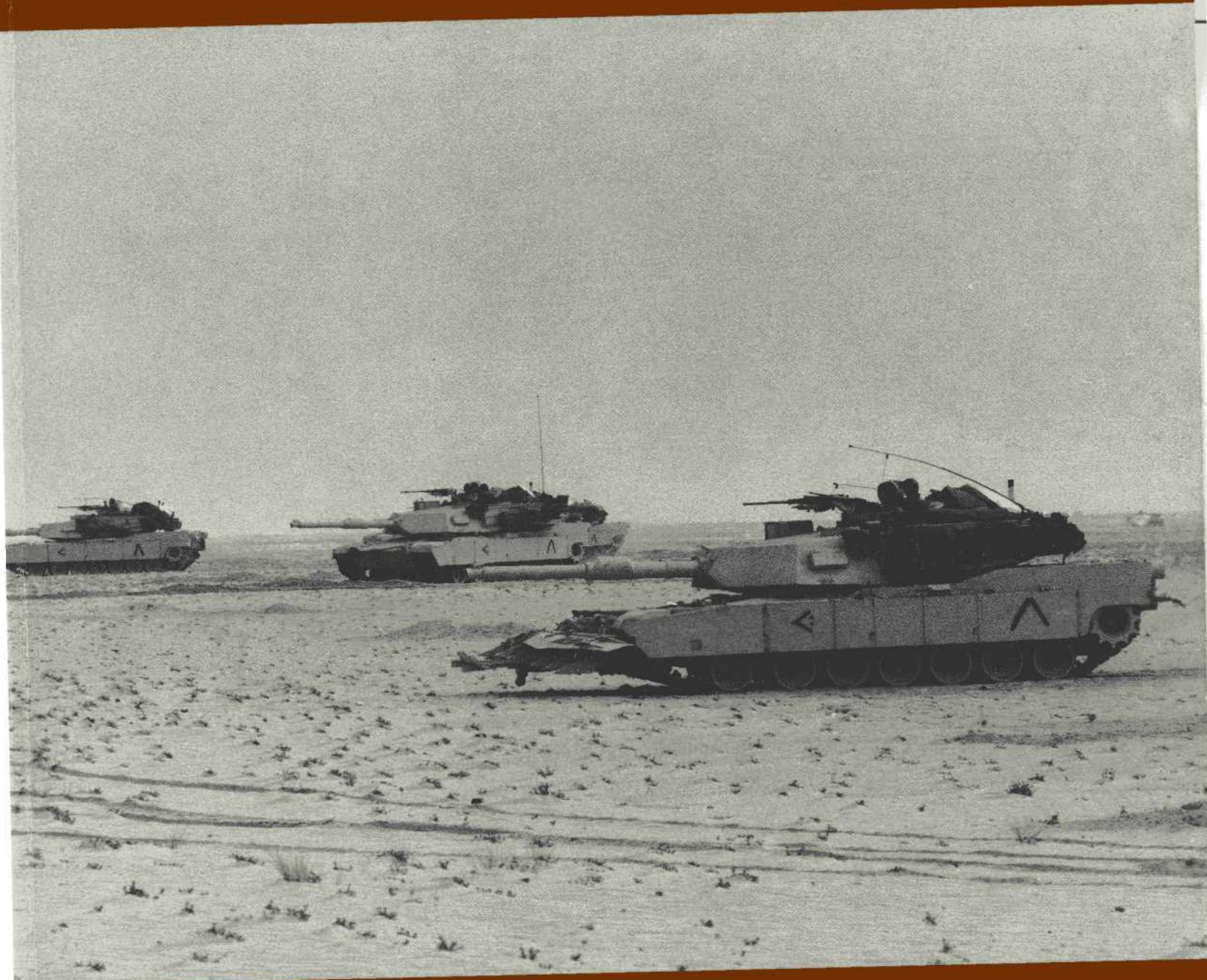


U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991 WITH THE 2D MARINE DIVISION IN DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM

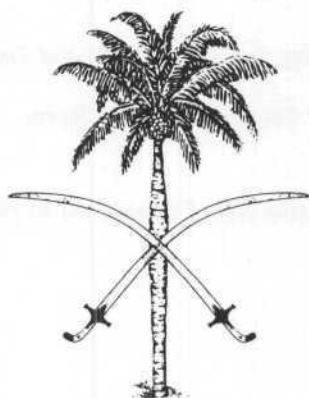


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WASHINGTON, D.C.

COVER: The 2d Tank Battalion on the move. The only Marine Corps unit equipped with powerful M1A1 tanks, the battalion functioned as the division reserve during the assault.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0338 18 91

U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991 WITH THE 2D MARINE DIVISION IN DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM



by
Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

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

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Operation Provide Comfort:

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

Foreword

Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski graduated from Saint Francis College in Brooklyn, New York, in 1968. Shortly after graduation he enlisted in the Marine Corps' officer candidate program. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in February 1969. After completion of The Basic School, he attended the Field Artillery Officers' Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His first assignment was as a forward observer with Battery F, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, as a member of Battalion Landing Team 3/9. He was transferred to the 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam in May 1970, and was assigned as a forward observer with Battery D, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines. He served with two rifle companies of the 5th Marines, and as a forward observer and adviser to the 37th Vietnamese Ranger Battalion. He finished his tour as the officer in charge of an integrated observation device team at an observation post in the Que Son mountains.

Upon his release from active duty in October 1971, he entered the federal Civil Service, working first with the Internal Revenue Service. He then obtained a position as a student intern with the Division of Military History of the Smithsonian Institution. At the same time he began to study for his master of arts degree in American civilization, which he received from George Washington University in 1976. Since January 1986, he has been the director of the U.S. Army's Casemate Museum at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

Lieutenant Colonel Mroczkowski joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1973 as the fire direction officer of Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines. Since that time he has held a variety of billets on the battery level, and as a staff officer. He has served in the intelligence and operations sections of the FMFLant Reserve Augmentation Unit. On six NATO exercises he has served as a liaison officer to the British Army. His most recent assignment with the Select Marine Corps Reserve was as the plans officer in the G-3 section of the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

With the start of Operation Desert Shield, he served for two weeks as a watch team commander in the Crisis Action Center of II MEF. He voluntarily returned to this duty in November 1990, and received involuntary active duty orders on 6 January 1991. Shortly thereafter he was assigned to the Marine Corps Historical Center and was further assigned to the 2d Marine Division as its historian. He arrived at the division on 27 January, and served with it throughout Operation Desert Storm and after its return to Camp Lejeune in April 1991.

Lieutenant Colonel Mroczkowski, recently selected for promotion to colonel, has received the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" and one gold star, the Combat Actions Ribbon with one gold star, and a Department of the Army decoration, the Commander's Award for Civilian Service.



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

Preface

This volume was written very shortly after the events described. It is based primarily on notes I made in the field while serving as the historian for the 2d Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm. Where necessary, these notes are supplemented by information contained in oral history interviews, many of which were made within days of the cessation of hostilities, with principal commanders and staff officers. Further clarification was gained through personal conversations with the officers involved.

This history is intended to be a first effort at presenting the division's actions, operations, and contributions to victory in what was a time of national crisis and intense military activity. Written so close to the time involved, many of those source materials which ordinarily would be available to a researcher of the war are not yet returned to the Marine Corps Historical Center. What this history can do is to guide the efforts of those researchers and writers who will come later. They will be introduced to the actions and decisions which were deemed to be most important to the division at the time; they will be made familiar with the content of sources which they might otherwise have missed; most importantly, they will be able to balance what is written here against those more complete records which will be available to them, and they will be able to correct any errors of fact which may have been made.

In writing this narrative, I had to choose which style might most clearly present all of those decisions and concerns which are the proper work of a division as it prepares for, and engages in, combat. I discovered early on that to try to present all of this information in a straight chronological sequence would be confusing. Rarely would an issue tend to a fast and simple resolution. Most questions were complex, requiring staff coordination and action over expanses of time which were measured in weeks. Nor would an issue be worked in isolation; any number of them were considered in a staff section at the same time. So I have written this history in a topical format. In this manner, an issue may be studied from start to finish, even though it may cause the narrative to move back and forth in the time-line of the history itself. This may lead to some redundancy of detail, especially where one decision is bound up in another. However, I believe that this presentation may be of greater value to future scholars as they research a particular question.

This history is also limited in scope, partly because of time constraints. It also is not meant to be the definitive work on the 2d Marine Division's participation in the war in the Persian Gulf area; that is intended by the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums to come later. This volume studies the participation of the division as an entity, and is written from that perspective. The actions of regiments, battalions, companies, small units, or individuals are noted as they are exceptional or contributed significantly to the division's overall efforts.

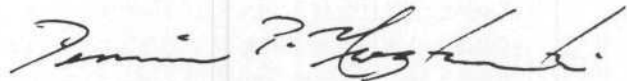
Every Marine is influenced by many others he meets during his career. I have been fortunate, while working on this history, to have had the assistance

of several highly professional Marines, of all grades. Each has contributed advice or knowledge to the completion of this work. All have unhesitatingly given that most precious commodity, their time, to ensure that what is written here is accurate.

I most especially thank Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, for having had the confidence to assign me to this most rewarding task. I also received great encouragement from the Deputy Director, Colonel Daniel M. Smith, and excellent advice from the Chief Historian, Mr. Benis M. Frank. Special Assistant Captain Roberta E. Breden most skillfully guided me through the intricacies of word processing and computer systems. While in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations and also back in the United States, I have been able to rely on my fellow Marine historians. Colonel Charles J. Quilter II met me at Al Jubayl, briefed me on the tactical situation and the work of the historical section, and ensured that I went forward to the 2d Marine Division without delay. His visits and telephone calls were always encouraging. I owe special thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, who recommended me for the billet of the division's historian. His ideas on the structure of a division historical program were professional and comprehensive. Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown read the initial draft of this history; his comments and criticisms were appropriate and helped to keep the narrative clear.

At the 2d Marine Division, there have been numerous officers and enlisted Marines who assisted with my work. My thanks and respect are given to each of the regimental, brigade, and battalion commanders and the members of the division general and special staffs. Each bore a heavy responsibility and each has been gracious in answering my many questions. First among these was the commanding general of the division, Major General William M. Keys; both before and after the ground campaign he found time in a busy schedule to answer my questions or to be interviewed for the record. The division's chief of staff, Colonel James K. Van Riper, ensured that I had access to appropriate meetings and briefings. Colonel Ronald G. Richard, the assistant chief of staff, G-3, kept me provided with all I required to complete my work. My comrades in the Breach Control Group, and most especially Lieutenant Colonel Howard P. Shores II, Lieutenant Colonel John Kiser, and Captain James T. Van Emburgh, all demonstrated those qualities expected from Marine officers: aggressiveness, intelligence, and endurance. It was an honor to be a part of the team. On the division G-3 staff, Lieutenant Colonel Ottavio J. Milano, Lieutenant Colonel James R. Battaglini, and Lieutenant Colonel John Lynn spent many hours with me, going over the course of the campaign and the most important decisions. Captain Steven G. Ackerman and Captain W. James Kimberly both ensured that the documentary evidence of the division's actions was properly retained. In the 2d Marine Division Combat Camera Team, Master Sergeant Herbert Gray, Gunnery Sergeant Kelly P. Turner, Gunnery Sergeant Charles Archuleta, Staff Sergeant Jack R. Ruark, Staff Sergeant Michael Masters, Sergeant James L. Roberts, Corporal Clark J. Schindler,

Corporal Sean M. Berwick, Corporal David Kearnes, Lance Corporal Danny P. Lanham, and Lance Corporal Albert T. Chlubna were all eager to "capture" the visual record of the division's participation in Desert Storm. They did an outstanding job, even under the most demanding of situations. Very importantly, Master Gunnery Sergeant Paul L. Fisher, Staff Sergeant Richard Molina, Sergeant Charles L. Leath, Corporal Henry Gutierrez, and Lance Corporal Joseph B. Traywick, from the division G-3 administrative staff all spent many long hours on many nights deciphering my hand-written pages, and typing the first drafts of this history in the desert of Kuwait. To all of these, and many others besides, I owe a great debt of thanks, which I can only repay with these pages.



Dennis P. Mroczkowski

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

The news of the invasion of Kuwait by the army of Iraq on 2 August 1991 caught many Americans by surprise. Although the news media had reported the possibility of an invasion for some days previous, many Americans did not immediately comprehend the implications of Saddam Hussein's actions upon the American economy and way of life. In one quick stroke the Iraqi dictator controlled 20 percent the world's oil reserves, and threatened the 25 percent owned by Saudi Arabia.¹ Such blatant aggression, affecting the nation's vital interests, demanded a strong response. Accordingly, President George Bush ordered a major deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to the Persian Gulf on 7 August.²

Initial Preparations

This initial deployment included the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), with the 1st Marine Division as its Ground Combat Element (GCE). Included with the forces afloat with the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (ComUSNavCent) was the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB), under the command of Major General Harry W. Jenkins, Jr.³ The brigade included two battalions of the 2d Marines, 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The division prepared to support this brigade's deployment, as it had done with other MEBs and Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) over the years. The division ensured that the brigade was provided the personnel and equipment required for its role as a landing force. Particularly, the brigade was provided large amounts of the division's available communications equipment, including two of its position location reporting system master stations. In the end, some of this equipment was inappropriate or, as in the case of the satellite equipment, excessive to the brigade's needs.⁴

The division's participation in Operation Desert Shield was only beginning with the deployment of the 4th MEB on 17 August 1990. The sustainment of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf area became a critical issue as they increased in numbers. With the initial mission being one of the immediate defense of Saudi Arabia against further Iraqi aggressions, a "line was drawn in the sand," behind which additional troops, supplies, and equipment could be brought into the theater. During the first several weeks, the replacement of units by a rotation policy was considered to be the best solution to maintaining a strong and effective force for an indefinite period in the harsh climate of the desert. Accordingly, the 2d Marine Division began a program of training and preparation for the time when it might be called to deploy and replace the 1st Marine Division.

An immediate question, requiring considerable detail to answer, was how the division should be structured for possible combat operations. Over the past two decades, the experience of the Marine Corps, and of the 2d Marine Division



Department of Defense Photo (USMC)

MajGen William M. Keys, Commanding General, 2d Marine Division.

in particular, had been for divisions to provide trained and equipped units for deploying MEBs and MEUs. While doctrine had envisaged that a MEF might deploy with two divisions, this had only occurred in the Vietnam War and in wargaming. The 2d Marine Division had to study the manner in which it would be committed to combat as a division for the first time since World War II.

Fortunately, the division had a commanding general who was especially qualified by temperament and knowledge to lead it in directions which just a few weeks previously could not have been imagined. Major General William M. Keys assumed command of the division in September 1989.* A quiet and

*Major General Keys was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps upon graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy in June 1960. He served his first tour in Vietnam as a company commander in the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. On his second tour in Vietnam, he was an infantry advisor to the 4th Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps, and subsequently the senior advisor to Brigade 147. Among his other assignments, he has been the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, and the commanding officer of the 6th Marines. Upon his promotion to brigadier general he was assigned as the Assistant Division Commander of the 2d Marine Division. He was advanced to the grade of major general on 14 March 1989 and assumed command of the 2d Marine Division on 27 September of that year. His personal decorations include the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with "V," the Bronze Star with "V," and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and silver star, Armed Forces Honor Medal (First Class), and Staff Service Honor Medal (First Class).

thoughtful leader, he had already built a staff of officers in whom he had confidence, and who returned his trust with competence and professionalism. He now had to lead them in a reconfiguration of the division and in an examination of how it was to operate in combat. With his Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Colonel Ronald G. Richard, and his Headquarters Battalion commander, Colonel Roger C. McElraft, he reviewed *Fleet Marine Force Manual 6-1*, to discover what changes best might be made to accomplish his anticipated mission.⁵ He believed that his staff and subordinate commanders would do well tactically; all would be doing what they had trained to do throughout their careers. The general also believed that a critical factor would be their ability to "fight smarter" than the enemy, as emphasized in the concepts of maneuver warfare.⁶

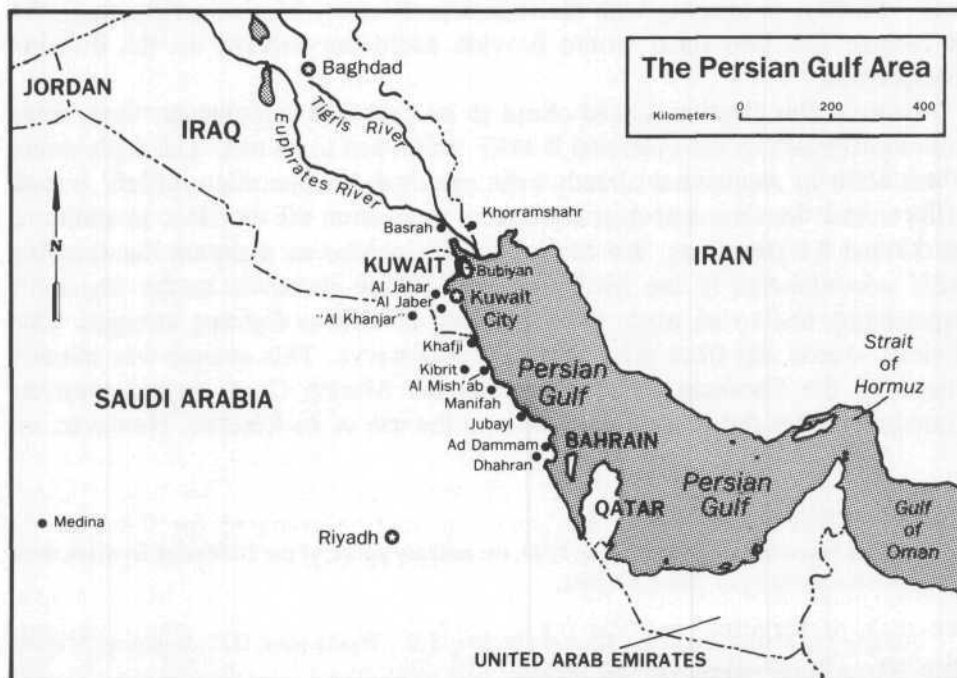
Recognizing the special features of desert warfare, General Keys emphasized the ability of the division to provide proper rear area security and timely, coordinated troop movements over large distances.⁷ The performance of these two functions caused the general and the colonels some concern, but the greatest problem was that of finding enough trained personnel. All possible sources were searched for Marines to perform these tasks. In August, the return to the division of Headquarters Battalion's Military Police Company was requested from MCB Camp Lejeune.^{*} With the large movement requirements for which Headquarters Battalion would be responsible, an early request was made in October for the 4th Truck Company from the 4th Marine Division. In November, additional Military Police support was requested, again from the 4th Marine Division. To assist with rear area security, two companies of specially qualified Marines were added to Headquarters Battalion: Anti-Tank TOW (tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided) Missile Company of the 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, and Company A, Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.^{**} Finally, in keeping with the tradition of "every Marine a rifleman," the 2d Marine Division Band would provide additional security to the division headquarters.⁸

Even as the division looked ahead to its probable deployment, there were still requirements of the Fleet and II MEF which had to be met. The deployment of 4th MEB in August has already been mentioned; when this unit left, it took 4,000 trained Marines and their equipment away from the division. In addition, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 8th Marines, were needed to maintain the standing MEU commitments in the Mediterranean.⁹ These shortfalls in the division's organization had to be made good to bring it back to fighting strength. One obvious source was from the Marine Corps Reserve. This avenue was initially closed by the Commandant's policy that the Marine Corps would meet its commitments for the first 60 days without the use of its Reserve. However, on

^{*}Under a base-division agreement of 1979, the military police of the 2d Marine Division were consolidated with those of Camp Lejeune.

^{**}Assigned to Marine Barracks, 8th and I Streets, S.E., Washington, D.C. Company A is one of the Marine Corps' ceremonial drill units.

Two of General Keys' earlier initiatives were of great value in preparing the division for its probable future missions. Shortly after assuming command of the



division, he ordered increased equipment readiness. Through his emphasis on this aspect of maintenance, the division's readiness level rose from between 88% and 91% in September of 1989, to 97.5% in February 1991, just prior to the start of the ground campaign.¹³

General Keys also continued the field training for the division staff begun by his predecessor, Major General Orlo K. Steele. Two of these earlier exercises provided many lessons which were of value as the division prepared itself for desert combat. In October 1988, the division had conducted "Combined Arms Operation 89," an exercise in which the 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, the 2d Tank Battalion, and other units maneuvered from Camp Lejeune into Virginia. This exercise helped to define command structures for the division, and also identified solutions for long-range communications. In the summer of 1989, the "South Carolina TEWT" (tactical exercise without troops) proved especially helpful in working out communications for the artillery regiment and in the employment of artillery in a movement-to-contact. These and other exercises had oriented the division to the size of the zone it would occupy in the desert and how that ground should be organized.¹⁴

In anticipation of the division's role in the conflict, General Keys ordered the division to conduct a field training exercise in September. During this three-day exercise, the II MEF wargame center's tactical warfare simulation evaluation analysis system was used to simulate an aggressor force in a Saudi Arabian desert scenario. The division command post (CP) responded to tactical situations, tested communications with subordinate units, and practiced convoy control. Most important, the exercise was used as a vehicle to determine the best configuration of the division CP. It evaluated personnel assignments, tentage requirements, and the physical layout. The most important lesson to come from this exercise was that the division could not fight a desert war from a traditional command post; General Keys and his staff were convinced that the CP had to be made more mobile. There were several configurations tried, and this experimentation continued even through the division's movements in Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, the division had a main, rear, forward, and mobile CP. The mobile CP included the commanding general, the operations officer, the air officer, and the fire support coordinator, and other officers as necessary, all working out of four light armored vehicles (LAV)--two command and control LAV-Cs, one LAV-25, and one LAV-AT (anti-tank variant) mounting the TOW missile system. It was from this mobile CP that General Keys would lead the division during the ground campaign.¹⁵

On 18 November, the division received its long-anticipated deployment orders in a message from the commanding general of II MEF.¹⁶ Training had already begun in earnest, with an emphasis on breaching operations and intelligence briefings on Iraqi doctrine and capabilities.¹⁷ The newly joined Reservists had an intensive program of instruction prepared for them by the Southwest Asia Training Group, which had formed from the II MEF wargame center. This instruction was set in two courses, one for enlisted Marines up to the rank of sergeant, and the other for officers and staff noncommissioned officers. The enlisted course emphasized individual marksmanship; nuclear,

biological, and chemical protection; minefield and obstacle breaching operations; desert survival and navigation; and orientation lectures on Southwest Asia and Iraqi army organization and equipment. The officer course covered much of the same material, and included classes on fire support coordination, the issuance of fragmentary (frag) orders, and exercises in the integrated combined arms staff trainer.¹⁸

Planning for deployment included use of Maritime Prepositioned Squadron 1 (MPS-1), which had a large portion of the equipment which the division would require. Shortly after the invasion of Kuwait, the division began MPS training. General Keys established an MPS planning cell in Headquarters Battalion. Major John M. Byzewski, the Headquarters and Service Company commander, and Captain Robert F. Brown, commanding officer of Truck Company, became MPS-qualified in preparation for the MPS off-load in the port of Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia. The division's advance party, under the command of Colonel McElraft, left from MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, on 4 December and the unloading of the MPS ships began immediately after their arrival at Jubayl, on 6 December 1990.¹⁹

Two of the division's staff sections also needed additional personnel to operate efficiently. The communications section needed 100 trained Marines in various communications specialties. These vacancies were filled by Reservists, but another problem arose as the mobilized units arrived. They frequently reported with only 25 percent of the communications equipment they were authorized. These and other shortages, such as cryptological equipment, were filled even as the division arrived in Saudi Arabia. However, full communications operations did not begin until 24 December, and a fully functional local area network (LAN) did not connect the staff sections' computers until four days after this.²⁰ The Intelligence Section was also short of personnel, but became fully staffed with the arrival of a detachment assigned from the 2d Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Intelligence Group (SRIG).²¹

Back at Camp Lejeune, preparations continued at a quick pace. However, there was time for a special ceremony. On 10 December, elements of the 2d Marine Division, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, 2d Force Service Support Group, and 2d SRIG, all commanded by Lieutenant General Carl E. Mundy, Jr., commanding general of II MEF, formed up on W.P.T. Hill Field. More than 24,000 Marines and sailors, active-duty regulars and mobilized Reservists, stood in formation for the largest review in memory at Camp Lejeune. After an address and review by General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Mundy ordered the assembled commanders to "deploy (their) Marines to Southwest Asia."²² Many Marines in that formation marched off the field and onto waiting transportation which carried them to Cherry Point for their flight to Saudi Arabia.²³ On the 12th the main body of the division began its movement to take its place as part of I MEF.²⁴

As the division began to arrive in theater, there was still much work to be done on its organization. One of the two Reserve infantry battalions, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, which had trained with the division at Camp Lejeune, was assigned to the 1st Marine Division.²⁵ The 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, had

been disbanded in 1988. Its place in the 6th Marines was taken by the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, the remaining battalion of the 2d Marines. (The 1st and 3d Battalions, 2d Marines, had deployed with 4th MEB in August.) As noted earlier, the 8th Marines had to leave two of its four battalions behind to cover any other MEF commitments which might arise. The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, a Reserve unit headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana became, the 8th Marine's third battalion.²⁶

These additions filled out the two infantry regiments. The division's artillery regiment, the 10th Marines, needed some reinforcement as well. The 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, had sailed in August as the artillery support of the 4th MEB; the 4th Battalion had been deactivated in the summer of 1989. Fortunately, elements of the 3d Marine Division had also been ordered to Saudi Arabia to reinforce I MEF; so the 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, from that division joined the regiment on 14 January 1991.²⁷ This battalion had just added Battery L, 4th Battalion, 12th Marines, to its organization prior to its deployment. Now, with the transfer to it of Battery S, 5th Battalion, 10th Marines, it became a "4x6" battalion, composed of four batteries of six 155mm howitzers each.²⁸ Two reserve batteries, K and M, of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, had been joined to the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines, bringing that unit also to four batteries. This battalion had just completed its transition from self-propelled to towed artillery in June. When it received the 155mm self-propelled howitzers from the MPS squadron, it had to reverse this course and become a self-propelled unit once more.²⁹ Other batteries which attached to the 10th Marines were Batteries D and F from the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines, 4th Marine Division; Battery D, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, 1st Marine Division; and Battery H, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, 3d Marine Division.



