WEAVING THE TANGLED WEB

Military Deception in Large-Scale Combat Operations

Edited by Christopher M. Rein

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Michael L. Hogg

Foreword

Since the Soviet Union's fall in 1989, the specter of large-scale ground combat against a peer adversary was remote. During the years following, the US Army found itself increasingly called upon to lead multinational operations in the lower to middle tiers of the range of military operations and conflict continuum. The events of 11 September 2001 led to more than 15 years of intense focus on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. An entire generation of Army leaders and Soldiers were culturally imprinted by this experience. We emerged as an Army more capable in limited contingency operations than at any time in our nation's history, but the geopolitical landscape continues to shift and the risk of great power conflict is no longer a remote possibility.

While our Army focused on limited contingency operations in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, other regional and peer adversaries scrutinized US military processes and methods and adapted their own accordingly. As technology has proliferated and become accessible in even the most remote corners of the world, the US military's competitive advantage is being challenged across all of the warfighting domains. In the last decade, we have witnessed an emergent China, a revanchist and aggressive Russia, a menacing North Korea, and a cavalier Iranian regime. Each of these adversaries seeks to change the world order in their favor and contest US strategic interests abroad. The chance for war against a peer or regional near-peer adversary has increased exponentially, and we must rapidly shift our focus to successfully compete in all domains and across the full range of military operations.

Over the last two years, the US Army has rapidly shifted the focus of its doctrine, training, education, and leader development to increase readiness and capabilities to prevail in large-scale ground combat operations against peer and near-peer threats. Our new doctrine, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, dictates that the Army provide the joint force four unique strategic roles: shaping the security environment, preventing conflict, prevailing in large-scale combat operations, and consolidating gains to make temporary success permanent.

To enable this shift of focus, the Army is now attempting to change its culture shaped by over 15 years of persistent limited-contingency operations. Leaders must recognize that the hard-won wisdom of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is important to retain but does not fully square with

the exponential lethality, hyperactive chaos, and accelerated tempo of the multi-domain battlefield when facing a peer or near-peer adversary.

To emphasize the importance of the Army's continued preparation for large-scale combat operations, the US Army Combined Arms Center has published these volumes of *The US Army Large-Scale Combat Operations Series* book set. The intent is to expand the knowledge and understanding of the contemporary issues the US Army faces by tapping our organizational memory to illuminate the future. The reader should reflect on these case studies to analyze each situation, identify the doctrines at play, evaluate leaders' actions, and determine what differentiated success from failure. Use them as a mechanism for discussion, debate, and intellectual examination of lessons of the past and their application to today's doctrine, organization, and training to best prepare the Army for large-scale combat. Relevant answers and tangible reminders of what makes us the world's greatest land power await in the stories of these volumes.

Prepared for War!

Michael D. Lundy
Lieutenant General, US Army
Commanding General
US Army Combined Arms Center

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Introduction

Multi-Domain Deception

Christopher M. Rein, General Editor

Throughout the recorded history of warfare, military planners and commanders have sought to deceive their adversary as to the size, timing, or location of an attack, in order to gain a decisive advantage. From the famous "Trojan Horse" to modern efforts to use the electromagnetic spectrum to "spoof" or "jam" sensors, deception in some form remains an essential component of military operations. Whether attacking an unsuspecting enemy on Christmas morning, as Washington did at Trenton, or emplacing "Quaker guns" (logs painted black to resemble cannon) to provide the impression of strength, US forces have successfully built on a long legacy of military deception (MILDEC) in order to prevail in the nation's wars. While technology continues to advance at a dizzying pace, threatening to render previous lessons obsolete, MILDEC operations have successfully withstood previous developments and even incorporated new technologies continue to form an important part of combat operations. While potentially capable, in some cases, of enabling military forces to prevail without a fight, as the theorist Sun Tzu postulated, more often MILDEC confers an advantage that helps the side that successfully harnesses it prevail, often at a much lower cost that it would have otherwise. Thus, MILDEC, and its long and successful history, remain an important, even vital, tool for any future leader.

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1. See David Glantz, Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War (London: Routledge, 1989); Mark Lloyd, The Art of Military Deception (London: Pen and Sword, 1999); Barton Whaley, ed., Practise to Deceive: Learning Curves of Military Deception Planners (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016); John Gooch and Amos Perlmutter, eds., Military Deception and Strategic Surprise (London: Routledge, 2007); Jon Latimer, Deception in War: The Art of the Bluff, the Value of Deceit, and the Most Thrilling Episodes of Cunning in Military History, from the Trojan Horse to the Gulf War (New York: Woodstock, 2001); James F. Dunnigan and Albert A. Nofi, Victory and Deceit: Deception and Trickery at War (San Jose, CA: Writers Club Press, 2001); Thaddeus Holt, The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004); and Mary Katherine Barbier, D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2007).

Given the voluminous, and excellent, body of literature currently available on military deception, it is certainly worth asking why we need another volume on the topic.[1] This volume is not intended to displace, even if it could, the deeply-researched and lengthy treatises on the long history of military deception operations. Rather, it is intended as a primer, and a thought piece, for how strategists, operational planners, staff officers and, ultimately, commanders, have historically integrated military deception into large-scale combat operations, focusing on the last 100 years of conflict. The individual chapters, while certainly excellent stand-alone treatments of the deception aspects of the operations and campaigns considered, likewise are of insufficient length to become the definitive works on their individual topics. Instead, they build upon the extensive secondary literature, and, in several cases, primary sources in order to provide a comprehensive but accessible understanding of how military deception has successfully enabled victory on the battlefield.

If principles of war can be sifted out of military history, as the master, Carl von Clausewitz, attempted to do with Napoleon's campaigns, then these twelve case studies also ought to provide us with some "universal truths" regarding deception operations.[2] Admittedly, considering successful deceptions, primarily in operations involving the US Army and its principal allies and antagonists, for less than half of its operational life may omit a number of relevant examples. But these cases are sufficient to provide several enduring threads of continuity in successful operations which, most importantly, remain relevant for current and future practitioners. One of the first is the importance of coordination in deception campaigns, especially since the addition of warfare in the third dimension, which coincides with the beginning of this volume. While many thought that the airplane, and later radar and satellite imagery, marked the end of successful deception by pulling back the veil that had shielded terrestrial armies for millennia, instead deception remained a key, if significantly more complicated aspect of many campaigns. While previously deception had to be coordinated between the military and political instruments of national power, now it also had to be practiced in multiple domains simultaneously. In what could be labeled "Multi-Domain Deception," these plans required close and careful coordination across the warfighting domains, to ensure that lapses in one did not undo efforts in other areas. A heavy bombing campaign focused exclusively on Normandy would have undone the ruse of an Allied landing at

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2. See Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (1832-4; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

the Pas de Calais, just as belligerent rhetoric from Egyptian political leaders would have undermined efforts to "lull" the Israelis to sleep prior to the 1973 Yom Kippur/October War. With the proliferation of warfare into space and cyberspace, the difficulty of coordinating a successful deception campaign has expanded exponentially and greatly complicated the efforts of its architects, but it has not made their task impossible.

Another "principle" that emerges from the narrative is that of the "Magruder Principle," the idea that it is easier to convince an adversary to hold on to a pre-existing belief that to convince them of a new one. This obviously depends heavily on both intelligence collection, to understand an opposing commander's estimate of the situation, as well a cultural competency, to understand what key assumptions commanders, militaries, and nations are likely to hold most dear. Once planners have accurately divined an enemy's strongly-held beliefs, they can then use this knowledge to achieve their goals. Just as a practitioner of the Japanese martial art of jiu-jitsu uses the momentum of an opponent's punch or lunge to continue movement in a certain direction, but well past the intended point, deception campaigners can use an adversary's assumptions against them, by reinforcing that belief while simultaneously planning an unexpected operation that catches them off-balance or out of position. While difficult to successfully accomplish, this remains the closest thing to an enduring principle in military deception operations, and forces planners to "mirror image" themselves, and ask what preconceived notions they have that an adversary might turn against them. One of the most famous of the humorous "Murphy's Rules of War" postulates that "The enemy diversion you are ignoring is his main attack," accurately describing the successful campaign in Normandy.[3]

Careful readers of the accounts in this volume will notice that weaker powers tend to favor the use of deception to overcome a stronger opponent. Just as jiu-jitsu enables a smaller fighter to use a larger or more powerful adversary's strength against them, successful deception operations can enable a weaker force or nation to prevail against a stronger, by dispersing effort or creating a tempo of operations to which a less agile opponent is unable to respond. Smaller nations, or those with smaller manpower reserves, such as the British Empire, thus became one of the most successful developers and employers of deception in order to achieve decisive effects. Deception might also enable the forces of casualty-averse

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3. For just one example of this list, see http://www.s2company.com/files/readings/murphy.htm, accessed 29 May 2018.

nations to succeed at a much lower cost, preventing an adversary from using attrition to achieve strategic aims. Through long experience, some nations and cultures, from China to Russia to the United Kingdom have become especially skilled at military deception and thus offer a wealth of talent and insights for potential allies or warnings for adversaries. Stronger nations that have typically relied on overwhelming force or less-sophisticated assaults to achieve military objectives would do well to leverage this expertise in their own campaigns and operations.

But these observations are not the sum total of insights within these pages. Readers may identify concepts that escaped the authors or editors, or find new inspiration from the efforts of earlier campaigns. While the speed, range, lethality, and scale of warfare are constantly increasing, military theorists argue that its fundamental nature is not, though they often engage in spirited on debate on what exactly comprises the nature of war. Future practitioners must study their craft, in order to first gain, and then share their own insights, and the authors hope this volume will provide a useful roadmap for the journey.

The book begins with the US Army's first successful deception operation in a major conflict. As Mark Grotelueschen convincingly argues, the "Belfort Ruse" successfully enabled American, and therefore Allied battlefield success in the First World War by influencing German troop dispositions in France. While relying heavily on its European allies, the US Army demonstrated it was a quick study and incorporated deception operations in future combat operations in almost all of its subsequent conflicts. Brian Drohan continues the focus on the First World War by examining British forces in Palestine, that leveraged deception operations to first outflank Ottoman dispositions on a weakened flank, and then used their adversary's tendency to expect a repeat of this tactic to drive through a weakly-held coastal sector. The two operations, at Beersheeba and Megiddo, remind planners that, like poker players and baseball pitchers, they develop their own "tells" and tendencies, and, by identifying these and then varying their plans, they can successfully catch their opponent off guard.

Gary Linhart keeps our focus on the shores of the Mediterranean, but shifts forward in time to examine the intricate British deception campaign at the Battle of El Alamein that enabled Montgomery's defeat of Rommel's vaunted Afrika Korps. While exploring in detail the technical aspects of the campaign, Linhart's analysis of Operation BERTRAM also reveals British efforts to use Rommel's tendencies against him. Knowing that the "Desert Fox" would both use, and therefore expect, a flank attack through the desert, Montgomery fed this belief while developing a strong

attack on the most likely avenue of approach that enabled him to break the Axis cordon. The episode reveals the continued British expertise in deception that significantly enabled the Allied victory in the west. Gregory Hospodor extends this analysis to subsequent campaigns in the Mediterranean, demonstrating how an elaborate, theater level deception enabled construction of a fictitious order of battle that far exceeded in scale the forces actually available, forcing the Axis powers to distribute forces all along their threatened shore and ensuring that a strong landing at any one point had a much better chance of success. While the famous, if macabre, efforts of "The Man That Never Was," inspired books and motion pictures, Hospodor reminds us that it succeeded only because it was part of a layered, detailed, and well-coordinated deception campaign that continually evolved to maintain a position of relative advantage for the western Allies.

Alan Donohue shifts our focus to the Eastern Front to one of the most significant theaters of ground combat in World War II. By successfully reinforcing Soviet perceptions that Moscow remained the focus of German attacks in 1942, Operation *KREML* facilitated a German drive that extended well into the Caucasus and might have cut off Soviet oil supplies had Hitler not become first distracted by, and later obsessed with the city of Stalingrad. Kyle Vautrinot's analysis of that detailed operation demonstrates that tactical, operational and strategic deception played an important role in the counterattack that rescued the city and destroyed Germany's offensive capability for the remainder of the war. Soviet deception, known as *maskirovka*, continued to evolve through the remainder of the war, most significantly, as Curt King points out, in Operation BAGRATION, when successive, and overlapping deception operations kept the Germans constantly off guard and unable to respond to sequential Soviet thrusts, resulting in the destruction of the German Army Group Center and the liberation of Soviet territory taken by the Germans in 1941. But Scott Farquhar's analysis of the D-Day deception plans reveals that the Soviets were not the only masters of deception in the Second World War. By 1944, the Allies had developed the staff and, most importantly, the expertise, to successfully execute an intricate and large-scale campaign that ensured the safety of the Normandy landings and the following breakout and liberation of France. During the course of the war, Germany went from deceiver to deceived, largely as a result of deficiencies in its intelligence apparatus and vulnerability through codebreaking, demonstrating the importance of superiority in the information domain to enable ground combat.

In Chapter Nine, Joseph "Geoff" Babb welcomingly provides both an example from an "Eastern" adversary, and a case in which a western

coalition succumbed to deception, with catastrophic consequences. Babb's account of Chinese deception on the Korean peninsula offers a stark warning for future commanders of how their pre-existing beliefs and notions, if unchallenged, can lead them to disaster. Tal Tovy follows with another successful case of deception, spanning the military and diplomatic arenas that successfully delayed Israeli awareness of the impending Arab attack and impacted that nation's response, though, fortunately, without disastrous consequences. It also offers a connection to previous chapters, demonstrating how Soviet sponsors successfully exported *maskirovka* to client states, and the successful use of a massive training exercise as cover for an invasion, a still-favored tactic in the post-Soviet world.

Steven Paget's account of the British liberation of the Falkland Islands brings the study forward into a compelling case of multi-domain operations requiring both a high degree of coordination among the military domains as well as synchronization with the media and other instruments of national power. Operating in an environment with a ubiquitous media presence, some of which may be hostile, presents a new challenge for military commanders, whether that media is state-based or "nationless" entities such as Wikileaks that collect and publish sensitive military information electronically.[4] Maintaining a successful deception campaign may require the active support of sympathetic media and exclusion of hostile media, presenting a further challenge in democracies where freedom of the press has been enshrined in their founding documents. Donald Wright's account of the First Gulf War, Operation DESERT STORM, brings the volume into the current operating environment, highlighting how air, land, and naval forces successfully cooperated to conceal, or at least delay recognition of the bold Coalition strategy to liberate Kuwait. While the Coalition was certainly strong enough to overwhelm Iraqi forces in a frontal assault, the deception plan's key contribution was to spare Coalition lives,maintaining popular support.

In his conclusion, Conrad Crane reminds us that much has transpired in the quarter-century since Desert Storm including leaps forward in technological capabilities that significantly increase the difficulty of a deception planner's mission. Seemingly innocuous advances in personal

4. "WikiLeaks Website Publishes Classified Military Documents from Iraq," http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/10/22/wikileaks.iraq/index.html, accessed 29 May 2018.

5. "US Military Reviewing Security Practices after Fitness App Reveals Sensitive Info," https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/28/politics/strava-military-bases-location/index.html, accessed 29 May 2018.

electronics now have the ability to reveal the location of clandestine military operating sites.[5] Coordination challenges have increased exponentially, while the proliferation of social media makes it difficult to control a popular narrative, and therefore public and global opinion. At the same time, commanders and staffs have become highly reliant on systems subject to denial or, worse, false injects, leading to the potential for paralysis or action based on false information, potentially easing the deceiver's task. He makes clear that military deception will continue to be a vital part of military operations and an essential area of study for leaders at all levels.

This collection of essays seeks to highlight current thinking and areas of doctrinal development in order to stimulate the study and development of military deception operations. The authors and editor hope this volume will provide a jumping-off point for professionals new to the topic and a resource for instructors educating and training the next generation of practitioners of military deception. While not a comprehensive treatment of the subject, the twelve excellent essays and thought-provoking conclusion provide ample grist for the mills or those who design military deception efforts and for all who guard against the many would-be deceivers weaving their tangled webs.

Chapter 1

The Belfort Ruse

The American Deception Plan for the Battle of St. Mihiel, 1918

Mark E. Grotelueschen

Introduction

When the American Expeditionary Forces' (AEF) First Army attacked the St. Mihiel salient in September 1918, it was, by a wide margin, the largest American battle in US military history to date, with over 500,000 Americans engaged in the offensive, along with over 100,000 Frenchmen, and even a number of British and Italian airmen. The offensive also served as the inauguration of large-scale modern warfare for the US Army, with over three thousand artillery pieces firing, more than a thousand aircraft and hundreds of tanks engaged, all supported by vast electronic and electrical networks of communications and intelligence gathering systems.[1] While these facts suggest that General John J. Pershing and his key staff officers and military planners—to include Major General James W. McAndrew, Brigadier General Fox Conner, and Colonel Arthur L. Conger—were dealing with many new elements of warfare, they were wise enough to incorporate the ancient element of deception into this massive, high-tech, multi-domain operation.

Unwilling to rely solely on the routine yet essential elements of operational security to obscure the enemy's understanding of the upcoming attack, they created an elaborate scheme to convince the German Army that the next American offensive might occur not along the St. Mihiel salient, where it was expected, but some 150 miles to the south, emanating from the area around the town of Belfort near the Swiss border and driving towards the German held town of Mulhouse. The deception campaign, often referred to as the "Belfort Ruse," was an important part of the American plan to keep the Germans guessing as to when and where the next American attack would occur in the fall of 1918. While it is difficult to assess the exact degree to which the Belfort Ruse confused the German Army, the evidence is clear that, in the end, the German Army was not prepared for the Allied attack that struck at both sides of the St. Mihiel salient on 12 September. While the Germans knew that an attack was likely somewhere along the salient, they were unable to predict its size, scope, or timing. Nor could they afford to discount the possibility of an attack in the Belfort-Mulhouse sector, and therefore had to augment their forces there. This
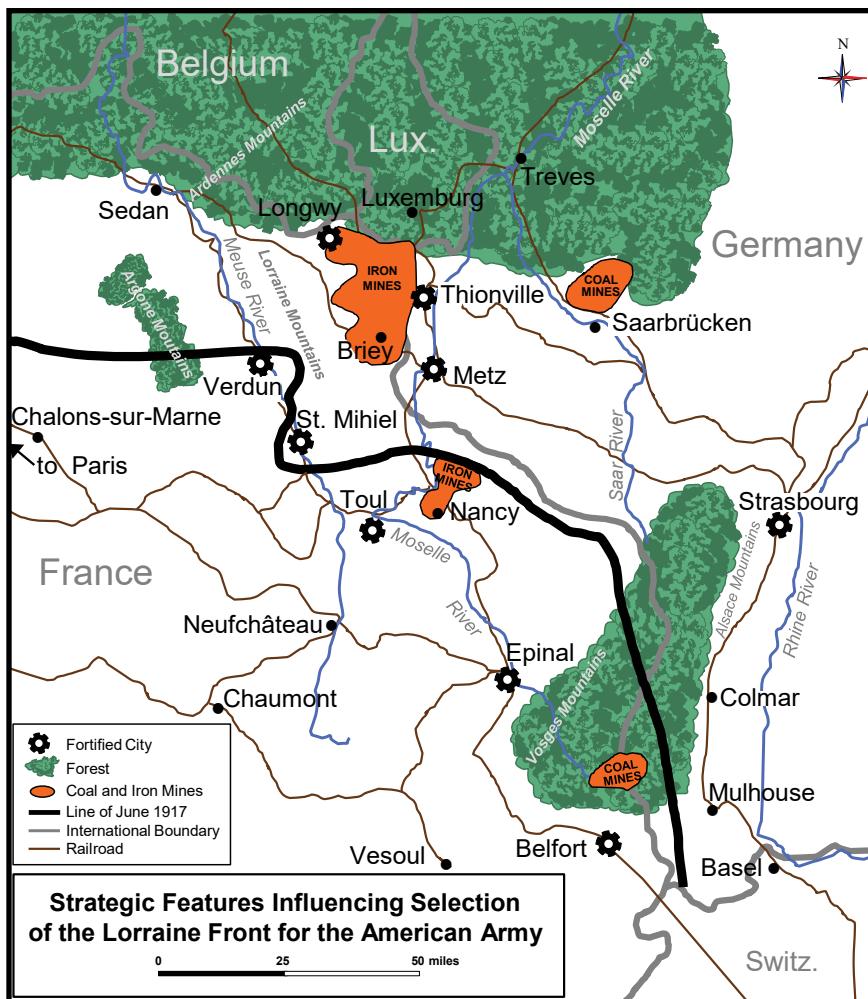
Figure 1.1. Strategic features influencing the selection of the Lorraine front for the American Army. Graphic created by CSI Press Staff.

uncertainty, to at least some extent, helped make the St. Mihiel Offensive one of the most successful American campaigns of the entire war.[2]

Strategic Context

The First World War is famous for the stalemate along the Western Front, where between late 1914 and early 1918 the frontline trenches rarely moved more than a few hundred yards in either direction despite massive offensives and enormous casualties. But beginning in March 1918, this tactical and operational stalemate began to crack. On 21 March, the German Army caught the Allies by surprise and smashed

through the British lines near Albert, France. The Germans gained more than 3,000 square kilometers of terrain, inflicted 250,000 casualties on the Allies, and captured a thousand artillery pieces. Within a couple of weeks, the Allies had contained Operation MICHAEL, but at a great cost. In April, the Germans struck the British again, this time near Ypres, Belgium, and they achieved impressive tactical results for the second time in as many months. If anyone doubted whether the Germans had discovered some important solutions to the tactical challenges of the Western Front, their third spring offensive must have settled the case. On 27 May the Germans crashed through the French positions along the Chemin des Dames between Soissons and Reims. By the end of the first day the leading German units had driven south more than a dozen miles from their jump-off positions, making it the most successful attack of the war on the Western Front since 1914. Finally, in early June, the German offensive began to stall, due to the exhaustion of their attacking units, the determination of French reinforcements, and some timely assistance from the soldiers and marines from the American 3rd and 2nd Infantry Divisions at Château-Thierry and Lucy-le-Bocage (near Belleau Wood).[3]

One of the keys to the German Army's tactical successes in 1918 was its ability to catch the Allies unprepared at the point of each attack. The Germans achieved surprise by employing a number of new tactics and techniques all designed to obscure their intentions until the last possible minute. These included employing new "scientific firing" methods that eliminated the need for extensive artillery registration firing, while at the same time dispensing with the days-long (and even occasionally weeks-long) preliminary artillery bombardments. According to historian David Zabecki, the German spring offensives also "included a number of well-planned and intricate deception operations" which were "extensive and elaborate," and contributed to the surprise they achieved in March, April, and May.[4]

While the Germans clearly had developed some impressive new methods of attack, their troop losses were still heavy (more than 430,000 casualties in the first three offensives), and their strategic situation was changing dramatically by the week.[5] Between 1 March and 1 June more than 400,000 Americans had landed in France, and the pace of arrival was increasing.[6] Realizing that a clock was ticking—soon so many American soldiers and marines would be on the Western Front that a decisive German victory would be inconceivable—the Germans rushed their fourth offensive, in June, against the French lines in Picardy. While they achieved some minor tactical success, the ground gained was much less impressive, and the attack had to be ended more quickly.

In mid-July, the Germans initiated their fifth, and ultimately final offensive of 1918 along the Marne River. This massive attack, which struck along a front of over 70 miles on both sides of Reims, is often considered to be the beginning of what became known as the Second Battle of the Marne. While the Germans achieved some minor successes west of Reims, the attack met abject defeat east of Reims, due in large part to having not achieved the same degree of surprise they had in the first three spring offensives. In fact, the Allies not only discovered where the Germans were going to attack, but exactly when the offensive was going to begin.[7] This critical information gave the Allies the chance to make important defensive adjustments, such as preparing a deep defensive organization and planning a smothering counter-barrage that struck the German front lines just when they were packed with assault troops, both of which helped make the fifth German offensive the least successful of all the major German attacks of 1918.[8]

Even before the Germans struck along the Marne, the presence of fresh American troops (and the promise of many hundreds of thousands more) along with an awareness that the recent German advances had placed them in vulnerable tactical positions, encouraged General Ferdinand Foch, the recently appointed Allied commander-in-chief, to direct the French and American forces to prepare a counter-attack in mid-July aimed at the northern shoulder of the great salient created by Germany's third offensive (sometimes called the Aisne-Marne salient, after the major rivers in the region).[9] However, when the Germans attacked first along the Marne, the Commander of the French Army, General Philippe Pétain, wanted to call off the Franco-American counterattack being prepared by the French Tenth Army near Soissons so he could focus on crushing the German assault. Foch rightly sensed that the moment was perfect for an Allied counterattack that would change the momentum of the war. Basing the attack on surprise more than any other factor, the French and American divisions employed tanks, rolling barrages, and a remarkable degree of élan to shatter the German lines and force a German withdrawal from the entire Aisne-Marne salient.

The Allies followed up this dramatic success, often referred to as the "turning point of the war," with an equally impressive attack by the British at Amiens in early August.[10] Again, surprise, tanks, aircraft, and close infantry-artillery coordination provided the keys to success. Ludendorff famously called the first day of this British attack—8 August—"the Black Day of the German Army," because thousands of overwhelmed, worn-out, and ill-prepared German troops chose surrender over stiff resistance and timely counter-attacks.[11]

In June, July, and August the strategic situation on the Western Front changed for good. In those three months the Germans experienced the failure of their massive Marne offensive, the shocking Allied successes at Soissons and Amiens, and perhaps most significantly, the arrival of more than 800,000 more American soldiers onto French soil.[12] The only questions remaining were whether the fresh, but partially trained and largely inexperienced, American forces would be able to form a competent field army, and when and where the new American units would strike. The only reasonable German hope was putting up such stiff resistance in their fortified defensive positions that the Allies would agree to a compromise peace settlement.

At the Bombon Conference of 21-22 July, Foch informed Pershing that it was time to begin assembling the dispersed American divisions into an American field army.[13] Nothing could have pleased Pershing more. On 24 July, Pershing issued an order creating the First Army, to take effect on 10 August, with headquarters at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, 40 miles east of Paris, and with himself in personal command, while still holding the position of Commander-in-Chief of the AEF as a whole.[14] By 9 August the Allies had agreed that the new First Army should make a major attack in the Woëvre region, which included the St. Mihiel salient, and that it should be ready to strike in early September. Pershing moved his headquarters to Neufchâteau by 16 August (then subsequently to Ligny-en-Barrois), and the First Army staff began developing detailed plans for the first major American-led offensive of the war. Assembling the massive First Army proved to be a substantial challenge, especially stationing the constituent army corps and divisions along the front lines of the salient without making it obvious to the defending Germans that the next great Allied attack would come in that sector.

The Plan for St. Mihiel

Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, just recently assigned to the First Army G-3 after serving with the 1st Infantry Division, earned the job of developing the St. Mihiel attack plan.[15] The extraordinarily fluid operational and strategic situation in the summer of 1918 forced Marshall to re-write the plan several times to account for significant changes in the number of divisions available and even the most basic goals for the offensive.[16] After a final argument between Foch and Pershing that nearly led to the cancellation of the St. Mihiel offensive altogether (and according to Pershing's account, nearly to a physical altercation between the two senior commanders as well!), Marshall was finally able to develop a relatively final plan that involved more than a dozen American divisions assigned
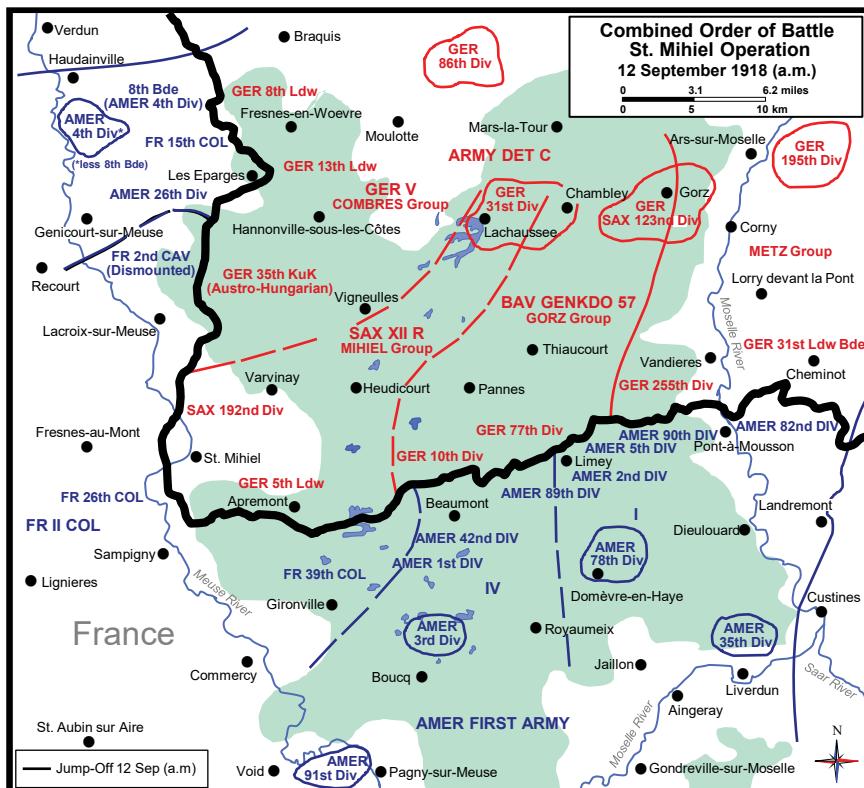
Figure 1.2. The combined order of battle of the St. Mihiel Operation. Graphic created by CSI Press Staff.

to three army corps, supported by four French divisions and one French corps.[17] Colonel Billy Mitchell assumed responsibility for developing the air support for the offensive, while Colonel George S. Patton prepared the tank forces. Other officers worked the critical issues related to transportation, food, ammunition, intelligence gathering, radio and telephone networks, and a range of other elements of modern war, some completely unforeseen just a couple decades prior when the US Army was still just a frontier constabulary. In the end, more than 600,000 American, French, British, and Italian soldiers, marines, and airmen participated in the attack.

Assembling these forces in the region without alerting the Germans proved to be a nearly impossible task, not only for the inexperienced staff officers in the Army, corps, and divisions, but also for the even more inexperienced officers and men that had to execute the plan to concentrate along the salient and be ready to attack on time. The staff officers and commanders took all reasonable precautions. Combat and support units moved into the attack sector only at night, while artillery, air, and radio operations

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had their movements tightly regulated to accomplish required preliminary tasks without changing the overall activity in the region.

Despite these efforts, it appears nearly all of France was abuzz with rumors of an upcoming American attack, and all too often, these rumors included surprisingly accurate details about its location and size. Pershing did not receive Foch's final official instructions to make preparations for the St. Mihiel offensive until 10 August. Colonel Hugh A. Drum, the newly appointed First Army chief of staff, did not issue his formal instructions to the GHQ and First Army staffs to begin detailed planning until 13 August.[18] But already by 17 August officers on Petain's headquarters staff—which had administrative control of the new American First Army—were so concerned about the widespread information leaks and general lack of operational security that it told its American liaison officer, Colonel Paul H. Clark, that Pershing needed to be notified of the security problems. Soon after this, the chief of the American mission at Foch's headquarters, Colonel T. Bentley Mott, informed Fox Conner at First Army HQ that "I have heard it repeatedly stated about these headquarters that '*everybody* was talking of a projected attack in the Woevre'…One officer said, 'I heard in Paris that the Americans were going to make an attack in the Woevre with 14 divisions.'"[19] In time, even young American soldiers noticed the lack of secrecy. Elmer Sherwood, a member of the 42nd Division that was soon to participate in the attack, wrote in his diary that "it seems to me everybody in France surmises that we are going to fight to flatten the St. Mihiel salient. Even the French peasants spoke of it as we came up to this front."[20] Clearly something had to be done.

Petain didn't wait long. On 19 August he wrote Pershing a note warning of the problem:

> I hear from everywhere, and especially from the armies and civil authorities of the east, that, in their generous enthusiasm on account of the prospect of a great success over the enemy, numerous American officers and soldiers have talked in a public way of the projects of the High Command in the Woevre. This is a fact which must be accepted at the present time and…it remains that the troops and the civil population of the east are all informed as to the offensive actions which are being considered. Under the conditions it is impossible that the enemy should not be forewarned, *but we can attempt to mislead him* (emphasis added).[21]

He then proposed a specific approach to mitigating the problem:

> To this end, if you are in accordance with me on this point, you could send American officers to make reconnaissances in the dif-

ferent sectors of Lorraine, of the Vosges, and of Upper Alsace, which are occupied by French troops. I would give to the French Seventh and Eight [sic] Armies instructions which would lead them to believe that an offensive action by American forces is under consideration in these sectors. Thus the enemy's attention would be to a certain extent taken away from the Woevre. I would be much obliged to you if you would inform me if this suggestion is approved by you and what officers you would send to the Seventh and Eight [sic] Armies and on what dates.[22]

Pershing replied to Petain's letter on 23 August, noting that "the considerations which you have set forth relative to the necessity for secrecy in all operations had not escaped me," and that he "keenly" regretted "that indiscretions may have been committed." He agreed that "we must attempt to mislead the enemy upon the actual directions of the attack" and stated that he had already "given instructions with this in view to my general staff." He closed his reply by informing Pétain that he would soon ask for a private audience to discuss "all that concerns the execution" of this deception plan. The Belfort Ruse was born.[23]

The Ruse

In fact, Pershing not only employed Petain's suggestions, he went far beyond them. He initiated an elaborate deception campaign, echoed in future operations in the next global war, involving an entire ghost army corps, led by a real corps commander and staff, and supported by delegations from seven combat divisions that went about energetically planning for a real offensive near Belfort because they themselves were unaware that they were part of a ruse. At first, Pershing discussed the scheme only with his chief of staff at GHQ, Brigadier General James McAndrew, and his top G-2 staff officer, Colonel Arthur Conger. After telling Conger that only the three of them knew that the attack near Belfort was "not real," he asked Conger if anyone else needed know. Conger replied that Brigadier General Fox Conner, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 at GHQ, would have to "issue certain orders." Pershing accepted this, stating, "very well, then there will be just four, you, General Conner, General McAndrew, and myself and I do not want any other soul to know that this attack will not actually be carried out except for us four."[24] It was a very small circle of trust.

The next step was a pair of press conferences, one held by Pershing on 26 August, and another the following day by a Captain de Viel Castel, the French liaison officer assigned to the American press headquarters. Pershing simply announced that he had set a date for a major American

attack in the near future. De Viel gave more information, suggesting that the Americans might be planning an important offensive in Alsace, and stating that Captain Gerald Morgan, the American press censor "would pass carefully worded dispatches."[25]

With the press now engaged, it was time to get the American military forces involved. On 28 August, Conner sent secret instructions to Major General Omar Bundy, the former commander of the 2nd Infantry Division who had just been appointed to command the new VI Corps (which at that time existed more or less only on paper). The subject was "Operations in Upper Alsace," and because of its importance to the Belfort Ruse, this order is included in its entirety:

> The Commander-in-Chief directs that you proceed, with such members of your Staff as you may consider absolutely necessary, to Belfort and prepare detailed plans for an attack in that region.
>
> In preparing these plans you will consider the front of attack as extending from Altkirch to Thann. The objective is Mulhouse and the line of heights extending to the southeast from that place. It is intended by the occupation of this line to insure the destruction of the Rhine bridges and eventually to establish our line along the river itself.
>
> It is believed that the enemy has been misled by the massing of our troops around Neufchateau and that the attack can be conducted by seven divisions in first line. In addition to the 29th Division now in the Belfort sector, the 80th, 35th, 78th, 91st, 79th, and 36th Divisions have been designated as first line divisions. A reconnaissance party of three officers from each of these divisions is being ordered to Belfort to report to you on August 30. You will be informed later as to arrangements for artillery and special services. In order, however, that the feature of surprise may be utilized to the full, it is intended to reduce the artillery to the minimum.
>
> Divisions for the relief of the first line divisions will, in order to avoid massing troops and thus attracting the attention of the enemy, be sent to arrive at least two days after the beginning of the attack.
>
> All troop movements will be ordered by these headquarters, your duties being limited for the present to the reconnaissance and the preparation of the preliminary plan. This work must

be expedited as it is desired that the attack be launched not later than 8 September.

The Commander-in-Chief expects to take command of the operations in person. Suitable buildings for the accommodation of the Headquarters, First Army, have already been leased in Belfort.

Colonel A. L. Conger has been directed to report to you at once. Colonel Conger is the immediate representative of GHQ as well as of G-2 GHQ, and is fully informed as to the Commander-in-Chief's plans. You will consult Colonel Conger in any case of doubt. Frequent telegraphic reports are desired, the operations code being used.

You will, of course, appreciate the necessity for secrecy.[26]

At the time of this order, the front line of the Western Front ran southeast from the eastern edge of St. Mihiel salient at Pont-à-Mousson, through Lorraine, and into Alsace. In Alsace the lines ran due south through the hills and woods of the Vosges mountains for dozens of miles. Then, from the southern edge of the Vosges the front lines ran through a flat, open stretch of country for nearly 20 miles before entering the foothills of the Jural Alps along the Swiss border. This twenty mile section of flat terrain, approximately 150 miles southeast from the St Mihiel salient, was one of the historic invasion routes between France and Germany, and it was known as the Belfort Gap. In 1918, it had been an inactive sector since the end of the war's opening campaigns. But it was flat enough and wide enough to conduct division and even corps-sized operations. Pershing's staff selected it as the site of the diversion effort for just these reasons.

No doubt with a great deal of pride and excitement, Bundy replied immediately that he and "selected members" of his staff would leave his headquarters in Bourbonne-les-Bains at 0800 the next morning. They were not alone in their unwitting subterfuge.[27] On the same day that Conner sent Bundy his orders, he sent a set of identical instructions to the generals commanding each of the six American divisions listed in Bundy's message (a seventh division, the 29th Division, was already in the front lines near Belfort):

The Commander-in-Chief directs that you send by automobile a reconnaissance party to consist of one officer from your headquarters and one from each of your infantry brigades to report to Major General Bundy at the Grand Hotel du Tonneau d'Or at Belfort before noon on 30 August.

