impact of the decision to have CentCom prepare for a "broader range of military options" made additional forces necessary.<sup>27</sup> For I MEF that meant the expansion of the aviation combat element and the combat service support element by a large portion of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing and the 2d Force Service Support Group, respectively. The 2d Marine Division was to come in as a separate maneuver unit of the ground combat element. On 25 November General Boomer made significant changes to the disposition of I MEF's ground forces. He wanted the 2d Marine Division to be ushered directly into its sector and get organized there rather than at the port of Jubayl. To accommodate the 2d Marine Division, General Boomer intended to expand MarCent's zone as far north as possible and move the 1st Marine Division into the zone's northernmost sector. The 7th Armored Brigade would occupy a central sector south of the 1st Marine Division and the 2d Marine Division would occupy a southern sector near adjacent port and air facilities.<sup>28</sup>

The I MEF began receiving reinforcements in the form of the 2d Division and a substantial portion of remaining Marine ground combat units not already at sea with the 4th and 5th MEBs. The 7th Armored Brigade became part of an expanded British force, the 1st Armored Division.<sup>29</sup> On 20 December General Boomer outlined an essentially defensive plan to cover the buildup period. While all units were to prepare for offensive operations, for the time being General Boomer envisioned a mobile defense with the 1st Marine Division stationed in the northern sector as a covering force, 1st Armored Division as a mobile maneuver element, and the 2d Marine Division in reserve. The point of main effort (unit to orient all support and tactical movements to assist) was initially the 1st Marine Division but was on order to shift to the 1st Armored Division.<sup>30</sup>

To accomplish the I MEF plan, Colonel Fulks and the G-3 staff developed Frag Order 20-90 to 1st Marine Division Operations Order 2-90. Published on 29 December, the order envisioned the addition of the 1st Marines as the division's second mechanized task force and the 4th Marines as an infiltration force. Colonel Fulks wanted reconnaissance teams patrolling along the division's northern zone to identify the locations of allied forces. The light armored infantry battalion (Task Force Shepherd) would continue to cover the division's front, while the 3d Marines would take up positions near Al Mishab as the heliborne force. Colonel Fulks wanted the two mechanized task forces to establish defenses in depth within their respective sectors.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, on 10 January 1990, I MEF lost the 7th Armored Brigade in the reconfiguration by CentCom that accompanied the changed allied posture. General Schwarzkopf compensated I MEF for the loss of the British brigade with the Army's 1st Brigade ("Tiger Brigade"), 2d Armored Division, which General Boomer attached to the 2d Marine Division. On 31 December 1990, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, was also detached from the 1st Marine Division and returned to the 2d Marine Division. The 1st Marine Division, however, gained another infantry regiment and two artillery battalions. Most of the units were not scheduled to arrive until after 1 January 1991.<sup>32</sup> The reorganization of the division at the start of the new year was:



**Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division****Task Force Papa Bear (RCT 1)**

- Headquarters, 1st Marines
- 1st Battalion, 1st Marines
- 3d Battalion, 9th Marines
- 1st Tank Battalion

**Task Force Ripper (RCT 7)**

- Headquarters, 7th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 7th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 5th Marines
- 3d Tank Battalion
- Company D, 3d LAI Battalion

**Task Force Taro (RCT 3)**

- Headquarters, 3d Marines
- 1st Battalion, 3d Marines
- 3d Battalion, 3d Marines

**Task Force Shepherd**

- Headquarters, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion
- Companies A, B, and C, 1st LAI Battalion

**11th Marines**

- Headquarters, 11th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 11th Marines
- 3d Battalion, 11th Marines
- 5th Battalion, 11th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 12th Marines

**3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (-)**

- 1st Reconnaissance Battalion
- 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion

**Rear Area Security:****2d Battalion, 7th Marines**

Meanwhile, planning for offensive operations continued and on 16 January (15 January in the United States), the day prior to the start of the allied air offensive, General Myatt signed 1st Marine Division Operation Order 1-91. The order reflected I MEF logistical constraints and shortages in assault amphibian vehicles and combat engineer equipment. In the I MEF plan, the 1st Marine Division would penetrate forward Iraqi positions and facilitate a passage of lines

by the 2d Marine Division. The division order followed the four phases outlined in the I MEF plan. During Phases I and II (the air offensive period) Task Force Shepherd (light armored infantry battalion) would continue covering the division's front to preclude an Iraqi spoiling attack. Elements of the division would conduct route reconnaissance for movement to attack positions and assist in enemy prisoner of war control. On order, units were to conduct tactical deception operations. In Phase III (air offensive and preparation of the battlefield) all tactical units were to move to their attack positions and conduct probes and artillery raids in zone. The final Phase IV consisted of four stages. In Stage A the division would attack to penetrate forward Iraqi positions, hold open the shoulders of the penetration, and assist in the passage of the 2d Marine Division. Stage B entailed a movement to blocking positions along the main supply route south of the Burqan Oilfield, while also providing local security at the point of penetration. In Stage C the division was to move to the 2d Marine Division's left flank and attack northwest in zone to seize a key road junction west of the Burqan Oilfield. Finally, in Stage D the division would continue attacking north while linking up with other CENTCOM components and coalition forces and assist the forward passage of Arab forces into Kuwait City.<sup>33</sup>

Several events combined to bring about yet another reorganization. Continued refinement of the division's offensive plan, as well as General Boomer's decision in early February to conduct a simultaneous two-division breach, altered the scheme of maneuver envisioned in 1st Marine Division Operation Order 1-91. The arrival of additional combat engineer equipment and personnel coupled with an increase in assault amphibian vehicles gave General Boomer the ability to alter the complicated division-size passage of lines.<sup>34</sup>

The division frag order revising 1st Marine Division Operations Order 1-91 that followed General Boomer's decision drastically altered the scheme of maneuver. In the revised plan, the 1st Marine Division attack shifted further west to a location near a border police station designated Observation Post 4 (the 2d Marine Division moved around the 1st Marine Division to an attack position north of Observation Post 4). The division was to conduct a deliberate attack to penetrate Iraqi defensive positions located between the Al Wafrah and Umm Gudair Oilfields. That attack would initiate the allied ground offensive. General Myatt envisioned a five-phased offensive. In Phase I, division units moved to their assembly areas while engineers began reducing the bermed wall of sand that marked the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border and reconnaissance teams evaluated the trafficability of the area. In Phase II, four task forces would breach the first obstacle belt. Two of the task forces, mostly infantry units, were to infiltrate the obstacle belt on foot and establish blocking positions on the division's right and left flanks. They were to be followed by two mechanized task forces conducting deliberate breaches and driving forward to the second obstacle belt. Phase III encompassed a breach of the second obstacle belt by the two mechanized task forces while the light armored infantry battalion moved ahead to cover the division's front in the vicinity of the Burqan Oilfield. In Phase IV, the division's focus of main effort was on seizing I MEF Objective A, the Al

Jaber airfield. Phase V followed with the division shifting on order to an attack northward to seize I MEF Objective C, Kuwait International Airport, and link up with either 4th MEB or Arab coalition forces. The division was to be prepared for an attack on Kuwait City.<sup>35</sup>

In the reorganization of the division that followed, the new G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Jerome D. Humble (Colonel Fulks moved to command RCT 4), realigned the infantry battalions to the four task forces. Task Force Ripper remained the primary maneuver element and was reinforced by 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (less a contingent transferred to Task Force Papa Bear). Task Force Papa Bear gained assault amphibian and engineer units to conduct breaching operations on the right flank of Task Force Ripper.<sup>36</sup>

The third and fourth task forces were not mechanized. They received the mission of protecting the division's flanks. Until 17 February, Task Force Taro (3d Marines) constituted the division's helicopterborne contingency force in addition to its new role as an infiltration force. To perform both missions, Colonel John H. Admire, commanding Task Force Taro, designated one of Taro's three infantry battalions as the heliborne force. In early February 1991, this contingency battalion, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, detached to division control, forming Task Force X-Ray. The fourth major task force was made up of the headquarters of the 4th Marines and the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines. Similar to Task Force Taro in its configuration, this newly created unit, designated Task Force Grizzly, also lacked organic transportation.

By late January 1991, the organization for combat of the division was essentially complete. There were two further modifications of note. The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, had been assigned a rear area security role. However, intelligence reports forecast, and General Myatt believed (following the division's experience in defeating the Iraqi attack on Observation Post 4, 29-30 January) that once the offensive began the mechanized task forces would be inundated by surrendering Iraqi soldiers. General Boomer and the division commanders were determined that these prisoners would not be allowed to delay the advance. Each division, therefore, established a special prisoner handling unit. In the 1st Marine Division, this was the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines.<sup>37</sup>

Another change was the creation of Task Force Troy by the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude. Brigadier General Draude intended Task Force Troy to carry out I MEF deception operations. The initial purpose of the task force, however, was to deceive the enemy as to the location of the main assault. Next it was to camouflage the shift of the 2d Marine Division from a position on the 1st Marine Division's right flank to its left flank by giving the Iraqis the impression that the 2d Marine Division was still in place. It was then to create enough noise and activity to draw the enemy's attention away from the western border of Kuwait. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Kershaw, Task Force Troy accomplished this mission through a combination of mock radio traffic, small-unit maneuvers of tanks and artillery, psychological operations (Psyops), and artillery raids. Lieutenant Colonel Kershaw built the task force around a headquarters

establishment made up of personnel primarily drawn from the 1st Marine Division.<sup>38</sup>

The final division task organization as of 21 February 1991 was as follows:

Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division

Task Force Papa Bear (RCT 1)

- Headquarters, 1st Marines
- 1st Battalion, 1st Marines
- Company B, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 3d Battalion, 9th Marines (-)
- Company C, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- Company B, 1st Tank Battalion
- Obstacle Clearing Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- 1st Tank Battalion (-)
- Company I, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines
- Engineer Task Force (Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion)
- Company A, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- Company A, 7th Engineer Support Battalion
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (23 AAV P-7s)
- 1st Platoon, Battery B, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

Task Force Ripper (RCT 7)

- Headquarters, 7th Marines
- 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (-)
- Company D, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- Company A, 3d Tank Battalion
- Obstacle Clearing Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- 1st Battalion, 5th Marines
- Company A, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- Company A, 1st Tank Battalion
- Obstacle Clearing Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion
- 3d Tank Battalion (-)
- Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines
- 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (-)
- Detachment, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (40 AAV P-7s)
- Company D, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion
- 2d Platoon (motorized), Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion

Task Force Taro (RCT 3)

- Headquarters, 3d Marines
- 2d Battalion, 3d Marines
- 3d Battalion, 3d Marines
- Section C, 1st Platoon, Battery B, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion
- 3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion

3d Platoon (motorized), Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion  
Team 2, 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion

Task Force Grizzly (RCT 4)

Headquarters, 4th Marines  
2d Battalion, 7th Marines  
3d Battalion, 7th Marines  
Detachment, Truck Company, Headquarters Battalion  
2d Platoon, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion  
1st Platoon (motorized), Company D, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion

Task Force Shepherd

Headquarters, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
Company A, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
Company B, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
Company C, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion  
Section A, 2d Platoon, Battery B, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

Task Force X-Ray

1st Battalion, 3d Marines

11th Marines

Headquarters, 11th Marines  
1st Battalion, 11th Marines  
3d Battalion, 11th Marines  
5th Battalion, 11th Marines  
1st Battalion, 12th Marines  
3d Battalion, 12th Marines

3d Assault Amphibian Battalion (-)

1st Reconnaissance Battalion (-)  
1st Battalion, 25th Marines

*The 'Cement Factory' Defense Line*

In September 1990 the 1st Marine Division had too few AAVs and tanks to conduct the active defense that later came to characterize its deployment. Instead, General Myatt took advantage of one of the few natural obstacles that existed between Jubayl and the Kuwait border. RCT 7 moved 50 kilometers north of Jubayl to establish the third Marine defensive position. Drawing its name from the large structures of the cement factory complex that dominated the surrounding area, the new defensive position was centered on an elevated ridge line and series of gravel pits that bisected the north-south coastal highway at that point.





Photograph by author, December 1990

*View of cement factory from coastal highway. The massive complex dominated the area.*

One of the first tasks facing the Marines of RCT 7 was the construction of a series of field fortifications along the ridge line and among the quarries. September was miserably hot and Colonel Fulford, the commander of RCT 7, immediately established a schedule of digging positions at night and having the Marines sleep during the day. While that helped, the experience at the cement factory defense line remained in memory as one of suffocating heat and exhaustion. Daylight brought hordes of flies that made sleeping and eating difficult. Temperatures often soared to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Nightfall was scarcely any better, for even a 20- to 30-degree drop in temperature was still hot.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, RCT 7 completed a system of interconnecting field fortifications with positions for tanks and AAVs. Behind the defense line were the M109A3 and M198 155mm howitzers of 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, and RCT 3, which was in the process of receiving its equipment. In front of RCT 7 were the mechanized 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, and Task Force Shepherd as general outposts. The Iraqi attack never materialized and as RCT 3 moved to the field, RCT 7 began shifting battalions farther forward. By late October, the entire division moved beyond the cement factory positions and began rehearsing mobile defensive operations.<sup>40</sup> Though never entirely abandoned, the cement factory line receded in importance and later became a staging area for 2d Marine Division units.

#### *Training with the Saudi Army*

The division's cross-training with the Arab coalition forces began soon after the establishment of the cement factory defense line. Cross-training activities were conducted primarily by elements of RCT 3 (Task Force Taro) commanded by Colonel John Admire. They started as the result of a chance encounter. Unlike the experience of RCT 7 (Task Force Ripper), Task Force Taro avoided

being billeted on the pier at Jubayl. It moved into a Saudi Marine base at Ras Al Ghar which was limited in its training facilities. The proximity of the American unit and a brigade of the Saudi Army National Guard soon led to a spirit of cooperation on training needs. General Myatt encouraged this development and, in October, appointed the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, to coordinate the division-Saudi training effort. The relationship with the Saudi Marines expanded to encompass combined use of training ranges as well as cross-training on a vast spectrum of military subjects. Colonel Admire was careful to ensure cross-training was a mutually supporting and reciprocal program. The Saudis conducted classes on subjects they knew well—desert tactics, desert survival, and desert navigation. In return, Colonel Admire rotated company-sized groups forward for eight- to 10-day training periods concentrating on Marine expertise on such subjects as weapons, leadership, and equipment maintenance. The international cooperation enhanced the fighting capabilities of both forces.<sup>41</sup>

Colonel Admire invited soldiers of the Arab coalition forces to participate in the Marine birthday ceremony on 10 November 1990. When the division moved forward in January, Task Force Taro was placed next to the Arab sector at Al Mishab. The move made Task Force Taro the northernmost Marine combat force except for Task Force Shepherd. Colonel Admire extended the training program to include the Royal Saudi Army, the nascent Saudi Marine Corps, and the Saudi Army National Guard brigade, as well as Qatari, Pakistani,



Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*M198 155mm howitzer, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, 18 February 1991.*

Moroccan, and Bangladeshi units. Commanding the only large Marine force at Mishab--a force lacking mechanized equipment but with good anti-tank weaponry and Marine helicopters--Colonel Admire was anxious to unite with the Saudi tank and mechanized units. The cooperative training programs further strengthened the bonds between the two organizations.<sup>42</sup>

#### *The Mobile Defense; October through November Training Exercises*

Task Force Taro's emphasis on cross-training with Arab units reflected the training focus of the October and November period. Following the establishment of the cement factory defense line, improvement in logistical capability, and an apparently quite Iraqi Army halted at the border, General Myatt took the opportunity to improve the division's combat skills. Ultimately, by the start of the ground offensive, the 1st Marine Division would have undergone more than four months of seemingly unending preparations. There were numerous repetitive training and tactical exercises dubbed "rehearsals." Training ranged from practicing individual combat skills to participation in major MEF and CentCom-directed exercises such as Imminent Thunder, 15-20 November.<sup>43</sup>

Initially, the emphasis was on perfecting tactics of the mobile defense. However, after United Nations Resolution 688 passed in November and directed Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait by 15 January 1991, training and planning were oriented to offensive operations, particularly breaching techniques. The task forces conducted frequent tactical exercises without troops (TEWT) using primarily unit commanders and staffs and sandtable briefs. Units were required to maintain a tactical posture at all times. Less frequent were exercises involving entire units in order to save on equipment wear and tear. The extent and variety of training ensured everyone was prepared for a variety of combat scenarios. It also provided commanders and staffs with a realistic appraisal of desert fighting which would later be incorporated into operational planning.<sup>44</sup>

#### *The Movement North*

In the period leading to the ground offensive, the 1st Marine Division slowly moved closer to Kuwait. Its moves were determined by changes in I MEF's boundaries, which gradually expanded the 1st Marine Division's area of responsibility. By 17 January 1991 the division's sector covered the Saudi-Kuwait border to a line 60 miles west of the coastal highway near what was known as the "Heel," the point the border turned north. The area was initially occupied by elements of the (Arab) Eastern Province Area Command and the division's reconnaissance and light armored infantry forces. The balance of the 1st Marine Division was concentrated 40 miles south in the area commonly referred to as the "Triangle." The Triangle was a large expanse of desert north of Jubayl bordered on the east by the coastal highway connecting the cities of Abu Hydriyah and An Nuayrihah, and the road intersection west of Manifah Bay.<sup>45</sup>



Photograph by author

*President Bush giving his speech to the assembled Marines, sailors, and British soldiers at Headquarters, 1st Marine Division. Senators Robert Dole and George Mitchell, Representative Thomas Foley, and First Lady Barbara Bush are on the podium with him.*

General Boomer originally intended to have the right half of the zone occupied by the 2d Marine Division and concentrate the 1st Marine Division on the left. He was not in a hurry to move either division into the border area, for several reasons. Chief among those was the overriding concern for security. Marine ground forces were responsible for the attack into Kuwait, yet, Iraq's thorough defensive preparations left little room for surprise. The only advantage remaining to the Marines was in the selection of the exact time and place of the attack. By January, intelligence sources indicated gaps existed along what appeared to be boundary lines between Iraqi divisions. Although the Iraqis were gradually closing these, close analysis of the southwest corner of Kuwait indicated existence of a boundary that offered a promising avenue of approach to Kuwait City. Marine commanders, General Myatt, General Boomer, and Major General William M. Keys, commanding the 2d Marine Division, naturally desired that nothing be done that might telegraph American tactical moves.<sup>46</sup>

Logistical constraints affected the phased buildup of combat power along the border. In order to support sustained combat operations 160 miles (1st Marine Division) to 190 miles (2d Marine Division) from the nearest port at Al Jubayl, the General Support Command (GSC) and the Direct Support Command created the logistical bases at Kibrit and later at Al Khanjar, west of the Heel. Until sufficient supplies moved forward to sustain both divisions through a major offensive, all other Marine combat units stayed south of the Kibrit road, except for units conducting deception operations aimed at masking the buildup of the



logistical bases. By the end of January 1991 the Direct Support Command and the naval construction battalions completed the first base at Kibrit allowing more units to move north.<sup>47</sup>

*The War Begins:*

*The Fight for Observation Point 4, 29-30 January 1991*

In late January, after the Direct Support Command declared its base at Kibrit to be ready, elements of both the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions began moving to the border assembly area. Actually getting them there, however, was not easy, as shortages of heavy equipment transporters (HETs) prolonged the relocation of the mechanized task forces.<sup>48</sup> The division G-4 staff coordinated among the task forces on the use of what was available to the division, but there were insufficient HETs to accomplish the redeployment in one movement. The establishment of Kibrit had exhausted the assets of Marine truck companies in I MEF. The Army was engaged in relocating the entire VII Corps to the northwestern Saudi-Kuwaiti border, which further strained transportation resources. The movement of allied forces changed the complexion of northern Saudi Arabia. Highways filled with long, slow-moving columns running night and day. Soon the litter of wrecked and broken-down equipment began to mark the path to the forward logistics bases. On 29 January 1991, there still was no sizable combat force between Kibrit and the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border. Only Task Force Shepherd--one company from the 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, and a few platoons from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, as well as an enemy prisoner of war detachment from 1st Battalion, 25th Marines--was in that area.

The border sectors hosted many artillery raids, or so-called "ambiguity operations," designed as part of a CentCom and I MEF deception effort aimed



Photograph by author, January 1991

*Supplies move north along coastal highway during build-up of Kibrit. The hazy conditions were typical for later afternoon at that time.*



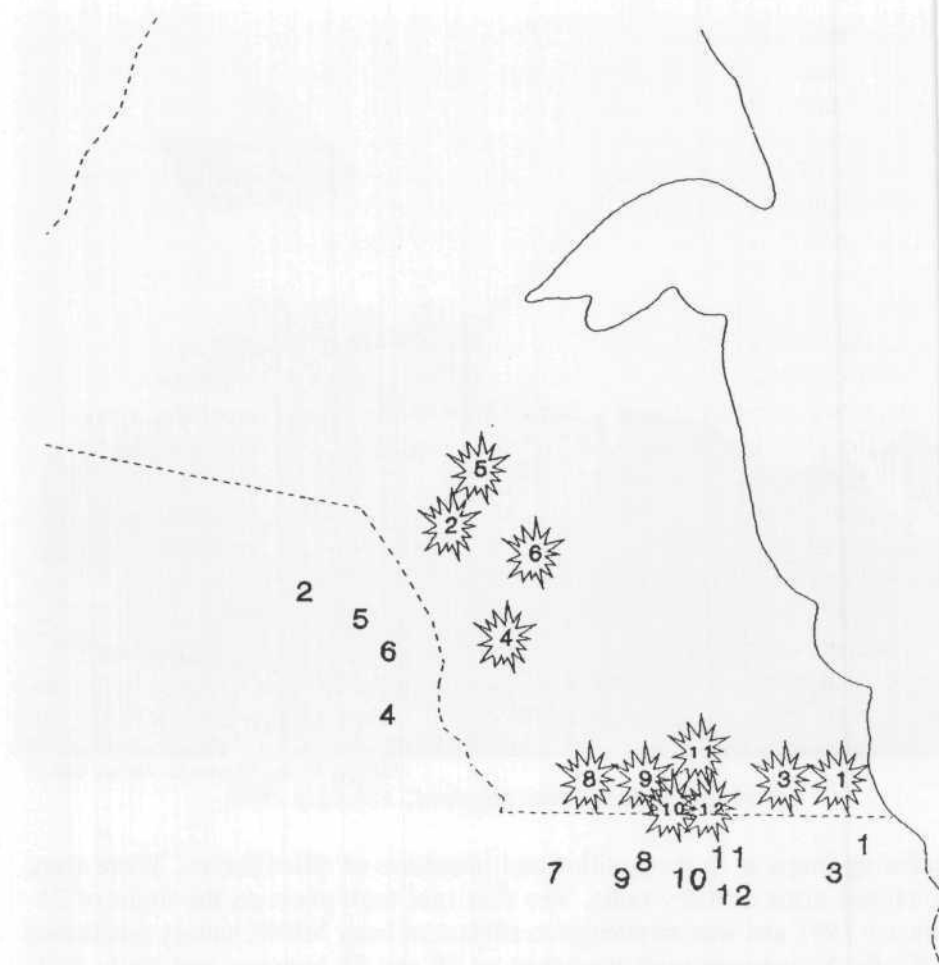


Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*LAV-25 from Task Force Shepherd, February 1991.*

at confusing Iraqis as to the position and intentions of allied forces. There were 12 combined arms artillery raids. The first raid took place on the night of 21-22 January 1991 and was an attempt to silence an Iraqi MLRS battery positioned near Khafji. Subsequent raids happened on 26 and 28 January, and on 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 19, 20, and 22 February.<sup>49</sup>

Each raid followed a similar format. Preparations generally began 24-48 hours prior to the raid with a raid force planning cell formed to develop targeting and support requirements. The designated battalion next developed its raid time line and coordinated with covering and security forces. Division selected a target and requested air support while the raid force planned routes, checkpoints, assembly areas, and tentative firing positions. On the day of the raid, the raid force would depart in sufficient time for all elements to be in their firing positions by nightfall. Once the raid commander declared "ready to fire," and the airborne forward air controllers and air support were on station, the primary battery fired on the designated targets. Afterwards it withdrew under covering fire from the support battery. A remotely piloted vehicle (RPV) later provided a battle damage assessment.<sup>50</sup>

While the raids damaged Iraqi forward positions, the division took casualties as well. The raid on 26 January caused the deaths of three Task Force Shepherd Marines in a vehicle accident.<sup>51</sup> The 2 February raid resulted in one Marine



## 11TH MARINES RAID OPERATIONS

*Location of division artillery raids along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border.*

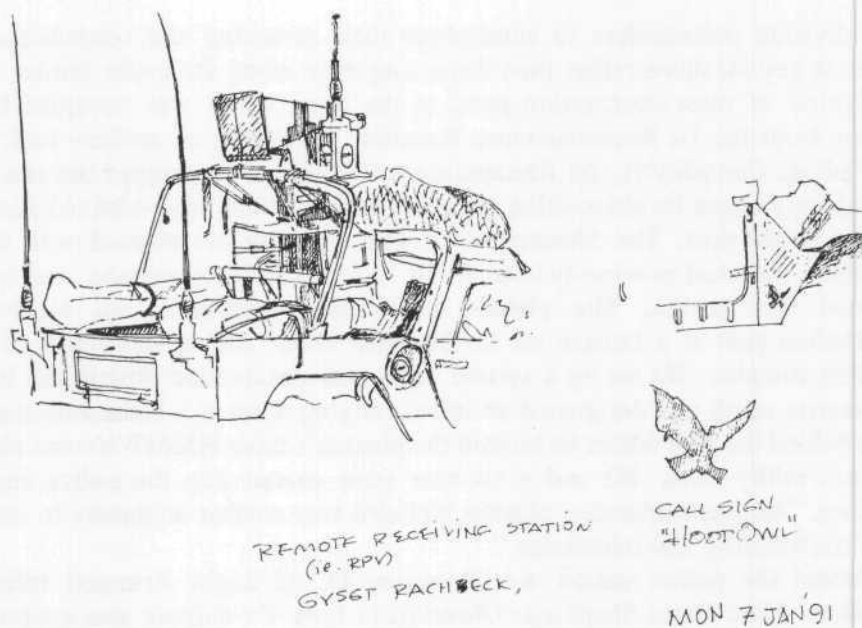
killed and two wounded from an allied air attack along with an 8-inch self-propelled howitzer.

Other than Iraqi counterbattery fire in response to the raids there had been little enemy activity along the border for several days when, on the evening of 29 January 1991, the Iraqis suddenly launched a multi-pronged attack which enemy prisoners of war later said was aimed at breaking through the observation post line, seizing Kibrit and Khafji, then driving south to take Mishab.<sup>52</sup> Initially, the only hint that an offensive was developing came from air reconnaissance which noticed an armored buildup near the coastal highway. Immediately, attention focused on Khafji. Yet, the first Iraqi attack hit the Marines at Observation Post 4, known as OP 4. This attack alerted Marine commanders that enemy forces were on the move in front of Marine positions.<sup>53</sup>

At first, the threat was only against the border observation posts. There were eight police stations that had been turned into observation posts by the Marines, numbered 1 through 8. Only OPs 4, 5, and 6 were in the 1st Marine Division area. Of these, OP 4 was the most important. It was strategically located at the "heel" corner of the border between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, 60 miles west of the coastal highway. A large force breaking through could go in any number of directions, including towards the Marine supply base at Kibrit.

The police stations were similar in appearance, each located on slightly undulating terrain characteristic of the area. Observation Post 4, known to the Saudis as the As-Zabr Police Post, consisted of a castle-like main building and two towers constructed out of brown stone. To the north of the castle was a white one-story concrete structure housing the electrical generator that provided power to the complex. Some small trees, a fenced-in area, and a water tower completed the station compound.

The station bisected the wall of sand, called a "berm," that extended the entire length of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. The berm was not actually on the border, but ran several kilometers inside Saudi Arabian territory. An invading force coming from the north would have already entered Saudi Arabia by the time it reached the wall of sand. On the other hand, a force coming from the south still had some distance to traverse before reaching Kuwait, giving the enemy time to react. Thus, the berm had both advantages and disadvantages. Often as high as 15 feet, the wall of sand blocked all vehicle movement across it and intentionally channelized traffic toward the police stations. That allowed



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*HMMWV used as a remote receiving station for the remote piloted vehicles supporting the 21-22 January 1991 artillery raid.*



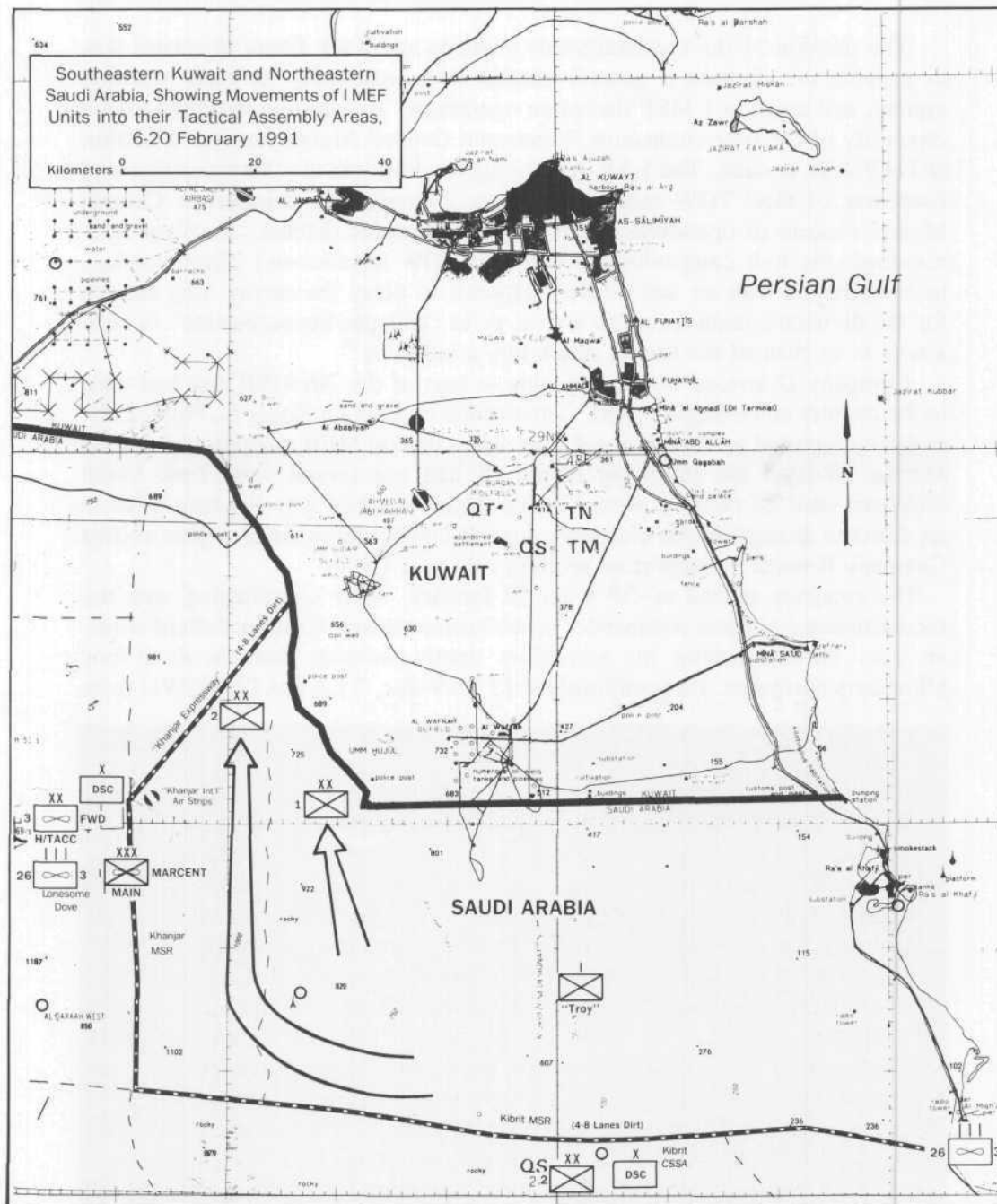
Watercolor by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*On 24 January 1991 the Op Hamma police station near Khafji was occupied by Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. The plumes of smoke were the result of a B-52 strike near the Al Wafrah Oilfield.*

both division commanders to concentrate their screening and reconnaissance forces at key locations rather than dispersing them along the entire border.

Typical of most observation posts at the time, OP 4 was occupied by a platoon from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. Following an artillery raid, the 2d Platoon, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, reoccupied the site and immediately began its observation of enemy activity at the Iraqi-manned Kuwait As-Sur police post. The Marines of 2d Platoon were not pleased with their situation. They had previously been at OP 3, which had hot showers, and some resented the change. The platoon commander established an eight-man observation post at a bunker set in the berm about 200 meters north of the building complex. He set up a second eight-man observation post in the berm 300 meters south and designated an initial rallying point at a horseshoe-shaped berm behind the post where he located the platoon's three HMMWVs and single five ton utility truck. He and a six-man team moved into the police station building. The reconnaissance platoon included two combat engineers to assess local trafficability and minefields.<sup>54</sup>

Behind the police station was Company D, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, Task Force Shepherd. Observation Post 4's defense was supported further by a second light armored infantry company, Company B, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, Task Force Shepherd, located about 25 kilometers to the south. Also, 10 kilometers to the west, was Company A, 1st Light



Armored Infantry Battalion, Task Force Shepherd's reserve. In direct support of these companies were the two batteries of artillery from the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines. Observation Posts 5 and 6 were occupied by elements from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Myers had only Company C, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, positioned in that area, however. Companies A and B had originally been deployed behind OPs 5 and 6 but had been withdrawn in support of division ambiguity operations.<sup>55</sup>



The mission of the reconnaissance platoons and Task Force Shepherd was to provide the division a general outpost line, essentially an early warning system, and assist in I MEF deception operations. To improve the night vision capability of the four companies, Lieutenant Colonel Myers attached a section of LAV-ATs to each. The LAV-ATs brought with them the thermal sights and firepower of their TOW missile launchers. Nevertheless, Lieutenant Colonel Myers' concept of operations did not envision a static defense. He planned to maneuver the four companies and use their TOW missiles and 25mm cannon, in combination with air and artillery support, to delay the enemy long enough for the division's main forces to arrive, or to "collapse the screenline" in such a way as to channel the enemy attack into a kill zone.<sup>56</sup>

Company D arrived in Saudi Arabia as part of the 7th MEB and had been in the country since August 1990. Commanded by Captain Roger L. Pollard, the company reported to Task Force Ripper when the 7th MEB merged with the 1st Marine Division the following month. It had not served with Task Force Shepherd until 28 January when General Myatt attached it to the task force in an effort to strengthen the division's general outpost force while Myers shifted Company B north to support an artillery raid near OP 6.<sup>57</sup>

The company moved to OP 4 on 29 January. After coordinating with the reconnaissance platoon commander at the police station, Captain Pollard chose an area for establishing his screenline (battle position) that was about four kilometers northwest. He positioned his 13 LAV-25s, 7 LAV-ATs (TOWs) from



Pastel by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Night firefight.*

the attached antitank section, and 1 LAV-C2 on high ground of what was essentially a basin approaching the police station. The company faced generally north and it was arranged in a single line along a 4,000-meter frontage. The 1st Platoon was on the northern left flank and the 2d Platoon was on the right. The right flank was located about 2,500 meters northwest of the police station. From all appearances, the evening of 29 January 1991 promised to be another cold, overcast, uneventful but tense winter night for the Marines around OP 4.

The engagement that occurred at OP 4 took place in three distinct phases. The reconnaissance platoon came under attack and withdrew. Company D moved to cover the platoon's withdrawal and attempted to delay or halt the Iraqi advance, took casualties, and withdrew. Companies A and B from Task Force Shepherd replaced Company D and drove out Iraqis from OP 4 which concluded the engagement.

Spotters using night vision scopes observed a column of about 30 Iraqi armored vehicles moving toward the Kuwaiti police station. The time was about 2000. Within 15 minutes of the first report, they reported a force of five T-62 tanks followed by several BMP infantry fighting vehicles moving in their direction. The Iraqi advance moved slowly, feeling its way to the American position. The Recon platoon immediately called for an air strike and advised Captain Pollard of events. As the tanks neared OP 4, the first aircraft arrived and attacked, but failed to halt the Iraqi advance. Once they entered small-arms range, 2d Platoon opened fire with a combination of M203 grenade launchers, LAAWs, AT-4s, and machine guns. One M-203 shooter dropped an illumination round on the lead tank, while a combat engineer fired two LAAW rockets into another tank, causing it to halt. (That tank would later be destroyed in an A-10 attack.)<sup>58</sup>

When 2d Platoon began firing, the Iraqi tanks returned fire with discarding-sabot penetrator rounds that went through the police station building the platoon occupied. At that point it was time to leave, and the platoon leader fired the red star-cluster as he attempted to rally the platoon with their vehicles behind the horseshoe berm. Iraqi tanks were within the complex of OP 4 when they began firing on the berm. As rounds passed overhead or were deflected by the berm, Company D engaged the Iraqi armor, causing it to pause long enough for the platoon to withdraw several kilometers from OP 4, where it later linked up with Company A. The platoon remained at that site until Company D withdrew several hours later.<sup>59</sup>

At 1926, Company D spotted the approaching Iraqi force. Captain Pollard immediately put the company on full alert and radioed Lieutenant Colonel Myers that there were approximately 50 vehicles heading south. He judged them to be about seven kilometers from his position and four to five kilometers from OP 4. He then withdrew south to gain room to maneuver and reconfigured the company against the armored threat. In place of the lengthy single line, Pollard created two lines, one for attack and one for support. In the main line facing the station to the northeast were 13 LAV-25s and 3 LAV-ATs. Behind the main line, the smaller second line consisted of the TOW section's remaining 4 LAV-ATs. The company's two supply vehicles fell back to the west. Lieutenant

Williams, the executive officer, and Sergeant Swalick, the company's forward air controller, were in the communications LAV located midway along but slightly back of the main line. Captain Pollard was on the right flank in his LAV-25.

While Company D prepared to confront the approaching force, Lieutenant Colonel Myers informed the other company commanders of events. He instructed Captain Pollard not to leave his position for the moment; Myers did not want to commit Company D until the enemy made his intentions clear.

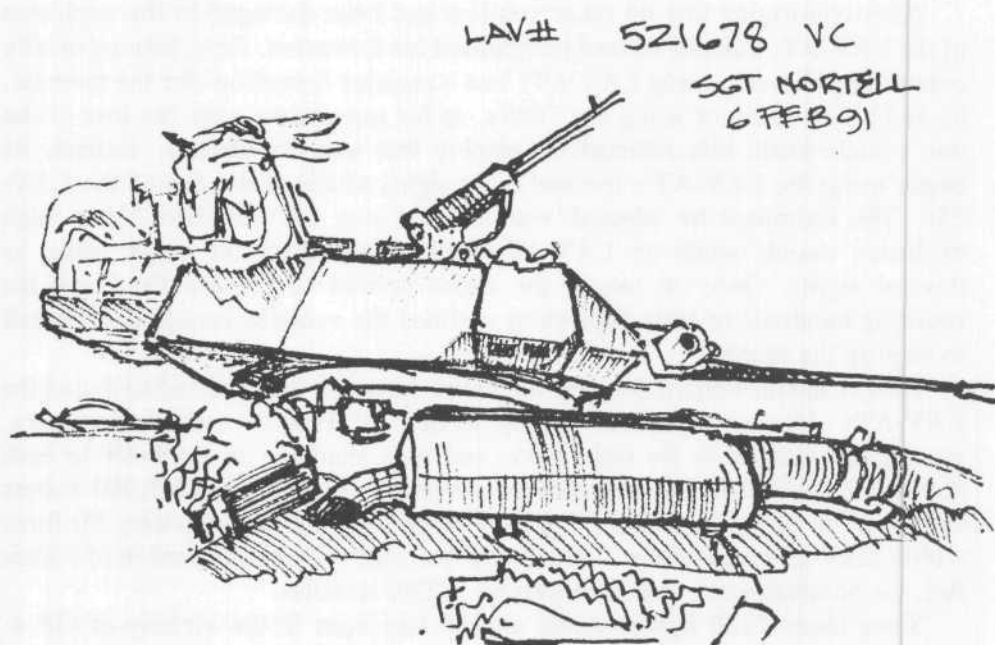
He did not have long to wait. Myers was still notifying his company commanders when the reconnaissance platoon at OP 4 began firing its heavy machine guns and LAAWs at the on-rushing Iraqi column. Captain Pollard could see that the platoon's fire stopped one tank and slowed the attack, but it was obvious that the Iraqis were determined to capture the police station.<sup>60</sup>

Captain Pollard immediately advised Lieutenant Colonel Myers that the Iraqis were at OP 4 in large numbers and seemed intent on continuing the attack into Saudi Arabia. Myers passed this assessment to General Myatt, along with an urgent request for air support. The Task Force Shepherd commander then prepared to defend in sector. Myers alerted his artillery batteries and he moved Company A slightly north to Checkpoint 25, a location that was within sight and supporting distance of Company D. Myers wanted Company D to develop the situation while he moved Companies A and B into position. Company D would then fall back, Company A would attack, and Company B would act as a blocking force.<sup>61</sup> He next shifted his attention to coordinating the defense of OP 5 and OP 6, where another enemy threat had begun to develop.