Photograph courtesy of U.S. Army, 1st Cavalry Division Museum
M1A1 tank belongs to the U.S. Army's 1st Brigade ("Tiger"), 2d Armored Division, which operated as a part of the 2d Marine Division during the Gulf War.

The division itself remained one infantry regiment short of its full strength as it arrived in theater. Until this time, I MEF had attached to it the United Kingdom's 7th Armored Brigade. This unit, commanded by Brigadier Patrick Cordingley, was composed of two armored regiments, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars, and an armored infantry battalion, the 1st Staffordshire Regiment. It also contained a field artillery regiment, an engineer regiment, an air defense battery, and an armored reconnaissance squadron of the Queen's Dragoon Guards.³⁰ Altogether it was equipped with 114 Challenger tanks, 45 Warrior infantry fighting vehicles, and 16 Scimitar medium reconnaissance vehicles. Its total manpower came to 9,466 soldiers. Originally, this brigade was to have been included in the MEF's plan for a three-division offensive. However, after working and training with the Marines for the previous two months, the brigade was transferred by theater commander General H. Norman Schwarzkopf to U.S. Army Central Command (ArCent) control on 17 December. This loss led to a great gain; the U.S. Army's 1st Brigade ("Tiger Brigade"), 2d Armored Division, reported from ArCent, via I MEF, to the operational control of the 2d Marine Division effective 10 January 1991.³⁰

This transfer appeared to be an ironic play on history. Seventy-four years earlier, the 4th Brigade of Marines had joined the U.S. Army's 2d Infantry Division and went on to win everlasting fame in such hard-fought battles as Belleau Wood and Chateau Thierry in World War I. The 6th Marines was a part of that brigade, and the French fourragere remains a proud and distinctive decoration worn by its Marines. Many of its subordinate units still incorporate the famous 2d Infantry Division "Indianhead" insignia in their coats of arms. Now an Army brigade was to be a part of the Marine Corps' 2d Marine Division, and all looked forward to an equally satisfactory relationship.

The Tiger Brigade was commanded by Colonel John B. Sylvester, U.S. Army. It was organized around two armored battalions, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 67th Armor Regiment and one mechanized infantry battalion, the 3d Battalion of the 41st Infantry Regiment. (In Army terminology these were known as "1-67 AR," "3-67 AR," and "3-41 IN" in writing, and as "1st of the 67th", etc., orally.) The brigade was well equipped with fire support, containing the 1st Battalion, 3d Field Artillery Regiment (1-3 FA) and a battery of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), Battery A, 92d Field Artillery.³¹

The brigade had just exchanged its M1 Abrams tanks for 120 newer M1A1s. The mechanized infantry battalion had also upgraded its equipment when it received 54 M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, while retaining five of the older M2A1 models. The brigade also had many other vehicles and weapons systems which were unfamiliar to most Marines. For instance, there were 18 M106 mortar carriers, 10 M270 MLRS, and 9 M163 Vulcan anti-aircraft vehicles. Maintenance and logistics support could have imposed a heavy burden on the division (fuel consumption for the M1A1 tanks alone was 3 to 5 gallons per mile

³⁰British Army regiments have peacetime strength of battalions; cavalry squadrons are company-equivalents.



Photograph courtesy of Col John B. Sylvester, USA
The Tiger Brigade arrived with its earlier-issue M1 tanks, here maneuvering in Saudi Arabia during November 1990.



Photograph courtesy of U.S. Army, 1st Cavalry Division Museum
Bradley fighting vehicle and soldiers of the Tiger Brigade take a break during training prior to the opening of the ground offensive.

but fortunately the brigade brought the 502d Support Battalion as part of its task organization. The "Tigers" were as anxious for their proper support as were the Marines with whom they would be operating. Accordingly, the two service components made agreements over which classes of support would be provided by each. The Marines provided support in Classes I (rations) and III (fuel) and Common Class V (ammunition). The 1st Cavalry Division would provide some Class IX (repair parts) support and maintenance personnel. Line-haul support for the brigade would come from ArCent in the form of 20 heavy expanded mobility tactical truck refuelers, 20 5-ton tractors, and 40 40-foot trailers.³²

With the arrival of this important brigade, the division's assembly in theater was complete. It now numbered more than 20,000 personnel, and contained a large number of armored vehicles: 196 M1A1 tanks, 59 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, 66 M60A1 tanks, 248 assault amphibious vehicles and 159 light armored vehicles.³³ General Keys planned now to task organize this highly mobile and powerful force. In recent years Marine commanders had created various "task forces" tailored to match the missions involved. But here, the general saw no need for such organizations, with all they implied for temporary attachments and their distinct functions.³⁴ He recognized that normal ground doctrine permitted regimental task organizations using organic division units, and there was really no compelling need for task forces. The division would enter operations composed of two infantry regiments, an armored brigade, an artillery regiment, and combat support battalions; it contained enough armored vehicles and firepower to match the highly mobile warfare which was anticipated. It was therefore decided that the division would go into combat in the "triangular" structure of three maneuver elements, familiar to commanders at all levels. Support and taskings of the separate battalions would be ordered as needed by the division headquarters. Also, General Keys had confidence in his brigade and regimental commanders, and he wanted them and their units to receive credit for their accomplishments.³⁵ This factor of trust was to be of importance in the weeks ahead, giving an additional moral strength to commander and subordinate alike. What T. E. Lawrence wrote of General Allenby, during an earlier desert war, was equally true of General Keys: "Power lay in his calm assumption that he would receive as perfect obedience as he gave trust."³⁶

The tools were now at hand; the time had come to put them to use.

Movements and Training

The 2d Marine Division formally established its command post in Saudi Arabia on 14 December 1990, upon the arrival of the commanding general and his flag from Camp Lejeune.³⁷ Over the next several weeks, units continued to arrive and join the division, retrieving their equipment which was arriving either by ship, or by airplane, or on board the Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 1.

Now that he was in the theater, General Keys believed his two most important and immediate concerns were to train all units for the type of combat

he anticipated, and to move the division forward to the operating area as quickly as possible in preparation for offensive operations.³⁸ The latter intent proved more difficult to do since it had to be executed from the division's initially assigned defensive missions. Nevertheless, at every opportunity, the division displaced forward, so its elements were nearly continuously on the move over a period of two months.

I MEF Fragmentary Order 006, dated 20 December 90, tasked the 2d Marine Division with providing one battalion for the security of "critical facilities" at Al Jubayl, and to prepare for offensive operations by 15 January 1991.³⁹ On 25 December, General Keys took this opportunity to issue the division's first order of Operation Desert Shield. The division's forward CP would displace on 27 December and then coordinate the displacement of subordinate units by echelon.⁴⁰ By 7 January 1991, the division's main CP had moved to the area known as the "Triangle," with other elements following.⁴¹ At the same time, some of the division's units were still arriving in theater and joining up with their equipment. On 17 January, the 2d Tank Battalion offloaded its equipment and left Al Jubayl, the last unit to close the division.⁴² Even as this battalion began to move up, the division was already taking its next stride across the desert.

On 9 January, I MEF issued Fragmentary Order 003 to I MEF Operation Order 006, assigning the 2d Marine Division a mission to "defeat enemy forces as far forward as possible and to protect vital facilities vice Al Jubayl"⁴³ The division was tasked to "Defend in zone using supporting arms; screen to west of EPAC TAOR" to provide early warning of attack; . . . (and) establish a forward operations base. . . ."⁴⁴ By 12 January the division issued a complementary order, number 1-91, by which the division would displace to "establish defensive positions in sector in order to protect Al Jubayl vital facilities from indirect fire; . . . conduct local counterattacks to restore the MEF zone; . . . (and) assist friendly units in rearward passage of lines."⁴⁵ The only manner in which the division would be able to successfully conduct any "counterattacks to restore the MEF zone" would be if it was positioned far to the north. Such a move would not only help to fulfill this mission, but would also be in keeping with General Key's intention to position the division as far forward as possible in preparation for offensive operations prior to the start of the planned air campaign.⁴⁶ A move of 190 kilometers north would bring the division to its next position near Al Kibrit, only 60 kilometers from the Kuwaiti border.

The division's forward CP arrived in the vicinity of Al Kibrit on 14 January. Once it was established, the main CP moved up, and established itself even farther to the north. The main CP then called the rear CP to come up and join with it. Other division elements arrived in the area during the next 10

³⁸"Eastern Province Area Command Tactical Area of Responsibility," which extended south from the Kuwaiti border, and was bounded by the Persian Gulf coast to the east and, at this time, by the 2d Marine Division to the west.

days.⁴⁷ While in this position, the 2d Light Armored Infantry (LAI) Battalion was ordered to screen the division's western flank.⁴⁸ The battalion would continue to fulfill this mission, screening the division's front and flanks throughout the war.

The division was now close enough to the Kuwaiti border to begin preliminary offensive operations. Only days after the last elements arrived at the new position, the division issued Frag Order 007, on 27 January 1991. This ordered an "artillery surface raid," intended to destroy selected targets across the border in what was known as the "agricultural area." The raid was conducted by the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines. Batteries Q and R, armed with M109A1 155mm self-propelled howitzers and M114 8-inch self-propelled howitzers, were selected as the firing units. The 2d LAI Battalion would provide screening and security.⁴⁹

The purpose of the raid was three-fold. First, to develop an offensive spirit in the division's units. Second, to destroy the targets chosen: a logistics site and truck park. Third, and perhaps most importantly, to measure the enemy's reactions to the raid and to gauge his ability to detect and counterattack the division.⁵⁰ The raid was structured as a Task Force, with Lieutenant Colonel Keith T. Holcomb, Commanding Officer, 2d LAI Battalion, in charge. The commander of the raid force was the commanding officer of the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew F. Mazarra. Counterbattery protection was provided by the counterbattery radar platoon of 10th Marines and Battery A, 92d Field Artillery, a multiple launch rocket system battery commanded by Captain Edward L. Hughes, USA."

At 2100 on 27 January the batteries moved from their assembly areas to their firing positions. At 2359 firing commenced and continued for 13 minutes.⁵¹ When firing ceased, Battery Q had delivered 72 155mm rounds and Battery R had fired 36 8-inch rounds. The batteries displaced and returned to their assembly areas. Throughout the fire mission, there was no attempt by the enemy to return fire.⁵² From this first combat mission, the 2d Marine Division had begun to take the measure of the enemy. The impression began to grow of Iraqi inability to bring accurate artillery fires against the division. This belief was confirmed by subsequent actions.

By the end of January, the division was planning to move forward into final assembly areas, in preparation for its role in offensive operations as assigned by the original MEF operation plan. A party from Headquarters Battalion, commanded by the battalion executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel John W.

*Occasionally, an officer's background and experience appear to have eminently qualified him to hold a position of great responsibility during a particular crisis. One such officer was Lieutenant Colonel Holcomb. Among his previous assignments, he served in Lebanon in 1978 to 1979 as a UN observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Army. He had attended the Naval Post-Graduate School, earning a master of arts degree in national security affairs, with a Mideast emphasis. He had been a Commandant of the Marine Corps Fellow to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. At the Defense Language Institute he spent 47 weeks studying the Syrian dialect of Arabic.

Muth III, had gone forward on 29 January to the vicinity of the large sand berm which marked the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. Their mission was to make a reconnaissance of a new site for the CP.⁵³ However, the events of the next three days would preclude any such movement.

On 29 and 30 January the Iraqi forces conducted a series of probes along the southern border of Kuwait. Although they never seriously engaged 2d Marine Division forces, these actions postponed the possibility of any forward movement of the CP by the division's headquarters. At the same time, the division staff had been developing recommendations for changes to the MEF operation order. Their major proposal tasked the 2d Marine Division to conduct a separate breach in an area more north and west than that originally planned. These changes were tentatively approved by the MEF Commander, Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, on 1 February; when he finally ordered the change on 6 February, the need for the division to move forward in its present zone was ended.⁵⁴

But occupying an entirely new defensive sector was now necessary. To place itself in the best position from which to launch its attack, the division had to move west and north, through the 1st Marine Division's sector and around the "heel" of the Kuwaiti border to the area known as the "elbow." This movement of an entire division across the enemy's front was a considerable risk, especially if confronted by an active enemy with accurate intelligence gathering assets. Fortunately, it was obvious the Iraqis did not have a good intelligence collection



Department of Defense Photograph (USMC)

Marines train with .50-caliber heavy machine guns and LAV-25 vehicles on the "Thunderbolt Range" in Saudi Arabia.

system. The greatest danger to discovery was from enemy ground surveillance radar. To counter this threat, the movement was routed entirely outside of the range of the enemy's radar, and these were jammed at critical moments by EA6B Prowler electronic countermeasure aircraft.⁵⁵ As an additional precaution to mask the disappearance of the division from its sector, the MEF established a deception unit, Task Force Troy. This task force had a special deception capacity: to emit the electronic signature of a division. If successful it would appear that the 2d Marine Division was still operating in its original area.⁵⁶

As in the previous move, the division's forward CP personnel led the quartering party. Accompanied by representatives of the 6th and 8th Marines, the Tiger Brigade, the 2d LAI Battalion, and the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion, the members of the CP scouted the division's new zone near the area soon to be named Al Khanjar. There they met with members of the 1st Marine Division's 1st LAI Battalion, who briefed them. In order to conceal the division, advantage was made of the natural lay of the ground. Sites for all of the division's units were selected as close as possible to the berm at the Kuwaiti border.

The next consideration in this movement was the need for the division to be able to maintain its tactical integrity and defend itself if attacked on the march. This would be accomplished by moving the division by echelon, and completing the move as rapidly as possible. G-Day had been set for 24 February 1991. To have the entire division in its positions in time to conduct final maintenance and pre-assault operations, General Keys ordered that the move be completed by 19 February.⁵⁷ Accordingly, 2d LAI Battalion led forward on the 12th; one week later, the division's last unit, the 8th Marines, was in position.

The division was now within range of the enemy's guns. While maintaining an active outpost line to the front, the division began those final preparations which would bring it into the attack in five more days.

In these days prior to the start of the ground campaign, General Keys' other task for the division was to train for the type of combat it expected to face. Division Frag Order 001 stated all units would "begin (field) unit training as soon as possible" after arrival in Southwest Asia.⁵⁸ It was recognized that this training would have to be integrated with the division's defensive missions and forward movements.

On 31 December, General Keys clearly expressed his intent for the type of training the division was to undertake. In Operations Order 2-90 he stated that he wanted to "focus the efforts of the Division on the training/preparation for combat during the transition period prior to the beginning of offensive ops. This will be oriented towards preparing the Division for mechanized operations and obstacle breaching. Reserve battalions will have priority of training"⁵⁹

To provide training to all units in the time remaining before the onset of hostilities, a program of instruction was organized in four phases. The first phase was unit training as prescribed by the regimental and separate battalion commanders. The second phase was the zeroing and calibration of individual and crew-served weapons. The third phase was for battalion-size units to receive mobile assault training. Finally, there were to be regimental combined arms



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0026 20 91

In an early rehearsal for the assault on Iraqi defenses in Kuwait, Marines of "Task Force Breach Alpha" fire mine-clearing line charges from special trailers towed by AAV7A1 vehicles. The explosions clear vehicle-wide lanes by detonating, disabling, or moving the mines.

exercises. Each infantry regiment which was task organized for mechanized and breaching operations was to conduct a combined arms mechanized assault and breaching exercise on the division mechanized assault course.⁶⁰

The course was built on the "Thunderbolt" range, where the division's major training exercises took place. The course covered approximately 250 square kilometers, and was designed to provide the division's unit commanders a realistic setting in which to exercise command, control, and fire support coordination, as well as complex obstacle breaching by mechanized forces. The 6th and 8th Marines, the Tiger Brigade, and the 2d Tank Battalion were each assigned a block of six or seven days in which to exercise these functions.⁶¹

The course contained several obstacles, much as those used by the Iraqis: a berm, a tank ditch, some trenchlines, and two minefields. There was also a sand-table model. It was used by unit staffs for their own training. Unfortunately, this course required the use of the specialized engineer equipment which was already identified as necessary to successfully conduct a breaching operation. Much of this equipment -- tank kits, armored combat earthmovers, track-width mine plows, armored vehicle launched bridges -- was either still on board ship, or yet to be sent by the Marine Corps Research and Development Command. Prior to the division's movement to Kibrit, the only unit to gain an appreciable amount of training on the course was the 6th Marines. Other division units conducted tactical exercises without troops when they could.⁶²

One of the division's most important training evolutions occurred on 22 January. A major sand-table exercise was held for I MEF commanders. Officers of both divisions were to walk through their roles as assigned in the MEF operation order.⁶³ The concept of operations tasked the 1st Marine Division with conducting the breaches through both obstacle belts, and the 2d Marine Division with conducting a passage of lines and continuing the attack. It was here that, as the participants walked through the scale model of the breach sites, they concluded that not only was the passage of lines a difficult maneuver, but that the area assigned was too congested for the maneuver of two divisions. As a

result of this rehearsal, the 2d Marine Division staff focused its staffwork upon the problem of a second breach zone through the enemy's obstacles.⁶⁴

By the beginning of February a concept had been approved for both divisions to perform separate breaches. On 13 February, the 2d Marine Division conducted its own sand-table rehearsal and exercise to practice the assault and the breach. This exercise was conducted in two phases. In the morning, participants took part in a large sand-table walk-through of the control methods by which the units would be called from their assembly areas and move through the lanes which would lead them to the breach sites. In the afternoon there was a full-scale rehearsal of the 6th Marines' assault from its assembly areas to the breach sites. An important part of this movement was the familiarization of the units' guides with their duties in leading their units along the proper routes and to the assigned breach lanes.⁶⁵

While unit training continued, the division staff turned to the final preparations for the assault, only 11 days away. After the movement of the division's elements into their final positions, the time had arrived for active offensive operations.

Intelligence

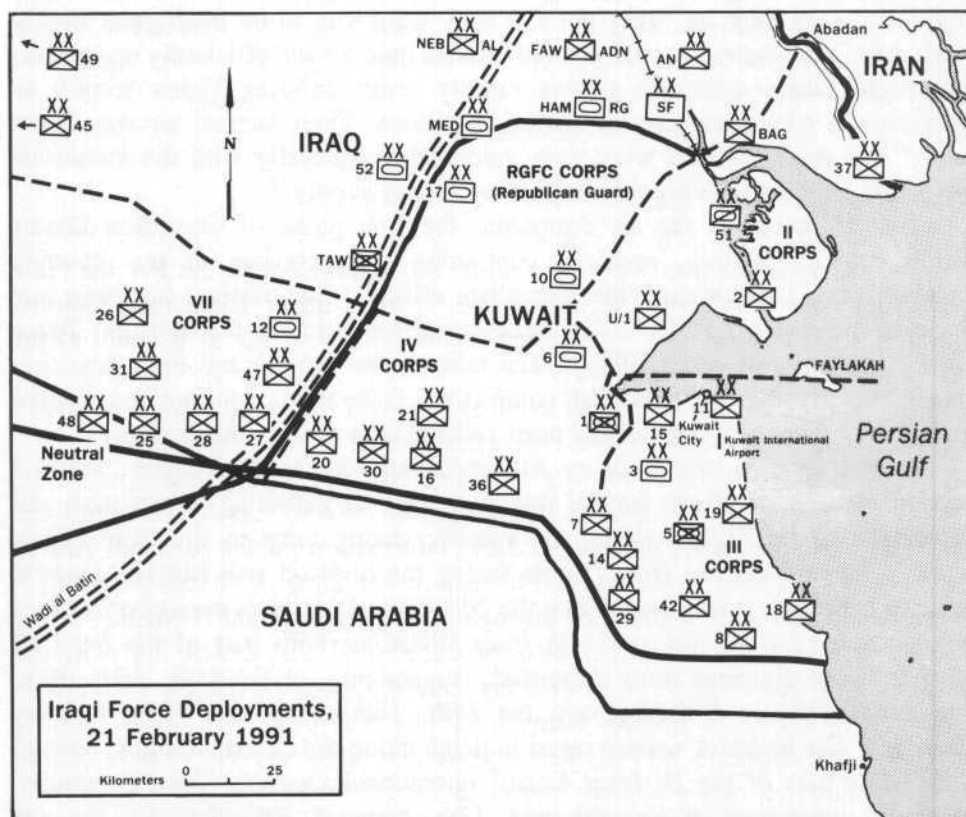
The 2d Marine Division staff and commanders sought information on the enemy situation beginning in the earliest days of August. Even before the division had received a mission, and while its deployment to the Persian Gulf was little more than speculation, the G-2 section, under Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Gregor, was assembling as much information as it could about the Iraqi Army and its capabilities.

An intelligence database was acquired early on through liaison with other intelligence agencies, and by reviewing the lessons learned from the Iran-Iraq War.⁶⁶ One of the earliest products of the G-2 section was a small pamphlet, entitled *Saudi Arabia Handbook*, which went into two editions. At this time, the emphasis was still on the defense, and the information related to Saudi Arabia and how its climate and terrain could be expected to affect military operations.⁶⁷ These handbooks were distributed throughout the division and II MEF.

Another important booklet, also produced and distributed early in the conflict, was *How They Fight: Desert Shield Order Of Battle Handbook*, published by the United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center in August and September 1990. This was an especially instructive publication, focusing upon the Iraqi Army, its organization, and its methods of operation. In addition to detailed and specific information, the handbook contained this assessment of the enemy:

The Iraqi Army, the world's eighth largest, is also one of the best equipped and combat-experienced in the world. It can conduct multi-corps operations spread over 100km or more and is capable of coordinating air and artillery, timing of movements and operations,

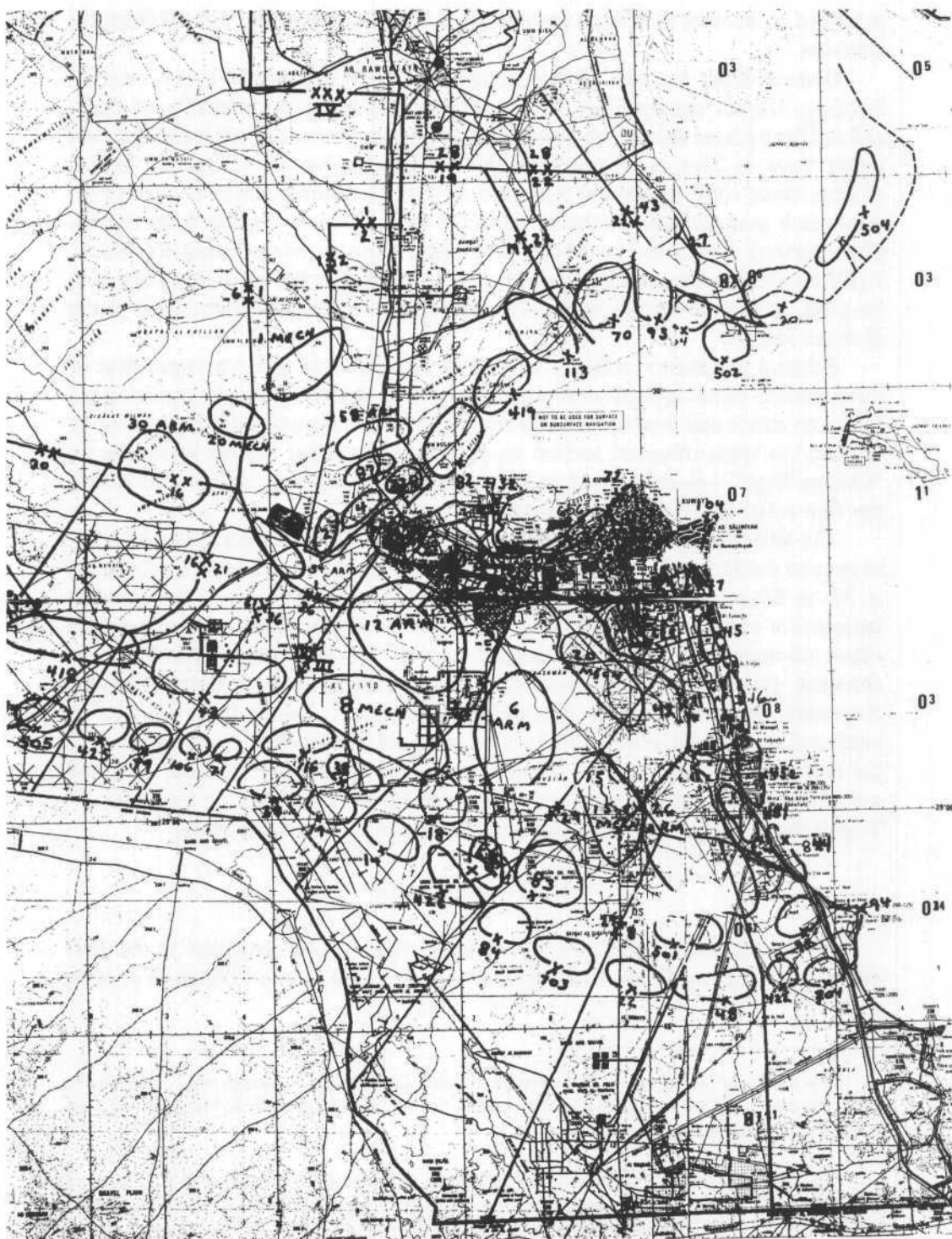
coordinating complicated logistics requirements, and getting supplies, equipment, and troops to the right place at the designated time. The Iraqi Army is distinguished by its flexibility, unity of command, and high level of mobility. The Army is highly qualified in planning, C2, logistics and maintenance, but limitations placed upon the commanders' initiative, especially in exploiting success, reduce these advantages. Concern over the political impact of excessive losses, military leaders' fear of punishment for failure, and lack of interservice cooperation also hindered initiative during the Iran-Iraq War.⁶⁸



This view of a strong and capable Iraqi Army was very likely correct for the early days of Operation Desert Shield, with morale still high and the integrity of units not yet destroyed by death and desertion. By the middle of December, as the division was arriving in theater, a more defined picture of the enemy was developed. At a briefing given by Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, USMC (Ret), the strengths and weaknesses of the Iraqi Army were detailed. The Iraqi soldiers were described as "conscripts who endure," and who were not required to do very much. They were secular in nature, without the religious fervor demonstrated by the Iranians. Great emphasis was placed on maintaining their morale, but they had demonstrated during the Iran-Iraq War that given the opportunity, they would break and run. The Iraqis were known to have large amounts of artillery and they had shown that they could use it properly; although not as proficient as U.S. forces, when they fired massed artillery they could assume that they had killed the target in their fire sack. Their engineers were rated as "very good." They were said to be intelligent, highly motivated, and innovative. They could operate quickly and efficiently under fire, and could create defensive sectors rapidly, even building higher terrain as necessary to take advantage of tactical situations. Their tactical air was "very poor," and their logistics were very vulnerable, especially with the numerous types and calibers of weapons which they had to supply.⁶⁹

The beginning of the air campaign, the first phase of Operation Desert Storm, on 16 January, required continuing reassessments of the enemy's capabilities and intentions. One immediate effect of the constant bombing was the ever-increasing number of line-crossers surrendering to the division. These enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) often told of low morale and high desertion rates in the Iraqi units.⁷⁰ Although comforting, these tales could not be accepted uncritically; deserters are not the most reliable sources of information.