Your Chief of Staff will not be one of the officer sent.
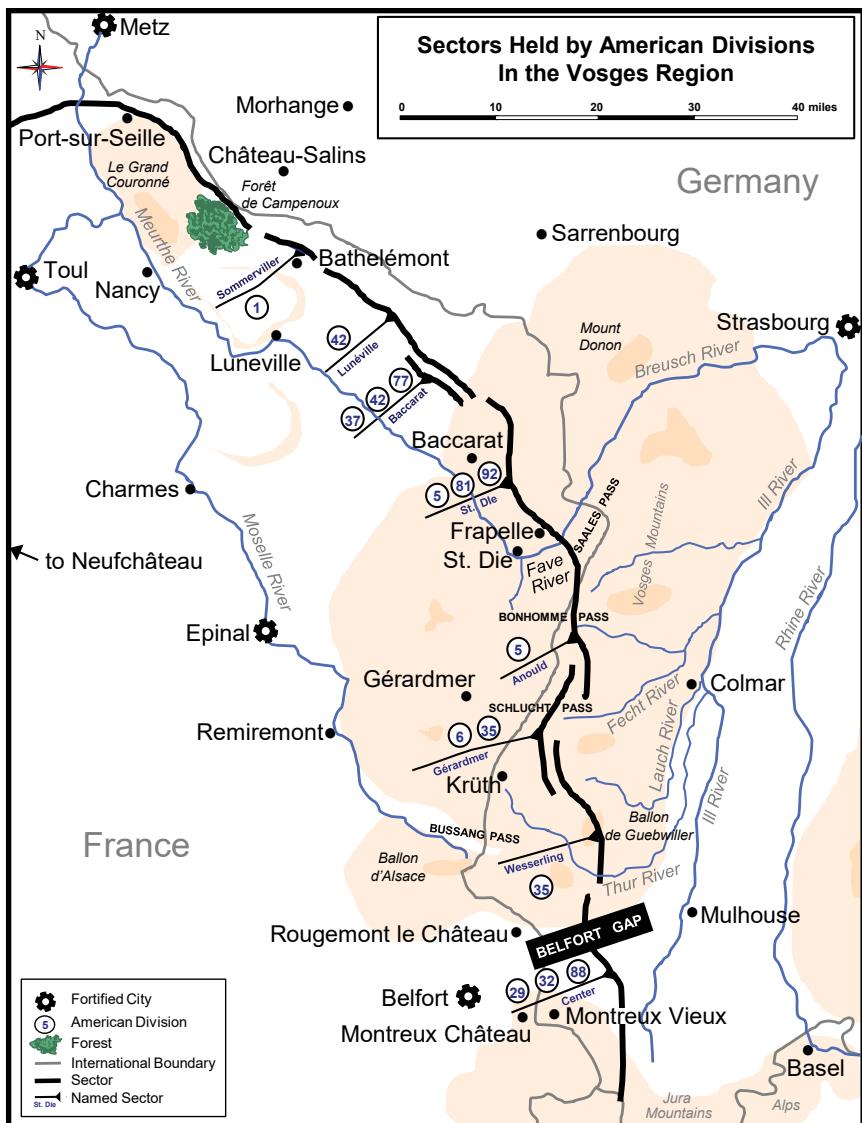
Figure 1.3. Sectors held by American divisions in the Vosges region. Graphic created by CSI Press Staff.

> The Commander-in-Chief directs that you personally warn these officers as to preserving silence as to their mission while in Belfort.[28]

Soon, Bundy, his small staff, the division reconnaissance contingents, and Colonel Conger assembled in Belfort to develop the deception campaign. Of the small but active team gathered at Belfort, only Conger

knew that the whole operation was a ruse. On 1 September, Conger reported back to AEF GHQ that "the instructions given me personally by the Commander-in-Chief have been executed." Bundy's staff had completed its preliminary plan for the never-to-be-executed attack towards Mulhouse, and the divisional reconnaissance teams had already completed their work and were heading back to their respective units. Conger was fully satisfied with the intensity and thoroughness of Bundy's team, reporting that they "have taken the work very seriously and have worked hard and in dead earnest."[29]

Bundy's initial report, enclosed with Conger's message, included a general description of the terrain features and enemy fortifications to be overcome in the sector. He noted that "at the present time" any potential difficulties due to "streams, lakes, ponds and wet marshy ground, are reduced to a minimum." He insisted that "now is a most propitious time for launching an attack in this region. The country is now as dry perhaps as it ever gets, the enemy is weak and conditions otherwise favorable for a surprise attack that would, in my opinion, attain the desired objectives and offer opportunities for an exploitation, to the north, of the success gained." He did report that "the most serious difficulty to be encountered is believed to consist of the large quantities of wire, existing in 'No Man's Land'," along with "the enemy's defensive organization." To overcome these, the attacking force would "require the employment of either a large quantity of artillery or of tanks and artillery in smaller quantity but still sufficient to support the advancing infantry."[30]

In his report, Conger also noted that the French staffs in the sector "have been very polite and helpful." However, he added that they gave him "the impression by their attitude of feeling: 'You Americans are very simple minded indeed if you think you can fool either us or the Germans by any such game as this." But Conger was not simple minded at all. After noting that "as to the results of this reconnaissance work on the enemy's plans, I believe, from all sources, that he is now fully acquainted with all that has been done here," he added that "I do not believe, however, that the enemy takes this reconnaissance very seriously; he has too good a check on every car load and truck load of ammunition and supplies brought into Belfort to be deceived by any mere paper work demonstration or reconnaissance of officers unaccompanied by actual preparations of guns, munition, materiel and subsistence."[31]

In fact, while the Germans did not fall hard for the Belfort Ruse, they continued to struggle in determining exactly when, where, and how large the next American offensive would be, and Bundy's ghost corps caused

them more difficulty than Conger suspected. In part this was because the Allies added other, more real components, to the deception campaign, including more artillery registration in the sector, increased air activity, and heavier radio traffic.[32] Allied units in the front lines increased their raiding activities, most notably the American 29th Division, which conducted violent raids on 31 August and 7 September.[33] Conger himself directly contributed to the deception by intentionally providing false information to the German spy network in the area. In one case, he used a "perfectly fresh sheet of carbon paper" when he wrote Pershing a report from his hotel room describing Bundy's attack plans. After making sure the carbon paper "was perfectly legible" he crumpled it up, threw it in his waste basket, and took a short walk around the hotel. When he returned to his room, the carbon paper had disappeared.

The German Confusion

While senior German commanders—from General Georg Fuchs who commanded all German forces in the St. Mihiel salient (called Army Detachment C), to the local army group commander, General Max von Gallwitz, all the way to the de facto head of the German Army, General Erich Ludendorff—all suspected a Franco-American attack somewhere near the St. Mihiel salient, they proved unable to determine exactly where the attack would hit, how large it would be, what its goals were, or when it would come. Part of this confusion came naturally from the fact that, while many American officers (and no doubt many French soldiers and civilians too) might have openly discussed their thoughts about the next American attack, the American First Army was constantly adjusting the actual details of the offensive, and the Allied High Command even debated whether the attack should be made at all. As late as 31 August Foch made certain strategic proposals to Pershing that could have led to the complete cancellation of the attack at St. Mihiel. Finally on 2 September Foch, Pétain, and Pershing resolved their disagreements and re-authorized a slightly scaled down offensive along the salient.[34] The new plan still involved a huge collection of American and French resources, as well as British and Italian bombers. When the American planners learned that important French heavy artillery assets could not arrive in time, they slipped the start of the offensive to 12 September. Conner promptly informed Bundy that the start of his phantom attack had to be postponed, and that he should spend the extra time expanding his attack plans—widening the potential frontage and going into greater detail about the depth of the advance, even to the point of selecting "the bridgeheads on the Rhine which it would be advantageous to secure."[35]

Nevertheless, Fuchs and Gallwitz increasingly suspected an attack on the south face of the salient, speculated whether an attack would also come from the western face, and regularly discussed with Ludendorff how and even whether to meet an attack. They even considered launching a spoiling attack on the southern face of the salient, but ultimately dismissed this option due to a lack of available resources to pull it off. While it is not possible to know for sure, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that one of the reasons that Fuchs did not receive the resources required to conduct the spoiling attack was because the German High Command had to spread its declining reserve forces to other threatened sectors along the Western Front. And in early September, that included the Belfort Gap.

Despite Conger's doubts of the efficacy of the ruse, the Germans were not only well aware of the American activities around Belfort, they were concerned enough about the possibility of a real attack there that they undertook substantial defensive measures. Diplomats in Switzerland reported "great activity" across the German border, including evacuation of entire villages (they prepared the entire city of Mulhouse for evacuation), the filling up of munitions depots with ammunition and Austrian artillery, the reinforcing of Rhineland fortresses with new, longer-range artillery, and the construction of a "complex system of trenches…between the Ill and Rhine rivers."[36] Finally, and most significantly, the Germans moved three precious divisions into the area around Mulhouse to meet a possible attack through the Belfort Gap. After the armistice, Conger reported meeting a German colonel who had been a staff officer charged with tracking the American activities near Belfort. According to Conger, this German colonel notified Ludendorff of the need to send reinforcements to the Mulhouse sector, and in his recommendation he stated, "I recognize quite fully that all these preparations being made for attack may perfectly well turn out to be a ruse de guerre intended to mislead us as to the real point of the attack. However, there is nothing to indicate that it is not the real point of attack and our danger there is so great that I deem it imperative to have these divisions."[37] No doubt, Fuchs would have preferred to have had those divisions available for the direct defense of the salient, and their relocation away from the sector of the actual attack is the clearest sign that the Belfort Ruse bore at least some fruit.

The Belfort Ruse and Allied Success

On 12 September, the American First Army attacked the St. Mihiel salient, catching the German defenders by surprise. Within two days it

had killed, captured, or driven off Fuchs' Army Detachment C in its entirety. The First Army liberated some two hundred square miles of French territory that had been occupied by the Germans for nearly four years, capturing more than 15,000 enemy soldiers, over 400 artillery pieces, as well as massive stocks of other military supplies, at the cost of just 7,000 American casualties.[38] Most significantly, the offensive frustrated German plans to remove the entire French male population from the salient and to methodically destroy every village, road, railroad, bridge, and well in the salient. It was an extraordinary victory for a brand new field army filled with partially trained officers and men, as well as a number of whole divisions that had never seen combat before. It also served as a welcome introduction to the methods of deception more familiar to European warfare, but practiced less-often by Americans. Many factors contributed to this remarkable American victory, and the innovative, and ultimately successful, Belfort Ruse appears to have been one of them.

Notes

1. No scholarly study of the battle has ever been written. The only monograph-length work is James Hallas, S*quandered Victory: The American Army at St. Mihiel* (Praeger, 1995), and it is not based on archival research. In his memoir, Pershing claimed the American First Army contained 550,000 American and 110,000 French soldiers during the St Mihiel attack, and the American Battle Monuments Commission's (ABMC) *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* gives these figures as the numbers "involved in the offensive." In his introduction to the US Army's reprint of the official history, David Trask states that Pershing assembled approximately 500,000 men for the battle. John Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1931), 2: 261; ABMC, *American Armies*, 110; *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990 reprint), 1: xvii. For information on signals intelligence at St. Mihiel, see William A. Morgan, "Invasion on the Ether: Radio Intelligence at the Battle of St. Mihiel, September 1918," *Military Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 2 (April 1987): 57-61.

2. For a piece that discusses the success and importance of the St. Mihiel offensive, see Grotelueschen, "The Doughboys Make Good: American Victories at St. Mihiel and Blanc Mont Ridge," *Army History* (Spring 2013): 6-18.

3. The best analysis of the German spring offensives is in David T. Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War* (London: Routledge, 2006); for a discussion of the American role in the first four German offensives, see Mark E. Grotelueschen, *Into the Fight; April-June 1918* (Washington, D.C.: US Army Center of Military History, 2018).

4. Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 39. For detailed discussion of the changes in German artillery methods, see Zabecki, *Steel Wind: Colonel Georg Bruchmüller and the Birth of Modern Artillery* (Praeger, 1994).

5. For statistics on the German offensives, see Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 160, 199, and 226.

6. ABMC, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1995 reprint), 502.

7. Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 261.

8. For more on the Second Battle of the Marne, see Michael S. Neiberg, *Second Battle of the Marne* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2008); for the key American contribution at the Second Marne, see Douglas V. Johnson, II, and Rolfe L. Hillman, Jr., *Soissons, 1918* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999).

9. Foch was not appointed a Marshal of France until August 2018.

10. For the Second Marne, or what the Americans called the Aisne-Marne Offensive, as the turning point of the war, see Robert L. Bullard, *American Soldiers Also Fought* (New York: Longmans, 1936), 13; in his memoirs, Pershing called it "the counterblow that was destined to change the entire aspect of the war," and "the turning of the tide," *My Experiences in the World War* (New York: Stokes, 1931), 2: 158, 161); Hindenburg said the same thing, in more words, as did German Chancellor von Hertling, see Pershing, *My Experiences*, 2: 162.

11. Ludendorff is quoted in Hew Strachen, *The First World War* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 316.

12. ABMC, *American Armies*, 502.

13. The documents announcing Foch's and Pétain's agreement that it was time to form an American army are included in the American official history, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990 reprint), 8: 4-8.

14. The first discussions regarding an American field army called for an American First Army to be created in the Aisne-Marne region, which was still active at that time, while an American Second Army was to be assembled more gradually in the St. Mihiel sector. However, by 9 August the Aisne-Marne sector had stabilized enough that the Allies decided to create the First Army in the St. Mihiel sector and to have it complete preparations to attack the salient there. The Second Army was not created until mid-October. See documents in *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 6-18. For Pershing's discussion of this, see his memoir, *My Experiences in the World War*, 2: 171-176.

15. Marshall was officially assigned to work under Fox Conner in the AEF GHQ's Operations section, but Conner loaned Marshall to Colonel Hugh Drum, the new First Army chief of staff, to help plan the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne operations. See George C. Marshall, *Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1976).

16. Marshall, *Memoirs*, 124-125.

17. Donald Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies* (Indiana UP, 1986), 176. In his memoirs, Pershing only relates that during the heated discussion "we both rose from the table where we sat." Pershing, 2: 247.

18. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 127-128.

19. Donald Smythe, "The Ruse at Belfort," *Army* 22, no. 6 (June 1972): 38.

20. Smythe, "The Ruse at Belfort," 38.

21. Petain's letter to Pershing is included in *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 21-22.

22. Petain's letter to Pershing is included in *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 21-22.

23. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 27. Rod Paschall, "The Belfort Ruse." *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Autumn, 2002): 24-29.

24. These comments come from Conger's post-war recollections when he was a military attaché to Berlin, included in *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 62-64.

25. Hallas, *Squandered Victory*, 39.

26. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 34-35.

27. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 35.

28. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 34.

29. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 44.

30. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 45.

31. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 44.

32. Smythe, "Ruse," 36.

33. ABMC, *American Armies*, 423.

34. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 47.

35. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 51.

36. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 65.

37. *United States Army in the World War*, 8: 63.

38. Different sources offer various figures for the number of German troops and guns captured, and US casualties suffered: The narrative portion of the official history claims "15,000 prisoners, 257 guns" *United States Army in the World War*, 1: 43. The ABMC history states that American casualties were "less than 9,000, yet more than 15,000 prisoners and about 450 cannon had been captured," ABMC, 112; in his memoir, Pershing states: "Nearly 16,000 prisoners were taken and some 450 enemy guns had fallen into our hands. Our casualties numbered about 7,000." Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, 2: 270; George C. Marshall writes that the numbers were "in the neighborhood of 15,000 prisoners and 400 guns," and just 5000 US casualties. Marshall, *Memoirs of My Services in the World War,* 146. In his biography of Pershing, Donald Smythe claims that the First Army "had captured 450 guns ad 16,000 prisoners, at a cost of only 7,000 casualties," Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies*, 185. The German official history, *Der Weltkrieg*, claims that German losses were somewhat smaller, approximately 17,000 men, including "at least" 13,000 POWs, and just 150 artillery pieces. Reichsarchiv, Der Weltkrieg 1914 bis 1918. *Die militärischen Operationen zu Lande* (14 vols. Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1925-44), vol. 14: 602.

Chapter 2

From Beersheba to Megiddo

British Deception Operations during the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1918

Major Brian J. Drohan

Deception operations are often romanticized in the sense that some dramatic ruse can appear as a stroke of genius that single-handedly wins the battle, as in the famous story of the Trojan Horse. However, the enduring value of deception operations is the integration of deception efforts into the concept of operations. During World War I in the Palestine Theater, the thorough integration of deception measures into the overall concept of operations played a significant role in the success of two major campaigns—the battles of Beersheba-Third Gaza in 1917 and the 1918 Megiddo offensive.

Deception was a key part of operational planning on all sides during the First World War. This is because offensives required massive concentrations of supplies and troops—so much so, that adversaries generally knew when the opposing army was preparing for an offensive. Thus, the point of deception operations prior to an offensive was not to disguise preparations entirely, but to prevent the enemy from accurately estimating the precise timing, scale, and location of an offensive.

At both Beersheba and Megiddo, British deception planners sought to strengthen their adversaries' inaccurate assumptions about the location of upcoming British offensives. They deliberately intended to make enemy leaders more certain of their (incorrect) assessment of the situation. To employ these measures effectively, deception planners must have an accurate understanding of the adversary's expectations and situational awareness. In these two cases, British intelligence officers understood enough about the enemy to know where the Turks and Germans believed the next offensive would occur. These insights proved vital in developing effective deception plans that British commanders fully integrated into the concept of operations and scheme of maneuver.

The Palestinian Campaign and the Road to Beersheba

With the outbreak of war in July 1914, the Ottoman Empire (today's Turkey) signed an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. In October, Turkey gave refuge to two German ships that the British Royal Navy
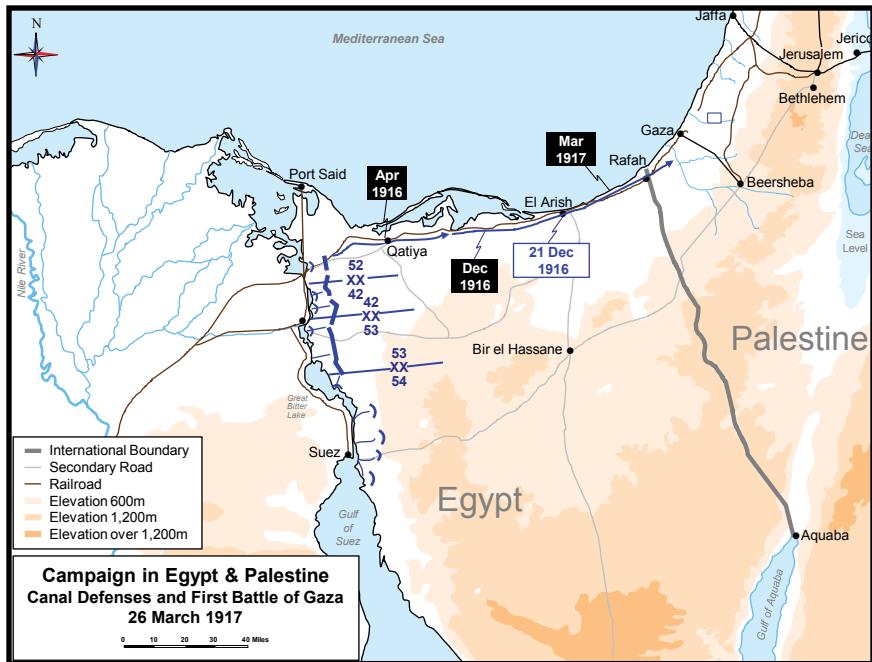
Figure 2.1. Canal defenses in the first battle of Gaza, 26 March 1917. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

chased into Turkish waters. Later that month, Turkey attacked the Russian Navy, prompting Russia, France, and Britain to declar war on Turkey in early November.[1] Contingents from across the British Empire—Australians, New Zealanders, and Indians—soon joined the British forces in the Middle East. In 1915, Britain suffered a series of setbacks; the amphibious landings at Gallipoli, designed to force the Dardanelles, failed and the British offensive in Mesopotamia also stalled. To make matters worse, Turkish forces drove from Palestine into the Sinai Peninsula, threatening British-occupied Egypt.[2] The return of British troops from Gallipoli allowed Britain to strike back in the Sinai. By the end of 1916, the Sinai Peninsula was under British control and British leaders prepared a new offensive into Palestine.

However, the British offensive soon ran into difficulties. Two assaults on the fortified city of Gaza, along the Mediterranean coast, failed to capture the city. After the second Gaza offensive, General Sir Edmund Allenby took command of the British forces. A cavalryman by background and an experienced commander who led a field army on the Western Front earlier in the war, Allenby instituted a series of reforms, such as a rigorous training regimen on new tactics such as rolling artil-

lery barrages and an improved system for regulating water consumption, which became a key consideration in heat of southern Palestine. Notably, however, Allenby also ensured that his staff included deception operations in every battle plan. This approach to deception planning paid off during Allenby's first offensive.[3]

Meanwhile, Germany deployed the Asia Korps—a force of military advisers and combat troops—to support Turkey. In July 1917, the Turkish government placed German General Erich von Falkenhayn in command of the newly established Yildirim Army Group, which consisted of two field armies—the Seventh and Eighth. Turkish General Mustafa Kemal—the future founder of the Republic of Turkey—led Seventh Army until Mustafa Fevzi took command in early October.[4] At the time of the British offensive, Seventh Army had only just taken responsibility for the inland sector of the front stretching from Tel el Sheria in the center to Beersheba in the east. The Turkish Eighth Army, commanded by German General Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, held the coastal sector between Tel el Sheria and Gaza. Eighth Army consisted of three corps: XXII Corps covered the Gaza sector, XX Corps held the center, and III Corps held Beersheba, which anchored the Turks' left flank in the Negev Desert.[5] The Turks and Germans had 33,000 infantry, 1,400 cavalry, and about 300 artillery pieces at their disposal.

Against this force, the British mustered 60,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and approximately 450 artillery pieces.[6] Allenby organized British forces into three corps: XXI Corps, which held the Gaza sector, and XX Corps were infantry formations, while the Desert Mounted Corps consisted of cavalry, New Zealand mounted riflemen, and Australian "light horse." Additionally, the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, a separate unit of camel-borne infantry designed for desert mobility, enhanced the mounted component.[7]

Beersheba: The Concept of Operations

One of Allenby's corps commanders, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Chetwode devised (or inspired) the plan for the British offensive that has since become known as the battles of Third Gaza and Beersheba. Having witnessed the failure of the first two assaults on Gaza, Chetwode thought it better to strike further inland where Turkish defenses were weaker. Many other senior officers agreed with the idea.[8] In June 1917, Chetwode wrote to Allenby, suggesting that the main effort of the next offensive focus on the town of Beersheba, which was approximately 50 kilometers inland from Gaza. Apart from its position on the far left of the Turkish line, Beer-
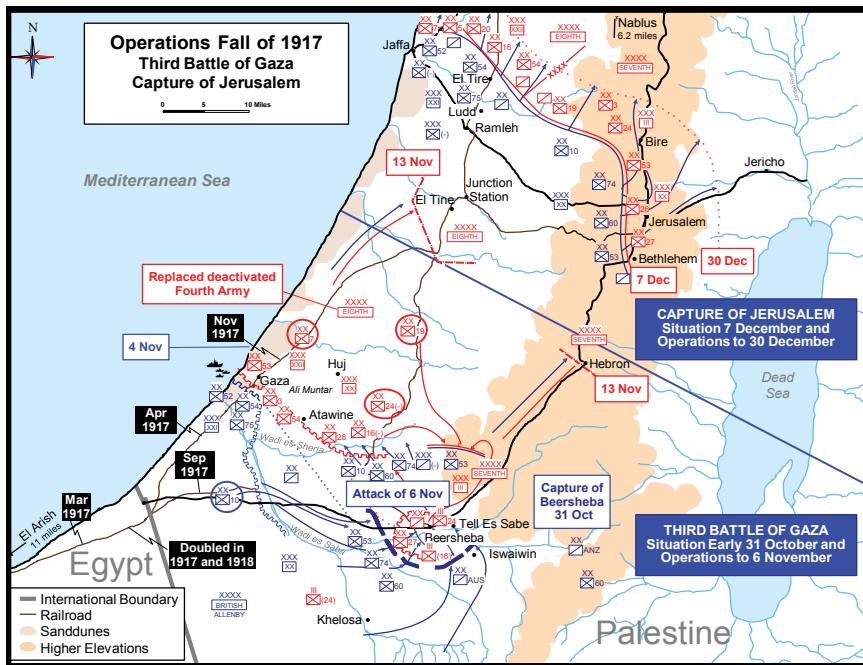
Figure 2.2. The third battle of Gaza and the capture of Jerusalem. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

sheba contained several water wells. Once in British hands, Beersheba's wells could be used to keep British troops supplied, as the availability of water remained a major logistical constraint of desert warfare. Beersheba could then serve as a jumping-off point for further attacks behind enemy lines, with the aim of driving north and west to the Mediterranean in order to cut off Turkish forces in Gaza.[9]

Allenby liked the idea and ordered his staff to plan for the Desert Mounted Corps and XX Corps to attack Beersheba. Both units would have to march through the desert without the Turks discovering the move, then seize Beersheba quickly so that the Desert Mounted Corps could lead a rapid exploitation of the breakthrough. The main attack on Beersheba enabled a supporting attack on Gaza to fix Turkish forces there and divert their attention from the main attack. Planners chose the night of 30-31 October 1917 to launch the offensive.[10]

The Deception Plan

Allenby, his staff, and his subordinate commanders also agreed on the importance of convincing the Turks and their German advisers that the main thrust of the British offensive would strike Gaza, not Beersheba, in

order to keep the defenders fixed there and prevent any fatal reinforcement of Beersheba. Moving two corps—a total of 56,000 men in four infantry and two mounted divisions, along with 200 artillery pieces—from one end of the front to the other presented a difficult task under any circumstances, but the need for secrecy required a thorough deception plan.

Deception planners knew that the Turks believed the British would attack Gaza a third time and used this to their advantage. British forces had decoded enemy communications in which Turkish and German commanders discussed how an attack on Gaza was easier to support logistically due to the city's proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and railways. The British also knew that Turkish and German leaders were worried about the possibility of an amphibious landing. The enemy was not particularly concerned about the chances of a major offensive against Beersheba. British planners therefore did not have to change their enemy's assessments—they sought to reinforce preexisting beliefs.[11]

The deception plan had three objectives. First, planners sought to reinforce the Turks' preexisting belief that the British offensive would target Gaza. Second, because British planners knew that Turkish ground and air reconnaissance patrols would discover at least some of the British troops as they repositioned toward Beersheba, the deception had to convince the Turks that an attack on Beersheba was only a feint. Finally, the British believed that the four or five Turkish divisions in Syria formed a strategic reserve that could be deployed to Gaza. The third part of the plan intended to fix these units in Syria and prevent them from reinforcing Turkish forces in Palestine.[12]

Objective 1: Gaza as the Main Effort

To support this objective, Allenby's planners coordinated with the Royal Navy, sent false radio messages, arranged for the intentional "loss" of fake documents, and prepared a massive artillery barrage targeting Gaza. Taken together, these efforts reinforced the Turkish belief that Gaza was the main effort of the impending offensive.

The Royal Navy aided the deception effort by simulating preparations for an amphibious assault. Naval officers collected small boats (in the days before amphibious assault vehicles, rowboats and dinghies were used to shuttle soldiers from large troopships to the shore) from the surrounding area and massed them on shore near the British frontline positions. In another potential sign of an amphibious attack, naval vessels took soundings off the Gaza coast to measure the depth of the sea and the beach gradient.[13]

The British also sent false radio messages that included information meant to disguise the exact timing of the offensive. For example, one message stated that General Allenby was going to be away from the front lines from 29 October-4 November. Because no army would launch an offensive while its commander was away from the front, the obvious implication of this information was that an offensive would not occur during that period.[14]

In what has since been termed the "Haversack Ruse," planners also arranged for false documents to fall into Turkish hands by having a reconnaissance patrol intentionally drop a haversack after making contact with Turkish cavalry patrols. The Turks were certain to capture the haversack and analyze its contents. These contents included fake planning documents indicating that the British planned to attack Gaza by land and sea. Meanwhile, the fake documents claimed, a feint would be launched against Beersheba.[15] Opposing forces frequently captured enemy documents during raids and patrols, so the fact that the haversack seemingly contained important documents was not out of the ordinary.[16] The idea for this ploy is often mistakenly attributed to a single British intelligence officer, MAJ Richard Meinertzhagen, who later claimed that the ruse was the key in deceiving Turkish forces. Instead, the haversack ruse formed only one part of the overall deception plan. British deception planners did not rely on a singular, "brilliant" ruse, but on the cumulative effects of multiple deception ploys that all reinforced the same message, demonstrating the high level of coordination required in any successful deception plan.[17]

Lastly, planners arranged for a massive preparatory bombardment against Gaza using artillery and naval gunfire. This began on 27 October, three days before the scheduled attack on Beersheba. During the First World War, both sides regularly used days-long preparatory barrages prior to an offensive to "soften up" the enemy positions. By targeting Gaza, British planners intended to convince Turkish and German commanders that Gaza was the target of the upcoming offensive.[18]

Objective 2: Disguise the Deployment Toward Beersheba

Because they believed that Turkish reconnaissance would discover at least some signs of the increased British presence near Beersheba, British planners sought to deceive the Turks as to the *size* of the deployment rather than the deployment itself. Therefore, British planners focused their deception efforts on counter-reconnaissance and operational security measures.

British planners recognized that overhead surveillance, in this case enemy aircraft, posed the greatest danger to the success of the deception.

Throughout 1917, the Turks and Germans had more aircraft in theater than the British. This superiority gave the Turks and Germans a marked advantage in aerial reconnaissance. To counter this advantage, British troops increased their air defense capabilities by building additional machine gun positions, and Allenby received additional aircraft sufficient for two air wings of 72 aircraft. Allenby sent many to the Beersheba sector, where they flew counter-reconnaissance missions. In addition to attempting to blind enemy air reconnaissance, British planners slowly increased the number of patrols in the Beersheba sector so that the Turks grew accustomed to seeing increased British activity in the area well before the offensive began.[19]

British troops also followed strict operational security procedures. Soldiers spent daylight hours hidden in wadis so that enemy aircraft could not spot them. Engineers constructed a railway line and water pipeline extension toward Beersheba to facilitate the movement of supplies for the offensive, but this worked only at night. During the day, they camouflaged the railroad and pipeline to prevent observation from the air. To further disguise the deployment, troops marched in stages from one concealed position to another and did so only at night.[20] Ultimately, Turkish and German forces discovered the movement of additional British forces to the Beersheba sector, but they incorrectly assessed the size of the force, believing it contained a maximum of two divisions—one infantry and one mounted—due to the logistical difficulties of moving and supplying forces in the interior.[21]

Objective 3: Fix Turkish Reserves in Syria

The third part of the deception plan—fixing Turkish reserves in Syria by creating the impression of a planned amphibious landing at Iskenderun—occurred on the British-occupied island of Cyprus, less than 200 kilometers away and the nearest British base to Iskenderun. British radio traffic simulated the arrival of new forces. Naval personnel laid out buoys in Cypriot harbors to direct troop transports and engineers began construction of new troop camps. Planners intended for these preparations to create the impression that Cyprus was to be the staging area for an amphibious assault on the Syrian or Turkish coast. Turkish intelligence sources soon heard about the preparations. On October 17, a Turkish air reconnaissance mission flew over Cyprus, but found no evidence of a large-scale amphibious assault.[22] Ultimately, this part of the British deception plan failed to convince the Turks. Even so, this failure had little effect on the overall deception effort. Turkish and German commanders continued to believe that the offensive targeted Gaza and were more con-

cerned about an amphibious landing there, rather than near Syria. Turkish High Command deployed some of its reserves to Palestine, but only two divisions reached the front by the time the British offensive began. One of those was in reserve north of Gaza while the other remained in reserve behind the center of the line. The Turks sent only one brigade of reinforcements to oppose the feint at Beersheba.[23]

The Battle

On the evening of 30 October, the Desert Mounted Corps left its bivouacs around Khalasa and Asluj, where it had assembled for the attack. The mounted troops then rode through the night in a wide flanking movement designed to have them ready to attack Beersheba from the east at dawn. Meanwhile, XX Corps crossed a series of wadis to reach their start positions where they could attack Beersheba from the south and southwest. The battle began with a short but intense artillery bombardment at 0555 on 31 October. By 0830, XX Corps' advanced troops had captured a key Turkish strongpoint. This opened the path for the main attack, which began at 1215. East of the town, the Desert Mounted Corps assaulted another strong hilltop stronghold, and by 1500, they had captured the position, enabling next phase of the operation, the seizure of the town of Beersheba itself. In late afternoon, with only a few hours remaining before darkness, Australian Light Horse swept into the town. Beersheba had fallen.[24]

On the Gaza flank, the attack began on November 1, spearheaded by XXI Corps, with 11,000 infantrymen and 148 cannon. The Turks defended with 116 guns and 4,500 infantrymen—a force that grew to 8,000 men as the battle dragged on. By November 5, British troops had captured some of the front-line Turkish positions, but the Gaza fortress remained in Turkish hands. But British successes in the Beersheba sector meant that the Turks would be encircled if they remained at Gaza. Over the night of 6-7 November, with the Desert Mounted Corps rolling the Turkish left flank back, the Turks abandoned Gaza, and British troops entered the city the following morning. With the Turks in full retreat, Allenby switched his main effort from the Beersheba flank to the more easily supported Gaza flank.[25]

The capture of Beersheba crushed the Turkish left, but Turkish forces withdrew in good order, occupying strong positions on high ground at Hareira, Tel el Sheria, and Tel Khuweilfe. The Turks managed to hold Tel Khuweilfe for five days, which allowed the Turks to regroup.[26] Turkish forces quickly occupied a new defensive line centered on the town of Huj. For the next few weeks, British forces slowly drove the Turks farther

north, with Turkish troops executing a series of well-organized withdrawals. By early December, British forces reached the outskirts of Jerusalem. After several days of fierce fighting, the Turks withdrew from the city. On 11 December, Allenby victoriously entered Jerusalem's Old City through the famous Jaffa Gate.[27] Allenby's offensive had succeeded in breaking the Gaza-Beersheba line, but he had not managed to surround and destroy the Turkish army. Even so, it was a significant victory, especially considering the stalemate that characterized the fighting in many other theaters during the First World War.

Assessment

The Turks and Germans identified some British deceptions and some troop movements, but it was too late. On 25 October, Turkish intelligence realized that many British camps near Gaza were empty. The Turks also identified several British mounted brigades southwest of Beersheba.[28] After the war, Kress von Kressenstein claimed in his memoirs that he correctly identified the haversack documents as fake and had accurately determined that the additional British reconnaissance near Beersheba indicated an attack was imminent.[29] His actions, however, suggest otherwise. Kress prioritized the improvement of fortifications in the Gaza sector over Beersheba. He also deployed the bulk of his reserves and reinforcements in the Gaza and central sectors of the line. Only one brigade reinforced Beersheba, which suggests that he believed that the main British attack would be against Gaza. His superior, von Falkenhayn, approved these troop dispositions. This meant that the Turks had only one infantry and one cavalry division holding Beersheba.[30] On 29 October, only two days before the offensive began, a message from the Turkish High Command noted that "an outflanking movement on Beersheba, with about one infantry and one cavalry division, is indicated; but the main attack, as before, must be expected on the Gaza front."[31] Senior German and Turkish commanders in theater did not take any concrete actions to suggest that they expected the British main effort to strike Beersheba.

Of the three deception objectives, only the first two succeeded. The third objective—fixing Turkish reserves in Syria through the Iskederun amphibious landing ruse—failed. But the arrival of Turkish reinforcements had little effect. Turkish and German commanders expected the main attack to come at Gaza with a feint directed toward Beersheba, and British deception operations successfully reinforced this belief.[32] The British skillfully disguised the fact that Beersheba was the target of the main attack and prevented the enemy from discovering the size of the force involved. This success did not stem from any single officer's genius; it
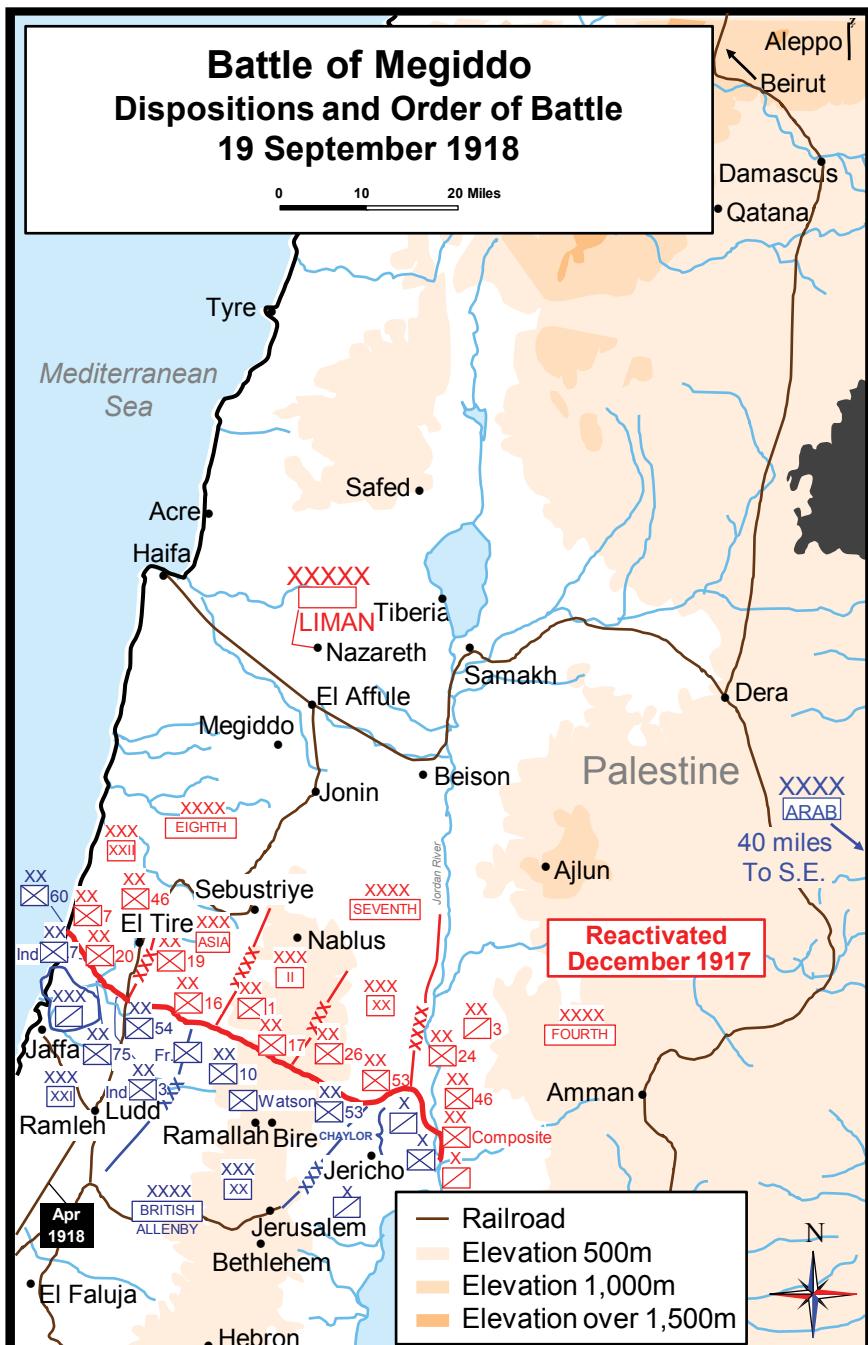
Figure 2.3. Dispositions and Order of battle in the Battle of Megiddo, 19 September 1918. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

was instead the product of a collective effort from Allenby's staff and commanders through a planning process that integrated military deception into all aspects of British operations.