Upon observing the reconnaissance platoon's distress flare, Captain Pollard began moving his vehicles within cannon range of OP 4. The maneuver shifted the company from a southeast to an eastern alignment. The formation remained essentially as it had been, with 1st Platoon occupying the left half of the company line and 2d Platoon the right half. The three LAV-AT vehicles followed in trace.

Once in range of the Iraqi force, the LAV-25s opened fire and almost immediately an Iraqi tank exploded. It would conveniently burn for some time and provide American forces with an excellent reference point. The burning tank illuminated the police station area. Within minutes, three T-55 tanks from the attacking force emerged out of the darkness and a furious firefight opened between the tanks and the reconnaissance platoon. For a while, the Marines managed to keep the tanks at a distance, however, they quickly expended their supply of LAWs and, by 2130 hours, it was time for the platoon to withdraw.

Captain Pollard decided to attempt a rescue. Leaving Lieutenant Williams in charge of 1st Platoon, Captain Pollard took 2d Platoon and advanced toward the station. His direction of movement soon put 2d Platoon partially in front of 1st Platoon's position. As he got closer to the police station, Pollard could see that Iraqi fire on the reconnaissance platoon had gotten so intense that it threatened the break-out attempt. He decided to upset the Iraqi assault by an attack of his own.



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*Turret of a LAV-25 of Company D, Task Force Shepherd.*

Pollard halted 2d Platoon and fired a volley of TOW missiles. Success was immediately apparent and an Iraqi vehicle exploded with a bright flash. Unfortunately, so too did one of the LAVs in Captain Pollard's formation: "The explosion was so violent we couldn't tell which hog had been hit . . . I thought we had been hit by Sagers fired by the Iraqi tanks."<sup>62</sup> In the radio check that followed, one of the LAV-ATs in the first line failed to report. Its loss was confirmed by the executive officer who had seen the vehicle struck by a missile fired by an LAV-AT from the second line. The missile went through the rear door and the resulting explosion of stored missiles disintegrated the LAV with its crew.

The destruction of the second T-55 momentarily halted the Iraqi attack. However, the loss of the LAV also halted Company D's advance while Captain Pollard attempted to determine what had happened. Nevertheless, the pressure on OP 4 lessened. Then, while the LAVs maintained a constant fire from their guns, Lieutenant Steven A. Ross and the Marines cleared the police station and eventually linked up with Company A at Checkpoint 25.

Meanwhile, the fight between Company D and the Iraqi armor around the police station continued with losses to both sides. "It was strange fighting at night," Captain Pollard later wrote, "tracers flew overhead in continuous lines, tanks were silhouetted by their muzzle blasts, and rounds impacted into the buildings of OP 4. Lead flew everywhere, but you could not see the enemy, just his fire."<sup>63</sup>



After confirming that no other vehicles had been damaged in the explosion of the LAV-AT, Captain Pollard reorganized his formation. First, he temporarily consolidated his remaining LAV-ATs into a separate formation--for the moment, he had no intention of using his TOWs, as his uncertainty over the loss of the one vehicle made him reluctant to employ that weapon system. Instead, he began using the LAV-AT's thermal night sights to adjust the fire of the LAV-25s. The technique he adopted was to have one LAV-25 fire 25mm high explosive rounds while an LAV-AT would guide them on target using its thermal sights. Once on target, the entire section or platoon fired and the resulting hundreds of little explosions outlined the vehicles enough for aircraft to acquire the target.<sup>64</sup>

Next, Captain Pollard brought the entire force on line and redistributed the LAV-ATs. He accomplished this by having 2d Platoon remain stationary, moving 1st Platoon to the right flank, and then attaching an LAV-AT to each section of LAV-25s. The reorganized company was now about 3,000 meters southwest of the police station. Captain Pollard's plan now was to keep his force within LAV-25 range of the T-55s and to hit them with a combination of 25mm fire, air bombardment, and, if necessary, TOW missiles.

Since about 2130 fighter/attack aircraft had been in the vicinity of OP 4. The first aircraft to arrive was an F/A-18 which Company D's forward air controller directed against tanks illuminated by the burning Iraqi T-55. The F/A-18 was followed by successive sections of United States Air Force Fairchild A-10 Thunderbolt II ground attack aircraft. For these, Captain Pollard continued the technique of using the LAV-AT's thermal sights to find a target, then marking the victim with shells fired from the LAV-25's cannon. While a 25mm round could not penetrate the T-55's armor, the flash of the rounds ricocheting off the tank was enough for the A-10 pilots to see their target. At times, the impact and detonation of the 25mm rounds on the tanks was sufficient to cause an Iraqi retreat. The combination of air bombardment and ground fire began to contain the attack.

The stress on the Iraqis began to show. It was at this time that Company D spotted two Iraqi tanks about a mile west of the police station and moving towards the north side of the berm. Captain Pollard marked these with 25mm fire while the forward air controller brought in a section of A-10s. Both tank crews panicked under the intense American fire and, disoriented by the darkness, inadvertently ran into the berm. There the crews left the tanks abandoned to be found the following day, still serviceable, by the Marines of Company A. (The Marines also found a dead Iraqi a short distance from the tanks. He had a cranial small-caliber wound and probably had been executed by another Iraqi soldier.)

Captain Pollard no sooner reformed the company than he had to contend with an attempt by several Iraqi tanks to get around his right flank. To counter the Iraqi move he shifted the two platoons back about 1,000 meters and had the LAV-ATs fire a second, and last, volley of TOW missiles. Then, while maintaining a constant fire, Company D withdrew another 1,000 meters and called in another air strike. It was now 2230 and the pilots in this section of A-



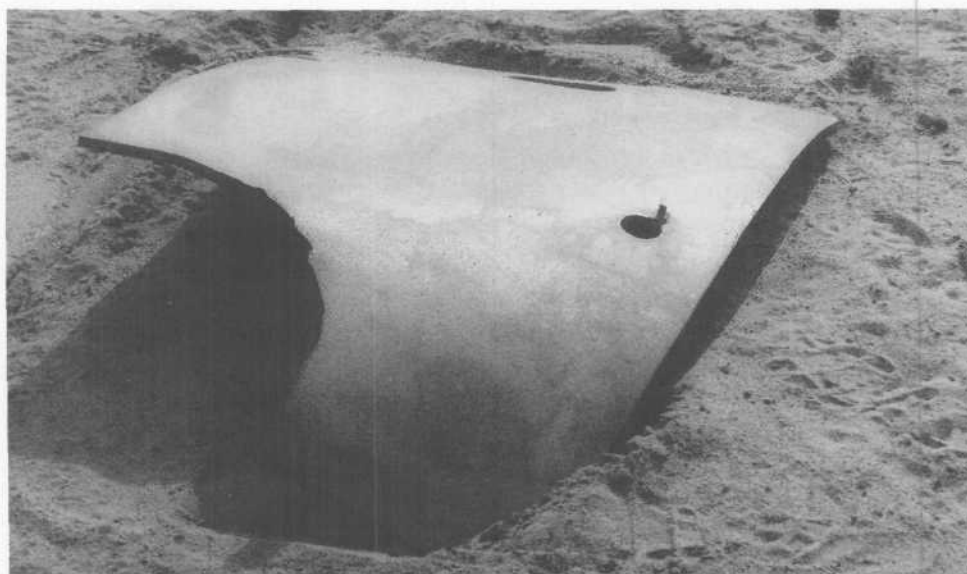
10s, the last to arrive in the area, radioed that they were having difficulty seeing anything on the ground. Twice, Company D's tracers marked a T-55 and twice the section leader reported that he was unable to acquire the target by this method. The pilot then said he was going to drop a flare and the forward air controller was to use it as a reference point for providing direction and distance to the tanks. Unfortunately, the flare landed a few meters behind the second from the last Marine vehicle on the left flank and, though the controller reported the T-55 as 1,000 meters northeast of the flare, a missile fired from the second A-10 struck the LAV-25 in front of the flare, destroying it and killing seven of eight crewmen.

"It was the only time I got scared," Captain Pollard said. "I was in the center of the line looking for the flare to land in front of me, when all of a sudden there was this huge explosion on my right. I thought we had been flanked and had lost a vehicle to enemy tank fire." Confusion also swept through the company. They had been fighting the Iraqi tanks for almost two hours, displaying the "discipline and coolness under fire" that Captain Pollard needed to successfully stand off what he believed were T-55s. He said, "Normally it is difficult to keep chatter off the radio, but throughout the battle, they maintained perfect radio silence. The only voices to be heard were those of myself, the XO, my FAC, and, occasionally the platoon commanders. However, when the LAV-25 went up, there was pandemonium over the net and it took a moment to settle everybody down."

Captain Pollard now faced two conflicting problems. He had to reestablish contact with the enemy in order to carry out his outpost mission, but he also had to know what caused the destruction of the LAV-25. Was the vehicle hit by a round fired from an enemy tank? A quick sweep of the surrounding area with thermal sights showed the desert clear of Iraqi vehicles. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Williams reported that the explosion coincided with the second A-10's run. The news was confirmed by the commander of Company A, Captain Michael A. Shupp, who reported seeing the first A-10 drop the flare and the second A-10 fire its missile followed by the LAV's explosion.

In spite of the loss of the LAV-25, the combination of 25mm and A-10 fire stopped the Iraqi attack. Once Captain Pollard confirmed that the enemy did not pose an immediate threat, he withdrew 1,000 meters to the west, linked up with Company A, and then relinquished the outpost to Company A while he assessed Company D's losses, refueled, and rearmed. It was now 2351 and the fighting around OP 4 moved into its third phase.

While the fight around OP 4 ensued, the enemy initiated a series of probes along the entire Saudi-Kuwaiti border. The most serious of these assaults was against OP 6 which was eventually attacked by another enemy force of about 50 vehicles.<sup>65</sup> The observation post was unmanned. Earlier in the evening, General Myatt withdrew the reconnaissance detachment and covered it with Company C, commanded by Captain Thomas P. Protzeller. Company C moved into position at 2231 with orders from Lieutenant Colonel Myers to establish a position adjacent to the berm about five kilometers south of the station. From that location, Captain Protzeller was to keep both OP 5 and OP 6 under close



Photograph by author

*The destroyed LAV-AT's rear door shows the location where the TOW missile penetrated.*

observation. Nothing occurred until 0110 when, suddenly, Iraqi artillery began shelling OP-6 with high explosive and illumination rounds. A mechanized assault commenced 30 minutes later.

Events began to move quickly. The Iraqi assault was poorly conducted. At 0134, Captain Protzeller informed Lieutenant Colonel Myers that he could see an intense small-arms firefight between two Iraqi units that were attacking OP 6. The shooting continued for about 10 minutes before the enemy commander regained control of his units and occupied the abandoned station. There were a dozen enemy vehicles in the immediate vicinity and Captain Protzeller saw that the assault units were backed by a much larger force, estimated at between 50 and 75 vehicles. The 12 vehicles remained at OP 6 only long enough to drop off their infantry passengers and then withdrew to the comparative safety of the open desert to await the American response.

General Myatt and Lieutenant Colonel Myers directed their attention against the main threat and began taking action to destroy the large Iraqi mechanized force sitting in the desert with a series of air attacks. The Iraqis were repeatedly hit and soon withdrew to the north under cover of defensive antiaircraft fire.

Company C saw the lines of tracers from the enemy's antiaircraft fire and Captain Protzeller moved the company closer to OP 6 in an attempt to designate the enemy guns with laser for air strikes. The Iraqi commander anticipated this and began protecting the police station and his antiaircraft guns with a thick smoke cover. He also put his 12 vehicles into a wedge formation and directed them to a new position about four kilometers north of OP 6. Captain Protzeller countered with an air strike using unguided bombs, moved Company C to within 700 meters of OP 6, and intensified his fire against the occupying force. It was now 0337.



Photograph by author

*All that remained of the LAV-AT after the engagement at OP 4.*

Soon after Company C arrived at its new location it was attacked by about 20 enemy vehicles. The assault got nowhere. Losing 11 vehicles to 11 TOW missiles, and then subjected to air bombardment, the survivors turned back and disappeared into the smoke surrounding OP 6. That concluded the engagement, and by dawn, only destroyed Iraqi vehicles surrounded the police station. Company C took no casualties during the four-hour fight.

Companies A and B also survived their engagements without loss. Myers ordered Company D to withdraw following the destruction of the LAV-25, and continued the fight with Company A, commanded by Captain Michael A. Shupp. Still holding to his original plan of having Company A attack the enemy, Myers directed Company A to move toward OP 4. The company's first mission, however, was to search the area for any possible survivors from the two destroyed LAVs and then reestablish Company D's position. Neither of these tasks was going to be easy. The night was very dark and the limited extent of the Iraqi attack was only dimly understood at the time, thus the movement of any vehicle across the desert was suspicious and threatened with immediate air or ground attack.

The concern was not misplaced. Between 2300 on 29 January and 0300 the following morning, Company B reported five sightings of possible enemy vehicles, even though at the time it was located 25 kilometers to the south of OP 4. Captain Eddie S. Ray, commanding Company B, had even gone so far as to target artillery against one of the sightings. Yet, all reports turned out to be either Company D withdrawing from OP 4 or Company A maneuvering. It took almost two hours for Company A to reach Company D's former position and establish a screenline.

At 0411 fighting around the police station flared up again. Initially, enemy activity consisted of nothing more than artillery fired in the general direction of Company A's position. It did not interrupt the search for survivors and firing ceased after 10 minutes. Meanwhile, one of Captain Shupp's sections found the destroyed LAV-25. The driver was still alive but his condition was initially

rated as marginal. He appeared to be severely burned and cut, but because of the darkness, the corpsman was frustrated in his efforts to fully assess the extent of his injuries. Captain Shupp called for an emergency helicopter medical evacuation. Within 10 minutes, he canceled the request after the corpsman managed to stabilize the wounded Marine. Further evaluation showed the wounds not to be as serious as originally believed.

While the injured Marine was being evaluated, Captain Shupp received a report of possible enemy helicopter activity north of Company A. Concerned that an attempt was being made to flank his position, Captain Shupp began preparing the company to move. Fortunately, an OV-10 arrived and quickly swept the area with thermal sights. The observer found the suspected landing site to be clear of enemy activity, but he advised Captain Shupp that there were many burned out vehicles between the company's screenline and OP 4.

As the OV-10 concluded its mission, the long night began to give way to the light of a new day. With improved visibility Captain Shupp could see the destroyed enemy vehicles for himself. He also saw many enemy troops and vehicles on the Kuwait side of OP 4. They appeared to be preparing another attack but Captain Shupp preempted it with a volley of TOW missiles fired from the company's attached LAV-ATs. The enemy lost two tanks to this volley. Ten minutes later, a third tank went up in flames when a section of Marine AH-1 Sea Cobra attack helicopters arrived over the police station and attacked the Iraqi force assembled there. The engagements distracted the Iraqis and Captain Shupp used the opportunity to send a platoon towards OP 4 to conduct a search for the lost TOW vehicle. Within a few minutes, the LAV-AT's shattered hulk was found and its ruined condition left no doubt that the entire crew had been killed. After confirming the loss of the LAV-AT's four Marines, Captain Shupp directed the lead platoon to provide suppressing fire for the company during its move forward. The company commander concentrated on working the section of AH-1Ws in a series of attacks and, by 0653, they had succeeded in disabling three more T-55s. The company captured nine Iraqi soldiers. As Company A engaged the enemy at OP 4, Captain Shupp received a report informing him of the presence of an unknown number of dismounted infantry positioned on the berm about a mile to the north. Their presence at that location threatened the company's left flank. The infantry, however, made no effort to join the fight and eventually disappeared. Captain Shupp did not believe it necessary to change position to counter the threat.

The sudden reappearance of two or three tanks at OP 4 as well as the sight of enemy troops moving about the station itself brought on a renewal of fighting. Captain Shupp no sooner completed repositioning his TOWs to fire on the enemy tanks and personnel than the Iraqis attacked with a second armored force consisting of an estimated 15 tanks. Lacking air support, Captain Shupp decided to break contact and fall back beyond the range of the tanks. He noted that the time was 0720 and, though the fighting at OP 4 had been going seemingly without pause for about 12 hours, the company showed no sign of fatigue. Company A slowly moved back, firing as it went. Its gunnery proved highly effective and only one tank, a T-55, actually got past the police station.



The T-55 was there only a few minutes when a section of A-10s arrived on station and destroyed it. The two aircraft were soon reinforced by a section of F/A-18s and another section of A-10s which gave Captain Shupp the firepower he needed to return to within TOW missile range of the police station.

The engagement took place in daylight and, for the first time in the fighting around the police stations, both sides were able to clearly see the other. They proved evenly matched. What the LAV-25s lacked in firepower and armor was compensated by their maneuverability, well-trained crews, decisive command, a section of LAV-ATs, and effective air and artillery support. On the other hand, the Iraqi unit now in front of Company A consisted of about 18 T-55 tanks sporadically supported by artillery. The Iraqis lacked air cover. Nevertheless, their firepower and armor protection of the tanks made it a difficult force to stop. Once past Company A, the LAVs of Companies B and D were still the only ground units between the Iraqis and Kibrit, though the 3d Tank Battalion from Task Force Ripper had begun moving north.

For the next hour, a combination of air, artillery, and anti-tank missiles kept the enemy tanks on the Kuwait side of the berm. The two abandoned Iraqi tanks north of OP 4 came under fire from a section of A-10s and Captain Shupp, unaware that the tanks were unmanned, found his movement of Company A constrained by the need to keep his left flank clear of their guns. Once it became clear that the Iraqi armor was neutralized, Captain Shupp began thinking about getting refueled and rearmed. The company's continuous movement and constant firing during the course of the entire morning left many of the LAV-25s low on fuel and ammunition. Initially, Captain Shupp considered withdrawing but the lack of Iraqi aggressiveness led to his decision to maintain his position and have the ammunition and fuel vehicles come to him.

Confronted by the strong Marine defense of the border posts the Iraqis began to give way and retreat back to Kuwait following the dawn engagement with Company A. The sight of the T-55s and T-62s pulling away electrified the Marines. Company A immediately drove up to the berm to bring the Iraqis under fire and Captain Shupp called in AH-1W Cobras against more distant vehicles. To this force Lieutenant Colonel Myers brought up Company B and positioned it on the berm to the southeast of Company A and he moved Company D to the northwest of Company A. For the next two hours, the three companies called in air and artillery strikes on the withdrawing Iraqis. The last enemy tank destroyed by Task Force Shepherd was hit by an antitank missile fired from an LAV-AT attached to Company B. They later counted 22 destroyed Iraqi tanks and within the next several days captured several hundred enemy prisoners of war.<sup>66</sup>

Though the Iraqi attack had ended, the border area remained tense. Over the next several days while the enemy concentrated on Khafji, Iraqi mechanized units returned to harass the Marine observation posts. However, aside from the flow of demoralized Iraqis surrendering, nothing developed and the border gradually settled down as each side prepared for the allied offensive.

Marine ground commanders were puzzled by the Iraqi attacks on the observation posts. The enemy failed to use its artillery to any appreciable



degree. The Iraqi air force remained grounded, leaving the ground attacks to go in without benefit of air cover. The unsupported assaults never put the Marines under enough pressure to force the division to reveal the tactical deployment of its units. Though the offensive came at a time when Marine units were still about 40 miles to the south, mobile defense was something Task Force Shepherd and the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing had practiced since October.

General Boomer, General Myatt, and General Keys saw the attack as a positive event. What the Marines got out of the attack influenced the planning for the allied offensive. They found the Iraqi soldiers unmotivated, poorly trained, and ill led. From this knowledge, there arose a feeling that Iraqi defenses were not as formidable as originally believed. In order to refine the division's offensive plan, therefore, General Myatt redoubled his efforts to get detailed photographs of the obstacle belts in his sector. The attack also showed American commanders there was a gap in air surveillance of the battlefield sufficient to allow a sizable armored force to move to the border without being detected. The gap was immediately closed.<sup>67</sup> One other result of the OP 4 fratricide incidents was CentCom's decision to mark all allied vehicles with inverted "V" symbols, V17 orange panels, chemical lights, and non-powered thermal tape. Those items would be a feature of allied markings for the remainder of the war.<sup>68</sup>

Of more immediate importance was the information received from a prisoner captured by Company C, Task Force Shepherd. He told Marine interrogators that at 1700 on the evening of 29 January an Iraqi armored division would move from the vicinity of Al Qurayn to attack the Saudi coastal town of Khafji. The attack was scheduled to commence at 0200 on 30 January. Khafji, however, was in the Saudi Army sector and was defended by the 2d Brigade, Saudi Arabian National Guard, a mechanized infantry unit. The only Marines in the Saudi sector were liaison officers attached to the brigade, training advisors from Task Force Taro, and reconnaissance teams from the 3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion (attached to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion) and 1st SRIG positioned inside Khafji.<sup>69</sup> Three Iraqi brigades made the assault but air attacks seriously damaged two brigades before they got to the border. However, what remained was sufficient to capture the city.

#### *The Engagement at Khafji, 30 January - 1 February 1991*

At about the same moment that Captain Pollard reported the sighting of the armored unit moving towards OP 4, a Pioneer remote piloted vehicle (RPV) operated by the 1st Remote Piloted Vehicle Company (1st RPV Company) flew over a large Iraqi force moving south along the coastal road. The RPV located the enemy force about 3 kilometers north of the border. First estimated at 8 to 10 armored vehicles, a further search discovered elements of a mechanized brigade and indicated that it was organizing for an attack on the empty town of Khafji. The city had been evacuated soon after the air offensive began and was



Painting by LtCol Keith A. McConnell, USMCR  
*AV-8B being readied for a sortie.*

only occupied by four reconnaissance teams from I MEF and the 1st Marine Division.<sup>70</sup>

Soon after identifying the Iraqi brigade, the remote piloted vehicle discovered a second brigade assembling east of the Al Wafrah Oilfields. General Boomer, General Myatt, and General Keys were being notified of this development when the remote piloted vehicle developed mechanical problems and returned to base. The 3d Remote Piloted Vehicle Company at Mishab immediately replaced it with one of its Pioneers and aerial surveillance of the eastern border area continued.

Meanwhile, allied fighter/attack aircraft arrived and launched the first of many air strikes against the Iraqis. The 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) supporting arms liaison teams (SALT) assigned to the Saudi National Guard brigade deployed south of Khafji engaged two Iraqi 152mm guns with Marine A-6s. The attack put both guns out of action, but the air strikes failed to halt the Iraqi armor. At about 2100, a fire control team from 1st ANGLICO near OP 8 reported hearing tracked vehicles. The attacking force moved towards Khafji driving back the few reconnaissance teams placed along the border. As Iraqi forces closed on the city, the various detachments of Army special forces, ANGLICO, and force reconnaissance withdrew from their observation posts at Khafji to Mishab. However, the main Iraqi attack came suddenly and trapped two 1st Marine Division reconnaissance teams in Khafji.

By the morning of 30 January, the enemy completed his occupation of the city and prepared to defend it against the inevitable allied counter attack. The

allies had not envisioned defending the immediate border area and had vacated Khafji and established a defensive line south of the town. By doing so, the intent was to create a buffer zone in which any Iraqi advance would be engaged by supporting arms fire. The continued flow of information from the two reconnaissance teams to division headquarters, 3d Marines, and the Saudi Army National Guard command post fueled a determination to somehow retrieve these Marines.

For the second time in two days, General Myatt had a crisis on his hands. The reconnaissance teams believed they could remain undetected for 36 to 48 hours, but reported enemy soldiers on all sides. The two teams and Myatt knew that ultimately the Iraqis were bound to discover the Marines. Yet, there was little Myatt could do to directly influence events. Khafji was in the Saudi Army zone and its tactical significance was insufficient to warrant jeopardizing the Allied coalition by a unilateral Marine attack. Yet, there were ways in which General Myatt could influence developments.

The largest Marine unit in the area was Task Force Taro. Its extensive cross training efforts with the Saudi National Guard brigade under Colonel Turki had created a bond between the two units which gave Colonel Admire access to its commander. Both Colonel Turki and Colonel Admire envisioned that Task Force Taro would operate with coalition forces if the Iraqis ever launched an attack on Mishab. The lack of significant pressure against the western police posts enabled General Myatt to concentrate Task Force Taro and its attached artillery battalion in support of a Saudi attack. Colonel Admire's offer of infantry and artillery support was enough to gird Saudi resolve to retake the town. The Saudis viewed it as a matter of honor to save the reconnaissance teams, furthermore the Saudi government also found the Iraqi occupation of a Saudi town intolerable and ordered their commanders to attack.

On 30 January 1991, while the Iraqis consolidated their position at Khafji, Colonel Admire and his staff conferred with Arab commanders to develop plans for a counterattack. Colonel Admire later confessed that limiting himself to a supporting role was the most difficult decision he, as regimental commander, ever had. On the one hand, he had devoted his entire career for an opportunity to execute a decisive attack. The recapture of an enemy held objective would validate the months of arduous training and preparations by 3d Marines. The task force was eager for the opportunity. Yet, he also saw that the retaking of Khafji was an opportunity to demonstrate the confidence 3d Marines had in the abilities of its Arab allies.

General Myatt understood the situation and supported Colonel Admire's deference to Arab commanders. Though Marine units moved in proximity to the assaulting Arab battalions, the Saudis planned and conducted the main attack using their armored and mechanized forces. Task Force Taro provided anti-armor detachments, infantry security forces, air and naval gunfire liaison teams, and crucial artillery and air support. By mid-day, the Saudis had completed planning and initiated the assault. It began with a night probing attack to determine Iraqi dispositions and reactions. The attack proceeded as planned, though not without some initial confusion. Nevertheless, the engagement went



Photograph by 1st Marine Division Combat Camera Unit, February 1991  
*M198 howitzer being fired in support of daylight operations. The Marines are not wearing chemical protective suits which were typical of their appearance prior to the ground offensive when the suits were always worn.*

as scheduled, and Saudi and Qatari units launched the main attack at dawn on 31 January. The 5th Battalion, 2d Saudi Army National Guard Brigade, with ANGLICO naval gunfire spotter teams in support, attacked north and northeast into Khafji. Two Marine AV-8B Harriers controlled by the ANGLICO teams destroyed three Iraqi vehicles while the Saudi battalion pushed into the city capturing 75 Iraqi soldiers.

Meanwhile, the 7th Battalion, 2d Saudi Army National Guard, supported by a naval gunfire spotter team, conducted the main Arab attack aimed at rescuing the two reconnaissance teams. Marines directed two AV-8B Harriers against 17 enemy armored personnel carriers in the city and called in successive flights of Marine aircraft against enemy vehicles attempting to move into Khafji along the coastal road. The ANGLICO team even passed control of two Marine AH-1W Cobras to the reconnaissance teams in an effort to turn back Iraqi forces moving toward the teams' positions. By 1200 hours, the 7th Battalion reached the Marines, extracted them, and as night fell, began consolidating their gains in Khafji in preparation for resuming the attack the following morning. The task of clearing Khafji fell to the 10th Battalion, Saudi Army National Guard. By 1600 on 1 February, the battalion reached the northern edge of the town and linked up with the 5th Battalion.



That completed the last major ground action of the Iraqi offensive. The Saudi and Qatari forces captured more than 600 enemy soldiers and destroyed more than 90 Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles. These statistics were of secondary value when compared with the new spirit the attack gave the Saudi ground forces. Its battalions had taken on what was viewed as a veteran Iraqi army and defeated the much larger force. Colonel Admire later noted that the Saudi achievement led to their subsequent decision to commit their forces join in the allied offensive, whereas before they had limited their participation to defensive operations within Saudi Arabia.

The Iraqi offensive profoundly affected the upcoming allied offensive. The change in Arab plans supported General Boomer's decision to have the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions conduct a simultaneous breach. In a series of MEF-level commanders' conferences held after the failed Iraqi attack, General Myatt echoed the observations of Task Force Shepherd's Marines that the Iraqi soldiers were unmotivated, poorly trained, and unable to conduct combined arms operations. Apprehensions over the strength of the obstacle belts lessened and both divisions streamlined their organizations for rapid offensive operations. Myatt was particularly amazed at the enemy's failure to mass artillery, or to use it to any degree. Artillery was considered one of the Iraqi army's strengths and General Myatt saw it as the main threat facing the 1st Marine Division's offensive. Incidents of fratricide accounted for the division's losses, not enemy action. Concern to avoid such losses in the future led to increased emphasis on unit commanders ensuring positive identification of every sighting before giving permission to fire. Consequently, General Myatt, General Keys, and their regimental commanders exercised greater restraint over the movement of their units during the offensive than the rapid Iraqi collapse might have otherwise warranted. General Boomer, General Myatt, and General Keys wanted an all-out drive, but not at the expense of American dead from friendly fire.<sup>71</sup>



Painting by LtCol Keith A. McConnell, USMCR  
*Captured Iraqi tank, February 1991.*



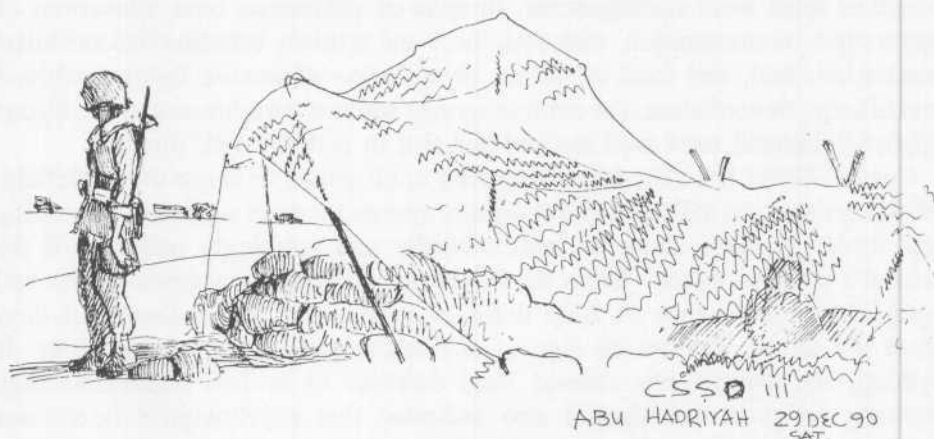
### *Final Preparations*

The Iraqi offensive against Khafji hastened the northern movement of division units. Within hours of the assault on OP 4, Colonel Fulford had Task Force Ripper on alert and ready to maneuver north. Major General Myatt directed Colonel Fulks, commanding Task Force Grizzly, to redeploy the task force to a position 30 kilometers south of OP 4 known as Al Qaraah. The next day, Fulks moved the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, to the site. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, followed soon after that. The deployment of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, was supported by Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, detached from Task Force Papa Bear. Task Force Papa Bear started its redeployment on 1 February and was in position north of Al Qaraah by nightfall the next day.<sup>72</sup>

Once the excitement of the first large engagement subsided, life for most Marines returned to the familiar routine experienced over the previous months in the desert. They awoke each morning to an almost featureless landscape, washed themselves, brushed teeth, ate what were known as "meals ready to eat" (MREs)<sup>73</sup> or food sent from the United States, shaved as best they could, and trained, performed their duties, and otherwise went through another 24 hours in the desert.

Like ant hills, the battalion laager camps came alive each morning. Vehicles drove in and out taking officers to meetings, picking up or delivering supplies, or carrying individuals simply on their way to do something different for a few hours on one pretext or another. The turning point of each day was the arrival of the truck carrying the "cooked" meal. Though some Marines grew fatalistic of ever again experiencing good food on a regular basis, the food truck signaled the shift in activities to preparations for another night.<sup>74</sup>

It was February in Saudi Arabia and the weather got colder and wetter. Tents collapsed in the night from a combination of rain and wind which resulted in frantic cursing, confusion, and a sudden effort to put them back together. The



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Guard post, Combat Service Support Detachment 111, 29 December 1990.*

battalion, one light armored infantry battalion, one reconnaissance battalion, and one combat engineer battalion. The unit deployment program and contingency force requirements tied up six battalions of the eight infantry battalions that remained following the buildup of the 7th MEB. With the brigade's departure to Saudi Arabia the division temporarily lost most of its deployable combat units.

Brigadier General James M. "Mike" Myatt would lead the division through its deployment and actions in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Forty-nine years old, he took command of the division on 8 August and would establish his command post in Saudi Arabia within a month's time. Already selected for his second star, he would be "frocked" to major general at the end of the year. He previously directed the personnel division of Headquarters, Marine Corps, but brought a wealth of recent operational experience from his service as a colonel in the Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, during the period when the Commandant had been its commander.

General Myatt's plan for carrying out the mission concentrated on getting the division in theater. An initial priority, however, was the establishment of a light mobile command post in order to assume operational control over forces already in Saudi Arabia. Myatt divided deployment of the division into four phases. In Phase I, he attached all available ground combat units to Regimental Combat Team 7, the reinforced 7th Marines. Next, in Phase II, Myatt assumed operational control over arriving units to include 3d Marines, Division Headquarters, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, and 11th Marines. The division's deployment concluded with establishment of a direct support area in Phases III and IV. Myatt estimated that he needed six weeks to accomplish the mission assigned to the division.<sup>17</sup>

To compensate for the transfer of one tank and four infantry battalions to 7th MEB, the division drew units from Okinawa and Hawaii. Division headquarters began arriving in Saudi Arabia on 26 August and on 6 September General Myatt established the division as the ground combat element of I MEF.

Normal personnel attrition and the periodic drafts to fill out units deploying to Okinawa during the first half of 1990 had already rendered some battalions far short of their authorized strength when the division received orders to move to Saudi Arabia. General Myatt quickly accepted Category 2 unit strength as sufficient for deployment. Yet, even so, throughout August battalion staffs adopted such expedients as consolidating companies and transferring personnel from non-deploying battalions in order to reach even that level.<sup>18</sup>

There were two distinct phases to the reconfiguration of the division. As already mentioned, the first deploying element was the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade stationed at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California. To complete 7th MEB ground units, the brigade drew 200 Marines from Headquarters Battalion, 400 infantry Marines came from the (initially) non-deploying 1st Marines and the 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, and 1st Tank Battalion's TOW company received personnel from the 5th Marines TOW Platoon. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, provided 135 artillerymen to the deploying 3d and 5th Battalions, 11th Marines.<sup>19</sup>

by the 2d Marine Division. The division order followed the four phases outlined in the I MEF plan. During Phases I and II (the air offensive period) Task Force Shepherd (light armored infantry battalion) would continue covering the division's front to preclude an Iraqi spoiling attack. Elements of the division would conduct route reconnaissance for movement to attack positions and assist in enemy prisoner of war control. On order, units were to conduct tactical deception operations. In Phase III (air offensive and preparation of the battlefield) all tactical units were to move to their attack positions and conduct probes and artillery raids in zone. The final Phase IV consisted of four stages. In Stage A the division would attack to penetrate forward Iraqi positions, hold open the shoulders of the penetration, and assist in the passage of the 2d Marine Division. Stage B entailed a movement to blocking positions along the main supply route south of the Burqan Oilfield, while also providing local security at the point of penetration. In Stage C the division was to move to the 2d Marine Division's left flank and attack northwest in zone to seize a key road junction west of the Burqan Oilfield. Finally, in Stage D the division would continue attacking north while linking up with other CENTCOM components and coalition forces and assist the forward passage of Arab forces into Kuwait City.<sup>33</sup>

Several events combined to bring about yet another reorganization. Continued refinement of the division's offensive plan, as well as General Boomer's decision in early February to conduct a simultaneous two-division breach, altered the scheme of maneuver envisioned in 1st Marine Division Operation Order 1-91. The arrival of additional combat engineer equipment and personnel coupled with an increase in assault amphibian vehicles gave General Boomer the ability to alter the complicated division-size passage of lines.<sup>34</sup>

The division frag order revising 1st Marine Division Operations Order 1-91 that followed General Boomer's decision drastically altered the scheme of maneuver. In the revised plan, the 1st Marine Division attack shifted further west to a location near a border police station designated Observation Post 4 (the 2d Marine Division moved around the 1st Marine Division to an attack position north of Observation Post 4). The division was to conduct a deliberate attack to penetrate Iraqi defensive positions located between the Al Wafrah and Umm Gudair Oilfields. That attack would initiate the allied ground offensive. General Myatt envisioned a five-phased offensive. In Phase I, division units moved to their assembly areas while engineers began reducing the bermed wall of sand that marked the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border and reconnaissance teams evaluated the trafficability of the area. In Phase II, four task forces would breach the first obstacle belt. Two of the task forces, mostly infantry units, were to infiltrate the obstacle belt on foot and establish blocking positions on the division's right and left flanks. They were to be followed by two mechanized task forces conducting deliberate breaches and driving forward to the second obstacle belt. Phase III encompassed a breach of the second obstacle belt by the two mechanized task forces while the light armored infantry battalion moved ahead to cover the division's front in the vicinity of the Burqan Oilfield. In Phase IV, the division's focus of main effort was on seizing I MEF Objective A, the Al

infantry, tank, and mounted battalions, which long before dispensed with all tentage except for their command and control centers, simply suffered that exposure as they had the heat months earlier. As each day in February passed, Marines got progressively more weathered in appearance and noticeably thinner.