As the division moved up to Al Kibrit and later to Al Khanjar, the G-2 section focused its efforts on the important task of gathering information and disseminating intelligence about the specific enemy units to the front. Their work in identifying the enemy units facing the division was highly accurate; prior to the attack it was known that the 2d Marine Division's area of operations was occupied by the 7th and 14th Iraqi Divisions, both part of the Iraqi III Corps. These divisions were composed, respectively, of the 19th, 38th, 39th, and 116th Infantry Brigades; and the 14th, 18th, 56th, and 426th Infantry Brigades. The brigades were arrayed in depth along the defensive lines; beyond them were part of the III Iraqi Corps' operational reserves, the 3d Armored Division, composed of the 6th and 12th Armored Brigades and the 8th Mechanized Brigade. Also in the zone was the 20th Mechanized Brigade, which



Translation of a captured map overlay showing Iraqi Army positions in the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions' zones.

belonged to another *III Corps* operational reserve division, the *5th Mechanized Division*.⁷¹

General Keys learned of the enemy's materiel strength at every evening briefing. Higher headquarters passed information about the numbers of tanks and artillery pieces facing the division, providing a forecast of what the division might have to face as it assaulted the Iraqi defensive lines. Shortly before G-Day, there were reportedly 500 guns of various calibers which could fire on the breach area. Of equal concern were the reports, often coming from EPWs, that chemical munitions would be used against the division during its attack. Artillery-delivered mustard gas was twice mentioned as the most likely agent to be used, and these rounds were even reported to have been distributed at the division level.⁷²

Because the enemy artillery so greatly outnumbered and outranged that of the division, three days of clear weather were needed to allow the coalition air forces to attack and destroy these prime targets.⁷³ Fortunately, just days prior to G-Day, the meteorological section reported that a weather system known as an "Omega High" was developing in the eastern Mediterranean, and would ensure the fine weather so urgently desired.

The ability and desire of the Iraqis to contest the division's attack was not as easy to predict as the weather, however. Various units were reported as being at 30- to 50-percent effectiveness, and the increasing numbers of line-crossers indicated a severe lack of fighting spirit.⁷³ Yet, if remaining enemy soldiers chose to stand and fight, and served any of the surviving guns with any accuracy, the division's movement through the breach lanes could prove costly. Nevertheless, General Keys remained highly confident. Shortly before G-Day he predicted that the division might have its most difficult period in getting through the breach. But, once beyond, the division would be able to "hold our own and get on," and that the "biggest problem would be the first three or four days."⁷⁴ This informal assessment was to be the most accurate forecast of all.

The First Skirmish

At approximately 2100 on 29 January, the division engaged in its first skirmish of the war.⁷⁵ At first, several reports came to the division's combat

⁷¹In a telephone interview with Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Gregor on 11 September 1991, the work of the G-2 section was described as "85- to 90-percent accurate" in identifying the Iraqi brigades and their locations.

⁷²With rocket assisted projectiles, the division's 155mm M198 howitzers had a range of 30,000 meters. The Iraqi Army had a variety of artillery pieces, many of which were typical Soviet-manufactured 122mm and 152mm howitzers, with ranges of 15,300 meters and 17,230 meters, respectively. However, the Iraqis had also procured more sophisticated weapons in some quantities: the South African 155mm G5 howitzer and the Austrian Noricum GH N-45 155mm gun-howitzer. These weapons, using aerodynamically improved "base-bleed" projectiles, had ranges of 39,000 and 39,600 meters, respectively.

operations center (COC) of large groups of Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles moving through the berm below the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, and heading south. Such groups (the largest was originally estimated at 60 to 100) were reported at several points along the fronts of 1st Marine Division, 2d Marine Division, and the Eastern Province Area Command (EPAC). Most alarming to the division were the reports coming in from Observation Posts 2 and 4, located close to the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, of enemy armored vehicles entering the division's zone. Because of the forward movements of the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions in preparation for offensive operations, these OPs were manned by elements of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Force Reconnaissance Battalion. These forces on OP 2 were the first to engage the enemy, bringing the column under TOW missile fire and calling in several air strikes.⁷⁶

At 2250, Company C, 2d LAI Battalion reported it had engaged 29 armored vehicles.⁷⁷ By 2345, the 2d LAI Battalion again reported that it was engaging enemy armored targets, and claimed one kill of a tank by a TOW gunner, Corporal Edmond Willis III of Company A.⁷⁸ This was the 2d Marine Division's first ground combat kill during Operation Desert Storm.

General Keys was concerned with the possibility of an enemy breakthrough into the division's zone. The 6th Marines, responding to an inquiry by the general, stated that it could have an infantry battalion and a battalion of tanks ready to move in 30 minutes.⁷⁹ The Tiger Brigade (1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division) was given a verbal order to provide one company to move forward and defend the Direct Support Group.⁸⁰ At 2341, General Keys personally discussed the protection of the ammunition supply point with Brigadier General Charles C. Krulak, commanding general of the Direct Support Group.⁸¹ By 2356, the Tiger Brigade unit was in place.⁸²

One other sighting of enemy vehicles was called in by the 2d LAI Battalion. At 0029, 30 January, the battalion reported another 29 vehicles moving through the berm; however, it was uncertain if these were Saudi or Iraqi.⁸³ A call to the MEF CP confirmed that these were Saudi, operating along the eastern boundary of the division's zone. At 0116, the 1st Marine Division's Task Force Shepherd reported that OP 6 was being fired upon; at the same time the 2d LAI Battalion reported the Saudis were firing over their positions. Colonel Ronald W. Richard, the division Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, immediately called the MEF staff to correct the situation.⁸⁴ There now were also 20 vehicles on the north of the border, heading south. These were engaged by the 2d LAI Battalion with air support.⁸⁵

By 0220, the skirmish was over; the 2d LAI Battalion reported two tanks destroyed, both hit by the same gunner, Corporal Willis.⁸⁶ At 0550, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Keith T. Holcomb, reported that a 15-kilometer gap existed on its left flank with the 1st Marine Division. The battalion was

ordered to refuse its flank, while the division sought approval to change the boundary.⁸⁷ This approval came at 0837.⁸⁸

After the action of the night of 29-30 January, General Keys decided to move several combat units to positions northward, from which they could more quickly respond to any further probes. He ordered 6th Marines to establish this covering force. The 6th Marines shifted north with two battalions -- the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, and 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. Artillery support would be provided by the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines. A frag order also was issued to the 2d Tank Battalion to place, on order, one company under the operational control of the 6th Marines.⁸⁹

With these preparations made against the possibility of a repeat by the enemy of the previous night's actions, General Keys left to visit the scene of the skirmish. There he met with Lieutenant Colonel Holcomb and reviewed the new dispositions with him. The remainder of the day passed in relative quiet, but reports were received of heavy enemy columns moving to the north of the division's zone and all along the Kuwaiti border. The 6th Marines, having moved north, continued its mission of covering the division front and preparing to counterattack any incursions. The 2d LAI Battalion, under the operational control of the 6th Marines, would conduct the screen of the division's sector south of the border.⁹⁰

By 2000, 30 January, reports were received at the division COC of an "imminent" attack in the 6th Marines' zone. Intelligence reports cited multiple brigade-size units moving in the area north of the border. In the midst of this news, at 2040, a message was received that a chemical attack in the 2d Marine Division's area was probable, and personnel north of 28 degrees, 8 minutes were to don chemical protective garments immediately. Intelligence sources continued to send more reports of enemy movements. At 2050, 60 vehicles were crossing the border within five kilometers of OP 3. At the same time, 74 tanks were reported moving in the area south of the border.⁹¹ At 2032, the MEF directed that all personnel north of the Kibrit road were to go to MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) level 3: all protective clothing except the gas-mask.⁹² General Keys personally passed this information on to the 6th Marines. Throughout this time vehicle movement within southern Kuwait continued to be reported to the COC. The largest such concentration reportedly contained 170 vehicles near a cultivated area above the division's sector.⁹³

The anticipated enemy attacks did not occur, and at about 2200 it was obvious that the Iraqi forces had been hurt and kept within the Kuwaiti border. The only place the Iraqis were partially successful was in the Saudi sector, where they entered the coastal town of Al Khafji and held portions of it for

⁸⁷The initial reports claimed two tanks killed by Corporal Willis. However, it was later determined that the same tank had been hit twice. The second time apparently occurred while the Iraqis were attempting to recover the vehicle; the movement was detected and the recovery vehicle provided a thermal signature. Believing that another tank was moving in the area, it was fired on and hit again.

more than 24 hours. By 2204, the MEF lowered the MOPP level to 2, and this information was passed to those units concerned.⁹⁴

On both nights, the division command post gained much needed experience. Marines on watch demonstrated a calm concentration and a quiet efficiency. This smooth functioning was the result of considerable practice, exercise, and professional competence. Probes by the Iraqis may not have led to a serious engagement by the division, but they tested its command and control. The experience and confidence gained here were to pay dividends in the weeks ahead.*

Development of the Operations Plan

As the division trained for combat and moved forward to defensive positions near the Kuwaiti border, the staff began developing its operations plan. It was recognized that no matter what the division's objectives might be, or what mission might be assigned to it, the ability to move into Kuwait and to fix and defeat the Iraqi forces there would depend upon the ability to conduct a successful breach of extensive enemy minefields and obstacle belts.

The original plan for the MEF, as published by Headquarters, Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MarCent) on 1 January 1991, tasked the 1st Marine Division with conducting the breach of both Iraqi defensive lines in the area of Al Wafrah. After breaching the second defensive line, the 2d Marine Division would conduct a passage of lines, become the point of main effort and continue the attack to the MEF objectives. A link-up operation with an amphibious landing on the coast near Ash Shuaybah was also a possible task for the division.⁹⁵

Based upon these tasks, the 2d Marine Division made its plans, to include training for the complex maneuver of a passage of lines.⁹⁶ A movement plan was designed to support an orderly and rapid passage through the breach created by the 1st Marine Division. Under this plan, the times, routing, and procedures of the division's regiments and other subordinate units were established.

As planning for the operation continued, some members of the division staff raised serious questions. The breach site selected was at one of the longest points between the two defensive belts, a distance of about 20 kilometers. This distance, coupled with a narrow front at the breach site, would restrict the movement of the 1st Marine Division through the second breach, and keep it in the zone between the defensive lines for an unacceptably long time.⁹⁷ The 1st Marine Division's own plans called for a decision to be made, not later than

*It is possible that the Iraqi attack on Khafji was a spoiling attack meant to disrupt the allies' preparations for the offensive. The actions in the 2d Marine Division's zone would therefore have been meant as an envelopment to cut off and destroy all those coalition forces between there and the coast. Such an action would have been in keeping with Iraqi doctrine. If such was their intent, however, the thrust was shattered by the actions of the 2d LAI Battalion and the effective use of air support, which destroyed over 60 Iraqi tanks and other vehicles during the two days of this action.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0787 24 91

The division commanders and their staff officers gather for a sandtable exercise. From right, MajGen William M. Keys and MajGen James M. Myatt (1st Marine Division), observe the training, after which MajGen Keys would advocate changing the I MEF plan from a single- to a two-division breach to avoid congestion and gain greater freedom of maneuver for his division.

1300 on the day of the attack, whether the second breach could be accomplished before dark. If not, it would take up defensive positions for the night in the zone between the defensive belts, and the second breach would be made at first light on the following day. This could mean that the division might take 30 or more hours to penetrate both belts and establish the breaches, a long time to be a target to the indirect fire weapons employed by the enemy to cover his defensive lines. During this time the 2d Marine Division would wait, perhaps under fire, in its attack positions, unable to influence the battle.

On 22 January 1991, when the MEF staff held its sand-table exercise for both divisions, Major General Keys became convinced that the current plan had to be improved. He saw the area was not large enough for two divisions to maneuver, presenting too great a target. It would take too much time to get both divisions through the single breach site, and not enough combat power could be moved forward quickly.⁹⁸

These issues were discussed by the division's staff, which was searching for a better solution to the breaching problem. The 2d Marine Division was fortunate in having Lieutenant Colonel Howard P. Shores II attached as its 1st Marine Division liaison officer. Lieutenant Colonel Shores was an especially thorough officer, whose capacity for hard work gained him immediate acceptance among the 2d Marine Division staff. He had been in Saudi Arabia

since August, and had personally reconnoitered much of the border area to the I MEF front, and was therefore familiar with the land and the trafficability of its various areas.⁹⁹ This knowledge was put to use when the staff conceived a recommendation to execute a separate breach. Lieutenant Colonel Shores suggested the vicinity of the Umm Gudair oilfield. The area between the defensive belts was narrower, only 4 to 6 kilometers, allowing a more rapid advance through the belts. Trafficability to and through this area was considered to be excellent. There was ample room for positioning the division west of the border, prior to the assault.

A review of the enemy's dispositions and the MEF's objectives indicated that the creation of a separate breach site in this area would more rapidly accomplish the missions of both the division and the MEF. With the 1st Marine Division conducting its breach at the original site, it could link up with the amphibious task force (ATF), or seize any ATF objectives, if necessary. Over several weeks of planning, the designation of the MEF objectives changed several times. As finally set, they were as follows: MEF objective A, Al Jaber Airfield, in the 1st Marine Division's zone; MEF objective B, the key terrain south of Al Jahrah, in the 2d Marine Division's zone; MEF objective C, Kuwait City International Airport, in the 1st Marine Division's zone. These MEF objectives oriented the MEF ground units to the force mission to conduct "a supporting attack to fix and destroy Iraqi forces in zone; to prevent reinforcement of Iraqi forces facing Arab Corps in the west; and to establish blocking positions to preclude retreat of Iraqi forces from southeast Kuwait and Kuwait City." The double-breach plan would require that the divisions exchange zones as currently assigned; that is, the 1st Marine Division would be on the east, and the 2d Marine Division would move around it to the west.¹⁰⁰

General Keys was certain that he and his staff had found the best solution to the problem of breaching the Iraqi defensive lines, not only for the division, but for the MEF as well. The general now had to convince the Commanding General of I MEF, Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer. The greatest foreseeable obstacle in effecting this change was that of time; the air campaign had now been going on for about two weeks, and it was known that the ground campaign was to begin very soon. However, it was also known that General Boomer was flexible and would freely accept a better idea and ensure it was put into action.

This concept of breaches, conducted at two widely separated sites, was proposed to General Boomer in a briefing during his visit to the 2d Marine Division on 1 February. As a result of this briefing, he ordered the division to plan for this separate breach. Accordingly, the division G-3, Colonel Richard, provided initial guidance to the staff; it was to continue to coordinate the training in breaching operations, to develop an appropriate concept of operations, and to ensure that a feasible movement schedule was prepared to support the plan.¹⁰¹

At 2038 that day, the division activated its future operations planning cell, headed by Lieutenant Colonel John K. Lynn. This cell was composed of representatives from several staff sections: fire support, air, intelligence,

psychological operations, medical, and engineers. The Tiger Brigade was also represented. This first meeting identified some broad issues the cell would have to resolve over the next three weeks. First, it was recognized that the new plan would have to meet the MEF commander's guidance that the breaches be made more rapidly than previously planned. Also, the change of zones would better suit the respective tasks of the divisions. The 2d Marine Division, having more tanks, was best suited to meet the armored threat to the west. The 1st Marine Division would face the urban fighting and clear the lines of communication on the east flank.¹⁰²

Logistics, as always, was a critical issue. Questions arose over a variety of supply and support matters. At a 2 February meeting, the group studied requirements for fuel and water, and the location of division dumps to hold these critical items. The same requirements existed for identifying the types and amounts of artillery ammunition. The nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare officer knew that his responsibility was to ensure that enough protective suits were sent forward to replace those which would be worn and become contaminated. The identification of local water points was also important for chemical defense, since these sources could be used for the decontamination of men and vehicles without using scarce potable water supplies. Medical aspects of the plan included the possibility of configuring assault amphibious vehicles (AAVs) as armored ambulances and training all personnel in communication procedures required for calling for medical evacuations by air. The communications officer reminded everyone that the distance from the assembly areas to the farthest point in the breach area must not exceed 30 kilometers, because of the limited range of the very high frequency (VHF) radios used by Marine units.¹⁰³

By 2 February, it was decided that the 2d Marine Division's breach would be conducted by the 6th Marines.¹⁰⁴ General Keys and the regimental commander, Colonel Lawrence H. Livingston, had served together in Vietnam, and Keys had great confidence in Livingston's ability to perform under fire. Also, this regiment had the most training in breaching operations, and was therefore the most qualified for the task. It would be assisted in its work by the 2d Combat Engineer Battalion's Task Force Breach Alpha, commanded by Major Gary F. Wines. This task force also had recently trained for breaching operations, and it was reinforced with additional engineering equipment.¹⁰⁵

On 3 February, Colonel Richard provided additional information and guidance. As previously planned, the 1st Marine Division would attack first and breach the Iraqi defensive lines. It would then take Al Jaber airfield. When the enemy deployed to counter this threat, the 2d Marine Division would assault and make its breach. On emerging from the second minefield, the division would head north to become the point of the MEF main effort.¹⁰⁶

The 6th Marines, as the lead element of the division, would move through the breach in six lanes. In its initial assault and breaching operations, the regiment would be temporarily reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The regiment would expand the breachhead line in preparation for the arrival of the rest of the division, which would move through the minefields when called



Photograph by author

On 17 February 1991, LtCol Mark E. Swanstrom, division engineer staff officer, facing, and Maj Rodney J. Gerdes, military police staff officer, identify areas of the berm for later excavation.

forward. The 6th Marines would remain in the division's center, with the 8th Marines coming into position on the right, along the joint boundary with the 1st Marine Division. The Tiger Brigade, with its heavy armored strength, was specially chosen to move on the division's left flank, which was the most exposed to an enemy armored counterattack. This boundary was shared with coalition Arab forces, which actually operated farther to the west, leaving this flank open. Also, this position would allow the brigade to move rapidly to block any retreat of Iraqi forces to the west. The 2d Tank Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Cesare Cardi, was assigned as the division's reserve; with its newly received M1A1 tanks and its Antitank (TOW) Company it would be able to react rapidly and aggressively to any threat.

Tank companies were attached to the infantry regiments to give them an extra armored "punch." Companies B and C of the 4th Tank Battalion were assigned to the 8th Marines. The 8th Tank Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Cavallaro, was assigned to the 6th Marines; Company A was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, and Company C was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. Company B and Headquarters Company, 8th Tank Battalion, served as the reserve for the 6th Marines.¹⁰⁷

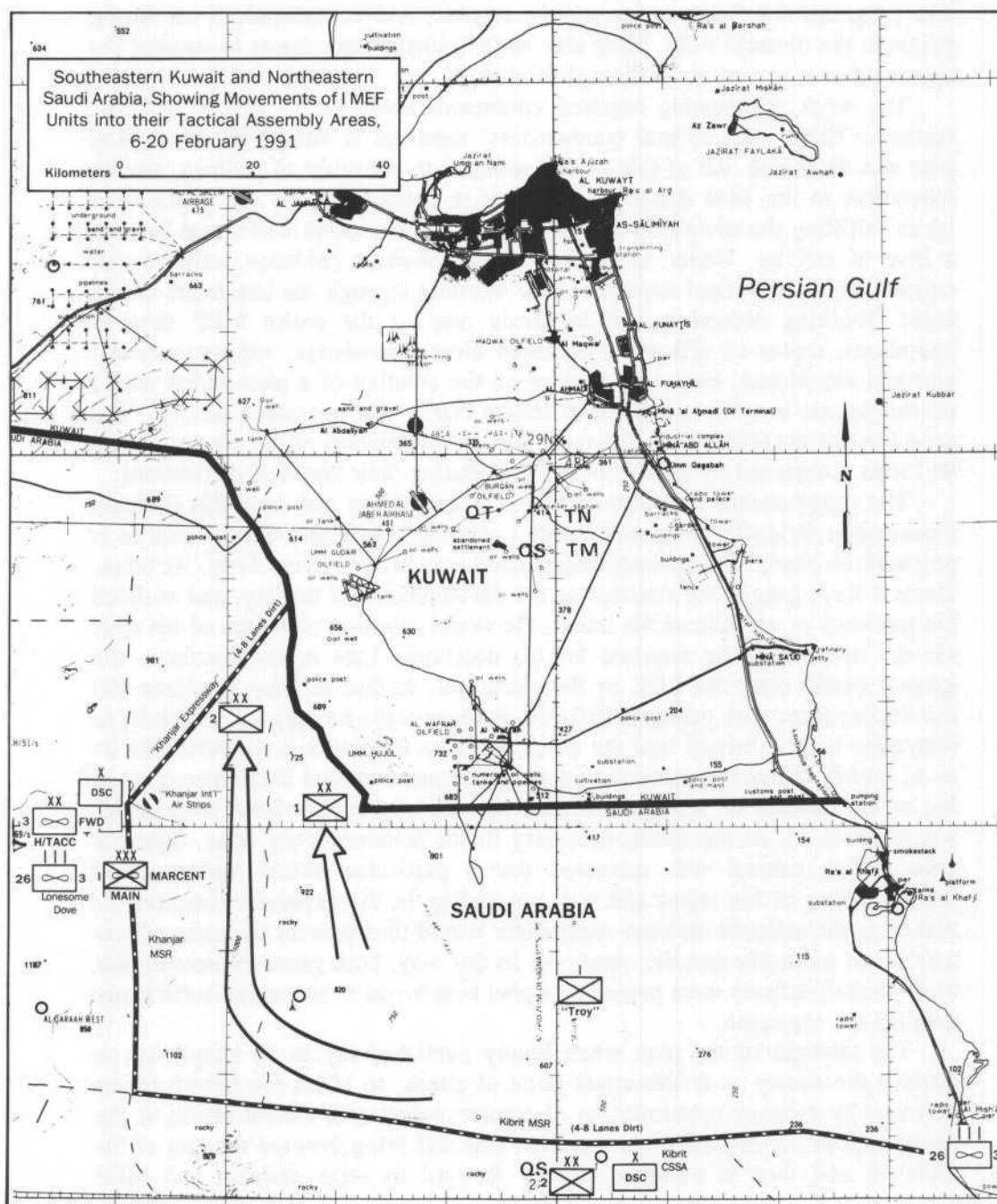
The units of the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Williams, were also divided among the division's elements. The battalion's 248 AAVs provided needed mechanized lift to the two Marine regiments and the combat engineer task forces. Company B, 1st Assault Amphibian Battalion, was attached to the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines; Company B, 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, was attached to the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines; Company B, 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, was attached to the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines; and Company D, 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, was attached to the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. A provisional General Support

Company was formed and attached to the combat engineers. The Headquarters and Service Company of the battalion was placed in general support of the division.¹⁰⁸

The three weeks prior to the assault was a period of continuous activity for the division staff and subordinate units. The division's staff sections prepared their own supporting plans. Critical issues were discussed and solutions refined. The division had to move to its final assembly areas in such a manner that there would be no need for a maintenance stand-down. Fueling points and sources of water for decontamination still had to be identified.¹⁰⁹ Essential elements of information included the construction of the obstacle belts themselves, the types and numbers of mines found there, and of the possible danger caused by the presence of hydrogen-sulfide (H_2S) gas (escaping from unlit oil wells) in the attack and breach area. To ensure that the division had the latest information about the enemy's defenses, Lieutenant Colonel Mark E. Swanstrom, the division engineer officer, was dispatched to Washington, D.C., on 5 February. He met with representatives of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Army Intelligence Agency. He reviewed the division's essential elements of information for the breach, and checked the intelligence products available, leaving requests for the collection of additional information.¹¹⁰ Upon his return to the division, the information he brought back was used to produce a series of maps of the Iraqi defensive lines, on a scale of 1:12,500. These detailed maps were issued down to company level.