Megiddo: The Concept of Operations

Between winter 1917 and spring 1918, Allenby ordered limited attacks into the Jordan Valley that proved inconclusive, but still intended to mount a major offensive in the fall. In the summer of 1918, Allenby's troop dispositions included XXI Corps with four divisions in the west, while XX Corps and its three divisions occupied the Samaria Hills in the center. Reinforcements arrived for the Desert Mounted Corps, bringing their strength to four mounted divisions. Allenby placed three divisions on the eastern flank in the Jordan Valley but kept the fourth in reserve near the coast.[33] On the other side, the Turkish Eighth Army held the coastal sector, with the Asia Korps to their left, while Seventh Army dug into the Samaria Hills, and Fourth Army deployed in the Jordan Valley to the east. These units also had a new commander—German General Otto Liman von Sanders.

The original plan for the Megiddo offensive—named for the ruins of an ancient city that lay along the planned British avenue of approach—was cautious, but in late August 1918 Allenby selected a more audacious option.[34] The main effort occurred on Allenby's left, near the Mediterranean coast, where XXI Corps hoped to break through the Turkish lines before wheeling east and advancing on Sebustiye and Nablus. This would create space for the Desert Mounted Corps to ride through the breach and seize Afule before turning east to strike Beisan, thus cutting the Turkish lines of retreat out of the Jordan Valley and, hopefully, trapping the Turkish army.[35] It was essentially the opposite of the third Gaza-Beersheba plan; this time, the main attack struck the Turks on the coastal flank rather than the inland one.

In the center, XX Corps used two infantry divisions to fix the Germans and Turks north of Ramallah. On the right, a mounted division, an Indian infantry brigade, and four infantry battalions formed a makeshift element named "Chaytor's Force" after the commanding officer. They served as a diversion, meant to convince the Turks that the main offensive would come across the Jordan River toward Amman.[36]

Ultimately, the operational plan relied on overwhelming force at the point of breakthrough, followed by rapid exploitation by the Desert Mounted Corps. With a three-to-one advantage in artillery over the Turks, Allenby had the largest artillery concentration in the Middle East Theater.

On top of this, he could call upon naval gunfire from two Royal Navy destroyers. Such a massive offensive required significant preparation such as stockpiling ammunition, food, and water as well as massing combat power. Just carrying the army's water required over 7,000 camels.[37]

The Deception Plan

As at Beersheba, Allenby's staff prepared a thorough deception plan and fully integrated it into the maneuver plan, in order to strengthen their enemy's preexisting beliefs as to the location of the next offensive. British intelligence knew from captured documents and prisoners that the Turks and Germans expected a British offensive and believed it would target the Jordan Valley. Turkish intelligence officers had come to this conclusion based on the pattern of British activity throughout 1918, including the British capture of Jericho in February. Throughout the spring, Arab irregular forces under Prince Feisal and British LTC T.E. Lawrence, the famed "Lawrence of Arabia," conducted raids behind Turkish lines. The Desert Mounted Corps also made two limited incursions into the Jordan Valley, which further reinforced the Turkish perception of a British attack there.[38] Consequently, the Megiddo deception plan had two objectives: strengthen the enemy's belief that the next offensive consisted of a main attack in the Jordan Valley toward Amman rather than in the west along the Mediterranean coast; and, if possible, convince the Turks and Germans to deploy additional forces in the Jordan Valley.

Objective 1: The Jordan Valley as the Main Effort

This was the primary objective. To strengthen the German and Turkish perception that the Jordan Valley formed the main objective for the offensive, British planners used rumor-spreading, operational security measures to hide the Desert Mounted Corps' actual location, counter-reconnaissance, and planned diversionary attacks.

Deception planners spread several rumors designed to support the notion that the offensive targeted the Jordan Valley. These rumors included scheduling a fake horse race in Jaffa for 19 September—the planned day of the offensive. A morale event such as a horse race suggested to the Turks and Germans that the British had not planned a major operation near the coast (where Jaffa is located). The date of the fake horse race also served to conceal the timing of the offensive. Deception planners also arranged for British forces to take over one of the most luxurious hotels in Jerusalem. They installed military communications equipment, hung signs on several rooms depicting staff positions and office titles to simulate a

Figure 2.4. Battle of Megiddo and the pursuit to Damascus, 19-25 September 1918. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

General Staff headquarters, and spread the rumor that the hotel served as Allenby's headquarters.[39]

Disguising the Desert Mounted Corps' location was necessary because the Turks expected this corps to form the main strike force. Allenby had used his mounted forces as his main strike force ever since the breakthrough at Beersheba. Turkish and German intelligence officers believed that wherever the mounted troops went, an attack would follow. The British therefore had to ensure that their adversaries continued to believe that the Desert Mounted Corps remained in the Jordan Valley. This also meant that the British had to prevent enemy intelligence from identifying the Desert Mounted Corps' true location after it redeployed toward the coast, and used several measures to keep the move hidden.[40]

When the rest of the corps relocated to the coastal flank, they left one Australian and New Zealand division behind as part of Chaytor's Force along with a small detachment of radio communications personnel. These troops erected fake encampments with dummy horses made from blankets and wood. They built a total of 15,000 dummy horses, along with dummy straw men to populate the camps.[41] During the day, the men used mules to pull sleds that kicked up large clouds of dust—enough dust to simulate a corps-level cavalry concentration and to obscure the fact that only a division remained. At night, they lit extra camp fires indicative of a much larger force. Meanwhile, the detachment of radio operators remained behind to continue sending the usual message traffic as if the headquarters had never moved.[42]

The British disguised the Desert Mounted Corps' redeployment by marching at night to cantonment areas hidden from view in orange groves. Troops inhabiting these assembly areas had to stay under the cover of the orange trees during daylight and were ordered not to light fires. Cooking could only be done with smokeless alcohol so as not to give away their size or position.[43] The groves were thick enough to conceal the men and horses from enemy aircraft, while British guards made sure to keep civilians—and spies—far away.[44]

British aircraft played their part as well. The newly formed Royal Air Force (RAF) flew counter-reconnaissance missions to screen British camps from enemy aircraft. The RAF had been considerably reinforced since Beersheba. Over the intervening months, the RAF gained air superiority, which enabled far more effective counter-reconnaissance patrols against enemy aircraft than during the previous campaign. The idea was to prevent enemy reconnaissance in the west and center of the front line,

while allowing only high-level reconnaissance (14,000 feet or above) in the east so that enemy aircraft could still spot the dummy camps but not come close enough to them to realize that they were fake.[45] In addition to severely restricting enemy aerial reconnaissance, the RAF attacked Turkish ground troops. A few days before the offensive began, the RAF bombed Turkish positions north and east of the Jordan Valley to convince the Turks of an offensive in the Jordan Valley.[46]

Other diversionary attacks came from ground forces. On 16 September, Arab guerrilla units under T.E. Lawrence and Prince Feisal raided the Hejaz railway between Daraa and Amman.[47] On 17 September, XX Corps launched a feint against the left flank of the Turkish Seventh Army. Both of these moves drew more attention to the Jordan Valley sector.[48]

Objective 2: Draw Additional Enemy Forces Toward the Jordan Valley

A secondary British objective involved drawing as many enemy forces toward the Jordan Valley as possible so that they could be enveloped by the advancing Desert Mounted Corps. Several deceptions that supported the first objective also supported the second. The Jerusalem hotel rumor, fake radio transmissions, and dummy camps suggested a Desert Mounted Corps attack in the Jordan Valley and hoped to convince the Turks to deploy more troops there. In addition to these deceptions, two infantry battalions from Chaytor's Force simulated the arrival of reinforcements. Engineers constructed several new camps along the Jerusalem-Jericho Road. Upon completion, the infantry marched to the camp in daylight, then departed in trucks after nightfall. The following day, the infantry marched to another camp and repeated the process.[49] The movements intended to make the Turks think that the British were busily reinforcing the inland sector, drawing additional Turkish forces in that direction. British planners believed that if they strengthened their positions, Turkish and German commanders would follow suit.

The Battle

The Megiddo offensive began at 0430 on 19 September with a short but intense artillery barrage followed by British XXI Corps' assault. Along the 20-kilometer front planned for the breakthrough, Allenby massed 35,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and 400 artillery pieces against an entrenched Turkish force of 10,000 infantry and 120 cannons. By mid-morning, British infantry completely overran the front-line Turkish defenses, capturing over 7,000 men in the process.[50]

XXI Corps quickly breached the front line, which allowed the Desert Mounted Corps to rapidly exploit the breakthrough. On 20 September, one cavalry division advanced 70 miles—an unheard-of distance by First World War standards. On the 21st, the Australian Mounted Division captured Jenin after advancing 11 miles in less than an hour and a half.[51] The speed stunned the Turkish and German forces, leaving them with little situational awareness and even less time to react. The Yildirim Army Group commander, General Liman von Sanders, did not even realize the extent of British success until over 24 hours into the offensive. Turkish and German commanders not only had the wrong idea of what the British intended to do, but also found it difficult to learn what the British were actually doing. British pre-battle deceptions as well as the speed and ferocity of the offensive created confusion among enemy commanders.[52]

The momentum of the breakthrough carried Allenby's troops forward for over a month. British forces seized Damascus on 30 September, Beirut on 8 October, and Aleppo on 25 October.[53] In addition to the territorial gains, the British captured 75,000 Turkish soldiers over the course of the campaign. These defeats convinced the Turks to sign an armistice at the city of Mudros on 30 October 1918, which effectively ended the war between the Entente powers and Turkey. Germany continued fighting in Europe for only a few more days, until the 11 November 1918 armistice.[54]

Assessment

Some evidence suggests that Turkish and German commanders anticipated an attack along the coast. For example, the Turks had concentrated most of their heavy artillery in the western sector. Three out of six heavy artillery battalions supported Eighth Army near the coast. On the surface, this troop disposition indicates General Liman von Sanders knew or at least anticipated where the British offensive would come.[55] But there are other explanations. For example, the terrain in the Samaria Hills and the Jordan Valley were well-suited to defensive operations, whereas the flat, open ground near the coast was not. Rather than having identified the location of the offensive, it is more likely that Liman deployed more artillery near the coast to compensate for the lack of defensible terrain.

In fact, German and Turkish intelligence reports demonstrate that Liman did not realize that the British had redeployed the bulk of their forces from the eastern to the western flank. On 17 September, just two days before the battle began, German and Turkish intelligence reported that the British had deployed three mounted divisions and one infantry division in the east. They also assessed that the Desert Mounted Corps headquarters remained

in its original location. The templated presence of an infantry division suggests that the ruse of infantry reinforcements arriving in camps during the day and being trucked out at night also succeeded. However, German and Turkish intelligence had accurately assessed that a British cavalry division was stationed in reserve near the coast.[56] This intelligence picture suggests that the British had successfully prevented the Desert Mounted Corps' redeployment from being discovered. Turkish and German commanders did not know that Allenby's strike force moved to the other end of the line. British planners had achieved their first objective of ensuring that the enemy continued to believe that the main offensive intended to strike the Jordan Valley.

Furthermore, the deployment patterns of Turkish and German reinforcements suggest that the British achieved their second objective of drawing enemy forces into the Jordan Valley. Between March and September, most reinforcements took position in the eastern and central sectors, not to the western sector. In his memoirs, Liman notes that he sent four infantry battalions to Fourth Army in the Jordan Valley, while assigning an additional four battalions arriving in September to the Seventh Army, in the center.[57] When the 2nd Caucasian Cavalry Brigade arrived in March, it took a position near the coast, but, by 15 September, relocated to the eastern sector.[58] In August, Liman ordered three German battalions to move from the coast to the center to rejoin the rest of the Asia Korps. He also deployed the Turkish 24th Division on the left flank of Seventh Army, where the Samaria Hills descend into the Jordan Valley. These decisions suggest that Liman believed that he needed to reinforce his eastern flank.[59]

Another event just two days prior to the offensive further emphasized the importance that Liman placed on protecting the eastern flank. On 17 September, Turkish troops captured a deserter from one of Britain's Indian units. The deserter informed his captors that the British planned to attack near the coast.[60] Upon receiving this report, Turkish Eighth Army commander Çevat Pasha asked Liman for permission to withdraw from his forward positions and redeploy on better ground, but Liman refused to authorize a withdrawal.[61]

The deserter had alerted the Turks to the possible timing and location of the offensive, but even if Liman believed the deserter's information, he still did not know if an attack on his western flank would comprise the main effort or a feint. Liman certainly knew that the British had enough forces in theater to launch attacks on both of his flanks. After the war, Liman wrote that he had to expect an attack near the coast, but the more important sectors were further east. "The situation of the Army Group would become critical," Liman insisted, "if we were beaten on the Jordan, or east of the Jordan."[62]

The Daraa-to-Amman railroad was the key line of communication that kept his men supplied. Protecting it was therefore a top priority. Consequently, after T.E. Lawrence's Arab troops raided the railway on the night of 16-17 September, Liman ordered an emergency reserve force of two German companies to Daraa to secure the railway. Liman was more concerned with the attacks on the railroad than the Indian deserter's tale, later writing that "I realized at once that these attacks on our only line of communications were the beginning of serious fighting."[63] Liman was correct that serious fighting had begun, but he had focused on the wrong flank.

Conclusion

At both Beersheba and Megiddo, British deception operations sought to reinforce the Turks' and Germans' false assumptions about their operational plans. The British also built multiple deceptions into the plan to further reinforce the Turks' and Germans' incorrect assessments. Most importantly, military deception was not merely an afterthought or a just a simple addition to an existing plan. Rather, British planners fully integrated the deception plan into the concept of operations and scheme of maneuver, coordinating all preparations for the offensives, and ensuring that British forces did not give away vital information that might allow the enemy to discover British intentions.

Although the deceptions were important factors, they were not decisive in-and-of themselves. Victory in both offensives still required astute tactical and operational decisions during the course of the campaigns. Pre-battle deception operations did increase the likelihood of success by luring enemy forces into reinforcing the wrong sections of the line, giving British forces an advantage in the attack. Ultimately, deception operations made a vital contribution to the Allied victory in Palestine.

Notes

1. Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The First World War in the Middle East* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2014), 29.

2. Ulrichsen, 103-106.

3. Michael J. Mortlock, *The Egyptian Expeditionary Force in World War I: A History of the British-Led Campaigns in Egypt, Palestine and Syria* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011), 84-90; James E. Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 54-55; and Matthew Hughes, "General Allenby and the Palestine Campaign, 1917–18," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 19, no. 4 (1996): 59-88.

4. Edward J. Erickson, *Palestine: The Ottoman Campaigns of 1914-1918* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword, 2016), 90-93.

5. Erickson, 103. On October 28, von Falkenhayn reorganized the front, placing III Corps under Seventh Army with XV Corps. See Erickson, 107.

6. Yigal Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby's Campaigns in Palestine," *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 2 (1990): 174.

7. Jean Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*. Australian Army Campaigns Series – 7. (Sydney: Big Sky Publishing, 2010), 14-19.

8. Jonathan Q. C. Newell, "Learning the Hard Way: Allenby in Egypt and Palestine, 1917–19," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 14, no. 3 (1991): 370-371.

9. Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, 41-43.

10. Bou, 41-43.

11. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 181-182.

12. Sheffy, 181-182.

13. Sheffy, 191-193.

14. Sheffy, 189.

15. Erickson, *Palestine*, 104.

16. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 234 fn61.

17. On Meinertzhagen and the "haversack ruse," see Brian Garfield, *The Meinertzhagen Mystery: The Life and Legend of a Colossal Fraud* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007) and Barton Whaley, "Meinertzhagen's False Claim to the Haversack Ruse (1917)" in Hy Rothstein and Barton Whaley, eds., *The Art and Science of Military Deception*, (Boston: Artech House, 2013), 57-58.

18. Mortlock, *The Egyptian Expeditionary Force in World War I*, 99 and Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, 43.

19. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 189, 191-2; H.S. Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914-1918*. 10th edition. The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume VII – Sinai and Palestine. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1914), 375-6; and John Mordike, "General Sir Edmund Allenby's Joint Operations in Palestine, 1917-1918," *Air Power Review* 5, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 18.

20. Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, 377-378 and Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 189, 191-192.

21. Erickson, *Palestine*, 104.

22. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 188 and Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, 374.

23. Gullett, 373 and Sheffy, 188, 196.

24. Gullett, 373-403. For a detailed recent account of the battle, see David W. Cameron, *The Charge: The Australian Light Horse Victory at Beersheba* (Sydney: Penguin Random House, 2017).

25. Erickson, *Palestine*, 112-113.

26. Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, 52-53, 58-61.

27. Bou, 63-69.

28. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 195-196.

29. As quoted in Sheffy, 195.

30. Erickson, *Palestine*, 105-106.

31. As quoted in Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, 375.

32. Erickson, *Palestine*, 109.

33. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 199.

34. Newell, "Learning the Hard Way," 378-379.

35. Cyril Falls, *Armageddon, 1918: The Final Palestinian Campaign of World War I* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1964; reprint, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 36.

36. Falls. 45-46.

37. Falls. 37-41.

38. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 200, 203.

39. Falls, *Armageddon*, 40-41.

40. Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, 110-112.

41. David R. Woodward, *Hell in the Holy Land: World War I in the Middle East* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 192-193.

42. Falls, *Armageddon*, 40-41 and Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 210.

43. Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, 110-112.

44. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 208 and Falls, *Armageddon*, 41.

45. Mordike, "General Sir Edmund Allenby's Joint Operations in Palestine," 30.

46. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 213-214.

47. Bryan Perrett, *Megiddo 1918: The Last Great Cavalry Victory* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1999), 33-34.

48. Erickson, *Palestine*, 161.

49. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 210.

50. Erickson, *Palestine*, 161, 167 and Perrett, *Megiddo 1918*, 30.

51. Ulrichsen, *The First World War in the Middle East*, 116.

52. Falls, *Armageddon*, 58-59.

53. Erickson, *Palestine*, 174-176.

54. Ulrichsen, *The First World War in the Middle East*, 116.

55. Edward J. Erickson is the main proponent of the view that the Turks and Germans anticipated an attack on the coast. See Erickson, *Palestine*, 159-160 and Edward J. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 2007), 135.

56. On this point, Yigal Sheffy's analysis is thorough and convincing. See Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 219-223.

57. Liman von Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1927; reprint, Uckfield, UK: The Naval and Military Press Ltd, 2012), 271-272.

58. Erickson notes that the 2nd Caucasus Cavalry Brigade was assigned to the Eighth Army sector, but he does not account for its subsequent move to the eastern flank. See Erickson, *Palestine*, 159-160; Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness*, 135; and Liman, *Five Years in Turkey*, 271.

59. Liman, 266.

60. Falls, *Armageddon*, 48.

61. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness*, 133.

62. Liman, *Five Years in Turkey*, 261.

63. Liman, 274.

Chapter 3

Operation BERTRAM

British Deception at El Alamein

Gary W. Linhart

Well, there it is. You must conceal 150,00 men with a thousand guns and a thousand tanks on a plain as flat and hard as a billiard table, and the Germans must not know anything about it, although they will be watching every moment, listening for every noise, charting every track. You can't do it of course, but you've bloody well got to!

—Brigadier Freddie De Guingand, British Eighth Army Chief of Staff[1]

Blitzkrieg. The word immediately elicits thoughts of mobile German combined arms forces returning maneuver to the battlefield during World War II. The Germans perfected this approach against Poland and France. However, this so-called "lighting war" was executed in its most pure form in the campaigns of North Africa, between the German-Italian force of *Panzerarmee Afrika* (PAA) and the British Eighth Army. The flat terrain and lack of natural obstacles allowed for near perfect command and control in the attack, with the only tactical limiting factor being the top speed of the tanks. Open fields of vision allowed for engagements to occur at maximum ranges, bringing tank and anti-tank guns to the fore in importance on the battlefield. Open flanks to the south led to never ending envelopments being conducted by both sides. Thus, these campaigns witnessed a series of victorious maneuvers followed by long pursuits across the open desert. Both sides traded victories, moving back and forth across the desert, much like two coiled springs attached to each other. While one side lost power as it stretched its lines of communication (LOC) to a breaking point, the other simultaneously increased in power with shortened LOCs. This see-saw warfare of maneuver finally came to an end at the small village of El-Alamein, located only 160 miles west of Cairo. It was here that restrictive terrain to the south forced the adversaries to exchange blitzkrieg for static warfare. Both sides now faced a situation reminiscent of the trenches of World War 1. They had to find a way to break the enemy lines that no longer relied on the "end runs" that had proven so successful in the last two years. While both sides attempted to break the stalemate, the British
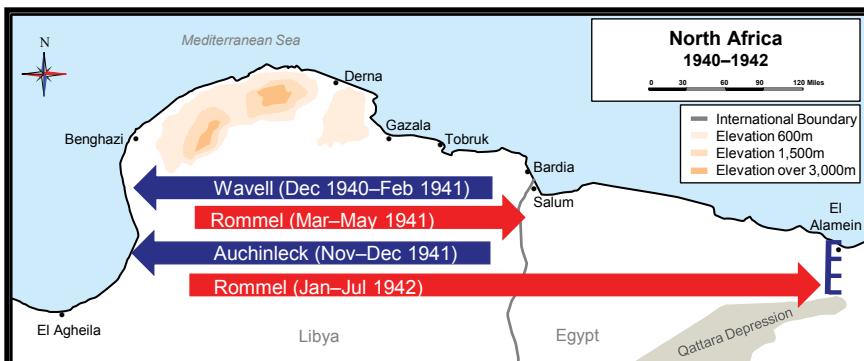
Figure 3.1. North Africa, 1940-1942. graphic created by CSI Press staff.

turned to a proven strategy which greatly assisted them in achieving victory at the Battle of El-Alamein: deception.

The Situation

Beginning on 26 May 1942, PAA, commanded by Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, attacked and defeated the British Eighth Army at the Battle of Gazala, resulting in yet another pursuit east. The Eighth Army withdrew back toward the Egyptian border, losing large quantities of supplies and the port of Tobruk to the advancing Germans. The pursuit continued until the Eighth Army reached El-Alamein, where they established a strong defensive line. Here, the British were able to secure their right flank with the Mediterranean Sea and their left flank with the Qattara Depression (an area in western Egypt that was covered with salt marshes and deep sand dunes which severely limited the mobility of tanks, or any other vehicle). Rommel attempted to break this short, 30-mile line in the south (near the Depression) during the Battle of Alam Halfa from 30 August to 5 September 1942 but difficult terrain, well established British positions and lack of fuel resulted in a German defeat.[2] This tactical defeat greatly attrited the German panzer forces and once again PAA had reached a culminating point. Rommel established defensive positions between the same secure terrain features the British used to stop him. September witnessed the two exhausted armies racing to rebuild themselves and break the static line they had created.

Rommel, being the ever-aggressive commander, spoke of resuming the attack and seizing Egypt, but several factors made it almost inevitable that the initiative shifted to the British. First, the United States had entered the war, allowing this key ally to open a massive logistical spigot and provide the Eighth Army with much-needed supplies and equipment. One of the most important assets the Americans delivered was the Sherman tank, which

was superior to the German's main battle tank, the Panzer III.[3] This infusion of equipment (along with much needed personnel reinforcement from Great Britain) allowed the British to reorganize and reequip the X Corps, which contained the majority of the Eighth Army tanks. Second, the British had gained naval and air superiority at this time. The Royal Navy and Air Force were sinking Italian ships and harassing the German ground supply routes at a rate that prevented Rommel from properly rebuilding his forces.[4] The most critical shortage for PAA was the lack of fuel, which directly affected how the Germans deployed their forces in the upcoming battle. The final factor that brought the initiative back to the British Eighth Army was a new commander: Lieutenant General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery. His personality and leadership brought new life to a defeated army. He declared: "We must regard ourselves as having been born for this battle." He visited all of his units to personally convey this message and then created a plan to implement his vision.[5] This plan, however, would have to overcome a German defensive position, the likes of which had not been previously encountered in these last two years of desert warfare.

PAA spent September and October of 1942 creating a defense that rivaled their trench systems of World War I in depth and complexity, reaching five miles deep in some areas. Their defense in depth began with almost a half million mines stretching between their secure flanks on the Mediterranean Sea and the Qattara Depression. Behind this almost unimaginable barrier, their main line was a patchwork of both German and Italian infantry units and anti-tank guns that covered these mines. Finally, Rommel placed the panzers of the *Afrika Korps*, the German portion of PAA, behind the main line as a counter attack force, prepared to defeat any penetration of the main line. While this defense in depth was formidable, it was not as flexible as it could have been. PAA had only enough fuel reserves to move the *Afrika Korps* once for any possible counterattack scenario. Since Rommel had limited knowledge of the British intent, he was forced to position the 21st Panzer Division in the south and the 15th Panzer Division in the North (each of them also had a less powerful Italian Armored Division co-located).[6] Had the Germans known the direction of the expected Eighth Army attack, they would likely have weighted the appropriate flank with a majority of the Afrika Korps.

The British Plan: LIGHTFOOT and BERTRAM

The Eighth Army plan, codenamed "Lightfoot" (a cynical name based on the immense number of mines the British would be forced to breach), to penetrate and defeat the German line had three separate missions for its three corps. The XXX Corps, located in the north, would initially be

the main effort, infiltrating through the minefields and engaging the Axis main defensive line near the coastal roads before engaging in an attritional battle that Montgomery called "crumbling." Once the engineers had created corridors, the tank-heavy X Corps would conduct a passage of lines through the XXX Corps and establish a strong defensive position. British gunners would then destroy the Afrika Korps as it attempted to counter-attack. Finally, the XIII Corps scheduled a demonstration in the south that would appear to be the main attack in order to fix the German southern forces, specifically the 21st Panzer Division, enabling X Corps to defeat the *Afrika Korps* piecemeal.[7]

There was, however, a major problem with the plan. Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Richardson, Eighth Army's main planner, described LIGHTFOOT's main attack in the north as, "horribly obvious."[8] The British would have to mass X Corps and all the supporting artillery and supplies in their assault and firing positions just prior to the attack. Like a poor boxer who telegraphs his punches, German reconnaissance could easily identify this massing in the open desert. Early detection would allow PAA to reposition and reinforce their northern sectors, making a successful breakthrough extremely costly at best. Montgomery, thus, turned to Richardson and Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Barkas, the Director of Camouflage at General Headquarters Middle East, to create a deception plan.[9] While the Eighth Army had conducted deception operations in the past, most had been on a small scale, and designed only to misdirect air attacks.[10] Montgomery now envisioned an operation on a much grander scale. The Eighth Army Chief of Staff asked Barkas: "what Camouflage could do to assist the following objects:

> First: Conceal the true nature of the preparations in the north.
>
> Second: Suggest that an attack was being mounted in the south.
>
> Third: Seeing that all the preparations in the north could probably not be hidden indefinitely, minimize their apparent scale.
>
> Fourth: Slow down the apparent rate of the build-up so that when everything was ready, the enemy would think that he still had at least two or three days before the attack could be launched."[11]

Montgomery realized that the Eighth Army would have to deceive the Germans as to the location, timing and scale of their attack for LIGHT-FOOT to succeed.

The planners created Operation BERTRAM, which Montgomery issued on 14 September.[12] The main objective was to deceive the Ger-

mans as to *when* and *where* the Eighth Army would attack. Montgomery desired Rommel to believe that the *when* would be at least two weeks past the actual date of LIGHTFOOT which was scheduled to begin on 23 October. The intent was to lull PAA into a false sense of security. If the Germans did not expect an attack until mid-November, they might be less vigilant on the night of the British assault. Additionally, they might assume that they had more time to build their defenses and thus be less diligent with their October preparations of the battlefield. As for the *where*, Montgomery wanted the Germans to believe that the attack would come in the south (XIII Corps sector) and force them to commit unnecessary forces there.[13] This second objective was the more resource intensive of the two since that meant somehow concealing the intentions and movement of an entire Corps. Luckily, Barkas had the 85th Camouflage Company from South Africa and three additional pioneer companies attached to create the materials needed to support the operation.[14]

Details of Operation BERTRAM

Operation BERTRAM consisted of several sub-operations (SO) to accomplish the overall tasks. Each SO had to be greatly detailed since widely dispersed units had to execute at different times and support the same illusion of an attack in the south which was to occur in early November. All of these sub-operations had to be stand-alone sentences that, when read together by the PAA intelligence personnel, created a coherent paragraph and thus produced the illusion. If any of these SOs were out of sync with the others, the picture would not make sense. Even the Middle East Command assisted in the illusion by creating background stories supporting an attack in early November. It extended both the Cairo hotel reservations for some high-ranking officers, and a major exercise in the Haifa Staff College. It announced a fake conference between Generals Alexander and Wavell scheduled for 26 October and developed a program of radio traffic that supported a southern attack.[15] Finally, it barred the Desert Air Force from attacking the enemy defenses on the days immediately prior to the scheduled attack, much to their dismay. They did conduct attacks on the Luftwaffe in October that resulted in the prevention of enemy air reconnaissance over the British attack positions.[16]

What follows are the specifics of BERTRAM's sub-operations using Figures 3.2: The Initial Deception and 3.5: The Final Deception. Although the Eighth Army did not phase these operations, it is helpful to visualize the picture given to PAA by breaking them into these two groups.
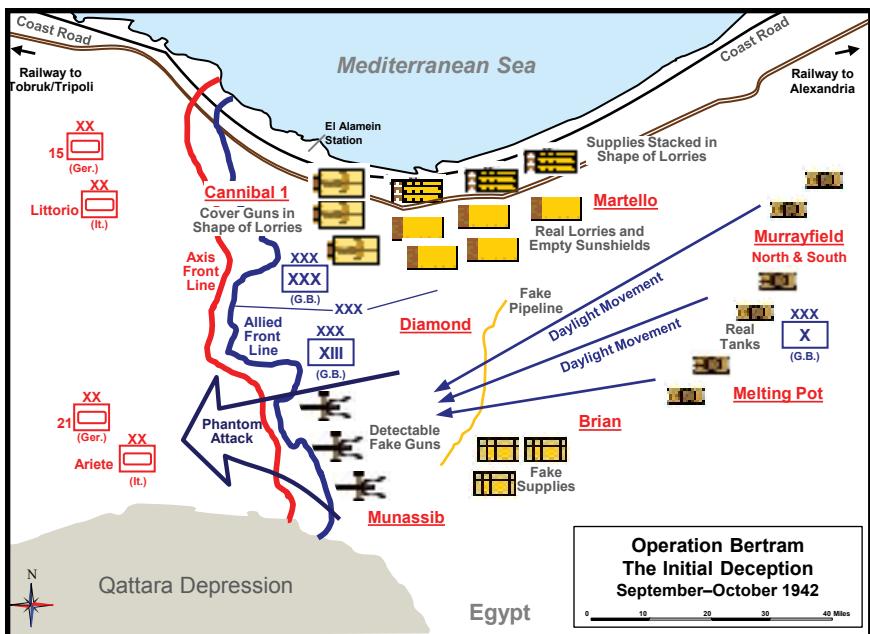
Figure 3.2. Operation BERTRAM: The Initial Deception. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

Possibly the most important SO was MARTELLO. Concealing X Corps' equipment and supplies presented the greatest challenge to the success of BERTRAM. With two corps already forward deployed, X Corps had to be moved close to the front lines just prior to the attack. Finding this corps in its assault positions would tell the Germans the exact timing and location of the British main attack. Thus, one of the main problems the Eighth Army had to solve was how to hide it all. Luckily, Lieutenant Colonel Barkas had been developing techniques on how to conceal vehicles in an open desert for the last two years.[17] Obviously, without any foliage, standard camouflage was not an option. In fact, the standard camouflage covering used effectively in Europe to break up the silhouettes of the UK vehicles failed in North Africa. The covering made the artillery and vehicles stand out more, giving the enemy an easier target for their artillery and aircraft. Therefore, the objective was not to hide the vehicles, but to make them look like something other than what they were. A brain child of General Wavell (the Middle East Commander in 1940-41), the British had developed a device called the "Sunshield."[18] Sunshields could either make a truck look like a tank (presenting the illusion of strength) or in the case of those used in Operation BERTRAM, to make tanks look like trucks, thus presenting an illusion of weakness (see Figure 3.3). The key to MAR-
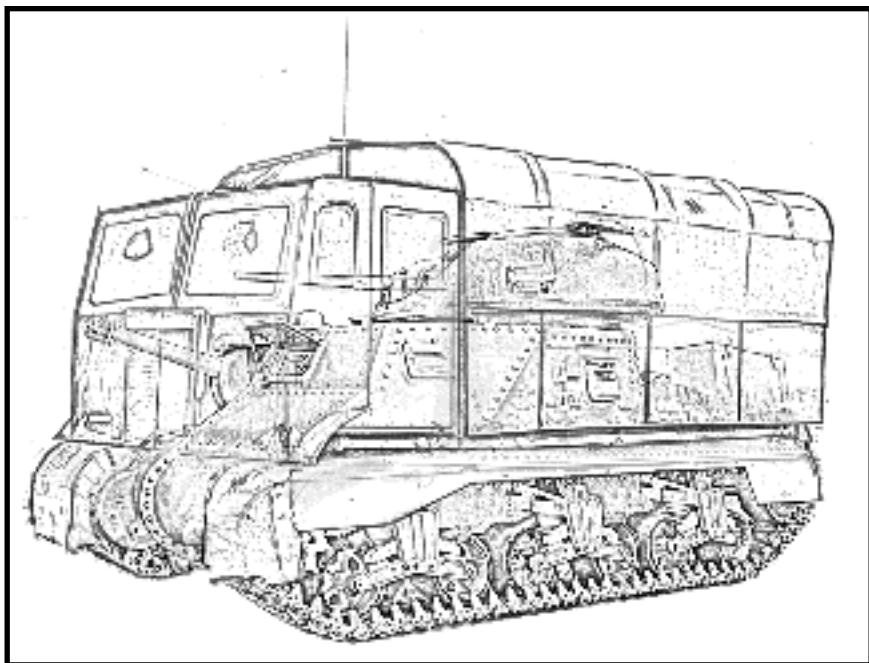
Figure 3.3. A tank under a sunshield. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

TELLO's success was to create a large area of non-threatening trucks that remained stationary for a long period of time. British forces deployed it in early October so that the Germans became conditioned to its existence and did not suspect that it was part of the build-up for an imminent attack. After the war, Barkas recalled, "In this way the enemy would become accustomed to seeing it and, when nothing further seemed to happen, might be expected to relax his vigilance."[19]

MARTELLO contained three versions of "vehicles:" (1) 700 empty sunshields that looked like trucks and were awaiting the tanks that would eventually occupy the space under them. (2) Boxes of the real supplies (mostly food) needed for the attack, stacked in the shape of trucks or under side tents were the "crew slept." (3) Real trucks (to be used for the main attack) and crew members that provided activity in the area.[20] The only supplies not covered up by this scheme were the fuel that X Corps needed. Luckily for the British, El-Alamein Station held a number of preexisting slit trenches. Logisticians realized that they could conceal hundreds of 4-gallon cans of fuel along the masonry walls of these slit trenches (basically just "thickening" the walls). Several tests with their own reconnaissance aircraft proved that the shadows of the trench naturally covered the fuel, allowing 2,000 tons of fuel to be hidden in plain sight.[21]
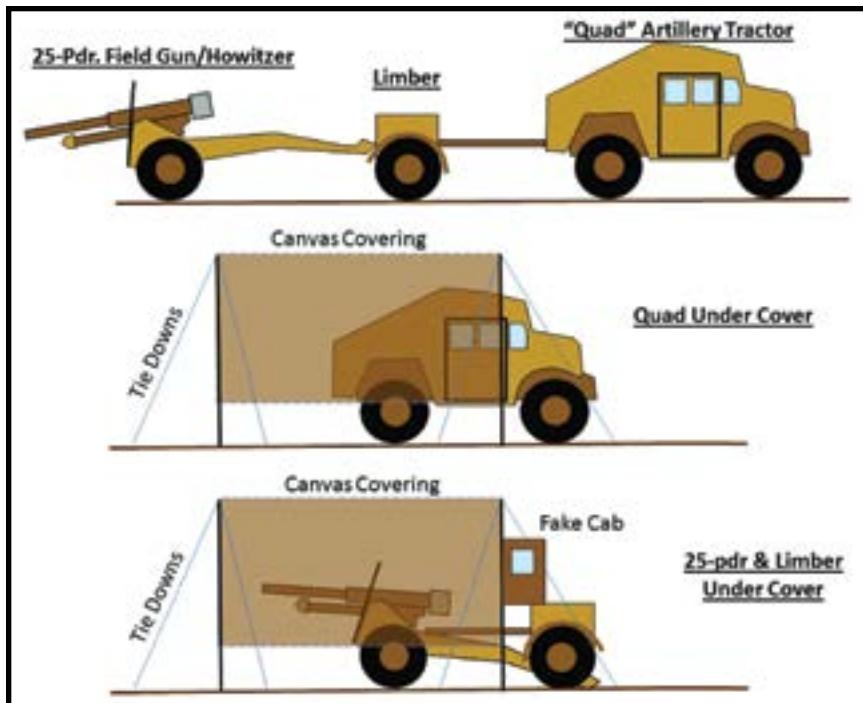
Figure 3.4. Quads. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

While SO MARTELLO concealed X Corps, SO CANNIBAL disguised another element of the Eighth Army build-up. One of the most recognizable vehicles in theater, for either side, was the British 25-Pounder Field Gun and its associated prime mover, known as a "Quad." Each 25-pounder had a limber in between the prime mover and the piece (reminiscent of horse drawn artillery) that gave it a highly distinctive profile. Air reconnaissance could positively spot these vehicles from great distances and, since large artillery concentrations were yet another positive indicator of an upcoming attack, planners needed to conceal them as something other than artillery. CANNIBAL1 became yet another ingenious deception. It broke the Quads away from the limber and covered them with canvas tarpaulins, making them look like ordinary 3-ton supply trucks (see Figure 3.4). Similarly, the disconnected 25-Pounders and their limbers also received a similar tarpaulin to represent even more trucks. As with Martello, the 360 guns of CANNIBAL 1 stood motionless for a month, taking away any suspicion that this was a buildup of an upcoming attack in the north.[22]

While MARTELLO and CANNIBAL 1 intended to divert the German gaze away from the north, several other SO's intended to capture the

German attention in the south. Like CANNIBAL, SO MUNASSIB was designed to hide "artillery." But this effort was even more complicated and took the deception effort to the next level of trickery. The British established three regiments of dummy artillery in assault positions but poorly camouflaged them. They allowed the covers to deteriorate over time, facilitating German identification of the dummy positions and indicating a British attack in the north. However, MARTELLO was actually a "double-bluff" designed for use when the actual attack came. Once the attack started in the north, artillerists replaced the dummy guns with real ones (see figures 3.2 and 3.5) making the Germans think the dummy gun positions had been created to conceal a main attack in the south.[23]

Two more SOs, DIAMOND and BRIAN, hoped to demonstrate a false buildup of logistical support in the south. SO DIAMOND was a fake water pipeline. Laborers dug up to five miles of trench each day and installed a "pipeline," made of discarded 4-gallon fuel cans, inside the trench. At night, the same crews pulled up the "pipeline" and displaced it forward, alongside the next length of trench. Finally, they filled the open trench just prior to sunrise, presenting the illusion of a newly-buried pipeline. As a final touch, work crews added dummy pumping stations and reservoirs for realism. This effort not only indicated that the Eighth Army was preparing to support a major effort in the south, but also assisted in the timing deception. The British rate of construction indicated that the pipeline could not possibly be completed until the beginning of November.[24] SO BRIAN was a reverse of MARTELLO. While planners worked to disguise real supplies as fake trucks in the north, they built massive fake supply dumps appearing to hold 7,000 tons of supplies in the south.[25]

Finally, Montgomery kept X Corps in three separate assembly areas far from the front: Murrayfield North, Murrayfield South and Melting Pot. These areas were along tracks that generally lead to the south. As long as the X Corps remained in these assembly areas, the Germans were confident that the British had no immediate plans for attack and, when the time for movement came, they appeared poised to use the tracks leading south. X Corps did eventually move forward, beginning on 18 October and in daylight, to assembly areas in the XIII Corps sector. This move gave the Germans the final and most convincing indicator that the British were coming south.[26]

While British planners spread all the previous efforts over a lengthy time period designed to lull the Germans into a false sense of security, the final shell game occurred in the days just prior to the 23 October attack. (see figure 3.5) X Corps tanks that had previously moved into assembly
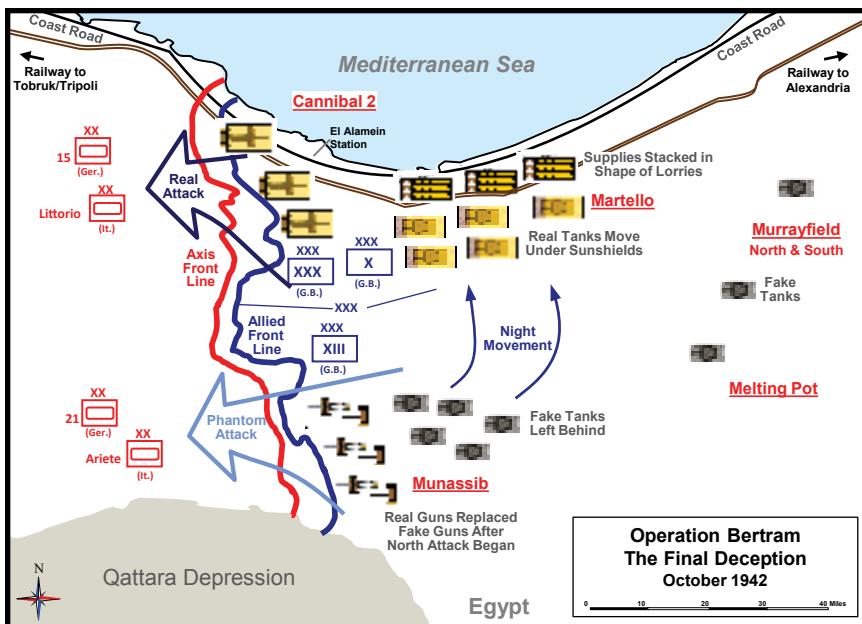
Figure 3.5. Operation BERTRAM: The Final Deception. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

areas in the south during the day changed course on 20-22 October and moved north at night to occupy the empty sunshields in MARTELLO. The British put great effort into this portion of the plan. As each tank left the false assembly area in the south, a dummy tank took its place. At MARTELLO, each tank occupied a designated and pre-identified sunshield. To further conceal the movement, crews wiped away the tracks that they made exiting and entering the two areas. Complementing the effort in another domain, false radio traffic completed the ruse that X Corps remained in the south. Finally, the artillery from CANNIBAL 1 moved at night to their firing positions in CANNIBAL 2, but remained concealed as 3-ton trucks.[27] Thus, the British positioned their main effort, XXX Corps and X Corps in areas that the Germans (hopefully) had ignored for the last month. Montgomery had successfully placed the vast strength of the Eighth Army in position to attack in the north, while erecting a vast phony army to bluff the Germans in the south.