The long anticipated offensive was about to happen. Marines could see the unceasing columns of vehicles moving supplies to Kibrit and Al Khanjar. There was scarcely a moment when the noise from fighter/attack aircraft flying to or returning from bombing Iraqi targets in Kuwait could not be heard.<sup>75</sup> The division command and control center became increasingly active as General Myatt and his staff worked with task force and battalion staffs in a series of planning meetings, operations briefs, and commanders' conferences.<sup>76</sup>

As G-Day (the commencement of the allied ground offensive) approached, Major General Myatt was confident of his division's ability to defeat the enemy. The division totaled 19,505 Marines and Navy personnel.<sup>77</sup> Repeated training, drills, and exercises prepared individuals and units to react quickly and correctly. Between 1 January and 20 February, for example, the 3d Tank Battalion, Task Force Ripper, participated in eight major training events or exercises.<sup>78</sup> At the division headquarters level, sandtable exercises and commanders' conferences insured division-wide understanding of General Myatt's intentions and updated commanders on changes and adjustments to the offensive plan. The most notable sandtable brief occurred on 20 February. Attendees included every battalion commander, their S-3s, forward air controllers, and other principal officers, as well as Major General Royal N. Moore, Jr., commanding the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing.<sup>79</sup>

Most of the equipment Myatt requested had arrived. In particular, the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion had the tanks with mine plows, Mine Clearing Mine Charges (single shot), MK154 (three shot line charges), fascine-equipped assault amphibious vehicles, and armored bulldozers necessary to conduct breaching operations and push through obstacles that might be encountered. The division G-4, Colonel Lilley, considered the level of supplies within the division high enough to meet most contingencies. In spite of difficulties over allocations of certain types of ammunition, each task force and artillery battalion had sufficient ammunition, fuel, and food to sustain several days of intense fighting without outside help. Nevertheless, the combat service support detachments of the Direct Support Command were well stocked and tied in with the task forces.<sup>80</sup>

General Myatt had also done everything in his power to shape the battlefield. Intelligence sources indicated that deception operations were successfully keeping Iraqi forces in place along the entire border and seemingly unaware of the division's point of attack. When he finally got detailed aerial photographs and a ground reconnaissance of Iraqi defenses in front of the division just days before the attack, he saw no sign of any last-minute enemy preparations. If anything, the photographs showed Iraqi defenses to be less formidable than originally believed. Intelligence also indicated that psychological operations (PsyOps), principally in the form of leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts across the border, were destabilizing Iraqi units. Gradually, widespread desertion and low morale weakened the Iraqi divisions in Kuwait. The enemy's poor showing



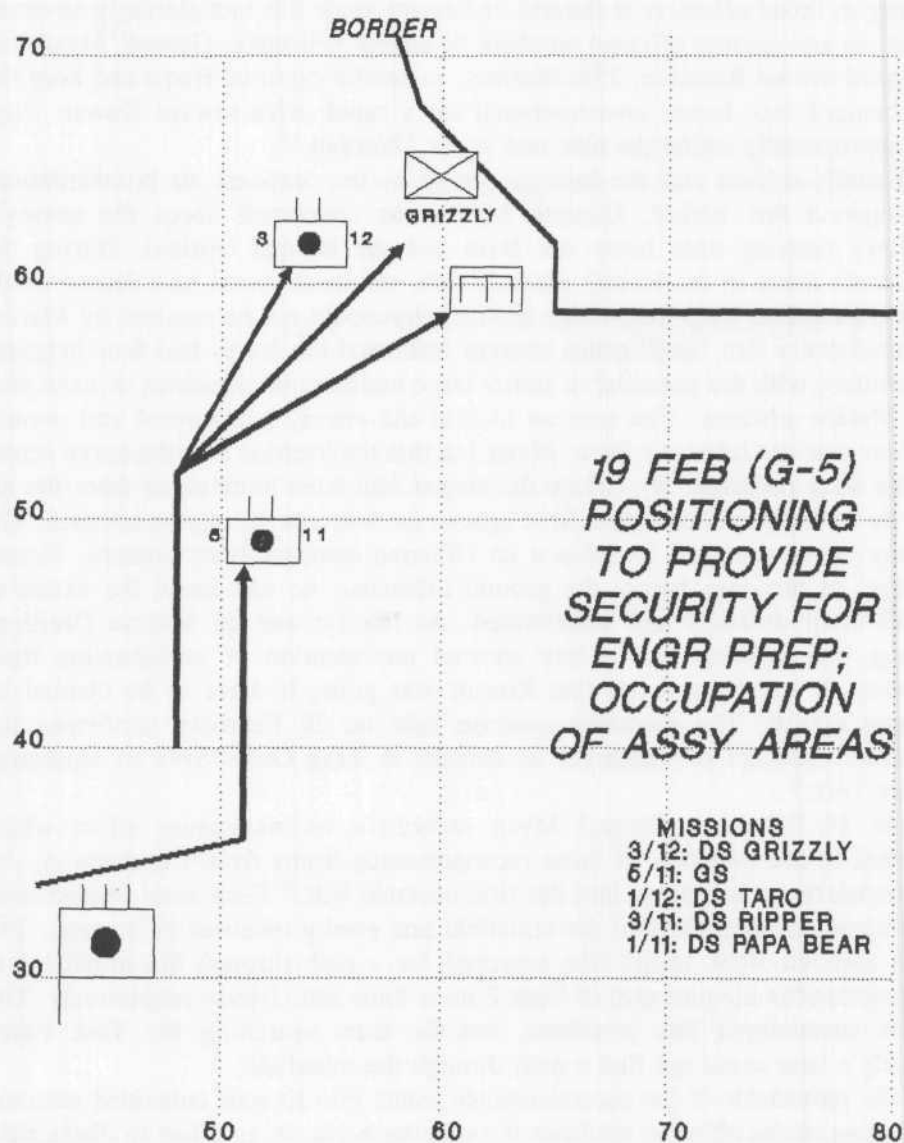
during its failed offensive at the end of January made this fact glaringly obvious. Thus, in anticipation of large numbers of enemy prisoners, General Myatt had assigned the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, to handle captured Iraqis and keep the mechanized task forces unencumbered for a rapid drive toward Kuwait City. He appropriately called the new task force "Warden."<sup>81</sup>

Equally evident was the damage caused by the ceaseless air bombardment. Throughout this period, General Myatt was concerned about the enemy's artillery massing near Jaber Air Base and the Burqan Oilfield. During the division's drive to the second obstacle belt, the mechanized task forces would be vulnerable to Iraqi long-range artillery that could not be reached by Marine counterbattery fire. Intelligence sources estimated the Iraqis had four brigades of artillery with the potential to inflict large numbers of casualties or even stop the Marine advance. The sources located the enemy's command and control system near the Jaber Air Base. Myatt felt that the location was the nerve center of the Iraqi defenses. By G-Day the targets had been bombarded from the air and by artillery until few guns fired against the Marines during the advance. The enemy never managed to achieve an effective counterbattery posture. Nevertheless, in the days before the ground offensive, no one knew the extent to which Iraqi defenses had deteriorated. As the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions swung into position, the enemy showed no intention of withdrawing from Kuwait. It was clear to all that Kuwait was going to have to be cleared by ground assault. The sandtable exercise held on 20 February confirmed the division's concept of maneuver as defined in Frag Order 5-91 to Operation Order 1-91.<sup>82</sup>

On 18 February, General Myatt ordered a reconnaissance effort which resulted in the insertion of three reconnaissance teams from Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, into the first obstacle belt.<sup>83</sup> Each team immediately conducted an assessment of the minefield and enemy defenses in its zone. The right and left flank teams also searched for a path through the minefield in preparation for the passages of Task Forces Taro and Grizzly respectively. The teams encountered few problems, but the team searching for Task Force Grizzly's lane could not find a path through the minefield.

The movement of the reconnaissance teams into Kuwait coincided with the beginning of the effort to cut lanes through the berm. In an effort to distract the enemy from this activity, Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Kershaw, commanding Task Force Troy conducted a combined-arms artillery raid the morning of 19 February. The raid did not provoke an immediate Iraqi response. Two days later, though, an enemy patrol of BMP-2 vehicles, armed with Sagger anti-tank missiles and 30mm cannon, drove toward OP 4 to investigate the dust clouds caused by the Marine engineer and Naval Construction Battalion bulldozers leveling the berm. A TOW missile fired by a gunner from the 3d Marines slammed into the lead vehicle, killing its crew, and the remainder of the patrol turned around and fled. As 3d Marines began moving to its positions on the division's right flank, Colonel Fulks established Task Force Grizzly's blocking position about four kilometers inside Kuwait. It was the first allied foothold in the occupied country.





*The 19 February position of forward-most division units, Task Force Grizzly, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, and division engineers.*

#### *G Minus 3, 21 February 1991*

On 21 February (G minus 3), all elements of the 1st Marine Division completed their movement to attack positions on the Saudi side of the berm. Upon arriving in its sector, each task force immediately began screening and reconnaissance actions. Within hours, forward observers called in artillery and air strikes on nearby Iraqi units. The 2d Marine Division did likewise and conducted a diversion with its LAI battalion. The assault on Kuwait began with

these engagements. Though initially intermittent, fighting between 1st Marine Division and enemy units continued across the division's front until the seizure of the Kuwait International Airport seven days later.

Faced with the prospect of a long foot march by two regiments to their blocking positions between the two obstacle belts, General Myatt wanted Task Forces Grizzly and Taro to enter Kuwait several days ahead of the two combined arms task forces. Both units occupied their initial positions by 20 February and their outposts were the first to encounter the enemy.

Immediately upon Task Force Grizzly's arrival at the berm, Colonel Fulks sent the 3d Platoon, Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, to find a path through the first obstacle belt. He did not need a large path, just something wide enough to get his infantry through.<sup>84</sup> To cover their movement, at 0236 on 21 February, Colonel Fulks requested 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, to fire a total of 24 rounds at an Iraqi position near the minefield. Though he risked advertising the presence of the task force, Colonel Fulks felt confident that the previous weeks of artillery raids conditioned Iraqi forward units to expect harassing fire at any point along their line. Iraqi artillery responded in the usual manner with a single volley that appeared more reflex than aimed. As it happened, the volley impacted 100 meters in front of an observation post of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. There were no further casualties, and the night again grew quiet. An hour later, the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, fired another 24 rounds in support of the probing effort. This time the target was Iraqi infantry. In spite of the artillery support, an anticipated air strike forced the early return of the reconnaissance team without having yet found a path through the minefield.

Just before dawn, a frustrated Colonel Fulks moved to the berm with the headquarters staff preparatory to Task Force Grizzly's planned march into Kuwait that evening. Both infantry battalions were already along the berm and spent the day resting, checking equipment, and refining plans. Additional personnel arrived along with an M60A1 equipped with a track-width mine plow, accompanied by an AAV equipped with three shot line charges. Their arrival at the task force headquarters at the last minute, was the result of a significant effort by the I MEF Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, Colonel Raymond A. List, to provide as much breaching support to the two divisions as possible.<sup>85</sup> Each task force now had gained the ability to make an explosive breach.

On 21 February, Task Force Taro became the second task force to occupy a position near the Saudi berm. Before moving to their sites, both battalions threw out outposts to turn back or destroy any Iraqi patrols that might have come into Saudi Arabia. Colonel Admire took the additional step of moving his antitank platoon HMMWVs into positions along the berm as a precaution against enemy reconnaissance efforts.

Task Force X-Ray spent the day moving to assembly area "Micah." There the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, awaited the arrival of its transport helicopters. The unit used this time to prepare vehicles and equipment for the air assault scheduled for the early afternoon of G-Day.

To the southwest of Task Force Taro, Task Force Papa Bear completed its movement to its assigned tactical assembly area. Concerned about artillery fire, Colonel Richard W. Hodory spread out the task force like the spokes of a wheel. He had the command post in the center, with the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, to its northwest facing the berm; the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, to the northeast, also facing the berm; the 1st Tank Battalion to the south; and the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion detachment to the southwest.<sup>86</sup> Each camp laagered in, that is, set up in a 360-degree arc with the command and control vehicles to the center and all fighting vehicles evenly spaced on the outside. Dismounted Marines established individual positions which were integrated into the all-around defense. With some slight adjustments for terrain and the specific enemy situation, the laager position typical of desert mounted operations continued in use throughout the offensive by every formation in the division.<sup>87</sup>

Task Force Ripper held off moving to its final assembly area until the rest of the division was in place. Colonel Fulford was determined to use the final movement of Task Force Ripper as a tactical rehearsal. He intended to test the assault timetable, check unit formations, and exercise the attack plan. The distance from Task Force Ripper's intermediate assembly area to its final assembly area was comparable to the distance from its attack position through the second obstacle belt. By the time the task force moved, the desert was clear of other units. The division command and control center contributed to the realism of the rehearsal with exercise traffic.<sup>88</sup>

The day was also busy for the artillery. With five battalions spread throughout the division's zone near their supported units, Colonel Howard, commanding the artillery, confirmed the initial assignment of a direct support battalion to each task force. Each commander could depend on the availability of that battalion's firepower. General Myatt stressed to commanders during the 20 February sandtable exercise that he intended to change the direct support battalions as Colonel Howard moved the artillery forward to keep pace with the division's advance.<sup>89</sup>

Initially, he placed 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, in direct support of Task Force Taro. That battalion was minus Battery E on a brief attachment to Task Force Troy. Lieutenant Colonel Kershaw used its guns to conduct an artillery raid. It fired two missions on 21 February. Late on 21 February, the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, left its positions and moved closer to the berm to support Task Force Grizzly's night march into Kuwait.

Of the remaining battalions, Colonel Howard kept 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, in its direct support assignment with Task Force Papa Bear, and he left 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, with Task Force Ripper. The 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, constituted the division's general support battalion to be used where and when General Myatt needed it. At 1640 on 21 February, the battalion took up a position near the Saudi berm to reinforce 3d Battalion, 12th Marines if Task Force Grizzly ran into problems during its infiltration.

The 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, gave priority of its fires to Task Force Shepherd. At the moment, however, Task Force Shepherd had been reduced drastically. Only Company B remained under Lieutenant Colonel Myers' control.

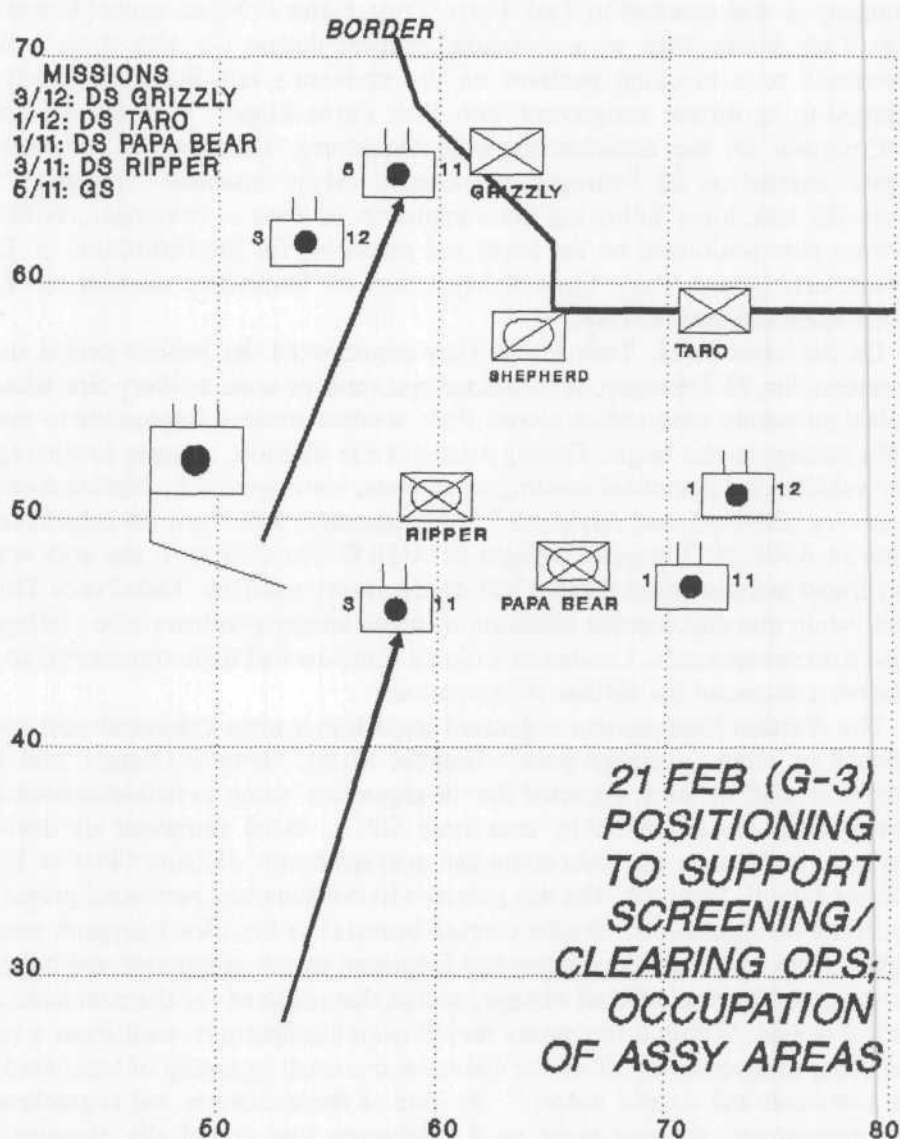
Company A was attached to Task Force Troy. General Myatt moved Company C to Task Force Taro as a screening element during the task force's slow movement to a blocking position on the division's left flank. Company D returned to its former assignment with Task Force Ripper. With the exception of Company D, the detachments were temporary. Company A returned to Myers' control on 22 February and General Myatt intended Company C to rejoin the task force following the completion of Taro's movement. With the division now positioned on the berm and preparing for the infiltration of Task Forces Grizzly and Taro, General Myatt had no immediate mission for Task Force Shepherd until G-Day.<sup>90</sup>

On the other hand, Task Force Troy experienced the busiest period in its existence. On 21 February, it conducted a combined arms artillery fire mission against an enemy observation tower. Poor weather made it impossible to assess battle damage to the target. During a second fire mission, a target consisting of four vehicles and personnel erecting an antenna, were spotted by Marine forward observers, fired on, and dispersed.<sup>91</sup> Subsequently, a forward air control team from 3d ANGLICO directed a flight of AH-1W Sea Cobras to the area where they found and destroyed about a half dozen enemy vehicles. Task Force Troy's final action that day was the detention of seven enemy prisoners who "alleged" to be Kuwaiti nationals. Lieutenant Colonel Kershaw had them transported to the prisoner compound for further interrogation.

The division headquarters organized itself into a main command post and a forward or jump command post.<sup>92</sup> General Myatt, General Draude, and key operations staff officers, departed the headquarters' camp in mid-afternoon and moved north to an assembly area near OP 4. What remained of division headquarters became the main command post led by the division Chief of Staff, Colonel John F. Stennick. The day passed with headquarters personnel preparing for offensive operations. Trucks carried material to the direct support area at Manifah Bay as the camp commandant identified excess equipment and baggage for storage. That included all tentage, except that required for the command and control center. Within a few hours the division headquarters went from a large tent camp to a scattering of shelter-halves and a small grouping of tents housing the command and control center.<sup>93</sup> In spite of these changes and regardless of unit movements, the one event on 21 February that graphically signaled the imminent offensive was General Myatt's order for all division personnel to begin taking anti-chemical and anti-biological agents--called NAPP and CIPPO pills.<sup>94</sup>

Meanwhile, the reconnaissance teams returned from their survey of the minefields.<sup>95</sup> Their encouraging reports indicated that the first obstacle belt was largely undefended. The minefields, though dangerous, lacked depth and the teams found no evidence of tank traps or berms. While pleased about the teams' overall reporting, General Myatt remained anxious about the failure to discover a path for Task Force Grizzly. He needed Colonel Fulks's Marines covering the division's left flank. Regardless of the lack of an identified lane, that evening Colonel Fulks started 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, across the line of departure.<sup>96</sup>





*Position of 1st Marine Division units as they moved into occupation of assembly areas or supported screening and clearing operations on 21 February 1991.*

#### *G Minus 2, 22 February 1991*

Shortly after midnight, Task Force Grizzly marched to positions near the first minefield. Artillery fire from the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, and the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, covered Task Force Grizzly's movement and a second effort by the reconnaissance platoon to find a path through the minefield.<sup>97</sup> Again the minefield proved impenetrable and Colonel Fulks withdrew the platoon just before dawn as the forward elements of Task Force Grizzly arrived

and dug in. Colonel Fulks placed the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, on the left flank and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, on the right. He put the reconnaissance teams further out on each flank as a screening force and to the rear, in a slight depression, he placed the task force's few vehicles guarded by a section of antitank HMMWVs. The remainder of Grizzly's elements would arrive that evening and fall into this formation.

Iraqi forward observers failed to detect the arrival of Task Force Grizzly opposite their positions. As daylight came, the view from their bunkers remained unchanged--the minefield with its two rows of barbed wire and miles of empty desert. But something seemed odd. The slightest movement of personnel or vehicles brought immediate American artillery fire and air strikes. Loudspeaker broadcasts urged Iraqi soldiers to surrender, and previously well-camouflaged bunkers came under accurate air attack.<sup>98</sup> By mid-morning, it became obvious to the enemy that they had an American force in front of them and began using their artillery in an effort to drive away their opponents. At 1022, enemy artillery fired into the area occupied by the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. To Colonel Fulks this fire indicated that the task force had been spotted. The fire turned out to be neither accurate or sustained--the enemy commander acted as if he was unsure about what was in front of him. Colonel Fulks immediately called in counterbattery fire which silenced the Iraqi guns, destroyed a 120mm mortar position, a vehicle, and eight Iraqi soldiers.

The situation intensified for Task Force Grizzly. In response to American shelling, the enemy commander countered with a force of T-62 tanks and armored personnel carriers. At 1050, 10 enemy tanks appeared opposite the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. They were followed by eight other tanks across Grizzly's front. To Colonel Fulks, the arrival of the Iraqi armor made it obvious that the task force had been observed. However, it took the appearance of 10 Iraqi soldiers attempting to surrender to make him decide that the time had come to move to a less exposed position a few kilometers west of the obstacle belt. He covered the withdrawal with a combination of artillery fire and air strikes, but, no sooner had 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines gained their new positions, than the 2d Battalion received a volley of artillery fire. Colonel Fulks responded with an F/A-18 air strike against an artillery battery. At 1440, forward observers from the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines directed additional artillery fire from 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, and air strikes against a second enemy artillery position. Forward observers from the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, also called in a series of air strikes against identified enemy artillery positions and against a group of revetted tanks and personnel carriers.

It was getting dark by the time the final air strike terminated and Colonel Fulks switched his attention to preparations for another attempt at finding a path through the minefield. He was hopeful that this effort would succeed. He had reinforced the reconnaissance teams with the addition of combat engineers and they had an entire night to attempt a silent breach. Unfortunately, the teams had begun their search when an unexpected air strike against an adjacent Iraqi position forced their return.<sup>99</sup> Colonel Fulks became furious at division headquarters for directing an air strike into Task Force Grizzly's zone without



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*SSgt McGovern, chief scout for Task Force Taro, 11 February 1991.*

prior coordination. After hearing this, General Myatt immediately passed control of these aircraft to Colonel Fulks. By then, there was not enough time left to complete the reconnaissance and Colonel Fulks canceled the attempt.

Task Force Taro also began 22 February with an engagement. At 0815, forward observers spotted a force of enemy armor. Colonel Admire ordered an artillery barrage by the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, which destroyed one vehicle and forced the others to withdraw north. At 1400, Colonel Admire ordered the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, reinforced by Company C, Task Force Shepherd, to attack and seize OP 3. They found the police station empty of enemy troops and returned to the task force assembly area at 2000, just before the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, crossed the line of departure on its march into Kuwait. It took 55 minutes more for the battalion to reach the actual border. At 2140, the 2d Battalion started its march and by midnight the lead elements of Task Force Taro came within sight of the first obstacle belt and began establishing "Battle Position Casino." While the rest of the task force marched north, Company K, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, began its task of identifying and marking the minefield. Company C, Task Force Shepherd, which crossed into Kuwait at 2300, was on hand to provide covering fire if needed.

For the remainder of the division, 22 February passed quietly. Task Force Papa Bear conducted a final task force sandtable exercise. Task Force Ripper lost a Marine in Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, to an accidental discharge of an M-16. Task Force Warden provided Task Force Taro and Task Force Grizzly with specially trained EPW handling teams.<sup>100</sup>

There occurred a last-minute change to the artillery plan. In response to Colonel Fulford's concern over the need to suppress enemy artillery and defenses opposing Task Force Ripper's assault on the second obstacle belt, General Myatt and Colonel Howard reevaluated the division artillery plan. Fulford believed that reconnaissance of the two belts and recent intelligence information indicated the first belt was not defended; the second belt was. For that reason, he felt there was no longer a compelling need to mass five battalions against the first belt and he proposed changing the firing position of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, from a location south of the first obstacle belt to just south of the second belt.

The drawback to the plan was that it reduced the number of artillery battalions available to support the assault on the first breach. It also placed the 3d Battalion in the middle of what was believed to be an Iraqi artillery fire sack (zone planned for massed artillery fires). The division's offensive plan, however, hinged on a quick breakout by Task Force Ripper. If it ran into trouble at the second belt, it would lack the artillery support necessary to counter Iraqi artillery fire. The change made sense from a logistics view. Colonel Howard agreed that the division's supply of long-range rocket assisted projectile (RAP) ammunition might prove insufficient if there occurred a prolonged engagement by five artillery battalions against targets beyond the second belt. General Myatt concurred with the reassessment and approved Colonel Fulford's request. In order to reduce the risk to the 3d Battalion, Fulford decided that it would follow 3d Tank Battalion until reaching its firing position. The decision did not affect the other battalions, except that concern over supply of RAP ammunition led to Myatt's decision to suspend its use except in emergency situations.<sup>101</sup>

Colonel Howard made two other changes to artillery dispositions. He moved the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, to a position closer to the berm in order to be in a better position to perform its general support mission, and to assist Task Forces Taro and Grizzly in their operations that evening. Howard also shifted the regimental headquarters forward. At 0404 on the morning of 22 February, General Myatt, with General Draude, established the division forward command post near the berm and assumed command and control of the division from the main command post, then 20 miles south. General Myatt no sooner took control than he faced three simultaneous operations by Task Force Troy, Task Force Grizzly, and a patrol against Markaz. Task Force Troy required little attention by General Myatt and its operations went without incident. On the other hand, from Myatt's perspective, the enemy situation facing Task Force Grizzly required most of his attention, particularly when an F/A-18 pilot spotted the armor movement against Task Force Grizzly. The division air officer at the forward command post immediately called in a flight of F/A-18s. A series of air strikes proved unsuccessful in turning back the armor force. At 0848, as the



enemy tanks neared the minefield, General Myatt advised Colonel Fulks of the threat and began making arrangements for additional fighter/attack aircraft. Myatt turned control of the aircraft to Colonel Fulks which he used later that morning.

General Myatt grew equally concerned over the threat to the division's right flank. Intelligence sources indicated that the Iraqis had a strong force positioned in a built-up area west of the Al Wafrah Oilfield. Task Force Taro notwithstanding, the enemy's location was perfect for a devastating flank attack. General Myatt wanted to know specifically what forces the Iraqis had in the area, what they were doing, and what were their defensive arrangements. This prompted his decision to have elements from Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion (attached 1st Reconnaissance Battalion) conduct a patrol against the police station at Markaz al Fawaris west of the built-up area. Stealth was central to the plan. Myatt wanted to keep outward signs of Marine interests in the area to a minimum and instructed Lieutenant Colonel Michael L. Rapp, the battalion commander, to have it avoid getting engaged with the enemy. At 0130, the patrol departed from its assembly position near OP-3. By 0545 it came within sight of Markaz, where it encountered two enemy vehicles. The vehicle crews could be seen moving around the station. They showed no sign of leaving, which left the patrol leader with little option but to abort the mission at 0630. The patrol returned to OP-3 without incident.<sup>102</sup>

#### *G Minus 1, 23 February 1991*

By 23 February, the spurious engagements begun two days earlier intensified as division units moved into attack positions. The engagements failed to impede the 1st Marine Division's advance, and, in one case, helped it. In front of Task Force Grizzly the defending *83d Brigade, 29th Division* began to come apart.<sup>103</sup> The first indication of Iraqi instability occurred at 0141 when the forward observers from the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, spotted a long vehicle column east of them. Forward observers directed an air strike against the Iraqi vehicles and saw no further sign of the Iraqis.

An hour and a half later, a second observation team reported an enemy unit to the north in the 2d Marine Division's zone. After coordinating with the 2d Marine Division, Colonel Fulks received permission to cross the division boundary. At 0555 while moving against the enemy, the left flank units of Task Force Grizzly no sooner cleared a bunker complex than they encountered three T-62s. The growing conflict to the north led Colonel Fulks to shift his command post at 0800 to a more forward location. From there he improved his control of the fight to the north as well as his ability to observe developments to the task force's immediate front.

At dawn, the failure of the night infiltration attempt caused Colonel Fulks to order a daylight reconnaissance of the minefield. The mixed teams of scouts and engineers departed task force lines at 0830 and moved to within one kilometer of the minefield. From several locations along the front of the mine-

field, the teams called in artillery fire and air strikes against the minefield and enemy bunkers. While the artillery fire destroyed two bunkers and four enemy artillery guns, combat engineers in front of the 2d Battalion reconnoitered their portion of the minefield. Enemy observers spotted the Marines and forced them back with artillery fire. American fighter/attack aircraft immediately rolled in to strike a nearby bunker complex and tanks. The air strike destroyed one tank and killed six enemy soldiers. Nevertheless, that probe ended in another failure, leaving Colonel Fulks out of time and forcing him to rethink his scheme of maneuver. Reluctantly, he began planning to conduct a hasty breach. At 1300, planning progressed far enough for him to hold a leader's rehearsal.

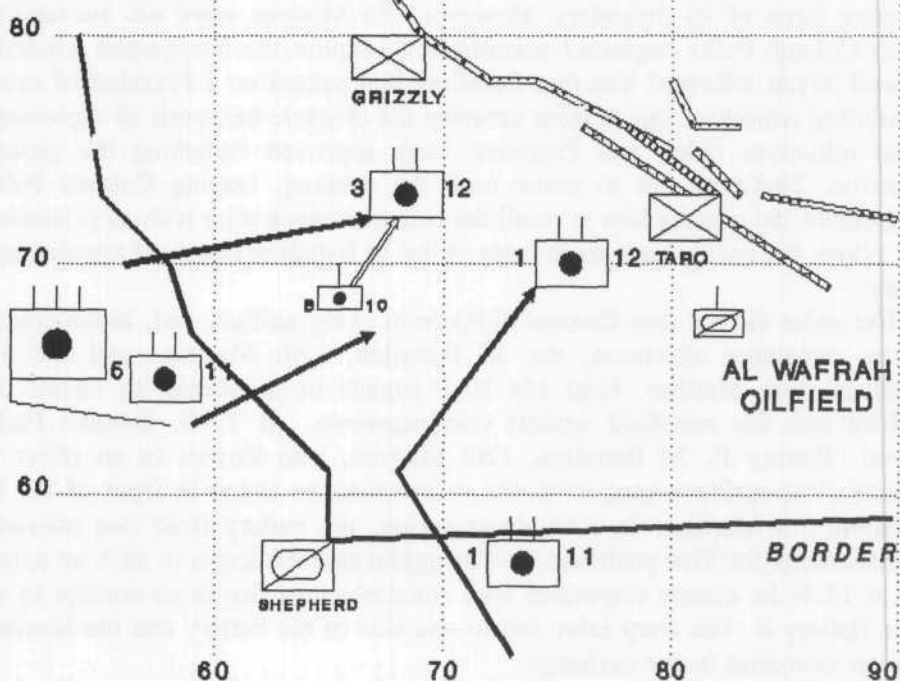
The rehearsal no sooner ended than at 1500 Colonel Fulks got a lucky break. A reconnaissance team in front of the 3d Battalion observed the path taken through the minefield by defecting Iraqis. Covered by another team, two scouts and a combat engineer crossed the minefield and captured an enemy bunker after shooting three of its defenders. However, the Marines were too successful. When Colonel Fulks requested permission to exploit the unexpected windfall, General Myatt informed him that CentCom had passed on a Presidential order prohibiting American forces from crossing the obstacle belt until all diplomatic peace initiatives failed and President Bush approved launching the ground offensive. That was not to occur until the evening, leaving Colonel Fulks exasperated and causing him to recall the reconnaissance team with its prisoners. For a time, the enemy bunkers in front of the 3d Battalion remained tantalizingly empty.

The order did not stop Colonel Fulks from using artillery and, in the course of the remaining afternoon, the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, and the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 144 RAP rounds in an attempt to isolate the bunkers and the minefield against reinforcements. At 1240, Colonel Fulks moved Battery B, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, into Kuwait in an effort to provide close artillery support to the reconnaissance teams in front of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. In a two-hour period, the battery fired two missions against enemy fortified positions. Its fire aggravated the Iraqis to such an extent that at 1730 the enemy responded with counterbattery fire in an attempt to silence Battery B. The Iraqi salvo fell to one side of the battery and the Marines took no casualties in the exchange.

Prohibited from conducting an infantry assault to establish a breach, Colonel Fulks continued to call in artillery on every Iraqi position identified by Marine observers. To his surprise, the artillery fire proved sufficient to destabilize the Iraqi line. The collapse started with further defections from the area of the abandoned bunker complex. At 1645, Colonel Fulks reported the surrender of 10 more enemy soldiers to the 3d Battalion. A psychological operations team moved forward and its broadcasts encouraged further defections to such an extent that the local Iraqi commander was reported to have directed mortar and artillery fire on his own troops to prevent their surrendering. At 1740 in front of the 2d Battalion, 22 Iraqi soldiers arrived at the minefield in three transport vehicles, dismounted, and walked across the obstacle belt. In the process they revealed another path through the minefield.

**PM 23 FEB (G-1)  
RECON AND  
OCCUPATION OF  
FIRING POSITIONS  
TO SUPPORT  
INFILTRATION AND  
BREACHING OPS**

**MISSIONS**  
1/11: GS, PRI TARO  
3/12: DS GRIZZLY  
1/12: DS TARO  
5/11: GS, PRI SHEPHERD  
3/11: DS RIPPER



*Location of Task Forces Grizzly and Taro and supporting artillery on the evening of 23 February 1991.*

Prisoners told Marine interrogators of poor morale and a general unwillingness to fight among the soldiers defending the obstacle belt. One prisoner claimed that entire companies wanted to surrender. He also reported the evacuation of Al Jaber Air Field by most of its defenders. The possibility of a tactical coup occurred to both General Myatt and Colonel Fulks; diplomatic concerns notwithstanding, the continued defection of the Iraqi soldiers provided the allies an opportunity to breach the first obstacle belt without loss to themselves. Having once been the Division G-3, Colonel Fulks understood the impor-

tance of getting quickly through the minefields. He discussed the situation again with General Myatt and repeated his request for permission to establish a breach. Myatt in turn conferred with General Boomer and, as the sun set, Colonel Fulks finally got approval for the 3d Battalion to send in a small force. Myatt limited its role to securing the bunkers and identifying and marking lanes through the minefield. Colonel Fulks moved the rest of 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, to Battery B's position to support infiltration of the task force that evening.

At 1800, combat engineers began clearing lanes for the movement of Task Force Grizzly. Within a short time, they cleared the lane in front of the 3d Battalion, marked it with chemical lights, and notified Colonel Fulks that they had it ready. By 2100 Task Force Grizzly started to take up formation for the march only to halt as the forward element dealt with the surrender of 58 Iraqi soldiers. Two hours later, the task force moved through the minefield and started on its long march to its blocking position.

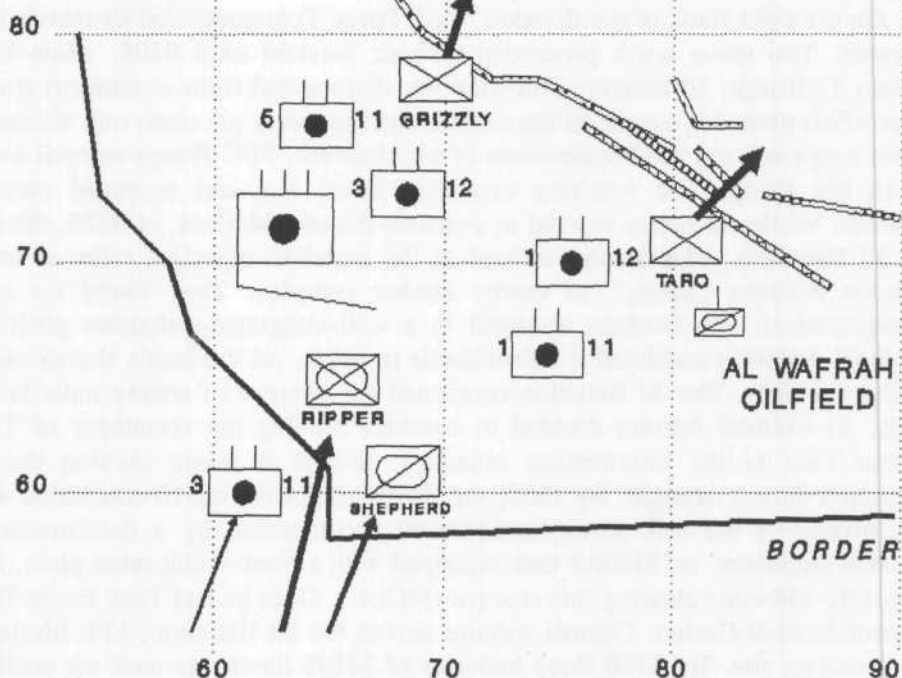
On the right flank of the division, Task Force Taro continued its march into Kuwait. The move north proceeded without incident until 0305, when PFC Adam T. Hoage, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, dismounted from a transport truck. One of his grenades caught on the vehicle and the safety pin came out. Knowing what happened and the hopelessness of his situation, PFC Hoage stepped away from his group. The resulting explosion killed him and wounded another Marine. While corpsmen worked to evacuate the two Marines, at 0320, the rest of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, arrived at the battalion objective referred to as "Battle Position Casino," an enemy bunker complex. They found the area honeycombed with bunkers arranged in a well-integrated defensive position. Colonel Admire considered it a formidable position, yet the Iraqis abandoned it without a fight. The 3d Battalion confirmed the absence of enemy units in the area, so Colonel Admire decided to continue moving the remainder of Task Force Taro to the intermediate objective, though it meant moving the 2d Battalion during daylight. By 1350, the first phase of the march concluded with the arrival of the task force headquarters accompanied by a detachment of combat engineers, an M60A3 tank equipped with a track-width mine plow, and two MK-154 mine clearing line charges (MCLC). Once he had Task Force Taro consolidated at Casino, Colonel Admire moved the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, to a nearby site. By 1740 three batteries of M198 howitzers took up position ready to cover the final portion of Taro's march.

At 1745, with Task Force Taro in place and set to conduct breaching operations, General Myatt conferred with Colonel Admire. He informed Admire that a B-52 strike was scheduled to hit Iraqi positions along the second obstacle belt at 2400 that evening. Colonel Admire said the strike would be over long before the task force reached its blocking position. However, he expressed increasing concern about the delay imposed by the Presidential order prohibiting any ground attack prior to the expiration of the final diplomatic initiative with Iraq. Admire reiterated to General Myatt that he needed six hours to move from Casino to the final objective. That meant the task force had to depart sometime between 2200 and midnight. General Myatt understood, but he could do nothing at the moment beyond advising General Boomer of the timetable. Meanwhile,



**LATE 23 FEB (G-1)/  
EARLY 24 FEB (G-DAY)  
SUPPORT OF  
INFILTRATION;  
TF RIPPER-3/11  
OCCUPATION OF  
ATTACK POSITIONS**

**MISSIONS**  
1/11: GS, PRI TARO  
3/12: DS GRIZZLY  
1/12: DS TARO  
5/11: GS, PRI SHEPHERD  
3/11: DS RIPPER



*Movement of Task Forces Grizzly and Taro during night of 23-24 February 1991.*

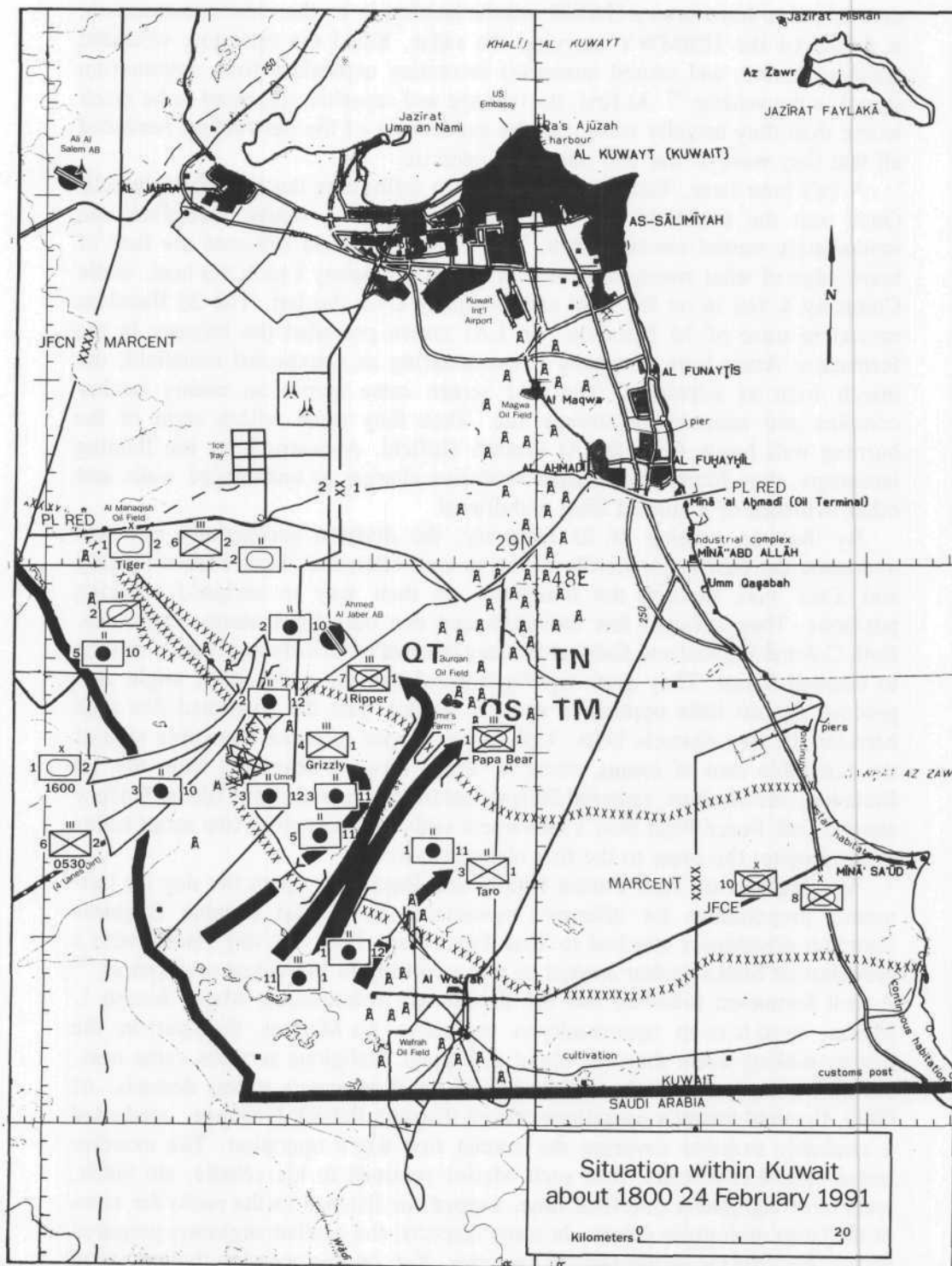
Colonel Admire watched the lights of aircraft after aircraft fly over to bomb enemy positions. Their identification lights could be seen by all Marines and, occasionally, they noticed a set of lights make a sudden turn then go off as the aircraft went into a bombing run. A bright flash marked the strike followed soon after by the lights coming on again as the aircraft climbed for altitude.<sup>104</sup> While interesting to watch for awhile, many of Taro's Marines took advantage of the opportunity to rest as the hours slipped by with no word to launch the attack. Their tranquility soon ended when, at 1930, the TLQ-36 radar emitter belonging to the artillery fire direction center exploded from a missile hit. Later

determined to have been a HARM missile homing in on the radar transmission, it destroyed the HMMWV carrying the radar, killed the operator, wounded another Marine, and caused numerous secondary explosions from ammunition stored in the vehicle.<sup>105</sup> At first, the damage and casualties appeared to be much worse than they actually were, but the suddenness of the destruction reminded all that they were at war and not on an exercise.