Command and control of the division's movement to and through the breach site was another major concern. Winston Churchill had likened desert warfare during World War II to fighting at sea.¹¹¹ The division staff agreed with him. Ultimately, it was decided to handle this problem in a manner with which all Marines were familiar; the assault through the Iraqi defensive lines would be conducted in the same manner as an amphibious assault, except that *this* assault would be made in wheeled and tracked vehicles driving across the desert floor and not by landing craft racing through a choppy surf. Instead of a beachhead line, there would be a *breachhead* line, which would have to be held to allow follow-on movement by the remainder of the division as it came through. Assembly areas, where division elements would await their turn to be called forth, in waves and serials, were tentatively identified on the map. Colored approach lanes led from the assembly areas to the breach site itself. Lieutenant Colonel Shores and Captain James T. Van Emburgh created a system of marking these approach lanes, using appropriately colored plastic barrels placed every 250 meters along the route. A breach approach sequence table was formulated to regulate the traffic of the division, and a breach control group was activated to ensure the orderly and timely flow of the division through the breaches.

To attack the enemy's artillery and air defenses before and during the assault, a fire support plan was developed by the fire support coordination center (FSCC). The enemy's artillery, the major means of delivery for chemical munitions, was identified as a key target.¹¹² An initial list of 156 targets was identified for the division fire plan. A target bulletin issued on 21 February deleted 20 targets and added 57 others for a total of 193. The targets were set



into programs for firing series, smoke screens, and concentrations on strong points in the obstacle belts. They also were arranged into phases to support the operation as it moved north through Kuwait.¹¹³

The work of planning required continuous coordination among the staff sections. There were several commanders' meetings at which the developing plan was discussed. All of this work continued in the midst of training, during movement to the final defensive positions in preparation for the attack, and while fulfilling the division's defensive mission. The plans cell's tent became a hive of activity. Under Lieutenant Colonel Lynn's guidance, officers and enlisted Marines worked from the early morning through the late hours of the night. Working around a 1:50,000-scale map of the entire MEF area of operations, scores of officers contributed ideas, knowledge, suggestions, and personal experience. Each one focused on the creation of a plan which would be simple and in sufficient detail to ensure clarity and guarantee success. The sand floor of the tent became the repository of the remains of the tobacco, in all its forms, consumed by legions of thinkers during their hours of discussions.

The complementary natures of Major General Keys and Assistant Division Commander Brigadier General Russell L. Sutton* benefitted the division as it prepared its plans. The commanding general was briefed twice daily. At these, General Keys gauged the situation or the developments of the day, and outlined his guidance or announced his intent. He would question members of his staff for the information he required for his decisions. Late in the evenings, the general would enter the COC or the plans tent, further refining his ideas and developing them with pertinent officers. In these ways he drew on his staff, to determine how he would lead the division across the future battlefields and on to Al Jahrah. While the commanding general's questions and ideas encompassed the whole concept of a particular problem, the assistant division commander would ferret out all the details necessary for its solution. Very often, after the commanding general was reassured that a particular officer had a sound understanding of his intent and was proceeding in the expected direction for planning, the assistant division commander would then present the same officer a series of pointedly specific questions. In this way, both generals ensured that division staff officers were preparing a plan both broad in scope and sufficiently detailed for execution.

The strength of the plan when finally published lay in its simplicity: to deceive the enemy as to the actual point of attack; to effect the breach of his defenses by a heavy concentration of combat power and violent action at the decisive point; to expand the breachhead line and bring forward the rest of the division; and then to continue rapidly forward to seize division and MEF

*General Sutton was already a familiar figure in the 2d Marine Division. He had been the commanding officer of the 6th Marines from August 1988 to July 1990, when he was promoted to brigadier general. He then became the Director, Operations Division, Plans, Policies, and Operations Department, at Headquarters Marine Corps. He joined the 2d Marine Division as the Assistant Division Commander on 6 January 1991, and remained with the division until 20 April 1991.

objectives, being guided by the tactical situation. As General Keys saw things at this time, the breach itself would be the greatest problem. But once beyond that, the division would be able to move rapidly to the north.¹¹⁴ This confidence of the commanding general was shared by everyone else in the division.

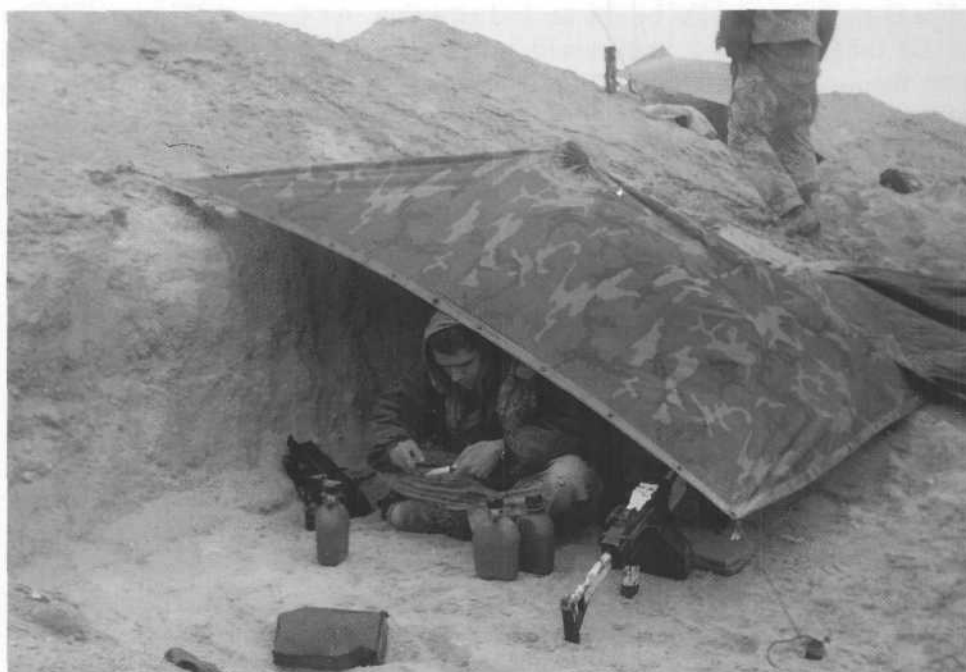
On 20 February, the division staff issued the operations order as its Fragmentary Order 16-91.* The weeks of preparation, training, and movement had ended; it was time to execute the division's orders, and fulfill its missions. G-Day was set for 24 February, with H-Hour at 0530.

The Start of Offensive Operations

The division's offensive operations began several days before G-Day, the opening day of ground attack by USCentCom forces. On 17 February 1991, the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion moved teams to insertion points on the Saudi berm in preparation for entering Kuwait.¹¹⁵ The battalion was fulfilling the division's mission of conducting "reconnaissance and surveillance of the area forward of current defensive positions in preparation for offensive operations." In particular, General Keys' intent was to "identify any enemy units south of the breach site and any gaps/weaknesses in the enemy defenses that we can exploit in order to enhance our breaching operation."¹¹⁶ Having moved up to the berm on the night of the 17th, the battalion reported that all its units were in their assigned positions by 1154 on the 18th.¹¹⁷

The manner in which his unit would fulfill this mission was a matter of no small concern for Lieutenant Colonel Scott W. McKenzie, the commanding officer of the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion. He realized early on that to operate in a small area of operations occupied by major elements of an enemy corps meant that some current methods had to be discarded. For instance, helicopters could not be used for the insertion and extraction of teams, due to the strong enemy antiaircraft artillery. In order to make his unit more mobile in this desert environment, Lieutenant Colonel McKenzie had motorized his companies. Reconnaissance teams were composed of six men; three were mounted in a High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) armed with a .50-caliber machine gun, and the other three were in a HMMWV with communications gear. These vehicles would be concealed by the teams digging pits deep enough to hold them chassis-deep, and then covering them with camouflage nets. Since large antennas could not be used with the radios, the teams had to rely solely on high frequency communications. However, the mobile configuration would be inappropriate for this mission of surveying the enemy's minefields and obstacle belts. Great stealth

*Almost every order issued by the 2d Marine Division during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was in the form of a fragmentary order. The reduced paperwork inherent in such orders allowed quicker production and dissemination, and were more in keeping with the division staff's emphasis on "mission type" orders. During the conduct of the ground campaign, it was not unusual for orders to be passed verbally when required by time and the tactical situation.



Photograph by author

A Marine of the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion takes shelter by an observation post on the berm, 17 February 1991.

would be needed to approach these lines; and so, when the reconnaissance teams moved into Kuwait, they did so on foot.¹¹⁸

Four reconnaissance teams walked over the berm on the night of 17 February. They moved to initial positions, remained for a few hours, and then progressed farther into Kuwait during the 18th. On the same day, two additional teams crossed and occupied positions of the earlier teams. The mission of these teams was to act as a radio-relay for their comrades farther forward. As noted above, they were using HF radios with limited range. Two other teams set up on the berm itself, to provide an overwatch for the operation. They were equipped with the long-range electrical optical system which could see farther than the standard spotting scopes, and with thermal-imagery night-sights of the modular universal laser equipment.¹¹⁹ Over the next four days, the teams reported enemy movements, concentrations, and activities.

The frag order also tasked the 6th Marines with providing an extraction force for the reconnaissance teams. This planning proved fortuitous; in the early morning of 20 February, Team 1 was apparently discovered and approached by 30 enemy troops and five armored personnel carriers (APC). Under the cover of an AV-8B air-strike and artillery fire, the team withdrew from its position and was extracted by the LAI company attached to the 6th Marines.¹²⁰ From their own position nearly three kilometers away, the members of Team 2 observed the extraction. Because of communications difficulties, Team 2 had been out of radio contact for nearly 24 hours. Then, to complicate the situation, a friendly artillery



Department of Defense Photo (USMC)

Marines of 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion move through minefield lanes in Kuwait, 24 February 1991.

fire mission placed some experimental chemical-light rounds within 500 meters of the team's position. Realizing that Iraqi troops might enter the area to investigate these unusual munitions, Sergeant William D. Bates, the team leader, moved the team approximately three kilometers to the position of a radio-relay team. There was still a gap in front of the enemy's minefields which had to be reconnoitered, but there was little time remaining to complete the mission. During the night of 20 February, Sergeant Bates led the team to within one kilometer of the edge of the minefield. Sergeant Bates, accompanied by the team's terrain sketcher and a photographer, conducted a daylight reconnaissance of the minefield. Moving in the open, they crawled the last 500 meters to the forward edge of the field. In order to gain a better perspective for his sketch, Lance Corporal William E. Owens climbed one of the nearby electrical pylons. From this exposed vantage point, he completed an accurate sketch of the minefield, while Corporal Michael D. Cooke took several photographs and made detailed notes. The three Marines collected information about the wire obstacles, the location of an unmined foot lane, the types of mines present, and enemy activities. The team returned, undetected, having accomplished its mission and having covered 30 kilometers of desert on foot in 24 hours.¹²¹ The battalion's mission ended on G minus 2, 22 February, and all teams had returned to their parent units by 0124.¹²²

Another battalion crossed the berm prior to G-Day. The attack order assigned the 2d LAI Battalion to screen the division's front and flanks on the Kuwaiti side of the berm, starting on G minus 3, 21 February. The battalion was to "attempt to identify any gaps in the obstacle belt and locate an alternate breach site for Tiger Brigade in the Northwest."¹²³ This last task was especially important should the division's main breach effort fail or be held up by the enemy. An alternate breach site would permit the Tiger Brigade to move its

heavy armored power around the division's flank and help to pull the remainder of the division through. Although this was not needed in the end, it was an important contingency to anticipate.

Within an hour of beginning its operation, the 2d LAI Battalion was in contact with the enemy. Mortar fire was received, and in one of the more dramatic incidents of the operation, a HMMWV carrying a low-altitude air defense team attached to the battalion received a direct hit.¹²⁴ The round impacted in the rear of the vehicle, the force of the explosion pushing the occupants, Lance Corporal Robert M. Grady and Lance Corporal William B. Noland, across the hood, from which they rolled onto the sand. Although the vehicle was destroyed, both Marines were unhurt, emerging from the wreck literally without a scratch. Apparently their personal gear and other equipment, piled behind them, absorbed the effects of the blast. After returning to the division CP and briefing General Keys, their only request was for another vehicle so they could return to the fight.

The actions of Company C, 2d LAI Battalion are illustrative of those of the entire battalion at this time. Commanded by Captain Kenneth W. Amidon, the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0338 7 91
Capt Kenneth W. Amidon, commanding officer of Company C, 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, holds an orders group with platoon leaders during the movement into Kuwait.

company operated on the northwest flank of the battalion and it preceded the other companies in the battalion movement into Kuwait. The company's mission was to seize key terrain overlooking the enemy's positions and the obstacle belts. The company's attack was violent and aggressive in order to draw attention to it and away from the division breach sites.

The attack was expected to draw fire from the Iraqi artillery and mortars and to expose them to counterbattery fire of the 10th Marines. In this aspect, the attack exceeded expectations. Shortly after crossing the border, about 1030, Company C came under considerable artillery, antitank, and mortar fire. So many weapons were firing that the counterbattery program proved inadequate to service the available targets. Captain Amidon calmly and skillfully withdrew his company until fire support took the desired effect.

Company C returned to the attack shortly thereafter, maneuvering to assault the flank of Iraqi forces which were forward of the minefields. Under continuing artillery and antitank fire, Captain Amidon advanced his company to the edge of the minefield, classified the mines, and identified a gap for possible use by the Tiger Brigade. For the next two days, Company C maneuvered aggressively and exploited Iraqi weaknesses. By 23 February (G minus 1), it had destroyed 10 tanks and eight wheeled vehicles, and killed numerous infantry with organic and supporting arms.¹²⁵

The 2d LAI Battalion sought contact and reported information on enemy troops, activities, and equipment. Operating almost continuously under antitank, rocket, and indirect fire, the battalion's companies engaged enemy troops, artillery, and tanks on at least 17 occasions, using organic antitank weapons, artillery fire from the 10th Marines, and close air support. During these three days, the battalion accounted for numerous enemy KIA, the destruction of 12 enemy tanks, a further 35 tanks with air strikes, and the capture of 120 EPWs.¹²⁶

One major consideration for the employment of the 2d LAI Battalion as it went into Kuwait on G minus 3, was that the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion also would be operating in front of the division. In order to keep these units' movements coordinated and prevent the possibility of friendly casualties, the 2d LAI Battalion would begin its screening mission in the northwest corner of the division's zone, and work its way across the division's front over the next few days. This would enable the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion to complete its surveillance mission and withdraw back across the berm. Of even greater importance, such conspicuous activity by the LAVs would have the desired effect of drawing the enemy's attention away from the actual area of the division's assault and breach.¹²⁷

Another benefit of the 2d LAI Battalion's operations was that the Iraqis began to use their artillery against it. In almost continuous contact with the enemy for three days, the battalion frequently came under mortar and heavy artillery fire. While casualties from enemy fire were light, the enemy disclosed the locations of many batteries to American counter-battery radar. Using air and artillery, the division was able to put numerous Iraqi artillery pieces out of action before the G-Day assault.¹²⁸ If they had remained undiscovered, these same guns could have caused the division heavy casualties as it went through the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC)

Gunners of the 10th Marines fire their M198 howitzer against Iraqi positions in Kuwait.

breach. Up until this time the division had a policy of attacking targets with air, and leaving the division's artillery quiet in order not to disclose its locations to the enemy's counter-battery radar. Now General Keys released his artillery to conduct its own counter-battery fires to attack these priority targets.¹²⁹

The development of the breach and movement plans was going well, so it was necessary to ensure everything would be physically set for the start of offensive operations. An important part of the breach sequence plan called for the various elements of the division to be staged at six assembly areas behind the Saudi berm. These areas had been designated as Red 1 and 2, Blue 3 and 4, and Green 5 and 6, each corresponding to one of the approach lanes which led to the breach site. Each was to be large enough to hold a battalion-sized unit and its combat support vehicles and equipment. At first these areas were identified on the plans, maps, and overlays simply as large "goose eggs" centered around specific coordinates. As G-Day approached it was necessary to physically inspect the berm, designate the precise coordinates at which the cuts would be made through it, and make a physical inspection of the ground selected for the assembly areas.

On 17 February, a party of officers from the division's Headquarters Battalion went forward to perform this work, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Mark Swanstrom. Using the global positioning system, they confirmed and marked each cut point. By coordinating with the reconnaissance teams and LAI sections stationed along the berm, and by their own visual inspection of the forward areas, they ensured that there were no obvious problems along the routes selected as approach lanes. The most significant features evident were the numerous fires in the vicinity of the oilfield at Umm Gudair North. At least 18

such fires could be seen, and their smoke and hydrogen sulfide fumes were considered to be possible limiting factors in the assault. A visual check of the assembly areas revealed that they would be large enough to hold the attack forces. There were no obstacles to impede movement from the assembly areas to the cuts in the berm.¹³⁰

Opening passages through the berm became the issue. "The Berm," as it was familiarly known, was the most obvious physical feature on the broad expanse of desert to the division's front. Built by a Japanese firm for the Saudi government several years before, it was made by bulldozing the desert sand into a continuous wall, attaining a height of three to four meters. It paralleled the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, situated between one and five kilometers on the Saudi side. It was visible from about 10 kilometers away, and provided excellent



Photograph by author

LtCol Howard Shores briefs division guides on their expected operations, 23 February 1991.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 5 91

Marines of 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion maneuver in Kuwait in LAV-L and LAV-25 fighting vehicles, with Stinger team (in HMMWV) and Cobra attack helo from 3d Marine Aircraft Wing in support.

concealment for forces just behind it, and a good vantage point from which to observe activities in Kuwait. It was obvious that to make six wide cuts through the berm would be a "tip-off" to the enemy to the exact location of the division's assault. However, these cuts did have to be made, and they had to be completed prior to G-Day. The division masked its intention as to the place of attack by making a total of 18 cuts. This work began on 20 February, with nine cuts being made in front of the Tiger Brigade, on the division's northwestern flank, and three in front of the 8th Marines to the southeast. The remaining six cuts would be accomplished on G minus 2, 22 February, in front of the 6th Marines.¹³¹ It was also anticipated that this early activity in the northwest, in concert with operations of the 2d LAI Battalion, would draw the enemy's attention and forces to that area and away from the actual point of assault."

As a final measure to conceal the division's intentions and to prevent any possible spoiling attacks, the 8th Marines was tasked to "provide security in the Division zone forward of the berm."¹³² The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ray C. Dawson, a Reserve officer and attorney from Baton Rouge, was given this mission. At 1010 on the 22nd, G minus 2, the battalion began its operations. It engaged enemy infantry with both air strikes and artillery. Later in the day, under conditions of extreme darkness caused by the smoke from burning oil wells, the battalion moved back through

¹³¹The 2d LAI Battalion had some success in drawing the attention of the Iraqis away from the actual point of the division's assault. As noted in the following chapter, some of the enemy artillery pieces were found to be laid on directions of fire away from the breach site. Also, in interviews taken a few days after the cease-fire, at least two Iraqi officers stated they had thought the actions of the 2d LAI Battalion in the northwest area were actually by an armored brigade, and were the start of the ground campaign.

the berm to the Saudi side.¹³³ They returned on the 23d, and continued to report on enemy troops and activities, engaged enemy troops, and brought in 168 prisoners.¹³⁴ Most importantly, the battalion kept the enemy at a distance, and ignorant of the division's intentions.

That evening, Company B, 2d LAI Battalion, scouted the entrances to the six breach lanes through the minefields. Captain Martin T. Wolf led his company's 1st Platoon and provided security to the other platoons as they marked their lanes. He then dismounted from his vehicle and went forward on foot to personally mark the last two lanes. These were further north than the others, and closer to the burning oil wells. The light from these great plumes of flame made discovery by Iraqi patrols very likely. But Captain Wolf calmly avoided obstacles and unexploded ordnance and despite the presence of Iraqi troops only 500 meters away, he supervised the marking of the lanes.¹³⁵

With the successful completion of this work, the division had prepared its zone for the assault. Now some of the division's units started to occupy their assembly areas or firing positions in preparation for H-Hour, early the next morning.

Into Kuwait: G Minus 1 through G Plus 1

I can't say enough about the two Marine divisions. If I use words like "brilliant" it would be an underdescription of the absolutely superb job that they did in breaching the so-called impenetrable barrier . . . It was a classic . . . absolutely superb operation, a text book, and I think it will be studied for many, many years to come as the way to do it.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, press briefing, 27 February 1991

On 23 February 1991, final preparations were made for the division's assault. One of the tasks given to the 2d LAI Battalion, when it moved across the berm on G minus 3, was to protect artillery survey parties from the 10th Marines.¹³⁶ An important part of the division's plan called for four of the six artillery units to move forward of the berm on G minus 1.¹³⁷ Their firepower would be critical to a successful breach by conducting counterbattery fire or in breaking up enemy armor counter-attacks. During the night of 23 February, the 2d Battalion, 12th Marines; the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines; the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines; and the MLRS battery were in firing positions east of the berm, inside of Kuwait itself. The 6th Marines' own direct support battalion, the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines, would be moving with that regiment in the assault, and taking up its firing positions beyond the second breach. The 1st Battalion, 3d Field Artillery, had taken its position on the west side of the berm and would move through with the Tiger Brigade.¹³⁸

This positioning of artillery units forward of the maneuver elements which they were to support may seem, at first glance, to violate all doctrine on the employment of artillery. It made proper tactical sense, however. Intelligence had reported that the Iraqi brigades to the division's front and flanks could reach

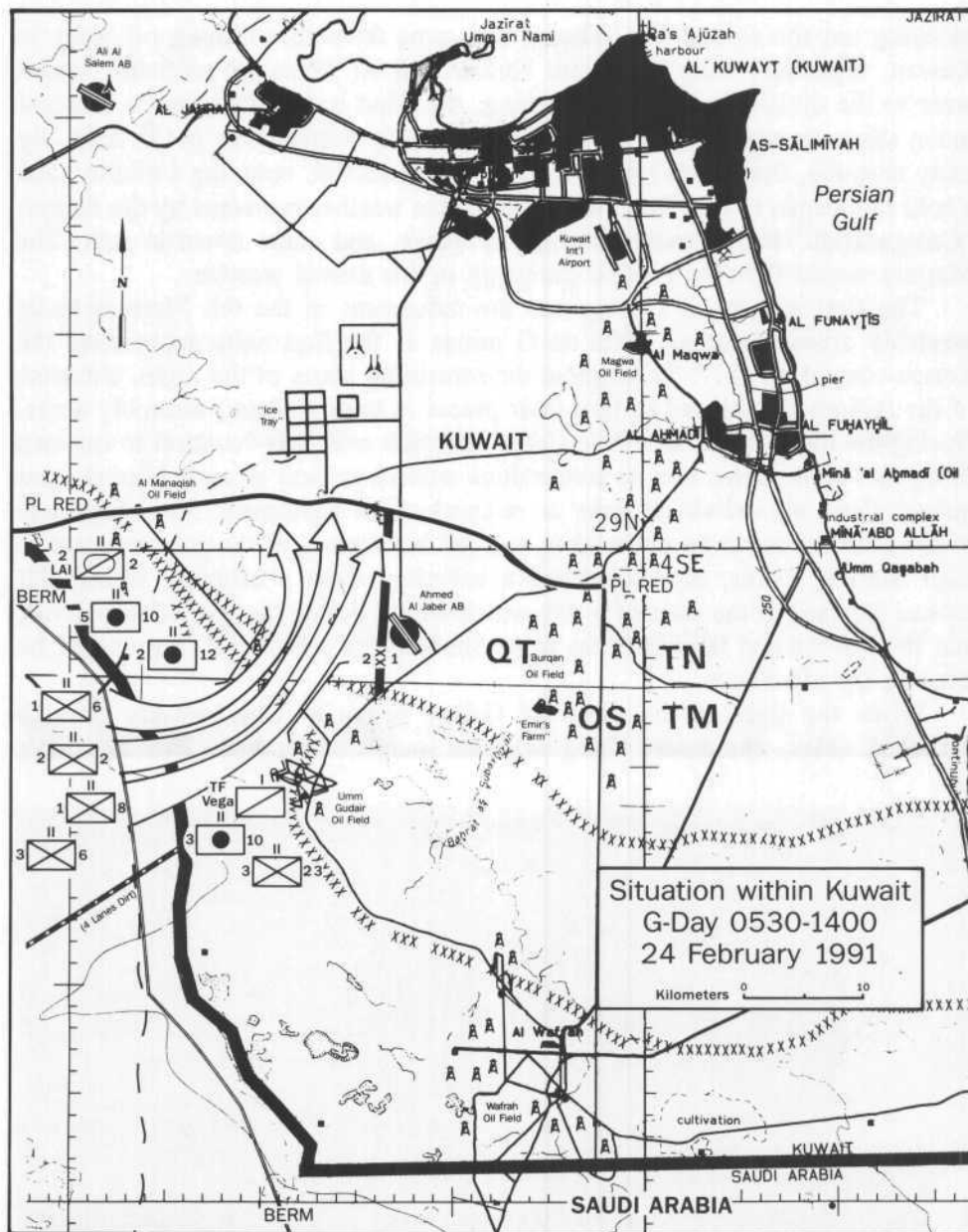


Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 6 91

6th Marines units on the move in Kuwait are supported by attack helicopters.

the area of the breach with about 500 guns. Many of these out-ranged the 10th Marines' M198 155mm howitzers, whose range was a little over 30 kilometers using rocket-assisted projectiles (RAP). To ensure that the assault elements had the timely, accurate, and responsive fire support they would need, it was worth taking the calculated risk to move the artillery ahead of the rest of the maneuver units. A measure of security would be provided to them by the 2d LAI Battalion, and the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, in screening positions to the division's flanks.