Evaluation of Operation BERTRAM

The British executed Operation BERTRAM exactly as planned. Although a dust storm damaged some of the dummies and sunshields on 16-17 October, troops managed to quickly repair them.[28] XXX Corps and X Corps emerged from the phony story built by BERTRAM and suc-

cessfully executed Operation LIGHTFOOT. The battle lasted from 23 October to 11 November 1942 and resulted in the penetration of Rommel's defense in depth, forcing PAA to retreat. Eighth Army continued the pursuit across Egypt and Libya as far as the Tunisian border. Eventually, PAA and the reinforcing Fifth Panzer Army, inserted to block Allied forces landed during Operation TORCH and now converging from the west, surrendered to a combined Anglo-American Force in May 1943. The defeat rivaled the loss of the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad, concluded just a few months earlier inflicting two near-simultaneous defeats on Hitler's now overstretched forces.

Effectiveness of BERTRAM

Winston Churchill, in a speech to the House of Commons, said of the Battle of El-Alamein: "By a marvelous system of camouflage, complete tactical surprise was achieved in the desert. The enemy suspected – indeed knew-that an attack was impending, but when and where and how it was coming was hidden from him."[29] While this was certainly a stirring account of Operation BERTRAM by the victorious Prime Minister, it may be a bit exaggerated.

We may never know the exact effect BERTRAM had on the Germans, as there are many contradictory accounts of what they did and did not know or expect. However, we can examine several indicators that point to success.

No positive identification of the main effort. PAA report of 10 October: "The British may launch an offensive soon…Pz. Army thinks that the main weight of the enemy attack will be south of Ruwiesat (*the center of the 30-mile line*), and perhaps also on either side of the coast road."[30] A follow on report on 16 October refined the dates of an attack to "20–25 October."[31] While the Germans seem to have identified the British *when,* they appear to be unsure of *where* the main attack would fall (they indicate the south, but "perhaps" the north) This inability to accurately identify the British main effort is reinforced by their continued separation of their counter attack forces in the north and the south.

Negative reports by German Reconnaissance. The same report of 10 October sheds some light on the German reconnaissance posture: "As assembly of the attacking troops and artillery will take at least one or two days, our own troops cannot be taken by surprise provided they keep their eyes open and make use of every means of observation."[32] However, the Germans never spotted the specific indicator they were looking for. *Panzerarmee Afrika's* 23 October report to their higher headquarters stated:

"Enemy situation unchanged."[33] Colonel Richardson was pleased that intercepts from the Luftwaffe in the week prior to LIGHTFOOT all stated "Nothing to Report". The Desert Air Force's remarkable feat of not allowing even one German reconnaissance flight to penetrate Eighth Army sectors after 18 October prevented the collection of accurate aerial intelligence and served to enhance the ruse.[34]

Delayed movement of the Afrika Korps. While few PAA officers admitted that they had been deceived by the British deception effort, one notable exception was General von Thoma, the commander of the *Afrika Korps* at the time of the battle. Upon capture, he stated that German reconnaissance had failed to notice any changes in the Eighth Army's posture in the weeks prior to the battle. He was of the opinion that the main effort would come in the south, even after LIGHTFOOT began.[35] This thought is reinforced by the fact that the 21st Panzer Division did not move north until 26 October. This would indicate that even Rommel was not convinced of the actual main attack until four days after it began.[36]

The Germans had the date of the attack but remained postured to receive that attack equally in the north and the south. Since they never weighted their counter-attack posture, we can conclude that BERTRAM succeeded in assisting the Germans to believe what they wanted to believe. As stated by their 10 October report, they could not possibly be surprised if they did not observe the building of forces necessary to execute a major attack. Thus, the Germans sat idle while the British conducted their elaborate shell game. British victory was hiding under the sunshades of MARTELLO.

Notes

1. Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies* (Guilford CT, The Lyons Press, 1975), 117-118.

2. Robert M. Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht* (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 217-220.

3. Niall Barr, *Pendulum of War* (Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 266.

4. Jon Latimer, *Alamein* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 162 and Barr, 222-225.

5. Barr, 302.

6. Latimer, *Alamein,* 136-137 and Barr, 270-271.

7. Glyn Harper, *The Battle for North Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 128-129.

8. Charles Richardson, *Flashback, A Soldiers Story* (London: William Kimber, 1985), 115.

9. Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 299.

10. Latimer, *Alamein,* 154, 160.

11. Geoffrey Barkas, *The Camouflage Story* (London: Cassell and Company, 1952), 191.

12. Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 299.

13. Barkas, *The Camouflage Story,* 191.

14. Barkas, 107,156, 201

15. Latimer, *Alamein,* 156.

16. Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 303-304.

17. Barr, 303-304. and Latimer, *Alamein*, 299.

18. Barkas, *The Camouflage Story,* 202-203.

19. Barkas, 202.

20. Charles Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1979), 31. and Barkas, 198-199.

21. Latimer, *Alamein,* 156. and Barkas, 198.

22. Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 300. and Barkas, 200-201.

23. Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II*, 30-31.

24. Cruickshank, 30. and Latimer, *Alamein,* 157.

25. James Lucas, *War in the Desert* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1982) 124 and Cruickshank, 30.

26. Latimer, *Alamein,* 159. and Barkas, *The Camouflage Story,* 207.

27. Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II*, 31-32; and Barkas, 211-212 and Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 300-301.

28. Barr, 300.

29. Barkas, *The Camouflage Story* 215-216.

30. Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 305.

31. Hans-Otto Behrendt, *Rommel's Intelligence in the Desert Campaign*, 1941-1943 (London: William Kimber, 1985) 198.

32. Behrendt, 198.

33. Glyn Harper, *The Battle for North Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 131.

34. Richardson, *Flashback*, 117.

35. Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II*, 33.

36. Lucas, *War in the Desert*, 126. and Barr, *Pendulum of War*, 353.

Chapter 4

Operations BARCLAY, CASCADE, and MINCEMEAT

Allied Deception in the Mediterranean, 1943

Gregory S. Hospodor

During early July 1943, German and Italian forces across the Mediterranean theater awaited the inevitable Allied follow-up to the Axis catastrophe in Tunisia. The critical problem was determining where the blow would fall. The seizure of the Italian islands of Pantelleria, Lampedusa, Linosa, and Lampione during early June as well as geo-strategic common sense suggested strongly that invading Sicily was the next logical Allied move. Yet when the assault on Sicily, codenamed HUSKY, occurred on 10 July 1943, an Italian garrison with only two reinforcing German divisions—*15. Panzergrenadier-Division* and *Fallschirm-Panzer-Division Nr.1 Hermann Göring*—stood ready to respond to the 180,000 men of the Allied assault echelon.

The invasion was no cakewalk, but it could have been much worse. Italian losses in North Africa and faltering morale meant that German units would be the primary bulwark of any defense. Between 9 March and 10 July, *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, the German military high command (OKW), sent one division to Sardinia and one to Corsica. The Balkans saw the number of German divisions rise from eight to eighteen. Greece received the most attention; seven German divisions joined the normal garrison of one.[1] Had OKW correctly divined Allied intentions and prioritized Sicily, the result of the invasion clearly might have been different.

Why the Axis, specifically the Germans, failed to prepare better for what seems obvious with the benefit of hindsight is the focus of this chapter. The simplest answer, although by no means the only one, is that the Allies deceived Axis leaders as to their intentions, which caused the Germans to misallocate the increasingly scarce resources of the *Wehrmacht*, the only forces truly capable of responding effectively to an Allied incursion by this point of the war. This, then, is the story of Operation BARCLAY, the Allied deception plan for the Mediterranean in 1943. BARCLAY, which included many subsidiary lines of effort, such as Operation MINCEMEAT that aimed to mislead the enemy as to Allied plans through so-called special means and Operation CASCADE, a comprehensive order-of-battle deception, played a key role in setting the conditions for the invasion of Sicily to succeed.

Organizations

The first requirement for effective military deception—the "end" of surprising the enemy (of misleading and thus causing them *to act* in such a way as to multiply the effectiveness of one's follow-on military efforts)—is a commitment to it. Institutions manifest commitment through resource allocation and the creation of organizations. Deception organizations are the "means" by which the "way," deception, is achieved.

The road to Operation BARCLAY began in the Middle East with General Sir Archibald Wavell's establishment of "A" Force on 28 March 1941. "A" Force grew from small beginnings—initially, one handpicked leader, Lieutenant Colonel (eventually Brigadier) Dudley W. Clarke, two officers, and ten enlisted men. Although Clarke would direct thousands in all manner of deception activities, including temporarily assigned regular army units, the core of "A" Force was never more than a few hundred men. Even within these few, security demanded that only a handful were ever "in the know" about the entire scope of "A" Force's undertakings. As the scale of "A" Force's efforts and resources expanded, its organization changed: Control dealt with plans, policy, and administration; Operations handled physical employment and tactical deception in the field; and Intelligence directed deception schemes through channels controlled by intelligence or security authorities.[2]

The Middle East and the broader Mediterranean basin were difficult environments within which to practice deception. Indeed, historian Michael Howard has described this complex region as "an intelligence officer's paradise and a security officer's hell."[3] The area contained almost limitless conduits through which to collect information and to transmit disinformation, and this situation worked both ways. Thus, months of assiduous effort on a deception operation could be compromised easily as it was impossible to discover, detain, eliminate, or turn all enemy agents. Simply put, balancing the scale of deception activity with the vital importance of security was difficult at best in a region where political, familial, and ethnic relationships might extend back a millennia and many did not appreciate the British presence.

Initially, Clarke's "A" Force, headquartered in Cairo, operated more or less independently, subject only to the directives of the Commander-in-Chief Middle East (today's equivalent is the commander of a Combatant Command). By 1943, as Allied fortunes improved and their military efforts broadened, Clarke synchronized "A" Force's strategic, if not always tactical, deception efforts through and with various intelligence entities in

Great Britain, most notably the London Controlling Section (LCS) under Lieutenant Colonel John H. Beven, which in December 1942 formally took responsibility for strategic deception in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and India.[4] Within its realm and subject to the guidance and approval of the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff, the LCS had nearly unlimited authority for the execution of strategic deception; it was also a super-secret group within the broader intelligence community. Clearly, as the scope of the Western Allies' military operations increased, the imperative for coordinating strategic efforts across theaters also increased. So, too, did the LCS take measures to continue to build upon the successes of the previous years, providing continuity for as well as coordination across previously disparate sub-organizations and operations. Finally, the LCS coordinated and cooperated with other intelligence and operational organizations to ensure synchronization.

Operation BARCLAY manifested this new degree of coordination and direction in many ways. First, high-level cooperation meant that deceivers had access to ULTRA intelligence; cryptologists broke the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence service) Enigma (mechanically encoded) cypher at Bletchley Park in December 1941. This intelligence source allowed carefully vetted deceivers unparalleled insight into the Axis intelligence network to determine and play upon fears and expectations and to assess the effectiveness of deception schemes.[5] Second, clear direction from the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the theater commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, guaranteed that distinct deception operations, such as MINCEMEAT and CASCADE, all served a common operational purpose. Finally, inter-theater coordination meant that discrete activities dovetailed operationally. Personnel of MI5 Section B1B and Naval Intelligence Division Section 17M were jointly responsible for MINCEMEAT.[6] "A" Force's Cairo-based, order-of-battle deceivers, responsible for CASCADE, were largely unaware of London-based Section B1B and Section 17M's existence (although Dudley Clarke was), a fact that did not matter provided there was a coordinating administrative bridge. The effects of the organizational maturation of the British deception enterprise were greater efficiency and effectiveness compared to their Axis counterparts.

The Axis intelligence services were the first-line "receptors" for Allied deception "signals." They interpreted the information collected for the senior decision-makers who were the ultimate targets of Allied strategic deception. Adolf Hitler, the commander-in-chief of the German armed forces, controlled operations through *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW). Within OKW, the *Wehrmachtsführungsstab*, the

operational staff of OKW, relied upon *Fremde Heere West* (FHW), Foreign Armies West, to manage operations and intelligence in the western theater to include the Mediterranean. FHW intelligence officers drew upon many sources for their assessments. Surprisingly, because it was part of the *Wehrmacht*, *Abwehr* was FHW's least-trusted German source for accurate information, but its size and encompassing activities made skeptical reliance upon it necessary. Only the Italian intelligence services stood lower in German eyes, although the British paradoxically and correctly regarded the Italians highly.[7]

Possession of *Abwehr*'s Enigma cypher, *Abwehr*'s size and mission, and dysfunction within the organization made it a focus of British deception operations. Reading the German's mail made it possible to play upon senior leaders' fears and expectations. It also made judging the effectiveness of deception activities possible. Competition reigned between *Abwehr's* overseas stations. This combined with an absence of close, critical oversight meant that *Abwehr* operators were often rewarded for the number of agents they recruited and the amount of intelligence they generated no matter how dubious. The result was that *Abwehr* served as willing, if unknowing or cynical, broadcasters of Allied deception to FHW.

For its part, FHW, which was increasingly fearful of the scale of military resources drawn into the meat-grinder in the Soviet Union, was disposed to passing along overestimations of Allied strength and aggressive intent in the Mediterranean to Hitler. Operation CASCADE played upon FHW's tendency to exaggerate the Western Allies' strength. Knowledge of OKW's and thus Hitler's fears and expectations in the Mediterranean gained through ULTRA decrypts formed the basis of Operation MINCEMEAT. Operation BARCLAY, guided by a mature and effective administrative apparatus, synchronized the two efforts as well as others.

Theory and Practice

If British deceivers held the organizational upper hand, they had also learned hard operational lessons. By 1943, Dudley Clarke, "A" Force's leader, possessed a clear vision of how to conduct deception, a vision tempered by his wartime experience. Clarke's ideas represent the theory and practice that permeated the broader British approach to deception and informed the conception of, planning for, and execution of Operation BARCLAY. As such, a brief review is useful:[8]

1. The purpose of *deception*, as opposed to *cover*, is to make the enemy *do* something that assists our plans and prejudices his. *Cover* induces non-action; *deception* induces action. They are related but different. What
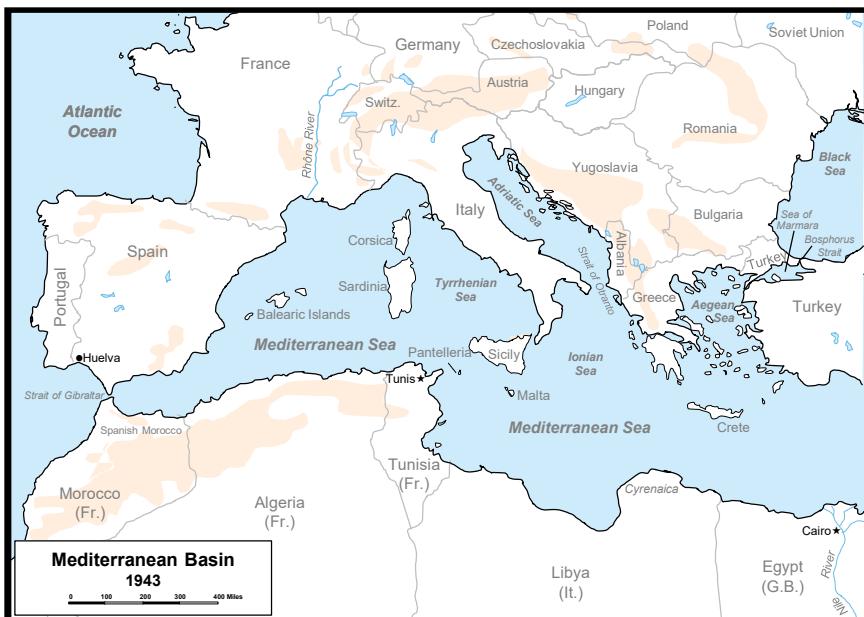
Figure 4.1. The Mediterranean basin, 1943. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

the enemy *thinks* is significant only for what it causes him to *do*. Thus, an operational commander should tell his deceivers what it is that he *specifically* wants the enemy to *do* at a place and time. The deceivers, in collaboration with the intelligence staff, should decide what the enemy needs to made to *think* to cause the required *action*. Violating this principle rests at the root of many deception failures. Furthermore, deceivers should not deceive merely because they can; deception should have a specific object.

2. Control of deception operations should rest with an operational commander rather than the intelligence staff. The operational commander tells the deceivers what he specifically wants the enemy to do at a place and time, which sets the tempo for deception operations. He or she also decides when to replace the deception plan, to alter it, or to end it.

3. Deception works best when all planning and execution is concentrated under one commander. This applies equally to tactical and strategic deception. One cannot institutionalize deception—making responsibility for deception a regular staff duty is a mistake, doing so hinders effectiveness and security. The same specialized organization and commander should be responsible for tactical and strategic deception.

4. Deception works best when it plays on real fears and expectations. It is uneconomical to try to induce fear or expectation where there is none.

Knowledge of enemy fears and expectations is a critical information requirement. Order-of-battle deception is particularly useful in playing upon both. The enemy's belief in the truth of a deception operation is not required; acceptance of its plausibility is.

5. Deception works best when it is given time to work. Specialized deceivers in consultation with intelligence staff members are best equipped to determine the time required. "At once" deception orders from an operational commander almost never succeed. Tactical deception generally takes less time than strategic deception. More time is better where strategic deception is concerned.

6. Deception works best when it uses several methods. Never rely on one method. Special means work best when at a distance from the enemy. Physical means work best when in close proximity.

These, then, were some of the theories and methods that informed the success of Operation BARCLAY. It is to this story we now turn.

Operation BARCLAY

On the fourth day of the Casablanca Conference, 18 January 1943, the British and Americans decided to invade Sicily (Operation HUSKY) as a follow-up to success in Tunisia. Thereafter, deception planning progressed quickly. The LCS began work on a general framework to achieve the following ends: first, to pose credible threats to the south of France and Balkans; second, to weaken the garrison of Sicily and deter reinforcements, especially German ones; and, finally, to minimize attacks on the shipping assembling for HUSKY.[9] After approval by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the LCS sent "A" Force its outline plan, which it received on 27 February. "A" Force finalized the BARCLAY plan on 21 March, which received Eisenhower's approval on 10 April and was issued by the LCS on 24 April.

The overarching story to accomplish the stated objectives was complicated. A fake army, British Twelfth, would invade Greece and Crete from the Middle East around 25 May, bringing Turkey into the war. Turkish and other Allied forces would then attack Bulgaria and into Yugoslavia. One and a half weeks later, an assault would be mounted against southern France. American forces under Lieutenant General George Patton would take Corsica and Sardinia to cover the main effort against southern France by General Sir Harold Alexander's forces, British Eighth Army and a French one. The Anglo-French army group would then advance up the Rhône River valley. Allied airpower would neutralize the naval and air threat from the Italian mainland and Sicily, enabling each to be bypassed. Both notional attacks would be postponed on 20 May for roughly one

month when another postponement would take place thereby pinning Axis troops in place and achieving surprise for the real effort against Sicily on 10 July.[10]

Although complex, the deception "story" was robust. If the Germans only bit on one of the illusory offensives, attention and, most importantly, military strength would be diverted away from the most logical target, Sicily. Furthermore, the enemy did not need to *believe* the Allies were going to invade Greece and France, only that they *could* and *might*. The risk, of course, was that the Axis intelligence agencies would catch on to the charade; the exposed lies would then point a finger directly at the supposedly bypassed actual invasion area, having quite the opposite effect intended.

To mitigate this danger, the British deceivers used every method and resource in their playbook—to name but a few: double agents; the creation of fake units complete with camps, administration, and vehicles; amphibious training for Greek troops; appeals for Greek interpreters and fishermen familiar with the Greek coast; distribution of maps of cover objectives, intelligence on Axis units in France and the Balkans, Polish-Bulgarian phrase books, and Pound notes overprinted with "France," "Bulgaria," and "Greece"; and deceptive radio traffic. The multi-dimensional effort required an immense amount of coordinated work on the part of deception operators and intelligence staffs spread over thousands of miles. That Axis intelligence services never caught wind of BARCLAY stands as a testament to Allied security measures.[11]

In addition to Allied competence, other reasons also contributed to German gullibility. BARCLAY played upon German fears and expectations (interestingly, the skillful Italians never totally took the bait).[12] For example, Hitler in particular worried obsessively about the Balkans. "A" Force had already mounted two recent operations, WAREHOUSE and WITHSTAND, to play upon these fears.[13] BARCLAY need only continue in this regard. Furthermore, *Abwehr*, led by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, suffered from inefficiency, corruption, and disloyalty. Thus, despite the elaborate German apparatus for intelligence collection and analysis, they were consistently and successfully deceived.[14] In addition, "yes-man-itis" increasingly permeated the German military high command as Hitler became more paranoid; if Adolf Hitler was worried about a threat to the Balkans then there were those on his staff that would affirm those fears.[15]

A plan as complex and comprehensive as BARCLAY contained many subsidiary and related operations. It also built upon the hard-earned achievements of previous deception enterprises. Enumerating all is beyond the scope of this essay, but a few examples provide a taste of the ingenuity, cre-

ativity, energy, and breadth of the whole. Operation LEYBURN supported BARCLAY from May through August 1943 by demonstrating interest in preserving works of art in the supposed target areas.[16] For WATERFALL, deceivers created a gigantic display of fake equipment in Cyrenaica. Over one hundred bogus landing craft, an armored division's worth of dummy equipment, and enough gliders and aircraft for an airborne division were on full display in harbors, assembly areas, and airfields. This was intended for Axis photoreconnaissance aircraft in the only sector they could reach. The purpose was to fool photo interpreters and intelligence analysts into reporting preparations for an Allied assault against Greece and Crete.[17] MINCEMEAT, discussed in more detail later, aimed to plant suggestions of planned invasions of Corsica and Greece by floating a body bearing fake documents ashore in Spain. Finally, CASCADE, which began in March 1942 and was enlarged several times until replaced by WANTAGE in 1944, comprised a sweeping order-of-battle deception that formed the essential background for BARCLAY's notional eastern attacks.

Operation CASCADE

Operation CASCADE was, writes intelligence historian Thaddeus Holt, Dudley "Clarke's and the Allies' crowning achievement."[18] It was almost uniformly successful. By 1944, FHW carried every unit created on its Allied order of battle assessments.[19] Consequently, CASCADE formed a firm foundation upon which a great deal of Allied strategic deception was based. Simply put, BARCLAY would not have succeeded without it. Due in large part to CASCADE, on 10 July 1943, at least seven German divisions awaited an assault that never came hundreds of miles away from their comrades on Sicily. By the time of the landings, the Germans believed that the Allies had 20 more divisions in the Mediterranean theater than they actually did (four armored, fifteen infantry, and one airborne), in addition to two Corps and one Army headquarters.[20]

Long-term order-of-battle deception is not easy. After the war Dudley Clarke said:

> The amount of inconvenience and extra work it involves should deter anyone from embarking upon it lightheartedly, for, once started, it remains a standing dish which can never be neglected nor abandoned, and which may imperil both military plans and delicate Deception machinery if not tended with sufficient and regular care.[21]

To create a unit out of thin air required planting the seed with the enemy and creating physical and administrative manifestations that could be ob-

served. To maintain the notional unit's existence in perpetuity necessitated thoroughness, patience, and diligence, among other qualities, in administrative and deception staff members when one careless error might bring the whole edifice crashing down.

The amount of effort expended, coordinated through both Cairo and London, was staggering. Every organization down to battalion-level needed a name and history. Soldiers wearing fake divisional patches regularly drove trucks marked with the same through areas where they might be detected. Thousands of official documents circulated with the names of fictitious units prominently displayed. Radio traffic routinely passed between bogus outfits. To prevent confusion, deceivers who fed false information to the enemy were provided with a comprehensive, regularly updated reference book that laid out the location, organization, and status of every counterfeit unit. Regular headquarters possessed a similar notebook that also contained information about the phony units that the deceivers wanted the enemy to know in addition to an estimate of what the enemy currently believed.[22]

Operation MINCEMEAT

Only one BARCLAY-related operation competed with CASCADE in terms of significance, MINCEMEAT. If similar in terms of the scale of their respective deceptive effects, the two could not have been more different in conception and execution. While CASCADE was long-term, resource- and time-intensive, and useful for a multiplicity of purposes beyond BARCLAY, MINCEMEAT was comparatively quickly pulled together, tiny, and produced time-sensitive results.

Operation MINCEMEAT was perhaps the single most successful and spectacular deception action of the entire war. It was certainly the most famous, inspiring a best-selling book in 1953, *The Man Who Never Was*, and a well-received movie of the same name in 1956. More recently, Ben Macintyre's 2010 *Operation Mincemeat* also hit the best-seller lists. Alas, the story may only be sketched out here.

MINCEMEAT was the brainchild of Flight Lieutenant Charles Cholmondeley (pronounced *Chum-ly*), seconded to MI5's Section B1A, where he served as an "ideas" man. MI5 charged B1A with running captured spies as double agents. Cholmondeley knew that official but unimportant papers found after a British aircraft had crashed into the sea off Cadiz, Spain in September 1942 made their way into *Abwehr* hands. He theorized that a deception operation might take advantage of this. Cholmondeley suggested that the body of a drowned man dressed in military uniform with fake secret papers might be dropped from an airplane where it would be found and

where nominally neutral Spanish authorities worked closely with *Abwehr*. One selling point of the scheme was that information of a far more secret nature, such as Allied plans for operations after Tunisia, could be introduced than through "normal" double agent channels. The basic premise of the subterfuge was not new; indeed, the intelligence community calls planting false information through a staged accident, a "haversack ruse," after the episode in Palestine discussed in Chapter Two. MINCEMEAT's uniqueness stemmed from the ingenious proposed method of executing it. From this germ, MINCEMEAT grew.[23]

Operation BARCLAY provided the opportunity to execute the idea. As "A" Force's Dudley Clarke and the LCS's John Beven pulled the threads of BARCLAY together, Sir John Cecil Masterman, chairman of the Twenty (XX—for "double-cross") Committee that oversaw the running of double agents in Great Britain, assigned help to Cholmondeley in the form of Lieutenant Commander Ewen Montagu, RNVR, of Naval Intelligence Division's Section 17M, which served as a clearinghouse of sorts for super-secret information and disinformation. The two made a perfect pair, and quickly worked to flesh out the details.

As executed, the success of MINCEMEAT rested in the details. Cholmondeley and Montagu acquired a suitable body, and brought Britain's most eminent pathologist, Sir Bernard Spilsbury, on board to ensure that it would pass intensive examination. Exhaustive work went into constructing a background for the notional Major William Martin, Royal Marines. The pair settled upon submarine delivery as the most effective way of placing the body of Major Martin, and solved the problem of long-term storage and delivery by such a method. Finally, they created the documents Major Martin would carry, the key one being a personal letter from Vice Chief of the Imperial Staff, Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Nye, to General Sir Harold Alexander, Eisenhower's deputy in the Mediterranean. The letter stated that the Allies were planning a landing in Greece, codenamed HUSKY, and another, codenamed BRIMSTONE, for which a fictional attack on Sicily would serve as a cover story. The letter hinted that Sardinia was BRIMSTONE's target. Significantly, the letter did not tell the Germans anything they did not already suspect.

On 30 April, HMS *Seraph* cast loose Major Martin off Huelva, Spain. He did his duty well. For example, even the Japanese *Chargé d'affaires* in Rome outlined grave Axis fears about Sardinia and southern France three weeks before the HUSKY landings. Moreover, OKW prioritized the defense of Greece for weeks after the Allies were established ashore in Sicily.[24] The "haversack ruse" had worked.

What stands out most from the MINCEMEAT endeavor is the ability of the British deceivers to apply deception in a creative and flexible yet coordinated manner. Montagu and Cholmondeley were from different departments and selected for their unique, some might say "anti-regular," personalities and skill sets. Yet they found a home where their talents would benefit the war effort. Furthermore, it is clear that the demands of the mission rather than administrative prerogatives informed MINCEMEAT's planning and execution. Although not saints, the leaders of the British deception enterprise prized effectiveness over other concerns; they worked to coordinate their efforts toward a larger goal.

The Deep Roots of Organizational Success

After examining MINCEMEAT, BARCLAY, and CASCADE, one is left with the distinct impression that the British did military deception and intelligence operations well during World War II less because of far-sighted, rational decision-making and more because of their extensive experience and for deeply rooted aspects of their shared culture.

As a central player in the highly competitive, long game of imperial and European politics and warfare, the British had lengthy experience with intelligence and deception operations. This undoubtedly played a role in their early commitment to establishing organizations such as Dudley Clarke's "A" Force. Indeed, one is tempted to assert that emphasizing deception during World War II came as almost second nature to them.[25] The Americans, on the other hand, proved eager but willing amateurs when it came to strategic deception for which they had little experience and no standing organizations.[26] We need not belabor this point.

Less clear, but no less significant, is the role that culture—the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization—played in accounting for British organizational success.[27] The influence of culture is particularly challenging to evaluate. How, for example, does one gauge the *exact* consequence of class structure or elite liberal arts university education upon the British officer corps and deception operations other than to say that these surely had an effect? For example, MINCEMEAT's masterminds, Cholmondeley and Montagu, were both "gentlemen." Montagu was the second son of a baron and attended Cambridge, while Cholmondeley was also from a respectable family and Oxford-educated. Did their collective creativity stem from a similar cultural orientation, or did it instead mean that their "eccentricity" would be tolerated, celebrated even, because they were gentlemen rather than upstart rankers? Whatever the answer to these questions, one thing is

undeniable—the British Empire possessed a seemingly limitless number of talented deceivers and intelligence operatives, including, most appropriately, Ian Fleming, the creator of the fictional James Bond.

More clear when considering the impact of culture are its organizational manifestations, such as staff systems.[28] The British staff system was more flexible than the American one. It lacked a true chief of staff and was usually composed of two parts, General ("G") and Administrative ("Adm"). The effect of this organization was that deception operatives often had direct access to the commander. The American one, on the other hand, revolved around a rigid hierarchy. Assistant chiefs of staff of one of the four primary staff sections—Personnel ("1"), Intelligence ("2"), Operations ("3"), and Supply ("4")—reported to the chief of staff who in turn reported to the commander. Deceivers, then, had to gain two levels of approval at the very least before a commander ever heard their ideas. The problem with this structure was, in the words of intelligence historian Thaddeus Holt, "that it smothered deception, which of all the activities needs to be imaginative and flexible, under layers of bureaucracy and bureaucratic coordination."[29]

If the American approach to organizing a military staff hurt deception efforts, it also possessed great strengths. The systems-oriented, managerial-focused American method made possible the mobilization of the economy and over twelve and a half million men, and the projection of these men with their equipment to the far sides of the globe. Here, truly, an effective and efficient system was the only answer. If there are lessons in this for today, they are that *not* all significant military problems are answered best with a system and, specifically, that any attempt to systematize deception is doomed to failure.

Conclusion

As the 10 July invasion of Sicily approached, the strategically-oriented BARCLAY increasingly gave way to tactical deception operations, most notably Operation DERRICK that aimed to tie down Axis forces in western Sicily until the Allies were established on the southeast corner of the island.[30] By then, BARCLAY had largely succeeded—British deceivers won on the cognitive battlefield, causing ambiguity that led the Germans to misallocate resources in a manner advantageous to the HUSKY landings. Indeed, Dudley Clarke, as responsible as anyone for the achievement, judged BARCLAY as:

> the peak of the Deception effort in the Mediterranean theater. 'Barclay' was neither the biggest nor the longest of the major Strategic Deception Plans of the War, but it was one of the most straightforward in the almost 'classic' style and it illus-

trated more clearly than most the principle lessons both of planning and execution.[31]

BARCLAY and its subsidiary and related operations were the consummation of a maturation process. By 1943, British deceivers dominated the strategic-level cognitive battlefield, shaping the operating environment in ways that multiplied the effectiveness of combat plans and forces. This occurred because the British believed that deception mattered, manifested this long-term commitment with resources and actions, and constantly adapted organizations, theories, and methods based upon experience.

However, it is possible to overestimate the significance of deception to ultimate military success. BARCLAY was no exception. Indeed, by 10 July, there was, argues Thaddeus Holt, "general recognition, especially by the Italian intelligence services, that Sicily was certain to be attacked."[32] Still, the possibility that the Allies *might* and *could* land in Corsica, Sardinia, and Greece meant that at least ten German divisions remained committed to spurious missions. Despite the fact that BARCLAY failed to deceive completely the Axis intelligence services, it was certainly worth the effort.

The effectiveness of deception operations is notoriously difficult to measure precisely. The consequences of ambiguity, misunderstanding, and confusion are hard to assess. Influences beyond perceptions planted by deceivers play upon an adversary's mind. For example, German forces in Greece remained throughout the HUSKY campaign and briefly gained a new commander, *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel. That this occurred was due to both Allied deception efforts and Hitler's phobia regarding the Balkans. So, too, was the choice to commit only two German divisions initially to the defense of Sicily warranted by realistic concerns about Italy's commitment to the war. Should Italy abruptly surrender, which occurred in September, the 60,000 Germans on the island would find themselves dangling at the end of a very long rope. Even today, it is impossible to determine the exact degree to which deception and other concerns played roles in these decisions.

