

Infantry Regiment (3/41 INF), 2nd Armor Division (2AD), seized the AL-Multa police post overlooking the Basra highway on 26 February 1991. For seven hours the platoon was involved in intense and close order combat in urban terrain on the outskirts of Kuwait City. At the conclusion of this battle, after action reports credited the platoon with destroying several Iraqi vehicles, capturing forty Iraqi Infantrymen, and killing thirty, while sustaining no friendly casualties (Phillips 137). The success enjoyed that day was the culmination of tough realistic training conducted both at home-station and in-country, outstanding leadership at the squad and fire team level, and individual soldiers acting decisively in support of the commander's intent. Although, the road to the "Highway of Death¹" was littered with numerous lessons learned; the brevity of this paper allows for a highlight of the major lessons learned during deployment, and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The lessons learned are recorded from the observations of the 3rd PLT Leader, 2LT Daniel S. Stempniak.

While the Iraqi Army was invading Kuwait on 2 August 1990, 3rd Platoon was completing a company team live fire on Clabber Creek multi-use range at Fort Hood, Texas. Even though the 1st Brigade of 2AD was deactivating in November of 1990, the unit was scheduled to complete one last rotation to the National Training Center (NTC) in September. The live fire conducted that day was part of an intense NTC train-up which had begun six months earlier.

The only mechanized infantry battalion in the brigade, 3/41 INF had conducted extensive field training during the year preceding deployment to Saudi Arabia. The battalion had completed a rotation to the NTC in October of 1989. The current NTC train-up had begun with squad live fire exercises in February 1990. This training event was followed by a company field training exercise (FTX), expert infantryman's badge training (EIB), and a Bradley fighting vehicle (BFV) live fire exercise (Gunnery) in May of 1990 (Kershaw 2).

In June the train-up switched into high gear as the task force (TF) leaders down to platoon leader level conducted a nine day tactical exercise without troops (TEWT) at Fort Irwin. At the conclusion of this TEWT the brigade deployed to the field for the final maneuver portion of the train-up. The NTC train-up dubbed "Hell's Forge 90" consisted of a company movement to contact fire coordination exercise (FCX), a company movement to contact situational training exercise (STX), a company defense STX, a battalion STX; consisting of a TF breach, a night attack, defense, movement to contact, and a deliberate decontamination (Kershaw 3).

When notification for deployment occurred on 13 August 1990 the leaders and soldiers of the brigade were confident in our tactical abilities. While the operations tempo (OPTEMPO) of the last year had forged a unit that was well trained, the division's low priority for class IX repair parts had left a combat fleet of M1s and M2s that desperately required an extended and well resourced maintenance program.

The M1 and M2 fleet of the brigade was exhausted by the combination of intense and protracted field training and lack of repair parts. The vehicles were unreliable and suffered from constant and reoccurring mechanic failures. It was not uncommon during field problems to have attached tank platoons down to one operational tank, and the Bradley platoons down to 50 percent operational readiness (OR) rates. These statistics were not indications of poor maintenance programs but rather the lack of repair parts and the low fielding and maintenance funding priority of 2AD in the United States Army. Compounding the lack of repair parts was the fact that the battalion's vehicles were some of the oldest Bradleys in the army. C Company was the proud owner of the 10th Bradley built; in 3rd Platoon none of the Bradley serial numbers exceeded 72. The age of the vehicles compounded by the high OPTEMPO and lack of repair parts had a devastating effect on the readiness of the battalion.

While the quality of the vehicles was a negative aspect of being in a brigade scheduled for deactivation, there was one benefit. As sister infantry battalions in the division

deactivated, soldiers who were not eligible for a permanent change of station (PCS) were assigned to 3/41 INF. My arrival in June put the officer personnel status at 100 percent. The summer months before the rotation my platoon strength reached forty-one personnel. The authorized strength of a Bradley platoon was only thirty-two. Deployment dictated that we deploy at modified table of equipment (MTOE) authorized strength. The wealth of personnel allowed many of us at the platoon level to be selective as we finalized our battle rosters.

Guidance issued stated that the "Tiger Brigade" would deploy as the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (1CD). Preparation for deployment was an intense and demanding process designed to prepare equipment and personnel for overseas movement. The original deployment schedule called for the division to be in-country by the end of September. Attempting to meet this optimistic timeline required that the average work day last from 0600-2300. This initial deployment schedule was delayed by nearly a month as transports were marshalled to concurrently move the 24th Infantry Division (24ID), 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3ACR), the 1CD, 197th Separate Infantry Brigade and the 1st Marine Division. The fact that the last time an armor division had deployed overseas from the continental United States (CONUS) was during World War II, may explain why the initial deployment schedule was delayed by nearly a month.

As sealift assets were marshalled the brigade entered the age of force projection. The first month of the deployment concentrated on bringing the battalion's vehicles to 10/20 standards. Concurrent with maintenance, load plans were established, revised and finalized. Vehicles would deploy with a basic load of class V and class III package products, and assorted pieces of company equipment. Lastly, the vehicles were converted from the woodland camouflage pattern to the desert camouflage pattern. On 9 September 1990 time ran out; tracked vehicles were marshalled and rail-loaded. Shortly afterward wheeled vehicles convoyed to the port of embarkation.

Concurrent with preparing the equipment for overseas movement, individual training was intensified. Every soldier qualified on his individual weapon, zone II was drawn and issued, personnel overseas movement (POM) packets were updated, personally owned vehicles (POVs) were secured, and all property was cleared out of the billets and office space.

On 9 October 1990 the company boarded aircraft at Robert Grey Army Airfield for the flight to Ad Damman Port, Saudi Arabia. The thirty-six-hour flight to Saudi Arabia provided ample time to reflect on lessons learned. The most profound lessons learned during the deployment were:

1. Always train as if war is imminent. The ever changing world situation does not always conform to the plans of the nation or defense department. A unit scheduled for deactivation on Monday, may be deployed to fight in a potential conflict on Tuesday. Demanding, realistic and challenging training will inspire confidence in leaders and soldiers. This confidence will allow soldiers and leaders to be versatile and innovative, and thus overcome the limitations of their equipment. Hell's Forge had taught us to use our vehicles to their utmost capabilities, soldiers and leaders preserved and succeeded inspite of being fielded with substandard equipment.