At 1600, another group which had to be in place by the eve of the ground assault had left the area of the division's main command post. The breach control group, a small party of officers and enlisted Marines from the division's



operations section and Headquarters Battalion's Military Police Company, was responsible for controlling and monitoring unit flow from the assembly areas through the second breach. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Howard Shores, this group arrived at 1700 at the cut in the berm which started lane Blue 3. The group dug in, established communications with the division main command post, and prepared for the work of the coming day.¹³⁹

As these early elements were settling into their positions on the afternoon of G minus 1, an ominous change came over the sky. Until this time, the desert air had been clear and warm, with excellent visibility under a deep blue sky. Now, a great, heavy black cloud of smoke began to move over the area,

blocking out the setting sun. The smoke came from the burning oil wells in Kuwait, especially from the Umm Gudair and Al Manaqish oilfields, which were to the division's front. By evening, the wind had shifted, and a crescent moon shone through a light cloud cover. But this weather was not to hold. By early morning, the clouds lowered, the smoke returned, reducing visibility, and a cold rain began to fall. The three days of fine weather promised by the famous "Omega High" had literally gone up in smoke, and come down in rain. The Marines would fight the ground campaign in this dismal weather.

The first activity of G-Day was the movement of the 6th Marines to its assembly areas. At about 2300 on G minus 1, the first units approached the breach control group.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the remaining hours of the night, elements of the regiment continued to take their places in their assigned assembly areas. During the night, there was little sleep, and each man was "counsel to his own thoughts." Yet, there was no tremendous anxiety evident as each Marine went quietly about his individual tasks or re-checked his equipment. The magnitude of the effort about to be undertaken and the importance of the role assigned to each Marine, sailor, or soldier had a sobering, even a calming, effect. All looked forward to the start of a day which would define the rest of their lives, and if some quoted familiar lines from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, they could be excused the affectation.

When the light of the dawn of G-Day began to filter weakly through darkened skies, the desert filled with the sounds of combat. The division's



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 14 91

Marines of 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion pause during advance into Kuwait, 24 February 1991. They are wearing partial chemical equipment (MOPP level 2).

artillery preparation fires began at 0430, the sound of the outgoing rounds mixing with their detonations far out in the desert. The low-lying clouds were illuminated by the passage of flaming MLRS rockets, and the tracers of Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. A total of 1,430 rounds were fired against 40 targets in just 11 minutes. These targets were mainly artillery positions, and they received heavy attention. Iraqi battery positions were fired on by an American battalion with one round of dual-purpose improved conventional munitions in effect. Iraqi artillery battalions received twice this amount. The MLRS battery fired on four targets deep in the division's zone. At the same time, air strikes were run against targets in the vicinity of Phase Line Red, an east-west road approximately eight kilometers north of the second obstacle belt.¹⁴¹

At H-Hour, 0530, the lead elements of the 6th Marine Regiment crossed the line of departure and followed the colored lanes assigned to its battalions.¹⁴² For the 6th Marines this moment was to be the culmination of the intensive preparation and training of the past several months. The regiment had the task of leading the assault through the Iraqi defensive lines, and then widening the gap on the far side of the second minefield to allow the rest of the division to come through. The regiment had carefully rehearsed its role in this first day's battle. In the weeks prior, it had constructed a training range, oriented on the same azimuths which the assault battalions would have to follow. A detailed fire support plan was prepared, and personnel schooled in the use of electronic navigation aids.¹⁴³ Now, everyone in the regiment was ready, and with the Marines' Hymn being broadcast by psychological operations loudspeaker teams, they launched the assault into Kuwait.¹⁴⁴

The axis of advance took the assault battalions directly into the oilfields of Umm Gudair North and South, and among some of the burning wells. The possible presence of H₂S gas in these areas was of some concern to the division. This highly toxic gas is very heavy; if it was escaping from an unlit well it would settle into any low spots in the ground. This would present a grave danger to Marines in shell-holes, fighting positions, or bunkers, since their MOPP gear was not designed to provide long protection against this gas. On the advice of Major John R. Viviano, a Reserve officer and a petroleum engineer in civilian life, one of the tanks with the 6th Marines was assigned to use a high explosive round to set fire to any such wells. In any event, no H₂S gas was encountered and the regiment moved rapidly through the area.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹The 2d Marine Division's H-Hour was an hour and a half after that of the 1st Marine Division, which had been set for 0400.

¹⁴²For the initial assault and the breaching operation, the 6th Marines had been reinforced with the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. There were sound reasons for this decision. First, this gave the regiment the firepower of an additional battalion in this crucial phase of the operation. Also, the presence of this battalion on the right flank, with the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, in reserve behind it, gave extra security against any possible counterattacks from the direction of Al Jaber Airfield. Finally, when the 8th Marines came through the breach, one of its battalions would already be in position, making the regiment's occupation of its zone easier and quicker.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0845 4 91

Tank of "Task Force Breach Alpha" moves into position during the assault of 24 February 1991. The tank tows an M59 line charge trailer used in the initial breaching of the Iraqi minefields.

The 6th Marines quickly closed on the first of the obstacle belts. At 0600 the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas S. Jones, reached the minefield. By 0615, both the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, and 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, were reported at the edge of the obstacle belt in lanes Blue 3 and 4 and Green 5 and 6.¹⁴⁶ The work of Task Force Breach Alpha, the special engineer unit attached to the 6th Marines, began. The enemy's defensive belts consisted of the two minefields and the wire obstacles noted in the intelligence reports. The task force was well-equipped to accomplish its task; 18 AAV's with M154 three-shot mine-clearing line charges, 2 M60A1 dozer tanks and 16 M60A1 tanks with track-width mine plow, 4 M60A1 tanks with mine rakes, 22 AAVs for the engineer squads, 15 M9 armored combat earthmovers, 39 M58 line-charge trailers, 6 M1A1 tanks with mine plows, and 4 armored vehicle launched bridges (AVLB).¹⁴⁷

Working under enemy indirect fire, the three Combat Engineer Battalion companies entered the minefield. Using the mine-clearing line charges, they opened lanes through the minefields, and then the mine plows cleared the lanes. Various types of mines were encountered, but this was expected. Plastic antipersonnel and antitank mines usually were blown out of position by the line charges, then pushed aside by the rakes and plows. It was recognized from the beginning that these mines, piled into the windrows of sand by the sides of the lane could possibly slide back into the lane, presenting a danger to follow-on vehicles. With great courage and skill, the engineers pushed through the Iraqi defensive belts, often clearing mines out of the windrows by hand. British bar mines also were encountered. They presented unique difficulties; their size and

shape prevented easy removal, so the best way to dispose of them was to blow them in place.¹⁴⁸

Gunnery Sergeant Mart J. Culp, the noncommissioned officer in charge of a demolitions team, was therefore especially busy this morning. His expertise was required at several of the lanes where unexploded mines or line charges which had failed to detonate were preventing the clearance of the lanes and the movement of the assault battalions. Time and again he entered the minefields, supervising the setting of demolitions charges and personally activating the fuzes. In spite of occasional Iraqi artillery and mortar fire, Gunnery Sergeant Culp and his team helped to clear three lanes and allow the assault to continue.¹⁴⁹

The use of chemical munitions by the Iraqis had been expected, but happily had not yet occurred. At approximately 0656, the "Fox" chemical reconnaissance vehicle at lane Red 1 detected a "trace" of mustard gas, originally thought to be from a chemical mine.¹⁵⁰ The alarm was quickly spread throughout the division. Since everyone had been required to don his protective outer garments and boots the previous evening, it was only necessary to hurriedly pull on a gas-mask and protective gloves to attain MOPP level 4. A second "Fox" vehicle was sent to the area, and confirmed the presence of an agent which had probably been there a long time. Unknown in origin, it was still sufficiently strong to cause blistering on the exposed arms of two AAV crewmen.¹⁵¹ Work continued on the clearance of the lanes, and the MOPP level was reduced to 2 after about a half-hour.

The first lanes to be opened were Red 1 and 2 through which the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines pushed. At 0724, the battalion reported it had passed



Photograph by author

Marines don full chemical protective equipment (MOPP level 4) during general chemical alert on 24 February 1991.

through the first belt, followed by the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Brian M. Youngs, on lanes Blue 3 and 4.¹⁵² Iraqi units between the two minefields tried to delay the assault, but their efforts were quickly suppressed. For instance, on lane Red 1, First Lieutenant Phillip W. Chandler, the commander of a reinforced heavy machine gun platoon, was supporting Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. While providing flank security to the company, the platoon came under both direct and indirect fires. Lieutenant Chandler maneuvered his platoon to fire on a bunker from which the Iraqi fire was coming, and then personally directed an antitank vehicle into firing position. The TOW missile destroyed the bunker, and 30 Iraqi soldiers surrendered. The company was able to continue its advance through the breach of the second obstacle belt.¹⁵³

By 0745, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, passed Phase Line Panther, at the second breach, receiving sporadic fire.¹⁵⁴ Resistance stiffened as it moved north; but to suppress these fires the regiment had the support of the division's artillery and of Cobra gunships which were able to fly right over the Iraqi trenchlines.¹⁵⁵ By about 0850, the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, conducted its breach of the second minefield on lanes Blue 3 and 4.¹⁵⁶

Around this same time, the division's mobile CP crossed through the breach lanes, in trace of the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. From this point on, General Keys remained at the front of the division, assessing the tactical situation, and in constant contact with his commanders.¹⁵⁷ It was from this mobile CP that General Keys and Colonel Richard were to make those "immediate, local, tactical decisions" by which they would lead the division for the next four days.¹⁵⁸

The Green lanes, carrying the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, were not as quickly cleared as the Red and Blue lanes. Here several of the engineer vehicles had struck mines and been put out of action. Line charges had caught on overhead power lines, or had failed to detonate. Corporal George J. Morgan and Lance Corporal Gerald Randolph, members of a demolitions team, unhesitatingly entered these dangerous areas. They set new fuzes to unexploded line charges, ignited them, and raced back through the minefields with only seconds to spare before the charges exploded.¹⁵⁹

It was soon evident that the minelaying in this sector was of a different nature than that found in the other lanes. This minefield had greater depth and a larger number of mines, and required a greater effort to clear them. In the end, the original Green 5 was never cleared. Instead Green 6 became Green 5 and a lane to the southeast, originally intended to carry return traffic, became Green 6. Even with this change, it was only at about 1145 that lane Green 5 was cleared, and 1345 before lane Green 6 was cleared and safe. In the opinion of Lieutenant Colonel John D. Winchester, commanding officer of the 2d Combat Engineer Battalion, the minefield at the Green lanes had been laid by a different and more dedicated Iraqi engineer.¹⁶⁰

On the right flank, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was also encountering Iraqi troops in positions between the two minefields. Company A had the mission of guarding the battalion's flank in this area; accordingly, the 3d Platoon



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0345 7 91

M-60A1 tank of "Task Force Breach Alpha," in Kuwait, is fitted with reactive armor and a track-width mine plow. These vehicles were first into the minefield of the Iraqi defenses.

was ordered to secure a building, surrounded by a chain-link fence, located 800 meters to the east. The platoon was mounted in assault amphibious vehicles. As they came within 300 meters of the building, Iraqi soldiers inside it opened fire with rocket-propelled grenades. The platoon dismounted, and under cover of the vehicles' .50-caliber machine guns, attacked through volleys of grenades. Within 100 meters of the building the platoon was pinned down by automatic weapons fire. The 3d Squad was ordered to attack the building while the rest of the platoon laid down covering fires. In open view of the Iraqis and under fire, Sergeant William J. Warren, leader of the 3d Squad, stood up and moved among his fire teams, giving orders and encouraging his men. He maneuvered his teams to within 20 meters of the building, and then led an assault through a hole in the fence. As the squad entered the building, the shaken Iraqi troops fled from it, seeking escape across the desert.¹⁶¹

By 1020, all three assault battalions were reporting that they were in contact with the enemy.¹⁶² Enemy resistance was stronger to the north, at the top of the minefields, but Colonel Livingston pushed all three of his assault battalions forward to their regimental objectives. On the regiment's left, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, was through the minefields and moved against the enemy fire with little difficulty. In the center, the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, was also past the minefields and encountered enemy artillery and tanks. This battalion was supported by tanks attached from the 8th Tank Battalion. Gunnery Sergeant John D. Cornwell aggressively led his tank platoon forward through Iraqi small arms and antitank fire. In a series of attacks, he directed the platoon against

fortified trenches, bunkers, dug-in tanks, and artillery. These rapid, sharp engagements helped the battalion to quickly seize and secure its objective.¹⁶³ On the right, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was still coming through the breach on lanes Green 5 and 6. It then moved into an Iraqi brigade-size position in which it destroyed a large number of tanks and APCs.¹⁶⁴

These early actions set the precedent for the next three days of the war. As elements of the division moved forward or approached objectives, they would encounter enemy resistance. But through rapid fire and maneuver, the Iraqis were overwhelmed. By outflanking them constantly, destroying their heavy weapons with air and artillery fire, the division gave the Iraqis the choice of surrendering or dying where they stood. Thousands of them chose the former.

As the 6th Marines moved forward through its regimental objectives, the division's combat power flowed through the breaches as planned in the breach sequence table published in the frag order. At 1250, the 2d Tank Battalion went through, as had the 10th Marines' forward command post. At 1410, the Tiger Brigade's tactical operation center (TOC) was in the breach site, followed closely behind by the division's own forward command post.¹⁶⁵

On this first day, one of General Keys' prime concerns was the passing of the 6th Marines and the Tiger Brigade through the breach as quickly as possible to face any counterattacks.¹⁶⁶ The responsibility for the coordination of this important movement was with the breach control group.

The division's breaching operations and initial assault had gone well, but the breach control group started to have difficulty communicating with either the



Photograph courtesy of Col John B. Sylvester, USA
The Tiger Brigade moves into Kuwait, passing through the minefield "green" lanes cleared by 2d Marine Division on 24 February 1991.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0338 18 91

The 2d Tank Battalion on the move. The only Marine Corps unit equipped with powerful M1A1 tanks, the battalion functioned as the division reserve during the assault.

division command post or the control element in the assembly areas. The group's original position was right at the entrance to the breach of lane Blue 3. By moving about two kilometers, good communication was restored, and the orderly control of the division's movement could be continued. At 1600, the Tiger Brigade was called out of its assembly areas and moved along all six lanes in two waves. As the sun set on G-Day, Tiger Brigade cleared the breach. The 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, left its firing positions and followed closely behind.

Darkness brought a halt to the division's movement through the breach, but by then the division had achieved General Keys' intent for this day by establishing the preponderance of its combat power on the far side. The units that successfully passed through were the 6th Marines, with its three battalions plus the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines; the 2d Tank Battalion; the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion; the 2d LAI Battalion; and the Tiger Brigade. The majority of the division's artillery was also forward; the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines, had gone through with the 6th Marines. On the receipt of that battalion's report of its capability to fire, the 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, was called forward at 1430. The 1st Battalion of the 3d Field Artillery had gone through with the Tiger Brigade, and the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, had come in behind them.¹⁶⁷ This successful conduct of the breach and the rapid movement



Official USMC photograph

Elements of the 6th Marines pass along one of the "red" lanes cleared through minefields, 24 February 1991.

of the division were necessary to the success of the campaign. Even during the earliest moments of the ground campaign, the exploitation of tactical situations and rapid execution of orders had become the standing operating procedure for the division.

The resistance encountered in the breach area was sporadic and occasionally heavy but not as intense as had been expected. The assault elements encountered small arms, indirect fires, and tank engagements, but all were generally easily and quickly suppressed. Also, Iraqi artillery frequently interdicted the breach lanes as the division's elements moved through them. This fire did not appear to be observed. It seldom shifted to new targets, and after a volley, would cease firing. Two factors were probably responsible for this effect. First, the Iraqis expected the attack to come from the northwest sector of the division's area of operations, and had oriented their artillery to that direction.¹⁶⁸ Because their communications were destroyed or interrupted and their forward observers were missing from the area, the Iraqis were incapable of adjusting their fire. Second, the division's counter-battery radars could quickly acquire the Iraqi guns as targets when they did fire, and the division's artillery immediately suppressed them. The incoming fire which was received did not hold up the engineers or the assault battalions for long.

The first day of battle had gone exceptionally well, although it was not without casualties. The combat engineers had the greatest equipment losses, incurred while clearing the breaches: seven M60 tanks, two AAVs, and one M1A1 tank.¹⁶⁹ Personnel losses for the day were two killed in action (one Marine and one soldier of the Tiger Brigade) and 12 wounded in action.¹⁷⁰ There were some Marines who recalled one of "Murphy's laws of combat," which says that when your plan is working perfectly, you are walking into an ambush. Most optimistically believed, however, that with the minefields passed and the division in the open terrain to the north, there might yet be hard work ahead; but the division could now complete its mission.

By the afternoon, the division's front was an echelon of battalions from the 6th Marines (the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines; 2d Battalion, 2d Marines; and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines) running northwest to southeast. The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Fields, was in reserve, behind the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.¹⁷¹ Flank security was a concern, and so some corrections had to be made. On the right flank, the proximity of Al Jaber airfield (in the 1st Marine Division's zone), was a recognized threat because of a large concentration of enemy forces. A special task force, named Vega, had been created to operate on the flanks, in the area between the two minefields. This force was composed of a reconnaissance company reinforced with a section of TOWs detached from Headquarters Battalion, and it would guard against counterattack from the east. On the left flank there also was a considerable screen. The division's western boundary was with the Joint Forces Command North (JFCN); in the absence of a physical link-up, this flank was "in the air." But the operation plan called for attacking through this area with the Tiger Brigade, whose large numbers of armored vehicles and mobility would provide necessary security.¹⁷² However, until the brigade came through the breaches and

although it was subsequently greatly eased by the creation of two EPW camps at the flanks of the breach area.

Another aspect of the battlefield also was evident on this first day. As the Marines and soldiers moved forward, they frequently encountered trenches, fighting positions, mortar pits, and artillery emplacements which had been abandoned in great haste. Often, arms and ammunition in quantity were in evidence, as were equipment and uniform items of all sorts. The enemy's will to resist had been badly damaged, and while there were some Iraqis who might yet continue to fight, many others were ready to lay down their arms when pressed. As Colonel Livingston was to say later, the Iraqis on the front line were "not surrendering until convinced, and the fire support plan did that."¹⁷⁴ Resistance often would be made from a distance, but as the Marines closed on the Iraqi positions, the vast majority were either surrendering, often in whole units, or were attempting to flee to the north.

With the 6th Marines and the Tiger Brigade holding the breachhead line, the division consolidated its positions for the night. Action began again early on G plus 1, 25 February, with the enemy firing upon the 6th Marines with tanks and mortars at 0330. But the division's own elements were not idle during the night; after midnight, using thermal sights, the 6th Marines had spotted several Iraqi vehicles to its front. The regiment called in air strikes on these targets.¹⁷⁵

In its sector, the Tiger Brigade had discovered a bunker complex approximately two kilometers north of its position. This was reported up to division, and the "Tigers" were ordered to attack it at first light. The mission was given to the 3d Battalion, 41st Infantry, the brigade's mechanized infantry battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Walter Wojdakowski, U.S. Army. The battalion used tanks and its own Bradley fighting vehicles to reconnoiter by fire. They met with "moderate resistance" as they destroyed Iraqi bunkers and vehicles at ranges in excess of 2,500 meters, using TOWs and 25mm cannon. Dismounted infantry completed the clearing of the bunkers. This sharp action brought in 400 EPWs, including an Iraqi major, who surrendered what was left of the *39th Iraqi Infantry Brigade* of the *7th Iraqi Infantry Division*.¹⁷⁶

This was followed, at 0620, by what has been called the "Reveille Counterattack." Apparently maneuvering to hit the regiment's logistics trains, a battalion-sized Iraqi unit of tanks and mechanized infantry collided with the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. Fighting back with its own attached tanks and air support, the battalion accounted for 39 Iraqi tanks and APCs.¹⁷⁷ In the crucial first minutes of this attack, Sergeant Scott A. Dotson led his vehicle-mounted TOW section up to positions from which it could most effectively engage the enemy armor. Although under heavy fire itself, within minutes this section had destroyed eight Iraqi tanks.¹⁷⁸ This attack may have been a part of a brigade-sized counterattack; its disruption caused the enemy survivors to move into prepared positions, where they would be encountered the next day.¹⁷⁹

Despite these auspicious beginnings, the division was not yet ready to move off on the assault to Division Objective 1. With the Iraqi defensive barriers behind him, General Keys was now free to concentrate on fixing the Iraqi operational reserves, which was the division's actual mission, and destroying

them if possible.¹⁸⁰ For this day it was General Keys' intent to have all three of the division's assault elements on the attack; this would require waiting for the arrival of 8th Marines on the right flank, and realigning some of the subordinate units. The 8th Marines was leaving its assembly areas in Saudi Arabia at first light. At 0550 it passed through the berm, moving on lanes Blue 3 and 4 and Green 5 and 6. By 0740 the regiment's lead elements were through the breach lanes. At the same time, the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines, the last artillery battalion, was at the mid-point of lanes Red 1 and 2 preparing to add its firepower to that of the four battalions which moved up on the previous day.¹⁸¹

As the 8th Marines came up into position in their zone, certain adjustments had to be made. First, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was returned to the operational control of its parent regiment; since it was already in the 8th Marines' zone, no movement was required. It was a different matter with the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. This battalion was positioned in what would be the 8th Marines zone to the west of Al Jaber airfield. It therefore had to move to the northwest to rejoin the other battalions of the 6th Marines.¹⁸² The 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, moved up between the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, on its left and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, on its right. The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, came in behind, as the regimental reserve of the 8th Marines.

The taking of Division Objective 1 was to be the aim of this day's efforts. The objective was in the middle of the division's zone. It was a gently sloping rise, several kilometers across, which dominated the surrounding desert literally to the horizon. It was covered with defensive positions set in depth, consisting of trench-lines, bunkers, and dug-in tanks. Depriving the Iraqis of it would be of great value in preventing their interference with the division's future movements. To the west of the objective were two important features, built-up areas known popularly as the "ice-tray" and the "ice-cube," because of their appearances on a map.