One reflection upon the effects of Operation BARCLAY remains— the consequences for how we view the past and the Sicily campaign in particular. An interpretation that, in the words of historian Carlo D'Este, "[f]rom the outset the Allies had taken the safe, conservative path" has become an article of faith.[33] Most historians marshal German judgments of the campaign to support this understanding of Allied operational decision-making. But German commanders thought, as we have seen, the

Allies had far more combat power in the Mediterranean than they did because of Operation CASCADE. For instance, *Generalleutnant* Eberhard Rodt, commander of the *15. Panzergrenadier-Division*, still believed in 1951 that "approximately 50 enemy divisions [were assembled] in the area of Algiers-Tunis" when the Allies possessed far fewer.[34] How this commonly shared overestimation of Allied combat power affected the German military's understanding of the campaign is little understood, but certainly must have had repercussions. If the Allies did indeed have fifty amphibious-ready divisions in North Africa, the 1947 assessment of Heinrich von Vietinghoff, commander of the German *10. Armee* in Italy, that "from the German standpoint it is incomprehensible that the Allies did not seize the straits of Messina. This would have been possible without any special difficulty" makes perfect sense.[35] But, again, the Allies did not. Allied military deception in the Mediterranean, it seems, plays upon our perceptions even today.

Notes

1. Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Volume Five, Strategic Deception* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 92. Other works consulted for this essay include, F. H. Hinsley, et al, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations, Volume Three, Part I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (New York: Scribner, 2004); Ben Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat: How a Dead Man and a Bizarre Plan Fooled the Nazis and Assured an Allied Victory* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010); Ewen Montagu, *The Man Who Never Was* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1953); Carlo D'Este, *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily, 1943* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2008); Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy, United States Army in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1965).

2. Howard, 10, 31-33, 40; Holt, 215-245.

3. Howard, 31.

4. Howard, 71.

5. Howard, 41. Deception practitioners refer to playing on an adversary's fears and expectations as Magruder's Principle. During the 1862 siege of Yorktown, Confederate Major General John Bankhead Magruder successfully deceived Union Major General George Brinton McClellan into thinking that he had far more strength than he actually possessed by catering to McClellan's cautious disposition.

6. On the conception of MINCEMEAT, see Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat*, 9-60; Montagu, the author of *The Man Who Never Was*, left out much in his 1954 book due to the top-secret nature of his work. Although *The Man Who Never Was* is a fantastic read, Macintyre's book is more reliable as a source.

7. Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 45-52; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 99-109.

8. This synopsis of Clarke's ideas is derived from Howard, 33, 39, 40-42; Holt, 52-98.

9. Holt, 366.

10. Holt, 367, 809; Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 86-87.

11. Holt, 367-369; Howard, 85-88.

12. Holt assesses the "Italians as by far the most competent [of the Axis intelligence services], but Italy was not a prime target of major strategic deception." Holt, 99.

13. Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 88.

14. Holt, *The Deceivers*, 102-106

15. Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat*, 39-40.

16. Holt, *The Deceivers*, 827.

17. Holt, 368, 843.

18. Holt, 225.

19. Holt, 226-227; Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 44.

20. Howard, 43-44.

21. Dudley Clarke quoted in Holt, *The Deceivers*, 227.

22. Holt, 25-226.

23. The description of Operation MINCEMEAT is based upon the following sources, Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat*, *passim*; Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 89-92, 206, 245-6; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 369-78, 829

24. Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 91.

25. For a few examples see, Huw Davies, "Wellington's use of deception tactics in the Peninsular War,"*Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29:4 (August 2006): 723-750; Barton Whaley, *Strategem: Deception and Surprise in War* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1969), 25-43.

26. Holt, *The Deceivers*, 247.

27. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture, accessed 15 April 2018.

28. For an excellent discussion of the effects of British and American staff systems on deception during World War II see, Holt, *The Deceivers*, 66-71.

29. Holt, 68-69.

30. On these tactical deception operations, see Holt, 379-382.

31. Dudley Clarke quoted in Holt, 366.

32. Holt, 379.

33. D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 551.

34. Eberhard Rodt, "15th Panzer Grenadier Division in Sicily," Manuscript #C-077 (Koenigstein, CZ: US Army Military History Institute, 1951; translation 1989), 1, 5.

35. Heinrich von Vietinghoff, "Brief Estimate of the Overall Situation in the Mediterranean up to the Landing on the Italian Mainland" Manuscript #D-116 (Garmisch, Germany: HQ European Command Historical Division, 1947), 5.

Chapter 5

Operation *KREML*

German Strategic Deception on the Eastern Front in 1942

Alan P. Donohue

Introduction

The German *Wehrmacht* suffered its first major reversal of the Second World War in the depths of European Russia during the winter of 1941-1942. A combination of faulty intelligence, poor logistical planning, inclement weather conditions, and the sheer tenacity of the Red Army brought the German invaders to a shuddering halt along the entire front, nowhere more spectacularly than at the gates of Moscow. The *Führer* and Supreme Commander of the *Wehrmacht*, Adolf Hitler, decided in early 1942 that the renewed summer offensive would not be aimed at the Soviet capital city, but instead towards the vitally important, oil-producing regions of the Caucasus region in the south (Operation *BLAU*). Indeed, Hitler had consistently expressed the opinion that economic factors were of paramount importance to the conduct of modern warfare, but he believed that his generals did not understand this as they were too conservative and devoted to outdated maxims of war that focused solely on the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. The *Wehrmacht*, he posited, would now face an insurmountable crisis in terms of operational freedom if it did not seize the Caucasus oil for itself. A further mitigating factor for this plan was that, if successful, it would have the added boon of denying the Soviets their own most important source of oil.[1]

Hitler and his top military aides were fully cognizant that losses suffered by the *Ostheer* ("eastern army") in 1941 could not be replaced in full, which meant that the offensive in 1942 would only be conducted on one axis (as opposed to three the previous summer). In fact, the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel-General Franz Halder, had suggested that the Army should go over to the defensive for the year in order to rebuild and prepare for the full offensive commitment of *all* army groups in 1943. This strategy, however, was anathema to Hitler, who was fearful that any respite would allow the Soviets to reconstitute their own armed forces and remain in the war until the Western Allies were in a position to open a second land front on the European mainland. Once Hitler had formulated his own strategy for the coming campaign—a single operation in the south towards the Caucasus oilfields —he would not be disabused of his rationale;

Assumed Direction of Main Thrust

Possible Alternative to Main Thrust

German Front Line 31 March 1942

First Phase of Main Operation (starting from 15 Jun)

Second Phase of Main Operation (starting from 15 Jul)

Third Phase of Main Operation (starting from 15 Aug)

Final Objective

Intended Front Adjustments Prior to Main Operation

Possible Additional Relief Attacks / Second Operations

Army Gp Center

Western Dvina River
Volga River
Moskva River
Oka River
Volga River
Kama River
Samara River
Sozh River
Khoper River
Don River
Volga River
Dnieper River
Donets River
Manych River
Kuban River
Terek River
Ural River

Rzhev · Moscow · Gorkiy
Smolensk · Kaluga
Bryansk · Tula
Orël · Tambov
Army Gp Center / Army Gp South · Lipetsk
Kursk · Voronezh
Belgorod · I · II
Kharkov · II
Izyum · III
Artemovsk · Voroshilovgrad
III
Rostov on Don
Sea of Azov
Crimea · Kerch
Simferopol · Krasnodar · Tikhoretsl
Sevastopol · Maykop
Black Sea
Groznyy
Caucasus Mountains
Caspian Sea
Tbilisi
Turkey · U.S.S.R. · Baku

International Border
Armored and Motorized Formation
Oil Deposits
Soviet Expectations
Plans for Operation Blue

German Intentions and Soviet Expectations 1942
0 50 100 150 200 250 Miles
0 100 200 300 400 km

Figure 5.1. German intentions and Soviet expectations, 1942. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

indeed, he was supported by many of his subordinates, particularly his economic advisors, who were themselves mindful of the dire fuel situation. The initial concern now was to try to convince the Soviet political and military leadership that the target of the German summer offensive would be Moscow as opposed to the southern sector. A strategy of deception was initiated under the code name Operation *KREML* ('Kremlin') that eventually came to involve the highest ranking generals and politicians down to frontline troops and individual saboteurs.

It is somewhat incongruous that such an important and fateful deception plan should be afforded so little attention in a field of study that has

otherwise been steadily gaining in significance. In fact, Operation *KREML* has been described as having had the potential to make it a "masterpiece of this somewhat speculative form of military art." Most significantly, it had a sound premise in that it advocated a renewal of the offensive against Moscow, which actually made strategic sense given the proximity of German Army Group Center to Moscow as well as the importance of the Soviet capital as a center of administration and industry and as a transportation hub. This was also what Stalin and the Soviet high command ultimately expected.[2] However, though the capture of Moscow would have been especially welcome in terms of military strategy, the destructive impact on the Soviet war economy, and the effect on German morale at home and at the front, it would undoubtedly have been a costly venture: An offensive in this region would effectively have been a frontal assault on the most heavily defended sector of the entire Eastern Front.

Initial stages of preparation and the Soviet response

Planning for *KREML* was under way almost as soon as it was for *BLAU*. On 12 February, the chief of the armed forces high command (OKW), Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, issued a directive entitled "Guidelines for Enemy Deception" (*Richtlinien für die Feindtäuschung*). As part of this undertaking, German counter-intelligence agents were tasked with convincing the Soviets that Moscow and the industrial areas of the middle Volga region would be the primary targets of the renewed German offensive.[3] For example, members of the recently formed Russian Nationalist People's Army (*Russkaia natsional'naia narodnaia armiia*, RNNA), comprised of former Red Army prisoners of war, were trained as spies and saboteurs to be transferred to the Soviet rear from the end of May. Among other things, the *Gestapo* (German secret state police) supplied them with identification papers and passports, military and political documentation to allow access to important locations, and stamps and seals for the majority of the military commissariats and district councils around Moscow. Some of those who returned reported that they had been active not only in Moscow but also as far away as Cheliabinsk, Sverdlovsk (now Ekaterinburg), and other cities.[4] The German authorities also began a campaign to destroy Soviet espionage efforts in Western Europe that summer, which resulted in the arrest of approximately 100 operatives.[5]

KREML was so secretive that even Germany's Axis partners on the Eastern Front (principally Romania, Italy, and Hungary) were not to be privy to the details. On 1 April, Halder raised the question of how operational intentions in the southern sector could be disguised while at the same time continuing the pretense of a renewal of the assault on the Soviet

capital. Hitler ordered, *inter alia*, that extreme caution was to be exercised during preliminary talks with the representatives of Germany's allies and that the goals of the forthcoming operations were not to be mentioned.[6]

Halder was generally reticent about *KREML*, even when confiding in his own diary. However, on 3 May, he noted that he had had a meeting with the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (Major-General Günther Blumentritt) about the deception measures being initiated for *BLAU*. Nine days later, Halder wrote that the Chief of Staff of Army Group Center (Major-General Otto Wöhler) had received instructions that day from both Hitler and himself concerning these plans, but does not go into any further detail. Finally, almost two weeks before *BLAU* began, he noted that outstanding issues had been discussed with Wöhler, especially with respect to implementing measures for *KREML*. The plan, he concluded, was straightforward: "Mislead the enemy."[7]

Unsurprisingly, the main focus of concern for the Soviets was their capital city and how to defend it against the likely German offensive. For the month of April, the command of Briansk Front (one of three army groups screening Moscow) decreed that its main priority was to hold the lines it occupied. It further noted that, in strengthening these positions, the main operational areas were to be given special attention, two of which were to be prioritized by the local commanders: The Bolkhov–Belëv sector, and the Orël–Mtsensk axis towards Tula (both approximately 300 km south-west of Moscow).[8] On 5 April, the chief intelligence officer (Ic) of Army Group Center noted that Soviet Western Front (Army General G.K. Zhukov) had apparently transferred 60th Rifle Division to the north-west in order to create a *Schwerpunkt* ("point of main defense") on both sides of the road Bolkhov–Belëv.[9] This was exactly where the Germans had ostensibly planned their main advance on Moscow (discussed below).

Three months after Keitel issued his initial order, his deputy, Colonel-General Alfred Jodl, supplemented it with more specific information on the situation as it stood. Present circumstances, he declared, were favorable for *KREML* for a number of reasons. Significantly, intentions would be largely hidden from the enemy because deployments for *BLAU* extended well into the rear area of Army Group Center. There was an east to west movement of troops (which suggested that they were being redeployed away from the southern sector), and a localized regrouping of units in Army Groups South and Center was currently being implemented (which would doubtless add to the enemy's uncertainty with respect to German intentions). Jodl further noted that there were plans to increase statements

in military journals and in the foreign press—as well as in the German press to a limited degree—about the significance of Moscow as the focal point of Soviet resistance, its importance as a communications hub, and the fact that it was the center of Soviet armaments production. The general theme of such proclamations was to be that the capture of Moscow would create a breach in the enemy line while at the same time deprive the Soviet leadership of much of its flexibility. The loss of the capital would also deny the Russians the ability to regroup and continue the struggle west of the Volga. From 25 May, Jodl suggested, it would be inevitable that the enemy would have some sort of clarification about German force dispositions. From the end of that month, therefore, it would be especially important to draw Soviet attention away from Army Group South to Army Group Center. It would also be imperative to feign weakness in many sectors of Army Group South by substituting units of the satellite armies for German formations. This would have the added benefit of offering a period of rehabilitation to the troops that would be withdrawn. Even the German soldiers at the front were to be misled into believing that Moscow would be the target of the offensive, and, where possible, intermittent reinforced artillery fire was to be carried out in certain areas. Likewise, the remaining sectors of Army Groups Center and North were to busy themselves with lively reconnaissance and deceptive measures as well as the preparation of local feints in order to conceal the true defensive posture of these positions and to tie down as many enemy units as possible.[10] German units also spread disinformation in radio traffic that was specifically meant to be picked up by Red Army commands.[11]

On 9 May, an *Abwehr* (German military intelligence) report based on information gleaned from the *Exchange Telegraph* news agency in Moscow suggested that Zhukov's preparations for the anticipated German offensive towards Moscow were "completed". The same agency also noted around this time that the Soviets had observed large troop movements to the southwest of Moscow in the Briansk–Orël–Kursk area.[12] These, of course, were forces to be used during *BLAU*, but it was certainly plausible from the Soviet perspective that these enemy formations were concentrating instead for a renewed advance on the capital.

Intelligence and counter-intelligence efforts were augmented by a somewhat unlikely source in the form of the German Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, Joseph Goebbels, who confided his own contribution to his diary on different dates beginning three months before the start of *BLAU*. On 6 April, for example, he noted that a number of articles which stated that the capture of the enemy's capital city was always

of paramount importance in war had been published by his department in military journals. He hoped that this would encourage international observers to focus their attention on Moscow—or at the very least the northern sector—instead of on the south, though he admitted that nobody seemed to have fallen for the ruse up to that point. Goebbels later wrote that he would personally send a boisterous news correspondent known to his fellow journalists in the West on a trip to the central sector of the Eastern Front, followed immediately by his reassignment to neutral Portugal, where he was to act drunk and spread rumors about an impending assault on Moscow.[13] Additionally, Goebbels's diary entry for 20 May reveals a plan whereby an "unauthorized" article had been published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper, only to then be unceremoniously withdrawn because it seemingly revealed German intentions to attack the Soviet capital. Though he was not entirely convinced that such endeavors would have a significant impact, he nevertheless noted that "one must always try whatever one can do." Three days later, he suggested that he was planning to have an article apparently written by the OKW published in Turkey or Portugal about an offensive in the central sector. He admitted, however, that this action had the potential to do more harm than good should the real authors of the article become clear, though again he stressed that "everything possible" had to be done in order to conceal *BLAU*. Goebbels further noted that Hitler himself had fully approved of these efforts.[14] On the following day, Halder suggested that deceptive measures with respect to *BLAU* had "worked well" judging by what was being reported in the foreign press. Finally, on 30 May Goebbels noted that Hitler was "very satisfied" with the effects of the reports published by the German journalists abroad. The *Führer* added that they had done a "very great service" to the conduct of the war.[15]

These efforts were reinforced to a great degree by Stalin's own distrustful nature. Around this time, for example, the British had discovered from a "secret and reliable source" that German VIII *Fliegerkorps* ("Air Corps") was being transferred from the central sector to the Crimea in the south, which indicated that a German offensive was imminent there. However, he refused to trust the British even when they offered him such highly accurate signals intelligence information (most likely emanating from *Ultra*, its encryption of top-echelon German communications).[16] Stalin's dismissal of outsider information that had foretold the initial German invasion of the Soviet Union the previous year (Operation *BARBAROSSA*) had nearly resulted in defeat; his suspicion of the intentions of the British government would now once again have almost fatal repercussions for his people and armed forces.
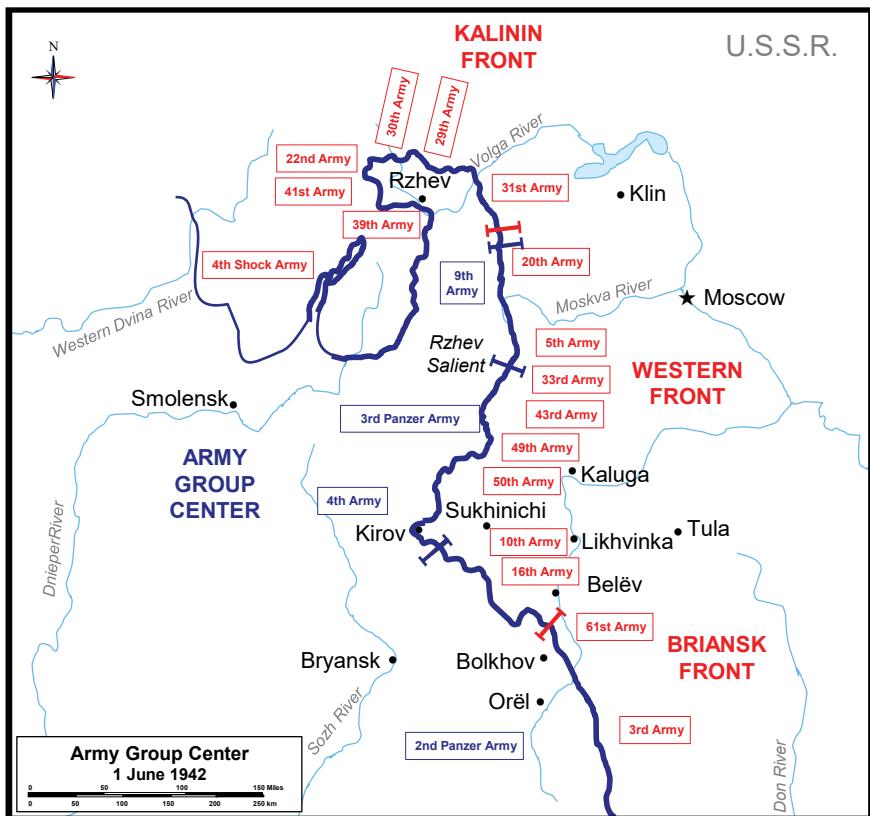
Figure 5.2. Army Group Center, 1 June 1942. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

KREML becomes "official"

On 29 May, the commander-in-chief of Army Group Center (Field Marshal Günther von Kluge) finally signed the order that supposedly made Moscow the target of the German summer offensive. Frontline units deliberately allowed some copies to fall into the enemy's hands in different ways, such as on dead officers or on aircraft that had apparently deviated from their flight paths. The *Luftwaffe* (air force) carried out aerial reconnaissance on defensive positions in and around Moscow as well as further eastward around the cities of Vladimir, Ivanovo, Tambov, Gor'kii (Nizhnii Novgorod), and Rybinsk. Operatives disseminated false information over the radio and agents increasingly crossed the front lines in this sector. A complete regrouping and transfer of troops and command posts also took place.[17] Army staffs were instructed to develop plans for their operations up to 5 June, while corps headquarters were to have their work completed five days later. From 10 June, each unit was to schedule a meeting in order to discuss forthcoming operations. Those

required to attend were the chiefs of staff, chiefs of operations, and the chief intelligence officers of the corps and divisions involved.[18]

The order stated that the armies were to be ready to begin their attacks no later than the end of June. In order to allow the *Luftwaffe* to stagger its support, 4th Army and 2nd Panzer Army (in the south) would ostensibly begin their operations on "X-Day," while 3rd Panzer Army (on the left wing) would, according to developments, most likely join battle five days later. On the right flank, 2nd Army was to move on Elets (350 km due south of Moscow), while Army Group North was either to stay on the defensive or, in the case of an enemy withdrawal, to advance with its southern wing towards Peno–Ostashkov. On the northern flank of the attack front, infantry reserves were to be brought in to help take Klin (80 km north-west of Moscow), while 9th Army was to remain on the defensive. All maps, plans, and aerial reconnaissance photographs were only to be issued to corps headquarters for the moment.[19] The *Luftwaffe*, meanwhile, was given the task of reconnoitering the rear area of the sector as far as the Volga along the line Kazan'–Vol'sk (700 km east of Moscow).[20]

On the final day of May, the intelligence department of Army Group Center recorded a build-up of armor near Belëv in the form of Soviet III Tank Corps in the sector held by LIII Corps (see Figure 5.3). It was further noted that the Soviets were strengthening to the immediate west along the front line of XXXXVII Corps (mot.) while simultaneously withdrawing forces from the western extremity of the Sukhinichi salient (between 4th Army in the north and 2nd Panzer Army in the south). Both instances could be seen as either preparation for an enemy attack or else defensive measures in expectation of a German advance. The situation was similar in the northern sector. On 4 June, local German intelligence noted that deserters had stated for the first time that the Soviet forces opposite the eastern front of 9th Army apparently had no offensive intentions but had instead assumed a defensive posture. Two days later, Army Group Center suggested that increased activity by scout parties and shock troops as well as reconnaissance operations in company to battalion strength demonstrated the "nervousness" of the Russians before 3rd Panzer and 9th Armies "in expectation of German attacks."[21]

This apprehension was justified because of what the Soviets themselves had been observing. Briansk Front reported that on 14 May and for the following few days there had been movement from the west via Briansk towards Orël of up to 300 panzers, a number of which had left in the direction of Bolkhov.[22] In fact, the Germans had been using the roads Rogachëv–Roslavl' and Roslavl'–Briansk–Orël as "through roads"
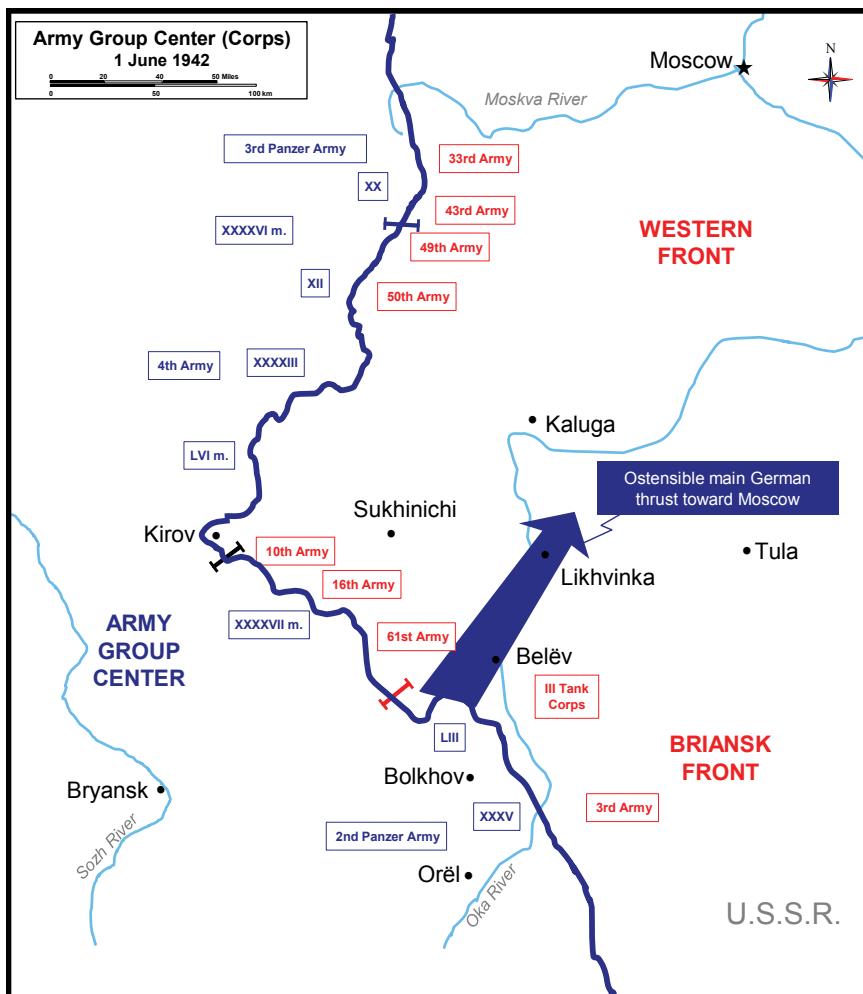
Figure 5.3. Army Group Center (Corps), 1 June 1942. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

(*Durchgangsstraßen*) VII and VIIa respectively. These were used to move units through the rear area of Army Group Center to Orël but then on to Army Group South in preparation for *BLAU*.[23] What Briansk Front had been observing was actually armor to be used in the drive to the river Don further south that was merely transiting through the sector held by Army Group Center—as noted by Jodl at the beginning of May—with only a small number heading towards Bolkhov. Thus, Soviet 61st Army holding this sector could be forgiven for assuming that the tanks continuing towards Orël would ultimately be deployed on the Mtsensk–Tula axis for the advance on Moscow.

On 5 June, 4th Army issued an order for *KREML* to its subordinate units. Apart from the information issued by Army Group Center a week previously, the army now revealed more specific tasks that it had been ordered to carry out. Its primary goal was the destruction of the enemy units in the Sukhinichi salient. Additionally, the three divisions of LIII Corps were to break through north of Bolkhov and advance via Belëv in order to win bridgeheads over the river Oka on either side of the village of Likhvinka. From there they were to attack towards the important road juncture of Kaluga (170 km south-west of Moscow). As might be expected, every detail was taken into account, including cooperation with the *Luftwaffe* and the boundaries between the corps. However, the order stipulated that only corps commanders were to be informed at this time of the preparations.[24]

These commanders continued to intensify their disinformation efforts at this level. XXXXVII Panzer Corps would try to do what 2nd Panzer Army had failed to do the previous winter and take the important town of Tula (175 km due south of Moscow). For this operation it would supposedly have two panzer divisions (4th and 17th) as its spearhead, in addition to 25th Infantry Division (mot.) and 112th Infantry Division on the left wing plus two more divisions to be added on the right.[25] This would have amounted to an exceptionally strong contingent for a short frontage of approximately 25 km and would certainly have been a cause for great alarm among the Red Army commanders in this sector if they had been privy to this information. Another possible candidate for such disinformation was a teleprinter message sent by LIII Corps to 4th Army stating that the expected warning order for *KREML* had not arrived at its headquarters and was feared lost. The corps command requested an inquest in order to determine when and how the order had been sent.[26]

With less than a month to go before the start of *BLAU*, Army Group Center headquarters sent batches of maps of the Moscow area to its subordinate commands down to regimental level, though they were not to be opened until 10 June. Only the chiefs of staff of the headquarters in question knew that the whole operation was merely an elaborate ruse.[27] On 5 June, 2nd Panzer Army ordered that only once the maps had been opened five days later were the plans to be discussed—in secret—by the corps and divisional staffs. Other measures were then to be implemented, such as increasing the number of agents beyond the line Tula–Moscow and preparing leaflets with information regarding intentions. Sufficient amounts of these were then to be sent to corps headquarters to be handed out to the troops.[28] Most agents who had previously crossed the Soviet

lines had never been heard from again, so the Germans could assume that Soviet counter-intelligence was working efficiently. They also knew that the local population was likely to inform the authorities about any suspicious activity, so even the merest trickle of information would suffice to arouse interest. The aim of the exercise was therefore to allow the Soviets to "find" the pieces of the puzzle and put it together themselves.[29]

Towards the end of the first week of June, the deception was beginning to take shape according to the orders that had been issued. 4th Army sent Army Group Center its operational intentions and intended force employment on a 1:300,000 scale map together with a detailed list of requests for additional reserves. The army headquarters also called for air support concentrated in the sector of LVI Panzer Corps, which was hypothetically its *Schwerpunkt* ("point of main attack") for the elimination of the Sukhinichi salient, though this was simply yet another ruse to arouse Soviet suspicions.[30] By 9 June, Army Group Center had received all operational intentions from its subordinate armies, and Wöhler ordered that further work on *KREML* could continue. His staff now also disseminated plans for the arrival of headquarters, formations, and independent GHQ units.[31] On the same day, 2nd Army was informed that Army Group Center would be feigning its attack towards Moscow within the next twenty-four hours.[32]

On 12 June, 4th Army ordered that all attack units were to be stocked with the following:

1½ infantry ammunition combat loads

2 artillery ammunition combat loads

5 days provision of fuel

10 days provision of rations[33]

By now, the armies involved were working hard together to try to give the impression that they were preparing for a genuine operation. Two days later, 4th Army informed 2nd Panzer Army that the orders to be attended to by XXXXVII Corps (which would make up the southern grouping for the proposed elimination of the Sukhinichi salient) were urgently needed. 4th Army asked the corps to intensify its work on the orders and inform army headquarters of its timeline for completion.[34]

On 18 June, 2nd Panzer Army headquarters notified its subordinate units that most of the troops to be brought in would arrive by rail and would detrain at Orël (about 50 km behind the front line). It even addressed the provision of the requisite number of road signs for the conver-

sion of town names to the Latin alphabet. These were to be provided for the population centers along the lines of advance right up to those places that were ostensibly the goals of the operation.[35]

Meanwhile, on 13 June the chief intelligence officer of Army Group Center had suggested that, as before, the enemy stood in a defensive posture in the entire sector in expectation of a German offensive. A week later, his staff noted that the Soviets had conducted attacks at several places along the front, which suggested that they were anticipating a German offensive and that they wanted to gain clarity through partial attacks as well as impede German preparations. On the following day, it reported that the strongest of these attacks had occurred on the left wing of 2nd Panzer Army (i.e. in the Bolkhov–Belëv sector, where the Soviets were expecting the main German thrust). On the 23rd, the intelligence department further noted that the focus of enemy aircraft activity was in the center of the army (LIII Corps). Most tellingly of all, three days before *BLAU* began in the south, Army Group Center suggested that the Soviets were expecting an imminent offensive in the central sector, or at the very least that they were growing increasingly uncertain about the situation in general. On the day German forces launched the actual offensive, a Red Army soldier captured due west of Moscow stated that the Soviets had been expecting a German offensive there for the past three days and that the troops had been ordered to hold their positions to the last man.[36] The deception had evidently been a complete success thus far.

Around the same time, however, one incident abruptly threw the German plans into turmoil. With just nine days to go until the beginning of the offensive, the chief of operations of 23rd Panzer Division, Major Joachim Reichel, crash-landed behind Soviet lines while on a reconnaissance mission. Against protocol, he had been carrying orders, maps, and details of deployments for the first stage of *BLAU* that the Soviets subsequently recovered from the wreckage. As a consequence, a furious Hitler set in place a strict code of conduct with respect to security issues, and he was fully justified in being angry over the whole episode.[37] In an addendum to the *BLAU* directive, he had already specifically laid out guidelines for security procedures. These included no telephone calls concerning planning and execution forward of the army group and *Luftwaffe* command posts; the requirement to make all necessary clarifications either in person or by encoded teleprinter; and withholding the most important details of the forthcoming operation from the satellite armies (i.e. Romanians, Italians, and Hungarians).[38] The fact that Hitler had even felt it necessary to issue such orders was indicative of his sensitivity to security in general, and the

counter-espionage measures that he laid out before *BLAU* show that intelligence was a matter he took very seriously. As it transpired, his agonizing over the consequences of the so-called "Reichel Affair" was misplaced, as Stalin had already convinced himself that this was simply yet another part of the German ploy to divert Soviet attention from Moscow. Ironically, the whole episode that originally threatened to completely undo German deception plans had now succeeded—through sheer good fortune—in reinforcing them.

Three days before *BLAU* commenced, the armies in the central sector were informed of slight changes to their own plans. 2nd Panzer Army notified its subordinate units that there would either be a temporary cancellation of *KREML* or a completely new assignment, as reserves originally intended for the army were now needed more urgently elsewhere. Preparations were to continue as normal, though individual headquarters were not to redeploy their units for the moment. Further orders were to follow. However, even as late as 2 July, Army Group Center informed 2nd Panzer Army that the OKH had ordered the continuous, vigorous implementation of the measures originally set out until further notice.[39] Furthermore, once *BLAU* had begun, Wehrmacht reports on the radio and in the newspapers declared that German forces had gone over to the offensive "in the southern *and central* sectors of the Eastern Front."[40]

By this time, however, the Germans were finally winding down *KREML*. The Soviets, on the other hand, remained deceived. On 7 July, the commander of Army Group Center noted that the enemy was attempting to conduct breakthroughs along the line Orël–Briansk (2nd Panzer Army) and had concentrated armored formations and strong air support there. Two weeks later, Wöhler reviewed the situation before Moscow. He suggested that the Soviets had transferred only very few units south, but that these losses had been more than offset with new arrivals and the replenishment of all units already in the front line. He further noted that the Soviets had therefore not only *not* weakened their forces despite what was happening further south, but had actually continuously *strengthened* their defenses before Moscow as they were still uncertain of German intentions.[41] Thus, even over three weeks after the beginning of *BLAU*, German deception efforts continued to fool the Soviets into believing that Moscow ultimately remained the principal target of the offensive.

Conclusions

Lieutenant-General Ivan Bagramian was the Chief of Staff of South-Western Direction in summer 1942, where the Germans cut his

formation to pieces during the initial stages of *BLAU* and beyond. Writing after the war, however, he dismissed the effects of *KREML* out of hand after discussing it in three of the briefest of paragraphs in his memoirs.[42] Even today, certain historians treat the results produced by this deception operation with the same disregard as Bagramian did. Nevertheless, the facts are self-evident: Weeks after the major Soviet defeat at Khar'kov in May, Stalin was still riveted to the German threat to Moscow, and only after the collapse precipitated by *BLAU* did he finally acknowledge the threat to the southern sector.[43] He was not alone, of course. Soviet intelligence had actually identified the large concentration of German forces and their preparations for an offensive on the southern strategic axis, yet the *Stavka* (armed forces high command) continued to believe that the main German thrust targeted Moscow.[44] Even precise British intelligence could not convince the Soviet leadership of German intentions. Indeed, Stalin and Molotov—who had so readily trusted Hitler during their brief dalliance as collaborators— had by now formed a deep-seated mistrust of their Western allies and feared that the Americans and British would inevitably conclude a separate peace with the common enemy. The Western Allies' continuing refusal to open a second front in France further exacerbated the tense situation—a stance that fueled a paranoia in Stalin which lingered long after the conflict had come to an end.[45]

The influential Chinese military thinker, Sun Tzu, wrote over two and a half millennia ago that if the enemy does not know where to expect an attack then he must make defensive preparations in many different places. Thus, he will be weakened wherever he is engaged.[46] This was the principal tenet behind Operation *KREML*. The objective of *BLAU* remained the destruction of the main Soviet forces, but having these forces in position and expecting an attack would have been especially disadvantageous for the German commanders.[47] The German deception proved its worth with respect to this aim: When the Germans finally launched the offensive, the Soviets had 28 armies between Leningrad and Tula, but only 18 in the southern sector between Tula and the Caucasus.[48] The deployment by the Russians of 80 percent of their tanks and 60 percent of their aircraft in the central sector at the beginning of *BLAU* provides further evidence of the successful outcome of *KREML*.[49] Finally, the commanders and headquarters of most of the Soviet army groups agreed with Stalin, the *Stavka*, and the General Staff that the German advance would be renewed in the central sector.[50] The deception that resulted from the disparate actions

which made up Operation *KREML* was instrumental to the success of the actual offensive further south. Throughout the first half of 1942, the Soviet leadership remained transfixed by the threat of a resumption of the assault on Moscow and deployed its forces and reserves accordingly, thereby expediting the German thrust towards Stalingrad and the Caucasus later that summer and fall.

Notes

1. Hitler believed from intelligence sources that the region was responsible for as much as 92 percent of all Soviet oil production: Adolf Hitler, *Hitler''s Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, intro. Hugh Trevor-Roper (London: Enigma Books, 2000 [1953]), 615 (5 August 1942). Though the actual figure was not quite this high, the Caucasus was still by far the most important oil-producing area of the country.

2. Earl F. Ziemke and Magna E. Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad: Decision in the East* (New York: Military Heritage Press, 1988), 329. Army Group Center was the German formation that held the central sector of the Eastern Front. At its closest (i.e. easternmost) point it stood approximately 160 km due west of Moscow.

3. "Feindtäuschung," Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg, Germany (hereafter BA-MA), RW 4/678, fol. 58; George E. BLAU, *German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations (1940-1942)* (Washington, DC: Dept. of the Army, 1955), 116.

4. Extract from an overview by the Soviet Central Staff of the Partisan Movement (TsShPD) entitled "Nationalist Formations in the Occupied Territories" (January 1944), cited in A.N. Artizov, ed., *General Vlasov: istoriia predatel'stva*, vol. 1: *Natsistskii proekt "Aktion Wlassow"* (Moscow: ROSSPÈN, 2015), 562. Both cities mentioned are approximately 1,500 km due east of Moscow.

5. Jonathan Haslam, *Near and Distant Neighbors: A New History of Soviet Intelligence* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 119.

6. Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab) 1940-1945*, vol. 2: *1. Januar 1942 – 31. Dezember 1942* (Frankfurt/Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1963), 313 (hereafter *KTB OKW*, vol. 2).

7. Cited in Anon., "Operatsiia 'Kreml'," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, 8 (1961), 81.

8. "Plan osnovnykh meropriiatii voisk Brianskogo fronta na aprel' m-ts 1942 goda" (n.d.), Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow, Russia (hereafter TsAMO), f. 202, op. 5, d. 222, ll. 1-2.

9. "Unterlagen des Ic der Heeresgruppe Mitte: Zusammenfassende Feindbeurteilungen," TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12454, d. 512, l. 15.

10. "Feindtäuschung" (7 May 1942), BA-MA RW 4/678, fol. 57, 58-59, 60.

11. A.M. Samsonov*, Stalingradskaia bitva* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 50-51.

12. BA-MA RH 2/2116, fol. 16-17, 18 (n.d.). Zhukov had also been simultaneously overall commander of the forces of Western Direction. A Soviet strategic *direction* (*napravlenie*) corresponded roughly to a theater or axis, and comprised two or more *fronts* (army groups).

13. Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942-1943*, ed. Louis P. Lochner (New York: Doubleday, 1946), 162-63, 223 (21 May).

14. Goebbels, 221-22, 226; Joseph Goebbels*, Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher, 1924-1945*, vol. 4: *1940-1942*, ed. Ralf Georg Reuth, 3rd ed. (Munich: Piper, 2003), 1795.

15. Cited in *KTB OKW,* vol. 2, 380 (24 May); Goebbels, *Tagebücher*, 1801.

16. Bradley F. Smith, *Sharing Secrets with Stalin: How the Allies Traded Intelligence, 1941-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 108.