2. Deployability is a task on the mission essential task list (METL) that must be trained as tenaciously as "conduct a deliberate attack". In the mechanized arena deployment training must include equipment being fully uploaded and sent by railhead and/or sea to another destination where it is downloaded and used for training. Movement of personnel and limited equipment to one of the combined training centers (CTC) or to a Reforger or similar exercise is neither adequate, sufficient nor realistic deployability training for heavy forces.

3. It makes absolutely no sense to have units equipped with substandard equipment. Equipment becomes substandard when units are required to operate under adverse fiscal or time constraints. Such constraints led to substandard maintenance programs that are

crippled by OPTEMPO and part shortages. It is wrong for units to succeed in the field not because of their equipment but inspite of it. It borders on being criminal to send these units to a potential conflict and expect them to fight with such equipment. When this situation develops an acceptable balance must be found between the resources allocated to training and maintenance. If necessary, units must be deactivated so that the remaining forces can be equipped, and maintained at an acceptable level of readiness. (Readiness equating to training and deployability).

For approximately two weeks 3rd Platoon's home in Saudi Arabia would be warehouse #18 in Ad Damman Port. The first week in port concentrated on acclimatization to the Saudi environment. Five days passed before the ships carrying our equipment were allowed access to a berth. Physical and psychological adjustment was the focus of training while the platoon awaited the arrival of its equipment. To assist in the physical adjustment, physical training was conducted every morning. Only salt water was provided for personal hygiene. Soldiers shaved, showered and brushed their teeth in wooden stalls that used salt water. The hardest physical challenge of the week was adjusting to the heat and the nine-hour time difference.

The greatest mental challenge of the week was the transition to a war time mindset. The Army assisted the psychological adjustment by unloading 750 lb bombs from barges less than 100 feet away from the platoon's sleeping area; this went on 24 hours a day for the entire two weeks spent in port. The battalion strove to transition the soldiers by requiring soldiers to carry masks and weapons at all times. Unfortunately, no ammunition was issued to individual soldiers. This fact hampered a complete mental transition to a war time mindset. Many soldiers interpreted the lack of live ammunition as meaning that the threat level was low. The issuing of live ammunition has a direct and profound effect on soldiers. Live rounds instinctively cause junior leaders and soldiers to become more serious about the situation they are thrust into.

Five days after arrival the ships containing our equipment were authorized access to the port. Their arrival began a detailed downloading process. When the vehicles were downloaded it was discovered that several vehicles had been broken into while being loaded onto ships by stevedores in Beaumont, Texas. None of the vehicles were vandalized and the majority of the thievery was petty and revolved around the theft of hand tools. Within three days the inventory of the 1750's was complete and more importantly, vehicles were reconfigured from the overseas shipment configuration with everything inside to the go to war configuration.

While the soldiers completed the final checks of the vehicles, the officers of the battalion conducted a reconnaissance of the proposed assembly area (AA); vicinity of Uriah Iryia. This AA, dubbed AA Stalwart was approximately 200 miles to the west of Ad Dammen. The battalion planned to occupy AA Stalwart in a 360 degree formation, with the combat trains located in the center of the battalion perimeter and companies located on the periphery. C Company was in a 180 degree formation with two platoons forward manning observation posts (OP) and the third platoon back in reserve. A rotation was established for platoons to rotate to different OP's and back to the reserve position. Tracked vehicles were moved to the AA by civilian heavy equipment transporters (HETS). The soldiers were moved by bus and our wheeled vehicles conducted a road march. C Company spent the better part of October, and all of November and December in static positions within AA Stalwart. The C Company AA was christened AA Graceland by the commander, CPT Michael Kershaw.

In AA Graceland, the soldiers acclimated themselves to desert living. Initially, there were few amenities in our desert lifestyle. Throughout October the only shelter from the sun was provided by camo-nets and vehicle tarps. Personal hygiene was a challenge, with no bathing facilities and toilet facilities limited to the standard cathole. Within days of being in the desert it became obvious to the battalion commander, LTC Walter Wojdakowski that the standard training day was impractical due to the heat of the desert.

With his guidance we went to a modified reverse cycle training day. At the company

level the standard training day was comprised of:

- 0530- Wake-up
- 0600-0630 Stand-to
- 0630-0700 Personal hygiene
- 0700-0800 Vehicle/weapon/mask maintenance
- 0800-0900 LOGPAC
- 0900-1100 Training
- 1100-1500 Rest
- 1500-1600-LOGPAC
- 1600-1800 Training
- 1800-1830 Stand-to

- 1830-2130 Night training

Mounted training was limited due to a 90 percent operational readiness (OR) rate imposed by division. The logistical system was not established and the availability of class IX repair parts was limited. With mounted training severely curtailed the battalion aggressively pursued squad and platoon level dismounted training. Training focused on the following: conducting manual breaches, clearing trenchlines, land navigation, movement in the desert, and reconnaissance and security (R/S) patrols. In addition to participating in dismounted training the crews focused on basic gunnery skills tasks (BGST), cross-training dismounts in BGST tasks, and vehicle identification. Command emphasis was placed on cross-training dismounts in BGST, dismounted navigation and manual breaching.

Throughout November the standard of living and the level and complexity of the training improved as the battalion established itself in the AA. By the second week of November platoons were living in tents, which provided protection from the coming wet season. Wooden shower stalls and a wooden four-hole outhouse were issued to each company. Soldiers were able to conduct personal hygiene in a more sanitary environment, but several soldiers still suffered from dysentery in mid-November. The dysentery was later traced back to contaminated food eaten at Ad Dammen port. The status of class V and class IX improved to the point that two platoon size mounted

training events were executed: platoon STX lane and a modified Bradley table VII. Dismounted training included long range reconnaissance patrols of the field trains, as well as extensive breaching and trench clearing training. The trench clearing techniques were practiced on a trench system built by the brigade's attached engineer battalion. Big morale boosters in November included the first chance to telephone stateside and a Thanksgiving meal. Thanksgiving dinner was the first meal consumed that wasn't a T-ration or meal, ready-to-eat(MRE)in two months.