While the repositioning of some of their battalions took place, the commanders of the 6th and 8th Marines made a personal liaison visit to coordinate their regiments' roles in the coming assault. Colonel Larry S. Schmidt, the commanding officer of the 8th Marines, met with Colonel Livingston at 0930.¹⁸³ The main issue was to agree on the boundary between their commands. The boundary as originally set placed the feature known as the "ice-tray" within the 8th Marines' zone, but this limited the 6th Marines to a narrow front in their assault to Division Objective 1. By mutual consent, the regimental boundary was shifted to the east, widening the 6th Marines' zone to include the "ice-tray." The smaller feature known as the "ice-cube" remained within the 8th Marines' zone.¹⁸⁴

Throughout the morning, the division's elements came under indirect fire from enemy artillery. The division's artillery fired counter-battery missions when targets were acquired. In one of the more memorable artillery actions of the campaign, the 10th Marines' counter-battery radar acquired an enemy self-propelled artillery battalion. Four of the regiment's five battalions fired a

"time on target" (TOT), with "zone and sweep" to cover this lucrative target. The entire enemy battalion was put out of action.¹⁸⁵

In preparation for the day's attack, the 6th Marines had run several air strikes on the "ice-tray." This built-up area contained a large concentration of bunkers and dug-in tanks.¹⁸⁶ As an additional assurance that there would be no disruption from this area, another regimental TOT was fired into its center by the 10th Marines.¹⁸⁷ A final issue to be resolved before the division moved off in its attack was the location of the eastern boundary. The 2d Marine Division, consolidated along Phase Line Red, was several kilometers ahead of the 1st Marine Division, which had not yet captured Al Jaber airfield. The original boundary ran just about one and a half kilometers west of a hard-surfaced road leading due south from Kuwait City to Al Jaber, placing the road within the 1st Marine Division's zone. It was along this route that the enemy had launched the "Reveille Counterattack" earlier that morning. To secure this flank, a change of the boundary, on a line running diagonally to the northeast and placing the road in the 2d Marine Division's zone, was approved by I MEF.¹⁸⁸ As additional protection, the 2d LAI Battalion was ordered to screen the northeast sector of the division's zone.¹⁸⁹

As the two Marine regiments and the Tiger Brigade made their final preparations for the assault to Division Objective 1, General Keys directed units to destroy all enemy equipment in zone. Colonel Richard further advised them to keep the division's momentum going by waving EPWs to the rear. They would then be taken into custody by follow-on elements and transported to the special camps established for them.¹⁹⁰ By 1315, all subordinate units had issued their orders and the division resumed the attack. As Colonel Livingston recalled, it was "the highlight of a career" to look across the desert and see a Marine division on line preparing to attack.¹⁹¹

Even as they prepared to cross the line of departure, the 6th Marines came under artillery fire. The 10th Marines quickly began counter-battery fires. By 1341, all of the division's assault units had crossed the line; the attack continued through incoming artillery, tank engagements, and small-arms fire. The 6th Marines attack was led by the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, with the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, and supporting tanks as the regimental reserve. A platoon of tanks from Company C, 8th Tank Battalion was attached to Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. This platoon's experiences were representative of the actions across the division's front on this day. Commanded by Chief Warrant Officer-2 Charles D. Paxton, the tanks

¹⁸⁵A TOT and a zone and sweep are two methods by which an artillery unit can control its fires. In a TOT, all of the guns of the unit are timed to be fired so that all of their rounds impact on the target at exactly the same time. In the instance cited here, this meant that every gun in the 10th Marines was fired to land with no warning on the enemy battalion. To ensure the destruction of this target, the zone and sweep was also used. Because an artillery battalion would occupy a large area, after the TOT the regiment's fires were shifted both in depth and laterally to a series of predetermined coordinates. In this way the massive artillery fires boxed in and destroyed the enemy target.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 20 91

Marine tankers maneuver their M60A1 tanks, leading the advance into Kuwait. These men are Reservists of the 8th Tank Battalion.

encountered several Iraqi tanks and armored personnel carriers soon after crossing the line. The platoon quickly destroyed seven tanks and four of the APCs, all the while continuing the momentum of the attack. When smoke and fog reduced visibility to only 200 meters, enemy targets had to be engaged at close range. Nevertheless, Chief Warrant Officer Paxton continued to press his platoon forward, destroying another six tanks and two ZSU 23-4 anti-aircraft guns before consolidating his own defense for the night.¹⁹²

In their attack toward the "ice-tray," the lead battalions were often able to by-pass Iraqi units, leaving them to the reserve battalion.¹⁹³ It was a different matter within the "ice-tray" itself. This feature covered more than eight square kilometers. Here the buildings and bunkers had to be cleared individually and methodically. Resistance by the Iraqis was overcome, as the regiment fought its way north. But the work of clearing the "ice-tray" continued until 0430 on the 26th, G plus 2.¹⁹⁴

On the division's right, the 8th Marines moved forward to the smaller "ice-cube." This built-up area was approximately one square kilometer in size, and was situated to the east of the northernmost portion of the "ice-tray." Colonel Schmidt had assigned the task of securing the "ice-cube" to the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines. This battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kevin A. Conry, was tied in with the 6th Marines on its left. Its progress was therefore slowed as the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, fought its way up the much longer area of the "ice-tray." At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was moving forward as the division's easternmost battalion, with the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, coming on as the 8th Marines' reserve.¹⁹⁵

The Tiger Brigade, on the division's left, had begun its assault at 1318. As earlier in the day, it encountered bunkers and dug-in tanks. At 1536, in spite of the enemy's opposition, and with visibility reduced by smoke to between 200



Photograph courtesy of Col John B. Sylvester, USA

Covering the division left flank, armor and mechanized infantry of the Tiger Brigade concentrate for their assault at noon, 25 February 1991.

and 500 meters, Tiger Brigade had already reached Phase Line Horse, its limit of advance for the day. During this advance, the brigade's commanding officer, Colonel Sylvester, personally accepted the surrender of a second Iraqi officer, the commander of the *116th Iraqi Infantry Brigade* of the *7th Iraqi Infantry Division*.¹⁹⁶

The division objective was secured by the 6th Marines and the Tiger Brigade. But the division was now far forward of the Arab forces on its left and the 1st Marine Division on its right. Because of the uncertainty of the locations of these units, the division held its advance along Phase Line Horse.¹⁹⁷ In the gathering darkness all division units consolidated their positions for the night.

Earlier in the day, Lieutenant General Boomer arrived at the position of the division's Headquarters Battalion, which had not yet gone forward. He was accompanied by members of his staff and several reporters. His concern was to draw the enemy's operational reserves out of the area of Kuwait City. He wanted to use a series of short thrusts by 2d Marine Division units, as well as artillery bombardments, to get them to react. At about 1600, the battalion was prepared to move forward to link up with the division's mobile CP, bringing General Boomer and his party along with it. Prior to its departure, the 6th Marines reported the location of a hasty minefield, and this was plotted on his map by Colonel Roger C. McElraft, the Headquarters Battalion commander. As the battalion moved forward, a darkness came over the area which was so deep that all who experienced it would remember it as the worst they had known in their lives. With no ambient light, night vision goggles became useless; to compound the problem, the Global Positioning System ceased to function at



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0338 6 91

Company C, 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, pauses during its movement into Kuwait, 25 February 1991.

about 1830, as it was wont to do every day at about that time." This left the column navigating by the less accurate means of a lensatic compass, and in the darkness the Marines drifted to the west. Not long after, Colonel McElraft realized that they had entered the minefield reported earlier, and that there were not only mines present but unexploded cluster-bombs as well. Fortunately, Master Gunnery Sergeant Terry L. Dale, the Headquarters Battalion sergeant major, had placed a box of chemical light sticks in the back of the colonel's HMMWV before they had left, on the chance that they might be of use. These "chem-lights" were used to mark the way for the following vehicles, as Colonel McElraft and Master Gunnery Sergeant Dale carefully explored the way ahead and removed dud cluster-bombs by hand. In this way, the column snaked its way through the minefield, and late in the evening General Boomer arrived at the division's forward CP.¹⁹⁸

As on the previous day, the number of EPWs gathered became a pressing difficulty. By this time the two EPW camps had been established, but they were soon filled with Iraqis who were hungry and thirsty, and many of whom required medical treatment. They also needed to be transported from the battle area, but their movement would require large numbers of vehicles and would

¹⁹⁸Navigation across the flat, featureless desert terrain, in extreme darkness and without the support of electronic aids was a problem faced by many of the division's commanders on this night. However, there were some methods to assist the assault battalions in their forward movements. For instance, Battery D, 2d Battalion, 10th Marines, commanded by Captain Robert F. Kluba, Jr., fired illumination rounds set to burn on the desert floor. These beacons helped to guide both the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. (Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star medal to Captain Robert F. Kluba, Jr.)

have to be controlled through the breach lanes. With much of its original work done, the breach control group was given the task of coordinating this work. Over the next three days the group worked closely with the engineers, military police, 4th Civil Affairs Group, and Direct Support Group 2 on establishing camps, providing food and water, and moving the EPWs to the rear.¹⁹⁹

G Plus 2 to the Cessation of Hostilities

The third day of the ground war also began with an antitank engagement. At 0230 on 26 February, 2nd LAI reported it had hit four tanks. Throughout the morning, all division elements were reporting the movements of, and engagements with, enemy formations.²⁰⁰ However, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was to be the focus of the enemy's attention once again.

The battalion had arrived along Phase Line Horse the previous evening, and was the right flank battalion of the entire division. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce A. Gombar, had positioned his battalion into an L-shaped defensive position for the night, in order to secure this eastern flank. The unit was set along two roads, the main north-south road leading from Kuwait City, and an east-west road intersecting with it just above the area of the "ice-cube." Company A was on the battalion's right, facing east, and supported by a combined antiarmor team. In the center was the tank company attached to the battalion, Company B of the 4th Tank Battalion, which was set in along the intersection of the two roads. On the left was Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, also supported by an antiarmor team.²⁰¹ (These teams, called "CATs," were designed to provide mobile antiarmor fires in the battalion. They were formed from weapons platoons, supplemented by attached antitank [TOW] squads.)²⁰²

At 0230, about the same time that the 2d LAI Battalion was engaged, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, was struck by a two-pronged attack of APCs and dismounted infantry coming from the northeast and northwest. The attack hit the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 18 91

Prisoners were processed at a center established by the 6th Marines.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0726 27 91

A column of armored and wheeled vehicles carried the Marines of Headquarters Battalion deep into Kuwait. Here they cross the Iraqi minefield via lane Blue 3, 25 February 1991.

road intersection held by the tank company and the boundary between the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, which was set in at the "ice-cube." The battalion's eastern flank also received some accurate artillery fire, causing five casualties. The battalion's tanks and CAT worked very effectively at beating back this attack. They destroyed several enemy armored vehicles, some of them within only 75 meters of the battle positions. Effective counter-battery fire from the 10th Marines soon silenced the artillery fire, but the fight continued for another hour and a half. At 0400, quiet returned to the scene. Lieutenant Colonel Gombard and his fire support coordinator, Captain Mark Ettore, were preparing to enjoy a well-deserved cup of coffee after their exertions of the night. Captain Ettore, thinking that the Iraqis were also taking advantage of the moment to regroup and relax, impressed on his commander that they should not be allowed to do so. Accordingly, Captain Ettore called for a repeat of three groups of targets which had been fired by the 10th Marines during the engagement. The results proved the correctness of the captain's thinking. There were several spectacular secondary explosions, and the next morning nearly 200 devastated and demoralized prisoners were taken, some of whom told of how the artillery barrages had caught them just as they were preparing to fall back to alternate positions.²⁰³

While these actions were going on, at the division CP the question of boundaries was significant once again. General Keys was still concerned about the division's open western flank. The 2d LAI Battalion, which had been screening to the east, was moved west, and screened the Tiger Brigade's flank.²⁰⁴ The eastern boundary presented unique problems of its own. There was a need

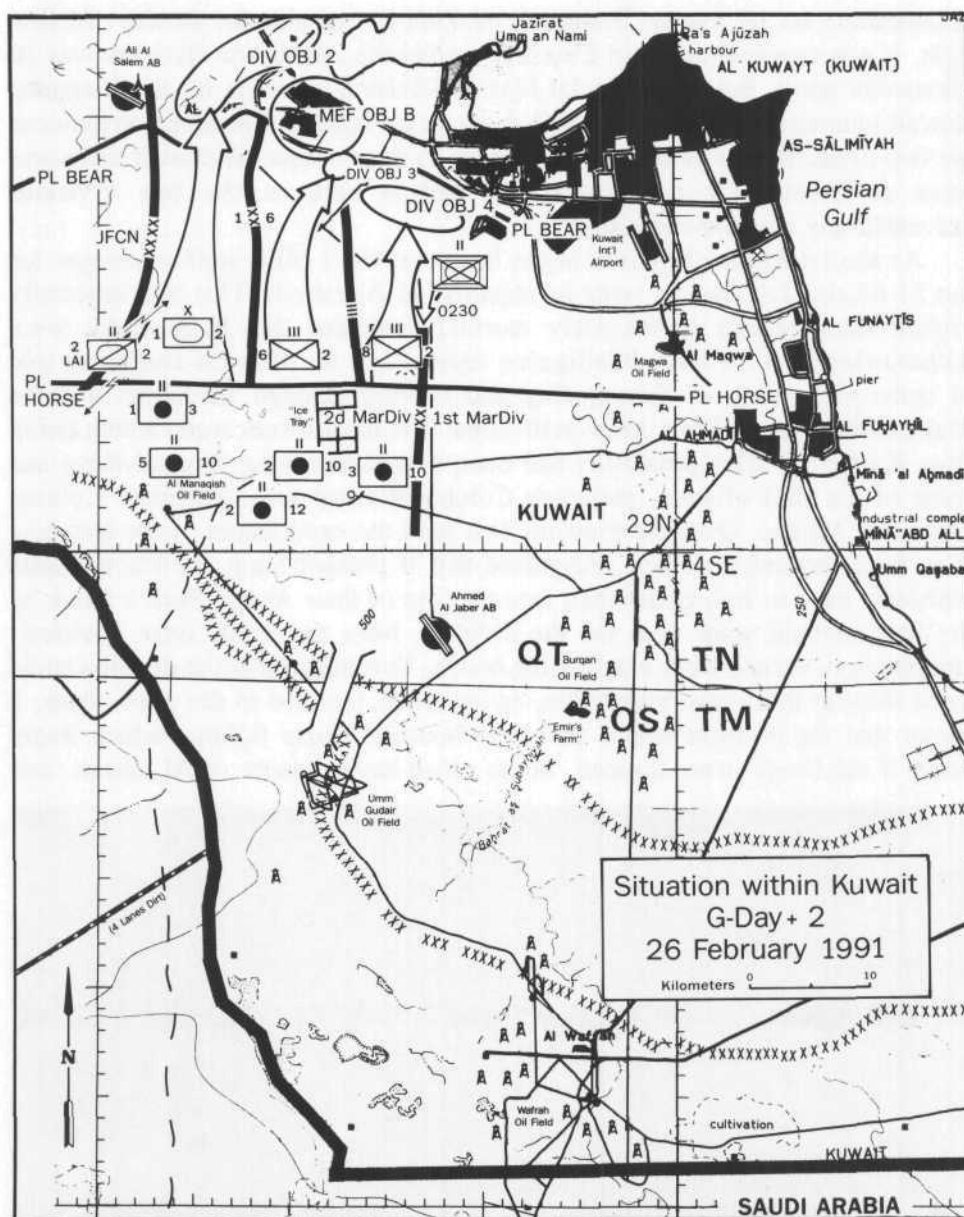
to determine the 1st Marine Division's position and its plan for the day. At first light, it was reported at Phase Line Red, while the 2d Marine Division was 10 kilometers north. But when the 1st Marine Division launched its attack against Kuwait International Airport at 0600, it caught up rapidly. Coordination between the two divisions was critical as they began to draw closer. Although there was some cross-boundary fire, close coordination between the two divisions prevented any friendly casualties.²⁰⁵

As the 1st Marine Division began its move, the I MEF staff was eager for the 2d Marine Division to seize its objective at Al Jahrah. This was especially critical since reports in the early morning indicated that Iraqi forces were withdrawing back to Iraq. Intelligence reports and the Kuwaiti resistance told of convoys forming in Kuwait City and moving through Al Jahrah and the Mutlaa Ridge area. The I MEF staff knew that Iraqi forces were withdrawing from Kuwait.²⁰⁶ This possibility had been discussed among General Keys and some of his staff officers, including Colonel Richard and Lieutenant Colonel Ottavio J. Milano. Over the previous two days the experiences of the Iran-Iraq War were recounted. It was recognized that if pressed hard, the Iraqis would withdraw back to Iraq rather than face the loss of their Army. Such a move by the Iraqis would work well for the division. Now the Iraqis were obviously attempting to escape from a tightening noose. This meant that the division could catch them at their most vulnerable, as the Iraqis traveled in the open. Also, it meant that the division would avoid the house-to-house fighting which might occur if the Iraqis were trapped in the urban environment of Al Jahrah and



Official USMC photograph

At the division command post in Kuwait, LtCol James Battaglini, third from right, and other officers plan the advance toward MEF Objective B, Al Jahrah.



Kuwait City. Major General Keys and Lieutenant General Boomer, who was still with the division, discussed how best to take advantage of the situation. General Keys determined to "hook" on the left with the Tiger Brigade.²⁰⁷

In the early morning, the division staff began to prepare the order which would take the maneuver elements up to their final objectives. Within 50 minutes, mission-type orders were ready for issue to the commanders. "Rapid, shock action" was recognized as "the key to the situation," and overlays containing only necessary fire-support coordination and control measures were prepared.²⁰⁸ The regiments were to remain within their established zones, the boundaries were set, and the division objectives defined. These had not been set

before due to General Keys' guidance that the regiments were to focus on each day's mission as it unfolded.²⁰⁹ However, in the commanders' meetings prior to the start of the ground campaign, the MEF objectives and commander's intent were clearly stated. Also, the key areas in each regimental zone close to the MEF objective, and their relation to the over-all plan, had been identified, explained, and discussed. In this way, each of the division's subordinate commanders knew what was ultimately expected of the division, even as they concentrated on immediate tasks. Now General Keys was prepared to set the final division objectives for his three maneuver elements.

The 8th Marines was to attack through to Phase Line Bear, the road leading west and north and upon which the Iraqis were trying to escape. It was to seize division objective 4, which contained an Iraqi barracks, and orient to the northeast to protect the division's flank against counterattack from Kuwait City. The 6th Marines was to attack toward division objective 3, to control the key cloverleaf on the road from Kuwait City, and destroy enemy columns attempting to escape to Iraq. The Tiger Brigade was to seize division objective 2, the high ground dominating Al Jahrah and prevent the escape of Iraqi columns to the north.²¹⁰

At the commanders' meeting that morning, the concept of operations and the fire support plan were explained, and the overlays distributed. Following their



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0722 10 91

MajGen William M. Keys with officers of the "Tiger" Brigade on their final objective at Al Jahrah.

meeting, the three major subordinate commanders conferred on the conduct of the attack, and left to issue their orders. At 1200, all elements of the division crossed the line of departure.²¹¹

They advanced quickly to their objectives. The major action of the day fell to the Tiger Brigade. With the heavy firepower and high mobility of their Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, they were well equipped for the task now before them. Their mission called for them to move rapidly across the desert, seizing at Al Jahrah the main road from Kuwait City. The division staff had long recognized that the high ground of the Mutlaa Ridge was key to controlling this area. Here the road crosses the ridge at a right angle, and as it climbs the ridge, it is bounded by steep escarpments, shallow ravines, and Iraqi minefields.

It was at this natural bottleneck that the convoys of Iraqi vehicles were being attacked by Marine aircraft in the early hours of the morning. The destruction of vehicles at this point caused a tremendous press of traffic. To ensure that none of these vehicles would escape, the "Tigers" now began a rapid move of 20 kilometers across the desert to seize and block the road. They were to be the "cork in the bottle."

The brigade moved off in the attack at 1200, along with the rest of the division. Colonel Sylvester formed his unit into a "V" formation: the 3d and 1st Battalions, 67th Armor, were side by side, followed by the 3d Battalion, 41st Infantry. The artillery of the 1st Battalion, 3d Field Artillery, came in trace of the maneuver elements. Of all the division's units, the "Tigers" had the greatest distance to cover. To reach their objective as quickly as they could, speeds of up to 20 kilometers per hour were maintained when possible.²¹²

On the left flank, the 3d Battalion, 67th Armor, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Tystadt, U.S. Army, quickly encountered a battalion-size defensive position. As the American soldiers assaulted this line, the Iraqis on the left chose to surrender. Recognizing the opportunity this presented, Lieutenant Colonel Tystadt moved his battalion through the gap, flanking the remainder of the position. At nearly the same time, the 1st Battalion, 67th Armor, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Johnson, U.S. Army, closed on a complex of Iraqi bunkers and dug-in tanks. Using their TOWs and the main guns of their tanks, the soldiers destroyed 20 Iraqi tanks and APCs. Then, flanking this position, they pressed on to the north.²¹³

Continuing north, the 3d Battalion, 67th Armor, approached the Ali Al Saleem airfield, which was just to the west of the division's left boundary. Here, as they came to the southern slope of the ridge leading to Al Jahrah, the soldiers encountered a minefield protecting an Iraqi strongpoint. One company was quickly ordered to conduct a hasty breach of the minefield, using mineplows and rollers. Two companies provided fire support to the breach force, while another assaulted through the breach. All of this was done under fire from the enemy's position, which was quickly destroyed.²¹⁴

While this was occurring, the mechanized infantry of the 3d Battalion, 41st Infantry, had moved behind the 3d Battalion, 67th Armor, and was following in trace of it, preparing to seize their objective, which was close to the airfield.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0300 28 91

Iraqi soldiers surrender to elements of the 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion.

They came through the breach created by their armor comrades, securing a bunker complex which was on their objective.²¹⁵

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Tystadt's armor battalion continued towards Al Jahrah, moving in column along the hard-surfaced road which ran along the ridge line. As they approached the Mutlaa police station, Lieutenant Colonel Tystadt saw the destruction and confusion caused by the earlier air attacks. He also noted that some Iraqis were still attempting to escape through the choke-point. He ordered Company B, which was in the lead, to attack north across the road and block the Iraqi retreat. It did so, opening fire on the lead tanks and destroying three. The shock of this action quickly persuaded the crews of 15 others to abandon their tanks and surrender.²¹⁶

At this time, Company C crossed the road to clear the police station. The fighting here had to be done room by room; when it was over, 40 Iraqis had been killed or made prisoner. But it was here that the Tiger Brigade suffered its own second loss. While assisting in positioning the command post, the battalion's master gunner, Sergeant First Class Harold R. Witzke, was shot by a sniper and died while awaiting evacuation.²¹⁷

With the road now blocked from the top of the ridge, Lieutenant Colonel Tystadt sent one company southeast along the road to secure a major cloverleaf. On the way the company had to conduct an "in-stride" breach of another minefield, and encountered and destroyed several more tanks and APCs.²¹⁸

With the 3d Battalion, 67th Armor, now in position on the Mutlaa Ridge, the Tiger Brigade could end its long exertions of this day. The area they now controlled was the scene of great destruction and death. The Tiger Brigade had put an end to what had been begun earlier by the attack aircraft of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing. A tightly-packed column of thousands of damaged and abandoned vehicles, military and civilian (stolen from the citizens of Kuwait), stretched down the road for close to two miles, filling all six lanes and overflowing onto the sides of the road for hundreds of meters. This scene, soon known as "Death Valley" or "Carnage Road," became one of the most familiar images to come out of the conflict. All of the soldiers and Marines who saw it were impressed by the devastation caused by modern weaponry. Equally, all



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0853 9 91

The ruins of defeat: an Iraqi self-propelled artillery gun at Al Jahrah, 26 February 1991, is destroyed.

were angered by the amount of loot, taken from Kuwaiti homes and businesses, which was evident in virtually every vehicle. One Marine, familiar with the Koran, recalled the verses:

As for the Paradise to come, it shall be theirs who seek neither glory in this world nor evil. The righteous shall have a blessed end.

He that does good shall be rewarded with that which is better. But he that does evil shall be requited with evil.²¹⁹

On the "Tigers" right, the 6th Marines also had crossed the line of departure at 1200. The regiment had pushed its combat service support detachment into the zone on G-Day, in order to keep supplied with fuel and ammunition. Now it was used for a final refuel prior to the attack.²²⁰ As the Tiger Brigade began its movement north, the 6th Marines had to move quickly to keep up with it. Once again, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, were on line in the attack, bypassing enemy groups to be taken care of by the reserve battalion, the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines.²²¹ The regiment's advance brought it into a quarry area, in which it encountered several dug-in tanks. A section of Cobra gunships was assigned to the support of each battalion, and was used to engage these targets. As the regiment approached its objective, it destroyed self-propelled artillery pieces and tanks. Several escaping Iraqi APCs were caught by the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, at the road junction and destroyed with TOWs.²²² Having secured the cloverleaf, the regiment closed its section of the road as an escape route.

The 8th Marines had the shortest distance to cover in its attack to its objective on the road. As on the previous day, the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines,

and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, were abreast. The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, followed in trace and provided additional flank security. As the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, moved north, it had to circumvent another minefield and encountered increasing armored resistance. Its attack brought it into a large agricultural area measuring several square kilometers. This area had been occupied by one brigade of the Iraqi *3d Armored Division*, and also contained a major logistic support site.²²³ It was surrounded by a high cinderblock wall, and was filled with bunkers and fighting positions. The battalion pressed on through increasing darkness, and consolidated its positions along its section of the road.

On the division's extreme right was the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, tied in with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, of the 1st Marine Division. The battalion aimed at two small hills, from which it could control the road, as its objectives. Near to these was a suspected Iraqi strongpoint in an agricultural area known as the "Dairy Farm." Artillery fired preparation missions on this area as the companies began their final assaults on their objectives. In gathering darkness the battalion's progress slowed as it entered the increasingly restrictive nature of a more urban area. However, by 1800, it had secured its section of the road and established anti-tank ambushes along it.²²⁴

In its movement north the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, had bypassed some Iraqi formations, in accordance with orders. Following in trace, the 3d



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0214 22 91

Wounded Iraqi soldiers await treatment at a division compound.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0850 3 91

Iraqi bunkers in the "agricultural area" seized by 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, on 26 February 1991.

Battalion, 23d Marines, began to take sporadic, harassing small arms fire from the agricultural area. One company was dispatched to clear this area of snipers. As the battalion continued north, it came upon a large number of abandoned Iraqi mechanized vehicles. These were destroyed with the battalion's direct fire weapons. The battalion's mission for the night was to destroy any remaining vehicles and to ensure that any Iraqi forces still in the area did not escape.²²⁵

As the division's elements consolidated their positions for the night, there was still much work to be done. Both Marine regiments now used their Kuwaiti liaison officers to make contact with the resistance forces operating to their fronts. It was these forces which cleared the remaining pockets of Iraqis in the town and secured Al Jahrah.²²⁶ At division headquarters that night, orders were prepared for both regiments to clear their zones up to the coast the following morning.

At 2250 that evening, the division was notified that Arab forces on its left flank would pass through the division's zone on G plus 3, 27 February. By 2330, communications were established with Egyptian forces operating to the left flank. Preparations for the coordination of the passage of these forces were immediately begun. At 0450, the fire support coordination center informed all units that there would be no firing north of Phase Line Bear, the road along which they were established, effective immediately. By 0555, Tiger Brigade had completed making liaison with the Egyptians. By 0720, these units were passing across the division's front lines on their way to Kuwait City.²²⁷

Because of the passage of these allied forces, the clearing of the zones was postponed. For the remainder of the day, the division remained in its positions

along Phase Line Bear, clearing any pockets of resistance within its sectors. This was to be an especially large undertaking for some of the division's units. Both the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, had bypassed major Iraqi positions in their zones. The logistics area that the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, had entered contained a large number of well-built and furnished bunkers, as well as several ordnance caches.²²⁸ In the light of the new day, the Marines of the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, could see that they were in the center of a larger complex than they had realized. The agricultural area contained a vast complex of bunkers which might still contain Iraqi soldiers, and there were considerably more tanks and armored vehicles than had been destroyed the previous night. The battalion swept the area with two companies, using a psychological operations tape in Arabic to induce any remaining Iraqis to surrender. The vehicles were to be destroyed by combat engineers once the area had been swept. A tank platoon from the 4th Tank Battalion also joined in the sweep, but its involvement ended when a secondary explosion in an Iraqi tank killed one Marine crewman and wounded another. The work of clearing this area would continue through 1 March.²²⁹

In its final task of the day, the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, was ordered to move northeast, closer to the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. At the northern edge of the farm complex, it received sniper and rocket fire. Reacting quickly, Marines destroyed an Iraqi ammunition truck and some Iraqi soldiers were killed.²³⁰ This was to be the 2d Marine Division's last action against Iraqi armed forces during the conflict.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0214 18 91

Iraqi prisoners gather at one of several compounds set up by the 2d Marine Division, 25 February 1991.