17. P.P. Chevela, "Novye Ispytaniia," in V.A. Zolotarëv, ed., *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina, 1941-1945: voenno-istoricheskie ocherki v chetyrëkh tomakh*, vol. 1: *Surovye ispytaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1998), 323.

18. Anon., "Operatsiia 'Kreml," 81.

19. "Prikaz na nastuplenie na Moskvu," cited in Anon., "Operatsiia 'Kreml'," 82-84.

20. "Zaiavki VVS po aèrofotorazvedke russkikh ukreplenii," cited in Anon., "Operatsiia 'Kreml'," 87.

21. "Unterlagen des Ic der Heeresgruppe Mitte: Zusammenfassende Feind-beurteilungen," TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12454, d. 512, ll. 190, 202, 209.

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28. "Kreml," BA-MA RH 21-2/896, fol. 38-39.

29. Ziemke, "Operation Kreml," 78.

30. "Kreml," BA-MA RH 20-4/363, doc. 4 (5 June 1942).

31. BA-MA RH 20-4/363, doc. 6.

32. BA-MA RH 20-2/160, fol. 68.

33. "Besondere Anordnungen für die Vorbereitung der Versorgung für den Angriff auf Moskau," BA-MA RH 20-4/363, doc. 7.

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Chapter 6

Red Star Resurgent

Soviet Deception Operations at Stalingrad, 1942-1943

First Lieutenant Kyle B. Vautrinot

The Second World War has many storied campaigns and battles, but none on the Eastern Front equaled the brutal fight for Stalingrad. In the summer of 1942, the German Wehrmacht seemed invincible, lunging deeper into Soviet territory and advancing against the British in North Africa. In six months, however, the Wehrmacht found itself fighting desperately to relieve the encircled Sixth Army, even as other Soviet offensives pushed back against German territorial gains made in the summer. The Battle of Stalingrad, together with the Battle of El Alamein in North Africa and Midway in the Pacific, form the turning points in the war, when the Allies seized the strategic initiative. A common explanation for the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad is German overconfidence and increased Soviet experience and ability in operational level warfare, but this does not fully capture what happened during the Stalingrad campaign.

Stalingrad was not only a decisive operational victory for the Red Army, but the first instance of any combatant defeating and destroying a German field army in the war. The Soviet Union had rapidly learned key lessons from combat and implemented new tactics and techniques in order to deliver victory. Chief among those lessons were the value of deception and denial, known in Russian as *maskirovka*. The Red Army demonstrated this increased understanding of deception, intelligence, and operational maneuver by assembling and launching Operation URANUS, the counteroffensive that relieved the besieged city, without providing German intelligence enough evidence to predict its timing and scale. The plans for the offensive substantially improved and expanded upon previous deception theories and efforts to mislead German commanders and intelligence officers at Stalingrad, enabling deep battle operations in the winter of 1942-43 that decisively contributed to the Red Army's victory. This is evident in an examination of pre-war *maskirovka* theory, the Red Army's initial efforts in 1941, and the deception and intelligence plans during the Stalingrad campaign.

Deception Theory to 1941

After the First World War and the Russian Civil War, which embroiled most of the Russian countryside in conflict, Soviet military commanders

and theorists continued to believe in the value of the offensive. During the interwar period, the Red Army developed doctrine calling for a combination of strong defensive positions and decisive offensive operations, with the aim of destroying a hostile nation's army.[1] As a key component of that doctrine, the Red Army knew that surprise would be vital, and carried on the tradition of *maskirovka* that the Imperial Russian Army had established leading up to the First World War. An examination of the 1929 and 1936 field regulations reveals only cursory treatment of *maskirovka*, but livelier examination in General Staff articles. A possible explanation for the lack of in-depth treatment in formal regulations is because of the classified nature of General Staff articles, meant for internal consumption and debate, while the field regulations were an official and published government document.

The 1929 *Field Regulations* stated that commanders achieved surprise by conducting troop operations "with the greatest concealment and speed." They enabled this by having units in secondary sectors maintain active operations in order to distract and deceive the enemy's perception of where the offensive would fall.[2] The *Field Regulations* further stated that commanders enabled concealment by "adaptation to the terrain and camouflage…[and] keeping secret the preparations for the maneuver and its goals."[3] The Red Army viewed this as necessary to prevent a notional enemy from learning of an offensive in time to reposition forces and prepare to receive the attack. Specifically, the regulations charged engineering units with camouflaging troop deployments, and stated that smoke-screens offered both concealment and an anti-aircraft defensive measure.[4] Although focused at the tactical level, the *maskirovka* guidance here was a starting point for the nascent Red Army. The regulations considered concealment of the time and place of an offensive as critical, but lacked exact guidance on how to implement concealment.

The 1936 *Provisional Field Regulations* provided more details on how the Red Army viewed *maskirovka*, but did not provide more insight or prescribe a defined doctrine. The Red Army re-emphasized the importance of surprise through speed, concealment, and the introduction of new weapons and tactics, but did not go into detail concerning how to create or maintain surprise.[5] Specifically, the regulations prescribed utilizing terrain, night marches, and planning secrecy in order to conceal a commander's intent. If commanders limited the size of planning circles, and kept planning documents to an easily-controlled minimum, they could safeguard critical documents or personnel with intelligence. The regulation also focused heavily on troop movement, emphasizing the need to

conduct river crossings at night combined with multiple fake crossings to prevent an enemy from determining bridgehead locations.[6] As in the 1929 regulations, the 1936 *Provisional Field Regulations* did not examine the planning process in detail.

Despite the lack of detailed analysis of deception and surprise, the Red Army's officers did not shy away from the subject's treatment in *Voennaia Mysl'* (tr. Military Thought), the General Staff journal, with two articles meriting attention. In the July 1937 issue, G.R. Pochter examined case studies from the First World War and expanded on the existing *maskirovka* theories. Critically, he emphasized that a deception plan attempted to conceal an army's disposition while creating false indicators to mislead enemy intelligence officers.[7] Radio transmissions with troop demonstrations, fabricating documents to be captured by enemy patrols, and the creation of false encampments, supply depots, and vehicles would all contribute to a false or ambiguous intelligence picture for the enemy.[8] Pochter also examined the increasing importance of aerial reconnaissance, and how unusually strong defensive arrangements might compromise deception. If planners could prevent aerial reconnaissance of a specific area, intelligence officers might focus more assets there to determine why defenses were stronger in one sector than in another. In the case of the main effort, this might attract unwanted attention, but notable increases in neighboring sectors or fronts could deceive enemy intelligence.[9] Pochter re-emphasized this concept in his discussion of deception principles. As he recognized, a deception plan needed to be logical with each component mutually reinforcing other elements. For example, demonstrations and deception efforts in a front ill-suited for offensive action were not believable, and therefore wasted valuable resources.[10] Radio deceptions worked best when accompanied by corroborating troop movements, and falsifying unit designations could prevent knowledge of an increase in maneuver units. Commanders needed to emphasize deception and give it the same planning considerations as reconnaissance, march security, and logistics.[11]

In the March 1941 issue of *Voennaia Mysl'*, Colonel A.I. Starunin revisited operational surprise, and argued maintaining surprise did not mean maintaining secrecy until an offensive's start. In his definition, surprise was "the unexpected appearance of powerful forces and resources at a sensitive point…where he [the enemy] cannot oppose them with sufficient forces at the given time."[12] Starunin emphasized that concealing the maneuver and emplacement of an offensive force was difficult at best, but surprise was largely a function of how much an enemy knew and how concentrated an enemy was in the assault sector. In order to conceal a unit's

emplacement, subunits could occupy assault positions over time, preventing observation of large troop movements.[13] Conversely, Starunin also emphasized speed as an element of surprise, but cautioned that railroads are an obvious reconnaissance targets, and troop movements required swift execution under security conditions similar to road marches to achieve both secrecy and caution. Moreover, once an attacker penetrated the first line of defense, aggressive mobile forces could quickly advance along an enemy's flanks, creating local surprise by the speed and violence of the assault.[14] Ironically, despite examining the reasons for Germany's recent military victory over France, the Soviet Union failed to mirror image or effectively counter these capabilities, and suffered both surprise and military catastrophe just a few short months later.

From Summer 1941 to Spring 1942

For all the emphasis placed on surprise and deception, the Red Army and the Soviet Union at large remained unprepared for the German invasion in the summer of 1941. Since 1940, the Red Army's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) had been receiving agent reports of German troop movements and conducted a detailed analysis of NKVD agent reports from within occupied Poland. Those agents identified German division strengths and locations, and agents within Germany relayed reports of war preparations and plans.[15] By the late spring of 1941, the GRU and NKVD identified over 100 German divisions along the border and troop movements across Europe, but very few of these reports made their way to Stalin.[16] Stalin read the few reports he saw with scorn, derision, and disbelief, which contributed to German success despite poor measures at concealing troop movements, as he authorized no defensive measures or deployments. The Red Army's General Staff knew that war was imminent, but could not react appropriately due to Stalin's attempts to salvage the non-aggression pact.

The Red Army soon found itself surrounded at Brest-Litovsk, Bialystok, Kiev, and Minsk.[17] The Red Army kept reconstituting and raising forces even as German forces reduced these and other pockets while the front lines retreated eastward, and by November 1941 a German operational pause well short of Moscow allowed time to place new forces on the line.[18] The Red Army's General Headquarters, or *Stavka*, welcomed that operational pause, a reflection of the German invasion's logistical limitations and failure to destroy the Red Army. At this time in the war, Soviet units operated along shorter, interior lines of communication and supply, making command and control easier. The accumulation of reserve armies presented an opportunity for *Stavka* during the last weeks of November.

Recognizing the chance, the Red Army began one of its first deception efforts in a desperate gamble to protect Moscow and halt the resumed German attack.

From new and reconstituted forces, the First Shock, Tenth, and Twentieth Armies spearheaded a counteroffensive on 6 December 1941 designed to push German forces back from the approaches to Moscow. The three armies, in reserve behind the front, faced the task of moving up to their assembly areas and deploying to the front lines without betraying their presence or purpose. Overconfidence and poor weather prevented German intelligence from accurately identifying the new armies, and tightly controlled sequential planning by *Stavka* created an effective cloak of secrecy for the three armies. In fact, the army commanders did not know their objectives and roles until a few days before the offensive, with movement beginning on 27 November.[19] Commanders used *maskirovka* measures in a general sense to ensure surprise, and limited efforts to their respective commands in the absence of a *Stavka* or front-directed plan, similar to the way pre-war regulations emphasized that creating surprise was a commander's prerogative and duty.[20]

The three counteroffensive armies moved units only at night, with roads, supply depots, and rail lines camouflaged to prevent German observation and targeting.[21] First Shock Army entered the defensive battles outside Moscow prior to 6 December, but German reconnaissance failed to recognize its units as the introduction of a new field army. German intelligence identified the new units and concentrations all along the front lines, but did not assess a likely offensive.[22] On 6 December 1941, First Shock, Tenth, and Twentieth Armies led the counteroffensive, and the Wehrmacht, caught off balance and at the end of its supply lines, withdrew under pressure. The counteroffensive quickly ran out of steam, however, as better prepared German forces stopped the advance and Soviet forces outran their logistics capabilities; both armies had reached their culminating points, and without fresh reserves, neither could continue offensive operations.

Ultimately, the December 1941 counter-offensive was a lesson in tactical *maskirovka*, as the compressed planning timeline and need to secure Moscow's approaches prevented elaborate feints, demonstrations, or schemes to confuse German reconnaissance efforts. Deception efforts alone cannot account for the counteroffensive's surprise and effectiveness; German distraction with logistical difficulties, poor weather, and increasing equipment difficulties prevented an effective German response until after Soviet efforts had exhausted themselves against better-entrenched

and—supplied forces. The systematic, if unplanned, use of concealment measures showed the Red Army what was possible with deliberate deception planning and initiative. For the remainder of the 1941-42 winter campaign, Soviet commanders implemented tactical *maskirovka* measures to greater or lesser effect, but never with the same degree of effectiveness as the 6 December counterattack.

Case *BLAU* and the Stalingrad Campaign

In the early spring of 1942, the Red Army prepared for the next round of offensives, and virtually every senior Red Army officer believed that the renewed German offensive would target Moscow and the Caucasus. Of the two, however, Stalin believed Moscow was the primary objective, due to the presence of Army Group Center's seventy divisions and the political importance Stalin placed on holding the city.[23] Unfortunately for *Stavka* and the Soviet armies to the south, the Germans hid their intentions for Case *BLAU* through Operation *KREML*, covered in the previous chapter. This had serious operational and strategic consequences for the Soviet spring offensives.

On 28 June 1942, Army Group South's Fourth Panzer Army broke through over the Donets, and advanced quickly to Voronezh, catching *Stavka* off guard despite capturing the offensive's plans on 19 June.[24] Unlike the summer of 1941, Stalin allowed the Red Army to fall back, and commanders avoided the catastrophic encirclements of the previous year. By 12 July, the Germans had advanced so rapidly that *Stavka* established the Stalingrad front, and by 19 July officially notified the city to prepare for war. The advance broke through the Donets Basin, and the Red Army attempted to hold the Germans west of the Don with the 62nd and 64th Armies, but quickly fell back as the Soviet infantry lacked support from essential artillery and tank units. In any event, Hitler's contradictory orders quickly began to show his erratic focus during the course of the campaign as he constantly shifted the Fourth Panzer Army, preventing it from assisting both General Paulus' Sixth Army's drive to Stalingrad and supporting Army Group A's advance into the Caucasus to any effective degree. This eventually had fatal consequences for the fighting around Stalingrad. By late August 1942, German aircraft launched heavy raids into Stalingrad, and Sixth Army closed in on the city, pressing 62nd and 64th Armies into a narrow defensive perimeter, shielded only by 24th Army.[25] Repeated attempts to attack Sixth Army's northern flank failed due to poor coordination, a pattern that repeated itself throughout the fall, lulling the *Oberkommado des Heeres*, or OKH, into complacency.
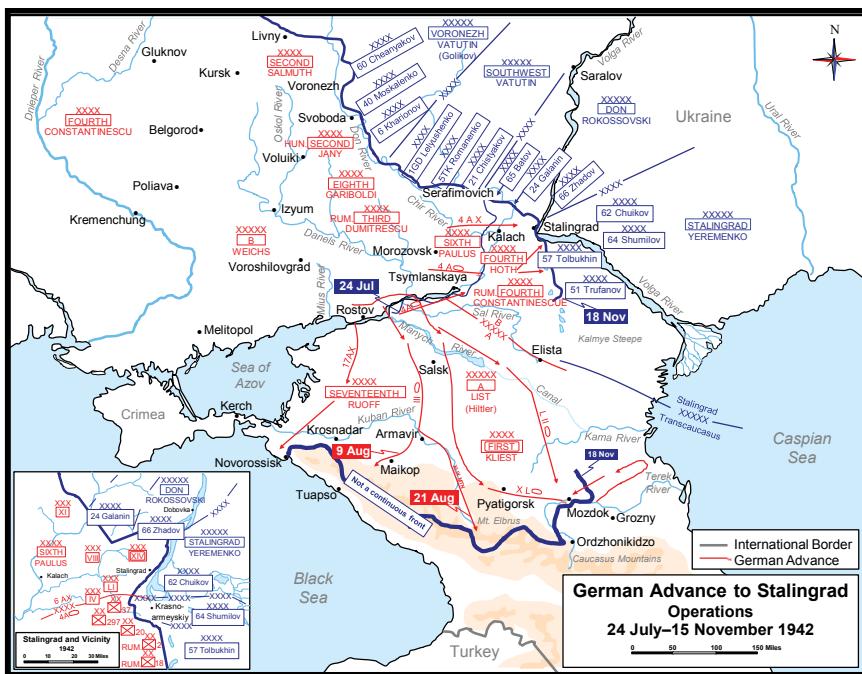
Figure 6.1. German Advance to Stalingrad, 24 July–18 November 1942. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

Creating the Cloak

When Sixth Army approached the outskirts of Stalingrad in late August and early September, the Soviet 62nd and 64th Armies had retreated into the city and across the Volga in an attempt to reconstitute and establish a defensive perimeter. As the German Sixth Army advanced, *Stavka* recognized that there would not be an offensive towards Moscow, which enabled freedom of maneuver for the reserve armies built up over the summer. This presented the Red Army's senior commanders and planners with an unprecedented opportunity to plan the course of the battle, instead of simply reacting to German blows.

Beginning in the summer of 1942, the Red Army began a series of deception and intelligence operations in order to conceal troop redeployments, determine the disposition of German and Romanian defenses, and confuse German intelligence assessments on the time, place, and scale of the counteroffensive. The Stalingrad campaign saw the first attempts at strategic deception, with the Western and Kalinin fronts postured for offensive operations all through the summer and fall in order to divert German formations away from Army Group South and relieve pressure

on Stalingrad and the Caucasus. The Rzhev-Sychevka operation, in this context, was a large and elaborate feint from 30 July to 23 August, which also had the effect of preventing German divisions from transferring to Army Group South to contain the new salient. German intelligence and the high command largely believed that the Red Army's strategic focus was along the Moscow approaches, transferring twelve divisions to positions opposite the salient and assessing that any offensive action along the front would take place in Army Group Center's area.[26] Although this deception occurred before counteroffensive planning began, the potential for action along the Moscow sector distracted German planners and intelligence officers. In September, troop movements in and out of the Western front served to confuse German intelligence assessments, as counteroffensive planning for Stalingrad began in earnest on 12 September and reserve divisions received training under fire.[27] As late as 29 October, OKH assessed that the most likely course of action was a Soviet offensive against Army Group Center out of the Rzhev-Sychevka salient, as large-scale movement in the Moscow sector seemed oriented to this end.[28]

With the counteroffensive targeting the northern and southern flanks of Army Group B, General Zhukov and General Vasilevsky, the Red Army's Chief of Staff, focused on two deception objectives. First, Soviet commanders concealed the movement and deployment of counteroffensive forces to the Southwestern, Don, and Stalingrad fronts to conduct a double envelopment, encircle the Sixth Army, and relieve Stalingrad. Second, German intelligence had to be misled concerning the time, place, and scale of the counteroffensive through the actions of neighboring fronts on the operational level. To the northwest of Stalingrad, the Voronezh Front conducted a series of demonstrations, imitating the construction of river crossings, concentrating and regrouping armored and artillery formations, and moving formations across the front. This focused German attention on Army Group Center, but non-essential Soviet commanders were uninformed regarding the time and place of the offensive, despite concluding that there were plans for one.[29] Closer to Stalingrad, the Red Army implemented a variety of operational and tactical deception methods. From 29 September to 4 October, the Stalingrad Front launched attacks to maintain bridgeheads on the western bank of the Volga south of the city. Although worthwhile in their own right, the attacks served as demonstrations and feints in order to draw German forces away from the fighting inside the city itself, and buy time for 62nd Army to receive and integrate reinforcements into the defense.[30] The Stalingrad Front's bridgeheads across the Volga, once secured, gave

Operation Uranus a southern flank. When German attention shifted back to securing the city and containing the bridgeheads, the Stalingrad Front gradually moved two mechanized corps, one tank brigade, two rifle divisions, and seven artillery divisions across the Volga under cover of darkness, as regulations and best practices prescribed.[31]

The Southwestern Front under Lieutenant General Vatutin created both concealed and false river crossings over the Don, moved only at night, constructed false concentrations of artillery and vehicles to mislead German reconnaissance, and even used loudspeakers broadcasting music to hide the engine noise of tank divisions and corps.[32] Deliberate planning, combined with presenting German reconnaissance with what the Front wanted to display, created a situation that enabled three tank corps to assume assault positions undetected across from German lines. All across the front line in Stalingrad, Soviet troops openly displayed a defensive posture, with *Stavka* distributing instructions to fortify and prepare a defense in depth. German intelligence expected this based on past observations, and Soviet efforts to create that impression exploited complacency in German headquarters.

Soviet intelligence and reconnaissance efforts also played a significant role in safeguarding the operational security of the offensive, as well as identifying weak points for the counteroffensive to exploit. The Red Army relied principally on aerial reconnaissance and ground *razvedka*, to include troop, engineer, and artillery reconnaissance efforts to monitor operational movements of German forces and develop the commander's assessment of the front, respectively. In the Stalingrad area aerial *razvedka* primarily operated in a belt extending thirty to forty kilometers into German territory, focusing along the primary axis of advance for the ground forces as well as observing rail lines and hard-surfaced roads for German operational and tactical reserve movements.[33] The Red Army's infantry utilized raids, ambushes, and combat reconnaissance patrols to capture documents and personnel, and assess defenses across the frontline at tactical and shallow operational depths.

The information they gathered was of interest to regimental and divisional commanders, but reconnaissance patrols occasionally achieved operational and strategic impacts. On 1 October 1942, for example, a reconnaissance patrol near Sadavoe 27 kilometers southwest of Stalingrad captured the documents for Case *BLAU*, as another patrol in the Ukraine had in early July, and confirmed the order of battle and timetable for the advance. These documents enabled front and *Stavka* intelligence to realize how overextended and behind schedule the German forces were, as well as

identifying weaker units along the front.[34] Critically, documents captured on 9 November from a German division opposite the Don front revealed poor German morale and readiness, which could be verified by observation across the planned offensive axis.[35]

Immediately before the offensive, battalion-sized elements conducted a reconnaissance-in-force to determine the extent and posture of Romanian and German defenses. The Southwestern front's Fifth Tank Army conducted a reconnaissance in force on 17 November and determined the forward line of troops had been withdrawn two to three kilometers in its sector, which enabled the artillery and engineer plan to be adjusted while convincing the Romanians that the Soviet offensive action had failed.[36] This was an effective measure, but only if action quickly followed reconnaissance; in some cases, units conducted pre-battle reconnaissance a week prior to action with no other patrols, enabling German tactical reserves to shift or reinforce undetected.

The Red Army, despite its remarkable variety of deception plans, did not entirely conceal their intent. The Romanian Third Army commander, General Dumitrescu, reported an increasing number of Soviet probes, and his own reconnaissance confirmed a general buildup of Soviet forces across the Don.[37] German commanders and staff officers met his concerns with contempt, largely stemming from their impression that the Red Army was almost defeated and Romanian incompetency. This dismissal blatantly ignored the lessons of the previous winter and spring, which had demonstrated the Red Army's capability to launch front-sized attacks under conditions of severe secrecy. German commanders assumed that once Stalingrad fell, the Russians would lose their will to fight, but the Red Army had maintained operational security and was poised to cut off and surround Sixth Army.

The Offensive

By mid-November 1942, the Southwestern, Don, and Stalingrad fron*ts* had assembled 160,000 men, 430 tanks, and 6,000 artillery tubes and mortars in preparation for the offensive.[38] On 19 November, the Southwestern front's artillery opened fire on the Romanian Third Army and began Operation URANUS. In line with the assessment that they could expect only local attacks, the Romanians received the under-strength XXXXVIII Panzer Corps as a reserve unit, largely as a way to mitigate the commander's fears of a winter offensive.[39] German intelligence was, not for the first time in the war, decisively incorrect as Fifth Tank Army broke through the forward defenses and rapidly worked
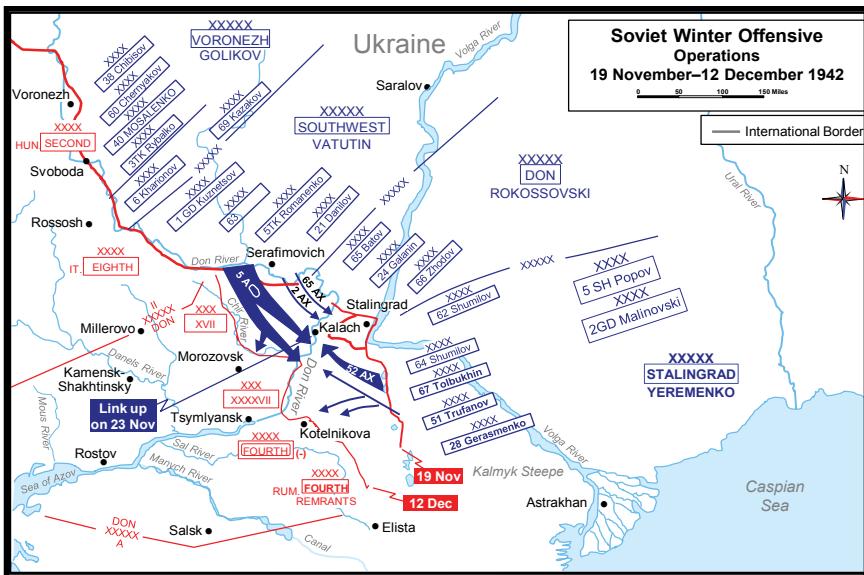
Figure 6.2. Soviet Winter Offensive, Operations 19 November-12 December 1942. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

into Third Army's rear areas, including the panzer corps. A day later, the Stalingrad front launched an offensive against Romanian units south of Stalingrad, breaking through their lines and assaulting the neighboring German units' flanks as the XIII and IV Mechanized Corps advanced deeper into the German rear.[40] On 23 November, the two fronts linked up at Kalach-on-Don, fifty kilometers from Stalingrad, encircling Sixth Army and achieving URANUS' immediate goals. At first, *Stavka* and the front commanders did not realize the extent of the encirclement, but the resulting surprise for the Soviets and Germans created a whirlwind of operations.

The Germans knew that the destruction of Sixth Army would be an operational disaster, and that aerial resupply, combined with a ground relief operations, could break the encirclement and present a viable threat to the Southwestern and Stalingrad fronts. The Soviets, knowing that the ring was tenuous at best, rapidly mounted further offensive action to expand the outer cordon, deny freedom of movement to Army Group B, and defeat aerial resupply efforts by ground and air actions. Throughout this period, the Red Army displayed further operational deception measures that led to a shift in strategic momentum.

Three key factors during the winter of 1942-43 influenced Soviet and German actions. First, the Germans failed to estimate accurately the lo-
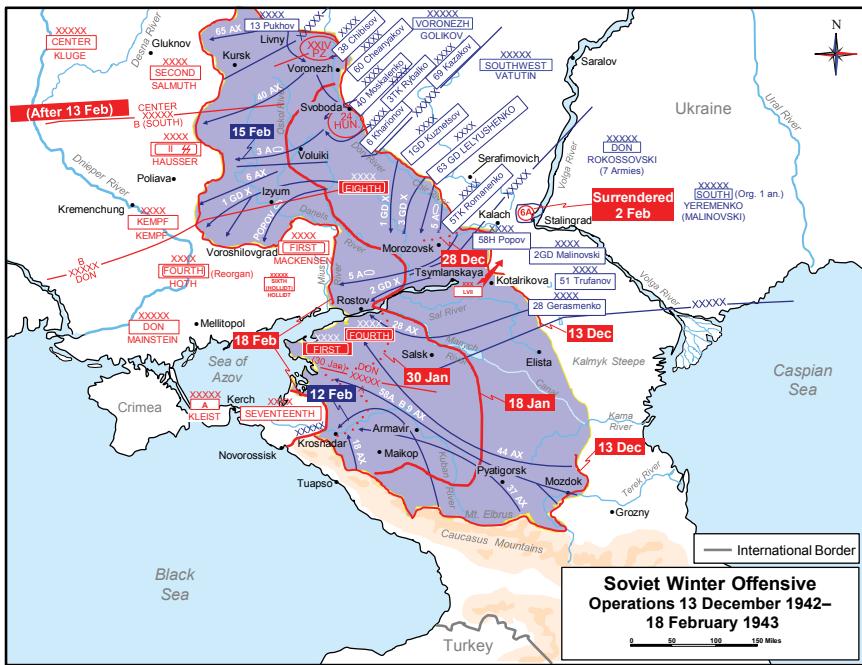
Figure 6.3. Soviet Winter Offensive, Operations 13 December 1942–15 February 1943. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

gistical requirements of Paulus' Sixth Army, carelessly downgrading Paulus' requested 700 tons of supplies per day to 300 tons while assuming that they possessed sufficient transport aircraft to meet this requirement. Both Soviet action and German failures in maintenance and logistics made these estimates highly inaccurate. Second, the attempted relief operation under Field Marshal von Manstein had only one German panzer army and two Romanian armies, all of which had retreated from URANUS' advance and required a refit period prior to resuming the offensive. The Fourth Panzer Army remained capable of maneuver, but the Romanian armies no longer formed coherent units, requiring individual divisions to integrate into German formations.[41]

Finally, Soviet armies along unengaged front*s* remained postured for offensive operations due to earlier deceptions, and had already identified additional weak areas farther along the front line that could replicate the success of Operation URANUS. In accordance with Soviet prewar deep battle doctrine, now adopted due to its effectiveness, the Red Army's fronts identified weaker flanks and units along the front line and concealed their buildup to encircle, destroy, or push back Army Group B. As General Vasilevsky realized the scale of the encirclement, the planned operation to

encircle Army Group B, code-named SATURN, earned the new moniker LITTLE SATURN in recognition of its more limited objectives.

The Southwestern front received orders to attack against the Italian Eighth Army and the German Army Detachment Hollidt, with the objective of overrunning German airfields and seizing Morozovsk, further isolating Stalingrad and preventing resupply of the pocket as well as presenting a threat General Hoth's Fourth Panzer Army had to honor.[42] Commanders issued verbal orders at the army level, and kept a single set of planning documents at each level under tight security. Troops concentrated for LITTLE SATURN behind the front, and moved under darkness to jumping off positions under strictly enforced noise, light, and transmissions discipline—in the frontline trenches, smoking and even verbal orders were forbidden. A prolonged period of reconnaissance blunted German efforts to discover the offensive's start, but also revealed Soviet intentions. The scale of reconnaissance prevented the location of exact attack sectors, and instead created a long list of possible attacks to guard against, which secured surprise for the Soviets. 15 December saw the Italian Eighth Army's turn to fall back as the Southwestern front, after concealing the deployment of five rifle divisions and three mechanized corps, attacked the left flank of Army Group Don.[43]

After two days of resistance, the Soviet First Guards, Third Guards, and Sixth Armies broke through the Italian lines and advanced into the German rear unopposed, as the 17th Panzer Division had been reassigned from Eighth Army to General Hoth's Fourth Panzer Army at his request.[44] Major General Badanov's XXIV Tank Corps provided the best indication of the levels of surprise achieved during LITTLE SATURN, catching the main German airbase at Tatsinskaya off-guard and unaware. After destroying seventy-two aircraft and overrunning the airbase on 24 December, the XXIV Tank Corps' raid forced the Luftwaffe to relocate farther west to a makeshift airfield, severely damaging German resupply efforts.[45] With three Soviet armies willing to conduct raids deep into the German rear, Field Marshal von Manstein knew that he could not continue the relief attack towards Sixth Army, and so halted and withdrew Hoth's Fourth Panzer Army. With their withdrawal, von Manstein condemned Paulus' Sixth Army to the inevitable fate of utter destruction or surrender, having lost the best chance for a breakthrough immediately after URANUS' success by failing to issue timely orders for a breakthrough to link up with the relief column. The Soviet advance was too rapid, and German lines too overextended, to open and hold a corridor from Stalingrad to the rest of Army Group Don.

Red Star Resurgent

The success of Operations URANUS and LITTLE SATURN prompted wider offensives, all using *maskirovka* to greater or lesser extent to capitalize on German withdrawals and continue the momentum built up by General Vasilevsky. The Germans, already retreating from Stalingrad, recognized the possibility of losing Army Group A in the Caucasus and ordered a general withdrawal, almost back to the June 1942 start lines. Stalingrad ultimately became Germany's high water mark, and set into motion the Red Army's inexorable advance towards Berlin, but not without great additional cost.

The Soviets learned a key deception lesson from the campaign: surprise largely hinged on concealing the time, place, or scale of an offensive. From a commander's viewpoint, achieving surprise for all three remained ideal and became the stated goal for tactical and operational deception, but enabling surprise for at least one factor contributed to varying levels of success. The Romanian Third Army on URANUS' northern flank provided the clearest example, as its commander had received indications of increased enemy activity, but did not anticipate the time or scale of the offensive that overran his army. Operation URANUS also demonstrated the links between strategic and operational deception, as efforts against Army Group Center occupied OKH's intelligence assessments even as the Red Army concealed troop movements in the Stalingrad region.

Practically speaking, Soviet efforts to link deception and intelligence grew substantially during the course of the campaign. By creating misleading or false concentrations of troops outside the planned attack areas and falsifying defensive postures in attack sectors, as seen in the Voronezh and Southwestern front*s*, the Red Army's senior commanders were able to deceive German intelligence staffs in Army Group B and OKH. In contrast, effectively concealing troop concentrations, tactical assembly areas, and camouflaging troop deployments into the front line enabled commanders to see the value of camouflage and operational security discipline. Red Army intelligence and reconnaissance then provided feedback on effectiveness, enabling commanders to maintain or adjust the deception and camouflage measures. The Soviets leveraged aerial reconnaissance for long-range operational and strategic *razvedka* outside the campaign to determine the concentrations and movements of German forces into and out of the Stalingrad region, and to detect the operational reserves posing threats to the offensives. Troop and artillery reconnaissance created an accurate disposition of German troop

levels, force concentrations, and defensive works and captured prisoners to determine what knowledge, if any, German officers and soldiers had concerning Soviet dispositions and intentions.

The late winter offensives of 1943 pushed the Germans back farther, but also saw a stabilization of the front line after losing Kharkov to the Germans again in March. *Stavka* and the Red Army's commanders re-learned the lessons of concentration and the need to reinforce rapidly advance units in the aftermath, but Kharkov's loss set the stage for Kursk, which saw the Soviet Union gain the strategic initiative for the rest of the war.[46] As German intentions became clear, the Red Army applied of the same methods proven during the Stalingrad campaign—concealing troop movements and marshalling areas, camouflaging elaborate defensive works, and even using the same command team of Generals Zhukov and Vasilevsky to coordinate the Kursk defense and the strategic counteroffensive that followed. Kursk was the first operation incorporating a *maskirovka* plan mandated by *Stavka*, and the experience the Red Army accrued at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels influenced the General Staff.[47] As the fall strategic offensives opened, the Red Army began recording and distributing its deception lessons in time for *Stavka* to begin planning Operation BAGRATION, which removed German forces from the territory of the Soviet Union.

Notes

1. *Field Regulations of the Red Army, 1929*. Moscow: Voenizdat, 1929. Translated by JPRS, 13 March 1985. Accessed 12 December 2017 at http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a354513.pdf, 3.

2. *Field Regulations of the Red Army, 1929*, 4.

3. *Field Regulations of the Red Army, 1929*, 46.

4. *Field Regulations of the Red Army, 1929*, 76.

5. *Provisional Field Regulations for the Red Army*. Moscow: Voenizdat, 1937. Translated by JPRS, 12 June 1986. Accessed 12 December 2017 at http:www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a361873.pdf, 2-3.

6. *Provisional Field Regulations of the Red Army*, 70.

7. G.R. Pochter, "Operational Deception and Surprise." *Military Thought*, No. 7 (July 1937). Translated by Eastview Press, February 2018, 63.

8. Pochter, 63-64.

9. Pochter, 65.

10. Pochter, 67.

11. Pochter, 66.

12. A.I. Starunin, "Operational Surprise." *Military Thought*, No. 3 (March 1941). Translated by Eastview Press, February 2018, 27.

13. Starunin, 34.

14. Starunin, 35.

15. Christopher Bellamy. *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 137.

16. Bellamy, 143-144.

17. John Keegan. *The Second World War*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 184, 186.

18. Bellamy*, Absolute War*, 302-303

19. David Glantz. *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*. (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006), 48-49.

20. A Soviet front was an operational level formation similar to an Army Group, often named for a geographical location or direction, i.e., Western front, Central front, 1st Ukrainian front, etc.

21. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, 51.

22. Glantz, 51-53.

23. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 449.

24. Antony Beevor. *Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege, 1942-1943*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 71-72.

25. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 116.

26. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, 109-110

27. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 221-222.

28. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, 110.

29. Glantz, 111.

30. Glantz, 112.

31. Glantz, 112.

32. Glantz, 112.

33. David Glantz, *Soviet Military Intelligence in War* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006), 121-123.

34. Glantz, 129.

35. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 234.

36. Glantz, *Soviet Military Intelligence in War*, 131-132.

37. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 229.

38. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 531.

39. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 231.

40. Beevor, 248.

41. Keegan, *The Second World War*, 235.

42. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, 121.

43. Glantz, 121-122.

44. Beevor, *Stalingrad*, 297, 300.

45. Beevor, 300-301.

46. Keegan, *The Second World War*, 461-462

47. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, 149.

Chapter 7

Operation BAGRATION

Maskirovka at Its Height, Summer 1944

Curtis S. King

The Red Army's crushing defeat of German Army Group Center (AGC) in Belorussia in June-July 1944 was a decisive victory for the Soviet Union in World War II. By the end of the campaign (known to the Soviets as Operation BAGRATION), the Soviets had decimated an entire German Army Group; killed, wounded, or captured hundreds of thousands of German soldiers; and advanced over 200 miles. A major reason for this success was the Red Army leadership's effective use of deception, which caused poor German deployments that left them unprepared for the Soviet offensive. The Soviets, building on their already extensive doctrine and execution of deception in earlier operations were able to convince much of the German high command that the major Soviet offensive for the summer of 1944 would occur to the north (Baltic States) and south (Ukraine) of AGC in Belorussia. This left the army group that bore the brunt of the main Russian effort with inadequate resources, particularly in armor and mobile reserves. In examining the role of deception in Operation BAGRATION, it is important to understand the Soviet concept of *maskirovka*, which entails a full range of deception operations and techniques and was already a large part of Red Army doctrine prior to the summer 1944 offensive.

Maskirovka

The Russian term *maskirovka* has sometimes been translated simply as "camouflage," but *maskirovka* is a much more extensive view of deception than mere camouflage.[1] In fact, Soviet doctrine has defined *maskirovka* as:

> The means of securing combat operations and the daily activities of forces; a complexity of measures, directed to mislead the enemy regarding the presence and disposition of forces, various military objectives, their condition, combat readiness and operations, and also the plans of the command…maskirovka contributes to the achievement of surprise for the actions of forces, the preservation of combat readiness, and the increased survivability of objectives.[2]

Maskirovka includes camouflage, but also encompasses a wide variety of measures and techniques designed to deceive the enemy, conceal Soviet capabilities and intentions, and achieve surprise.