The platoon STX consisted of AA operations, movement-to-contact, hasty attack, hasty defense, and a deliberate (night) attack. In order to maintain the division imposed 90 percent OR rate, companies were not authorized to conduct any mounted training other than that approved by the battalion. While the logistics system had become more responsive, mounted training was still extremely constrained. The platoon STX was the second mounted training event conducted during the first two months in Saudi Arabia. Crews were excited about this opportunity and had begun an intensified maintenance program two weeks prior to the event in anticipation of being able to conduct maneuver training. For 3rd Platoon unfortunately, the STX was a disheartening experience. At the conclusion of the platoon order, squad leaders were evaluated on their squad orders and then the platoon prepared for movement. As the dismounts boarded their tracks and the platoon began movement toward the line of departure three Bradley commanders (BC's) reported deadline deficiencies. A quick examination by mechanics revealed that these tracks would not be able to finish the exercise. With that prognosis the mounted portion of the STX was aborted and the platoon conducted the mission as a dismounted platoon. Maintenance had crippled us at a critical time. More than a chance to maneuver was lost that day; the soldiers confidence in the reliability of their equipment, was the greatest casualty of the training event.

On 23 December 1990 the battalion received a well deserved and much needed Christmas present: new M2A2s. On 20 December 1990 the M2s were placed on HETs

bound for Ad Dammen port. At the port the M2s were turned in and crews underwent a three day transition. By the 23rd the crews were enroute back to AA Graceland with new M2A2s. The 24th was spent road marching to Pegasus range; where on Christmas day, 3rd Platoon along with the rest of C Company conducted a modified BT VII. The modified BT VII was the culminating training event of the platoon's new equipment transition (NET) training. This training event instilled confidence in the new equipment, but more importantly it validated the proficiency of the crews.

On 1 January 1991 the brigade implemented task force organization and the company moved to 3/67 AR where it was to serve as the only mechanized company in TF 3-67. Upon arrival in our new AA, TF 3-67 implemented team organization. Second Platoon became part of Team (TM) A. Third Platoon A/3-67 AR under the leadership of 2LT Mac Duncan was attached to TM C. All task force and team organization was identical to the task force and team organization in effect during "Hell's Forge".

Maintaining a 90 percent OR rate with M2A2s was not nearly the challenge it had been with basic Bradleys. Several maneuver exercises were conducted two weeks after task organization both at company and battalion level. On 10 January 1991 the brigade conducted a brigade FTX which consisted of a refuel on the march(ROM), a movement to contact, an instride breach, a hasty attack, and a night attack enroute to an AA 75 KM to the north. The first night into this exercise 3rd Platoon was tasked to guard the division ammo holding area (AHA).

Division AHA guard was uneventful and lonely. Up to this point, AHA guard had been a company mission; however, the division was moving north and the majority of the ammunition stored in the yard was gone. The remaining ammunition was being transferred north as we guarded it. We kept ourselves busy by constructing triple stand concertina obstacles around the perimeter of the yard, and improving the guard post at the entrance to the guard. By the second day of the mission the company had maneuvered out of radio range to the north. With the company out of radio range a strong feeling of

isolation set in. The length of the tasking was not specified when the tasking was received and as the days passed the soldiers began to believe that they might sit the war out guarding multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) and copperhead rounds. The amenities of being in the divisional rear were a vast improvement over life in the line company, and while we felt isolated very few soldiers complained.

On the afternoon of the 15th CPT Kershaw drove up in a high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV), and told us to road march to rejoin the company that evening. While recovering class IV³ and loading the vehicles, one Bradley pivot steered in the soft sand and threw a track. This mistake cost the platoon about three hours of daylight. By 1600 we were able to begin the road march to rejoin the company. Twenty Kilometers into the march, C32 began to report a coolant problem. A quick inspection revealed that a coolant pipe had broken. This deficiency was later found to be a common design flaw in the M2A2, and all vehicles were modified in January. At this time the decision was made to cross-load the dismounts from C32 into the other tracks of the platoon. SSG Breast the BC was left behind with his gunner and driver to be recovered by maintenance assets at a later time. This vehicle would not rejoin the platoon until two weeks later.

Link up with the Company Executive Officer (XO), 1LT Scott Hume was accomplished at 0200, 16 January 1991. Immediately upon link up I reported the location of C32 to 1LT Hume. At this time the platoon was instructed to go to MOPP II⁴ and to take our first nerve antidote, called pyridostigmine (NAP pills). The deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait had expired two hours previously and the brigade had intensified the chemical protective posture. 1LT Hume guided us into the company perimeter. The battalion was in a desert lager and my platoon occupied its standard location on the left side of the company. I dismounted from my vehicle, walked to the commander's track, and reported my status. He confirmed my suspicion that the air war

deployed to the theater of operations. The deployment of the second M2A2 and M1A1 fleet equated to the division being deployed twice. I would argue that this was not a wise use of the nation's sealift assets and more importantly at the platoon level two months of in-country mounted training time was lost. The solution to this problem is to simply allocate the necessary fiscal resources to maintain units at a deployable level.

January 16 and 17 were spent road marching approximately 150 KM to link up, with the 2nd Marine Division. One ROM was conducted during this movement. The location of the ROM site failed to allow for the additional fuel requirements of M1A1's with attached mine plows. Within 15 KM of the ROM site, the fuel status of plow tanks became critical. Several of the plow tanks did not make it to the fuelers and were stranded along the march route. The one mine plow tank in TM C (A33) received 498 gallons of fuel at the ROM site⁵. The M1A1 has a capacity of 505 gallons. The Bradleys had no problem making it to the ROM site. A brigade ROM is a complicated operation. Different types of vehicles take on fuel at different rates; this means vehicles will exit the ROM site at different times making reorganization a challenge. The brigade ROM was conducted during darkness which further complicated the process. TM C used chemlights and filtered flashlights to aid in reorganization. The ROM site was cleared and all vehicles were linked up with the company in thirty minutes.