Photograph by author

Iraqi armor was destroyed by 3d Battalion, 23d Marines.

Looking towards a possible future mission, General Keys tasked the assistant operations officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jan C. Huly, to prepare the division to continue from its present positions up northeast to the coast. The ports in this area could be used for resupply of the division or of Army forces to the west. With the Tiger Brigade continuing to hold the escarpment and block the road from Al Jahrah, the rest of the division could move north and east to the area of Bubizan Island. Accordingly, the division operations section prepared and sent an order to the 6th and 8th Marines to attack and clear zones to the coast to the vicinity of Al Urthamah and the port of Al Dohah commencing at 0900 on G plus 4, 28 February. The time was later changed to "on order." But in the early morning hours of 28 February the order was received from I MEF to cease offensive operations at 0800 of that day, and the division cancelled its order to clear the zones.²³¹

With the reversion to defend in zone, the division's offensive operations in Desert Storm came to an end. However, there was still work to be done. As the 1st Marine Division withdrew to Saudi Arabia, the 2d LAI Battalion occupied that Division's zone.²³² Over the next few weeks there would be several reports of shootings by unidentified Arabs. Frequently these were simply shots fired into the air by Kuwaitis celebrating their new freedom and the holy month of Ramadan. In some instances, however, rounds were deliberately fired at Marine positions and vehicles.

While remaining in Kuwait, the 2d Marine Division was not allowed to become idle. Small-arms ranges were constructed in the desert, positions were continually improved, and maintenance performed on weapons and vehicles. Unexploded ordnance was located and destroyed, and some captured equipment prepared for shipment back to Camp Lejeune as trophies. In one piece of self-assigned civic action, the Marines of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, spent much of their time clearing the debris of both the Iraqi occupation and the battle from the agricultural compound in which they were located.



Department of Defense Photo (USN) 91 09899

On the way back are Marines of Headquarters Battalion, traveling from Kuwait City to Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia.

By the middle of March, the division began to prepare for its own withdrawal to Saudi Arabia. On 14 March, the 2d Tank Battalion moved south to Al Mishab, and would be followed by other units over the next several days as the division returned to Al Jubayl. In the midst of this movement, the Tiger Brigade returned to the operational control of ArCent on 23 March. On 30 March, the division main CP displaced, to be followed the next day by Headquarters Battalion.²³³ But not all of the division was returning. The Headquarters, 8th Marines, was to remain in Kuwait to provide a "presence" of U.S. forces in the area and to provide a forward defense for Kuwait in its sector. In this way the continued security of Kuwait could be ensured as it began to rebuild. A small regiment was formed using the regimental headquarters, the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, and the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines. These battalions were supported by the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, and other combat support and combat service support units as necessary. Even Hornet and Harrier aircraft were designated in support of this force. At first, the 8th Marines reported directly to CG, I MEF for operations, but after the latter's departure, the regiment came under the operational control of Major General Norman E. Ehlert, Commander, Marine Forces Southwest Asia.²³⁴

At Al Jubayl, the main activity was the preparation of equipment for shipment back to Camp Lejeune or for reembarkation with the MPS shipping. The work was long and often tedious, but spirits were buoyed by the knowledge that the day for returning to the United States would soon arrive. A special detachment from the Southwest Asia Training Group, led by Lieutenant Colonel John R. Michaud, was present to assist with the demobilization of the division's Reservists. Discharge forms were signed, discharge physical conducted, and pre-separation briefings given about the benefits and entitlements due on separation from active duty.²³⁵



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0732 20 91

"Phone home": After the ceasefire, Marines, sailors, and soldiers of the 2d Marine Division took the opportunity to call the United States, with assistance from a U.S. telecommunications company.

By mid-April, most of the division had returned to Camp Lejeune and a few days of well-deserved liberty. Woodland camouflage utilities took the place of desert camouflage, and acquaintances were renewed among Marines who had not seen each other for several months. As the active-duty Marines settled into a normal routine, their Reserve counterparts were demobilized and returned home to families and civilian occupations. By the middle of May the remaining battalions returned from Saudi Arabia, and the division turned to its usual business of deployments and the rotation of units. For the 2d Marine Division, "The Storm" was over at last.

Epilogue

. . . When, without stratagem,
But in plain shock and even play of battle,
Was ever known so great and little loss,
On one part and on th'other?
(William Shakespeare: *King Henry The Fifth*;
Act IV, Scene VIII)

On 8 June 1991, members of the 2d Marine Division formed up on The Mall in Washington, D.C., to participate in the national victory parade. Barely six months from the time that its first elements had arrived in Saudi Arabia, the division had completed its missions and redeployed to Camp Lejeune. Now, the division was to participate in one of its last roles relating to Desert Storm.



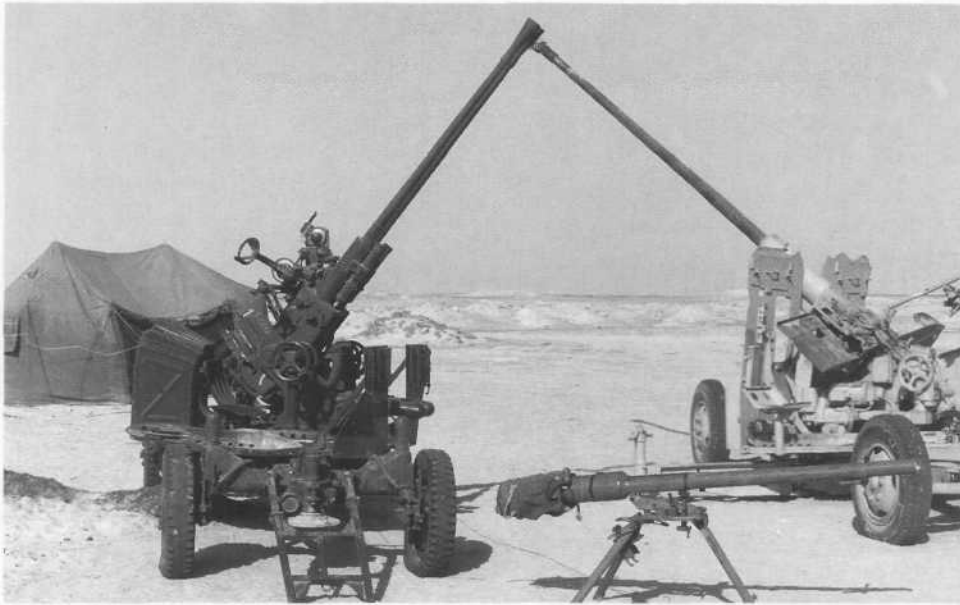
Official USMC photograph

Marines of the 2d Division march in the National Victory Parade in Washington, D.C.

Under a bright and clear sky, members took up their positions and adjusted their uniforms and equipment. The flag-bearers proudly displayed the streamers on their respective unit colors, naming the most famous engagements and honors: World War I and the French Croix de Guerre; World War II and the Presidential Unit Citations; Armed Forces Expeditionary Service; Marine Corps Expeditionary Service. Soon, there would be one more streamer to place on all those banners.

At 1045, the massed national colors of all of the coalition forces moved out at the head of the parade. These were followed by the U.S. Army units, and then the Marines. At about 1130, the Marine Band struck up The Marines' Hymn, and the 2d Marine Division stepped off with collective pride. As it turned onto Constitution Avenue, a great cheer was given by the multitudes lining the parade route. The end of the march meant new beginnings for the Marines who had served in the 2d Marine Division during the conflict in the Persian Gulf. Individually, they would be moving to other assignments and new commands. But all they had accomplished together so recently would continue to abide in the division's traditions, lineage, and honors.

If this was a time for handshakes and farewells, it was also an opportunity to reflect upon the true accomplishments of the division. Since ancient times, armies have marked success by the trophies captured from the enemy. Using these as an indicator, the 2d Marine Division compiled an outstanding record. Perhaps the most impressive figure was the number of EPWs taken; a total of 13,676 Iraqi soldiers surrendered to the division during the four days of battle. Equipment captured or destroyed in the division's zone of operations totaled more than 500 tanks, 172 field and antiaircraft artillery pieces, and 300 armored personnel carriers.²³⁶



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0732 8 91

Captured Iraqi weapons are displayed at the 2d Marine Division command post, March 1991.

Such numbers, interesting as they are in themselves, cannot provide a complete picture of all that the division actually accomplished during the conflict. Even while deployment was a remote possibility, General Keys directed the assembly of the division and began to prepare it for combat. Ultimately, the division numbered more than 20,000 men and women Marines, soldiers and sailors. But nearly half of those who fought with the division were not a part of its regular establishment. The division was reinforced by units from the 3d and 4th Marine Divisions, Reservists from the Individual Ready Reserve, and by the nearly 5,000 soldiers of the Tiger Brigade. All of these units and individuals had to be integrated into the division's structure and trained within it. That this was successfully done cannot be better proved than by the effectiveness with which the division operated, and the camaraderie which prevailed.

Little time elapsed from the departure of General Keys and the division's advance party from Camp Lejeune, through the start of offensive operations, to the ceasefire. Yet, in this short span of time, the division deployed more than 15,000 Marines, matched up units with their proper equipment, joined the Tiger Brigade and other units, and moved into its combat role. Defensive missions were accomplished, an extensive course of training was conducted, and a detailed operation plan was prepared. Perhaps most important of all during this period was General Keys' convincing of Lieutenant General Boomer, commanding general of I MEF, to order the 2d Marine Division to perform its own separate breach of the Iraqi defensive lines. All of this work, to include the culminating four days of battle, was accomplished in less than three months.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0789 12 91

On 14 March 1991, the author stands at the entrance to lane "Blue 3," where he participated in breach control group operations.

The cost to the division was six killed in action, and 38 wounded, none as the result of friendly fire. There were also three non-battle deaths and 36 non-battle wounded. Such light casualties should serve to enhance the value of the final victory won by the division, for they indicate the existence of two important factors. The first was the high morale and training of the Marines, sailors, and soldiers. The second was that this conflict, perhaps more than any other in recent memory, was fought properly on all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical.

Shortly after the ceasefire, while the division was still in Kuwait, Brigadier General Sutton rightly remarked that the Marine Corps should not seek too many lessons from a war that lasted only four days. It is certainly true that the Persian Gulf War was unique in many ways, and will not cause any textbooks to be rewritten. Sometimes, the real lessons learned are those which reaffirm the classic principles by which wars and battles have always been won. In this sense, the truest lesson to be garnered from the 2d Marine Division is that the execution of this campaign is a validation of the thought and training developed by the Marine Corps over the past several years.

The current *FMFM-1 Warfighting* manual states that "Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope."²³⁷ The division's actions fit this definition in every major point. The division deceived the Iraqis about the place of its attack; its psychological operations affected the enemy's will to resist; American elements moved more quickly against Iraqi defenses

than the enemy expected. Caught off-balance, the Iraqis were given no opportunity to respond effectively to the division's subsequent actions. Using superior firepower and rapid maneuver, the division threatened the Iraqi commanders with encirclement in the environs of Al Jahrah and Kuwait City. When they chose to escape the trap, their movement was turned into a rout by the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and the division's timely actions. What the division accomplished in its area was duplicated, on a larger scale, throughout the theater by the combined actions of the coalition forces.

There were some guiding principles which distinguished the division's actions and enabled it to be so successful. Rapidity of movement and shock action appear to be both more necessary and easier to achieve in desert warfare. In writing about the highly successful British desert campaign of 1918, Cyril Falls states that "... the most interesting feature of the campaign ... was the success of shock action. Almost every charge was made in extended formation and driven home at the gallop ... On many occasions it was not the speed of the charge alone but the celerity with which brigadiers and regimental commanders made up their minds which led to success."²³⁸ What was true of the British cavalry was equally certain, 73 years later, of the mobile and armored formations of the 2d Marine Division.

To General Keys, maneuver warfare is essentially a "way of thinking about everything in combat, the ultimate goal [of which] is the destruction of the enemy." He believes it to be the province of the division and higher-level

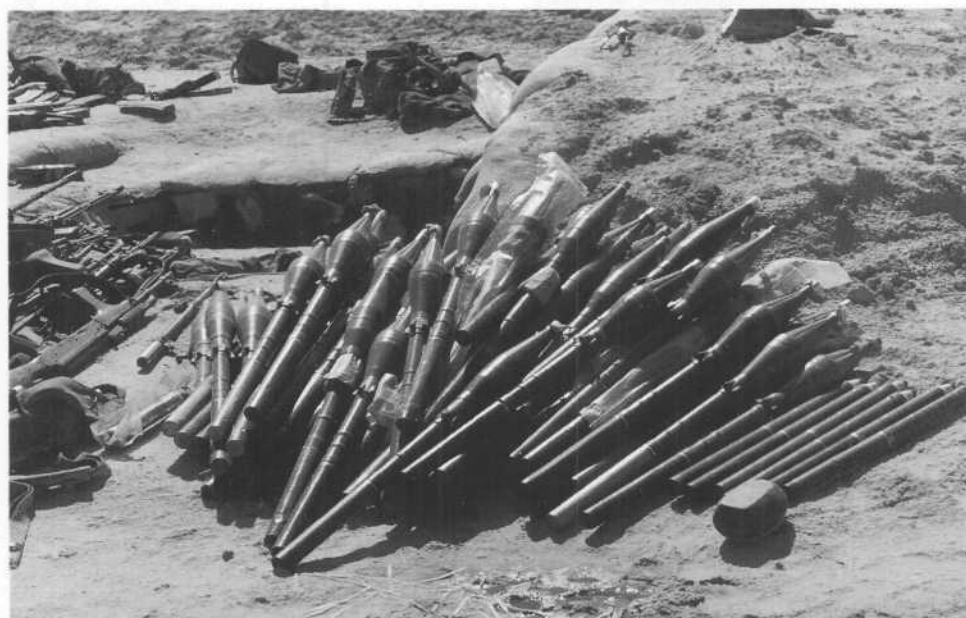


Photograph by author

LtCol John Kiser and Capt James Van Emburgh inspect captured FROG-7 rockets on a mobile launcher.

echelons, for at lower levels it is necessary to close with the enemy. However, maneuver warfare enables commanders at all levels to "fight smarter" than their opponents. It was this ability, that mental "celerity" among the British commanders noted by Falls, which was another factor which contributed so greatly to the division's accomplishments. In a series of interviews recorded shortly after the ceasefire, the division's regimental, brigade, and battalion commanders nearly all made similar comments; they were able to make decisions and take advantage of tactical situations because they knew what their own commanders expected of them. The concept of knowing the commander's intent is nothing new. But rarely has it received so strong and universal an endorsement as by the commanding officers of 2d Marine Division units. It clearly assisted them in the quick accomplishment of their missions. The combination of knowing the commander's intent and having his confidence to carry it out created a strong weapon which they used well.

Finally, it must be noted that the 2d Marine Division played a significant role in the accomplishment of the overall strategic mission of freeing Kuwait from its occupation by the army of Iraq. It was the swift movement of the division through Kuwait, alongside the 1st Marine Division, which led General Schwarzkopf to order the early advance of the coalition forces on the far left flank. Everyone who served in the 2d Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm can be justly proud of his or her role and efforts and contributions to the final victory. It is always an honor to serve; but to assist in the liberation of a nation from tyranny is a privilege accorded to few.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 0290 21 91

Captured small arms and munitions lie in an Iraqi position in Kuwait.

But this will protect us,
when the Assyrian invades our
land,
when he sets foot on our soil;
ample leaders we shall raise
against him,
princes ample and enough,
to let Assyria feel the sword
and drive the bare blade over
Nimrod's land,
rescuing us from the Assyrian,
when he invades our land
and sets foot on our territory.
(*Micah: 5; 5-6.*)

NOTES

Initial Preparations

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section was derived from the following sources: LtCol Dennis P. Mroczkowski battlefield journal, hereafter Mroczkowski Jnl; oral history interviews with LtCol Christopher J. Gregor, 11Apr91, MajGen William M. Keys, 16May91, LtCol Andrew F. Mazarra, 5Apr91, Col Roger C. McElraft, 8Mar91, Col Sepp D. Ramsperger, 10May91, LtCol Michael J. Swords, 4Apr91, (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Gregor intvw, Keys intvw, Mazarra intvw, McElraft intvw, Ramsperger intvw, Swords intvw; telephone conversations between the author and Col Louis E. Brossy, 6Jun91, Col Jack A. Davis, 7Jun91, MajGen William M. Keys, 13Jun91, LtCol Lee F. Lange II, 7Jun91, Col Roger C. McElraft, 6Jun91, LtCol Ottavio J. Milano, 5Jun91, Col Leslie M. Palm, 7Jun91, Col Ronald G. Richard, 25Mar92, Col James K. Van Riper, 5Jun91, hereafter Brossy telcon, Davis telcon, Keys telcon, Lange telcon, McElraft telcon, Milano telcon, Palm telcon, Richard telcon, Van Riper telcon; personal conversation between the author and LtCol Mary K. Lowery, undated, noted in Mroczkowski Jnl; Col John B. Sylvester, U.S. Army, "Actions Of The 1st (Tiger) Brigade, 2nd Armored Division During Operation Desert Shield/ Operation Desert Storm 10 Aug 90-1 Mar 91," hereafter 1-2AD AAR.

1. Lisa Beyer, "Iraq's Power Grab," *Time*, 13Aug91, pp. 16-17.
2. Andrew Rosenthal, untitled, *The New York Times*, 8Aug91, p. 1.
3. "Marines See Action: Middle East and Africa," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Sep90, p. 4.
4. Ramsperger intvw.
5. McElraft intvw.
6. Keys intvw.
7. McElraft intvw.
8. Ibid.; Mroczkowski Jnl, 28Jan91.
9. Lowery intvw.
10. "Troops Added," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Dec90, p. 7.
11. "Reserves Mobilized," Ibid., p. 6.
12. Davis telcon.
13. Van Riper telcon.
14. Richard telcon.
15. Milano telcon.
16. CG II MEF msg to CG 2d MarDiv, dtd 182049ZNov90.
17. Keys intvw.
18. Brossy telcon.
19. McElraft intvw; McElraft telcon.
20. Ramsperger intvw.
21. Gregor intvw.

22. Sgt Robert C. Jenks, "II MEF Review: 'Deploy Your Marines to South West Asia,'" *The Camp Lejeune Globe*, 13Dec90, pp. 8-9.
23. Ramsperger intvw.
24. Keys intvw.
25. Ibid.
26. McElraft telcon.
27. Palm telcon; Lange telcon.
28. Swords intvw.
29. Mazarra intvw.
30. 1-2 AD AAR.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. 2d MarDiv ComdC, dtd May91.
34. Keys telcon.
35. Ibid.
36. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (London: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 664.

Movement and Training

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from official messages and orders received at, or issued by, the 2d Marine Division. It has been supplemented by: Mroczkowski Jnl; oral history interviews with LtCol Keith T. Holcomb, 17May91, MajGen William M. Keys, 16May91, and Col Leslie M. Palm, 2Apr91 (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Holcomb intvw, Keys intvw, and Palm intvw; personal interviews with Maj Robert Brennan, 13Apr91, and LtCol Lee Lange, 23May91, hereafter Brennan intvw and Lange intvw; LtCol Mark Swanstrom, "2d Marine Division Breaching Operations During Desert Storm," undated engineer report, hereafter Swanstrom rpt; 2d Marine Division Situation Reports, hereafter 2d MarDiv SitReps #, date.

37. Capt Kimberly memo to Col Richard, dtd 18Mar91.
38. Keys intvw.
39. CG I MEF Order 006, dtd 201221Z Dec90.
40. CG 2d MarDiv, "Operation Desert Shield" FragO 001, dtd 25Dec90.
41. 2d MarDiv SitRep #023, dtd 07Jan91.
42. 2d MarDiv SitRep #034, dtd 18Jan91.
43. CG USMarCent/I MEF, FragO 003 to I MEF OpO 006, dtd 0900100Z (sic) Jan91.
44. Ibid.
45. CG 2d MarDiv, "Operation Desert Shield" FragO 1-91, dtd 120800C Jan91.
46. Keys intvw.
47. 2d MarDiv SitRep #031, dtd 15 Jan91, and #041, dtd 25Jan91.
48. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 2-91 "Desert Storm," dtd 18Jan91.
49. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 007 "Artillery Surface Raid," dtd 27Jan91.

50. The first effect, to foster an offensive spirit in the division, was mentioned in conversations with MajGen Keys. The second effect is noted in the order itself. The third effect is mentioned in Palm intvw.
51. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, 29Jan91 and 30Jan91.
52. CG 2d MarDiv msg to Col Schreiber dtd 28Jan91 (0800).
53. Holcomb intvw.
54. Mroczkowski Jnl, 1Feb91 and 6Feb91.
55. Brennan intvw, 13Apr91.
56. Lange intvw, 23May91.
57. CG 2d MarDiv, "Operation Desert Storm," FragO 14-91, dtd 11Feb91.
58. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 001, op.cit.
59. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 2-90, dtd 31Dec90.
60. Ibid.
61. CG 2d MarDiv, Letter of Instruction, "for the Conduct of Training on the Division Mechanized Assault Course," undated.
62. Swanstrom rpt.
63. 2d MarDiv SitRep #39, dtd 23Jan91.
64. Keys intvw.
65. Mroczkowski Jnl, 1-13 Feb 91.

Intelligence

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section was derived from the following sources: Mroczkowski Jnl; LtCol Howard P. Shores II, battlefield journal, hereafter Shores Jnl; oral history interview with LtCol Christopher J. Gregor, 11Apr91 (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Gregor intvw; personal conversation between the author and MajGen William M. Keys, 21Feb91, hereafter Keys intvw.

66. Gregor intvw.
67. G-2 2d MarDiv, *Saudi Arabia Handbook*, Second Edition (Camp Lejeune, N.C., n.d.)
68. United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, *How They Fight: Desert Shield Order of Battle Handbook* (Sep90), p. 43.
69. Shores Jnl.
70. Mroczkowski Jnl, 14 and 19Feb91.
71. Map showing the Iraqi Order of Battle Dispositions as of 24Feb91, translated from a captured Iraqi overlay by the G-2, 2d MarDiv.
72. Mroczkowski Jnl, 18, 19Feb91.
73. Ibid., 14, 18, and 19Feb91.
74. Keys intvw.

The First Skirmish

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section was derived from: Mroczkowski Jnl, and the 2d Marine Division COC Watch Officer's Journal, hereafter 2d MarDiv COC Jnl.

75. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2110) 29Jan91.
76. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
77. CG 2d MarDiv msg to CG IMEF FWD, "Ground OPSUM/Sequence of Events 29-30Jan91," dtd 301259 Jan91.
78. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
79. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2316) 29Jan91.
80. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
81. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2341) 29Jan91.
82. Ibid., (2356) 29Jan91.
83. CG 2d MarDiv msg to CG I MEF FWD, "Ground OPSUM/sequence of Events 29-30 Jan91," dtd 301259 Jan91.
84. Ibid; also Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
85. Ibid.
86. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0220) 30Jan91.
87. Ibid.
88. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
89. CG 2d MarDiv msg to CG I MEF FWD, "Ground OPSUM/Sequence of Events 29-30Jan91," dtd 301259 Jan91.
90. CG 2d MarDiv FragO 8-91, "Operation Desert Shield," (sic) dtd 30Jan91.
91. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
92. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2032) 30Jan91.
93. Mroczkowski Jnl, 30Jan91.
94. Ibid.

Development of the Operations Plan

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: Mroczkowski Jnl; LtCol Shores battlefield journal, hereafter Shores Jnl; oral history interview with MajGen William M. Keys, 16May91, (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Keys intvw; telephone conversations with the author, LtCol Michael D. Cavallaro, 11Oct91, and LtCol Robert L. Williams, 16Dec91, hereafter Cavallaro telcon and Williams telcon; LtCol L. S. Asadoorian, "Division Fire Plan For Offensive Operations, 24Feb91," memorandum dtd 28Mar91, hereafter Asadoorian memo; LtCol Mark Swanstrom, "2d Marine Division Breach Operations During Desert Storm," undated engineer report, hereafter Swanstrom rpt.

95. CG USMarCent, "Operation Plan Desert Storm," 1Jan91.

96. CG 2d MarDiv, "Letter of Instruction, for the Conduct of Training on the Division Mechznized Assault Course," undated.
97. Keys intvi.
98. Ibid.
99. Shores Jnl.
100. Mroczkowski Jnl, 1Feb91.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., 2Feb91.
104. Ibid.
105. Swanstromi rpt.
106. Mroczkowski Jnl, 3Feb91.
107. Cavallaro telcon.
108. Williams telcon.
109. Mroczkowski Jnl, 3Feb91.
110. Swanstrom rpt.
111. Winston S. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance, The Second World War*, vol. III (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), pp. 557-558.
112. Mroczkowski Jnl, 3Feb91.
113. Asadoorian memo.
114. Keys intvw.