The Russian theory and practice of deception has a long history that pre-dates the formation of the Soviet Union and continuously evolved through the inter-war years and up to BAGRATION. As early as 1904, the Imperial Russian Army had a *maskirovka* school that continued with the Red Army and wrote much of the early Red Army theory and concepts on the topic.[3] These early concepts focused mostly on tactical deception. At the time of the publication of the 1929 *Field Regulations*, Red Army doctrine still focused on concealment at the tactical level, but it also discussed rapid troop movements—often at night—and the use of new technology and doctrine to surprise the enemy. For example, the Soviets might conceal the development of a new weapons system or airframe so that, when first used, this equipment and its capabilities would be a surprise to the enemy. The Red Army 1935 *Instructions on Deep Battle* and the 1936 *Field Regulations* continued the trend of greater emphasis on *maskirovka*. In addition to added emphasis technological surprise, these manuals stressed the use of secret concentrations of forces and surprise artillery concentrations. Building on this doctrine, Soviet military theorists writing in the journal of the General Staff, *Voennaya Mysl* (Military Thought) added even more detail to the concept and methods of *maskirovka*. This included procedures for developing a *maskirovka* plan and assigning deception objectives to subordinate combat units as well as particular missions for aviation, cavalry, engineer, support, signal and political elements. The 1939 *Field Regulations* continued the earlier doctrine with even more emphasis at planning for deception at all levels.[4]

Despite an impressive doctrine on *maskirovka*, it was the Soviets who fell victim to deception in June 1941 and were surprised by the German invasion known as Operation BARBAROSSA. The Germans certainly deserve credit for their own deception methods prior to the offensive, but a large part of their success also lay in self-delusion by the Soviet leadership who refused to believe that a German attack was imminent. Nonetheless, the Red Army General Staff quickly responded to the invasion and began to issue instructions to the field forces to correct deficiencies. In just four days after the invasion, it issued its first instructions on *maskirovka*, which reiterated the 1936 and 1939 *Regulations* with some added recommendations.[5] After some better success at deception in the Moscow counteroffensive, the Soviet High Command (known by its Russian name, *Stavka*) issued new directives in 1942 that discussed operational level *maskirovka* in more depth and stressed security in the planning process.[6] This led to improved deception for the counterattack at Stalingrad (Operation URANUS), where *maskirovka* formed an inte-

gral part of the plan and not just an "add-on," as in previous operations.[7] In April 1943, *Stavka* called for even stricter secrecy when planning or regrouping forces. The 1943 *Field Regulations* gathered many of the earlier *Stavka* directives into a single regulation. It provided even more details on the contents of *maskirovka* plans and added some other factors to consider in deception operations to include the value of air dominance. Another update to the *Regulations* in 1944 stressed even further the need for surprise, especially at the operational level. Also in 1944, the Red Army published *The Manual on Operational Maskirovka*, the first doctrinal publication devoted exclusively to deception operations. The manual summed up the existing concepts of *maskirovka* and emphasized that the Soviets could not just rely on secrecy to achieve surprise, but needed to create false objectives, make use of feints and demonstrations, and develop an effective disinformation campaign.[8]

Thus, going into the planning for BAGRATION, the Red Army had extensive doctrine and successful experiences in *maskirovka*. This combination led the Soviets to look at *maskirovka* at all three levels of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. Strategic *maskirovka* "is conducted by the high command and includes a complex of measures to protect the secrecy of preparations for strategic operations and campaigns, as well as disinformation of the enemy regarding the true intentions and operations of [our] armed forces."[9] At the operational level, Fronts (the Red Army term for an army group) and armies were responsible for *maskirovka*. Similar to the strategic level, the goal of deception for the Fronts and armies was to enable surprise, which forced the enemy into an unfavorable position.[10] At the tactical level, divisions, regiments, and battalions conducted *maskirovka* with the main (but not exclusive) goal of concealing forces from the enemy.[11] In addition to planning and executing *maskirovka* at all three levels of war, the Soviets viewed deception as being applied through both active and passive measures. Active methods included misleading and misinforming the enemy. Passive methods were more along the lines of concealing units and physical locations, as well as concealing intent.[12] All of these aspects of *maskirovka* informed the Red Army leaders as they planned for Operation BAGRATION.

Overall Planning for BAGRATION

The Soviets emerged from 1943 with many successful operations, especially in Ukraine, which left them with several options for offensives in the summer of 1944. *Stavka* and the General Staff examined four possible options for their summer offensive and concluded that the main effort should be a four-Front offensive in Belorussia with the goals

of destroying AGC, liberating Belorussia, and paving the way for fol-
low-on offensives to advance into Poland.[13] After deciding on the main
strategic effort for 1944, Soviet leadership worked out the details of the
operational plan. The development of the plan began with *Stavka* and
Stalin giving the general outline of the strategy to the General Staff and
Fronts at an initial meeting on 28 April. By 14 May the Soviet leaders
had completed the preliminary plan, and the General Staff released the
approved (initial) plan six days later. The Front commands provided ad-
ditional input and, after further meetings, *Stavka* approved the final plan
on 30 May and issued it the next day.[14]

The plan for BAGRATION involved attacks by four Red Army Fronts
on multiple axes that would annihilate AGC (see Figure 7.1). The Soviet
General Staff described it as "a simultaneous offensive by Soviet forc-
es along the Polotsk—Svencionys, Orsha—Minsk, Mogilev—Minsk
and Bobruisk—Slutsk directions" with the goal of the "encirclement and
destruction of the enemy's groups of forces in the areas of Vitebsk and
Bobruisk, the development of the attacks along converging axes toward
Minsk, and the encirclement and destruction of the main enemy group of
forces."[15] Starting in the north, First Baltic Front, under General Ivan Ba-
gramyan, and Third Belorussian Front, under Colonel General (later Gen-
eral) Ivan Chernyakhovsky, were to break through at Vitebsk and encircle
the German forces there. To the south, Second Belorussian Front, com-
manded by Colonel General Georgii Zakharov, was to support the efforts
of the Soviet armies on its left and right and destroy the German forces
holding Mogilev. Further south, the First Belorussian Front, led by Gen-
eral Konstantin Rokossovsky, had the most ambitious tasks. It was to en-
circle and destroy German forces at Bobruisk. Further south and west, the
Front was to break through German forces on the north edge of the Pripyat
Marshes and advance to Minsk. All of the Soviet Fronts were to eventually
converge on Minsk to destroy any remaining forces of AGC.[16] To further
assist in synchronizing the Soviet effort, *Stavka* tasked Marshal Aleksandr
Vasilevsky with coordinating the offensives of First Baltic and Third Be-
lorussian Fronts. Another *Stavka* representative, Marshal Georgii Zhukov
received orders to coordinate First and Second Belorussian Fronts.

The Soviet plan required a massive reinforcement of the four Fronts
attacking AGC in order to ensure a successful offensive. Prior to the
transfer of these forces, the Red Army had only 1,000,000 men to face
the roughly 850,000 Germans of AGC, which was not nearly enough
to ensure a successful attack. To improve the correlation of forces, the
Soviets moved five combined arms armies (two in reserve), two tank
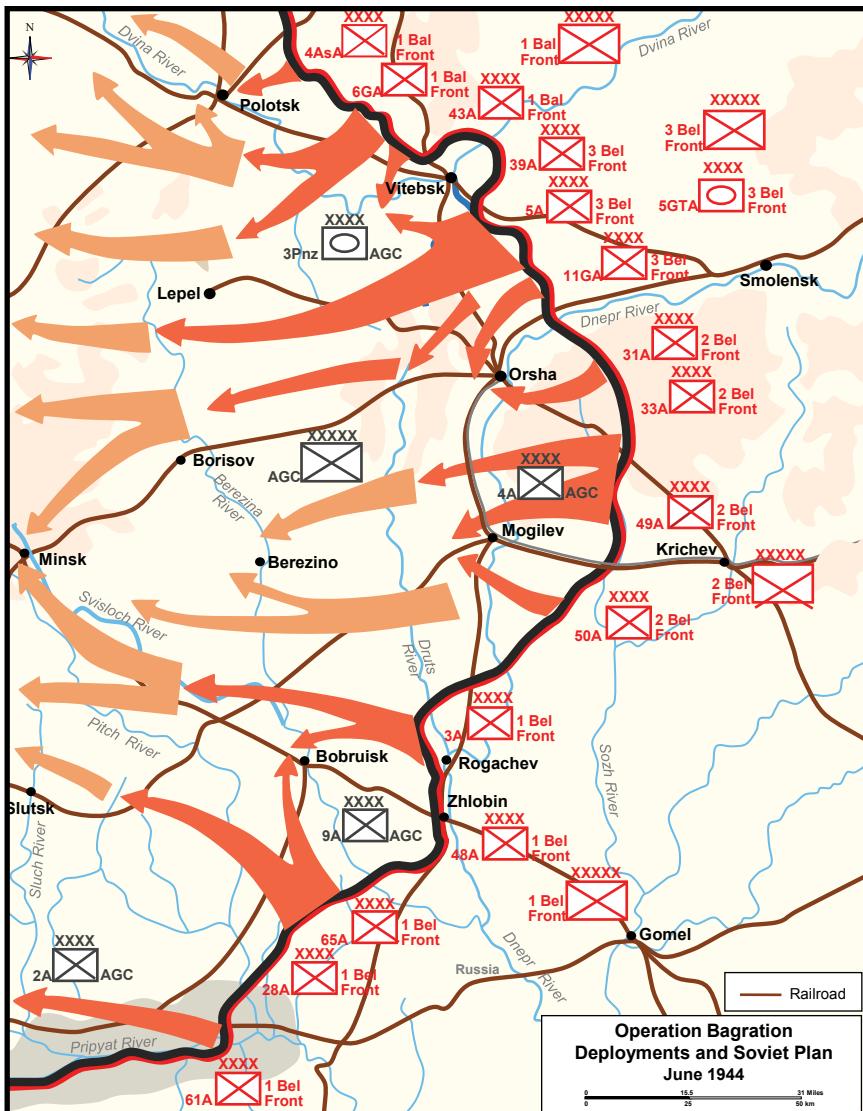
Figure 7.1. Operation BAGRATION: Deployments and Soviet Plan, June 1944.
Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

armies (one in reserve), the First Polish Army (in reserve), one air army, five tank corps, two mechanized corps, and four cavalry corps into position for the summer offensive. It designated the reserve forces for commitment after BAGRATION began. The forces added to the four Fronts for the initial assaults included over 400,000 men; 3,000 tanks and assault guns; 10,000 artillery pieces, mortars, and rocket launchers; as well as 300,000 tons of fuel.[17]

The Soviets concentrated their reinforcements for the crucial initial attacks designed to destroy AGC as close to the front line as possible. Fifth Guards Tank Army moved from Ukraine to the Third Belorussian Front. That Front also received Eleventh Guards Army and II Guards Tanks Corps. First Baltic Front received Sixth Guards Army and I Tank Corps. All of these forces supported the powerful effort at Vitebsk. Second Belorussian Front received LXXXI Rifle Corps along with other units to assist in the attack on Mogilev. Rokossovsky's First Belorussian Front took command of Twenty-eighth Army, I Guards Tank Corps, and a Mechanized Cavalry Corps for the effort on Bobruisk and exploitation further west.[18]

Before discussing the Red Army's plans for deception in support of BAGRATION, it is important to note two factors inherent in the German Army high command and in the command of AGC that had an influence on Soviet *maskirovka* measures. First, the German leadership was predisposed to believing that the main Soviet effort would be south of the Pripyat Marshes against German Army Group North Ukraine (AGNU). Both Hitler and the High Command of the Army (in German known as *Oberkommando des Heeres*, or *OKH*) held this belief. In addition, the commander of AGC, Field Marshal Ernst Busch, and the commander of AGNU, Field Marshal Walter Model, also thought the main Soviet effort would be in northern Ukraine with the ultimate aim of cutting behind (west) of AGC and isolating that group in one massive pocket—a plan that had been one of the original courses of action discussed by *Stavka*. The Germans believed this was the most likely Soviet plan because that was what the Germans themselves would have chosen if they were doing the Soviet planning. Thus, even when evidence became apparent of a Soviet build-up in front of AGC (north of the marshes), the Germans dismissed the Soviet concentrations as forces being gathered for a supporting effort only.[19] Soviet deception efforts took advantage of German expectations of an attack in northern Ukraine and placed great emphasis on creating the illusion of a Soviet main effort focused there.

The second factor helping the Soviet planning efforts was Hitler's (and subsequently Busch's) reliance on "fortified regions" based on cities close to the front-lines. Hitler was convinced that refusing to allow front-line troops to retreat, and having them defend strongpoints—even if isolated—could buy time for counterattacking German forces to restore the situation.[20] On 20 May, Busch tried to convince Hitler of the need for withdrawal before the Soviets launched an assault in order to shorten his line, or at least allow greater flexibility for retreats once the fighting had

begun. Hitler rebuked the Army Group commander, accusing Busch of being like the other German generals who "spent their whole time looking over their shoulder."[21] From this point on, Busch never questioned the Nazi dictator, and the four fortified regions of Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, and Rogachev remained a major feature of AGC's defensive plan. This played into the Soviet deception effort. Even if the Germans could detect some of the Red Army build-up in front of AGC, it still made sense for the Soviets to conceal the size and scope of the offensive so that they could surround and destroy the units in the fortified regions before the Germans could withdrawal or initiate a rescue mission.

Deception Planning

Soviet deception planning formally began with *Stavka's maskirovka* directive issued on 29 May and signed by Zhukov and General Aleksei Antonov, Chief of the Operations Directorate of the Red Army General Staff. The directive, focused mostly on strategic *maskirovka*, began with instructions concerning the massive movement of forces to the four Fronts in BAGRATION:

> To insure concealment of activities going forward on all fronts, I order:
>
> 1. All movements of troops and equipment are to be done only at night, strictly observing night march discipline. Movement during the day is to be authorized only in weather when flying is absolutely impossible, and only for individual groups that cannot be observed by the enemy on the ground. At daytime halting places and new assembly regions, troops and equipment are to be dispersed and carefully camouflaged. Personnel must not communicate with the local population and movement of groups and subunits along open roads and terrain sectors must be minimized. Direct special attention to concealment when replacing first-line troops.[22]

In addition to these restrictions on movements, the reinforcements and shifting units were subject to timetables that kept them away from the front-line—and German detection—for as long as possible. Arriving units were kept at least fifty kilometers from the front until five to seven days before the offensive. At that point, these units could move to within twelve to twenty kilometers from the front, but they could not move into their attack positions until one or two nights before the assault began.[23] *Stavka* also strictly controlled all rail movement. Full cars only moved forward at night and then returned—empty but with their lack of content

concealed—in daylight. Units moving to the front by rail disembarked at multiple stations and then concentrated with night road movements.[24]

The *Stavka maskirovka* plan then went on to discuss the need for deception in the development of fire plans. It directed that "during the entire period of regrouping and preparation for action keep up the existing fire situation. Establish a procedure for ranging artillery and mortar weapons that guarantees concealment of the artillery grouping in the primary axis."[25] The newly arriving artillery concentrations were not permitted to fire. Instead, only existing artillery could register their weapons using a single gun for each battery, and only in the later stages of the preparations for BAGRATION, 17-21 June.[26] The Soviets needed overwhelming fire support in order to achieve rapid penetrations on the flanks of the fortified regions, and thus they planned for the use of large "breakthrough" artillery divisions, which needed to be concealed from the Germans. They also minimized antiaircraft fires.[27] In addition to ground fires, the Soviet Air Force (VVS) hid the gathering ground support aircraft prior to the start of the offensive, and used only long range aviation assets, mostly from Ukraine, to maintain the routine level of air bombardment on AGC.[28]

Limiting reconnaissance work so as to not reveal Soviet intentions was the next topic of the directive. The *Stavka* order read:

> Prohibit newly arrived formations from conducting ground reconnaissance. Do not conduct commander's reconnaissance in large groups simultaneously. To conceal the true sectors of action organize the work of commander's reconnaissance groups on a broad front, including the passive sectors. In necessary cases, command personnel on commander's reconnaissance are authorized to wear the uniforms and gear of privates. Tank soldiers are categorically forbidden to appear on commander's reconnaissance in their special uniforms.[29]

This instruction on reconnaissance was just one part of an overall secrecy plan designed to ensure that the Germans did not discover the concept, plans, or preparations for BAGRATION. The Red Army leaders maintained strict secrecy of the operation during the planning and preparation stages. They limited the individuals with knowledge of the plan to the smallest possible number. As an example, Third Belorussian Front's did not issue their written orders until 20 June, three days before the offensive. All orders were hand-written and hand-delivered. The Soviets virtually eliminated radio traffic, while minimizing telephone communications.[30]

Although a marked reduction in radio and telephone activity could possibly give away an operation, the risk for the Soviets was small because they minimized their communication activities almost all of the time, and along the entire length of the front. Marshal Vasilevsky, *Stavka*'s representative coordinating First Baltic and Third Belorussian Fronts, summed up these efforts: "All that colossal work had to be conducted in conditions of strict secrecy in order to hide from the enemy the huge complex of preparatory work for the forthcoming summer offensive."[31]

Stavka also directed that the commanders and staffs at all levels participate in the planning and execution of all *maskirovka* operations. The directive ordered that the commands organize "careful daily checks on execution of all orders relating to concealment. Make daily checks from the air of the concealment of headquarters and positions, for which purpose special officers from the front and army staffs must be appointed."[32] In addition, the Fronts provided their own *maskirovka* orders and reports by 1 June.[33] Front and army staff representatives conducted ground and air inspections of the deception efforts and sent these results to the General Staff each day at 2200 hours.[34] The Red Army not only created plans for deception, they ensured that staffs and commanders at all levels were in place to oversee the execution of the *maskirovka* plan.

After *Stavka* had provided its instructions, each of the Fronts developed their own *maskirovka* plans. In most cases, the Fronts emphasized the *Stavka* directive while adding some details of their own. First Baltic Front's plan stated:

> 1. All movements of troops and rear services are to be done only at night between 2200 and 0400 with an exactly determined travel distance. Do not try to travel long distances. End marches in forested, sheltered regions. Do not permit columns to stretch out or lagging subunits to move during daytime. No matter where troops and their rear services may be when light comes, all roads must be perfectly still; all movement must stop.

> 2. Motor vehicles can travel only at night with headlights out. Set up white signs that are plainly visible at night on the roads. Paint the front part of the hood and rear sides of vehicles white. Traveling at high speed or passing vehicles on the march is categorically forbidden.[35]

Bagramyan's Front plan also called for units to travel on planned routes and not to enter areas where they might be seen by the Germans. Even if

German reconnaissance planes appeared, they were not to be fired upon. It was permitted to respond only to major German air attacks. The plan also specified that when "enemy aircraft appear during tactical exercises subunits and units must take cover immediately and, according to predetermined signals, quickly deploy and simulate defensive construction on natural lines."[36] The Front also reiterated *Stavka's* instructions regarding artillery fire and registration, and the strict control of radio and telephone communications. The Baltic Front added specific personnel to enforce the deception plan:

> No activity (troop movement, hauling supplies, commander's reconnaissance, and so on) can be permitted or carried out before steps have been taken to conceal this activity. For this purpose: Select one assistant chief of staff at all unit and formation headquarters to be assigned to work out instructions for camouflaging troops in all types of combat activity and to see that specially designated officers monitor this closely.[37]

First Baltic Front's order repeated *Stavka's* directive concerning security of reconnaissance operations and added: "In zones scheduled for vigorous actions, step up defensive works, paying special attention to the quality (convincingness) of construction on dummy minefields and the like."[38] Bagramyan's Front *maskirovka* plan contained tremendous detail. It included measures for discipline on the march and instructions for subordinate commanders to enforce this discipline. Similarly, it instructed Soviet leaders to exercise restraint with air reconnaissance. The Provost Service was given direct responsibility to enforce much of the march, fire, reconnaissance, and communication discipline. For this purpose, the provost had three zones:

> a. the front zone, from the line of front bases (city of Nevel') to the line of army bases (Zheleznitsa, Bychikha). The organization of provost work in this zone is assigned to the chief of staff of the front;
>
> b. Army zone, from the line of army bases (Zheliznitsa, Bychikha) to the line of division exchange points;
>
> c. Troop zones, from the line of division exchange points to the forward edge of defense.[39]

Continuing instructions gave specifics for the provost on how to control the movements of units to include the number of provost officers to be assigned, the best locations for the officers, and their specific missions.

Finally, the directive "categorically forbid written communications relating to activities being carried on. Only the restricted circle of scheduled persons should be permitted to see the content of essential documents, and documents must not go beyond the headquarters that prepared them" and it required "reports to front headquarters at 2100 each day [to] report the results of the concealment inspection."[40]

Each of the other Soviet Fronts developed their own *maskirovka* plans. These plans were similar to First Baltic Front's instructions, but each had some unique aspects of their own. Chernyakhovskii's Third Belorussian Front assigned special escorts for the newly arriving units and emphasized the use of air inspections to check concealment. It also stipulated specially assigned officers from the staff to inspect *maskirovka* preparations.[41] Zakharov's Second Belorussian Front mirrored *Stavka* and the other Fronts' emphasis on secrecy with some added instructions on the rear services' preparations and details on concealing the assumption of frontline positions by the attacking forces.[42] In addition to their own deception operations, Third and Second Belorussian Fronts conducted "diversionary and imitative" activity to distract from the major efforts at Vitebsk and Bobruisk.[43] Rokossovsky's First Belorussian Front also conducted extensive *maskirovka* planning. In addition to most of the measures discussed above, the Front emphasized conducting defensive preparations by front line units to hide the offensive preparations behind the front. Units conducted false movements during the day and then regrouped in new positions at night. Engineers laid bridges in false locations and then took them up, and they deployed dummy vehicles on an incorrect axis. Officers checked on all of these preparations and reported to higher headquarters. Specific instructions went to infantry, artillery, tank, aviation, and engineer units to ensure that they supported the deception plan.[44] In his memoirs, Rokossovsky confirmed the importance of "concealment of troop movements" and "all kinds of stratagems to mislead the enemy."[45] The Front commander went on to praise his Chief of Staff, Colonel General Mikhail Malinin for his innovation in deception operations for the Front.

Most of the Soviet *maskirovka* efforts discussed so far might be considered as passive—designed to hide the intent and extent of the Red Army preparations. Active deception measures were also used to convince the Germans of Soviet intentions in false directions. This effort sought to play on German beliefs that the Soviet main effort in the summer of 1944 would be in north Ukraine, and to a lesser extent, in the Baltics.

A key component of this deception was based on the locations of the Soviet tank armies. These armies were crucial to Soviet success in 1943

in Ukraine. The Germans had become convinced that only Red Tank Armies could provide the main effort for any offensives in 1944. Except for the hidden transfer of Fifth Guards Tank Army to Third Belorussian Front, the other Soviet tank armies remained in Ukraine in the summer of 1944. In fact, these tank army units lacked their full complement of tanks after the campaigns of 1943. However, the Army headquarters and skeleton forces remained in Ukraine without receiving new forces, while maintaining routine radio traffic to convince the Germans that the tank armies were at full strength.[46] At this time, the Soviets also stopped all offensive operations in the area of AGC and started work on defensive positions to convince the Germans that the Soviets only wanted to defend in Belorussia.[47] While the bulk of the tank army headquarters continued to be very visible in Ukraine, smaller tank corps, mechanized corps and cavalry corps units were transferred to the Fronts facing AGC. Additionally, *Stavka* directed the Fronts to the north and south of BAGRATION to simulate offensives in their regions to draw attention away from the main effort on AGC.[48] It tasked Third Ukrainian Front with simulating an offensive on its right flank using eight or nine divisions with artillery and air support while sending similar instructions to Third Baltic Front.[49]

Deception Execution and Effectiveness

The execution of the Soviet deception effort, while not flawless, was generally successful, and it left AGC ill-prepared for the massive onslaught that it faced on 23 June 1944. For the most part, the Soviets successfully hid the enormous volume of rail traffic prior to the offensive. These rail movements included three armies and multiple separate corps with artillery and air support—29 rifle divisions, nine tank or mechanized corps, and two cavalry corps. In addition to moving these units to their assembly areas, the rail network also carried 5,718,916 tons of supplies in 126,589 freight cars in the weeks before the attack.[50] However, the need for night movements and deception limited the amount and speed of rail transport, and the transportation of reinforcements and supplies fell behind schedule. The movement of Fifth Guards Tank Army was supposed to be complete by 18 June, but it was delayed. Also, III Guards Mechanized Corps could not be moved on schedule. Planners referred the matter to Stalin who agreed to delay the attack from its original date of 14 June to 23 June.[51] *Maskirovka* was so important to the Soviets that they were willing to delay their attack to ensure that their movements were kept hidden from the Germans.

The success of these efforts can be measured in the German intelligence reports at *OKH* and AGC. In late May, AGC detected some elements of Eleventh Guards Army moving into place, but it still concluded that the main So-

viet effort would be in north Ukraine. On 30 May, based on the mistaken belief that this constituted the Soviet main effort, *OKH* transferred LVI Panzer Corps from AGC to AGNU, leaving Busch with almost no mobile reserves. On 2 June, an AGC report expected only holding attacks on its front. The army group's war diary did report some Soviet build-ups throughout June, and it concluded that AGC might expect some heavy attacks. However, the main Soviet effort was still anticipated south of AGC. The OKH Intelligence Branch confirmed these conclusions. The final intelligence reports of the Germans recognized some Soviet effort against AGC, but expected it to be a supporting effort. In addition, the Germans completely underestimated the size and extent of the Soviet offensive in Belorussia.[52]

One last measure of success of the Soviet deception effort is the superiority of forces that the Red Army amassed against AGC. They had a 2.5:1 advantage in men, a 2.9:1 advantage in artillery and mortars, a 4.3:1 advantage in tanks and assault guns, and a 4.5:1 advantage in aircraft. In addition to these overall numbers, the Soviet Fronts massed their forces in the crucial attack zones, achieving a 10:1 ratio of forces or better in these zones prior to the offensive.[53] Figures 7.2 and 7.3 illustrate the largely undetected (or underestimated) concentration of First Belorussian Front forces in the Bobruisk direction. The German Intelligence assessment (see Figure 7.2) detected some of the reinforcing corps that were coming to First Belorussian Front but could not determine their exact locations. The assessment also tended to spread Soviet divisions evenly along the front, especially in the Sixty-fifth Army area. In reality (Figure 7.3), the Soviets concentrated tremendous strength near Rogachev and south of Svetlogorsk for the breakthrough designed to encircle Bobruisk. Also, the Front received additional corps that the Germans failed to detect. These corps were poised to exploit the initial penetrations deeper into the German rear. Each of the other Fronts' major breakthrough areas targeted by BAGRATION achieved similar results.

With the help of *maskirovka* operations, the Soviet offensive was a tremendous success. A partisan offensive in AGC's rear area preceded the attack and helped disrupt German communications and supply routes. Then, on 22 June, First Baltic and Third Belorussian Fronts opened their assaults on both sides of Vitebsk. The next day, Second and First Belorussian Fronts began their attacks. In less than a week, Vitebsk had been surrounded and reduced, while First Belorussian Front did the same at Bobruisk. Other Soviet forces achieved breakthroughs at Orsha and Mogilev. Hindered by Hitler's demand to hold fortified regions and surprised by the strength and speed of the Soviet attacks, much of AGC was destroyed

**German Intelligence Picture
Soviet Deployment (Bobruisk)
22 June 1944**

Railroad

Bobruisk

Rogachev

3A 1 Bel Front

Zhlobin

Parichi

Berezina River

Svetlogorsk

48A 1 Bel Front

Pitch River

Dnepr River

Druts River

German Intelligence detected some additional Corps for each Army, but the Germans did not know the Reserves' location or strength

65A 1 Bel Front

61A 1 Bel Front

Kalinkovichi

Figure 7.2. German Intelligence picture of Soviet deployment, June 1944. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

in the front-line just as the Red Army commanders had planned. Soviet columns exploited this success by rapidly crossing the Berezina River and closing two pincers at Minsk on 3 July. Red Army forces continued to advance far to the west through mid-July when BAGRATION transitioned into the Lvov-Sandomierz Operation with Fourth Ukrainian Front opening its offensive south of the Pripyat Marshes. In the end, the Soviets were

Actual Soviet Deployment (Bobruisk) 22 June 1944

New Units Undetected
Railroad

Reserve Corps of 3rd and 48th Armies deployed to the front, concentrated for breakthrough

Bobruisk

Rogachev

Zhlobin

Parichi

Svetlogorsk

Reserve Corps of 65th Army deployed to the front, concentrated for breakthrough

New Army HQs allowed 65th Army to concentrate on a narrow front

Druts River

Dnepr River

Berezina River

Pitch River

Dnepr River

1 Bel Front
3A

XXXX 1 Bel Front

48A XXXX 1 Bel Front

65A XXXX 1 Bel Front

28A XXXX 1 Bel Front

N

Figure 7.3. Actual Soviet deployment, June 1944. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

on the outskirts of Warsaw with German AGC virtually destroyed as an effective fighting force.

Conclusion

The Soviet deception effort worked—it succeeded in surprising the Germans as to the direction of the main effort of the Soviet offensive in the summer of 1944, and the vast power and scope of the attack on AGC.

Perhaps more importantly, we can conclude that some of the basic concepts of Soviet deception efforts and their techniques are still valuable to professional military leaders today.

One concept that seems to permeate all deception operations, but applies particularly well to BAGRATION is the ability to take advantage of your enemy's preconceived ideas. US Army Techniques Publication (ATP) Draft No. 3-13.4, *Army Military Deception Planning*, outlines:

> Required perceptions are the personal conclusions, official estimates, and assumptions the deception target must believe in order to make the decision that will achieve the MILDEC [Military Deception] objective. These adversary perceptions will form from both objective (observation and analysis) and subjective (intuition and experience) analysis. They are also heavily impacted by biases, preconceptions, predispositions, and filters applied in the collection, analysis, delivery, and reception of information.[54]

The Red Army leadership understood that the Germans expected an attack in north Ukraine and focused their deception on reinforcing what the Germans already assumed the most likely Soviet course of action.[55] Only one tank army moved from Ukraine (Fifth Tank Army) and did so with the utmost secrecy. This left the remaining tank armies' headquarters in Ukraine—but with few tanks because those headquarters did not receive replacements. Nonetheless, the Germans believed that these tank armies were the main effort, in part due to "ingrained self-delusion."[56]

Another area that the Soviet *maskirovka* effort in BAGRATION illustrates is the current doctrinal concept of integration. The ATP emphasizes that:

> MILDEC is an integral part of the concept of an operation and must be considered, at all levels, throughout the planning process. It is especially important to develop a concept for MILDEC that supports the overall mission, as part of COA development.
>
> Deception plans must also be integrated with higher headquarters plans. Deceptions must also be consistent with Army doctrinal norms. The MILDEC planner assists the staff in integrating the deception operation throughout all phases of the operation.
>
> This begins with planning, continues through execution, and concludes with the termination of the deception.[57]

The Soviets excelled at this concept. They integrated deception planning with the operational plan at all levels, and designated officers to inspect these measures and report their effectiveness to higher headquarters.

Finally, the Soviets devoted extensive assets to their deception effort. *Maskirovka* was not just an afterthought. Active measures such as the feint in northern Ukraine and concealment efforts for the movement of reinforcements and supplies required the time and efforts of hundreds of thousands of men to execute properly. In the end, deception cannot just be a paragraph in a plan, it must be emphasized, integrated, and resourced across all levels of the joint force in order to help achieve the desired effects.

Notes

1. Kenneth Katzner, *English-Russian, Russian English Dictionary* (NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1984), 585. This dictionary translates *maskirovka* as masking, disguising, and concealment. It also gives *maskirovka* the military focused definition as camouflage. Roger Beaumont, *Maskirovka: Soviet Camouflage, Concealment, and Deception* (College Station, TX: Center for Strategic Technology of Texas A & M University, 1982), 1. See also Charles J. Dick, *From Defeat to Victory. The Eastern* Front*, Summer, 1944* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 14. Dick writes that "*Maskirovka* is a form of combat support, its purpose being to conceal the disposition and activities of friendly troops and mislead the enemy with regard to the grouping and intentions of those troops in order to achieve surprise. Maskirovka is a single, all-embracing concept that includes concealment, deception and disinformation, counter reconnaissance and security."

2. David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War* (London: Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., 1980), 2. See also Beaumont, *Maskirovka*, 3. Beaumont writes that Soviet doctrine's definition of *maskirovka* "encompasses a diverse spectrum of stratagems employed to warp the enemy's view of the Soviet positions, designs and missions."

3. Major General Evgenii Korotchenko and Colonel Nikolai Plotnikov, "*Informatsiia—tozhe oruzhie: O chem nel'zia zabyvat' v rabote s lichnym sostavom*" [Information is also a weapon: About which we cannot forget in working with personnel]," *Krasnaia zvezda* [the Soviet military journal known as *Red Star*] (February 17, 1994), as quoted by Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," in *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 17, 2004 – Issue 2, 5.

4. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 5-14.

5. Glantz, 21-23.

6. The Soviet Union's political leader and Commander of the Red Army, Josef Stalin, headed *Stavka*. In addition to military members such as the Commissar for Defense, the Deputy Commander of the Red Army, the Chief of the General Staff, and the commanders of the Navy and Air Force, *Stavka* included key Politburo members such as the commissar for Foreign Affairs, the Commissar of Internal Affairs, and the chief of economic production for the military.

7. Dick, *Defeat to Victory*, 63.

8. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 25-34. On page 33, Glantz quotes the following from the regulation: "Surprise dumbfounds the enemy, paralyzes his will, and deprives him of an opportunity to offer organized resistance.

Surprise is achieved:
-by leading the enemy astray and by keeping the plan of upcoming actions in strictest secrecy;
-by the concealment and swift regrouping of forces and of the concentration of overwhelming forces and weapons in the decisive locations;

  -by the surprise [unexpected] attack of aircraft, cavalry, and motor-
ized tank units;
  -by surprise [unexpected] opening of annihilating fires and the
beginning of swift attacks."

 9. As quoted by Glantz, 2.

 10. A Red Army Front was an Army Group, but smaller than a German
Army Group. Similarly, Soviet Armies were smaller than German armies
(roughly 60 to 70 per cent the strength of a German army). This chapter will
use the term Front (with capital "F") to distinguish Red Army Fronts from the
general term of front, such as the front line.

 11. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 2-3. See also Beaumont, *Maskirovka:
Soviet Camouflage, Concealment, and Deception*, 5. Beaumont adds that the
Soviets also apply the concept of surprise at all three levels of war, 7-8.

 12. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, IL: The Free
Press and the Rand Corp., 1953), 266. See also Beaumont, *Maskirovka: Soviet
Camouflage, Concealment, and Deception*, 7.

 13. General of the Army Sergei M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at
War. Book One* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981, English Translation, 1985),
297-299. Shtemenko was the chief of the Operations Directorate of the General
Staff during the planning for BAGRATION. In his memoirs, he discusses the
General Staff's examination of four option for the Summer offensive: an attack
northwest from Ukraine designed to cut behind AGC and trap it in one large
pocket, an attack in the Baltic region, an attack on Finland, and the option that
was eventually adopted, a direct attack on AGC on several axis designed to de-
stroy the German Group with multiple encirclements close to the front. For the
goals of the Belorussian offensive see David M. Glantz and Harold S. Orenstein,
translators and editors, *Belorussia 1944. The Soviet General Staff Study* (Lon-
don: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 3-4; and Richard W. Harrison, translator and
editor, *Operation BAGRATION. The Rout of the German Forces in Belorussia.
Soviet General Staff* (West Midlands, England: Helion & Company, Ltd., 2016),
48. See also Anthony Tucker-Jones, *Stalin's Revenge. Operation Bagration &
the Annihilation of Army Group Centre* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword
Military, 2009) 3-5.

 14. Walter S. Dunn, Jr., *Soviet Blitzkrieg. The Battle for White Russia, 1944*
(Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000), 20-23; and Dick, *Defeat to
Victory*, 98.

 15. Harrison, *BAGRATION, Soviet General Staff*, 49; and Shtemenko, *The
Soviet General Staff at War*, 313.

 16. Harrison, 50-51; Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General
Staff Study*, 7; and Dick, *Defeat to Victory*, 97-98. See also Dunn, *Soviet Blitz-
krieg*, 23-24, which identifies six separate breakthroughs by the Soviet attacks.
Also Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 360-362.

 17. Glantz, 362.

 18. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 28.

19. Gerd Niepold. *Battle for White Russia. The Destruction of Army Group Center*, translated by Richard Simpkin (London: Brassey's Defense Publications, 1987), 15-18; Earl F. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East* (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1968), 313-314; and Alex Buchner, *The German Defensive Battles on the Russian* Front *1944*, translated by David Johnston (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 1995), 146-147.

20. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 8; Dick, *Defeat to Victory*, 94-95; and Tucker-Jones, *Stalin's Revenge*, 24-25.

21. Niepold. *Battle for White Russia*, 14.

22. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 616.

23. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 27; Glantz, 357-358; and Niepold. *Battle for White Russia*, 47. Glantz points out that the concealment efforts in troop movements was largest taken up to that point in the war for the Soviets. In 1943, The Red Army have moved only one army into reserve, and it was only committed in a counterattack role. The rest of the regrouping was within the Fronts. In 1944, multiple armies were moved between Fronts as well as numerous separate corps.

24. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 27.

25. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 616.

26. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 27; Niepold. *Battle for White Russia*, 47; and Glantz, 365.

27. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War*, 313.

28. Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General Staff Study*, 29.

29. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, Appendix 2, 616.

30. Niepold. *Battle for White Russia*, 49; Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General Staff Study*, 29 and 57-59; Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War*, 307-309; and Paul Adair, Hitler's Greatest Defeat. The Collapse of Army Group Centre, June 1944 (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994), 52.

31. As quoted by Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 362.

32. Glantz, 616-617.

33. Glantz, 617.

34. Glantz, 367.

35. Glantz, 617.

36. Glantz, 617.

37. Glantz, 617.

38. Glantz, 618.

39. Glantz, 618.

40. Glantz, 619.

41. Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General Staff Study*, 43-44.

42. Glantz and Orenstein, 51-55.

43. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 369.

44. Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General Staff Study*, 56-64.

45. Marshal of the Soviet Union Konstantin K. Rokossovsky, *A Soldier's Duty* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970, 1980 [English translation, 1985]), 237.

46. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 28-29; and Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin*, 314.

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47. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War*, 306-307.

48. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 27-29.

49. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War*, 306-307.

50. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 29-30; and Dick, *Defeat to Victory*, 99.

51. Dunn, 28.

52. Niepold. *Battle for White Russia*, 15-24. See also Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia. The Soviet General Staff Study*, 64-66; and Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg*, 3-5 and 29.

53. Niepold. 57.

54. United States Army Techniques Publication (ATP), Draft, No. 3-13.4, *Army Military Deception Planning* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Dec, 2017), 11.

55. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin*, 314

56. Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception*, 370.