On 17 January 1991 the Company linked up with the 2nd Marine Division and established an AA approximately 40 KM south of the Al Wafrah oil fields. Training continued and included another company STX, which consisted of a movement to contact, a breach, a hasty attack, and a night attack. Coordination with the engineers resulted in another trench system being constructed within the company assembly area. Mounted and dismounted breach drills were rehearsed along with the assaulting and clearing of trenchline systems. Demolition training was received by every soldier. Soldiers received instruction in the use and construction of bangalore torpedoes, pop and drops, and satchel charges. Lastly, a range was established where the zero on small arms

were verified and Tunnel C qualification was conducted. All crew served heavy weapons were test fired (M240C, M240G, M242, M2 and M60)⁶.

The Battle of Khafji occurred while the brigade occupied this AA. Khafji was 50 KM to the east of the brigade AA. The brigade sat at REDCON I⁷ for over four hours; ready to assist in the fight occurring to the east or to repel any additional spoiling attacks launched by the Iraqis. The Iraqi forces in Khafji were contained by the Marines and no additional Iraqi spoiling attacks were launched across the border. This incident had a profound mental effect on the soldiers. The soldiers had a front row seat as artillery and MLRS fired in support of the engaged Marines and to interdict any reinforcing enemy forces. This was the first time the platoon witnessed such an awesome display of massed artillery fires. The sights and sounds of the outgoing artillery surpassed all peacetime live fire experiences.

On 13 February a second road march was conducted 100 KM to the northwest. At the conclusion of this march the brigade was situated on the northern boundary of II Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF) and the adjacent EPAC Corps, 20 KM south of the Kuwaiti border near the Um Gudar Police Post. To maintain OPSEC the road march was conducted under radio listening silence⁸. Upon arrival platoon battle positions were established with tanks in the center, 1st Platoon on the right, and 3rd Platoon on the left; tied in with TM B to the company's northwest. In this BP security was maintained at 50 percent and OP's were established to the front of every platoon. The primary enemy threat was from deserters and a Khafji style spoiling attack (Kershaw 4).

On the afternoon of 16 February CPT Kershaw received a warning order over the battalion net to prepare to relieve C Company, 2nd Light Armored Infantry (2LAI) Battalion and screen the battalion's front. Before departing to the battalion tactical operations center (BN TOC) to receive the complete order CPT Kershaw instructed the XO to bring the company to REDCON I. TM C's mission was to screen the battalion's front and provide early warning of an Iraqi spoiling attack along the berm which

composed the border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in order to allow C/2LAI the battalion's screening force since the 13th, time to stand-down, conduct maintenance, and prepare for a reconnaissance by force into Kuwait. The company moved to the international border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in a company wedge. Each mechanized platoon dispatched sections to co-locate with the battalion scouts on the border. The tank platoon and the company trains were located in an AA 10 KM to the south of the OP's on the Kuwaiti border. Dismounts aggressively conducted reconnaissance and security patrols to provide local security for the Bradleys manning the OP's. Bradley sections rotated up to the berm thirty minutes prior to evening stand-to, and were relieved thirty minutes prior to morning stand-to. While 3rd Platoon was able to visually monitor Iraqi wheeled vehicle and dismounted movements at ranges of 6-10 KM, the platoon experienced no direct contact during the screen mission. First Platoon occupying the western OP's was mortared on two consecutive nights.

The company team supported 2LAI's reconnaissance by force into Kuwait from 20-23 February. Third Platoon was given the mission to man the passage point for 2LAI. At 1000 21 February 2LAI crossed through the passage point into Kuwait. Close air support (CAS) was severely constrained due to poor weather conditions. Artillery support was also not accurate or responsive. Two KM into Kuwait the marines began to receive extremely heavy and accurate mortar and anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) fires. Casualties mounted and after a HMMWV was lost to a direct hit from an 82 mm mortar, the marines broke contact and withdrew through the passage point back into Saudi Arabia. Third Platoon provided security for the withdrawal through the passage point, and began to assist with casualty evacuation. By 1300 the weather had cleared, CAS was brought on station, and the problems with the indirect artillery had been rectified. At this time 2LAI passed through the passage point into Kuwait. The second reconnaissance by force was extremely successful; this attempt penetrated almost 20 KM into Kuwait and generated over ninety-four enemy prisoners of war (EPW's). Third Platoon established an

EPW collection point at the passage point. At the passage point 2LAI transferred their EPWs to our control and 3rd Platoon assisted with casualty evacuation.

CPT Kershaw received the BN operation order for the attack into Kuwait on the night of 22 February 1991. With 2LAI screening to the front, I was authorized to pull my A section back to the company AA. The B section was tasked to continue the manning of the passage point in support of 2LAI, until 1200. At 0800 on the 23rd the company operation order was issued. The remainder of the day was dedicated to detailed troop leading procedures (TLP's), final precombat inspections (PCI's), and company and platoon rehearsals. Dismount squad leaders and all Bradley and tank commanders (BC/TCs) were required to attend company rehearsals. During the final company rehearsals at 2000, the company received its one and only replacement, Private Reed an engineer from Germany. Private Reed was assigned to 3rd Platoon, and I specifically assigned him to my track. Private Reed reported to the company with no zone II, no flak jacket and an M16A1. The standard rifleman in the platoon was armed with an M16A2. The platoon sergeant; SSG Willie Copeland, and my A section dismount squad leader; SSG Eric Garza, were able to scavenge a uniform and flak jacket for PVT Reed. SSG Garza then began the assimilation process by issuing PVT Reed a crash course in the procedures of 3rd Squad and the battle drills of the platoon.

At 0530 on 24 February 1991 the team departed it's AA and assembled in a battalion desert lager. The team remained in this lager until it was called forward for a final ROM. The priority of work conducted in this location included personal hygiene, Class I⁹ and final talk through rehearsals. The TM's quartering party led by the XO departed for the ROM site at 0900. The main body was called forward by the XO at 1300. The ROM site was located approximately 1 KM south of the Kuwaiti-Saudi berm. Tail gate refueling was conducted in a herringbone formation. From this location the team crossed the berm and entered the breach lanes. At 1654 on 24 February 1991 TM C crossed the border into Kuwait and entered the first minefield belt.(Kershaw 9).