A half hour later, Task Force Taro began infiltrating the first obstacle belt. Once past the minefield the 3d Battalion adopted a wedge formation and immediately started moving north. The wedge formation reflected the lack of knowledge of what enemy defenses lay ahead. Company I took the lead, while Company K fell in on the right and Company L on the left. The 2d Battalion moved in trace of 3d Battalion. An LAI screen preceded the infantry in the formation. Aside from Company K encountering an unexpected minefield, the march went as scheduled. The LAI screen came across an enemy bunker complex and ammunition storage site. Then they came within sight of the burning well heads from the Al Wafrah Oilfield. Awe-struck by the flaming landscape, they found undetonated explosive charges at undamaged wells and other evidence of a hurried Iraqi withdrawal.

By the late evening of 23 February, the division successfully met and overcame the first major hurdle of the ground offensive. Task Forces Grizzly and Taro were through the minefields on their way to assigned blocking positions. They suffered few casualties and met only light enemy resistance. Both Colonel Fulford and Colonel Hodory listened to Grizzly and Taro's reports to General Myatt. They grew equally hopeful that the main attack might also proceed against little opposition and get quickly past the suspected fire sack between the two obstacle belts. Task Force Ripper received a tangible sign of the favorable turn of events when, at 1735, forward observers from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, captured 20 Iraqi soldiers in two trucks. Colonel Hodory started Task Force Papa Bear's movement with the dispatch of two scout teams to reconnoiter the route to the first obstacle belt.

The Marines of Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear spent the day on last-minute preparations for offensive operations. In the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion detachment attached to Task Force Papa Bear, the day started with a breakfast of MREs (either cooked or not according to individual preference).<sup>106</sup> A unit formation followed and the detachment commander, Major Joseph I. Musca, used it as an opportunity to explain to his Marines their part in the history-making event that was about to happen. Religious services came next, but they competed with the distribution of the field mess's excess desserts. At 0900, the detachment's operations officer, Captain Patrick J. Dunne, conducted a sandtable exercise covering the crucial first day's operation. The exercise lasted almost two hours, then each Marine returned to his vehicle, ate lunch, went over equipment one final time, napped, or listened to the radio for news of the latest diplomatic efforts. In many respects, the combat engineers prepared just as they had for earlier tactical exercises. Yet, on this occasion they removed all personal items and unnecessary equipment and put them on supply and administrative vehicles. These activities proceeded quietly and, as each section



completed preparations it moved into position in the detachment formation. Gradually, the M60A3 tanks equipped with track-width mine plows, AAVs, and armored combat excavators (ACEs) making up the detachment took their places. Marine units along the Kuwait border followed similar routines.

The detachment's Marines kept their fears to themselves. A mixed unit of combat engineers, tankers, and AAV crewmen (and one Kuwaiti liaison officer). Most had been in Saudi Arabia since August 1990. They knew the faster they got the Iraqis out of Kuwait, the sooner they would be on a transport going home. All were aware that they were part of a great event. None more so than Staff Sergeant David Shaw, whose fate symbolized the spirit and camaraderie that existed among Marines in Saudi Arabia.

At midday Staff Sergeant Shaw complained of stomach cramps. He knew it signaled a reoccurrence of a heart condition. He avoided seeing a corpsman, however, and attempted to hide the pain by resting in the shade of a portable bridge. There he suffered a massive heart attack and a search party later found him barely alive. While a team of corpsmen attempted to revive him, Shaw's story came to light. Several years before, Navy doctors diagnosed Staff Sergeant Shaw, an AAV crewman, as having an occasional irregular heartbeat. He fought to remain in active service, went through physical rehabilitation, and eventually was cleared for full duty. The doctors attached one restriction, Shaw could not rejoin the Fleet Marine Force. Assigned to the AAV unit at Quantico, he enjoyed being back with amphibious vehicles and expected to remain there until retirement. In January, the need for additional AAV qualified personnel in Saudi Arabia led to his volunteering and transfer to one of the casualty replacement companies stationed at Camp 15 at Jubayl. While awaiting assignment, Shaw's heart condition reoccurred and worsened. He managed to escape the findings of a subsequent examination by removing the disqualifying report from his medical records. An urgent request for AAV personnel to crew vehicles combat engineer unit led to his transfer to Task Force Papa Bear. Staff Sergeant Shaw repeatedly told friends of his happiness at being back in a division and a part of the coming battle. He died before the Medevac helicopter arrived.

At first, the detachment saw his death as a bad omen for the beginning of a campaign. When the story emerged, his desire to risk everything to be with his fellow Marines in a great event created a deep sense of comradeship and commitment among those in the detachment. Staff Sergeant Shaw's example reminded General Draude of a speech from William Shakespeare's *Henry the Fifth*. On the eve of Agincourt on Saint Crispin's Day, King Henry V said to his soldiers:<sup>107</sup>

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition:  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accurst they were not here;  
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.



After the sun set, Task Force Papa Bear began moving to a staging area near the berm. At 1900, Marines donned their chemical protective suits and boots (MOPP Level 2) and rested for the remainder of the evening while awaiting the attack order.<sup>108</sup> Company A rejoined Task Force Shepherd in the late afternoon and immediately moved to its attack position and crossed the berm at 2300.

Only two batteries of the five artillery battalions fired on 23 February. Battery B, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, supported Task Force Grizzly's effort to establish a beachhead on the Iraqi side of the obstacle belt. At 0445, Battery E, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines,<sup>109</sup> shifted positions to shoot preparation fires in support of Task Force Troy's Operation Flail, the final deception operation undertaken by the division. Beginning just before dawn the battery fired at five targets in the Al Wafrah Oilfield. The fire dispersed enemy personnel and caused some secondary explosions.<sup>110</sup> Afterwards, the battery returned to the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, which left to return to the 2d Marine Division's control.

At 1030, the division headquarters staff radioed Colonel Howard to move artillery reconnaissance, survey, and advance parties into Kuwait and establish positions for the regimental command post, the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, and the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines. By late afternoon the teams completed their preparations and Colonel Howard began moving the two battalions into Kuwait. Their movement was covered by the other three battalions. As soon as the 1st and 5th Battalions declared themselves ready to fire, Colonel Howard redeployed two of the remaining three battalions. Each battalion marked its crossing of the border by donning its chemical protective clothing. Of this event, Major John H. Turner, S-3 for Task Force Papa Bear, wrote: "Most Marines found the [MOPP] suits to be cut much larger than utilities and were bulky and cumbersome. My extra-large trousers had to be held up with a rope. I found the galosh-style boot to be generally serviceable, but had to turn under about six inches of my trousers, which were too long."<sup>111</sup>

The redeployment of the artillery took five hours to complete. At 1600, the regimental command post, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, and the reduced 3d Battalion, 12th Marines crossed into Kuwait. The 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, declared itself ready by 1720. An hour later, the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, which had meanwhile been rejoined by Battery B, occupied its firing position which allowed the other three battalions to move. At 1830, the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, displaced. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, followed 30 minutes later. Only the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, moving with Task Force Ripper, stayed in Saudi Arabia. When he got the four battalions in place, at 2000 Colonel Howard declared the coordinated fire line (CFL) number 1 in effect to coordinate divisional fire and movement, and at 2120 he moved the regimental mobile command post to an attack position.<sup>112</sup>

Shortly after the 11th Marines mobile command post redeployed, division headquarters notified all units that the present frequency and cryptographic settings would remain in effect for the next 72 hours. The order came as no surprise. Headquarters Central Command indicated in planning conferences that



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*Crossing into Kuwait, 24 February 1991.*

it did not want to risk communications problems arising from frequency or cryptographic changes occurring in the middle of a fast-paced offensive.

What General Myatt did not want was a last-minute alteration to the 1st Marine Division offensive plan. Yet, just after dawn on 23 February he faced precisely that situation. Task Force X-Ray had been at its assembly area for two days fully ready to conduct the planned helicopter assault scheduled for the early afternoon of G-Day (24 February). Few helicopters ever arrived and all indications supported a growing belief that the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW) could not support the insertion of an entire battalion because too many helicopters had been diverted to support medical evacuation and logistical resupply missions. Only enough aircraft remained to transport the battalion command group and one company. With no other aircraft available General Myatt revised his scheme of maneuver. Task Force X-Ray's alternate command group and Companies B and C returned to Task Force Taro and General Myatt ordered the assault made by the antitank-equipped Company A and the main command group. If the first day's ground attack by Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear went according to schedule, Colonel Fulford and Colonel Hodory merely needed to adjust battalion frontages to counter the loss of Task Force X-Ray's two companies.

Lieutenant Colonel Rapp made the final distribution of the division's reconnaissance units. He kept Company A at OP 3. General Myatt wanted it there to provide early warning of any enemy formation that might threaten Task Force Taro and division combat service support units. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion's remaining companies stayed with the main command post, while it provided reconnaissance teams to the infantry and mechanized task forces. Company A transferred the dismounted 3d Platoon to Task Force Taro. However, Task Force Taro also got 3d Platoon, Company D, and Team 2 from 1st Platoon, Company A. Team 2 had the specific mission to guide Taro to its breach site. The motorized 2d Platoon of Company C went to Task Force Ripper. Task Force Grizzly received the dismounted 1st Platoon from Company D.

By the end of the day the division was in position for the attack. General Myatt had the forward command post centrally located and near Task Force Ripper. Each element of the 1st Marine Division had moved on schedule and without difficulty. The only problem facing General Myatt concerned the timing of the attack order launching the offensive. He felt that circumstances made the actual order irrelevant by this point. Both Marine and right-flank Arab forces had moved so far forward that the direction and place of their attack was becoming evident. Yet, in spite of allied activity along the entire Saudi-Kuwaiti border, neither General Myatt nor the task force commanders detected any signs of enemy reactions.

### *G-Day*

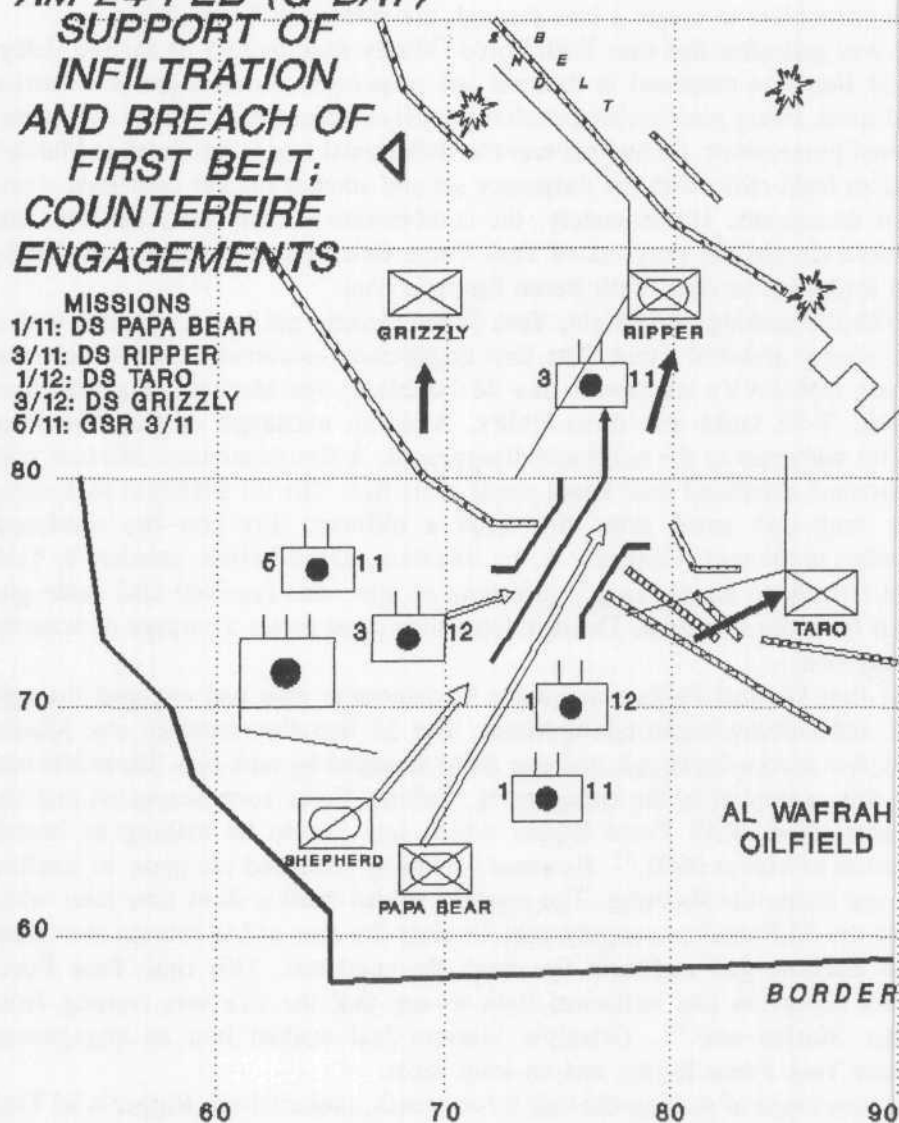
The division's attack went as planned. Both infiltration forces established strong blocking positions. Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear successfully breached the obstacle belts and by the evening advanced past the Jaber Airfield, the Emir's Farm, and the southern portion of the Al Wafrah Oilfield. Under such pressure, Iraqi defenses collapsed with a loss of 600 tanks, 450 armored personnel carriers, 750 trucks, and 10,365 enemy prisoners taken by the 1st Marine Division. Iraqi battle deaths remained unknown. This was achieved at a cost to the 1st Marine Division of 18 killed in action, 55 wounded, 5 non-battle deaths, and 15 non-battle related injuries. In equipment the division lost one tank, one howitzer, one truck, and one HMMWV.

As planned, Task Forces Grizzly and Taro became the first allied units to break through the obstacle belt. They moved as rapidly as the fully loaded Marines could march to establish their blocking positions. The infantrymen naturally felt uneasy walking into the unknown across the darkened desert. Their primary worry was the lack of concealment. The terrain was flat with only occasional undulations that did not amount to much. In this environment each Marine expected to be struck by artillery or small arms fire at any moment. Meanwhile, they walked feeling every ounce of their heavy packs, equipment, and weapons. Sergeant Charles G. Grow, a combat artist attached to 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, wrote of the march:<sup>113</sup>

We marched through the cold, damp evening. When we'd stop we were like frothy horses and the chill night air would have its way with us. After donning our chem gear we marched til sweaty in the warmth of the day. Now as evening sets in we'll shiver again and await our next mission.

**AM 24 FEB (G-DAY)  
SUPPORT OF  
INFILTRATION  
AND BREACH OF  
FIRST BELT;  
COUNTERFIRE  
ENGAGEMENTS**

**MISSIONS**  
1/11: DS PAPA BEAR  
3/11: DS RIPPER  
1/12: DS TARO  
3/12: DS GRIZZLY  
6/11: GSR 3/11



*Movement of Task Forces Grizzly, Ripper, Shepherd, Papa Bear, and Taro with supporting artillery during the morning of 24 February 1991.*



Task Force Grizzly crossed using the lane discovered in front of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. Covered by artillery, the 3d Battalion led the march into Kuwait. It found no enemy resistance, but its scouts unexpectedly found a second, though smaller, minefield just after midnight. Already behind schedule because of the imposed restrictions, Colonel Fulks decided to make an explosive breach. At 0130 combat engineers under the command of Second Lieutenant Charles L. Fraticelli, Company C, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, used an AAV firing a Mk154 line charge followed by a M60A1 tank equipped with a track-width mine plow to create a lane through this unexpected minefield.<sup>114</sup>

It was just after this that Task Force Grizzly encountered its second delay. The 3d Battalion remained in the lead and soon came across signs of a hurried withdrawal. Every position the battalion passed contained their former occupants' personal possessions. So hurried was the withdrawal that in one bunker Marines found an Iraqi radio with the frequency set and another bunker contained a safe full of documents. Unfortunately, the combination of late start, bunkers, and minefield slowed the progress of Task Force Grizzly to such an extent that by dawn it had yet to clear Task Force Ripper's zone.

With the coming of daylight, Task Force Grizzly got into a skirmish with a small enemy armored force. The first engagement occurred at 0519 when the antitank HMMWVs attached to the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, engaged three reported T-72 tanks and three BMPs. After an exchange of fire, the Iraqi vehicles withdrew to the north and disappeared. A short time later Marines with the forward command post heard small arms fire. The 2d Battalion then came under tank and small arms fire from a different direction--the southeast. Likewise, to the rear, Company A, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, attached to Task Force Grizzly to handle enemy prisoners of war, also received tank main gun rounds from the southeast. The task force then came under a barrage of accurate artillery fire.

At first Colonel Fulks was unable to determine who had engaged the task force, but Grizzly began taking losses. The 3d Battalion reported one Marine killed, two trucks destroyed, and one AAV damaged by tank fire. Three Marines were also wounded in the engagement. Colonel Fulks soon suspected that the fire came from Task Force Ripper which was due to be making its breach southwest of him at 0600.<sup>115</sup> However, visibility remained too poor to confirm who was doing the shooting. The mystery solved itself a short time later when one of the 3d Battalion's supply vehicles near the rear of his column also came under machine gun and tank fire from the southeast. This time Task Force Grizzly observers had sufficient light to see that the fire was coming from another Marine unit.<sup>116</sup> Grizzly's Marines had walked into an engagement between Task Force Ripper and an Iraqi force.

In the course of making the task force breach, tankers from Ripper's 3d Tank Battalion spotted and fired on the same enemy unit subsequently engaged by the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. Concentrating on their break out from the breach, the tankers moved forward unaware that Task Force Grizzly might still be in their zone. They interpreted the distant forms to be part of the withdrawing Iraqi

force and fired. A short and sharp discussion between Colonel Fulks and Colonel Fulford ensued and that stopped the engagement.

The incident affected the pace of offensive operations. General Myatt directed each commander to maintain close and constant communication between the task forces to ensure positive identification before firing.<sup>117</sup> The combination of extreme range, poor visibility, geographic disorientation, excited gunners, and rapidly moving units led to increased possibilities of more "friendly fire" engagements. Concern over friendly fire incidents curbed free maneuver during the day and unit movement at night.

Task Force Grizzly continued towards its blocking position, an area of high ground known as Hill 191. Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, spearheaded the task force. A scout team mounted in HMMWVs preceded the company by 500 meters and the 2d Battalion followed behind the 3d Battalion. At 0730, the scout team observed a suspected enemy position just south of Hill 191. Using .50-caliber machine guns, it probed the site. After receiving no counterfire it moved closer to the position and discovered that it was a decoy position. Once clear of the obstacle, Task Force Grizzly moved to Hill 191 without further incident.

Occupation of the site proved anticlimactic. By mid-morning it was clear that the majority of the Iraqis between the two obstacle belts had either already withdrawn or were surrendering. Colonel Fulks believed that a counterattack seemed increasingly unlikely with each passing hour and he began concentrating on Task Force Grizzly's follow-on assignment, securing the Al Jaber Airfield. To the Marines of Task Force Grizzly, the lack of enemy activity came as a relief following the physically exhausting all-night march to Hill 191.

Task Force Grizzly continued active operations. A constant stream of Iraqi prisoners entered Grizzly's lines. Colonel Fulks sent patrols into the surrounding desert. They initiated several artillery missions. For example, at 0930, a patrol from the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, located a tower that it believed to be an Iraqi retransmission site. A barrage from the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, destroyed the tower. However, the enemy responded with sporadic mortar fire which the artillery battalion countered. On the first volley by Marine artillery the enemy mortar crews surrendered. Late in the afternoon another 3d Battalion scout team spotted five stationary enemy vehicles with 15 dismounted soldiers located in the open. They immediately called in artillery against this target.

Compared with the anticipated intense enemy counterattacks that failed to materialize, the first day of the ground offensive proved equally anticlimactic for Task Force Taro. At 0325 the task force began moving through the first obstacle belt. Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, took the lead. With each company in column, the battalion marched north unfazed by sporadic and inaccurate artillery fire.

The task force encountered only scattered groups of the enemy, all of which it engaged with long-distance artillery fire. At 0615 a forward observer from Company K, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, directed the howitzers of 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, against five BMPs. Fifteen minutes later, another observer called in an artillery mission on two tanks and four BMPs. At 1205 a third fire mission



Drawn by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Drawing of Iraqi prisoner of war captured south of Al Jaber, 24 February 1991.*

struck a unit of enemy armor. The final target that day occurred at 1434 with a call for counterbattery fire against an enemy mortar position. A single accurate volley brought about the surrender of an entire mortar platoon.<sup>118</sup>

The lack of pressure against Task Force Taro allowed Colonel Admire to reinforce and assist the mechanized task forces. During Taro's approach march, Colonel Admire transferred one of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, companies to Task Force Ripper for enemy prisoner of war handling. During the day concern over congestion at the primary breach lanes prompted General Myatt to have Task Force Taro's combat engineers open another lane in its zone. Myatt wanted to use the additional lane to disperse and speed up the movement of artillery and resupply columns. He initially planned to use Task Force Papa Bear's lanes for this purpose. An early reassessment of traffic flow and the lack of enemy resistance prompted him to simply increase the number of available lanes. At 0856 the division G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Jerome D. Humble, transferred two M60A1 tanks with track-width mine plows to Colonel Admire and Taro's combat engineers began opening a second lane. By 1300 they successfully cleared, proofed, and marked two additional lanes. The tanks rejoined Task Force Papa Bear at 1500. Colonel Admire also released Company C, Task Force Shepherd, once Task Force Taro completed the establishment of its blocking position.

In spite of the release of an infantry company to Task Force Ripper to assist in handling enemy prisoners of war, the volume overwhelmed Marine preparations. While making its breach of the second obstacle belt, Task Force Ripper ran into a determined Iraqi defense. It also encountered thousands of enemy soldiers attempting to surrender. Their numbers swamped the prisoner of war handling teams and threatened to delay the main attack.

"At this time," wrote Gunnery Sergeant Paul S. Cochran, 3d Tank Battalion, "POWs started appearing from everywhere. A total of approx 300 to 350 were

credited to 2nd Plt, because the[y] surrendered to our t[an]ks in our sector. POWs were blowing us kisses, waving American flags and ask[ing] for food and water."<sup>119</sup>

Knowing from his monitoring of division headquarters' radio traffic that Task Force Ripper needed to move forward quickly, Colonel Admire offered 14 trucks from the regimental truck platoon as well as the second company from the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, for prisoner transportation and handling duty. General Myatt welcomed the reinforcements, and at 1539 the trucks and infantry company departed to the northwest. That accomplished, the Marines of Task Force Taro settled in for the night.

As the Marines of Task Forces Grizzly and Taro reflected on the day's events, they felt a general sense of relief. Their part of the attack never found any formidable Iraqi defense. They quickly eliminated the minimal resistance encountered, and, important in the thinking of each participant, incurred few casualties in the process. This pattern existed from the first moment of the offensive and continued through the day. After months of preparing for the worst, by the time the sun set on 24 February, some Marines began to feel that the entire offensive might go as painlessly as it had thus far.

Likewise, by the end of the day, Marines of Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear experienced a similar sense of relief. Their advances were similarly fast and bloodless, and both task forces successfully reached their limits of advance. It was darkness, they needed to consolidate their gains, and to prepare for the following day's attack, and therefore they halted their drives.<sup>120</sup>

On the evening of 23 February, General Myatt, Colonel Fulford, and Colonel Hodory could only hope that the hints offered by developments on Task Force Grizzly's front suggested the Iraqis were not enthusiastic about fighting. Later that night, Task Force Taro and Task Force Grizzly reported by radio that the area between the two obstacle belts was neither heavily nor resolutely defended. That agreed with recent intelligence and nothing happened during the night to alter the impression. By the time Task Force Ripper launched its attack, Marines in the waiting assault vehicles felt they were going against a defense that already seemed to be coming apart, at least along the first obstacle belt.

At 0405 Task Force Ripper began the drive that would prove that one way or the other. The attack began at 0001 with receipt of the code word, "Coors" (Task Force Ripper to depart its assembly area).<sup>121</sup> Radios came to life, vehicle engines started, and the task force began moving to its attack position. Colonel Fulford put the two mechanized infantry battalions and the tank battalion in a task force wedge formation. Using night vision devices, the drive forward was slow and deliberate--as would be expected for a night movement. Nevertheless, at 0125, Task Force Ripper crossed Phase Line Black on schedule. Scouts saw no sign of the enemy, though 30 minutes later Colonel Fulford received an aerial surveillance report indicating the existence of an enemy battery, four tanks, six BMPs, and a suspected command post in front of the task force.

While moving to its attack position, Task Force Ripper picked up with its forward air control (FAC) teams, artillery observers, naval gunfire teams, surveillance and target acquisition (STA) platoon, and its mine-clearing tanks.



Colonel Fulford had deployed these elements on 23 February to check and mark the route, secure the attack position, and make last-minute adjustments preparatory to ensure the assault went smoothly. Unit movements were controlled through the use of phase lines. The lack of identifiable terrain features meant that for the ground offensive the division's phase lines were arbitrary lines on the map acting as reference points. Commanders used a combination of position location recording system (PLRS) and global positioning system (GPS) to provide them the unit's exact location.<sup>122</sup> Phase lines were generally named after colors, going from Black at the Kuwait border to Red just south of the Kuwait International Airport.

Ripper's advance, well rehearsed before the ground offensive, proceeded so well that it arrived at its attack position at 0200, an hour ahead of schedule.<sup>123</sup> Engines idled in the darkness then were shut down as the task force settled in to await orders from division headquarters to start the attack.

At 0359 General Boomer informed General Myatt that G-Day and H-Hour had been confirmed. The division attack was preceded by a B-52 strike and at 0410 Myatt told task force commanders to execute the attack plan. An hour later General Myatt directed Colonel Fulford to send Task Force Ripper across the line of departure near the first obstacle belt and begin the main attack. While Task Force Ripper moved to the first obstacle belt, a flight of A-6s struck the four Iraqi tanks identified earlier. The tanks then withdrew north. However, in doing so they inadvertently drew the fire of 3d Tank Battalion to Task Force Grizzly, still in Task Force Ripper's zone of action.

After continuing in wedge formation to Phase Line Saber, the forward edge of the minefield, Task Force Ripper began breaching operations. At 0617 and continuing for the next five minutes, the horizon in front of the task force became lit by a series of red star clusters as the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, indicated their arrival at the minefield and the beginning of breaching operations. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, experienced a slight delay because the forward edge of the minefield in its sector proved to be further north than originally believed.<sup>124</sup> Both battalions immediately put their obstacle clearing detachments (OCDs) to work clearing lanes.

The obstacle clearing detachments used procedures rehearsed many times in the previous months and quickly opened four lanes. A light drizzle had turned to rain, making visibility difficult when Colonel Fulford directed 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to clear the two left flank lanes while 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, cleared the right two lanes. He gave the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion the task of creating two additional lanes when the two mechanized infantry battalions finished.<sup>125</sup>

Each obstacle clearing detachment used similar equipment and techniques. On order from the officer commanding the detachment, an M60A1 tank equipped with a track-width mine plow (TWMP) moved to the edge of the minefield and fired a MK58 single-shot line charge (MCLC) from a trailer towed behind the tank. Attempts to remotely detonate this type of line charge invariably failed and a combat engineer then left the comparative safety of an accompanying AAV and manually primed the charge. When subsequently detonated, the resulting blast

normally cleared a path some distance into the minefield. The combat engineer repeated the process until they reached the other side. In some instances, the MK58 single-shot line charge failed completely and an AAV with the newer MK154 three-shot line charge came forward. This happened with "Team Tank," 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. The AAV simply moved behind the tank, fired the line charge over the tank, then detonated the charge either remotely or manually--normally the latter as both the MK58 and MK154 remote detonating systems proved unreliable. Once through a lane with the line charge the track-width mine plow-equipped tank plunged forward to clear and thus proof the lanes against loose or deeply buried mines.<sup>126</sup>

Except for problems with proper detonation, the combat engineers breached three of the four lanes without incident. Lane 3, assigned to "Team Mech," proved to be the most difficult. Initially, this breach proceeded better than the others. Sergeant Scott Helms, commanding an M60A1 tank, pulled its MK54 single-shot line charge into position and aligned it on a 10-degree azimuth straight across the minefield. Helms next radioed that he was in position and ready to fire. Permission received, Sergeant Helms pressed the ignition button. After a characteristic explosion and whooshing sound when the rocket launched, the line charge uncoiled over the tank, landing almost perfectly on the minefield. The charge proved to be one of the few successfully detonated by remote control. That was the last thing to go right. Sergeant Helms' tank was only half-way through the lane using its Israeli-designed mine roller (called "roller dude") when the tank struck a possible double impulse mine. The tank lost its left tread and road wheel in the blast. Captain Craig Baker, commanding "Team Mech," saw that the tank was out of action, immediately shifted 30 meters left of Helms' tank, and called up a MK154 equipped AAV to fire another line charge. A similar sequence followed, but this charge needed manual priming to detonate. A second tank with mine plow proofed to the end of the charge-cleared lane where the AAV fired a second charge to complete the breach.<sup>127</sup>

Once the tank cleared a lane through to the far side, it turned around and plowed back to the starting point. A team of combat engineers followed and marked the right, left, and center of the lane. While doing so they looked for any surviving obstacles or mines that might have fallen back into the cleared lanes. They destroyed anything too dangerous to move. The team was especially observant for chemical and biological mines. If they found such a mine, the combat engineers called in a West German-made Fuchs (Fox) chemical detection vehicle to investigate. During one of these investigations the vehicle's instruments indicated it had found a chemical mine. Upon hearing this report General Myatt ordered MOPP level-4 (the complete chemical protective suit, including gas mask and gloves) for everyone in the immediate area of lane clearing operations.

It took only 24 minutes for the combat engineers to clear lanes 1, 2, and 4. A series of green and white star combinations shot into the sky when each obstacle-clearing detachment completed its lane. At 0644 the 3d Tank Battalion passed through the minefield using lanes 1 and 2. It led the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. Once into the open desert, the three

battalions fanned out to establish the breach-head. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, took the right side to protect the task force's eastern flank until Task Force Papa Bear made its breach a few hours later. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, moved to the left side while the 3d Tank Battalion with its M60A1 tanks held the center of the breachhead. The enemy chose not to actively contest the crossing of their first obstacle belt. However, the Iraqis did employ passive defensive measures such as a surface scattered, or "hasty," minefield which the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, encountered soon after emerging from the first minefield.<sup>128</sup>

Leaving the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, to link up with Task Force Papa Bear, Colonel Fulford moved 3d Tank Battalion and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to battle position 17 near the second obstacle belt. The 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, moved with them. After arriving at battle position 17, Task Force Ripper's Marines used the time required for their artillery to set up, to clear the position of possible enemy threats, to process enemy prisoners, and to rearm the obstacle clearing detachments for the next assault. At 0755 Task Force Ripper began receiving a steady stream of Iraqi soldiers wanting to surrender. That continued for about 40 minutes until Iraqi artillery fired on a group of soldiers in front of 3d Tank Battalion in an attempt to prevent their surrender. An American forward observer managed to find what he believed to be the enemy artillery's observation post for the sector, a metal tower located on a rise in front of the second minefield. The forward air controller with Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, called in an AH-1W which destroyed the tower with a Hellfire missile.<sup>129</sup>

That missile shot significantly damaged Iraqi artillery capabilities, evident in an immediate slackening in the volume of enemy fire. Whereas, before, Iraqi artillery appeared to follow the movement of Ripper's battalions, afterward the enemy fired blindly. Sporadic fire continued through the day, but without inflicting any losses to the task force. At 1055, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, rejoined the task force after linking up with Task Force Papa Bear. Five minutes later the assault on the second obstacle belt began with a 22-minute mixed barrage of 550 rounds of HE and DPCM from the howitzers of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. Task Force Ripper attacked at 1125 and encountered more enemy resistance than experienced so far in the offensive.

In its attack, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, received a combination of mortar and artillery fire which wounded two combat engineers riding in an AAV. As the battalion drew closer to the minefield, it also came under machinegun fire from its right flank. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, countered with a combination of tank and heavy machine gun fire. Tank fire from "Team Tank" also took out an 82mm mortar position. After this, the obstacle clearing detachments moved to the minefield and commenced lane clearing operations to establish the right flank of Ripper's breachhead.<sup>130</sup>

Meanwhile, the 3d Tank Battalion engaged to its front. The Iraqis had constructed the second obstacle belt differently from the first. It proved to be deeper and lacked the barbed wire fences marking the front and rear edges.<sup>131</sup>



An occasional derelict automobile or sand-filled oil drums marked an uncertain lane. The second minefield was also better laid out and more dangerous.

The obstacle clearing detachments followed the same procedure used in opening lanes through the first minefield. There was one difference in this assault: the Iraqis chose to oppose the Marines' second breach. Colonel Fulford began Task Force Ripper's assault with a barrage of smoke rounds to obscure the area, followed by a series of variable time fuse (VT) fire missions against enemy bunkers. Variable time fuse shells exploded above the ground and saturated the trenches with fragments. Behind the smoke screen the obstacle clearing detachments moved in and began work to clear four lanes at 1200. Though a detachment clearing a lane for the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, lost its engineer marking vehicle when it got stuck in a bomb crater, and the line charges again had to be manually primed, within eight minutes the officer commanding the detachment fired the green and white star combination signifying the clearing of the first lane. By 1215, the combat engineers succeeded in opening lanes 2, 3, and 4. The 3d Tank Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, immediately went through and began the task force assault against the defending Iraqi positions.

The situation developed into a confusion of surrendering Iraqi soldiers and intermittent engagements against determined defenders. Major Drew Bennett, operations officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, found the battalion engulfed by "hundreds upon hundreds of Iraqis sporting white flags . . . converging on the breach sites, especially lane-3 . . ." before it was entirely out of the minefield. The senior officer with the forward element, Captain Baker, attempted to save the situation by sending one platoon forward to secure the front and dismounting an infantry and an engineer platoon to escort prisoners through the breach. The number of surrendering soldiers increased and ultimately threatened to impede the battalion's advance. Eventually, Lieutenant Colonel James Mattis decided to dismount another infantry platoon and directed it to establish a temporary holding area about 300 meters south of the breach. It held the prisoners there until Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (the task force reserve), arrived to take over this duty.

The effort proved futile. Within minutes the situation worsened. The loss of one lane forced the diversion of traffic to the single open lane, 3. Then, as the mechanized columns converged, the absence of the division breach control party, which had not yet been able to get to the second obstacle belt, compounded an already difficult situation. Because there was no one there controlling traffic the lane became a jumble of prisoners with their Marine guards going in one direction colliding with the press of supply vehicles and the LAVs of Task Force Shepherd attempting to go in the opposite direction. Inevitably, the lane got congested and movement completely halted. It was precisely the type of delay that General Myatt wanted to avoid. However, it was also precisely this type of local situation that General Myatt wanted his commanders to recognize and use their own initiative to correct. The senior officer present, Lieutenant Colonel Mattis, saw what occurred and took immediate steps to clear the lane. The obvious problem centered on the enemy prisoners and the scattered vehicles



from the dismounted Marines guarding them. Needing the AAVs forward, Mattis remounted the infantry and engineer platoons and replaced them with Marines from the battalion supply train. He first directed them to stage their vehicles away from lane 3. Next, judging the Iraqi prisoners to be harmless and realizing that maintaining the forward momentum of the offensive was all important, Mattis instructed the battalion not to stop for surrendering soldiers. The Iraqis were to be pointed in the direction of the breach lanes and instructed to make their way there on their own.

While Lieutenant Colonel Mattis corrected the problem at lane 3, he directed "Team Tank" to lane 4 and instructed it to move through following the passage of the 3d Tank Battalion. Since the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, continued to be responsible for Task Force Ripper's right flank, once through the breach, "Team Tank" angled right and pushed ahead two and one-half kilometers. Its attack uncovered abandoned bunkers and more surrendering Iraqi soldiers. It no sooner pointed these soldiers in the direction of lane 3 than the Marine tankers and a combined anti-armor team, "CAAT-2," encountered two enemy tanks manned by crews determined to fight. Following a brief engagement, Marine gunners destroyed both tanks. The momentum of "Team Tank's" attack carried it into Task Force Papa Bear's zone. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis directed the unit into the 1st Battalion's area and reoriented it to support Task Force Ripper's assault on the Al Jaber Airfield. The assault entailed a major shift in direction from the northeast to the west. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis moved the battalion to a position south of a tree-covered area with several buildings known as the "Emir's Farm." Its seizure was the battalion's next objective and Mattis intended to use "Team Tank" to provide covering fire in the upcoming assault.<sup>132</sup>

During the period the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, was busy clearing the right flank, the 3d Tank Battalion fanned out to cover the forward edge of Task Force Ripper's breachhead. Its movement triggered a series of engagements. Within 15 minutes after getting past the minefield, Marine tankers destroyed three enemy tanks and captured 60 Iraqi soldiers. A short time later, the battalion destroyed a fourth tank, a T-62. By 1252 seven more enemy tanks in the same area had been destroyed. After that engagement, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Alphonso B. "Buster" Diggs, repositioned the unit for the assault on I MEF Objective "Alpha," Al Jaber Airfield. When moving to the new position, 3d Tank Battalion captured another 50 Iraqi soldiers.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, breached the minefield at the same time as 3d Tank Battalion and immediately deployed into an attack to clear the task force's left flank. Each company engaged Iraqis as it came on line. At 1300, the battalion's attached tank company encountered two T-62s and quickly destroyed one of them. The Iraqis responded with mortar fire but without effect. A running fight developed as Marine tankers attacked a force of Iraqi T-55s. The engagement cost the enemy two tanks destroyed. While Marine and Iraqi tanks dueled, the battalion became inundated with surrendering Iraqi soldiers. By 1410, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, reported the surrender of 500 Iraqis, including one colonel. To manage the prisoners the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Cortez, dismounted an infantry company. It remained

guarding the Iraqis until 1628 when elements of 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, arrived to relieve them. By then, the number of enemy prisoners totaled 1,230 men, with more coming into Marine lines every moment.<sup>133</sup>

At 1400 Lieutenant Colonel Mattis had his "Team Tank" in position and commenced the battalion's attack to capture the "Emir's Farm." A dismounted infantry company (Company C) and a mechanized infantry company ("Team Mech") began enveloping the position from west to east while "Team Tank" covered their movement with fire. "Team Mech" was the main effort and Mattis intended that it would move in close, dismount, and attack the farm supported by machine-gun fire from its AAVs. The area of the "Emir's Farm" had already been swept by artillery fire during Ripper's breaching operations. Hit by a second barrage covering Task Force Ripper's redeployment against the airfield, the enemy force stationed at the farm began to disintegrate. "Team Mech" moved to within 1,700 meters west of the farm, the infantry dismounted, and, covered by smoke barrage from 81mm mortars, started the assault. Sweating profusely in their MOPP suits the infantry moved slowly. Too slow for Lieutenant Colonel Mattis, who sensed the farm's defenders wanted only to flee or surrender. Frustrated, Mattis eventually assaulted the farm from the opposite side using the battalion's headquarters vehicles and directed the final operations from there. Moving from bunker system to bunker system in each successive row of trees, the two companies captured about 200 prisoners.