The Start of Offensive Operations

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: oral history interviews with LtCol Ray C. Dawson, 26Mar91, LtCol Keith T. Holcomb, 17May91, LtCol Scott W. McKenzie, 9Apr91, and Col Leslie M. Palm, 2Apr91 (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Dawson intvw, Holcomb intvw, McKenzie intvw, and Palm intvw; LtCol Mark Swanstrom personal conversation with the author 29May91, hereafter Swanstrom percon; the 2d Marine Division COC Watch Officer's Journal, hereafter 2d MarDiv COC Jnl; LtCol Mark Swanstrom, "2d Marine Division Breach Operations During Operation Desert Storm," undated engineer report, hereafter Swanstrom rpt.

115. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2130) 17Feb91.
116. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 15-91.
117. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (1154) 18Feb91.
118. McKenzie intvw.
119. McKenzie telcon.
120. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0345) 20Feb91.
121. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Sergeant William D. Bates; Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Corporal Michael

- D. Cooke; Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Lance Corporal William E. Owens.
122. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0124) 22Feb91.
123. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 16-91, "to 2d MarDiv OPlan (Desert Storm)", dtd 20Feb91.
124. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (1140) 21Feb91.
125. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Capt Dennis M. Greene.
126. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, 21 to 23Feb91.
127. Holcomb intvw.
128. Ibid.
129. Palm intvw.
130. LtCol Mroczkowski, division historian, accompanied this group of officers on this reconnaissance, and made the observations noted in this paragraph.
131. Swanstrom rpt; also Swanstrom percon.
132. CG 2d MarDiv, FragO 16-91, "to 2d MarDiv OPlan (Desert Storm)", dtd 20Feb91.
133. Dawson intvw.
134. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, 22 and 23Feb91.
135. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Capt Martin T. Wolf.

Into Kuwait: G Minus 1 through G Plus 1

Unless otherwise indicated, the material in this section was derived from the following sources: 2d Marine Division COC Watch Officer's Journal, hereafter 2d MarDiv COC Jnl; 2d Marine Division Situation Reports, hereafter 2d MarDiv SitRep with number and date; Mroczkowski Jnl; LtCol Dennis P. Mroczkowski battlefield voice recording made 23 - 27 Feb 91, hereafter Mroczkowski rec; oral history interviews with LtCol Kevin A. Conry, 29Mar91, LtCol Ray C. Dawson, 26Mar91, LtCol Bruce A. Gombar, 6Apr91, MajGen William M. Keys, 16May91, Col Lawrence H. Livingston, 10Mar91, Col Leslie M. Palm, 2Apr91, Col Ronald G. Richard, 8May91, Col Larry S. Schmidt, 28Mar91, and Maj Jack K. Sparks, Jr., 10Mar91 (OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Conry intvw, Dawson intvw, Gombar intvw, Keys intvw, Livingston intvw, Palm intvw, Richard intvw, Schmidt intvw, and Sparks intvw; telephone conversations between the author and CWO3 Thomas C. Ashley, 12Nov91, Col Roger C. McElraft, 6Jun91, LtCol Ottavio J. Milano, 7May92, and LtCol Mark E. Swanstrom, 20Jun91, hereafter Ashley telcon, McElraft telcon, Milano telcon, and Swanstrom telcon; personal conversation between the author and LtCol James R. Battaglini, 20May91, hereafter Battaglini intvw; LtCol L. S. Asadoorian memorandum "Division Fire Plan for Offensive Operations, 24Feb91," dtd 28Mar91, hereafter Asadoorian memo; Capt Alvester T. Coleman, U.S. Army, "Psychological Operations in Support of the 2d Marine Division," undated report, hereafter Coleman rpt; Swanstrom rpt; Col John B.

Sylvester, U.S. Army, "Actions of the 1st (Tiger) Brigade, 2nd Armored Division, during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm 10 Aug 90-1 Mar 91," undated after action report, hereafter 1-2AD AAR; Maj John R. Viviano, undated after action report, hereafter Viviano rpt.

136. CG 2d MarDiv FragO 16-91, "to 2d MarDiv OPlan (Desert Storm)," dtd 20Feb91.
137. Mroczkowski Jnl, 19Feb91.
138. 2d MarDiv SitRep #71, dtd 24Feb91.
139. Mroczkowski rec.
140. Ibid.
141. Asadoorian memo.
142. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0530) 24Feb91.
143. Sparks intvw.
144. Coleman rpt.
145. Viviano rpt.
146. Mroczkowski rec.
147. Swanstrom rpt.
148. Ibid.
149. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Gunnery Sergeant Mark J. Culp.
150. Mroczkowski rec.
151. Ashley telcon.
152. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0724) 24Feb91.
153. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to First Lieutenant Phillip W. Chandler.
154. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0745) 24Feb91.
155. Keys intvw.
156. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0850) 24Feb91.
157. Milano telcon.
158. Richard intvw.
159. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Corporal George J. Morgan; Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Lance Corporal Gerald Randolph.
160. Winchester intvw.
161. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the award of the Bronze Star Medal to Sergeant William J. Warren.
162. 2d MarDiv, COC Jnl, (1020) 24Feb91.
163. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Gunnery Sergeant John D. Cornwell.
164. Livingston intvw.
165. 2d MarDiv, COC Jnl, (1250, 1410) 24Feb91; Mroczkowski rec.
166. Keys intvw.
167. Mroczkowski rec.
168. Richard intvw.

169. Swanstrom telcon.
170. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2359) 24Feb91.
171. 2d MarDiv SitRep #72, dtd 25 Feb 91.
172. CG 2d MarDiv FragO 16-91 "to 2d MarDiv OPlan (Desert Storm)," 20Feb91.
173. 2d MarDiv SitRep #72, dtd 25Feb91.
174. Livingston intvw.
175. Sparks intvw.
176. 1-2AD AAR.
177. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0620) 25Feb91; Gombar intvw.
178. Summary of Action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Sergeant Scott A. Dotson.
179. Gombar telcon.
180. Richard intvw.
181. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0740) 25Feb91.
182. Battaglini intvw.
183. Schmidt intvw.
184. Livingston intvw.
185. Palm intvw.
186. Battaglini intvw.
187. Palm intvw.
188. Battaglini intvw. Both the Commanding General of I MEF and the MEF ACoS, G-3, were with the 2d Marine Division when the request was made for the boundary change. Verbal approval was given.
189. Holcomb intvw.
190. Battaglini intvw.
191. Livingston intvw.
192. Summary of action for the Recommendation for the Award of the Bronze Star Medal to Chief Warrant Officer-2 Charles D. Paxton.
193. Livingston intvw.
194. Sparks intvw.
195. Conry intvw; Gombar intvw; Dawson intvw.
196. 1-2AD AAR.
197. Keys intvw.
198. McElraft telcon.
198. Mroczkowski rec.

G Plus 2 to the Cessation of Hostilities

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section was derived from the following sources: 2d Marine Division COC Watch Officer's Journal, hereafter 2d MarDiv COC Jnl; Mroczkowski Jnl; oral history interviews with LtCol Kevin A. Conry, 29Mar91, LtCol Bruce A. Gombar, LtCol Keith T. Holcomb, 17May91, MajGen William M. Keys, 16May91, Col Lawrence H. Livingston, 10Mar91, Col Ronald G. Richard, 8May91, Maj Jack K. Sparks, Jr., 10Mar91

(OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Conry intvw, Gombar intvw, Holcomb intvw, Keys intvw, Livingston intvw, Richard intvw, Sparks intvw; telephone conversations between the author and LtCol Bruce A. Gombar, 26Jun91, Maj Michael J. O'Mahoney, 7Jan92, Col Larry S. Schmidt, 16Dec91, hereafter Gombar telcon, O'Mahoney telcon, and Schmidt telcon; telephone conversation with BGen Russell L. Sutton, 17Dec92; Col John B. Sylvester, U.S. Army, "Actions Of The 1st (Tiger) Brigade, 2d Armored Division, During Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm 10 Aug 90-1 Mar 91," undated after action report, hereafter 1-2AD AAR; Command Chronologies for the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, 1-28 Feb 91, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, 1 Feb-1 Mar 91, and the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, 1-28 Feb 91 (MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter 1/8 ComdC, 2/4 ComdC, 3/23 ComdC.

200. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, 26Feb91.
201. Gombar telcon.
202. Gombar intvw.
203. Gombar telcon.
204. Holcomb intvw.
205. Battaglini intvw; also Gombar intvw.
206. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (0245) 26Feb91.
207. Keys intvw.
208. Richard intvw.
209. Mroczkowski Jnl, 27Feb91.
210. Ibid.
211. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (1200) 26Feb91.
212. 1-2AD AAR.
213. Ibid.
214. Ibid.
215. Ibid.
216. Ibid.; Tystadt intvw.
217. Ibid.
218. Ibid.
219. The Koran: 28; 83-84.
220. Sparks intvw.
221. Livingston intvw.
222. Sparks intvw.
223. Conry intvw.
224. 1/8 ComdC.
225. 3/23 ComdC.
226. Livingston intvw.
227. 2d MarDiv COC Jnl, (2250, 2330) 26Feb91 and (0450, 0555, 0720) 27Feb91.
228. 2/4 ComdC.
229. 3/23 ComdC.
230. Ibid.
231. Mroczkowski Jnl, 27 and 28 Feb 91.

Appendix A

Command and Staff List

Commanding General

Major General William M. Keys
Assistant Division Commander
Brigadier General Russell L. Sutton

6th Marines

Colonel Lawrence H. Livingston
1st Battalion, 6th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Tom S. Jones
2d Battalion, 2d Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Brian M. Youngs
3d Battalion, 6th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Fields

8th Marines

Colonel Larry S. Schmidt
1st Battalion, 8th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Bruce A. Gombar
2d Battalion, 4th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Kevin A. Conry
3d Battalion, 23d Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Ray C. Dawson

10th Marines

Colonel Leslie M. Palm
2d Battalion, 10th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Joseph R. Stewart
2d Battalion, 12th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Swords
3d Battalion, 10th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Phillip E. Hughes
5th Battalion, 10th Marines
Lieutenant Colonel Andrew F. Mazzara

1st Brigade (Tiger Brigade), 2d Armored Division

Colonel John B. Sylvester, USA
1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment
Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Johnson, USA
3d Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment
Lieutenant Colonel Douglas L. Tystad, USA
3d Battalion, 41st Mechanized Infantry Regiment
Lieutenant Colonel Walter Wojdakowski, USA

1st Battalion, 3d Field Artillery

Lieutenant Colonel James R. Kerin, USA

502d Forward Support Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Coy R. Scroggins, USA

142d Signal Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Henry C. Cobb, Jr., USA

Battery A, 92d Field Artillery (MLRS)

Captain Edward L. Hughes, USA

Company A, 17th Engineers

Captain Craig Wells, USA

Company B, 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery

Captain Charles D. Watt, USA

Headquarters Battalion, 2d Marine Division

Colonel Roger C. McElraft

2d Assault Amphibian Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Williams

2d Combat Engineer Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel John D. Winchester

2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Keith T. Holcomb

2d Reconnaissance Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Scott W. McKenzie

2d Tank Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Cesare Cardi

8th Tank Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Cavallaro

GENERAL STAFF*Chief of Staff*

Colonel James K. Van Riper

Staff Secretary

Major David L. Kidwell

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1

Lieutenant Colonel Mary K. Lowery

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Gregor

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

Colonel Ronald G. Richard

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4

Colonel Morris O. Fletcher

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6

Colonel Sepp D. Ramsperger

Division Sergeant Major

Sergeant Major Ronald A. Chamberlain

Appendix B

Task Organization, 2d Marine Division

6th Marines

- 1st Battalion, 6th Marines
 - Company C, 8th Tank Battalion
 - Company B, 1st Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 2d Battalion, 2d Marines
 - Company A, 8th Tank Battalion
 - Company B, 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 3d Battalion, 6th Marines
- 8th Tank Battalion

8th Marines

- 1st Battalion, 8th Marines
 - Company B, 4th Tank Battalion
 - Company C, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion
 - Company D, 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 2d Battalion, 4th Marines
 - Company C, 4th Tank Battalion
 - Company B, 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion
- 3d Battalion, 23d Marines

1st Brigade (The Tiger Brigade), 2d Armored Division

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2d Reconnaissance Battalion

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Task Force Vega

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Detachment, 2d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion

Appendix C

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAV--Assault Amphibious Vehicle. The AAV7A1, an armored personnel carrier used by the U.S. Marine Corps in a variety of configurations. The AAVs of the 2d AAV Battalion provided mechanized lift to the 6th and 8th Marines and other units of the 2d Marine Division.

ACE--1) Aviation Combat Element. One of the elements of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. See MEF, below 2) Armored Combat Earthmover. An armored bulldozer used by the 2d Marine Division's combat engineers.

APC--Armored Personnel Carrier. Lightly armored and armed vehicles designed to transport troops on the battlefield and provide them some protection from small-arms fire and shell fragments. The types of APCs used in the 2d Marine Division were the AAV, the BFV, and the LAV. The frequently encountered APCs of the Iraqi Army were the Soviet-made BMP and the BRDM.

ArCent--United States Army Central Command, a component of CentCom.

ATF--Amphibious Task Force. During the Persian Gulf War the threat of a landing near Kuwait City by a Marine ATF forced the Iraqi Army to heavily defend the shoreline.

AVLB--Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge.

BFV--Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The M2A1 or M2A2 Infantry Fighting Vehicle, an armored personnel carrier used by the U.S. Army. In the 2d Marine Division these vehicles belonged to the 3d Battalion, 41st Infantry, the Tiger Brigade's mechanized infantry battalion.

BMP--A Soviet-manufactured infantry fighting vehicle used by the Iraqi Army. This APC had a crew of three, and carried either seven or eight soldiers, depending upon the model.

BRDM--A Soviet-manufactured amphibious scout car used by the Iraqi Army.

CentCom--U.S. Forces Central Command. The U.S. joint force headquarters in whose area of responsibility were Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Subordinate to CentCom were ArCent, MarCent, and ComNavCent.

COC--Combat Operations Center. That portion of a unit's headquarters used exclusively for the conduct of a campaign or the fighting of a battle.

ComUSNavCent--United States Naval Forces Central Command, a component of CentCom.

CP--Command Post.

DMAC--Division Mechanized Assault Course. This was the specially constructed course in Saudi Arabia on which the division's elements practiced techniques of assaulting and breaching the Iraqi defensive lines.

DPICM--Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions. An artillery round designed to be effective against both troops and hardened targets.

EPAC--Eastern Province Area Command. The Saudi Arabian Army command bordering on the east of MarCent.

EPW--Enemy Prisoner of War. This designation was used to differentiate enemy prisoners from friendly troops captured by the enemy.

Frag--A "fragmentary order," one containing only the essential information to ensure proper fulfillment of the mission. Its short form allows quicker preparation and faster dissemination. It can be delivered verbally or in writing.

FSCC--Fire Support Coordination Center.

GCE--Ground Combat Element. See MEF, below.

GPS--Global Positioning System. A satellite navigation system providing highly accurate, continuous three-dimensional positioning for a using unit. This system allowed U.S. forces to maneuver quickly across the featureless desert terrain.

H₂S--Hydrogen Sulfide Gas. A highly toxic gas often present in oil fields.

HEMTT--Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck. Generically a truck family, used to carry large-capacity loads at highway speeds with excellent overland mobility. Key materiel for the deployment of large armored forces.

HMMWV--High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle. Made in a variety of configurations, these vehicles have replaced the "jeep." They carry troops and light cargo, and can be armed with TOW missiles or machine guns.

JFCN--Joint Forces Command North. The joint command for the Arab Coalition forces operating on the 2d Marine Division's western boundary.

KIA--Killed In Action

LAAD--Low Altitude Air Defense. A LAAD Battalion is a part of each Marine Aircraft Wing. LAAD teams, armed with Stinger missiles, are assigned to ground units to provide them close-in defense against air attack.

LAI--Light Armored Infantry.

LAN--Computer system's Local Area Network.

LAV--Light Armored Vehicle. An armored personnel carrier used by the 2d LAI Battalion.

LD--Line of Departure. A control measure. Troops are considered to be in the attack once they have crossed the LD.

LREOS--Long Range Electrical Optical System. A telescope system of enhanced magnification and clarity, used by Marines of the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion.

MarCent--United States Marine Forces Central Command, a component of CentCom.

MCAS--Marine Corps Air Station.

MCB--Marine Corps Base.

MCLC--Mine Clearing Line Charge.

MEB--Marine Expeditionary Brigade. A Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) normally structured around a regiment as its GCE. See MEF, below.

MEF--Marine Expeditionary Force. The largest deployable Marine formation, capable of up to 60 days of self-sustained combat. Like all Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), it is composed of a Command Element (CE), a Ground Combat Element (GCE), an Aviation Combat Element(ACE), and a Combat Service Support Element (CSSE). The GCE of a MEF is normally a division, although it can be composed of two divisions. During Operation Desert Storm, I MEF had such a two-division structure for its GCE.

MEU--Marine Expeditionary Unit. The smallest Marine Air Ground Task Force normally structured around a battalion as its GCE. See MEF, above.

MLRS--Multiple Launch Rocket System. A field artillery weapon system of the U.S. Army, capable of firing 12 227mm rockets. It is a highly mobile automatic rocket system designed to engage massed enemy formations and area targets. Battery A, 92d Field Artillery, an MLRS battery, was a part of the Tiger Brigade, and provided fire support to the 2d Marine Division.

MOPP--Mission Oriented Protective Posture. Protective equipment for chemical attack consists of a suit made of charcoal-activated cloth, overboots, gloves, and a gas mask with hood. There are four MOPP levels, depending upon the threat of a chemical attack, and each prescribes which items are to be worn. Level 1 consists of wearing the suit (trousers and jacket) and carrying the boots, gloves, and mask with hood. Level 2 adds the overboots to be worn, with the gloves and mask with hood still carried. At level 3 the mask with hood is worn. Level 4 requires the wearing of the entire outfit, including the gloves.

MPS--Maritime Prepositioning Squadron. A Marine Corps concept under which ships have been preloaded with combat equipment and supplies and then forward deployed. There are three squadrons of such ships, each squadron being capable of providing enough supplies for a MEB to sustain itself for 30 days.

MULE--Modular Universal Laser Equipment. A man-portable target designator and rangefinder, often used by forward observer and reconnaissance teams.

NBC--Nuclear, Biological and Chemical. A term used to refer collectively to such weapons and agents, and to protective measures.

PL--Phase Line. A control measure, used to coordinate the advance or movement of subordinate units.

PLRS--Position Location Reporting System. This UHF radio network provides precise position locations of subordinate units. The system consists of a master unit with a visual display, and user units which can be manpacked or mounted in vehicles. The master unit continuously updates the location of each user unit.

RAP--Rocket Assisted Projectile. A special munition which increases the range of the M198 155MM howitzer to 30,000 meters.

RAS--Rear Area Security. A term to describe those actions by which a unit will defend its rear areas from possible attack.

RPG--Rocket Propelled Grenade. A portable rocket launcher, firing an 85mm projectile. The RPG is a close-in anti-armor weapon, capable of penetrating 330mm of armor.

SRIG--Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Intelligence Group.

SWATG--Southwest Asia Training Group. A specially constituted group of officers and enlisted Marines from the II MEF Wargaming Center. This group had the mission of providing specific training for the units of the 2d Marine Division and for the mobilized reservists arriving at Camp Lejeune. Later, some members of the SWATG arrived in Saudi Arabia to prepare the division's reservists for demobilization.

TAOR--Tactical Area of Responsibility. A TAOR is established as a specific area on the ground. A commander assigned a TAOR is responsible for the control, conduct, and coordination of all activities within its boundaries.

TEWT--Tactical Exercise Without Troops.

TOW--Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided missile. An anti-tank missile which can be used by infantrymen, or mounted on vehicles such as the LAV, the BFV, or the HMMWV.

TWMP--Track Width Mine Plow. A mine-clearing plow designed to be placed on the front of a tank, and which will clear a lane the width of the vehicle.

TWSEAS--Tactical Warfare Simulation Evaluation Analysis System. A computer simulation system which can exercise a unit's command post in a variety of scenarios.

WIA--Wounded In Action.

Appendix D

Chronology

1990

2 August--Kuwait is invaded by the army of Iraq.

6 August--The United Nations authorizes economic sanctions against Iraq.

7 August--Operation Desert Shield begins. President Bush orders the first deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to the Persian Gulf.

17 August--The 4th MEB deploys to the Persian Gulf.

8 November--President Bush authorizes additional deployments of troops to the Persian Gulf region.

14 November--The Secretary of Defense grants the Marine Corps the authority to call up 15,000 Reservists.

18 November--The 2d Marine Division receives orders to deploy to the Kuwait Theater of Operations.

26 November--The first increments of mobilized Reservists arrive at Camp Lejeune.

29 November--U.N. Security Council Resolution 678 authorizes the use of "all necessary means" to get Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait if they have not done so by 15 January 1991.

4 December--The 2d Marine Division's advance party departs for Saudi Arabia.

6 December--The advance party arrives at the port of Al Jubayl and begins the offload of MPS-1 ships.

10 December--The 2d Marine Division participates with other II MEF elements in a review at Camp Lejeune.

12 December--The main body of the division begins its movement to Saudi Arabia.

14 December--Major General William M. Keys, commanding general of the 2d Marine Division, arrives in Saudi Arabia.

25 December--The 2d Marine Division issues its first order of Operation Desert Shield.

27 December--The division's forward CP makes its first displacement forward.

1991

6 January--Brigadier General Russell L. Sutton joins the division as the assistant division commander.

10 January--The 1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division (the Tiger Brigade) reports to the 2d Marine Division from ArCent.

12 January--Congress approves the President's use of military force against Iraq.

14 January--The division forward CP arrives in the vicinity of Al Kibrit.

15 January--The U.N. deadline for the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait passes.

16 January--U.S. and coalition forces launch air attacks against Iraqi positions in Iraq and Kuwait.

17 January--The last of the division's units, the 2d Tank Battalion, completes its offload of equipment at Al Jubayl and moves forward to join the division.

22 January--A major sand-table exercise is held for I MEF. At this exercise Major General Keys and the division staff become concerned about the concept of operations and begin to seek another site for the 2d Marine Division to conduct a separate breach of the Iraqi defensive lines.

27 January--The 2d Marine Division conducts its first offensive operations with an artillery raid against Iraqi positions.

29 January--Iraqi attacks are made at various points along the Kuwaiti border. The 2d LAI Battalion is engaged along the area of the berm, close to the border, within the division's zone. In this first direct engagement with the enemy, Corporal Edmond Willis III of Company A destroys the first Iraqi tank for the division. Elements of the "Tiger" Brigade are moved forward to protect the Direct Support Group.

30 January--Iraqi probes continue along the border. Elements of the 6th Marines are moved to block any attacks in the division zone.

1 February--General Keys briefs General Boomer on the concept of separate breaches by both the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions. General Boomer gives an oral warning order to prepare the plan.

12 February--The division begins its move to Al Khanjar, its final location prior to the start of the ground campaign.

13 February--The division holds a major sand-table exercise, including a full-scale rehearsal of the 6th Marines' assault of the Iraqi defensive lines.

17 February--Reconnaissance teams move to insertion points along the berm. The berm is inspected by 2d Marine Division officers; cut points and assembly areas are selected.

18 February--Reconnaissance teams cross into Kuwait to conduct reconnaissance of Iraqi minefields and obstacles and to identify any gaps and weaknesses.

19 February--The division completes its move to Al Khanjar.

20 February--The 2d Combat Engineer Battalion begins to make cuts through the berm.

21 February--The 2d LAI Battalion begins screening the division's front, forward to the berm, in Kuwait; the battalion draws the enemy's attention away from the actual breach site.

22 February--The 2d Combat Engineer Battalion finishes the cuts through the berm. The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, moves into Kuwait to provide security for artillery surveying parties.

23 February--Four of the division's artillery battalions move into Kuwait to provide responsive fire support for the division's assault.

24 February--The 6th Marines, with attached combat engineers, assaults the Iraqi defensive lines. Six breach lanes are successfully made through the minefields. By the end of the day, most of the division's combat power has crossed through the minefields, and is consolidated along Phase Line Red.

25 February--An Iraqi armored counterattack hits the right flank of the division, but is defeated. The remainder of the division's units cross through the breach lanes. The division assaults and secures its first objective, fighting through the "Ice Cube" and the "Ice Tray."

26 February--Another counterattack is defeated on the division's right flank. Iraqi units are reported to be withdrawing from Al Kuwait. The Tiger Brigade, 6th Marines, and 8th Marines attack to their final division objectives on the outskirts of Al Jahrah and Al Kuwait.

27 February--Arab forces of the Joint Forces Command North pass along the division's front and participate in the liberation of Al Kuwait. The division

consolidates its positions outside of Al Jahrah and Al Kuwait, and clears the last pockets of Iraqi resistance.

28 February--Ceasefire is ordered for 0800. Division units remain in position.

23 March--The Tiger Brigade returns to the operational control of ArCent.

30 March--The division main CP displaces to Saudi Arabia. The 8th Marines (minus) remains in Kuwait under the operational control of Marine Forces Southwest Asia.

Mid-April to mid-May--Division units return to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

8 June--The division participates in the national victory parade in Washington, D.C.

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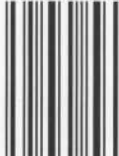
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The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued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