The lanes through the minefields were narrow and extremely constrained with no margin for drivers error. This fact caused movement to be slow and deliberate with speeds averaging between 5-10 KPH. Darkness began to settle as the final belt of mines were cleared. In order to get to the nights objective, the company had to pass through numerous support and artillery units from 2nd Marine Division, 11th Marines and TF 3-41 (Kershaw 9). To ease command and control during this passage the company moved in a staggered column. During movement the company received a fragmentary order to occupy OBJ NEW YORK, and tie in with TM B on the left side of the objective. While maneuvering to this position, two rocket-propelled grenades (RPG's) were fired at the company. Both rounds passed through the company without finding their intended targets. The company deployed into an echelon left and assaulted OBJ New York. While assaulting through OBJ New York another minefield was encountered. Movement was halted before any vehicles entered the minefield, and the company occupied hasty defensive positions. Security was manned at 50 percent. One Bradley per section scanned with thermals, a crew member from the other Bradley in the section scanned with PVS-7s, and half of each fire team was in hasty fighting positions providing local security while the other half of the team slept in their hasty fighting positions. First Platoon experienced the only contact of the night, engaging several dismount positions still occupied by Iraqi soldiers. Numerous wheeled vehicles were spotted with thermals moving between 4-5 KM to the west of the TM's position, but the enemy made no attempt to engage or maneuver within range of our direct fire weapons. At the end of the first day of combat 3rd Platoon had yet to fire a shot.

Stand-to was conducted at 0530 on 25 February and dismounted patrols were dispatched to determine the actual size and composition of the enemy battle position. The Iraqi battle position was completely abandoned. The enemy on the objective had retreated, surrendered or been killed by 1st Platoon during the night. The remainder of the morning was devoted to policing and destroying abandoned weapons and equipment with

demolitions. At 1100 the company received an order to continue the attack to seize objective OHIO. The company moved to link up with TM B which would lead the BN attack. Movement was conducted in a company echelon left with TM B leading the TF in a wedge. Third Platoon moved in an echelon left on the far left side of the company's echelon. To the platoon's right was the tank platoon and to the left was D/LAI. As the TM crested a hill the tanks made contact with four T-55s which they quickly destroyed. In 3rd Platoon's sector, an enemy wheeled vehicle containing a squad of dismounts was identified. SGT Rolen, in C33, engaged and destroyed the vehicle, and placed deadly and accurate suppressive fires on the surviving dismounts. Due to SSG Rolen's effective fires, these enemy soldiers quickly opted to surrender. The prisoners were then secured by D/LAI and the platoon was ordered to assault another identified enemy battle position. The platoon received no enemy fires during the assault and it was quickly determined that this position was abandoned. CPT Kershaw ordered that all enemy equipment be quickly destroyed with demolitions. In this battle position the platoon destroyed one T-55, three ZSU-57's, two SPG-9's and numerous AK-47's and RPG-7's.

The attack to seize objective OHIO continued at 1300. The company advanced in an echelon left formation. After moving one kilometer 1st Platoon and the tank platoon made contact with enemy T-55's. The tanks and 1st Platoon very quickly engaged and destroyed the T-55's. To the west of the company 3rd Platoon engaged numerous dismounts using 25 mm HE at ranges of 3,000 meters. The objective was quickly seized and with darkness rapidly descending, sections were dispatched to clear the dismounted positions observed during the approach to the objective. By midnight the company had secured 105 Iraqi prisoners. The company was hard pressed to guard such a large number of prisoners, while maintaining adequate local security. The dispatched sections were withdrawn, EPW collection efforts ceased and the company concentrated on local security.

At 0510 on 26 February 1991 CPT Kershaw was called to the BN TOC to receive a new operation order. In the commander's absence mounted security patrols were conducted and captured Iraqi equipment was destroyed. At 0900 CPT Kershaw returned from the BN TOC, and the company order was issued at 1000. TM C was to move as part of a battalion movement to contact and seize the Al Mutla Police Post. Enroute the team was to be prepared to conduct an instride breach, and would destroy by fire all identified Iraqi vehicles.

The operational situation known by the TF at the time stated that the route to Kuwait City was clear, with Iraqi units offering limited resistance. EPAC forces consisting of Egyptian, Syrian and Saudi units were reported to have joined the ground offense. The Iraqi III Corps was reported to be combat ineffective, but light resistance was expected from Iraqi Special Forces. Reports on the disposition of the Republican Guards to the north were sketchy but they were believed to be surrounded by 7th Corps. Vehicle movement was reported to be heavy along the highway leading out of Kuwait City to Basra. All intelligence indicated that the Iraqi Army was attempting to conduct a retrograde and retreat from Kuwait with as much of its military machine intact as possible (Kershaw 18).

CPT Kershaw received the following enemy situation at the BN TOC:

"Enemy forces are currently retreating from Kuwait City. Expect 2 armored battalions and a mechanized infantry battalion from the 3rd Armored Division's 34th Brigade to defend vicinity the Ali Al Saleem Airfield. Expect them to be in blocking positions behind a mine belt running east to west along the 38 grid line. Expect them to have (worst case) 80 T-72's, 35 BMP's, and at least 6 MRL's in direct support. The mechanized battalion will be forward in the blocking position and the armor will be in reserve. GHN-45 artillery pieces (155mm) are reported on the Mutla ridgeline and are supporting the retrograde. There are unconfirmed reports of chemical weapons found in the 1st Marine Division's area and also by the 1st Infantry Division to the west. The enemy's 6th

Armored Division (T-62's) is attrited substantially and is retreating to the west (Kershaw 18)."