Mattis then launched the entire battalion on a sweep of the area. "Team Tank," CAAT 2, and artillery forward observers, protected the attackers from distant enemy forces. Using a combination of tank, machine gun, and TOW missile fire, supported by AH-1W Cobras firing Hell-fire and TOW missiles, the Marine armored force engaged Iraqi bunkers, tanks, rocket launchers, trucks, and armored personnel carriers. As the infantry attack on the farm moved into its final stages Lieutenant Colonel Mattis directed "Team Tank" to move to Battle Position 172 northeast of Al Jaber where the remainder of the battalion would join it for the attack on MEF Objective A.<sup>134</sup>



Photograph by 1st Marine Division Combat Camera Unit  
*An amphibious assault vehicle with 3d Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Task Force Ripper.*

The attack involved tactical risk. To capture the airfield General Myatt needed Task Force Ripper to change its axis of advance from north to west and expose its right flank to the enemy. He minimized the risk by ordering Task Force Shepherd to screen north of Ripper. As the two task forces took up their positions Colonel Fulford set the assault to start at 1630. He placed the 3d Tank Battalion in the center, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, on the right, and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on the left. Both infantry battalions deployed in a battalion wedge formation for the attack. Each commander placed the tank company in the lead with the mechanized company on the left and the infantry company on the right. The battalion commanders in their AAVs took position in the center of the wedge behind the tank company. To the rear of the battalion commander in the forward command post came the 81mm mortar section, the main command post, and the battalion combat train. Each commander tacitly acknowledged the exposed right and took the added precaution to establish a battalion CAAT screen on that flank. Throughout the afternoon while the task force deployed into the attack, the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, saturated the airfield with preparatory fires. The fire ceased at 1600 when General Myatt grew concerned over the large number of defeated Iraqis wandering about the area.

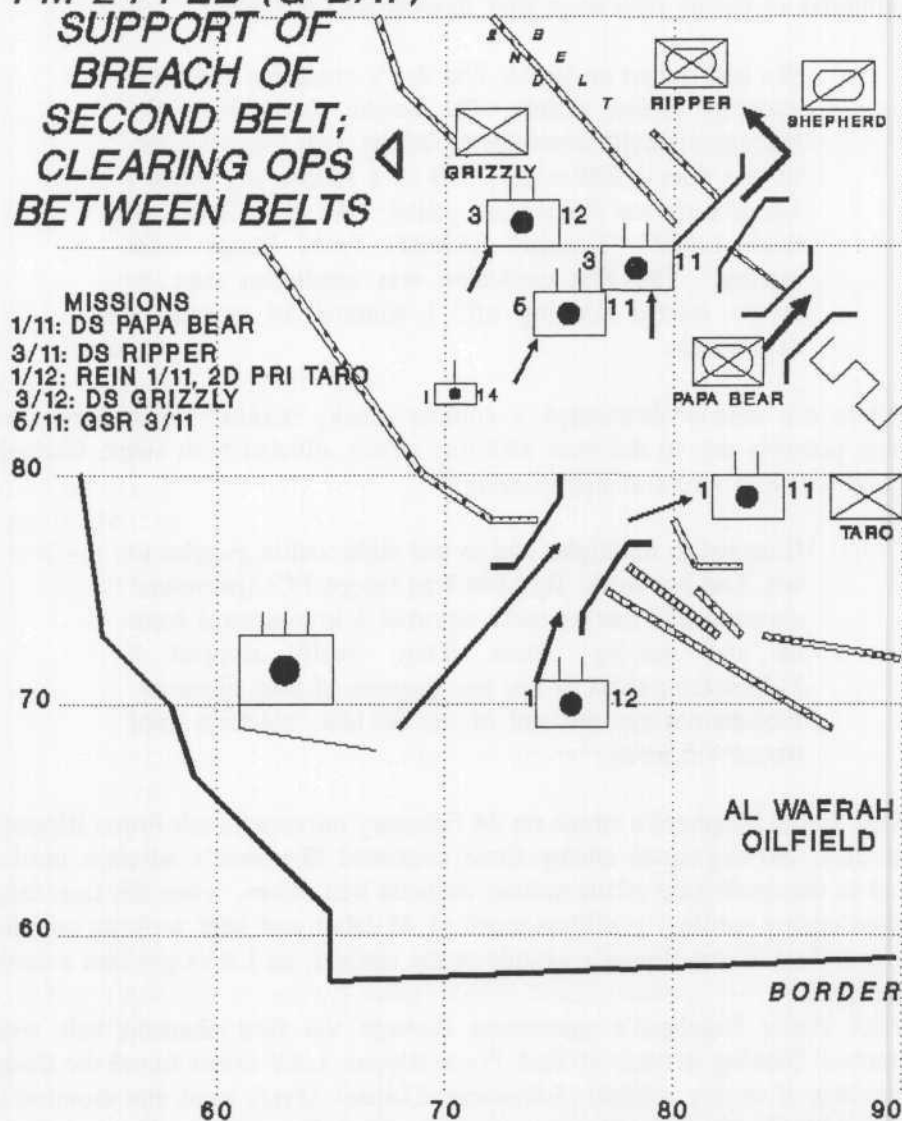
At 1630 the assault began. It was the first attack affected by burning oil wells which surrounded the area and the battalions moved cautiously. Major Bennett noted:<sup>135</sup>

All hands were awestruck by the ominous pall of smoke emanating from over 50 wellhead fires in the Al Burqan Oilfield. Commanders whose senses were sharply focused found that the rumbling from the burning [well heads] played tricks on their hearing, sounding almost like columns of armored vehicles approaching our right flank.

Task Force Ripper maneuvered north of Jaber Airfield to envelop it from the rear, wheeling along a southwest axis then closing on the airfield perimeter. By then the attacking battalions moved in semi-darkness brought on by dusk combined with smoke from burning well heads. Regardless, the task force maintained its formation and negotiated its way through a complex of dug-in enemy tanks, bunkers, debris from allied air bombardment, and many surrendering Iraqis. For the most part, the afternoon's artillery fire ended Iraqi resistance. However, at 1734 with visibility down to 300 meters, two T-62s attempted to engage the right flank of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. The CAAT screening to the northwest spotted the enemy tanks and destroyed one of them. Four minutes later "Team Tank" from 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, engaged and destroyed three T-62s hidden behind revetments. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, knocked out three more T-62s and three T-55s in the final push to the airfield perimeter. Iraqi resistance ceased at that point and by 1800 Task Force Ripper successfully isolated Al Jaber.

**PM 24 FEB (G-DAY)  
SUPPORT OF  
BREACH OF  
SECOND BELT;  
CLEARING OPS  
BETWEEN BELTS**

**MISSIONS**  
1/11: DS PAPA BEAR  
3/11: DS RIPPER  
1/12: REIN 1/11, 2D PRI TARO  
3/12: DS GRIZZLY  
6/11: GSR 3/11



*Penetration of second obstacle belt.*

Initially, Colonel Fulford positioned the battalions facing the airfield. However, the Iraqi attack against the northern flank of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and reports from enemy prisoners indicating that the airfield was abandoned, prompted Fulford to request that Task Force Ripper reorient to the northeast. General Myatt concurred. He directed Task Force Ripper to reposition for a drive to seize the Kuwait International Airport the following morning. Task Force Grizzly got the mission of clearing Al Jaber. A sweep of the airfield with thermal sights confirmed prisoner reports. Meanwhile, the task force took up position for resuming the offensive at first light. Engagements continued into the



night. Second Lieutenant James D. Gonsalves, Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, encountered an enemy tank soon after moving into position:<sup>136</sup>

We had pulled up to our 2nd day's objective and were awaiting further orders. The smoke clouds from the burning oil wells were closing in fast, reducing visibility to less than 1,500 meters. All of a sudden my loader, Lance Corporal Rodrigues, yelled: "We got a T-62 out there--Look!" "Gunner! SABOT! Tank! Range 1100 meters!" The first explosion was small but then its ammo started cooking off. I counted 14 secondary explosions.

While the enemy threatened a counter-attack, nothing materialized that evening possibly due to the poor visibility which affected both sides. Gunnery Sergeant Cochran wrote of that evening:<sup>137</sup>

It turned to midnight, had to use night vision goggles to see. Did not work. By 6PM Iraq troops PCs [personnel carriers] and t[an]ks were reported 3 k[ilometers] from us and moving closer. They finally stopped 2 k[ilometers] short of our pos because of total blackout. I could not see the end of my 50 [cal. machine gun] barrel 4 ft away.

Task Force Shepherd's attack on 24 February mirrored Task Force Ripper's experience. No organized enemy force contested Shepherd's advance until it moved to the north side of the second obstacle belt. Then, when the task force attacked enemy artillery positions north of Al Jaber and later took up position to protect Task Force Ripper's assault on the airfield, its LAVs got into a series of firefights.

Task Force Shepherd's movement through the first obstacle belt went unopposed. Moving in trace of Task Force Ripper, LAV crews found the desert swept clear of enemy soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Myers used that moment to link up with Company C after its release by Task Force Taro. The task force then consisted of Companies A, B, and C. Thus reinforced, Myers immediately planned to launch an attack after passing through the second set of lanes.<sup>138</sup> Unfortunately, at 1130, when the task force reached the next obstacle belt, Myers arrived to discover that Task Force Ripper's lanes were still choked with units whose movement had been delayed by the Iraqi defense and the fouling of Lane 4. After waiting 90 minutes, Lieutenant Colonel Myers decided to bypass these lanes and create one of his own. His Marines had spotted a set of tire tracks through the minefield which seemed recent enough to indicate the area had to be free of mines.<sup>139</sup>

By 1330 Myers had his three companies and combat train on the north side of the obstacle belt when he received an order from the division forward

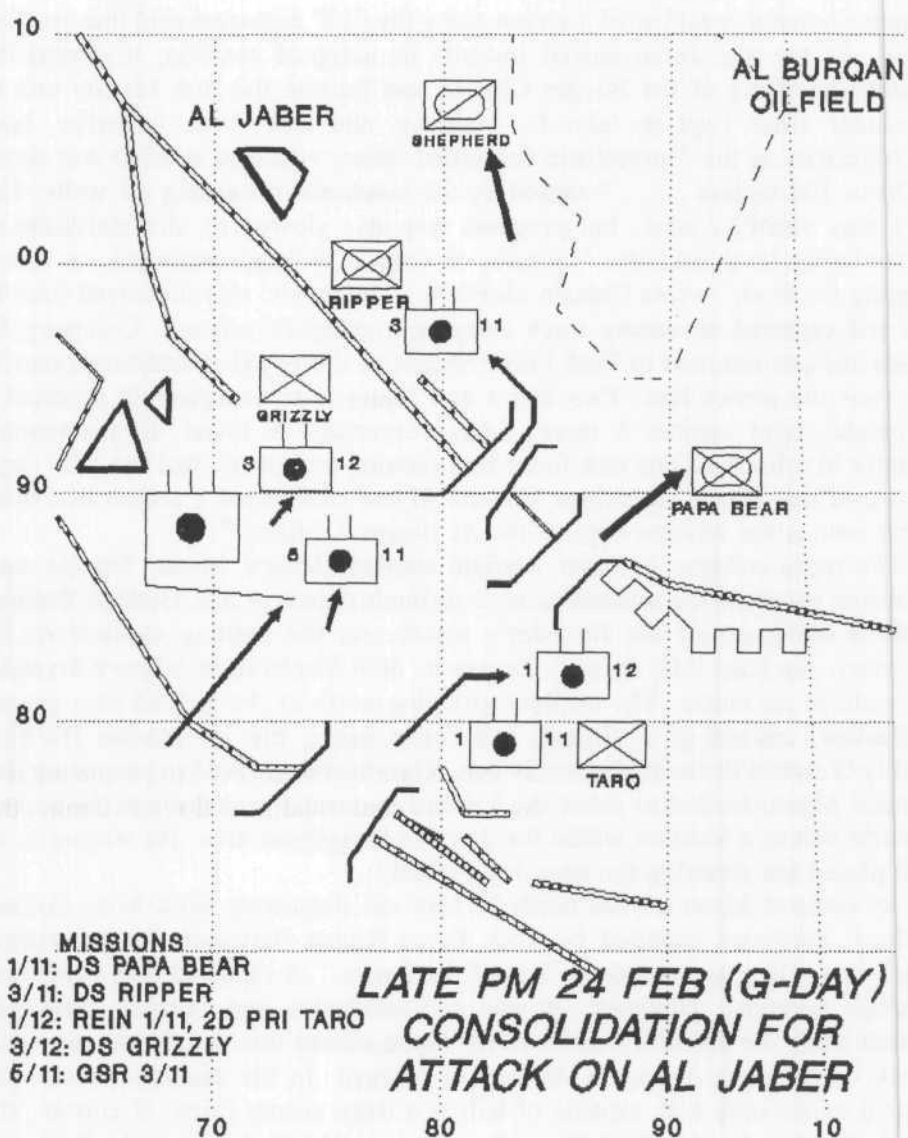
command post to established a screen along the "15" east-west grid line on their maps. As the task force moved towards its assigned position, it skirted the western boundary of the Burqan Oilfield and became the first Marine unit to encounter what Captain John F. McElroy, the task force historian, later characterized as the "surrealistic battlefield where visibility at 1500 was down to 50 to 100 meters . . . ." caused by the hundreds of burning oil wells. Not only was visibility poor, but progress was also slowed by the multitude of surrendering Iraqi soldiers. "Literally thousands of Iraqis emerged, at times, begging for food," wrote Captain McElroy. Company C also destroyed four T-62s and captured an enemy truck carrying a group of officers. Company D, which had just returned to Task Force Shepherd, destroyed an additional two T-62s near the power line. Two and a half hours later Company D reported a successful fight against 5 more T-62s. Company A found 40 dismounted infantry in a bunker. The task force kept moving until it reached the "15" east-west grid line where Lieutenant Colonel Myers established a screen that went as far east as the western edge of the Al Burqan Oilfield.<sup>140</sup>

The rapid collapse of Jaber Airfield startled General Myatt. Marine staff estimates expected the airfield to be a difficult objective and General Boomer made it the focus of the first day's attack. As the fighting evolved on 24 February, the Iraqi *14th Infantry Regiment, 56th Mechanized Infantry Brigade*, surrendered en masse. The artillery grouping north of the airfield also proved ineffectual. Instead of a difficult and costly battle, the 1st Marine Division readily breached the second obstacle belt. The situation proved so promising that General Myatt decided to move the forward command post through the second obstacle belt to a location within the division bridgehead area. He wanted to be well-placed for directing the next day's attack.

As General Myatt moved north he received disturbing news from Colonel Fulford. Prisoners captured by Task Force Ripper indicated that a counter-attack was going to come from "out of the flames." A captured map confirmed prisoner accounts. However, it was not conclusive and burning wellheads existed along the division's entire front. Myatt sensed that the phrase meant the attack would come from the Al Burqan Oilfield. In his analysis he saw the oilfield as the only area capable of hiding a large enemy force. If correct, the attack threatened to hit Task Force Papa Bear on the division's right flank.

Up to that point, Task Force Papa Bear had played a limited role as the division reserve in support of Task Force Ripper's main attack. The task force was to begin moving to its attack position at 0200, but Colonel Hodory set it creeping forward in advance of the scheduled hour. At 0533 Task Force Papa Bear crossed Phase Line Black and entered Kuwait in column formation led by 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, followed by the engineer task force (1st Combat Engineer Battalion Detachment), 1st Tank Battalion, and 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. By 0745 the task force reached its attack position.<sup>141</sup>

Task Force Papa Bear remained at its attack position until 0905 when the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, began breaching the first obstacle belt to the east of Task Force Ripper's lanes. The obstacle belt consisted of a barbed wire fence marking its forward edge, an anti-personnel and antitank minefield (120 meters



*Movement and location of division units by the evening of 24 February 1991.*

deep at that point) and a rear-boundary barbed wire fence. No cover existed to protect the assaulting force, but the Iraqis chose not to defend this part of the first obstacle belt. By 0940, the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, completed its two lanes and deployed into the desert beyond to establish the task force breachhead 2,000 meters deep by 3,000 meters wide. The 1st Tank Battalion followed and moved north to secure the center of the breachhead. There, it began receiving enemy artillery fire. Though sporadic, the firing continued against Company D until the forward air controller with Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, Task Force Ripper, spotted and destroyed the Iraqi observation tower. Colonel

Hodory followed 1st Tank Battalion with his command group and 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, which immediately turned southeast to cover the right flank. Meanwhile, the engineer task force completed two additional lanes and moved to the northern side of the minefield where it rearmed for the second breach.

During the next several hours Task Force Papa Bear gradually expanded the breachhead while preparing to penetrate the next obstacle belt. The forward air controller with 1st Tank Battalion directed a series of Cobra and Harrier strikes against enemy tanks and positions near the proposed breach site. The air attacks destroyed two tanks, two observation posts, a mortar position, and bunkers. Meanwhile, fire support and scout teams from the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, began reconnoitering the second obstacle belt, but enemy direct and indirect fire interrupted the attempt. Colonel Hodory countered with further air strikes by a section of Cobras and four AV-8B Harriers. Under the direction of an OV-10 FAC(A) the Marine aircraft destroyed another forward observation tower, two more mortar positions, two T-55 tanks, and one bunker.

By 1205 all of Task Force Papa Bear's assault battalions and Colonel Hodory with the "Alpha" command group were through the first breach. Colonel Hodory moved north and completed arrangements for breaching the second minefield. With Task Force Ripper getting ready for its swing west at Al Jaber, General Myatt wanted Task Force Papa Bear quickly through the second belt. He needed it to cover Ripper's flank, and to establish a breachhead large enough for the landing of Task Force X-Ray before darkness made movement too risky. Yet, the Iraqis were clearly alert and seemed determined to resist. This made a hasty breach necessary and Colonel Hodory began consolidating and repositioning the task force for the assault. At 1400 the task force combat trains were on the north side of the first breach and ready to support follow-on operations. By 1500, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, had completed its displacement to a new position north of the first belt and began neutralizing Iraqi positions. Meanwhile, amid sporadic artillery and mortar fire, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, started deploying for the assault on the second obstacle belt. As the Marines neared the minefield they got their first sight of the burning wellheads of the Al Burqan Oilfield.

By 1520 everything was in place and Colonel Hodory sent the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, against the second obstacle belt defended by the Iraqi *22d Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division*. The same problems with line charges experienced by Task Force Ripper and Task Force Papa Bear's first breach continued. At 1600, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, obstacle-clearing detachments successfully opened lane 2. The effort to clear lane 1 stopped when an anti-tank mine knocked out an M-60A1 roller-equipped tank. The tank blocked the lane. Lane 1's combat engineers began work on another lane while the battalion's assaulting companies moved to lane 2 and started through. No sooner had the first company penetrated the minefield than it engaged five T-55 tanks attempting to withdraw and destroyed two. The assault force pressed on to widen the breachhead. Then, enemy mortar fire fell on the advancing Marines causing 10 casualties among a group clearing bunkers. While corpsmen treated and evacuated the wounded, the 3d Battalion continued its assault on the *22d Brigade's* trenches. Assisted by AH-1W Cobras, artillery fire from 1st Battalion,



11th Marines, and organic 81mm mortars, the 3d Battalion fought its way through a strong antitank and mortar position. When the position fell, hundreds of Iraqi soldiers began surrendering.<sup>142</sup>

During the 3d Battalion's assault, 1st Tank Battalion moved through the single open lane. At 1615 it swung east and attacked an enemy force consisting of revetted tanks and dug-in infantry. Tracers crisscrossed the gray sky as Marine units closed on the Iraqis. When the TOW company moved into position on the battalion's right flank, it unhinged the Iraqi defense by destroying six T-55 tanks. Company B's forward air controller directed a flight of AH-1W Cobras against another group of tanks. Their TOW missiles accounted for an additional eight T-55s. The Iraqi defense came apart. Company I, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines (attached to 1st Tank Battalion), no sooner reached the enemy position than it became inundated by 650 Iraqi soldiers wanting to surrender. In the gathering darkness, while Company I handled the prisoners, 1st Tank Battalion pushed its antitank company into the oilfield as a screen. One of the TOW-equipped HMMWVs no sooner got in position than it encountered a T-55 whose crew still wanted to fight. Following a short engagement, the Iraqi tank exploded in flames after a direct hit by a TOW missile.<sup>143</sup>

At 1700 Colonel Hodory brought the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, into the breach. The battalion moved directly north where it encountered resistance. Company B and a platoon of TOWs destroyed three tanks and three armored



Photograph by 1st Marine Division Combat Camera Unit, 31 January 1991  
*An anti-tank HMMWV. The absence of allied recognition symbol (^) indicates photograph was taken prior to engagement at Khafji.*

personnel carriers in the fight. The company forward air controller directed a flight of AH-1W Cobras and knocked out four armored personnel carriers. Meanwhile Company A moved to the battalion's right flank where it engaged enemy vehicles and infantry. Colonel Hodory then detached the uncommitted 1st Battalion's Company D, which had just gone through the breach, to assist the 1st Tank Battalion with its prisoners.

Colonel Hodory moved into the breachhead with his "Alpha" command group in trace of the 1st Tank Battalion. During the tank battalion's engagement Colonel Hodory located the command post in the center of the task force position. He kept the "Bravo" command group south of the minefield. From there it coordinated the movement of units into the only functioning lane at the time. Work on clearing additional lanes continued. The obstacle-clearing detachments completed an alternate lane and the engineer task force moved to the minefield and began work clearing two additional lanes. Work on lane 3 suddenly stopped when another M60A1 tank struck a mine.

By then it was getting dark. Colonel Hodory consolidated his position. He turned over lane control to the regimental S-4 and moved "Bravo" command group north to his location. He established a temporary enemy prisoner camp on the north side of the breach. Continuing resistance, however, caused Hodory to leave the logistics trains and the engineer task force on the south side.<sup>144</sup> Papa Bear's assault battalions remained where they were and completed the formation of a breachhead into the Al Burqan Oilfield. The 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, occupied the left sector of Task Force Papa Bear's zone. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, moved north into the oilfields to anchor the center of the line. The 1st Tank Battalion faced east and the open desert on the right flank.

Though enemy resistance diminished, the area of the breakthrough remained volatile. "Bravo" command group, traveling in a lightly armed AAVC7A1, no sooner cleared the minefield than it came under fire from a T-55. A missile fired from an accompanying HMMWV mounted TOW knocked out the Iraqi tank. The assault battalions spent the next few hours sweeping their areas and making final dispositions in a landscape littered with enemy bunkers, revetted positions, and wrecked tanks, personnel carriers, and vehicles of all types. Behind the task force, between the two obstacle belts, moved support units of the 1st Marine Division as they took up night defensive positions in the gathering darkness. To the north the burning wells belched great columns of flame and smoke. The entire Al Burqan Oilfield seemed to be on fire and no one knew what enemy force might be lurking there, if indeed any Iraqis remained in the oilfield at all. Light from burning wells overpowered thermal sights and smoke obscured the area. Growing concern about what lay in front of the division prompted General Myatt to have Colonel Hodory push Papa Bear's antitank screen several kilometers into the oilfield at 2100 that evening.<sup>145</sup>

At 2330 General Myatt gave Task Force Papa Bear a new mission. Myatt wanted to consolidate the division position before resuming the offensive. Like a snake getting ready to strike, he began building combat power for the next day's attack on Kuwait International Airport and Kuwait City. Myatt ordered Task Force Papa Bear to defend east and northeast to cover the landing of Task

Force X-Ray and to protect the division's right flank until Colonel Howard got all five artillery battalions repositioned in the morning. Once X-Ray and the artillery were in place, General Myatt gave Colonel Hodory an "on order" mission to continue attacking northeast.

As Colonel Hodory planned his new mission General Myatt reassessed the tactical situation. For the most part the offensive had gone very much as planned. The division had finished the day on planned objectives. Four artillery battalions were already in position to support the continuing attack and Colonel Howard planned to move the last battalion, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, early the next morning. During G-Day, the artillery fired 1,346 rounds, mostly rocket assisted projectiles (RAP), in support of the task forces, yet ammunition supplies were still plentiful.

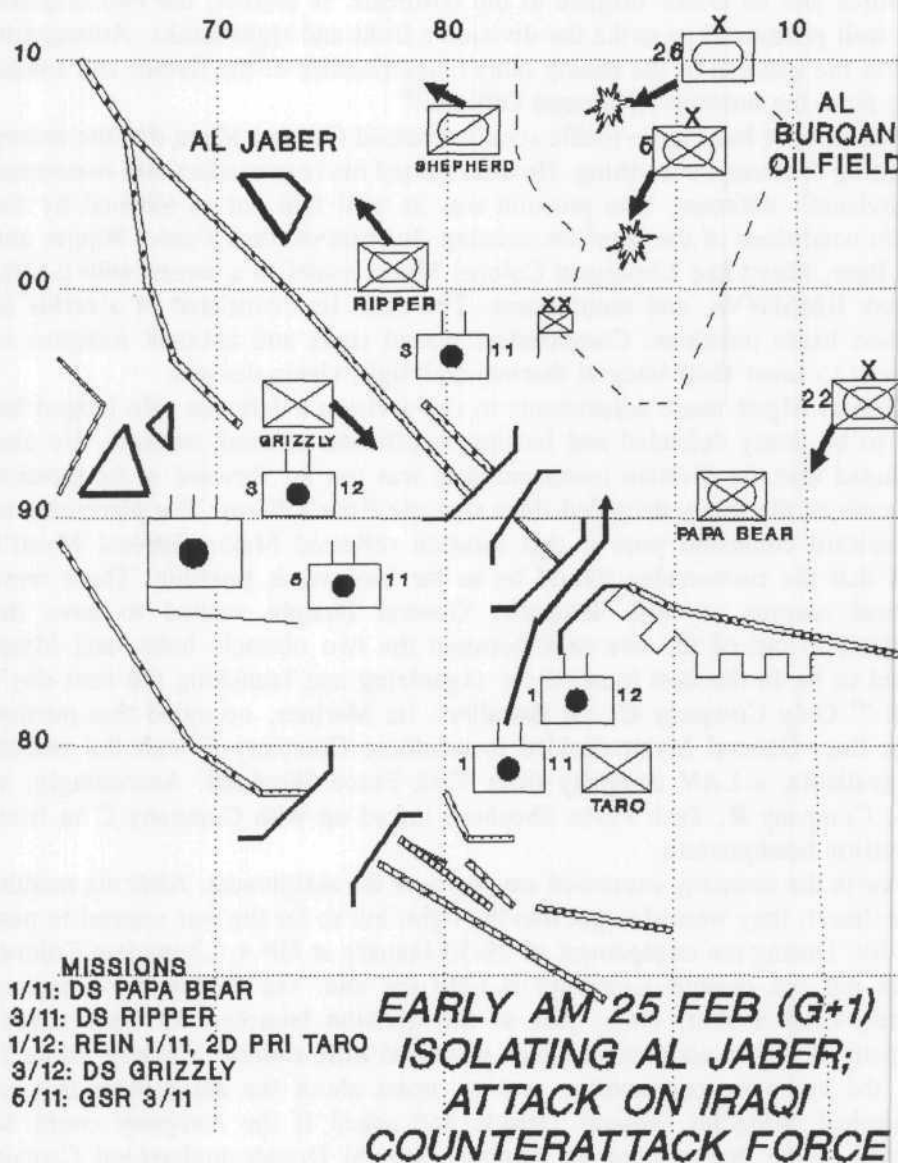
The one aspect of the operation which failed to happen was the helicopter insertion of Task Force X-Ray. To the infantrymen of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, the lack of helicopters, the diverse squadron origin of those provided, the lack of pilot rehearsal, and the seeming ad hoc operation that emerged left the impression that the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing had reached the limit of its resources. The helicopter shortage reduced the task force by almost two-thirds of its strength. Unfamiliarity of pilots and crews with Task Force X-Ray and its equipment, as well as a shortage of pilots qualified in night formation flying limited the maneuverability of the helicopterborne force. General Myatt lost the flexibility he required should the ground offensive not go as planned.

For Task Force X-Ray the first day went completely awry. The Iraqi defense of the second belt proved strong enough to delay the breach. General Myatt needed the breachhead to be large enough to accommodate the landing of Task Force X-Ray and it took the mechanized task forces most of the afternoon to secure the necessary area, which left them with only 40 minutes to establish a landing zone (LZ).<sup>146</sup> Consequently, instead of a daylight insertion, the helicopters arrived over the second breachhead at 1800 in darkness. Pilots saw a battlefield active with burning wells, burning enemy tanks, machine gun and antiaircraft fire, and Marine vehicles that milled about without any apparent sense of direction.<sup>147</sup> They also saw more than one landing zone. Earlier, an artillery mission hit the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and killed two Iraqi prisoners and wounded one Marine, one Navy corpsman, and 23 enemy prisoners of war. Consequently, a flight of medevac helicopters was expected at any moment thus causing the marking of a second landing zone.

Compounding the problems facing Task Force X-Ray was the gradual disorientation experienced by the pilots as their formation maneuvered to avoid the clouds of smoke and overcast conditions encountered near the second breach. The flight leader attempted to get assistance from division headquarters, but he only had the frequency to the division tactical net. He found it overwhelmed with radio traffic from the battalions fighting to secure the breachhead. When he finally established communications with General Myatt, they decided that the confused situation on the ground and in the air, and the threat of heat-seeking missiles, courted disaster the longer the flight continued. Myatt believed the mechanized task forces had the situation well enough in hand that he ordered

Task Force X-Ray return to base and to attempt a landing at first light the following morning.

Cancellation of Task Force X-Ray's insertion did not immediately affect division operations. The rapid collapse of the Iraqi defense rendered Task Force X-Ray really unnecessary. On the division's left flank, Colonel Fulford was not even aware that the task force had not gone in. However, a restricted fire zone had been created for the task force and it was inadvertently still in effect when the Iraqi attack struck the following morning.



*Location of division units and Iraqi counter-attack on the morning of 25 February 1991.  
 Note placement of division forward command post.*



*G Plus 1, 25 February 1991: 'Possible enemy attack'*

At 0109 General Myatt saw the Iraqi maps captured by Task Force Ripper and heard the statements by several captured officers that began to concern him that a counterattack was imminent. However, for a time, he and his headquarters staff continued to focus on the Jaber area--that was where the original concentration of Iraqi artillery (and the greatest threat to the division) had been. As the night wore on further intelligence reported an armor/mechanized brigade-size force and an armor brigade to the northeast. If correct, the two brigades were well positioned to strike the division's front and right flanks. Attempts to confirm the location of the enemy units failed because of the flames and smoke rising from the burning Al Burqan Oilfield.<sup>148</sup>

Intercepts of Iraqi radio traffic soon convinced General Myatt that the enemy was going to attempt something. He then alerted his commanders and reassessed the division's defenses. The position was as well laid out as allowed by the chaotic conditions of the previous evening. In front of Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear, Myatt had Lieutenant Colonel Myers establish a screen with LAVs, antitank HMMWVs, and scout teams. The main line consisted of a series of battalion battle positions. Commanders placed tanks and antitank weapons to the front to favor their integral thermal and night vision devices.

General Myatt made adjustments to the division's defenses. He judged his front to be thinly defended and lacking a sufficient antitank strength. He also concluded that the division command post was too far forward in its location just south of the thinly defended lines near the Emir's Farm. The placement of the forward command post at that location reflected Major General Myatt's belief that the commander should be as far forward as possible. There were practical reasons as well. Brigadier General Draude wanted to have the headquarters out of the fire sack between the two obstacle belts, and Myatt wanted to be in the best location for organizing and launching the next day's attack.<sup>149</sup> Only Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, occupied that portion of the line. General Myatt decided to reinforce Company C with the nearest unit available, a LAV company from Task Force Shepherd. Accordingly, at 0645, Company B, Task Force Shepherd linked up with Company C in front of division headquarters.

Few in the company expressed any joy over the assignment. After six months in the desert, they wanted to get into the fight, but so far the war seemed to pass them by. During the engagement of 29-30 January at OP 4, Lieutenant Colonel Myers did not commit Company B until the end. On G-Day the company scarcely fired a shot. Now, just as the division launched its final attack, Company B got an assignment which promised little combat. Captain Eddie S. Ray, the company commander, was so upset about the assignment that he approached Brigadier General Draude and asked if the company could be returned to the line as soon as feasible. General Draude understood Captain Ray's frustration but advised him that the company was needed in front of the division command post for the time being.<sup>150</sup> As events turned out, Company B's

departure from Task Force Shepherd put it in position as the center piece in the most important engagement fought by the 1st Marine Division during the war.

General Myatt made another fortunate adjustment to the division's defensive lines. Concerned about what enemy units might be hiding in the Al Burqan Oilfield, he ordered the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, to conduct a reconnaissance in force into the oilfield at first light. By waiting for dawn, Myatt hoped to avoid friendly fire casualties. In the period of time necessary for Lieutenant Colonel Humble to orient the division for the drive to the Kuwait International Airport, General Myatt wanted a thorough probe of the oilfield, even though the Iraqi attack had so far failed to develop. Other intelligence information coming to division headquarters indicated that the enemy was building a sizable counterattack force. At 0730, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, attacked into the Al Burqan towards Gathering Center 4. It found movement difficult. A combination of thick black smoke and morning fog reduced visibility to 200 meters and less.

Myatt decided to mass the fire from the five artillery battalions to disrupt the attack before it got organized. The 11th Marines quickly responded. Nevertheless, Brigadier General Draude found the time required to shift the guns to be "agonizingly slow."<sup>151</sup> At 0753 when he received the order, Colonel Howard had only one battery oriented to the area, but two brief orders from the regimental fire direction center massed every available artillery piece against the separated Iraqi brigades. Howard fired on the targets in sequence with the order: "Regiment; four rounds DPICM or RAP as range appropriate; Time on Target, 0817" against the armored-mechanized brigade, and: "Regiment; four rounds DPICM or RAP as range appropriate; Time on Target, 0820" against the site of the armored brigade. As directed, at 0817 11 batteries from four battalions fired on the first target. A barrage of 244 rounds fell on the Iraqi *22d Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division*. Three minutes later, 13 batteries from five battalions shifted to the site of intelligence subsequently discovered to be the Iraqi *15th Brigade, 3d Armored Division* and fired a barrage of 496 rounds of RAP and DPICM. The enemy did not immediately respond to the Marine artillery.<sup>152</sup>

The Iraqi attack began from the east with a feint against the left flank, followed by large-scale assaults against the right flank and center.

The first attack struck Task Forces Shepherd and Task Force Ripper at about 0515. To the Marines of Company D, Task Force Shepherd, the assault seemed reminiscent of the engagement at OP 4. Under cover of an overcast and dark night an Iraqi column made its way south towards Al Jaber guiding on a north-south running power line. When Company D spotted the enemy vehicles they opened a running fight, hitting the Iraqis with a combination of TOW missiles and 25mm fire. Slowly moving south, Company D knocked out five enemy tanks and one truck from the rear of the column. The main line of Task Force Ripper engaged the column's front when it came in range. By 0620 the 3d Tank Battalion's TOWs found themselves in an intense firefight with 20 vehicles and an unspecified number of dismounted infantry. The TOW fire soon dispersed the attacking force which ended the first Iraqi assault.<sup>153</sup>

Meanwhile, Colonel Hodory on the division's right flank held an "orders group" to discuss General Myatt's changes to the task force mission and the possibility of an Iraqi attack. The meeting proved difficult to put together. Dense fog enveloped the area and reduced visibility to 100 meters. Unit commanders with their operations officers found getting to regimental headquarters an arduous exercise. They groped through fog and smoke so thick that some never got to the meeting on time and needed to be briefed separately. Consequently, the "orders group" took longer than intended.

The fog proved as much a problem for the Iraqis as it did for the Marines. It disoriented the enemy force. Instead of striking Marine lines with mass, the attack dissipated and drifted into Task Force Papa Bear. Some enemy units collided with positions along the main line, some slipped past and moved into the center of the task force. The first encounter surprised both sides. An enemy force aiming for the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, missed the Marine battalion and kept driving until coming into contact with the task force headquarters.

At 0800 Colonel Hodory and his staff were still briefing late arriving commanders when a T-55 tank and three Type-63 armored personnel carriers emerged from the fog and halted about 50 meters from where Colonel Hodory stood.<sup>154</sup> The tank sat motionless with its gun perfectly sighted on Hodory's command vehicles. It never fired. Instead, the brigade commander came forward and surrendered to the astonished Marines. When questioned, he revealed that his force made up part of the *22d Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division* assigned to attack the American right flank. When questioned further, he explained that he no longer wished to fight nor did the group accompanying him. However, he could not speak for those behind him in the fog.

As Colonel Hodory digested this information, the rest of the Iraqi force began an attack on the task force command post with tank and automatic weapons fire. The task force S-3, Major John H. Turner, saw that:<sup>155</sup>

We had main gun rounds, machine gun tracers and even 5.56mm fire (from India 3/9) coming through the CP. I remember hitting the deck for the first time during the war and I saw tracers going through the CP from east to west at knee height.

The headquarters countered with a combination of MK-19s, machine guns, and light antitank weapons. In ten minutes, they destroyed or disabled one enemy tank and several armored personnel carriers, and forced the Iraqis to retreat into the fog.

Colonel Hodory notified commanders that headquarters was under attack by a brigade-size force. He told 1st Tank Battalion to expect the Iraqi assault to come in an easterly direction, parallel to the second obstacle belt. That information required the 1st Tank Battalion, which had already faced north in anticipation of resuming the division attack, to redeploy facing east. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Michael M. Kephart, then called the company commanders in for a meeting. However, the briefing had scarcely

begun when battalion headquarters suddenly came under enemy automatic weapons fire. As bright yellow tracers cut across the Marine position company commanders quickly returned to their units and the battalion prepared to first contain the attack, then launch a counter-thrust. The first response consisted of Dragon and light antitank fire from the dug-in Company I, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, attached to 1st Tank Battalion. Struck on its flank and startled by American fire from the unseen unit, the Iraqi attack faltered. The tank battalion used the opportunity to reposition its companies for a counterattack to the east, Company D deployed on the left and Company C on the right. Colonel Admire supported the tank battalion's drive by moving 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, to a location adjacent to the second obstacle belt.

The 1st Tank Battalion redeployed to meet the enemy assault. The dense fog and the limited capabilities of night-vision gunsights threatened even greater confusion if any of the companies got out of position. The two companies managed the movement without difficulty and once they got into position, 1st Tank Battalion's counterattack began. A deep rumbling from engines and the high-pitched squeaking of tank tracks replaced the sound of enemy fire as Companies C and D moved forward on their 2,000-meter jab through the Iraqi brigade. Marine tanks and antitank HMMWVs paused only long enough to sight and fire on enemy vehicles. The TOWs were the first to get engaged and they knocked out six enemy tanks. Lieutenant Colonel Kephart then switched the TOWs north to guard the battalion's left flank and give the tanks a clear field of fire. Company C destroyed more than 18 enemy vehicles. Company D supported the main attack and destroyed whatever managed to get past Company C.<sup>156</sup>

Not everything went smoothly for the Marine tankers. Corporal Motley, a tank commander in Company C, spotted a T-55 and swung his turret at the target. Giving orders to his gunner, Corporal Irwin, Motley shouted out the target and type of main gun round to be fired: "Gunner, Sabot, Tank!" Irwin attempted to fire the gun but experienced a misfire. Corporal Motley then switched Irwin to the main gun's co-ax machine gun only to have that misfire, as did his position's .50-caliber machine gun. Another tank then engaged the T-55.<sup>157</sup>

During the course of the Iraqi counterattack the fog lifted. As it did, a forward air controller in an OV-10 Bronco spotted a build-up of enemy armor to the northeast. Marine fighter-attack aircraft took advantage of the improved visibility and bombarded the Iraqi force. Seriously weakened, the enemy unit fled. At about 1000, a second force began assembling to the southeast. The clearing fog enabled 1st Tank Battalion's TOW weapons to swing into action. Firing at extended ranges, they scored numerous tank and vehicle hits before being joined in the attack by AH-1W Cobras. Major Turner saw from the vantage point of Task Force Papa Bear's command post located "about 1,500 meters west of the battle, we could see enemy tanks and APCs bursting into flames."<sup>158</sup>





Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*Destroyed dug-in Iraqi tank.*

Struck simultaneously by air and ground fire, the Iraqis lost vehicles and personnel. No further attacks developed, and by 1100 the 1st Tank Battalion controlled the battlefield. Remnants of the enemy force soon surrendered or withdrew north through the burning wells. In a fight lasting three hours, the battalion had successfully stopped an attack by two Iraqi Brigades (the *501st Brigade*, *8th Infantry Division*, and the *22d Brigade*, *5th Mechanized Division*). The enemy lost 50 tanks disabled, 25 armored personnel carriers destroyed, and 300 prisoners taken. There were no Marine casualties.