The brigade's main effort would be 3/67 AR. The brigade would move in a V formation. TF 3/67 AR would move on the left, TF 1/67 on the right and TF 3-41 INF would move in the rear. TF 3-67 would move in a diamond. TM B would lead, with TM C on the right, TM D was on the far left and TM A was in the rear. The combat trains, the mortars, and the TOC would move in the center of the diamond. TM C would move in an echelon right with 3rd Platoon leading in a wedge formation, tanks in an echelon right in the center, and 1st in an echelon right on the far right (See Sketch #1). Movement would begin at 1145 and we would cross the Line of Departure (LD) at 1200.

The brigade quickly covered the 50 KMs to the anticipated breach site. Enemy resistance was minimal and characterized by the sporadic firing of tank rounds well outside of the Iraqi's maximum effective range. These rounds were quickly answered by TM B and TM C's tank platoon with deadly accurate fires. After several vehicles were destroyed and the enemy realized the ineffectiveness of his weapons systems in comparison to ours, he surrendered. EPW's were disarmed by the engineers under the operation control (OPCON) of TM C when possible and pointed in a southern direction. The brigade was intent on maintaining the momentum of the exploitation and did not slow to process prisoners. During movement towards the breach site TM C was engaged twice by TF 1/67 with 50 Cal and 7.62. Although enemy resistance was minimal the lead elements of TF 1/67 were conducting a recon by fire. Luckily no friendly casualties were sustained and LTC Johnson; the task force commander of TF 1/67 AR, eventually regained control of his battalion's fires. Contributing to the friendly fire incidents was the fact that the brigade had never maneuvered using the "V" formation. While the "V" formation maximizes the forward fires of a unit it is inherently difficult to command and control. On several occasions the center of the brigade had to be collapsed when TF 3/67 and TF 1/67 converged on each other. When this happened individual crews took

measures to quickly adapt and rectify the situation. Much credit must be given to the company commanders and individual vehicle commanders, because although the brigade had never rehearsed this formation, movement in general was extremely disciplined and controlled.

TM B located the templated enemy minefield in the vicinity of the Al Atraf Police Post. As TM B deployed to conduct an instride breach, one of TM B's platoons discovered a by-pass. TM B quickly lead the TF through the by-pass. Third Platoon maintaining contact with TM B lead TM C through the by-pass. The TM emerged from the by-pass onto a hard top road with the Al Ali Saleem airfield to the left. At this time it was reported that TM D was receiving incoming artillery fire. The BN S-3; MAJ Warner identified suspected forward observers in the two airfield control towers on the airfield. CPT Kershaw directed C30 to engage the aircraft control tower on the right, while C66 engaged the air traffic control tower on the left. Both targets were engaged and destroyed with TOW rounds at ranges in excess of 3100 meters. After the targets had been destroyed TM D reported that incoming artillery fire had ceased.

The company then began to move down the highway behind TM B at speeds in excess of 45 KPH toward the objective. Suddenly the company was ordered to halt and breach a suspected minefield to the east. The tank platoon dropped its plows and began the breach. At this time I lost radio contact with my wingman; SSG Richard Breast in C32. SSG Breast was leading the company at the tail end of TM B. If not for SSG Garza monitoring the platoon net on his PRC-126 in the troop compartment of C32, SSG Breast never would have received the change in mission. The radios on C32 had completely failed and SSG Breast would fight the remainder of the battle using SSG Garza's PRC-126.

Once control of C32 had been regained, 3rd Platoon turned around and began to follow the tanks through the suspected minefield. By plowing through the minefield TM C gained access to the north-south running Al-Mutla ridge line. The TM followed the ridge line around a water filtration plant; by-passing numerous enemy bunkers, vehicles,

and surrendering enemy soldiers. Once it was ascertained that the approach to the police post was clear, the company dropped off of the ridge line, and fell in behind TM B; who had continued to attack along the road.

TM B and TM C were now racing toward the police post on a two lane highway. The remainder of the battalion was strung out behind us in column. The time was 1545 and visibility was reduced to 400 meters because of smoke from the burning oil fields and burning vehicles and equipment. To my front I could see white muzzle flashes of light originating from the ridgeline that we were approaching. Suddenly I saw the concrete four story buildings composing the AL-Mutla police post emerge out of the gloom. I heard CPT Kershaw over the radio say: "This is it! Tanks center. First right. Third left. Dismount and assault through the objective." I quickly relayed to my platoon: "Come on-line. Dismount left. Vehicles suppress buildings to our front (See Sketch #2)."

The company and platoon had rehearsed and trained for this mission so often in the last six months that everything was executed with the speed of a battle drill. The company instantaneously came on-line with platoons on-line. Before dismounting I ensured that my gunner was oriented onto the right buildings, and told him to get the rest of the tracks oriented on the target. I contacted my platoon sergeant to confirm that he knew that I would be dismounting and that he was responsible for supporting the dismounted assault with suppressive fires. I told him to use my track as a guide for immediate suppressive fires.

As I went through the turret shield door, my gunner began to engage the buildings. Outside I could hear the rest of the tracks begin to fire suppressive fires. By the time I untangled myself from my combat vehicle communications (CVC) cord and was in the troop compartment, the dismounts in the back of my track had already exited the vehicle, and the ramp was on its way up. To my astonishment my radio telephone operator (RTO) PFC Banks and forward observer (FO) SGT Walton were still in the back of the track. I told them to open the troop door and exit the track. Once on the ground I was shocked by

the carnage. No longer wearing a CVC helmet the noise from exploding vehicles seemed deafening. Enemy soldiers and vehicles moved in all directions attempting to flee or gain positioning to return effective fires on us.

While my RTO and FO positioned their radios on their backs behind the protection of the track, an Iraqi armed with an AK-47 ran towards me. He was an older man with a wild and dazed look in his eyes, and appeared as though he wanted to surrender. I halted him about 5 feet from C30, but he refused to lay down his weapon. Several tense moments passed, during which the muzzle of his weapon was repeatedly oriented in the vicinity of my chest. Just as I began to doubt his intentions to surrender: our eyes met and he laid his weapon down. Once disarmed, the prisoner was sent towards the company trains, with his hands high over his head; this time his intentions would be clear.