At 1100, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, remained heavily engaged in a fight of its own. Having departed its positions at 0730 to clear the Al Burqan Oilfield through Gathering Center 4, the battalion proceeded slowly, moving north for over an hour when, at 0915, it ran into the southern flank of an enemy force counterattacking from the east. The engagement began when the 1st Platoon, Company B, the battalion heavy machine guns' "Baker Team," and the 1st Section, 4th Platoon, Antitank (TOW) Company, 1st Tank Battalion, came in contact with mechanized infantry from the Iraqi *15th Mechanized Infantry Brigade*, *3d Armored Division*. All of Company B soon joined the fight and, by 0930, it destroyed three armored personnel carriers and captured 29 enemy soldiers. The 1st Battalion resumed its movement north with Company B on the left, Company A in the center, and Company D on the right. Companies A and B fought several company-size enemy units during their drive through the burning oilfields. Company D struck the *2d Battalion*, *15th Mechanized Brigade* and captured more than 400 prisoners including an Iraqi battalion commander.

While moving through the oilfield, the battalion came abreast of an LAV screen consisting of Companies A, C, and D, Task Force Shepherd. Because

of the thick smoke that often reduced visibility in that area of the battlefield to less than 50 meters the two units maintained constant communications using 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, tactical radio net. The frequent cross-checking successfully avoided friendly fire incidents while the LAVs and mechanized infantry maneuvered against the Iraqis. By 1600 the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, reached the planned limit of its advance astride the "03" grid line. From the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, Company B covered the battalion's left flank; Company A occupied the center on Hill 114; while Company D, which continued to sweep the area for prisoners, was to take position on Hill 127 covering the right flank (which it did at 1900 that evening). Company D was tied in on the right with 1st Tank Battalion.

Both the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and the 1st Tank Battalion fought amid dense smoke. Unable to employ close air support and artillery, their tactics relied on TOW gunners using thermal sights. In spite of poor visibility, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, destroyed about 43 enemy vehicles and captured more than 500 prisoners. The battalion lost three Marines wounded when an RPG exploded in front of a scout vehicle.<sup>159</sup>

The drive by the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, set off a chain of events. When the 1st Battalion proceeded north it encountered Iraqi units moving across the division front. The battalion halted the southern flank unit of a brigade-size enemy force, fixed it in place, and ultimately destroyed it. The other enemy units continued through the smoke and the fog, pivoted south, and, at 0930, collided with the 1st Marine Division Command Post; Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines; and Company B, Task Force Shepherd (both companies were reinforcing the forward command post). The first hint that something was amiss occurred soon after Company B arrived. Commanded by Captain Eddie S. Ray, the company had just gotten into position when one of its LAVs suddenly fired into the fog. That caught everyone's attention. There had been no radio communication and a quick check showed the firing to have been the result of an accidental discharge. However, no sooner did the company commander complete his investigation than 100 Iraqi soldiers appeared wanting to surrender. Spooked by the 25mm gun fire, their arrival at a location already swept the previous day raised questions about what might be developing further out in the fog and smoke. At first, Marines around the command post could only hear the low sound and rumble of moving tanks and vehicles. Then, the smoke and fog suddenly lifted to reveal an attacking force consisting of five T-55s, 33 armored personnel carriers, and some dismounted infantry.

A vicious firefight erupted as Company B, Task Force Shepherd, and Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, along with Marines assigned to the division forward command element, responded with TOW, AT-4, 25mm gun, and automatic weapons fire. Burning enemy vehicles began to litter the battlefield. After an hour of fighting the Iraqis withdrew into the fog. Marines around the division command post breathed a sigh of relief, none more so than the radio operators and staff personnel working inside the canvas headquarters tent.

The Iraqis quickly reorganized. Fifteen minutes later, at about 1015, the enemy launched a second attack against the command post. The attack again withered under the intense Marine fire, now reinforced by several sections of Sea Cobras firing TOW missiles. Repulsed, the Iraqis withdrew behind the burning wells which obscured them from thermal sights.

At about 1100 much of the fog and smoke dissipated and the enemy launched a third attack. On that occasion General Draude raised the side of the headquarters tent to provide command element staff with a panoramic view of the battlefield as Iraqi tanks and personnel carriers came under fire. Stopped again, the enemy force disintegrated with the loss of 320 soldiers captured, and two tanks and 27 armored personnel carriers destroyed.

As soon as Iraqi pressure eased against the command post General Myatt repositioned the division for a resumption of the offensive. Task Force Papa Bear bore the brunt of the attack and consequently needed more time to adjust. At 1132 Task Force X-Ray flew to a landing zone adjacent to Task Force Papa Bear's breach lanes. Myatt attached it to Papa Bear, and Colonel Hodory held it south of the second obstacle belt until fighting ended in the 1st Tank Battalion's zone. Then he moved it overland to establish battle position X-Ray, a blocking position in the vicinity of the 1st Tank Battalion's previous location. That secured the division's eastern flank while the tank battalion reoriented north.<sup>160</sup> Combat Service Support Detachment 11 moved into the battle area to resupply the 1st Tank Battalion; 3d Battalion, 9th Marines; and 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. As darkness fell Colonel Hodory brought up the engineers and logistics trains to locations north of the obstacle belt.<sup>161</sup>

It took most of the day for Task Force Grizzly to move into positions surrounding the Al Jaber Airfield and to relieve the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, to rejoin Task Force Ripper in the north.

Initially, Task Force Grizzly's redeployment went as planned. In contrast to Colonel Hodory's situation on the right flank, Colonel Fulks enjoyed generally favorable weather conditions with cloudy skies but excellent visibility. By 1028 the reconnaissance teams from both battalions arrived at their respective attack positions and began looking over the area. They found the airfield seemingly undefended, but Colonel Fulks could not capitalize on this windfall--the task force remained to the southeast at the second obstacle belt stopped by a false report. When the lead elements of the 3d Battalion arrived at Task Force Ripper's lanes, radio communication informed Colonel Fulks that a force of enemy armor managed to break through the center defenses and continued south towards him. This was apparently part of the force that earlier struck division headquarters. With the two battalions mounted on trucks, Colonel Fulks did not want the task force getting into engagements with enemy armor. Nothing materialized and after a while Fulks determined the report erroneous and directed the two battalions to move through the breach. A few hours later the 3d Battalion and a company from the 2d Battalion were ready to attack.

Unfortunately, the delay caused by the false report made it impossible for the empty trucks to return to Grizzly's old position and return before dark with the remaining two companies of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. Equally as bad,

weather conditions suddenly deteriorated. The little sunlight that existed disappeared behind a completely overcast sky. Also, the wind shifted and brought with it smoke from the burning oilfields, thereby further reducing visibility.<sup>162</sup> Colonel Fulks remained determined to take Al Jaber that day--General Boomer needed the airfield as a forward helicopter base. Fulks extended the 3d Battalion to cover 2d Battalion's gap and he reworked his plans for a single battalion assault.

With one company from the 2d Battalion placed in reserve, the 3d Battalion began Grizzly's attack at 1602. Fulks wanted a methodical attack beginning with cuts in the perimeter fence, followed by artillery and mortar preparation, concluding with the assault and building clearing operations. The enemy remained passive and made no attempt to disrupt 3d Battalion's initial movement. For some Iraqis, the sight of Marines advancing towards the perimeter fence was enough. Even before lead elements reached the fence, 18 Iraqi soldiers emerged from the outer defenses and surrendered. Though they claimed the airfield was abandoned, Colonel Fulks could not risk an ambush and continued the methodical attack. At 1645, 3d Battalion's combat engineers and scouts planted explosives that blew holes in the airport perimeter fence. An engineer was wounded by one of the explosions and had to be evacuated.

At 1722, preparation fires began striking Al Jaber. Mortar fire rained in on the airfield hitting its defenses with 86 rounds of high explosive rounds. Artillery fire fell on suspected command and control positions. The Iraqi *449th Artillery Brigade, III Corps*, countered with an unusually accurate response by what remained of its artillery north of Al Jaber. Company I bore the brunt of an Iraqi rocket salvo but suffered no casualties. On the other hand, Company K lost 10 Marines wounded and one killed. Another volley fell on the forward deployed Battery G, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, which wounded two Marines. For the next several hours, the Iraqis kept up sporadic fire against Marine artillery positions, no further rounds fell on Task Force Grizzly, and there were no additional casualties.

The experience justified concerns prior to G-Day about the threat posed by Iraqi artillery concentrations. Before Grizzly's assault on Al Jaber progressed past the perimeter fence enemy artillery had already made it the costliest ground operation of the offensive. Colonel Fulks reevaluated the situation. He faced a force of unknown size, the task force appeared to be in a fire sack, smoke and darkness reduced visibility, and several gas alarms delayed efforts to evacuate wounded and continue the assault. Yet, Colonel Fulks decided to press on and, at 1746 hours Company K managed to slip through the holes in the perimeter fence and establish a foothold in the airfield's outer defenses.

Their attack met no resistance, which convinced Fulks to press forward to take the airfield that evening. Close observation of Al Jaber by Marines using thermal sights and night vision devices supported his decision. They saw few, if any, defenders. Assisted by 81mm illumination rounds the 3d Battalion's assault continued. For the next four hours, the battalion gradually crept forward and captured 32 Iraqi soldiers. Progress became increasingly more difficult when blowing oil smoke frequently reduced visibility to a few yards. By 2100,





Pastel by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Capt Donald E. McRae, Company F, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, Task Force Grizzly, huddles against the cold.*

patrols from Company K had pushed as far as the outermost buildings when Colonel Fulks decided not to risk casualties in house-to-house fighting at night and suspended the attack order until daylight.

The poor visibility made it difficult for Colonel Fulford to reposition Task Force Ripper's maneuver battalions. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, experienced the most difficulty. He had to remain near Al Jaber until midafternoon waiting for Task Force Grizzly to arrive. Although the relief went smoothly, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, moved so late in the day that it got caught moving to its new position when the wind changed and enveloped the entire area under a thick blanket of oily smoke. The experience seemed surreal. At 1500 all daylight suddenly vanished and, three hours later, the battalion moved in darkness so black as to be impenetrable by night vision devices. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, pressed forward regardless. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis put CAAT 1 and CAAT 2 forward, screening the battalion's left and right fronts, respectively, while he kept the companies organized in a wedge formation with "Team Mech" at the point, Company C on the left, and "Team Tank" on the right. By using PLRS data, the battalion eventually rejoined Task Force Ripper.<sup>163</sup> Colonel Fulford and the reassembled task force were ready for the attack on the Kuwait International Airport.

The visibility also limited the use of artillery during the day's fighting, but the day was not uneventful. While Task Force Papa Bear and the division command post were busy defeating the three-brigade attack, Colonel Howard

started the long process of moving the artillery battalions through the second obstacle belt and into position to support further division operations. The redeployment also brought the battalions into a fluid battlefield situation. In the late morning as Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and the battalion command post moved to a new firing position, they came under automatic weapons fire from a group of Iraqi vehicles positioned to the northeast of them. The battery commander immediately ordered one gun into a hasty firing position to engage the enemy force with direct fire. It destroyed one vehicle and dispersed the remainder. An hour later, Sergeant Shawn Toney of Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines (a reserve unit from Richmond, Virginia, attached to the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines), spotted two enemy multiple rocket launchers preparing to fire on Marine positions. He thought they were tanks but his gun commander, Sergeant Thomas Stark, IV, looked closer and confirmed that they



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*Marine from Company F, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, Task Force Grizzly, on patrol near Al Jaber Airfield.*

were rocket launchers. After quickly swinging their guns on the vehicles and taking direct aim at point blank range, the artillerymen put both launchers out of action with a combination of automatic weapons and direct fire from their M198 155mm howitzers.<sup>164</sup>

At 0930, following the massive Marine artillery barrage, the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, began moving into the battle area. In contrast to the experience of Batteries H and A, the 5th Battalion's batteries saw nothing of the enemy except destroyed or abandoned vehicles. The battalion arrived at its position and was ready to fire by 1130. It remained there only 30 minutes then displaced to a new location for Task Force Grizzly's assault on Al Jaber Airfield. Less than an hour later the 5th Battalion completed its second move and informed Colonel Howard that it was ready to fire.

The 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, remained in direct support of Task Force Ripper. It followed the 5th Battalion into the breachhead by displacing each battery forward by echelon. By that technique, a battery had one platoon in position ready to fire while the other two moved. When the first platoon reached the new location it deployed and the next platoon displaced forward. The first echelon declared itself for action at 1351. The entire battalion was in position within an hour and a half. Concurrent with the movement of 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, the regimental command post crossed the second obstacle belt to occupy a central position in preparation for the attack on the Kuwait International Airport. At 1530, the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, moved through the obstacle belt and occupied a firing position near 3d Battalion, 11th Marines.

During the day Colonel Howard modified battalion assignments in order to support the final drive to seize the Kuwait International Airport. He left the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, with Task Force Ripper and he reinforced the task force with the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines. Howard put the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, in general support of the division but assigned it priority of fires to Task Force Shepherd. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, also received a general support mission, but Colonel Howard wanted it to follow in trace of Task Force Papa Bear and gave it an on-order direct support mission should Papa Bear get engaged. Howard put the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, in direct support of Task Forces X-Ray and Taro but designated one of its batteries to supporting Task Force Grizzly. Accordingly, at 2024, Battery A displaced and established a firing position near the Al Jaber airfield.

At 2245, Colonel Howard further refined the artillery plan. He wanted 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, and 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, to leapfrog by battalions to keep pace with Task Force Ripper's advance. He kept 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, in direct support and used 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, to reinforce 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, retained its general support tasking, but Colonel Howard confirmed its direct support mission of Task Force Papa Bear. He wanted the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, to support Task Force Shepherd's drive by displacing by echelon along the task force's western zone of advance. The 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, kept its mission and instructions unchanged. At 2310 Colonel Howard collocated his command post with the division main headquarters.<sup>165</sup>



Photograph by author, 25 February 1991

*One of the Iraqi rocket launchers put out of action by Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines, in the afternoon.*

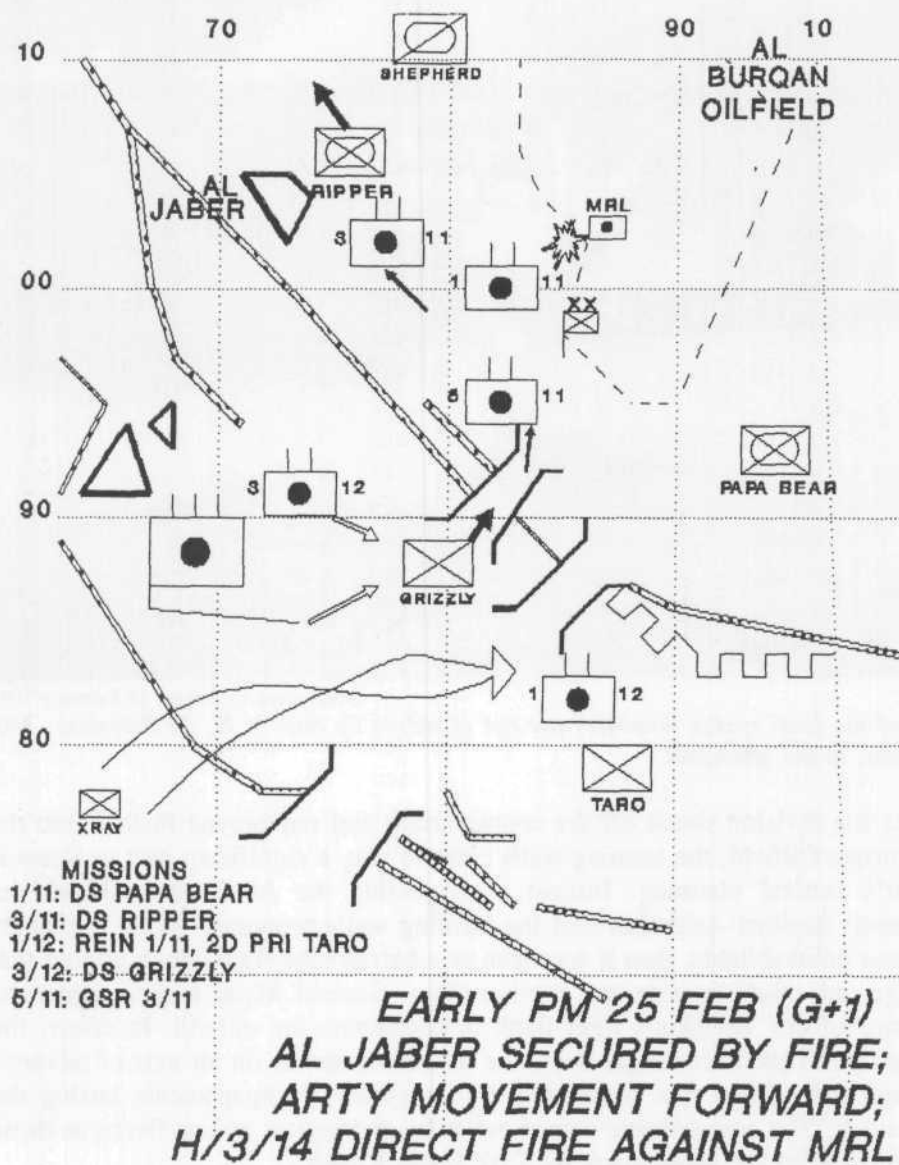
As the division shook off the counterattack and redeployed further into the Al Burqan Oilfield, the burning wells came to play a significant part in General Myatt's tactical planning. Instead of bypassing the Al Burqan Oilfield as originally decided--scientists said the burning wells produced toxins that made the area uninhabitable, thus it was seen as a barrier--the Iraqi attack proved that a large unit could operate and survive there. General Myatt had to adjust the advance of the division's right flank to encompass the oilfield. In effect, the change put Task Force Papa Bear, the division reserve, on an axis of advance through the oilfield that committed it to a series of engagements lasting the entire day. The engagements turned out to be as frequent and as fierce as those encountered in the main attack by Task Force Ripper.

The burning wells belched thick black smoke that completely obscured the battlefield. Poor visibility concealed the three Iraqi brigades and enabled them to attack without being detected. As a result General Myatt needed to ensure the oilfield did not hide any more surprises. Rather than it being the barrier that



division staff figured the Al Burqan Oilfield to be, the counter-attack showed the area to be trafficable, an excellent tactical position in its own right. The Al Burqan Oilfield became an objective to be seized.

The smoke affected all aspects of division operations. The division operational plan needed good visibility, 25 percent or better of moonlight, for



*Position of division units by the afternoon of 25 February. Map shows location of Battery H's engagement against Iraqi rocket launchers and deployment of Task Force X-Ray.*

night operations. However, by the end of the first day's operations, General Myatt discovered that the blowing smoke obscured the battlefield during the day and frequently rendered night vision devices inoperable. The inability to see in the dark forced Myatt to abandon the idea of large-scale night operations. Also, extensive smoke and cloud cover canceled out the use of fighter-attack aircraft and made it difficult even for AH-1W Cobras to operate. On the third day of the ground attack, when the division moved into the heart of the Al Burqan Oilfield, the task forces found themselves frequently plunged into virtual darkness when wind shifts suddenly blanketed them under smoke too thick for sunlight to penetrate. Gunnery Sergeant Cochran noted at the time that: "It was like being in a black hole."<sup>166</sup>

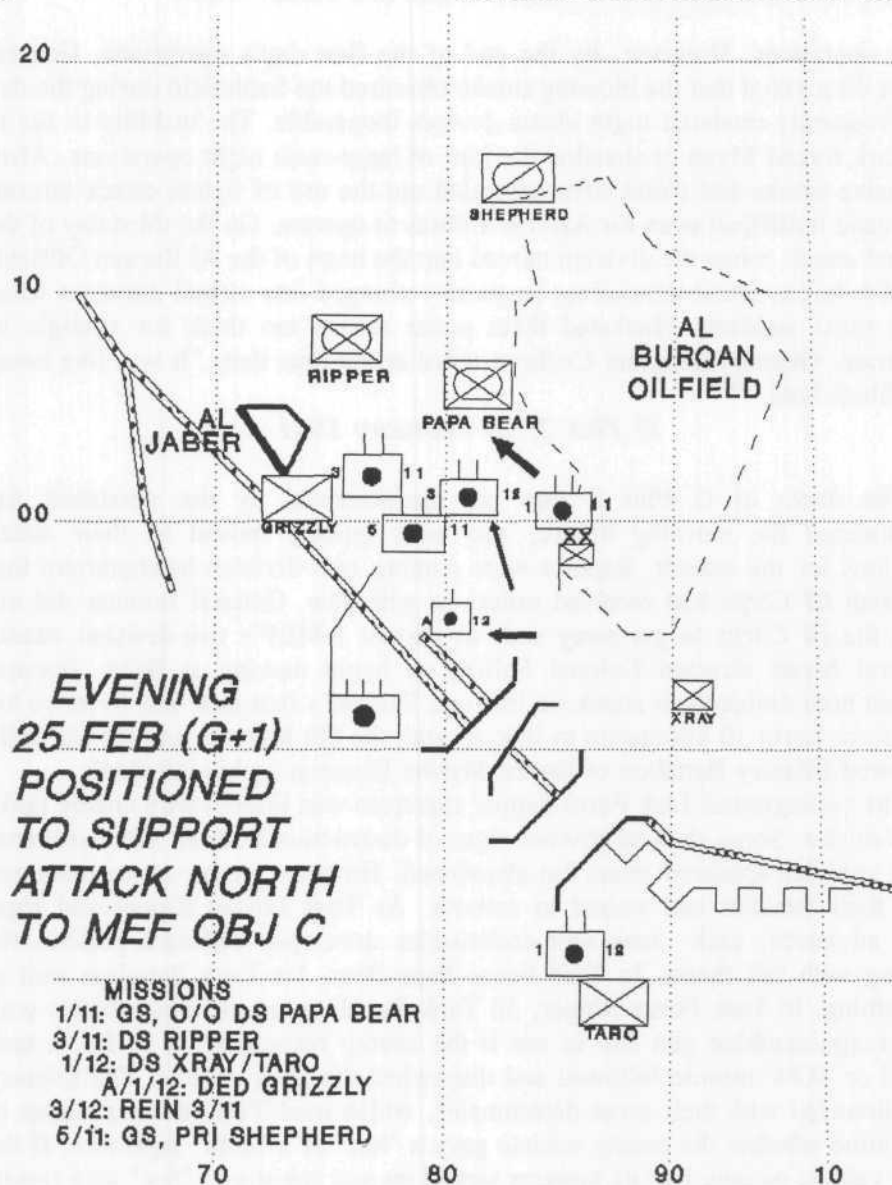
*G Plus 2, 26 February 1991*

The dawn of G Plus 2 was not characterized by the persistent fog encountered the morning before, and units quickly moved to their attack positions for the assault. Reports were coming into division headquarters that the Iraqi *III Corps* had received orders to withdraw. General Boomer did not want the *III Corps* to get away and, as part of I MEF's two-division attack, General Myatt directed Colonel Fulford to begin moving at 0654. Boomer wanted both divisions to attack on line and Fulford's first task was to move his task force north 10 kilometers to link up with the 8th Marines and the 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion of the 2d Marine Division on his left flank.

The battleground Task Force Ripper traversed was littered with enemy tanks and vehicles. Some showed obvious signs of destruction from air bombardment; other vehicles appeared intact but abandoned. However, some crews remained with their vehicles and waited in ambush. As Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear advanced, each tank unit commander developed different policies for dealing with this threat. In Task Force Papa Bear, 1st Tank Battalion shot at everything. In Task Force Ripper, 3d Tank Battalion tested Iraqi vehicles with long-range machine gun fire to see if the enemy responded. If it did, a tank round or TOW missile followed and dispatched the Iraqi vehicle. The infantry battalions led with their scout detachments, which used TOW thermal sights to determine whether the enemy vehicle gave a "hot" or a "cold" signature. If the Iraqi vehicle or tank had its systems turned on and registered "hot" as a result, they engaged it. The frequent firefights interrupted the rapid advance with numerous stops and starts.

The drive to Kuwait City took place in two phases. In the first part, General Myatt set the limit of advance for Task Force Ripper at the "30" east-west grid line (marked by a line of high tension wires), 10 miles south of the Kuwait International Airport. Myatt ordered Colonel Fulford to hold Ripper there while the rest of the division came into position for the final push.

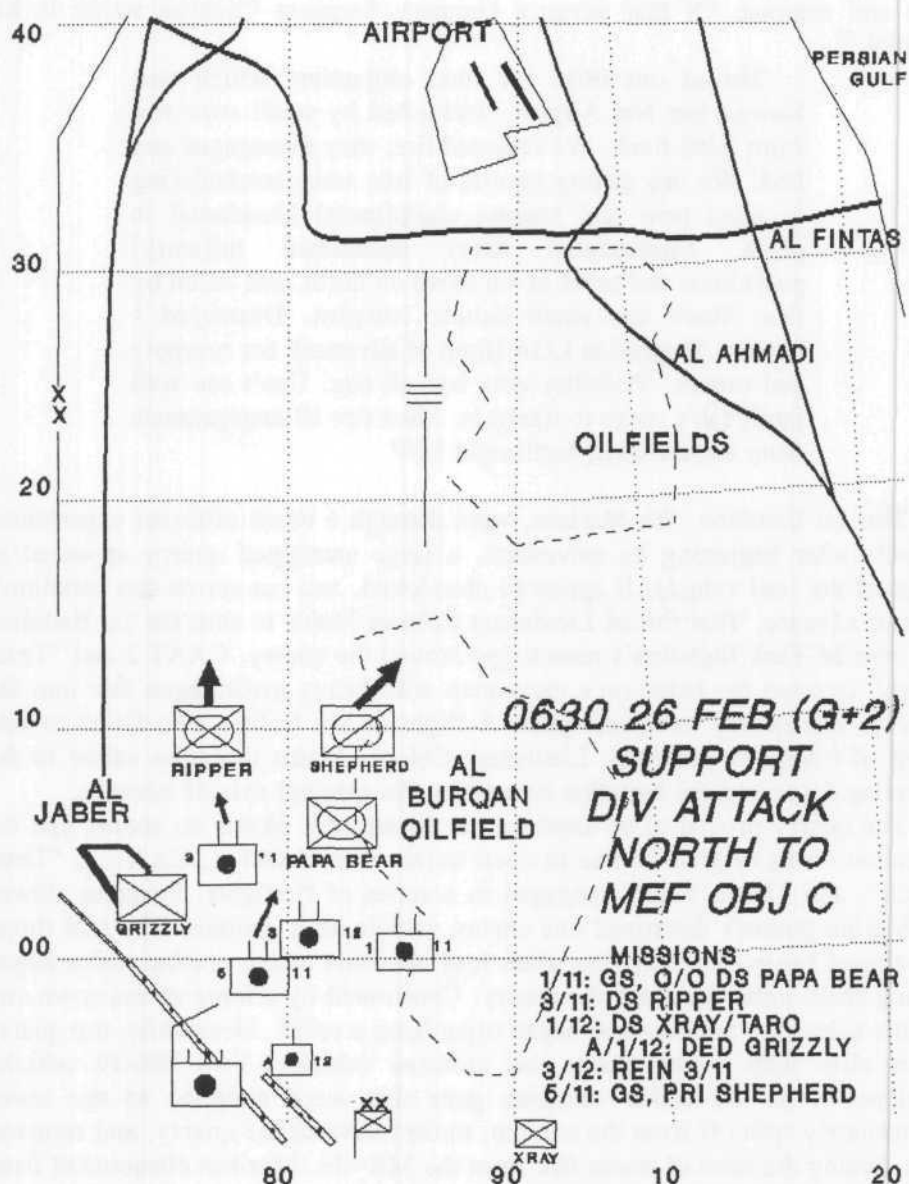
At dawn, Task Force Ripper deployed into its standard wedge formation and began the drive with 3d Tank Battalion in the lead. Encountering only scattered resistance, which the task force easily brushed aside, Ripper reached the designated limit of advance at 1130 and halted. Though enemy forces seldom



*Final location of division units by the evening of 25 February 1991. Units are positioned to support the next day's drive to seize the Kuwait International Airport.*

consisted of more than five vehicles, fighting remained continuous. The 3d Tank Battalion first encountered an abandoned bunker complex and bypassed it only to run into a second position consisting of seven entrenched T-55s. Marine tankers raked the enemy tanks with machine gun fire but got no response. They proved to be abandoned and were bypassed. It was not until 0904 hours that Task Force Ripper met any resistance. Forward observers from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, spotted entrenched infantry and called in a section of AH-1W Sea Cobras.

Thirty-five minutes later a forward element of the 3d Tank Battalion got into a brief engagement with an Iraqi T-62 and destroyed the tank. The tank proved an to be an intelligence windfall. Documents found inside revealed Iraqi frequencies, unit call signs, and a communications plan. However, hostilities ended before this information could be put to use. Of more immediate importance was the battalion's encounter with a T-72. Regarded as the most



*Movement of Task Forces Ripper and Shepherd at 0630 on 26 February 1991.*

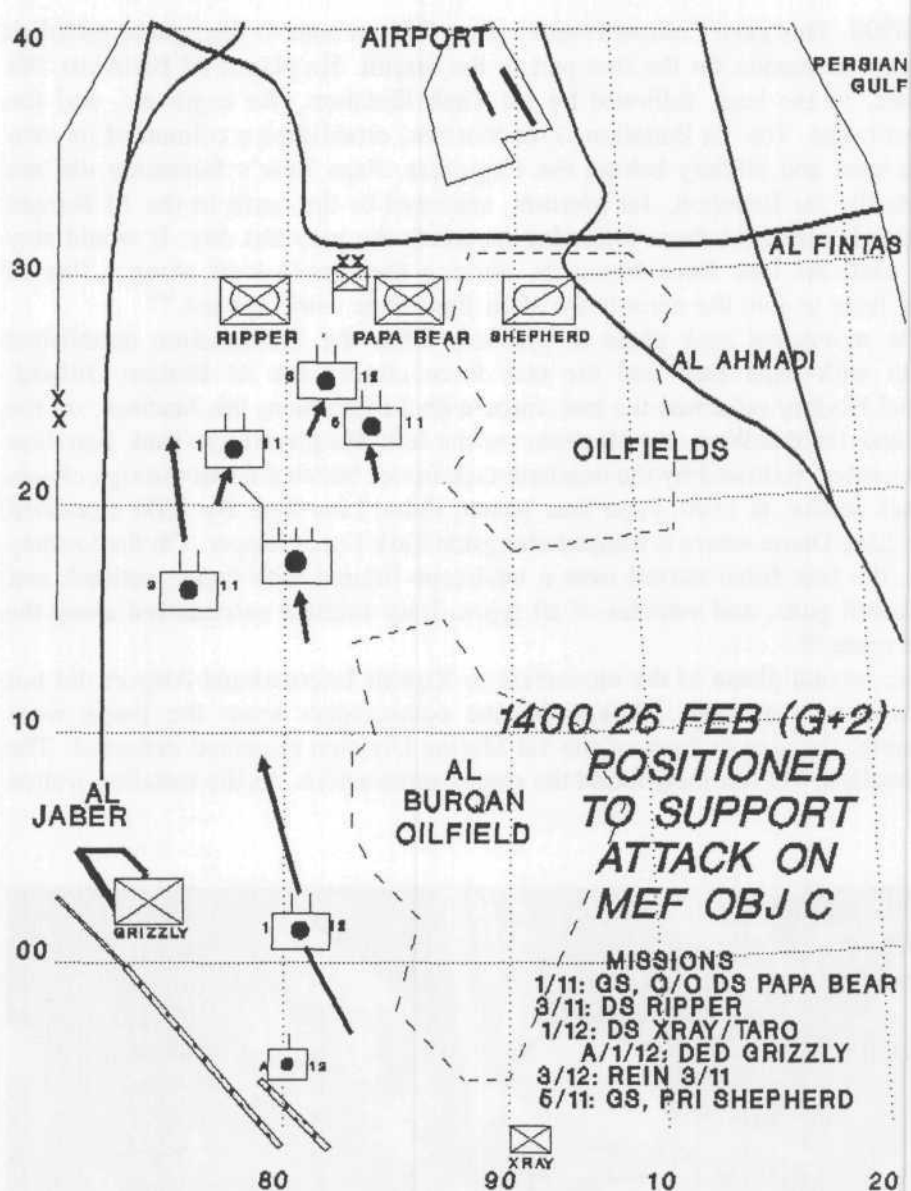


formidable tank used by the Iraqi army, it featured a sophisticated sighting system, thicker armor, and a gun more powerful than 1st Division tanks had. While Marine tank personnel considered the T-55 and T-62 tanks dangerous, they felt the T-72 was lethal. Yet, after a brief firefight, an antitank HMMWV with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, knocked it out of action with a single missile hit. Meanwhile, 3d Tank Battalion encountered more tanks. After driving off the enemy, 3d Tank Battalion reached the high tension wires marking the "30" grid line and stopped. Of that advance Gunnery Sergeant Cochran wrote in his journal:<sup>167</sup>

Moved out 0615 for next obj[ective] which was Kuwait Intr Nat Airport. Ambushed by small arms fire from l[eft] flank. We returned fire, they disengaged and fled. We are getting reports of Iraq units surrendering in mass now and leaving equip[ment] abandoned in place. Encountered many abandoned inf[antry] pos[itions] and tanks as we move on north, and recon by fire. Move into small bunker complex. Destroyed 1 bunker. Stopped at LOA [limit of advance] for resupply and orders. Visibility very bad all day. Can't see well [and] can't range to t[ar]gets. Must fire all engagements from est[ablished] battlesight SOP.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, went through a much different experience. Shortly after beginning its movement, a large unmapped quarry appeared in front of the lead vehicle. It appeared abandoned, and cut across the battalion's axis of advance. That forced Lieutenant Colonel Mattis to shift the 1st Battalion left into 3d Tank Battalion's zone to get around the quarry. CAAT 2 and "Team Mech" covered the battalion's movement with heavy machinegun fire into the quarry. The quarry remained quiet. A flight of Sea Cobras also failed to find signs of troops or positions. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis therefore called in the covering force and the battalion returned to its original axis of advance.

The quarry proved to be anything but abandoned. Mattis no sooner had the battalion on its original course in open terrain than CAAT 1, CAAT 2, "Team Mech", and "Team Tank" engaged in a series of firefights. Progress slowed as Marine gunners destroyed one enemy vehicle after another. The real threat developed behind the battalion when lead elements of the combat trains began taking small arms fire from the quarry. Confronted by a force of unknown size Mattis halted the advance and began organizing a relief. Meanwhile, the quarry came alive with enemy troops and armored vehicles. Two MK-19 vehicles equipped with .50-caliber machine guns that were assigned to the trains immediately split off from the column, moved towards the quarry, and returned fire. Seeing the lines of tracer fire from the MK-19s, Marines dismounted from AAVs and HMMWVs and joined in. A supply officer in the column, Second Lieutenant James Welborn, destroyed a BTR-50 with a single LAAW shot while Lance Corporal David Castleman used a LAAW to knock out a second BTR-50.



*Task Forces Ripper, Papa Bear, and Shepherd at Phase Line Diane south of Kuwait International Airport, 1400, 26 February 1991.*

A section from the Dragon Platoon heard the engagement and soon arrived. Quickly moving into range the Dragon gunner destroyed the last remaining enemy machine gun position with a single shot. Organized enemy resistance ceased at that point. Company C then arrived and, under cover of AAV mounted .50-caliber machine guns, the infantry dismounted and cleared the quarry.<sup>168</sup>

By 0030 Colonel Hodory had Task Force Papa Bear positioned for the attack on Kuwait International Airport. Again designated the division reserve supporting Task Force Ripper, Papa Bear was not scheduled to begin its advance

until 0800. This gave Colonel Hodory more than an hour of daylight to establish a column formation for the first part of the assault. He placed 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, in the lead, followed by 1st Tank Battalion, the engineers, and the combat trains. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, established a column of its own to the west and slightly behind the Engineers. Papa Bear's formation did not include the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, stationed to the north in the Al Burqan Oilfield. It remained there following its attack the previous day. It would stay there until the task force began its advance then move west along a line of power lines to join the main body when Papa Bear came abreast.<sup>169</sup>

The movement took place as planned. After the 1st Battalion established contact with Papa Bear and the task force cleared the Al Burqan Oilfield, Colonel Hodory reformed the task force with 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, on the right and 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, on the left. He placed 1st Tank Battalion in the center, followed by the engineer task force. Moving north through clouds of black smoke, at 1100, Papa Bear passed Phase Line Red. By 1300 it reached Phase Line Diane where it stopped alongside Task Force Ripper. On the journey north, the task force moved over a landscape littered with tanks, antitank and anti-aircraft guns, and vehicles of all types. Iraqi soldiers surrendered along the entire route.<sup>170</sup>

The second phase of the movement to Kuwait International Airport did not promise to be as easy. Though Marine commanders knew the Iraqis were retreating, the area in front of the 1st Marine Division remained defended. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, found the enemy quite active. As the battalion waited



*The G-3, LtCol Jerry D. Humble, at center, coordinates task force movements on 26 February 1991. MajGen James M. Myatt is on the left wearing the black watchcap.*

at the line of departure, CAAT 2 received sporadic small arms fire from a group of buildings about 600 meters northeast of the battalion. Remembering the previous day's ambush, Lieutenant Colonel Mattis struck back with everything the battalion had. In a matter of minutes, artillery, mortars, machine guns, MK-19 40mm grenades, and LAAW fire rained in on the Iraqis. Tracer fire snaked into the buildings and explosions ripped them apart. When the smoke cleared the buildings lay in ruins with their occupants dead or dying.<sup>171</sup> The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, adopted a less dramatic approach. Taking advantage of the waiting period, the battalion launched a preemptive strike. Its "Able Team" and TOW section moved forward to clear the immediate area in front of the battalion. In their assault they found 10 abandoned T-62s, 10 AT-12s, large quantities of ammunition, and enemy soldiers wanting only to surrender.<sup>172</sup>

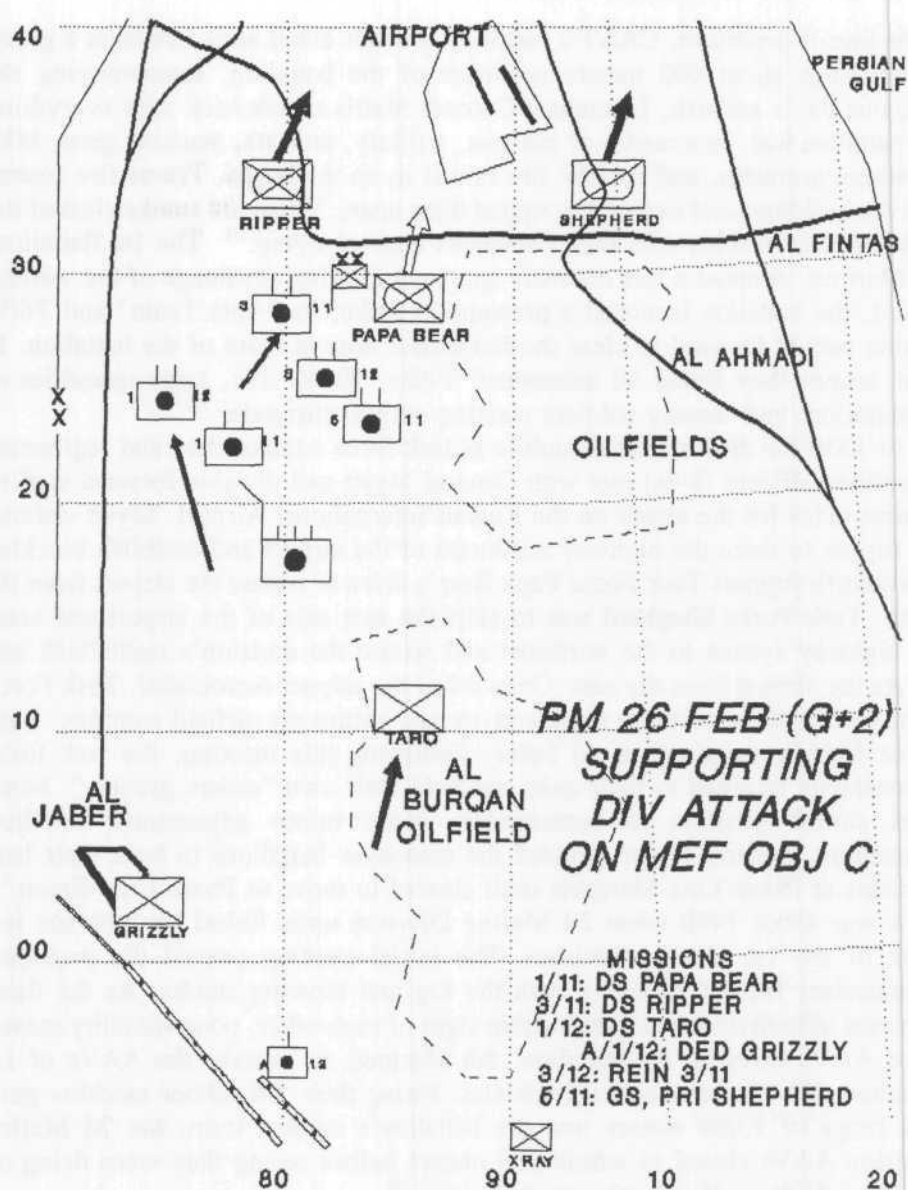
At 1330 the division sat immobile as task force commanders and regimental operations officers (S-3s) met with General Myatt and division forward staff to finalize plans for the attack on the Kuwait International Airport. Myatt ordered TF Ripper to seize the highway northwest of the airport and establish blocking positions to support Task Force Papa Bear's drive to isolate the airport from the south. Task Force Shepherd was to skirt the east side of the airport and seize the highway system to the northeast and secure the division's right flank and isolate the airport from the east. Once it had the airport surrounded, Task Force Taro was to move north by truck convoy and secure the airfield complex. Task Force Grizzly remained at Al Jaber. Following this meeting, the task force commanders returned to their units and held their own "orders groups." Some units shifted position as commanders made minor adjustments to their formations. General Myatt directed the maneuver battalions to hold their lead elements at Phase Line Margaret until cleared to move to Phase Line Green.<sup>173</sup>

It was about 1400 when 2d Marine Division units linked up with the left flank of the 1st Marine Division. The initial meeting proved the problems commanders faced contending with the fog and blowing smoke. As the flank elements of both divisions came within sight of each other, poor visibility caused some AAVs carrying 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, to mistake the AAVs of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, as Iraqi vehicles. Firing their .50-caliber machine guns at a range of 1,000 meters into the battalion's combat train, the 2d Marine Division AAVs closed to within 500 meters before seeing they were firing on Marine vehicles and returning to their zone.<sup>174</sup>

At 1530, the final drive began. Task Force Ripper crossed Phase Line Margaret and moved north. Frequent wind shifts covered Marines in clouds of black smoke that blocked nearly all light. Night vision devices overcame conditions, but movement remained difficult. The experience of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, typified Task Force Ripper's attack.