Meanwhile 3rd and 4th Squads had deployed on-line to the left of the vehicles. Fourth Squad under SGT Donald Webb was on the far left with 3rd Squad; under SSG Eric Garza, closest to the vehicles. Two hundred meters of ground had to be covered to reach the lip of the Basra highway. Between the highway and our present position there were several structures. On the far side of the highway were two three story concrete buildings which composed the headquarters of the Al-Mutla Police Station. Using fire and maneuver my headquarters section bounded through my 3rd Squad toward the police post. We had maneuvered about 100 meters when I looked back and realized that my 3rd squad had still not moved. This was the first time my dismounts had experienced enemy small arms fire of such intensity and once they found a covered and concealed position they were hesitant to abandon it. After a few curt words directed at SSG Garza he managed to motivate his team leaders, who began to get the soldiers moving. Once the soldiers made their initial bound under fire: their fear evaporated, training took over, and they were unstoppable. Meanwhile, the vehicles had been suppressing the concrete buildings using HE while we got ourselves organized on the ground.

Assaulting toward the headquarters of the police post, we initially encountered a series of temporary structures on the southern side of the highway. The first temporary structure encountered was constructed of concrete. SSG Garza tossed a grenade inside of it and one of his teams cleared it. Continuing the assault, we came to a row of aluminum office buildings, as one of my soldiers prepared to toss a grenade into the structure I stopped him. Grenades could not be used in these structures due to the possibility of inflicting friendly casualties. While clearing these prefabricated buildings my 4th squad had maneuvered too far to the left and appeared to be maneuvering outside of mutually supporting range. SGT Webb did not respond on the platoon net. After repeatedly exposing myself I was able to get SGT Webb's attention. He maneuvered his way to the location of the platoon's headquarters element. SSG Garza was already present and I issued a very quick order concerning how we would get across the danger area formed by the highway and seize an initial foothold into the headquarters of the police post. The plan was as follows: 3rd Squad would lay down suppressive fires, 4th Squad, along with the headquarters section would bound across the highway and provide suppressive fires as 3rd Squad bounded across the highway and continued the assault to seize a foothold inside the building. The squad leaders returned to their squads and 3rd Squad began to support with extremely effective and deadly suppressive fires. Bounding across the highway it appeared that the chances of being hit by shrapnel from ordnance exploding from a burning T-55 and 2S1 was much greater than from effective enemy small arms fire. On several occasions rather large pieces of metal whizzed by my head which originated from ordnance exploding from the numerous burning vehicles destroyed in the vicinity of the highway. When 3rd Squad seized a foothold on the far side of the highway approximately ten Iraqi's on the first floor began to wave a white flag. I gave the order to cease fire and moved forward to attempt to coax the Iraqi's out of the building. They initially hesitated to leave the cover of the building, but eventually they came forward. Once the EPWs had cleared the building, one team from 4th Squad was detached to

search them and send them towards the company trains. Meanwhile 3rd Squad had crossed the highway. The dismounted squads were now set to enter the first of the three story concrete buildings. Entering the first building movement was detected down one of the hallways. I ordered my squad leaders not to throw grenades, and told them to move their squads back out of handgrenade range should a grenade come around the corner. Peering around the corner I spotted an Iraqi crawling towards my location, trailing a blood trail behind him. The Iraqi soldier had his legs blown off and had been left to die by his surrendering comrades. I called two of my soldiers forward and they evacuated him to the company trains.

A foothold had been seized and I immediately dispatched my fire teams to begin the process of clearing each of the rooms on the upper floors. I moved with headquarters section to a position where I could watch the second building of the complex, while my soldiers cleared the building we were currently in. In that building there was another group of 10-15 Iraqi's who were attempting to surrender. They were hesitant on crossing an open space between the second and first building. After extensive yelling, waving and coaxing they made the dash to the building we had secured. They were then escorted to the highway where an EPW search team frisked them and sent them back towards the company trains. During the time it took to coax the surrendering Iraqi's out of the second building, 3rd Squad had cleared the first building to the roof and was in position to provide suppressive fires as the platoon's headquarters section along with TM A 4th Squad; under the control of SGT Donald Webb, assaulted to gain a foothold in the second building. Third Squad covered this bound with a withering volume of suppressive fires engaging all known and suspected enemy positions in the second building. Inside the building we began clearing the rooms in two man teams. Third Squad bounded from the first building and began to assist 4th in the clearing of the second structure.

While 3rd Platoon was fighting to secure the buildings the remainder of the company had isolated the objective for us. First Platoon's dismounts were involved in serious

fighting as they cleared dismount positions along the ridge line which was east and north of the buildings. The vehicles were initially involved in a heavy exchange of fire as they destroyed all manned vehicles on the highway and then established blocking positions preventing the use of the highway as an escape or counterattack route.

When the complex was secured I regained contact with the commander and was informed that he was located with 1st Platoon's dismounts. This element was preparing to assault a suspected mortar position which had been harassing the platoon with fires as they fought along the ridge line. He ordered me to move whatever forces possible to the top of the ridge line to reinforce the assault. At the time of this radio contact I was only able to respond with my Alpha teams from my 3rd and 4th squads. By the time we linked up with the commander on top of the ridge line, the 1st Platoon's dismounts had achieved overwhelming suppressive fires. While 1st Platoon suppressed, 3rd Platoon assaulted the suspected mortar site. No contact occurred crossing the objective and a hasty defense was established in abandoned Iraqi fighting positions. The commander then moved the rest of the company's dismounts forward. At this time the commander instructed me to secure the left flank of the company from these positions while he along with the dismounts from first platoon rejoined the company and continued to push down the highway.

After two hours of no contact on the left flank of the company: 3rd Platoon's dismounts received orders to move through the engineer positions and link up with our vehicles. Once we reestablished contact with the platoon's vehicles, the dismounts moved to the left side of the company and began to clear the numerous enemy infantry positions on the company's flank. When the flank was secured, the company tightened the perimeter and hunkered down for the night (See Sketch #3).