This unit no sooner began its attack than Lance Corporal Peter Ramsey of CAAT 2 spotted two "hot" T-54s through thermal sights. Only 70 meters from him, the smoke that hid them also obscured Ramsey's vehicle. Lance Corporal Ramsey quickly sighted in on the two tanks and destroyed each with a TOW missile before either could react. Immediately after this engagement, another crew spotted yet another "hot" T-62 and dispatched it with a TOW missile.





*Movement of task forces during the final attack to seize the Kuwait International Airport on 26 February 1991.*

At 1545, the battalion encountered an obstacle belt consisting of three bands of double-strand concertina wire set in a line running east to west, parallel to Phase Line Margaret. Momentarily stopped while notifying Colonel Fulford and awaiting clearance to proceed or find a way around the belt, Lieutenant Colonel Mattis organized 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, for a hasty breach of a defensive line. Though halted, firefights continued across the battalion's entire front. The sound of tank, machine gun, and TOW fire could be heard above a persistent

wind that blew sand and oil over every exposed object and Marine. By 1609 battalion gunners had destroyed eight BTRs.

Three minutes later, Colonel Fulford directed Lieutenant Colonel Mattis to conduct a hasty breach of the minefield. Like a released spring, Team Mech and Team Tank immediately jumped off and began breaching operations. Team Mech's combat engineers with their M60A1 tanks and AAVs moved into position and fired line charges to open three lanes. Suddenly, 200 meters away, two Iraqi tanks emerged from out of the smoke and attempted to beat back the combat engineers. Team Tank's gunners spotted the enemy attack and destroyed the two tanks before they could do any damage.

Covered by a curtain of .50-caliber fire from AAVs, tanks, and CAAT teams, the combat engineers successfully fired line charges across the obstacle belt. Yet, in what had become a typical experience, each charge failed to detonate by remote control. A combat engineer ran over the exposed desert to manually prime the line charge. This unnerving task had to be done three times, but within a short period Team Mech successfully opened three lanes. Team Tank added two lanes of its own and Mattis launched the battalion through. Penetrating the minefield collapsed the Iraqi defense. Pushing north Lieutenant Colonel Mattis ordered planned artillery fire against known enemy positions and (especially after the earlier experience) against every quarry encountered.

The persistent wind gradually increased in intensity to become a raging sand storm. That combined with smoke and darkness made the final movement to the highway a blind grope. Mattis dismounted the infantry for the last assault and, in pitch black darkness and blowing sand, the battalion took up a position about 700 meters south of Kuwait City and 400 meters west of the airport perimeter. No one saw the city on the other side of the highway.<sup>175</sup>

The advance of Task Force Ripper ultimately exposed its right flank. With 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, heavily engaged in clearing the obstacle belt, at 1620 Colonel Fulford asked General Myatt to launch Task Force Papa Bear's attack. Ten minutes later Papa Bear crossed Phase Line Diane. Visibility deteriorated as the task force moved into the same weather conditions confronting Task Force Ripper's Marines. Unit commanders found themselves fighting problems generated by circumstances and the environment as much as they did the enemy. The position location and reporting system (PLRS) suddenly went out when the master station relocated to keep pace with the rapid advance. Normally, operations officers used the global positioning system to cover periods when PLRS failed to work; however, it also failed. Commanders immediately returned to standard desert navigation techniques using compasses and constant odometer checks. That worked to a point. Papa Bear's advance took it into the heart of the Magwa Oilfield (which made up the northern part of the Al Burqan Oilfield) complex of wells, over-ground pipes, and power lines. Frequent twists and turns got the task force around most obstacles but challenged navigational abilities. Unfortunately, smoke, blowing sand, and darkness obscured terrain features, making progress slow and halting.

Task Force Papa Bear remained channeled by the burning wells and above-ground pipe lines. Colonel Hodory organized the task force into two columns.



Photograph by author

*Morning of 26 February 1991, as seen from the position occupied by the engineer task force, Task Force Papa Bear.*

The 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, made up the balance of the left-hand column and spearheaded Papa Bear's attack. The task force headquarters followed in trace. The right-hand column consisted of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, followed by the 1st Tank Battalion. Colonel Hodory placed the engineer task force behind the 1st Tank Battalion.

In order to cover TF Ripper's flank, the columns pressed forward. They bypassed numerous abandoned Iraqi positions and saved time by directing surrendering Iraqi soldiers towards follow-on units. At 1730 the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, arrived at Phase Line Margaret and soon after encountered the obstacle belts. The battalion found two barbed-wire belts in front of it instead of one. Breaching operations began and, unopposed by the enemy, the 3d Battalion's combat engineers quickly cleared lanes through the two belts. At about 1800 the battalion completed its passage of the belts and started moving toward an agricultural area just south of the airfield perimeter road.

That proved to be the last Iraqi defensive position between Task Force Papa Bear and the Kuwait International Airport. Occupied by elements of the Iraqi *20th Infantry Regiment, 3d Armored Division*, the position consisted of a complex of bunkers and fighting positions supported by armored personnel carriers and tanks. Most defenders chose not to fight and the sporadic resistance scarcely hindered the 3d Battalion's advance. However, the near-zero visibility and the sandstorm combined to make progress difficult and slowed its movement to a crawl around the wells, pipe lines, and the occasional oil lakes. It took the battalion until 2300 to locate and cut through the perimeter fence of the airport to establish a small breachhead.<sup>176</sup>

The right-hand column experienced similar conditions. At about 1815, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, crossed Phase Line Margaret and began its attack east toward a radio station located next to the perimeter road. Smoke obscured everything. Only TOW thermal sights provided a view of what lay ahead.

Slowly the battalion felt its way north and into an area containing numerous tanks and armored personnel carriers manned by crews determined, for once, to resist. Several firefights developed as Marine and Iraqi vehicles exchanged tank and machine gun fire. Leaving burning Iraqi vehicles behind, the battalion brushed aside opposition, bypassed surrendering soldiers, and pressed north to the obstacle belt.

No sooner were they past the barbed-wire and minefield than lead elements of the 1st Battalion saw two enemy vehicles through their thermal sights. The Iraqis attempted to flee west at high speed only to be stopped when TOW missiles slammed into their vehicles. Two of the Iraqis died in the explosions and the dazed but surviving six passengers surrendered. They were all officers. Later, when closer to the airport, an armored personnel carrier bolted from concealment in an attempt to get to the highway. A TOW missile hit and disabled the vehicle and it stopped between the 1st Battalion and task force headquarters. Instead of surrendering, the survivors dismounted and began shooting. Marines from Company D returned fire, killing them. The incident turned out to be the battalion's last firefight. At 2200 the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, reached the radio tower and established positions alongside the airport perimeter road.<sup>177</sup>

The 1st Tank Battalion initially followed 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Numerous oilfield pipelines obstructed its route and there were frequent halts and detours as the battalion moved to get past these barriers. Occasionally, Iraqis bypassed by the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and fired on the Marine tanks, but the engagements which ensued always left the enemy's vehicles destroyed and burning. The congested area and appalling visibility was an unnerving experience for the tankers. Second Lieutenant James D. Gonzales, Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, later wrote:<sup>178</sup>

It was an obvious chokepoint, kind of like the classic ambushes you learn about in school. We could go forward, or back out the way we came. Unfortunately, the entire 1st Marine Division lay behind us, so going back was not an option. Eight-foot berms to our right and a dense orchard on our left, left us with only one option: push forward down the narrow road to out front.

"Move out, Red. Take it slowly and keep an eye on those trees. They've got bunkers in there," the 1st Platoon commander called out over the net.

Not only were there bunkers--but bunkers filled with ammo. One tank had just pumped 100 .50-cal rounds into one twenty minutes earlier and it was still burning ferociously.

I watched as 1st Platoon crept its way down the road. They were at great risk and everyone knew it. We were all tense, maybe the most thus far. What lay



ahead? They could really hurt us right here. Oh well, everything was going good so far.

All of a sudden: BOOM! BOOM! Two bright flashes followed by massive secondary explosions lit up the sky. My heart dropped through my stomach. Both explosions came from near the head of the column.

An ambush! They got us!

"Speak to me, Red! Red, speak to me! What's going on up there?" Skipper tried to sound calm but couldn't hide his concern. Silence. It must have been our tanks. "Red! Red! Speak to me!" More silence.

Oh God! I can't believe they got us. I wanted to throw up. It was all so unbelievable. Would we be next? Still, no response. . . .

"Any Red element, any red element, this is Gold. What's going on up there?"

"Roger, Gold, this is Red. Destroyed two enemy trucks."

Thank God! Trucks! Oh, that's right. We had all forgotten about the last intel report which mentioned a parking lot along our route toward the airport.

As resistance collapsed the battalion completed the last kilometers without further enemy interference. The 1st Tank Battalion had reached its battle position alongside the airport perimeter road on the task force's right flank by 2100.<sup>179</sup>

As the 1st Tank Battalion halted, the engineers went into their own night battle position about a half-mile south of the airport perimeter road, between the 1st Tank Battalion and 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Their drive had been typical. After Colonel Hodory's commanders' meeting, the combat engineers moved into formation behind the tanks. The column had moved a few kilometers when it stopped--3d Battalion, 9th Marines, had gotten engaged. Halted next to a burning wellhead, the engineer task force waited as day turned to night. A sandstorm struck soon after dark. When the column began moving again it pressed slowly forward, surrounded by flaming wells belching thick black smoke. At least the wells enabled the track vehicle drivers to see, but when the unit veered off from the main column to establish its night defensive position, it drove away from the flames and into absolute darkness, devoid of sky, ground, or horizon.<sup>180</sup>

Many in the unit felt uneasy. The blowing sandstorm made speech difficult outside the vehicles. It took the detachment commander's deputy, Captain John M. Allison, 20 minutes to get the task force's mix of AAVs, tanks, and armored combat excavators (ACE's) into a circular defense that normally required a few minutes to accomplish. Instructed by regiment to orient the unit's defense to the southeast, he faced the command vehicle in that direction and put the three M60A1 tanks outside of the main circle to allow their guns maximum

coverage. The tanks' fields of fire formed a protective triangle to the AAV's inner circle of heavy machine guns.

In terms of firepower, the task force made a strong defense of tank, heavy machine gun, and interlocking small arms provided by dismounted combat engineers. The position vulnerability was the volatility of the obstacle clearing detachments' AAVs. Most of the AAVs in the column carried fully loaded Mk154 three-shot line charges besides towing trailers carrying single-shot line charges. A rocket or mortar hit on any of these would have proven devastating.

Once Captain Allison finished placing the vehicles, the engineer task force commander, Major Joseph I. Musca, held a leader's brief in his AAV to establish radio procedures, the watch schedule, the enemy situation, and other relevant items. When the meeting ended 20 minutes later Major Musca discovered that a sudden shift in wind direction not only improved visibility, but also enabled the flames from nearby wells to illuminate every vehicle in the task force, except for the three tanks.

Allison felt good about being able to see again, but the unit's exposed situation troubled him as he walked the perimeter a few minutes later, checking positions. Tempering uneasiness with the knowledge that fighting was virtually over, he cut across the circle of AAVs. Suddenly, a series of explosions from mortar fire, instantly followed by RPG and heavy machine gun fire, poured in on him. The next few minutes passed in a blur. He noticed that the enemy fire was coming from the airport highway to the north, while it was the AAVs and tank nearest the Iraqis returning fire. As an AAV next to Captain Allison pivoted to bring its gun to bear he saw a combat engineer get caught under its tracks. Fearing that the Marine was dead, Captain Allison ran to get assistance.<sup>181</sup> He had gone only a few feet when a sledgehammer blow across his face knocked him down. Dazed and bleeding from a machine gun round through the face, Allison crawled to the dubious shelter of one of the obstacle clearing detachment AAVs. There, he removed his bulky chemical suit and ran to the command vehicle where he hoped to get medical attention for the combat engineer, and now for himself.

Inside the command AAV, Major Musca had already started coordinating return fire. Concerned over the proximity of adjacent Marine units, Musca held his tanks in checkfire. Sitting in darkness, the three M60A1s had been ignored by the attackers and their commanders used their night sights to track Iraqi movement and acquire targets. Of the three, Musca cleared only "Phambo 07" to fire. In almost the same moment that Captain Allison was wounded, Corporal Duchoa Pham, the tank commander, destroyed an armored personnel carrier with two well-aimed shots. Corporal Pham explained, "I meant to hit the target with HE but was so excited that I forgot [and fired SABOT]. The first round went right through the vehicle without damaging it. The second round must have hit something sensitive because the whole vehicle exploded with a flash."<sup>182</sup>

Mortar rounds continued to fall on the Marine position. The enemy had two well-served mortars operating. Firing simultaneously, the mortar crews walked their rounds into the circle of AAVs and out the southwest side, but inflicted no damage. RPG rounds flew into the Marine position. One round penetrated the

rear ramp of an obstacle clearing detachment AAV, but fortunately missed the line charges stored inside.

It was soon apparent that the enemy was positioned along the elevated highway that marked the airport's southern perimeter. They had placed three heavy machine guns on the highway and put the mortars on the opposite slope. It was also apparent that the task force was up against a determined unit. The destruction of the armored personnel carrier only served to intensify Iraqi fire rather than end it, as had previously been the pattern. Initially, they fired high but gradually found the range. Machine gun rounds began hitting the ground near Marine positions and thudded into AAVs. Occasionally, 7.62mm rifle fire added to the din.

Once Major Musca determined that the enemy could only confront the combat engineers with small arms, he checked all tank fire out of concern for adjacent units. Musca opted to use the task force's automatic weapons to suppress the attack. For 15 minutes yellow-orange tracers crisscrossed between the two positions until the enemy disengaged. As the Iraqi survivors withdrew along the perimeter road, a change in wind direction gradually darkened the task force's position like the closing of a curtain ending a play.

On the 1st Marine Division's right flank, Task Force Shepherd's attack paralleled the movement of Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear.<sup>183</sup> At 0600 Company D rejoined Task Force Ripper on the left. Lieutenant Colonel Myers then deployed the remaining companies and attacked, moving north through and along the east side of the Al Burqan Oilfield. The Marines encountered remnants of the retreating Iraqi corps. Within an hour, Company C destroyed 10 Type-63 armored personnel carriers. The enemy lost a further six armored personnel carriers and their passengers (totaling 100 men) to Company A as it moved into position next to Company C. Having reached Phase Line Margaret, Myers halted the task force and waited for the division to move into position for the final push. While there, Company A found a tank supply point and captured three T-62s, two armored personnel carriers, one Soviet-built BTR, and one truck.

In the division's final push, Task Force Shepherd continued its screening mission and attacked north along the coastal highway. Iraqi resistance proved weak as the task force destroyed 6 tanks, 11 armored personnel carriers, and 5 trucks in the drive. Eventually, the LAVs reached the perimeter fence, skirted the airport's east side, and entered the outer edges of Kuwait City at 1700. Company A found a military barracks two miles east of the airport. After the company's LAVs shot into it for several minutes without any response, Myers determined that its occupants had fled.

Task Force Shepherd moved on to continue the attack. Driving north to the city racetrack, lead elements of Task Force Shepherd contacted Kuwait resistance forces at 1730. They told Myers that most Iraqis had departed the city and the road was clear. Task Force Shepherd then moved to Phase Line Green, the limit of advance, without incident. At 1830 the task force established its position near the racetrack.



Photograph by 1st Marine Division Combat Camera Unit  
*LAV-25s with an LAV-L from Company D, Task Force Shepherd (attached to Task Force Ripper), move forward during a break in the generally poor visibility that characterized 26 February 1991. The vehicles are approaching the power lines southwest of the Kuwait International Airport.*

Myatt did not leave Shepherd at that location for long. Task Force Taro had been unable to negotiate its way through the Al Burqan at night and would be late arriving at the Kuwait International Airport to conduct the final assault. Myatt needed the airport occupied and gave the mission to Task Force Shepherd. At 2230 Myers received the assignment. By 2300 the LAVs were on the east-west highway heading for the airport.

It had been a frustrating day for Colonel Admire. It started well when, at 1005, General Myatt notified him that he wanted Task Force Taro to move by truck to secure the airport. Yet, sufficient transportation proved unavailable, outside of what the task force already had to carry its supplies and the heavily armed jeeps and commercial utility vehicles (CUCV) of Task Force X-Ray. Admire felt the task force needed transportation more than supplies and immediately emptied the trucks. Leaving 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, to secure the main supply road between the obstacle belts with heavy machine gun teams, he mounted the "Alpha" command group and most of 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. It was on a mixed collection of Jeeps, Toyota pickup trucks, M998s, HMMWVs, and trucks that Task Force Taro set off at 1600 for its journey north into the Al Burqan Oilfield.

Colonel Admire missed Myatt's afternoon orders group because of the distance involved in getting to the division forward command post. Now he faced moving Taro over the same ground and over a battlefield crisscrossed with enemy defensive positions and littered with abandoned and destroyed enemy vehicles. It was also a battlefield still alive with Iraqis. Fortunately, all wanted only to surrender. In the journey north, more than 200 Iraqis gave themselves up to Task Force Taro. This slowed progress as the drive to the airport was



ultimately coming up against the same impenetrable darkness and sandstorm that had made the final assaults of Task Forces Ripper and Papa Bear so difficult. At 2230, the division G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Humble, directed the task force to laager in the oilfield and continue at first light.

By midnight, the 1st Marine Division had achieved its primary objective, cutting off the Kuwait International Airport. Enemy resistance had collapsed. It only remained for Task Force Shepherd to move into position for the final push to physically occupy the airport itself. Behind the mechanized task forces, Task Force Grizzly succeeded in taking Al Jaber in a dawn attack by 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. The infantrymen cleared the buildings. "With minimal vocalization they quickly secured their objective," Sergeant Grow observed.<sup>184</sup>

Task Force Grizzly spent the day carefully clearing every bunker in the complex. At 1500 Colonel Fulks felt satisfied the airfield was clear and announced I MEF Objective A secure. Even before the declaration, however, combat service support personnel arrived and installed a forward air refueling point.

Colonel Howard's artillery scheme of maneuver worked exactly as planned. Leaving Battery A, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, to support Task Force Grizzly, Colonel Howard leapfrogged the artillery north. By 1400 he had them placed within range of Kuwait City and the airport.<sup>185</sup>

Nevertheless, the close proximity of the task forces to the city, combined with the poor visibility, left few opportunities to use artillery. The only notable engagement of the day occurred at 0412 when 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 79 RAP rounds at an enemy position spotted by observers from the 2d Marine Division. By 0630 the fire mission ended and the battalion began its displacement north. First to move were Batteries R and S, followed three hours later by the remaining batteries. In the regiment's shift north, one of the regimental ammunition trucks struck an antipersonnel mine that disabled the vehicle but caused no injuries.

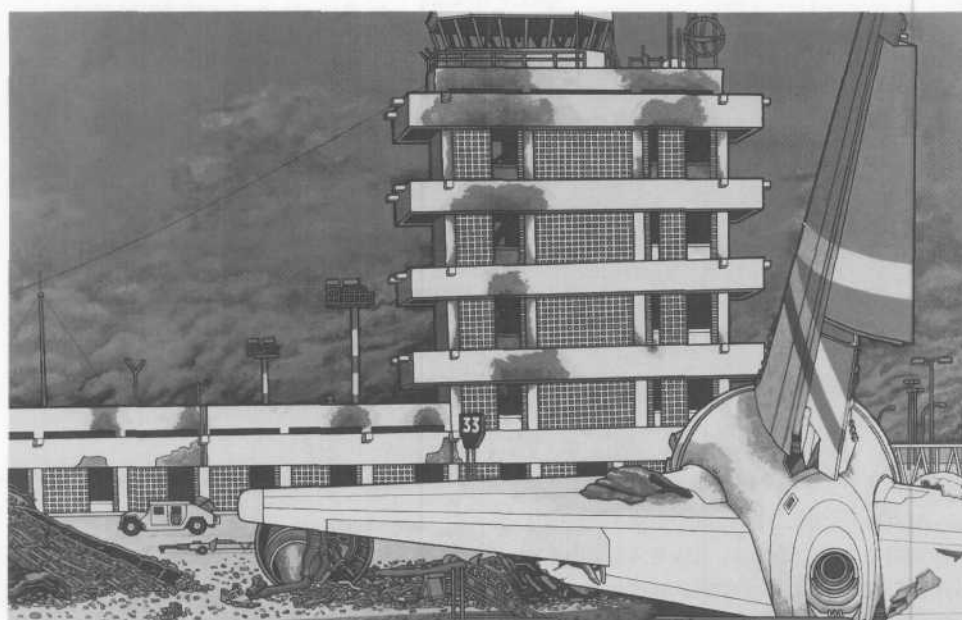
### *G Plus 3, 27 February 1991*

It took Task Force Shepherd three hours to find its way through the darkness and reach the airport perimeter. Shepherd first moved south on the coastal highway, then west along the perimeter hard-surface road to approach the airport from the south side. As the LAVs moved in, Colonel Hodory relocated the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, to positions outside the fence-line, thus clearing an area for Task Force Shepherd's assault. Observation of the airport with thermal sights revealed enemy activity, but it was not until 0330 when Task Force Shepherd neared the 3d Battalion's former position that the Iraqis reacted. RPGs and machine gun fire caused the night to come alive with bright yellow-orange tracers and the flash of explosions. However, the LAVs suffered no casualties or vehicle hits and the firing gradually subsided.

Myers ordered the two companies on line. At 0430 the attack began in complete darkness with Company A on the left and Company C on the right.

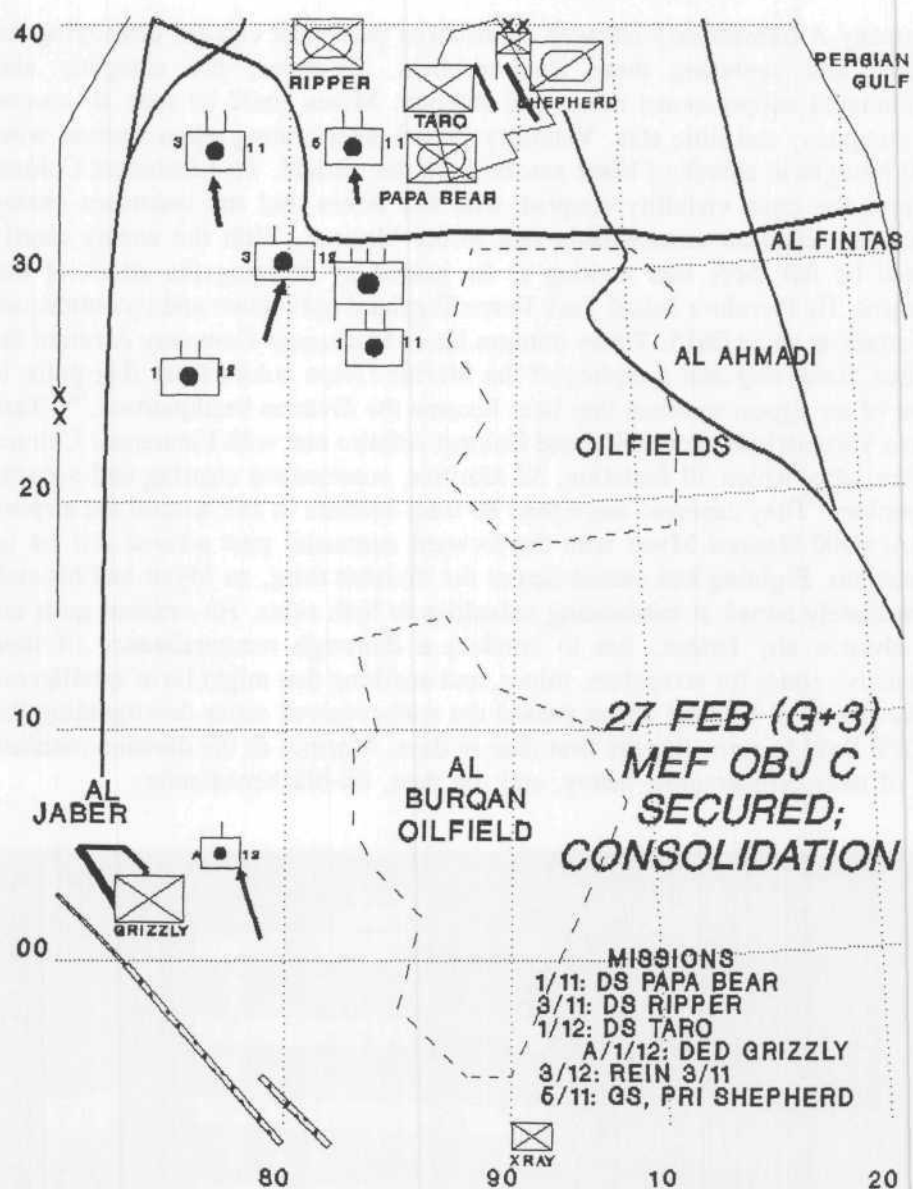
Company A immediately engaged an armored personnel carrier, destroying the vehicle and capturing three Iraqi soldiers. However, the company also encountered antipersonnel mines and stopped. Mines could be seen all around the company, and little else. Visibility started deteriorating when another wind shift brought in clouds of black smoke from the oilfield. To Lieutenant Colonel Myers, the poor visibility coupled with the mines and the unknown enemy situation, posed an unacceptable risk to the Marines. With the enemy clearly routed he felt there was nothing to be gained by pressing the attack at that moment. He therefore halted Task Force Shepherd until dawn and recommenced the attack at about 0615. Thirty minutes later, Marines of Company A raised the United States flag and a replica of the Marine Corps colors from flag poles in front of an airport terminal that later became the division headquarters.<sup>186</sup> Task Force Taro arrived about 0800 and Colonel Admire met with Lieutenant Colonel Myers, after which 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, commenced clearing and security operations. They captured more than 80 Iraqi soldiers in and around the airport.

At 0900 General Myatt with the forward command post arrived and set up operations. Fighting had ceased across the division front, so Myatt and his staff immediately aimed at minimizing casualties to both sides. He ordered units not to advance any farther, but to conduct a thorough reconnaissance of their respective zones for stragglers, mines, and anything that might be of intelligence value. At 1615 General Myatt passed the well-received order downgrading the MOPP level to zero. For the first time in days, Marines of the division climbed out of their cumbersome, heavy, and, by then, oil-blackened suits.



Painting by LtCol Keith A. McConnell, USMCR

*Destroyed commercial airliner near the control tower of the Kuwait International Airport. The smoke from the burning oilfields can be seen in the background.*



Location of division units at conclusion of offensive operations, 27 February 1991.

#### G Plus 4, 28 February 1991

At 0647 on 28 February General Myatt directed division units to cease all offensive operations. An hour later came even better news. Myatt directed that NAPP and CIPRO pills were no longer to be taken. To many in the division the discontinuation of the pills was the first tangible evidence the fighting was over. The threat of chemical and biological weapons that had loomed since arrival in August and September thankfully had ended.

From 28 February to 5 March, division units remained at the Kuwait International Airport in positions occupied near those established on 26 February. Beginning 1 March General Myatt directed the withdrawal of his units to Saudi Arabia. Task Force Shepherd departed first, followed by Task Forces Ripper, Papa Bear, and Taro, on successive days. The initial stopping point for most units was the port of Ras Al Mishab, where they unloaded ammunition and began preparing vehicles for going back on board ship. The 1st and 3d Tank Battalions and their M60A1s were transported to Jubayl by ship and completed their preparations there. The remainder of the division moved from Mishab to the division support area at Manifah Bay, where it awaited transportation to home bases in the United States, most to Camp Pendleton, California.

Once the movement back to Manifah Bay ended, Major General Myatt cancelled the task organization of division units on 6 March. Two days later, the advance party for 7th Marines; 628 Marines from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; and 588 Marines from 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, departed Saudi Arabia. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, conducted a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP) mission 10-12 March to find the wreckage of an OV-10 aircraft shot down in mid-January. Other units conducted sweeps of all live-fire ranges in Saudi Arabia. The division's main effort during the retrograde period was on recovering equipment from Kuwait and reconstituting equipment for the Maritime Prepositioned Force. Whether occupied on those tasks or engaged in making personal preparations for departure, all Marines waited impatiently for their flights to the United States.<sup>187</sup> By the end of March, more than half the division had departed Saudi Arabia. The division completed redeployment on 24 April 1991.<sup>188</sup>





Painting by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC  
*The beginning of another day in Saudi Arabia.*

## Notes

---

1. Southwest Asia was defined as the land area encompassing the Saudi Arabian peninsula, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf area.
2. 7th MEB ComdC, 1Jul-3Sep90.
3. 7th MEB calendar of events, Aug90, hereafter 7th MEB calendar. The calendar was a compilation of significant 7th MEB situation reports; 7th MEB ComdC, 1Jul-3Sep90.
4. High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles or HMMWVs replaced the Jeep used since World War II. The HMMWV existed in several versions ranging from the lightly armored TOW-armed vehicle to the canvas-sided, four-door utility.
5. 7th MEB ComdC, 1Jul-3Sep90; 7th MEB calendar.
6. Maj Mike F. Applegate intvws w/author dtd 6 and 13Dec90 at 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, campsite, Saudi Arabia, hereafter Applegate intvws. Maj Applegate was then commanding officer, Company D, 3d Assault Amphibian Vehicle Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. Company D deployed to Saudi Arabia as a part of the 7th MEB.
7. 7th MEB calendar; Applegate intvws.
8. 7th MEB ComdC, Jul-Sep90; 7th MEB calendar; Applegate intvws.
9. Strength and equipment figures were based on 7th MEB calendar; 7th MEB ComdC, Jul-Sep90.
10. 7th MEB calendar.
11. Intvw with BGen James A. Brabham, USMC, "Training, Education Were the Keys, *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Nov91, p. 52, hereafter, Brabham, "Training"; intvw with LtGen Walter E. Boomer, USMC, "Special Trust and Confidence Among the Trail-Breakers," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Nov91, p. 48, hereafter, Boomer, "Special Trust;" 7th MEB calendar, pp. 1-4; author's field notes, Mar91.
12. 7th MEB ComdC, 1Jul-3Sep90; 7th MEB calendar, pp. 4-6.
13. LtCol Ronald S. Eluk intvw w/author, 3Dec90 at Hq, 1st MarDiv, Saudi Arabia. LtCol Eluk was then Commanding Officer, 3d Assault Amphibian Vehicle Battalion.
14. Boomer, "Special Trust," p. 48.
15. 7th MEB OpO 003.1, 26Aug90.
16. Stenographer's transcript of I MEF morning briefing, Nov90.
17. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jul-Sep90.
18. Col Joseph R. Holzbauer, "Combat G-1: New Perspectives from the Desert War," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Aug92.
19. "How We Put It Together: A Synopsis of the 1st MarDiv Deployment to Saudi Arabia," 1st MarDiv report dtd 9Nov90.
20. Unit assignments based on 7th MEB and 1st MarDiv daily situation reports to I MEF.
21. The evolution of the division's practice of naming task forces was drawn from 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91; and BGen Thomas V. Draude intvw, 13Aug92, hereafter, Draude intvw.
22. 1st MarDiv OpO 2-90, 31Aug90.
23. 1st MarDiv FragO 10-90, dtd 111230Z Sep90.
24. FragO 16-90 to 1st MarDiv OpO 2-90, 18Nov90.
25. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Nov90.
26. Descended from "Desert Rats" of World War II.
27. ComUSMarCent msg, subj: ComUSMarCent Reinforcement Order, dtd 251026Z 6Nov90.
28. Ibid.

29. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Dec90.
30. CG I MEF msg, subj: CG I MEF Order 006, 201221Z Dec90.
31. FragO 20-90 to 1st MarDiv OpO 290, 29Dec90.
32. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Dec90; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
33. 1st MarDiv OpO 1-91, 16Jan91.
34. Boomer, "Special Trust," p. 49.
35. FragO to OpO 1-91, n.d., Feb91.
36. Ibid.
37. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
38. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91; MajGen James M. Myatt, USMC, "The 1st Marine Division in the Attack," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Nov91, p. 73, hereafter, Myatt, "Attack"; Draude intvw.
39. Applegate intvws.
40. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Oct90.
41. BGen John H. Admire, USMC, "The 3d Marines in Desert Storm," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Sep91, pp. 67-69, hereafter, Admire, "3d Marines"; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Oct90; Draude intvw.
42. Ibid.
43. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Oct90; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Nov90, Maj Drew Bennett intvw dtd 7Dec90.
44. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Dec90.
45. Ibid.
46. Draude intvw; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
47. Boomer, "Special Trust," pp. 48-49; Brabham, "Training," pp. 52-54; BGen Charles C. Krulak, "A War of Logistics," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Nov91, pp. 55-56.
48. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
49. Draude intvw; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
50. "Artillery Surface Raid SOP," enclosure to "11th Marines Significant Events, Desert Storm," dtd 2Mar91.
51. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
52. Capt Roger L. Pollard, "The Battle for OP 4: Start of the Ground War," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Mar92, p. 50, hereafter, Pollard, "OP 4."
53. 1st MarDiv, "Significant Events Report, 2100-0216, 29-30Jan91."
54. Marty Kufus, "Eyewitness to Friendly Fire," *Command* 46, March-April 1992, p. 15, hereafter, Kufus, "Eyewitness"; Sgt Barry F. Bell, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion After Action Report, 3Mar91, hereafter, Bell AAR.
55. Pollard, "OP 4."
56. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Dec90.
57. The account presented here on the OP 4 engagement is primarily drawn from the author's interview with Capt Roger L. Pollard, commanding officer, Company D, Task Force Shepherd, on 5Feb91, and from Task Force Shepherd's Command Operations Center (COC) journal. Subsequently, Capt Pollard published an account in the March 1992 *Marine Corps Gazette* that varied slightly from what he stated to the author. Another version of the engagement came from Sgt Thomas Manney, 2d Platoon, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, in the March-April 1992 issue of *Command*. Unless otherwise cited, this account is from the author's interview and TF Shepherd's COC journal.
58. Kufus, "Eyewitness"; Bell AAR.
59. Kufus, "Eyewitness"; 1st Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
60. Team Debrief Report, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1Feb91.

61. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
62. The term "hog" was a slang word used by tracked vehicle and LAV personnel for their vehicles.
63. Pollard, "OP 4," p. 49.
64. Ibid., p. 50.
65. Unless otherwise noted, the accounts of OPs 5 and 6 were based on TF Shepherd COC journal, 29-31Jan91.
66. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
67. 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91.
68. I MEF ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
69. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
70. Unless otherwise noted, the Khafji account is taken from Admire, "3d Marines"; 1st MarDiv COC journal, 29-31Jan91; 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91.
71. I MEF ComdC, Jan-Feb91; Myatt, "The 1st Marine Division in the Attack," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, Nov91, p. 74, hereafter, Myatt, "Attack"; Boomer, "Special Trust," p. 49.
72. 3d Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st Tank Battalion ComdC Jan-Feb91; 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
73. "Meals Ready to Eat," but sometimes referred to as "Meals Rejected by Ethiopia" or "Meals Rarely Edible."
74. Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC, daily journal, 10Jan-22Feb, hereafter, Grow journal; observations by author 14-20Feb91.
75. Grow journal.
76. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
77. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Mar91.
78. 3d Tank Battalion ComdC, Feb91.
79. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
80. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91.
81. 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91; 1st Battalion, 5th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb91; Myatt, "Attack," p. 73; author's notes, 1st MarDiv CG's morning briefings.
82. Unless otherwise noted the pre-G Day account was drawn from the following sources: 1st MarDiv Commanders' Meeting, 16Mar91; 1st MarDiv Synopsis of Headquarters and Task Force COC journals for the period 21-28Feb, Mar91; author's notes for the period 15Jan-20Mar91.
83. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion Operational Chronology, Jan-Mar91, hereafter 1st Reconnaissance Bn Chronology.
84. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
85. I MEF ComdC, Jan-Feb91; Boomer, "Special Trust," p. 49.
86. 1st Marines Summary of Action for Operation Desert Storm, 18Mar91, hereafter, 1st Marines Summary.
87. Author's observations, 22-28Feb91.
88. cf. 3d Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
89. cf. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
90. cf. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
91. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
92. 11th Marines record of call signs for ground offensive.
93. Author's observations, 20-22Feb91.



94. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; author's observations of division Marines' reactions to the order to start taking the pills. (Up to that point the reality of the offensive's dangers had been distant and imaginary; so much training had taken place that even the events of the past several days seemed part of a familiar pattern rather than signifying the start of the ground offensive. The taking of the pills dispelled all doubts.)
95. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
96. cf. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
97. cf. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
98. cf. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
99. Ibid.
100. cf. 1st Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
101. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
102. cf. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st Reconnaissance Bn Chronology.
103. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
104. The use of lights in that manner by allied aircraft was standard procedure. Only in the critical moments of an actual strike did the pilot turn off the plane's identification lights.
105. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
106. The Engineer Task Force (Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion) account for the events of 23 February is from the author's observations and notes, 22-28Feb91.
107. William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works* (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press/Omega Books, 1968), p. 508.
108. 1st Marines Summary.
109. Battery E's parent unit was 1st Battalion, 12th Marines.
110. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
111. Papa Bear S-3 Summary of Action, enclosure to 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
112. cf. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
113. Grow journal.
114. 1st Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
115. Marine Corps Lessons Learned System Long Report, "Inadequate Control Measures for Passage of Lines During Actual Combat Operations," 14Mar91.
116. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
117. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
118. 1st MarDiv COC journal highlights, 21-28Feb91.
119. GySgt Paul S. Cochran, USMC, daily journal, Dec90-Mar91, hereafter, Cochran journal.
120. Author's observations, 24Feb91.
121. 1st MarDiv Code Word Checklist, n.d.
122. 1st MarDiv G-6 input for ComdC, Jan-Feb91, n.d. (Mar91); Marine Corps Lessons Learned System Long Report, "Land Navigation in Desert Operations," 14Mar91.
123. "Operation Desert Storm Maneuver Synopsis," prepared by 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 14Mar91, hereafter, 1/7 Synopsis.
124. Ibid.
125. 1st Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; Company C input to ComdC, 11Mar91.
126. Author's observations of 1st Combat Engineer Battalion Detachment operations in support of Task Force Papa Bear's breaches, 24Feb91; "Chronology of Events During

- Ground Combat Operations," report by Detachment, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 11Mar91, hereafter, 1st Combat Engr Bn Chronology.
127. 1/7 Synopsis.
128. 1st MarDiv COC journal highlights, 21-28Feb91.
129. Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, input for ComdC for Jan-Feb91, 5Feb91, misdated 5Mar91.
130. 1/7 Synopsis.
131. 1st Combat Engr Bn Chronology; 1/7 Synopsis.
132. 1/7 Synopsis.
133. 1st MarDiv COC journal highlight, 21-28Feb91.
134. Maj Mike F. Applegate discussion with author, 15Mar91; 1/7 Synopsis.
135. 1/7 Synopsis.
136. Account written by 2dLt James D. Gonsalves, Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, n.d., hereafter, Gonsalves account.
137. Cochran journal.
138. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
139. LtCol Clifford O. Myers III intvw, 8Mar91.
140. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
141. 1st Marines Summary of Action for Operation Desert Storm, 24-27Feb91, dtd 18Mar91, hereafter, 1st Marines Summary.
142. Ibid.
143. 1st Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st Marines Summary.
144. "1st Marines S-4 Summary of Action for Logistics, G-Day to G-3," 10Mar91, hereafter, Papa Bear S-4 Summary.
145. 1st Marines Summary; Task Force Papa Bear S-3 Summary of action, n.d. (Mar91), hereafter Papa Bear S-3 Summary.
146. 1st Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
147. LtCol Michael V. Maloney, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, intvw, 9Mar91.
148. Draude intvw.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.
152. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91; 1st MarDiv COC journal highlights, 21-28Feb91.
153. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91; Maj Patrick F. Gould, TOW Company, 1st Tank Battalion, Desert Storm Chronology, 5Apr91.
154. Maj Turner noted that the tanks used in the attack against Task Force Papa Bear were all T-55s, while most of the armored personnel carriers were Type 63s. Task Force Papa Bear "Summary of Action for Operation Desert Storm," n.d., hereafter, Papa Bear Summary.
155. Papa Bear Summary.
156. 1st Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
157. 1st Tank Battalion "Vignettes from Operation Desert Storm," 9May91.
158. Papa Bear Summary.
159. 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, "Kuwait Operations 23-28 February," n.d. (Mar91), hereafter, 1/1 Operations.
160. Papa Bear S-3 Summary.
161. Papa Bear S-4 Summary.
162. 4th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb92.