By 2200 that night the company had a secure perimeter from which we would defend until the sun rose in the morning. At sunrise the company was credited with the destruction of three enemy tanks (1 type 59 and 2 T-55) about fifteen trucks; capturing seventy prisoners (10-15 WIA) and killing forty enemy soldiers. The company also was

to be credited with the capture of large amounts of equipment including 3 T-72 and 5 T-55 tanks all of which were still running (Kershaw 23). After a restless night the company continued combat operations the next morning, and conducted a hasty attack to seize what is known as the summer palace outside of Kuwait City.

The most important lessons learned from 3rd Platoon's experiences during the assault of the Al-Mutla Police Post are:

1. Individual and small unit level training is crucial to successful combat operations. During the battle for the AL-Mutla Police Post soldiers and small unit leaders performed exceptionally well with little guidance from higher leaders. The soldiers understood the commander's intent and their actions supported the achievement of his goals. If not for the quality and training invested in the soldiers and NCO's the platoon would have suffered substantial casualties from friendly and enemy fire. Quality soldiers and leaders are the Army's most precious resource. Well trained quality individuals will always overcome adversity and persevere by maximizing the capabilities of issued equipment while soldiers of poor quality will be unsuccessful even with state of the art equipment.
2. Well rehearsed battle drills and SOP's understood by all, played a large part in 3rd Platoon's success. These drills and SOP's had initially been developed during home-station training and were continuously refined during sustainment training conducted prior to the ground war. Third Platoon was the traditional assault platoon of the company, and within the platoon, 3rd Squad was the designated assault squad. Because every element within the company and platoon was designated and trained to specialize in specific tasks, this attack was executed as a battle drill by the platoon.
3. Home-station training should have included more military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and demolition training. Even in a desert environment the final and most intense battle occurred on the outskirts of a major city. Preceding that battle the dismounted elements of the platoon had used demolitions on a daily basis. Demolition training and

MOUT training should be conducted quarterly in order to maintain acceptable levels of proficiency.

C Co, 3-41/Team Battle Roster

Headquarters

C66 BFV	CO CPT Mike Kershaw MG SSG Donald Ray Smith DVR SPC Joey Tignor RTO PFC Calvin Peters	C15 M113A3	XO 1LT Scott Hume Commo SSG Crosby NBC SGT Tyrone Webb DRV SPC Scott Kerkes
C6 HMMWV	SPC Scott Stokes	C7 M35A2	SGT Richard Ulman SPC Bagwell
FIST-V	1LT Larry Hamm SSG Bobby Bullard SPC Nicely PFC Smerchansky	C8 HMMWV	1SG Johnny P. Erwin Drv SPC Delgadillo
FCT BFV	CPT Jeff Endicott	C9 M35A2	CPL Thompson SPC Peyton
Med M113	SGT Matt Cyr SPC Rob Cardines	Maint M113	SFC Whiteman
		M88	SGT Roland Daige
PLL Truck	PFC Charles Minor	5 Ton	PFC Bratsveen
		5 Ton	PFC Anthony Frey

1st Platoon

C11	PL 1LT Paul Linkins MG SGT Harry Leake SPC Scott King PFC Lee Trudeau FO SGT Dalton	C12	SGT Matt Klatt CPL Jim Proctor PFC Ehrlich
2d Squad	SSG Jimminez		
A Team	SGT Randy Thompson SPC Tony Hobbs PFC Williams	B Team	
C14	PSG SFC George 'Mike' Rudolph GNR SGT Schmidt PFC McCormick Medic PFC Chris Merriman	C13	SGT Tony Juairé DRV PFC Shane Fortner
4 th Squad	SSG Jesse Brown		
A Team	SGT Alex Pratt	B Team	

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2nd Platoon (Detached to Co A, 3-67 Ar)

C21	PL 1LT Alan Hinkle Gnr SGT Martin Hall Dvr SPC Robert Hogan RTO PV2 Steven Parker FO SPC EB Polk	C22	BC SSG Stanley Davis Gnr SGT Nathan McCray Drv PVT Hill
2d Squad	SSG Clifton N. Kershaw		
A Team		B Team	
C24	PSG Shelly Davis Gnr Drv Med	C23	BC SSG James King Gnr SGT Edmund Sibley Drv
4 th Squad	SSG Thomas Grace		
A Team		B Team	

3d Platoon

C31	PL: 2LT Daniel S. Stempniak GNR: SGT Frank R. Gardner JR DVR: PFC Phillip Sykes RTO: PFC Ferrell Banks FO: SGT Walton	C32	BC: SGT Richard J. Brest II GNR: SPC Roderick Jones DRV: SPC Albert Shaffer
		2d Squad	SSG Eric G. Garza
B Team	SGT Ronny Sims SPC Raymond Ingram (M249) ENG: PVT Reed (M16A1)	A Team	SGT Robert F. Lewis SPC Kevin Williams (M249) SPC Roy VanValkenberg (M249) PFC Timonthy Arett (M203)
C34	PSG: SSG Willie Lee Copeland GNR: SPC Jerome Wyble DRV: PFC Dean Ruth MED: PFC Merriman	C33	BC: SSG Steve T. Rolen GNR: CPL James B. Galvin DRV: PFC Robert Lee
4 th Squad	SGT Don L. Webb		
B Team	SPC Kevin Smith (M203) SPC James Wood (M249)	A Team	SGT Jerry R. Jones II SPC Don Hammett (M16A2) PFC Darius Coleman (M16A2) PV2 James Mahnke (M249) PV2 Ronald Denhartog (M16A2)

SFC Charles Redford, SGT Francis Yebesi, PFC Pat Franklin

The 'Independent Tank Platoon' (attached from Company A, 3-67 Ar)

A31	PL 1LT Mac Duncan Gnr SGT Benjamin Alston Drv SPC David Wakefield Ldr PFC Greg Christensen	A32	SGT Rodney Dunn Sgt Mark Horn SPC James Patterson PFC Tracey Clemons
A34	PSG SSG Tony Green SGT Gary Hildebrandt SPC Lamont Wilkerson PFC James Silcott	A33	SGT David Yost SGT Brian Jones SPC James Turoik PFC James Kenyon

Platoon, Company A, 17th Engineers
3d Platoon

Platoon Leader	1LT Kurt Ebner		
MG	SPC Mincey		