163. 1/7 Synopsis.
164. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
165. Ibid.
166. Cochran journal.
167. Ibid.
168. 1/7 Synopsis.
169. Col Richard W. Hodory, commanding officer, 1st Marines, Task Force Papa Bear, intvw, 18Mar91.
170. 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
171. 1/7 Synopsis.
172. 1/1 Operations.
173. 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
174. Company A feeder report, 24-28Feb91, for 1st Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91. Company A was attached to 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, Task Force Ripper, and witnessed the incident.
175. 1/7 Synopsis.
176. 1st Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
177. 1/1 Operations.
178. Gonsalves account.
179. 1st Tank Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
180. The description of events for the engineer task force is based upon the author's own experience.
181. LCpl John E. Waldron, USMC, died instantly.
182. Discussion between the author and Cpl Duchoa Pham, USMC, 27Feb91.
183. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
184. Grow journal.
185. 11th Marines ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
186. 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion ComdC, Jan-Feb91.
187. Cochran journal.
188. 1st MarDiv ComdC, Mar91; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Apr91.

## Appendix A

### 1st Marine Division Commanders and Staff

---

Commanding General

MajGen James M. Myatt

Assistant Division Commander

BGen Thomas V. Draude

#### *Subordinate Commanders*

Headquarters Battalion

LtCol James P. O'Donnell  
from 1Jan91

LtCol Michael L. Rapp  
to 31Dec90

1st Marines

Col Richard W. Hodory

1st Battalion, 1st Marines

LtCol Michael O. Fallon

3d Battalion, 9th Marines

LtCol Michael H. Smith  
from 31Dec90

LtCol Larry W. Wright  
to 28Dec90

1st Tank Battalion

LtCol Michael M. Kephart

3d Marines

Col John H. Admire

1st Battalion, 3d Marines

LtCol Michael V. Maloney

2d Battalion, 3d Marines

LtCol Robert W. Blose Jr.

3d Battalion, 3d Marines

LtCol John C. Garret

4th Marines

Col James A. Fulks  
from 22Jan91

Col Ronald Brown  
to 21Jan91



2d Battalion, 7th Marines	LtCol Roger J. Mauer
3d Battalion, 7th Marines	LtCol Timothy J. Hannigan
1st Battalion, 25th Marines	LtCol Stephen M. McCartney
7th Marines	Col Carlton W. Fulford
1st Battalion, 7th Marines	LtCol James M. Mattis
1st Battalion, 5th Marines	LtCol Christopher Cortez
3d Tank Battalion	LtCol Alphonso B. Diggs, Jr.
11th Marines	Col Patrick G. Howard
1st Battalion, 11th Marines	LtCol John B. Sollis
2d Battalion, 11th Marines	LtCol Paul A. Gido
3d Battalion, 11th Marines	LtCol Mark W. Adams
5th Battalion, 11th Marines	LtCol James L. Sachtleben
1st Battalion, 12th Marines	LtCol Robert W. Rivers
3d Battalion, 12th Marines	LtCol Charles W. Adair
1st Combat Engineer Battalion	LtCol Frank L. Kebelman III
1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion	LtCol Clifford O. Myers III
1st Reconnaissance Battalion	LtCol Michael L. Rapp from 1Jan91
	LtCol Charles W. Kershaw to 31Dec90
3d Assault Amphibian Battalion	LtCol Ronald S. Eluk

*Principal Staff Members*

Chief of Staff	Col John F. Stennick
Staff Secretary	Maj John Forr
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1	Col Joseph R. Holzbauer
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2	LtCol John D. Counselman
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3	LtCol Jerome D. Humble from 22Jan91
	Col James A. Fulks to 21Jan91
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4	Col Jasper C. Lilly Jr.
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6	LtCol Rodney N. Smith
Adjutant	LtCol David Franke
Aide-de-Camp to Commanding General	1stLt Larry L. Melton, Jr.
Aide-de-Camp to Assistant Division Commander	1stLt Andrew S. Harvey
Air Officer	Col Thomas F. Reath
Artillery Officer	Col Patrick G. Howard
Chaplain	Cdr Stanley B. Scott, USN
Engineer Officer	Maj Gary R. Holmquist from 18Jan91
	Capt Timothy E. Meyer to 17Jan91
Motor Transportation Officer	LtCol Norman W. Jepsen from 27Jan91
	Capt Steven E. Christensen to 26Jan91

Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Warfare Defense Officer	CWO-3 Stephen Q. Bauer
Ordnance Officer	LtCol William T. Pope
Staff Judge Advocate	LtCol Michael Reardon
Supply Officer	LtCol Julian W. Parrish
Surgeon	Capt Robert T. Dufort, USN
Division Sergeant Major	SgtMaj Charles W. Chamberlain

### Photographs of Regimental and Battalion Commanders

The photographs are of the division commander and key 1st Marine Division infantry, tank, artillery, and combat engineer commanders, arranged by task force.



*MajGen James M. Myatt, here shown in his official photograph as a brigadier general.*





*Task Force King (11th Marines), from left to right: LtCol Charles W. Adair, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines; LtCol Robert W. Rivers, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines; Col Patrick G. Howard, commanding officer; LtCol Mark W. Adams, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; LtCol John B. Sollis, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines; and LtCol Paul A. Gido, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines.*



*Task Force Grizzly (4th Marines), from left to right: LtCol Stephen M. McCarthy, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines; LtCol Charles W. Adair, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines; Col James A. Fulks, commanding officer; LtCol Roger J. Mauer, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines; LtCol Timothy J. Hannigan, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.*



*Task Force Ripper (7th Marines), from left to right: LtCol Mark W. Adams, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; LtCol Alphonso B. Diggs, Jr., 3d Tank Battalion; Col Carlton W. Fulford, commanding officer; LtCol James M. Mattis, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines; LtCol Christopher Cortez, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; LtCol Frank L. Kebelman III, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion.*



*Task Force Papa Bear (1st Marines), from left to right: LtCol Michael M. Kephart, 1st Tank Battalion; LtCol Michael O. Fallon, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines; Col Richard W. Hodory, commanding officer; LtCol John B. Sollis, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines; LtCol Michael H. Smith, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines; Maj Joseph I. Musca, Engineer Task Force (1st Combat Engineer Detachment).*



*Task Force Taro (3d Marines), from left to right: LtCol Robert W. Blose, Jr., 2d Battalion, 3d Marines; LtCol Michael V. Maloney, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines; Col John H. Admire, commanding officer; LtCol John C. Garret, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; LtCol Robert W. Rivers, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines*

## Appendix B

### Major Weapons Systems

---

M88A1 Medium Recovery Vehicle	10
M60A1 Tank	126
M60A1 Tank with Dozer Kit	7
Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge	8
M220A4 TOW II Missile Launcher	239
AAVP7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle (troop carrier)	244
AAVC7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle (command and control variant)	20
AAVR7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle (recovery variant)	7
M109A1 155mm Self-Propelled Howitzer	6
M110A1 8" Self-Propelled Howitzer	6
M198 155mm Towed Howitzer	68
M29A1 81mm Mortar	66
M224 60mm Mortar	63
SMAW Rocket Launcher	193
LAV-25 Light Armored Vehicle (troop carrier)	73
LAV-AT Light Armored Vehicle (antitank TOW variant)	22
LAV-L Light Armored Vehicle (resupply variant)	15
LAV-M Light Armored Vehicle (mortar carrier)	10
LAV-R Light Armored Vehicle (recovery variant)	8
LAV-C Light Armored Vehicle (command and control variant)	11
M2 50-cal. Machine Gun	357
M60E3 7.62mm Machine Gun	584
M60E2 7.62mm Machine Gun	124
MK19 40mm Machine Gun	296
M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW)	1,098
Dragon Tracker (Night and Day)	56
AN/PAQ-3 Modular Universal Laser Equipment (MULE)	55
AN/USQ-70 Azimuth Determining System (PADS)	12



## Appendix C

### Combat Engineer Breaching Equipment

---

1. M58 Single-Shot Mine-Clearing Line Charge (MCLC). The MCLC is capable of explosively breaching a lane 100m by 16m wide through minefield. This trailer mounted and generally towed behind an assault amphibious vehicle.
2. MK154 3-shot Line Charge. The system contains three line charge systems within the troop compartment of an assault amphibious vehicle. It was employed in the same manner as the MCLC.
3. Anti-personnel Obstacle Breaching System (APOBS). The system was used to explosively breach a 25m by 1m wide lane through a minefield for personnel.
4. Track Width Mine Plow. The plow was attached to the front of a M60A1 tank to plow the ground 8-12 inches deep directly in front of a tank's tracks in order to remove mines from its path.
5. Full Width Mine Rake. The rake was attached to the front of a M60A1 tank with M9 blade to plow the ground 8-12 inches deep across the entire width of the tank in order to dislodge mines.
6. Track Width Mine Roller. The roller is Israeli made and attached to the front of a M60A1 tank to roll over mines directly in front of the tank tracks. The weight of the roller causes mines to detonate before they can endanger the tank.
7. "Roller Dude." This was a homemade version of the mine roller designed by 1st Tank Battalion and fabricated by Naval Construction Battalion personnel.
8. "Blade" Tank. This is a M60A1 tank with M9 dozer kit blade attached for earthmoving tasks.
9. Armored Combat Excavator (ACE). The ACE is a lightly armored combat bulldozer/earthmover.
10. D76 Bulldozer. The D76 is the largest bulldozer in the Marine Corps and considered by combat engineers as the best of its type. Capable of being armored.
11. 1150E Bulldozer. This is the Corps' light bulldozer, capable of being carried in a CH53E.
12. Diffenbaugh Fascine System. Designed by Warrant Officer Thomas M. Diffenbaugh, the system consisted of bundles of PVC pipe carried on the sides of assault amphibious vehicles to provide gap-crossing capability over ditches.

13. Towed Assault Bridge (TAB). This was an Israeli-built rolling bridge capable of providing 34 feet of wet or dry gap crossing. It was generally towed and used by tanks.

14. Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge (AVLB). The AVLB was a scissor bridge affixed on top of a M60 tank chassis. The bridge is capable of providing 42 feet of wet or dry gap crossing.

## Appendix D

### Uniforms in the 1st Marine Division

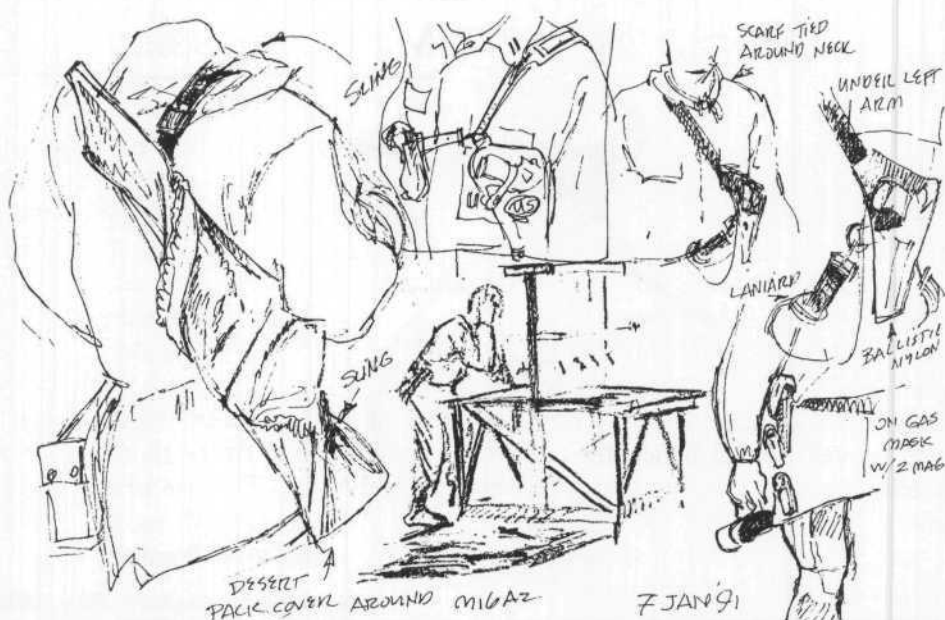
---

The authority governing Marine uniforms and personal equipment is contained in the Marine Corps uniform regulations and CentCom-generated directives regarding wear. Neither Major General Myatt nor Lieutenant General Boomer officially authorized changes to the prescribed uniform. Differences existed among the Services, however. Unit insignia, name tags, and branch or specialty insignia characteristic of Army and Air Force dress were much in evidence. By mid-September 1990, Marines began applying the distinctive eagle-globe-and-anchor USMC pocket insignia to the desert battle dress. In addition, the green, and later tan, flight clothing; medium green "nomex" flame-retardant tracked vehicle and helicopter crew clothing; and green coveralls continued in use by those Marines authorized to wear such clothing. The use of those items added variety to the basic desert uniform and contributed to the gradual emergence of sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, differences among Marines, their units, and their commands.

Departures from the prescribed desert uniform and regulation equipment partly resulted from supply shortages which took place during the massive increase in American forces beginning in December 1990. For several weeks the desert battle dress uniform remained in short supply. The onset of cold weather and the lengthy period of field deployment contributed to the emergence of non-regulation sweatsuits worn as undergarments, as well as various colored watch caps. Some of the differences proved to be idiosyncratic ("selective disobedience" as one officer noted) in nature, which Generals Boomer and Myatt tacitly permitted by their silence on the subject of dress--so long as everyone retained a semblance of uniformity.

During Operation Desert Shield the manner of wearing the pistol emerged as one obvious example of individualism and, to a lesser extent, of status and unit affiliation. Many of the officers and staff noncommissioned officers deploying with the 7th MEB wore the black leather shoulder belt designed for tank crews. On the I MEF staff the tanker shoulder belt distinguished former 7th MEB members from later arrivals. This distinction disappeared in time. The shoulder belt's convenience and comfort made it universally popular. Its use in the 1st Marine Division by persons authorized to carry the pistol centered on tracked vehicle personnel, division staff, and regimental staffs. Some battalion officers wore the shoulder belt, but it was uncommon in infantry units.

The tanker shoulder belt proved difficult to obtain as supplies of the belt disappeared. By December 1990, privately purchased belts made an appearance, but most aviation personnel held to their issue aviator shoulder belt. A variation to the shoulder belt was to affix the Beretta pistol holster to the upper nylon straps on the desert camouflage flak jacket cover and slide the holster's base into the jacket's breast pocket. Some members of the I MEF staff performing essentially office work, combined with the perceived remoteness from serious attack, dispensed with shoulder and waistbelts and attached the holster and



Drawing by Sgt Charles G. Grow, USMC

*Some ways of carrying the pistol and M-16.*

magazine pouches to the wide strap of the gas mask. They either wore this arrangement from around the waist in the prescribed manner for wearing the gas mask, or created a sort of quasi-shoulder holster rig with the gas mask case. Some members of the MEF staff merely slung the gas mask and pistol combination over their shoulder like a carry bag. Two members of the 4th Civil Action Group wore the holster attached to their trouser waist belts thus making it inconspicuous and more suitable for their work with Saudi nationals. This configuration was not seen in the 1st Marine Division.

Regardless of the manner Marines carried the pistol, they normally had it attached to the green regulation nylon pistol lanyard. The prescribed method of wearing the lanyard was over the opposite shoulder from the pistol (if worn on the waist belt) and across the body. In time it proved more convenient to simply loop the lanyard through the metal bar at the base of the holster and attach the snap to the pistol thereby dispensing with having to remove the lanyard every time the pistol belt came off. With shoulder belts, the lanyard looped around a convenient strap. Though rare, some officers adopted the British method of wearing the lanyard from the neck rather than across the body. A few officers, Lieutenant Colonel Frank L. Kebelman III of the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion chief among them, managed to obtain British Army lanyards. Since the cord proved too wide for the metal bar on the Beretta holster, Lieutenant Colonel Kebelman tied the loop of his lanyard around his waist belt.

Every member of the 1st Marine Division was issued desert battle dress uniform (DBDU) hat. The desert hat was part of the basic uniform made up of hat, boots, trousers, blouse, and green T-shirt. With the hat's capacity of being styled in a variety of ways, its proper wear was one of the few uniform matters





*1stSgt Wimer, Company D, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, Task Force Ripper, is wearing the desert hat in the correct manner, 7 January 1991.*

to receive official guidance. The prescribed manner of wear was with the brim turned down along its entire circumference. Yet, immediately upon issue every conceivable interpretation emerged, some less subtle and outrageous than others. Popular styles included: the rolled up "cowboy" brim, the flat hat with its absolutely level brim and flat crown (the latter achieved by a cardboard insert), the completely upturned brim, and the "fedora" worn by General Boomer.

The shaped battledress hat typified Marines belonging to the Force Service Support Group, 3d MAW units, or MEF headquarters. Its existence proved less common in the 1st Marine Division where field conditions, and some commanders, proved a natural deterrent. Within the division, styled hats appeared among rear echelon personnel rather than with Marines assigned to maneuver units. In October 1990 it would be a hat worn by a member of the division that prompted a CentCom directive against styling. In a visit to forward deployed units, MEF Sergeant Major Rafe J. Spencer spotted the one hat that went too far. While the hat in question merely had its front and back brims turned up, what pushed Sergeant Major Spencer into taking action was the fact that its owner was a gunnery sergeant and he used one of his metal collar rank insignia to pin the front brim to the crown. The resulting CinCCent directive of 21 October prohibited all but regulation wear:

When the desert battledress uniform (DBDU) floppy hat is worn, the chin strap will be tucked into the hat so it does not show and the brim of the floppy hat will be worn down. Curling or bending the brim of the hat,

other than its natural configuration is not authorized. Sweatbands or bandannas worn separately or in conjunction with authorized headgear are not authorized.

The message's impact was minimal. While it slightly reduced the extreme deviations, styling remained an aspect of dress throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. General Boomer continued to wear his characteristic "fedora."

The errant gunnery sergeant notwithstanding, Marines generally wore the desert hat without insignia. Exceptions were the iron-on eagle-globe-anchor utility cap stencil and, in rare instances, the metal service cap device.

Two other caps appeared among Marines in Saudi Arabia. The familiar green camouflage utility cap was the usual substitute for their desert hat. By December, desert camouflage versions of the green utility cap (manufactured by commercial firms in the United States) began to appear. Purchased on an individual basis, they enjoyed limited use in the 1st Marine Division. Partly this resulted from the lengthy period between ordering the cap and its receipt via the very slow mail service. Also, by December the well-worn desert hat marked the veteran from the newly arriving reinforcements, a number of whom had the desert camouflage utility cap. General Myatt preferred the desert utility cap and wore it constantly during the latter part of Operation Desert Storm.

Each service used the same pattern desert battle dress uniform, distinguishable only by insignia peculiar to each organization. Air Force personnel assigned to I MEF wore name tags, and their specialty and insignia embroidered in black thread on green backings as designed for the green utility uniform. Some managed to obtain these items done with brown thread letters on a tan backing. Army officers and enlisted men wore the same insignia and badges authorized for use on the green utility uniform. After December 1990, some examples of brown devices on tan cloth came into use, but those proved rare. Rank insignia consisted of the subdued style, either pin-on or embroidered on green backing.

Until mid-September 1990 Marine desert uniforms did not carry the eagle-globe-and-anchor USMC pocket insignia. After 15 September, a large supply of iron-on labels arrived in Saudi Arabia and within a few weeks most utilities, but not all, carried this insignia. Typically, Marine desert battle dress uniforms went without unit patches of any kind. A notable exception was the I MEF liaison officers assigned to the British 7th Armored Brigade. They wore the brigade's red on black desert rat patch on the upper right sleeve. Some Marines assigned to CentCom wore name and service tags over their breast pockets. The service identifying tag consisted of "US MARINE CORPS" in brown thread on tan cloth. These patches came in the same shape and dimensions and were worn in the same manner as Air Force name and service tags.

By December a crisis occurred in the availability of desert uniforms. The extensive buildup of American forces exhausted supplies and some arriving units went without the desert battle dress for awhile. Complaints from General Myatt



*The "fedora" style favored by LtGen Walter E. Boomer was often seen, 9 January 1990.*

and other commanders resulted in a redistribution of desert uniforms. Marines assigned to the 1st FSSG working in the port at Jubayl largely gave up their desert uniforms and reverted to green camouflage utility dress. That alleviated the more pressing requirements and, by February, all Marines in the 1st Marine Division were entirely clothed in desert camouflage.

Correct wear of the desert battle dress uniform, sometimes referred to as the "chocolate chip" uniform, included the desert hat and either the jungle boot, black leather combat boot, or, by late February and March, the tan desert boot. When in combat dress during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, prior to the ground offensive, the full uniform consisted of appropriate equipment as well as the green camouflage flak jacket or armored vest and kevlar helmet, both of which came with special issue desert camouflage covers. With the onset of hostilities, General Myatt required everyone to wear the flak jacket and helmet. The pack also had a desert cover provided. The desert cover was sometimes used as a field expedient cover for the M-16.

By December, the onset of cooler weather brought with it increasing use of the cold-weather night desert camouflage parka, a loose coat complete with a removable liner. General Myatt left it as a matter of choice whether Marines wore the parka under or over the flak jacket. Matching trousers came with the parka. Most Marines, however, used the night desert camouflage trousers infrequently. Instead, in addition to the parka coat, many wore civilian sweatshirt tops and bottoms under their desert utilities. Most sweat suits were gray in color, but it was not unusual to find division Marines wearing red, yellow, and blue suits. Since the weather had grown very cool and wet in January and little of the color showed anyway, unit commanders generally permitted the wearing of sweatshirts and non-regulation watch caps of various colors without comment.

Supply shortages made it difficult for commanders to achieve total uniformity. From the beginning of Operation Desert Shield, items of green camou-

flage utility uniform were acceptable substitutes for missing desert items. All combinations proved possible, but there occurred no simultaneous wearing of desert jackets with green utility trousers or desert trousers with the green utility jacket. The mixing of green and desert items remained limited to caps and hats, the wearing of black, jungle, or tan boots, and occasionally the green camouflage field jacket. In addition, maintenance personnel frequently wore the issue green overalls. Tracked vehicle personnel wore fire-retardant "nomex" suits.

During the ground offensive all forward deployed I MEF personnel put on the mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) jacket and trousers as well as chemical protective boots of various styles. In the 1st Marine Division, the flak jacket generally went over the MOPP jacket. The feeling in the division was that while everyone was vulnerable to chemical attack at all times, the flak vest frequently needed to be removed. In contrast, General Keys, commanding the 2d Marine Division, directed that the MOPP jacket be worn over the flak vest. He felt that if contamination occurred, the flak jacket would not then require cleaning or replacement. After the first 24 hours of the ground offensive, General Keys saw that the chemical threat in the division's zone was sufficiently remote that he had the 2d Marine Division cease wearing MOPP suits. General Myatt saw the situation differently and the 1st Marine Division continued using MOPP suits throughout the ground offensive. The MOPP suit, and the manner in which Marines wore the suit, became a manner of identifying to which division a Marine belonged.

The practice of personalizing equipment and clothing differed from unit to unit. Though largely confined to the division's artillery battalions, in those units, graffiti appeared on the covers of flak vests and helmets. Graffiti took the form of calendars, names of girlfriends, pithy comments, religious symbols, cartoon characters, and the 1st Marine Division's World War II patch in outline. In one instance the blue patch with its red number "1" appeared on the well-worn pocket of a flak jacket cover. Otherwise, marking clothing and equipment seldom went beyond that allowed by Marine Corps Uniform Regulations MCO P1020.34 which specified ink stamping the owner's name in certain inconspicuous locations. Some individuals, however, followed the practice of stenciling their names in one-inch-high letters across the back of utility jackets and flak vests.

A few units adopted organizational symbols for the uniform. Marines in Task Force Papa Bear stenciled the task force's paw print symbol on the back of flak vest covers as well as on the sides of vehicles. The 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, was distinctive in its use of camouflage netting on all helmets.

Marines used three types of boots in Saudi Arabia. During the extreme hot weather the jungle boot surpassed the all-leather black boot in comfort and it became the only boot available through unit supply. The boot proved generally adequate, eyelets located on the lower portion trapped sand, and it did not keep the foot particularly warm during the winter months. General Boomer recognized the boot's shortcomings and in December 1990 the MEF G-4, Colonel Raymond A. List, announced that the tan desert boot would be available by January 1991. The desert boot was essentially the same as the jungle boot, but





Photograph taken by author  
*A Marine from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, is shown in the dress worn at the start of Desert Storm, 17 January 1991. The camouflage netting on the helmet characteristic of that battalion is clearly evident.*



Painting by LtCol Donna J. Neary, USMCR  
*Marine Tanker.*

it was made of roughened tan leather and without eyelets. Since the desert boot initially appeared among Marines assigned to CentCom headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, it was viewed as an affectation and called the "tinkerbell boot."

The abrasiveness of desert sand tended to wear off the black dye of the leather combat boot and the jungle boot; eventually the entire boot came apart as the result of abrasion and constant use. Replacing worn-out boots proved difficult because of the strained supply situation during the allied build up. Frustrated by the slowness of resupplies of any boots, division Marines

frequently acquired commercially made desert boots from catalogs. However, quantities of desert boots began arriving in late January. First issues went to Task Forces Shepherd, Grizzly, and Taro. The rationale was that the Marines of Task Force Shepherd deserved the boot because of the length of time they had spent as the division's forward element. General Myatt felt that the Marines of Task Forces Taro and Grizzly needed the boots for their long desert march. Complete issue of the desert boot to the entire division occurred following its return from Kuwait.

Other items typical of Marine dress include the regulation tan web trouser belt with its brass open buckle and the khaki green tee shirt. The web belt proved durable, yet some Marines preferred belts made from nylon parachute straps. In one instance, a staff noncommissioned officer in the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, wore a parachute cord around the waist in combination with two cloth straps as a sort of field expedient suspenders.

Non-standard dress never gained official sanction. In September 1990 General Boomer stated his position that every I MEF Marine and sailor needed assurance that the frame of reference for himself and for unit discipline had not changed simply by virtue of serving under the unique circumstances of Saudi Arabia. He saw "squared away uniforms" and well-kept appearances as a demonstration that Marines were taking care of themselves. Dress and appearance acted as an outward indicator of unit morale and discipline. Yet, General Boomer recognized that conditions varied from one unit to another and he allowed commanders the flexibility to authorize "temporary deviations due to unusual circumstances." Those deviations that occurred remained within parameters established by General Boomer or resulted from the "unusual circumstances" inherent in a lengthy field campaign.

## Index

---

- Abu Hydriyah, 24  
Admire, Col John H., 19, 22, 23, 24, 44, 46, 51, 56, 61, 62, 72, 73, 93, 117, 119  
Al Burqan Oilfield, 18, 49, 80, 83, 87, 90, 91, 94, 101, 102, 103, 108, 111, 116, 117  
Al Jaber Airfield, 18-19, 60, 68, 72, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 90, 91, 96, 97, 99, 100, 109, 118  
Al Jubayl, 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 23, 25, 65, 121  
Al Jubayl Airfield, 3  
Al Khanjar, 25, 48  
Al Mishab, 23, 121  
Al Qaraah, 47  
Al Wafrah Oilfield, 18, 30, 43, 58, 63, 68  
Allison, Capt John M., 114, 115  
Almohia MajGen Saldh Ali, 3  
An Nuayrihah, 24  
*Anderson*, 3  
Applegate, Maj Michael, 3  
Aymah, 9
- Bahrain, 9  
Baker, Capt Craig, 75, 77  
Bennett, Maj Drew, 77, 80  
*Bonneyman*, 3  
Boomer, LtGen Walter E., 1, 5, 6, 9, 12, 16, 18, 19, 25, 42, 43, 46, 61, 74, 83, 97, 103  
British Army Commands and Units  
    *1st Armored Brigade*, 16  
    *1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division*, 16  
    *21st Royal Engineers Detachment*, 15  
    *40th Field Artillery*, 15  
    *7th Armored Brigade*, 13, 15, 16  
    *Queen's Dragoon Guards*, 15  
    *Queen's Royal Irish Hussars*, 15  
    *Scots Dragoon Guards*, 15  
    *Staffordshire Regiment*, 15  
Bush, President George, 1, 25  
Bush, Barbara, 25
- Camp 15, 65  
Camp Pendleton, California, 121  
Castleman, LCpl David, 106  
Cement Factory, 13, 21, 22  
Central Command, United States, 1, 16, 26, 42, 66  
Cochran, GySgt Paul S., 72, 82, 103, 106  
Cortez, LtCol Christopher, 78
- Diggs, LtCol Alphonso A., 78  
Direct Support Command, 25, 26, 48  
Dole, Senator Robert, 25  
Draude, BGen Thomas V., 19, 23, 53, 57, 65, 90, 91, 96



Dunne, Capt Patrick J., 63

Emir's Farm, 68, 78, 79, 90

Foley, Representative Thomas, 25

Fraticegli, 2dLt Charles L., 70

Fulford, Col Carlton W., 22, 47, 52, 57, 63, 67, 71, 73, 74, 77, 80, 81, 89, 98, 103, 110, 111

Fulks, Col James A., 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 70, 71, 96, 97, 98, 118

General Support Command, 25

Gonsalves, 2dLt James D., 82, 113

Grow, Sgt Charles G., 68, 118

Hadriyah, 13

Hauge, 3

Helms, Sgt Scott, 75

Hoage, PFC Adam T., 61

Hodory, Col Richard W., 52, 63, 67, 73, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 96, 107, 108, 111, 112, 118

Holzbauer, Col Joseph R., 8

Hopkins, MajGen John I., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Howard, Col Patrick G., 52, 57, 66, 88, 98, 100, 118

Humble, LtCol Jerome D., 19, 72, 91, 108, 118

#### Iraqi Commands and Units

*14th Infantry Regiment, 56th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, 83*

*15th Brigade, 3d Armored Division, 91*

*15th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, 3d Armored Division, 94*

*20th Infantry Regiment, 3d Armored Division, 112*

*22d Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division, 85, 91, 92, 94*

*2d Battalion, 15th Mechanized Brigade, 94*

*83d Brigade, 8th Infantry Division, 58*

*449th Artillery Brigade, III Corps, 97, 103*

*501st Brigade, 8th Infantry Division, 94*

Kephart, LtCol Michael M., 92, 93

Kershaw, LtCol Charles W., 19, 49, 52, 53

Keys, MajGen William M., 25, 42, 43, 46

Khafji, 27, 28, 30, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 86

Kibrit, 25, 26, 28, 29, 41, 48

Kuwait As-Sur, 30

Kuwait City, 18, 19, 49, 87, 103, 111, 116, 118

Kuwait International Airport, 11, 19, 51, 74, 81, 87, 91, 98, 100, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 117, 118, 119, 121

Lilly, Col Japser C., 5, 48

List, Col Raymond A., 51

Magwa Oilfield, 111

Manifah Bay, 24, 53, 121

Marine Corps Commands and Units

11th Marines, 7, 15, 17, 21, 66, 91

1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, 43

1st Battalion, 11th Marines, 7, 17, 21, 52, 57, 85, 88, 99, 100, 108

1st Battalion, 12th Marines, 11, 15, 17, 21, 52, 56, 61, 66, 100

1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 17, 20, 52, 83, 85, 86, 87, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, 121

1st Battalion, 25th Marines, 10, 19, 21, 26, 49, 79

1st Battalion, 3d Marines, 8, 14, 17, 19, 21, 51, 72, 73, 117

1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 9

1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 2, 3, 15, 17, 20, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 104, 106, 109, 121

1st Battalion, 6th Marines, 8, 14, 16

1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 2, 3, 10, 11, 14, 17, 20, 63, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 88, 96, 98, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111

1st Battalion, 8th Marines, 109

1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 22

1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 2, 17, 19, 20, 48, 74

1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 7, 9, 10, 15, 17, 21

1st Marine Division, 6, 9, 11

1st Marine Division Command Post, 95

1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 6

1st Marines, 17, 20

1st Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 13

1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 7, 17, 21, 30, 31, 68

1st Remote Piloted Vehicle Company, 42

1st Tank Battalion, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 17, 52, 83, 85, 86, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 103, 108, 112, 113, 114, 121

2d Battalion, 12th Marines, 11, 23

2d Battalion, 3d Marines, 20, 56, 61, 63, 93, 117, 119

2d Battalion, 4th Marines, 96, 97

2d Battalion, 5th Marines, 9

2d Battalion, 7th Marines, 10, 17, 19, 21, 51, 53, 55, 58, 59, 70, 71, 118

2d Battalion, 9th Marines, 9

2d Force Service Support Group, 16

2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 26, 103

2d Marine Aircraft Wing, 16

2d Marine Division, 8, 16, 18, 19, 22, 25, 26, 49, 50, 58, 66, 103, 109, 118

3d ANGLICO, 53

3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2, 3, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21

3d Battalion, 11th Marines, 7, 15, 17, 21, 22, 52, 57, 76, 80, 100

3d Battalion, 12th Marines, 21, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 59, 61, 66, 71, 100

3d Battalion, 1st Marines, 9

3d Battalion, 3d Marines, 14, 17, 20, 56, 121

3d Battalion, 4th Marines, 96, 97

3d Battalion, 5th Marines, 9, 63

3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 9, 10, 19, 21, 47, 53, 55, 59, 61, 68, 70, 71

3d Battalion, 9th Marines, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 52, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 96, 108, 112, 114, 118

3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 9-10, 15  
3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 14, 15, 20  
3d Marine Aircraft Wing, 42, 48, 67, 88  
3d Marine Division, 8  
3d Marines, 7, 16, 17, 20, 44, 49  
3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 42  
3d Platoon, Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 51  
3d Remote Piloted Vehicle Company, 43  
3d Tank Battalion, 2, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 41, 48, 57, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 91, 103, 104, 105, 106, 121  
4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 16, 19  
4th Marines, 10, 21  
5th Battalion, 11th Marines, 7, 11, 15, 17, 21, 26, 31, 52, 54, 59, 66, 100, 118  
5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 8, 16  
5th Marines, 9  
7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 32  
7th Marines, 2, 10, 17, 20, 121  
8th Marines, 103  
Battery A, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, 118  
Battery B, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, 66  
Battery B, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 20, 21  
Battery E, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, 66  
Battery G, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, 97  
Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines, 99, 101  
Combat Service Support Detachment 11, 96  
Combat Service Support Detachment 111, 47  
Company A (reinforced), 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 14  
Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 20  
Company A, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 20  
Company A, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 30-31  
Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 21, 30, 49  
Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, 20  
Company A, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 20  
Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 20, 58  
Company A, 3d Tank Battalion, 20  
Company A, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 20  
Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 77  
Company B, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 30  
Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, 13, 20  
Company B, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 20  
Company C (reinforced), 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 15  
Company C, 1st Assault Amphibian Battalion, 13  
Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 90, 95  
Company C, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 70  
Company C, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 31  
Company C, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 14, 15, 20, 21  
Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, 47  
Company C, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 20  
Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, 84, 113  
Company D, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 21

- Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, 8
- Company D, 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 20
- Company D, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, 17, 20, 30
- Company F, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 98, 99
- Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, 71
- Company I, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, 20, 86, 93
- Company K, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, 56, 71
- Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 71
- I Marine Expeditionary Force, 1, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 32, 43, 51, 118
- Regimental Combat Team 3, 8, 11, 13, 14, 22
- Regimental Combat Team 7, 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 14, 21, 22
- Regimental Landing Team 7, 8
- Task Force Grizzly, 10, 19, 21, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 81, 96, 97, 98, 100, 109, 118
- Task Force Papa Bear, 11, 17, 19, 20, 47, 52, 57, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 76, 78, 83, 85, 87, 90, 92, 93, 96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 107, 109, 111, 112, 116, 118, 121
- Task Force Ripper, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 32, 41, 47, 48, 52, 53, 57, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 90, 91, 96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 116, 117, 118, 121
- Task Force Shepherd, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 46, 52, 53, 56, 66, 69, 72, 77, 80, 82, 90, 91, 94, 95, 100, 105, 107, 109, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121
- Task Force Taro, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 42, 44, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 82, 100, 109, 117, 121
- Task Force Troy, 19, 49, 52, 53, 57
- Task Force Warden, 57
- Task Force X-Ray, 19, 21, 51, 67, 85, 88, 89, 96, 100, 102, 117
- Markaz, 57
- Markaz Al Fawaris, 58
- Mattis, LtCol James M., 77, 78, 79, 98, 106, 109, 110, 111
- McElroy, Capt John F., 83
- McRae, Capt Donald E., 98
- Mishab, 28, 43
- Moore, MajGen Royal N., Jr., 48
- Musca, Maj Joseph I., 63, 115, 116
- Myatt, BGen James M., 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24
- Myatt, MajGen James M., 25, 34, 37, 38, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 67, 68, 71, 73, 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 83, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 96, 101, 103, 108, 111, 117, 119, 120, 121
- Myers, LtCol Clifford O. III, 9, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 41, 52, 82, 83, 90, 118, 119
- Nunn, Senator Sam, 25
- Observation Point 3, 58, 68
- Observation Point 4, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 53, 90, 91
- Observation Point 5, 31, 34
- Observation Point 6, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39



Pham, Cpl Duchoa, 115  
Pollard, Capt Roger, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37  
Protzeller, Capt Thomas P., 37, 38

Ramsey, LCpl Peter, 109  
Rapp, LtCol Michael L., 58, 68  
Ras Al Ghar, 23  
Ras Tannurah, 9  
Ray, Capt Eddie S., 39, 90, 95  
Rivers, LtCol Robert W., 11  
Ross, Lt Steven A., 35

Safaniyah, 12  
Saudi Arabian Army Commands and Units  
    10th Battalion, Saudi Army National Guard, 45  
    5th Battalion, 2d Saudi Army National Guard Brigade, 45  
    7th Battalion, 2d Saudi Army National Guard, 45  
Schwarzkopf, Gen H. Norman, USA, 1, 16  
Shaw, SSgt David, 65  
Shepherd, Gen Lemuel C., Jr., 10  
Shupp, Capt Michael A., 37, 39, 40, 41  
Stark, Sgt Thomas IV, 99  
Stennick, Col John F., 53

Toney, Sgt Shawn, 99  
Turki, Col, 44  
Turner, Maj John H., 66, 92, 93

U.S. Army Commands and Units  
    VII Corps, 1, 26  
U.S. Navy Commands and Units  
    Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2, 1, 2, 3, 4  
    Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 3, 6  
Umm Gudair Oilfield, 18

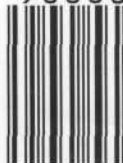
Welborn, 2dLt James, 106



ISBN 0-16-041826-7



90000



9 780160 418266

*The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.*