57. ATP Draft, No. 3-13.4, *Army Military Deception Planning*, 14.

Chapter 8

Deceive, Divert, and Delay

Operation FORTITUDE in support of D-Day

Scott C. Farquhar

Operation FORTITUDE is an example of a full-spectrum information operation conducted by the Allies in World War Two "[w]ith the object of inducing the enemy to make faulty strategic dispositions" in support of their victorious campaign in northwest Europe.[1] It was a years-long scheme aimed at deceiving the highest levels of the Nazi government and continued seamlessly down to confusing the smallest German tactical formation. The Allies achieved this with a thorough British counter-intelligence effort to deprive and then deceive the Axis powers' intelligence services. The information warfare effort began with the Allies using human intelligence via espionage and signals intelligence by collection and decryption of Axis military and diplomatic radio traffic. It continued against Axis photo and measurement intelligence and battle-damage assessments with the use of false Allied troop deployments, radio transmissions, and an air bombardment to divert enemy combat power. The Allies maintained the plan with adherence to operational and communications security procedures in contrast to Hitler's failed efforts.

The western Allies agreed to begin their long-awaited campaign to invade and liberate northwestern Europe, Operation OVERLORD. Its supporting and inherent deception plan was code-named BODYGUARD after Churchill's remark to Stalin at the Tehran Conference that "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."[2]

Churchill's War Cabinet included the Joint Planning Staff, which in September 1941 included a committee for military deception called the London Controlling Section (LCS). After a period of disorganization, British Army Lieutenant Colonel John Bevan joined and took command of the LCS. Bevan recruited talented personalities and meshed deception with other nascent intelligence operations, such as the ULTRA code-breaking activities at Bletchley Park (BP) and the counter-intelligence system of the so-called "Twenty Committee," (for the Roman numeral XX, meaning "double-cross").[2] These seemingly ad hoc organizations worked at the strategic level and became models of joint, inter-agency, and coalition op-

erations (some vestiges of which still exist). The LCS, as a secret organization, assumed responsibility for executing for Operation BODYGUARD.[3]

Bevan completed the deception plan to support Operation OVERLORD, previously approved on Christmas Day, 1943. Throughout 1943, the LCS conducted a series of deception operations through the existing Anglo-American headquarters, Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander-Designate or COSSAC. Under the rubric of Operation COCKADE, COSSAC developed operational deception maneuvers intended to draw German attention, and, hopefully, forces away from Allies in the Mediterranean and the Eastern fronts by threatening invasions at other locations, such as France and Norway. Though not fully successful in deceiving the Germans, COCKADE served a useful purpose to the LCS and its subordinate elements as opportunities to test and practice Allied deception systems while simultaneously provoking and measuring the German responses.

Operation COCKADE's deception operations mirrored the joint, combined, and inter-agency nature of the LCS in their targeting and execution. These included demonstrations visible to enemy forces by large naval amphibious flotillas, sometimes with embarked troops and equipment, and supporting air forces. Feints in enemy contact accompanied each operation, including air strikes, amphibious or airborne Commando raids, and guerrilla attacks by special operations forces. Inherent to each operation were fake Allied orders of battle ("phantom units"), false radio traffic, and controlled leakage via the "double-cross" agents. The latter measure strengthened the spies' "legends" and, to their German handlers, veracity. The LCS nested strategic diplomatic skullduggery against neutral or Axis-allied countries within these operational and tactical deceptions to further erode trust in the enemy camp.[4]

In an inverse of the British, and later Allied, intelligence skills, the Germans started the war strongly and then declined in diplomatic, espionage, and communications intelligence capabilities. Despite being a military dictatorship, the Nazis exhibited poor communications and operational security and spent their counter-intelligence energies on rooting out political dissent or hunting down racial and ideological foes. Also, in contrast to the eventually streamlined and efficient system under LCS, the Germans had two separate strategic intelligence organizations. The first was the national military intelligence service, the *Abwehr*, established to gather military and diplomatic information, including code-breaking and exploitation. The second was the Nazi Party's sinister security apparatus, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (*RSHA*). These were in continual ideologi-

ETO Chain of Command

| US President | | UK Prime Minister | | |
| | Combined Chiefs of Staff | | | "XX Committee" |

Allied Strategic Air Forces
RAF Bomber Command Harris (UK) — USAAF 8th AF Doolittle (US)

SHAEF Eisenhower (US) Tedder (UK)

London Controlling Station (LCS)

Bletchley Park (BP)

Ops 'B'

| Naval Forces Ramsay (UK) | Ground Forces Montgomery (UK) | R-Force | Air Forces Leigh-Mallory (UK) |

1st Army Bradley (US)		2nd Army Dempsey (UK)	
VII Corps Collins (US)	V Corps Gerow (US)	XXX Corps Bucknall (UK)	I Corps Crocker (UK)
UTAH Beach	*OMAHA Beach*	*GOLD Beach*	*JUNO Beach* *SWORD Beach*

Figure 8.1. ETO Chain of command. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

cal and bureaucratic conflict until the *RHSA* absorbed the *Abwehr* in early 1944. This disastrous "hostile takeover" did nothing to improve German intelligence capabilities against Operation BODYGUARD.

Through the LCS, the Allies established a "feedback-loop" to the *Abwehr* by means of "turned" spies and decrypted communications. The British security services captured every German spy on the British Isles in the first months of the war and successfully hid their efforts from the *Abwehr*. These spies "turned" (or "doubled") on their former masters and reported tailor-made intelligence to their handlers. The LCS, some of whose senior members were novelists and playwrights, wrote a complex script of fact and fiction to mislead the Germans while BP's ULTRA operation monitored the audience's reaction. The German agents under LCS control recruited rings of other spies, all fictitious, to carefully feed more and more information to the *Abwehr*. This fictitious network allowed the LCS a twofold advantage; it demonstrated that there were no unknown German agents in their midst and it obviated the need for the *Abwehr* to send reinforcements. The *Abwehr* transmitted their intelligence requirements to their agents, providing an intelligence coup for the LCS, as it announced clearly what its customer, the German High Command (*Ober-Kommando de Werhrmacht-OKW*), did not and needed to know. The XX Committee set about filling this need.[5]

Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery arrived in England just after Christmas 1943 and were briefed by COSSAC on the existing Operation OVERLORD plan. It was complex, involving a cross-channel amphibious invasion of northern France, but characteristically limited, almost timid, owing to its half-hearted origins. The weak operational maneuver plan was fortunately backed by an adequate deception operation created by the practiced staff of the LCS and COSSAC. Eisenhower and Montgomery immediately set to improving on both.[6]

General Eisenhower's headquarters, now designated Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), evolved from a planning staff to one capable of conducting a campaign. General Montgomery, now commanding 21st Army Group, the combined land force headquarters for OVERLORD, strengthened the invasion force and refined its assault and lodgment areas. Both required extensive modifications to their supporting deception operations. COSSAC conducted the various COCKADE deceptions throughout 1943 under its G-3 Operations "B" Department staff, called Ops (B). British Army Colonel Noel Wild, who was another experienced protégé of the Mediterranean theater's deception chief, the brilliant and eccentric Brigadier Dudley Clarke, and who had been in charge of Montgomery's deception plan at Al Alamein, took over Ops (B) concurrent with Eisenhower's assumption of command.[7] Colonel Wild was now responsible for OVERLORD's theater-level deceptions. General Montgomery retained Wild's peer, Colonel David Strangeways, as his deception chief at 21st Army Group.[8]

The LCS measured the German intelligence-gathering capabilities throughout 1943 in anticipation of Operation OVERLORD. Through ULTRA and battle-damage assessment against the *Abwehr* spying effort, the LCS correctly deduced that the Germans had only two sources with which to collect information out of physical contact with the Allies: spies and radio interception. The first was controlled by XX Committee and the other was carefully managed by SHAEF's Ops (B). Photo-reconnaissance by *Luftwaffe* overflights of the UK were rare and obviated the need for extensive physical deception, such as dummy vehicles. Allied control of the air domain resulted in an imagery "black hole" in the Dover region. This allowed the LCS to control the information domain by causing the *Abwehr* to urgently request intelligence from its agents.

Deceive

Colonel Wild set out to fulfill BODYGUARD's stratagem, targeted at *OKW,* with one nested within General Montgomery's operational ma-
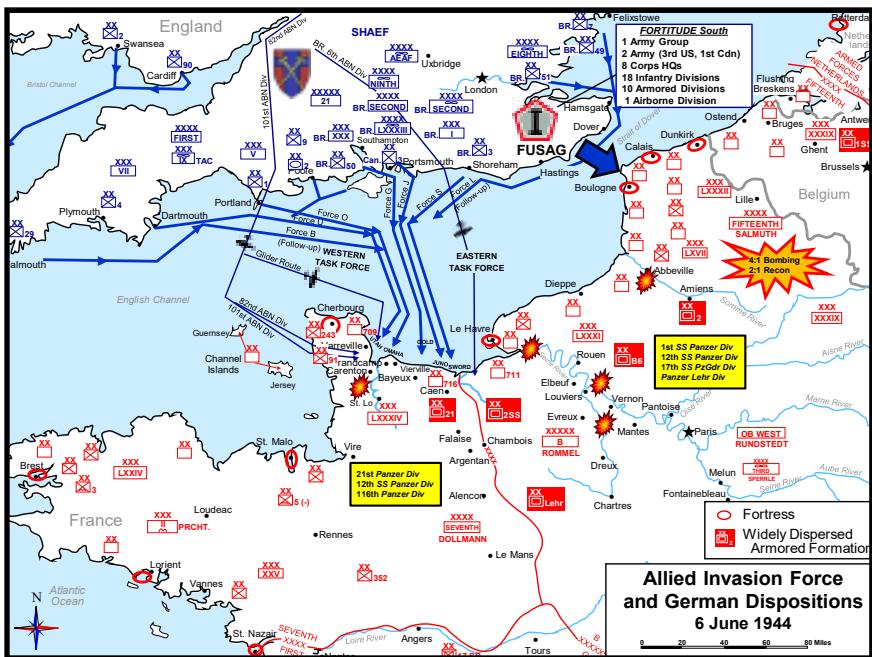
Figure 8.2. Allied invasion force and German disposition, June 1944. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

neuver plan, Operation NEPTUNE, the airborne/amphibious cross-channel attack. This deception plan, also inherited from COSSAC, was named Operation FORTITUDE in February 1944. Colonel Wild and Ops (B) set about to obscure the thrust of the Allies' assault from Eisenhower's opposing HQ, *Oberbefehlshaber West (OB-West*; "Supreme Commander, Western Theater")) under *Generalfeldmarschall* Gerd von Rundstedt. SHAEF's staff estimated that Montgomery's forces required fourteen days (until D+14) to establish a beachhead with enough forces to begin offensive operations. Operation FORTITUDE intended to create this time and space by preventing German forces from massing against it.

In contrast to COCKADE, which tried unsuccessfully to convince the Germans of an impending cross-channel attack in 1943, FORTITUDE sought to portray the Anglo-American force staging in the UK as unready to invade until mid-summer 1944. The Allied deception was two-fold, gaining space by portraying a main and supporting effort and buying time with the former occurring forty-five days after the latter. ULTRA intercepts revealed that the Germans believed that a lack of amphibious shipping and poorly-trained American forces arriving in England were delaying the invasion; both estimates were correct. A shortage of invasion craft, particularly LSTs, combined with General Montgomery's doubling of the

size of NEPTUNE forces and a lack of training areas postponed D-Day by a month, from May to June. Emphasizing these actual challenges assisted the FORTITUDE scheme.[9]

Building on Operation COCKADE's various geographically disbursed schemes, FORTITUDE attempted to deceive, divert, and delay German forces defending Normandy. An enormous task across a huge front, the Allies' deception plan began to mirror Germany's widespread defenses from Norway to Spain. Just as *OB-West* contained subordinate headquarters and coastal fortifications, SHAEF's Operation FORTITUDE created false headquarters, units, depots, and airfields across the UK while simultaneously concentrating its actual combat power opposite Normandy in southwest England. German dispositions in northwest France, with the bulk of their forces near the Pas-de-Calais, which *OKW* and *OB-West* staffs deemed the most likely and most dangerous courses of action, aided SHAEF efforts immeasurably. The Pas-de-Calais is the narrowest point in the English Channel and allowed rapid transit of amphibious shipping, afforded the densest air cover, held several excellent ports, and, crucially, provided the shortest distance to the heart of Germany.[10]

The Germans, under Rundstedt's *OB-West*, arrayed their forces in France in two field armies, *Heeresgruppe B*, under *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel, and *Heeresgruppe G*, under *Generaloberst* Johannes Blaskowitz. Rommel was responsible for the defenses of all of northern France (the channel coast) while Blaskowitz had a portion of the Atlantic (the Bay of Biscay) and all of France's Mediterranean coast. Rommel divided his army group into *Fifteenth Armee* along the Pas-de-Calais region and *Seventh Armee* defending Normandy and Brittany. Using sound military logic and pattern analysis, Rommel placed the majority of his forces, about eighteen divisions, under *Fifteenth Armee* north of the Seine River in the Pas-de-Calais, while allocating only five divisions to *Seventh Armee* in Normandy.[11] These were "700-series" "fortress divisions" manning fortifications along the coast reinforced by a dozen high-quality "300-series" infantry divisions, only one of which garrisoned Normandy. Rommel's defense plan fixed these forces in place, preventing their reaction to a landing outside their assigned sector. German armored divisions comprised the essential element in the race to build up forces into and against the beachhead. Of the six available in northern France, Rommel allocated only one to Normandy. He dispersed the others across his defensive front, but controlled them through a complicated and irrational command system orchestrated by *OB-West* and, in actuality, Adolf Hitler at *OKW* in Berlin. FORTITUDE sought to exploit this unwieldy arrangement in order to maximize German confusion and friction.[12]

To shape the German defenses, SHAEF accordingly divided Operation FORTITUDE into two halves, NORTH and SOUTH. The first included the creation of a fictitious field army, the British Fourth Army, headquartered in Scotland. An economy of force in the overall effort, Operation FORTITUDE NORTH used few resources, but aimed to convince the Germans of a multi-division amphibious landing, potentially in concert with Soviet forces, to seize harbors, airfields, and production facilities in Norway. This deception leveraged existing Allied facilities in Scotland, such as the Commando Course, an amphibious operations training area, and the Scapa Flow naval base. These actual troops, and those rotating through (e.g. US Army Ranger battalions and divisional Ranger companies), used false radio traffic to mimic divisions forming and training. SHAEF placed commensurate fake marriage announcements, unit athletic team scores, and military band concert schedules into British news media and various semi-official outlets via newsreels and service publications. These open-source intelligence feeds lacked physical backing, as *Luftwaffe* reconnaissance aircraft failed to penetrate British air defense in Scotland.[13]

Operation FORTITUDE NORTH, building on COCKADE's sub-plan TINDALL, helped to convince the *OKW* to retain 400,000 German naval, air, and ground forces, including twelve divisions, in Norway. These remained throughout Operation OVERLORD and until the end of the war. The increasingly-stretched *Wehrmacht* could not afford this commitment while the Allies devoted fewer than 500 men to FORTITUDE NORTH.

Divert

At the level below SHAEF, General Montgomery and Colonel Strangeways worked throughout January 1944 on the revised plan that became Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH. The original COSSAC plan intended to merely camouflage the build-up of Allied forces in southwest England, but Strangeways considered this both unrealistic and insufficient. Instead, he developed an information "ju-jitsu" whereby he used the enemy's intelligence and operational inertia against him.[14] Approved in mid-February, the scheme was a double of FORTITUDE NORTH that created a credible threat to Rommel somewhere *other than Normandy* by inventing a second Allied army group in southern England, a twin of Montgomery's. Strangeways established an organization called R-Force in 21st Army Group to conduct his operational and tactical deceptions similar to what Brigadier Clarke's A-Force accomplished in the Mediterranean Theater.

The Allies, through BP intercepts, knew that German intelligence had learned of the existence in England of an American ground headquarters,

the European Theater of Operations, US Army (ETOUSA). This was the service component command for the build-up of troops throughout 1943 and handled training and administration. From this kernel of truth, Strangeways' R-Force began to populate *OB-West*'s enemy order of battle by using a cover plan code-named QUICKSILVER. ETOUSA now became a fictitious combat organization, the 1st US Army Group (FUSAG). Like COSSAC, it had a headquarters near London but awaited its designated commander. The quite real and flamboyant Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., soon took command of the fictional FUSAG enhancing the ruse. The German intelligence services appreciated Patton's considerable abilities displayed in the Mediterranean and considered his previous supernumary status in ETO a poorly-executed deception on the Allies' part.[15]

The crux of the problem for General Montgomery was the need to achieve tactical surprise for the D-Day landings in Normandy and then shift to convincing the Germans that NEPTUNE was only a diversion from the real operational objective. Strangeways knew the majority of German defenses were in the Pas-de-Calais; he now developed a series of deceptions (what the deceivers called "the story") to keep those forces diverted there prior to and after NEPTUNE. He refined these complicated maneuvers into Plans QUICKSILVER I through VI, with each plan sub-divided into phases occurring before and after D-Day. The first two plans fed the Germans information of an increasing force that was strong enough to invade the Pas-de-Calais *in mid-July*. On D-Day, once NEPTUNE was underway and its scale apparent to the Germans, the QUICKSILVER plans shifted to their second phases. The post-D-Day chapters of "the story" portrayed NEPTUNE as a diversion intended to draw German mobile forces away from the Pas-de-Calais to Normandy, allowing Patton's FUSAG to land behind them for an armored drive into Germany.[16]

FUSAG and its commanding general gained a combination of real and fictitious subordinate units and headquarters in the late winter and into spring of 1944. The former were new US and Canadian combat formations that completed initial training in North America and debarked in western England before assignment to FUSAG. After a bombastic welcome by Patton, these units quietly transferred to Montgomery's control, leaving behind various administrative clues for the *Abwehr*.[17] The 1,200 man-strong specially-trained and equipped deception troops of Strangeways' R-Force executing QUICKSILVER II, or "the Wireless Transmission Plan," comprised FUSAG's only actual assigned units. Alongside engineers building dummy camps and vehicle staging areas, there were electronic warfare units, the innocuously-named US Army 3103rd Signal Services Battalion

and the British Army No. 5 Wireless Group.[18] Throughout the spring of 1944, these units dispersed teams across southeast England to transmit radio traffic portraying division, corps, and army-level headquarters. Initially following a script, they eventually began sending actual, slightly edited messages from Montgomery's real units, who were restricted to using landlines or messengers to minimize their radio transmissions.[19]

Plans QUICKSILVER III, V, and VI were the naval counterpart of QUICKSILVER I and II that created the necessary amphibious fleet to transport and supply FUSAG across the Dover-Calais strait. QUICKSILVER III had the by-now familiar components of visual, electronic, and movement deception: hundreds of dummy landing craft assembled in six locations around Dover broadcasting fake radio traffic and erecting signage to direct the phantom corps, divisions, and specialist amphibious troops of FUSAG to their staging areas and embarkation points. QUICKSILVER V and VI provided activities of an invasion fleet in southeastern England by ship traffic, signal lamps, and minesweeping. At night, various Allied small craft equipped with radar reflectors, Morse operators, and towing a myriad of blinking barges provided visual and electronic signatures to German coastal radars and radio intercept stations in the Pas-de-Calais.

The QUICKSILVER activities followed the pattern and pace of General Montgomery's masked NEPTUNE preparations in southwest England. Strangeways timed them to appear larger to convince the Germans that FUSAG was the still-building main effort to follow the Normandy landings. The last component of QUICKSILVER, part IV, the air plan, was a kinetic combat operation rather than the demonstrations of the ground and maritime plans and did the most to divert German attention towards the Pas-de-Calais.

QUICKSILVER IV was a comprehensive air interdiction plan designed to reinforce the entire FORTITUDE deception while simultaneously isolating the Normandy region. Whereas the earlier COCKADE plans had failed to bring the *Luftwaffe* to battle, by spring 1944 the Allies had almost achieved air superiority over France, rendering that priority moot. Instead QUICKSILVER IV "was a robust, predatory air campaign that took real action against militarily significant targets combining both diversionary and deceptive elements into one coordinated operation…with the very real presence of aircraft and bombs."[20] Over the protests of the Allied bomber commanders, it included a bombardment scheme of increasing intensity leading up to, through, and beyond D-Day. The targets attacked in and around the Pas-de-Calais, especially rail and road bridges and railway marshalling yards, prevented or delayed the lateral movement of German

forces west to Normandy or the reverse, in keeping with "the story" of FORTITUDE SOUTH.[21]

QUICKSILVER IV comprised almost half of the total Allied bombing effort in the four months prior to D-Day. Planners carefully weighted the air forces' attack and reconnaissance missions to support the FORTITUDE SOUTH diversion, with the Pas-de-Calais and Normandy receiving attention proportional to their portrayal as main and supporting efforts (about 4:1 in bombing and 2:1 in photoreconnaissance sorties). German battle damage assessments correctly deduced these attacks were attempts to isolate their defenses from the interior of France. It also supported the R-Force build-up of phantom troops and shipping in southeast England by staging thousands of real fighter sorties from austere airfields in the Dover region, away from their actual bases in the southwest. German radar and radio listening stations in France tracked and monitored the aircraft's ingress and egress routes, confirming the base locations. Observation reports via the XX Committee from three false spies the *Abwehr* ordered to surveil the Dover region "corroborated" measurement and signals intelligence.[22]

German dispositions in the first week of June confirm the effectiveness of FORTITUDE SOUTH. Their forces remained massed in the Pas-de-Calais, heavily engaged in building defenses for the expected mid-summer attack, rather than training and rehearsing for an imminent invasion. Rommel had dispersed the feared armored divisions well back from the coast, where a lack of fuel and the absence of counterattack orders prevented effective reconnaissance or rehearsals. In a final example of the asymmetry of intelligence, the Allies' weather forecast accurately predicted a storm in the channel with a small break beginning on 6 June. The Germans had lost their north Atlantic weather stations and could only visualize the beginning of a week-long gale. Consequently, Rommel took leave in Germany and the commanders and staffs of the Normandy-based army, corps, and divisions took advantage of the suspected lull to conduct a map exercise in eastern Brittany on the night of 5-6 June, placing Rommel's command, *Heeresgruppe B*, at the lowest alert level. Commanders granted troops leave and passes to sustain morale prior to the anticipated surge in activity before the expected mid-July invasion.[23]

Cunningly, as NEPTUNE forces reached their point of no return, the prized spy of the *Abwehr*, code-named *Alaric Arabel* (and GARBO by XX Committee), transmitted to Berlin an accurate report on the size, composition, and destination of the invasion. Like the fake observers counting real fighter sorties taking off from Dover, this report was of no use as it was too

EXECUTOR	OPERATION or PLAN	CONDUIT	SENSOR	TARGET (EFFECT)
LCS **XX Committee** (COL Bevan, et. al)	**BODYGUARD** *"the story"*	**HUMINT/OSINT**	**Agents/spies, press releases, media events**	*Abwehr / RHSA* and *OKW* (Deceive)
OPs (B) (COL Wild)	**COCKADE / FORTITUDE North**	**Radio transmissions, demonstrations, raids**	**EW intercept, traffic & pattern analysis,**	*OB-West Heeresgruppe B* "Atlantic Wall" units (Deceive & Divert)
R-Force (COL Strangeways)	**FORTITUDE South / QUICKSILVER** **TITANIC** **GLIMMER & TAXABLE**	**Air: bombing, photo recce** **Ground: staging, rehearsals, dummy paratroopers** **Maritime: ship traffic, staging, minesweeping, radar jamming**	**Battle Damage Analysis** **EW, Photo recon, contact reports** **Radar, contact reports**	*OB-West Heeresgruppe B* "Atlantic Wall" units Mobile Reserve Naval District HQs (Divert & Delay)

Figure 8.3. Operation chart. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

late for the Germans to react to, but its accuracy and detail solidified his bona fides at *OKW*. This last quality paid huge dividends in maintaining the Pas de Calais ruse during the coming weeks.[24]

Delay—TAXABLE, GLIMMER, and TITANIC

The final steps of the FORTITUDE deception plans confused the German defenses during the NEPTUNE airborne and amphibious landings and gained surprise for the Allies while slowing and dispersing the inevitable counterattacks. As with FORTITUDE SOUTH, these plans were a low-cost, high-payoff mix of real and simulated air, sea, and ground forces that appeared to be the main force directed at the Pas-de-Calais. SHAEF's Colonel Wild and the Ops (B) staff, planned and directed the operations executed by the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, and a small group of Special Air Service (SAS) men. The first two, code-named TAXABLE and GLIMMER, were feints by ships and aircraft enhanced by electronic warfare methods in the Dover-Calais strait beginning a few hours before D-Day.[25]

TAXABLE and GLIMMER were closely linked and combined RAF special operations aircraft of No. 617 Squadron (the famed "Dambusters") and Royal Navy Volunteer Reservists manning eighteen small harbor patrol craft. The air-sea duo moved at the same speed, but slightly ahead of, the NEPTUNE invasion fleet; the boats towing radar-reflecting balloons

with Lancaster bombers orbiting in a precise racetrack pattern whilst dropping radar-jamming "chaff" (tinfoil strips, similar to tinsel). The skillfully-piloted boats continued the QUICKSILVER III, V, and VI actions of false radio and visual signals commensurate with an enormous invasion fleet. As dawn neared, the bombers returned to base while the small boats laid a smokescreen before dashing towards the main German coastal artillery battery at Cap d'Antifer. The boats then retreated to England, laying mines to cover their withdrawal.

GLIMMER was a similar operation using fewer aircraft and ships than TAXABLE. German coastal defenses engaged both feints but inflicted no losses. The German army, navy, and air defense units in the Pas-de-Calais all reported contact with the large force their systems had observed. Commanders rapidly disseminated these false reports up the German chain of command from *Fifteenth Armee*, the naval district, and *Luftflotte 3* to *OB-West* and thence to *OKW* in Berlin (all monitored by BP), followed with the inevitable clarifications and retractions at dawn just as NEPTUNE began.[26]

Operations TITANIC I through IV mimicked the airborne drops occurring simultaneously in Normandy with another mix of RAF bombers and special operations forces. TITANIC I dropped dummy paratroopers inland from the Pas-de-Calais "invasion" beaches to simulate an entire Allied airborne division landing in the dark. The dummies (called "Ruperts") contained pyrotechnic firefight simulators while two SAS teams engaged the responding Germans troops to add realism. Subsequent daylight discovery of "Ruperts" conflicted with the very real casualties SAS men caused when reports of both arrived at the headquarters of *Fifteenth Armee*.[27]

TITANIC II, III, and IV also dropped hundreds of "Ruperts" and their fireworks on the eastern, western, and southern flanks of the actual Allied airborne and glider landing zones just inland from the Normandy beaches. A further two SAS "sticks" parachuted in near Saint-Lô. As in the Pas-de-Calais, German reaction forces engaged in an escalating series of firefights, ambushes, and futile searches. The few mobile German forces in Normandy received confused reports and orders to attack, halt, reverse, and then withdraw, all while suffering casualties as FORTITUDE forces targeted them. The mobile regiment that could have reinforced the OMAHA and GOLD beach defenses remained far out of place searching for paratroopers until well after those close-run landings had gained a foothold ashore. The French *Maquis*, previously quiescent as part of the scheme to lull the Germans while carefully gathering information for the Allies, now began long-planned acts of sabotage. With their commanders out of place, contradictory reports pouring in, and communication lines

disrupted, German units only managed a slow and fragmented reaction to the airborne landings.[28]

On D-Day, with each passing hour, another Allied infantry battalion landed on SWORD, GOLD, JUNO, OMAHA, and UTAH beaches while more skidded into the glider landing zones. Armored brigades, artillery regiments, and specialist engineer troops soon joined them to defend and solidify the beachhead. The Germans launched uncoordinated counterattacks that failed to prevent Montgomery's forces from getting ashore and linking together along a solid, if precarious, front. The defending German corps headquarters in Normandy, badly sited in Saint-Lô, could not effectively control its subordinate divisions nor give an accurate report of Allied strength to *Seventh Armee*. Instead, various German headquarters began to piecemeal battalions and regiments in different directions, never achieving mass on D-Day. QUICKSILVER IV continued to hold the attention of German intelligence towards the Pas-de-Calais by increasing air attacks across the operational depth of OVERLORD.[29]

By D+3, the Germans knew NEPTUNE was not a raid, but remained unsure of its size and scope, and *OB-West* could not afford to be wrong. There was only one group of mobile armored forces available, and if committed to Normandy and decisively engaged by the attackers, FUSAG might land to their rear between them and the Reich. At this point of maximum need for operational information, punctuated by contradictory and confusing reports at *OB-West* and *OKW*, agent *Alaric Arabel*/GARBO reported in again. The spy transmitted an extremely detailed order of battle of Montgomery's 21st Army Group, easily confirmed by Rommel's HQ fighting it in Normandy, with an additional detailed description of Patton's FUSAG. The latter almost perfectly aligned with the independently assembled picture obtained by the radio interception service of the *OKW*. Over the next vital few days, while the Anglo-American-Canadian forces clawed out their Normandy lodgment, the spy further refined for Berlin the size and disposition of Montgomery's forces, while reporting on the preparations of the eleven divisions and two corps of FUSAG to attack the Pas-de-Calais in July. *OKW*, now possessing what it believed to be superior, all-source intelligence, refused to take the Allied "bait" and denied Rommel the release of the armored reserve behind the Pas-de-Calais.[30]

FORTITUDE continued past the fourteen days required by General Montgomery to build up enough forces to create a break-out from Normandy. Through July, the elaborate deception continued, with *Alaric Arabel*/GARBO feeding *OKW* an explanation of why Patton was transferred from command of FUSAG in Dover to the Third (US) Army in

Normandy, namely to take advantage of the unexpected success of the diversionary attack. By August, "the story" changed to portray NEP-TUNE as the main effort and the units arriving in Normandy allocated away from FUSAG. Newly-created units and headquarters maintained the threat of a second attack in the Pas-de-Calais or the Low Countries. One by one, Allied aircraft attacked and destroyed German headquarters located by ULTRA, forcing commanders to travel by road to give orders face-to-face, resulting in many of them succumbing to strafing attacks, including Rommel himself.

Operation FORTITUDE succeeded by creating an imaginative plan that leveraged the enemy's weaknesses, prejudices, and predilections. The Germans had poor strategic, diplomatic, and economic information-gathering methods, but excellent tactical, particularly signals, intelligence. Germany never fully realized its former inadequacies, and came to rely on the latter. Britain perceived this weakness and took full advantage. Churchill's war cabinet, and later the Combined Chiefs of Staff, embraced deception and integrated it in planning and execution from strategic to tactical levels. It vertically nested every aspect of BODYGUARD, FOR-TITUDE, QUICKSILVER, and TITANIC, but also ensured each could stand alone as a successful deception.

The FORTITUDE deceptions are significant and should be studied for how they enabled the Anglo-American-Canadian army to invade an enemy-occupied continent at far lower cost than planners anticipated. The measure of FORTITUDE is that it allowed the Allies to gain a foothold and build its firm base through the summer of 1944 without even feeling the full weight of the *Wehrmacht* based in France, thereby preserving combat power for the liberation of Europe.

Notes

1. "Plan FORTITUDE," Headquarters, SHAEF, 23 February, 1944 Combined Arms Research Library (CARL), Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1.

2. Martin J. Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill Vol. VII* (London: Heinemann, 1988), 586.

3. ULTRA was the code name for the security classification given to the *product* of code breaking, but describes Allied effort to defeat Germany's *Enigma* encryption machine. The British Government Codes and Cipher School (GC&CS) used modern organization and management at Bletchley Park and allowed the Allies to intercept, decrypt, and analyze German military, diplomatic, and commercial radio traffic. In a triumph of operational security and personal discipline, ULTRA remained secret until declassified in 1975. See Ronald Lewin, *ULTRA Goes to War* (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978).

4. Christopher Andrew, "F.H. Hinsley and the Cambridge moles: two patterns of intelligence recruitment" in Richard Langhorne (ed.), *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War: Essays in Honour of F.H. Hinsley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22-40; Roger Hesketh, *FORTITUDE: The D-Day Deception Campaign* (Woodstock, NY: 2000), *i-xx*. Hesketh was a key deception planner; his book is an adapted version of a formerly "most secret" after-action review.

5. Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 1-7.

6. Ben Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies* (NY: Crown Publishing, 2012), 1-6, 21-27.

7. Gordon Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1950), 1-230; a succinct account is in John Keegan, *Six Armies at Normandy* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982), 21-67.

8. Brigadier Dudley Clarke is the "Godfather" (or "midwife") of British WWII military deception. Clarke codified "Escape & Evasion" and founded "A-Force" (which later became the Special Air Service – SAS) as well as the British Commandos (who gave birth to the US Army Rangers). See Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (NY: Scribner and Sons, 2004), especially 9-15, and Nicholas Rankin, *Churchill's Wizards: The British Genius for Deception, 1914–1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008).

9. Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 24-35.

10. "Plan FORTITUDE," Headquarters, SHAEF, 23 February, 1944; F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. III, Part II, (London: HMSO, 1988), 3-39.

11. This is also a case of "mirror-imaging" where the Germans reversed their nascent 1940 plan (*Operation Sealion*) to invade England across the Calais-Dover strait into an enemy COA. The Germans were also absent any amphibious doctrine or experience and had little appreciation of the knowledge gained by the Allies in the Mediterranean and Pacific theaters.

12. The western Allies had assaulted directly into ports in Norway (Op. WILFRED), Dieppe (Op. JUBILEE), and North Africa (Op. TORCH). Only in Sicily and Italy had the Allies conducted over-the-shore beach landings.

13. Richard Hargreaves, *The Germans in Normandy*, (Mechanicsville, PA: Stackpole, 2006), 20-32; J.E. & H.W. Kaufmann, *Fortress Third Reich: German Fortifications and Defense Systems in World War II*, (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 302-320.

14. "Plan FORTITUDE," Headquarters, SHAEF, 23 February, 1944; Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 155-173.

15. Hesketh, 34-35.

16. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 350-351.

17. Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 8-16.

18. This series of stem-winders inspired the iconic opening scene in the 1970 Hollywood film "Patton."

19. Americans used trained troops portraying HQ signal personnel while the British economized by using a single truck equipped with numerous transmitters and an automated "player piano"-type device. As noted, messages and codes used were those of 21st Army Group. Continually using a code increases the chances for enemy EW assets to collect and break it; Colonel Strangeways successfully argued that it was worth the risk for his realistic deception. Jonathan Gawne, *Ghosts of the ETO: American Tactical Deception Units in the European Theater* (Haverton, PA: Casemate, 2014), 185-186; Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 63; Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 36-37.

20. FORTITUDE was so important that two compartmented security procedures were modified; QUICKSILVER radio deceivers and BP code-breakers were briefed on NEPTUNE (classification "BIGOT") and SHAEF planners on ULTRA to provide fidelity and alacrity in their respective roles. Hastings, *The Secret War*, 480-483.

21. Eric D. Hresko, "QUICKSILVER IV: The Real Operation Fortitude" (School Of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2010), vi, 23.

22. Hastings, *OVERLORD*, 42-43.

23. Hresko, QUICKSILVER IV, 33-36; Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 118-122; Robert Kershaw, *D-Day: Piercing the Atlantic Wall* (London: Ian Allan Publishing, 2008), 38-41.

24. Kershaw, *D-Day*, 20-41.

25. GARBO's report was horribly bungled by the *Abwehr*-cum-*RHSA* but eventually passed to *OKW* and, eventually, Adolf Hitler. The spy, a Spanish volunteer named Juan Pujol, received both a German Iron Cross and British Knighthood for his actions. Hesketh, *FORTITUDE*, 212, 274; Holt, *The Deceivers*, 665.

26. Holt, *The Deceivers*, 578–579.

27. There was another small naval-only deception similar to TAXABLE/GLIMMER named BIGDRUM on the western flank of UTAH Beach to distract the coastal defenses around Cherbourg.

28. The SAS troops also operated loudspeakers playing sounds of gunfire and shouted orders recorded during training exercises. The men eventually linked up with Allied troops, though several were captured and executed. Mary Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 112.

29. The commanding general of one German division was killed in an ambush racing back to his command post from the map exercise, another delayed until noon; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 293-300; Kershaw, *D-Day*, 80-94.

30. Hresko, QUICKSILVER IV, 38-52.

31. Kershaw, *D-Day*, 190-201, 237; Niklas Zetterling, *Normandy 1944: German Military Organization, Combat Power and Organizational Effectiveness*, (Winnipeg, Canada: J.J. Federowicz Publishing, Inc., 2000), 304-392.

Chapter 9

Chinese Deception and the 1950 Intervention in the Korean War

Joseph G.D. Babb

This chapter outlines the key strategic, operational, and tactical issues involved in the "deceptive" introduction of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV), into the conflict on the Korean Peninsula in October and November of 1950. This analysis addresses several key issues beginning at the strategic level with how Washington missed the signs that Mao Tse-tung's (Mao Zedong's) People's Republic of China (PRC) would come to the aid of its Communist ally. This oversight is all the more troubling given that the Central Intelligence Agency had already "raised alarms" in June and the Chinese passed specific warnings to Washington through Indian diplomatic sources as early as September.[1] The Chinese strategic deception is best characterized as taking advantage of the effects of the Magruder Principle.[2] The senior leadership of the United States believed the People's Republic of China, in the process of consolidating political power and still conducted military opeations against remnants of Chiang Kai-shek's (Jiang Jieshi's) Nationalist forces, were in no position to support their Korean allies with a large-scale military intervention. The Chinese leadership successfully reinforced this false estimate of Chinese capabilities.

The deception at the operational level was centered around the deployment of hundreds of thousands of People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops, their equipment, and logistics support from all over eastern China to Manchuria and along the Korean border. More significantly, China's military forces then covertly infiltrated multiple armies (corps-level formations) across the Yalu River in October and November of 1950. General Douglas MacArthur and the Eighth Army staff continued to believe, even after the initial devastating attacks in late October, that this was a only a warning and not the intial phase of a massive, broad front, multi-army attack that actually occurred about a month later.

For the deception at the tactical level, the Chinese used well-practiced techniques of night marches, daytime concealment, and avoidance of ground and air reconnaissance assets to fool the meager and inadequate intelligence collection means of the United Nations Command (UNC). Forward elements of both United States and Republic of Korea units approaching the Yalu failed to discern and properly react to the first Chinese

assault. These forces, under orders from MacArthur, continued to attack toward the Yalu and were again caught by surprise with the massive late Novermber assault. S.L.A. Marshall declares in his book, *The River and the Gauntlet,* "There resulted one of the major decisive battles of the present century followed by the longest retreat in Americn history."[3] This is a classic case study in military deception—unexpected in scale and scope—from strategic to tactical level. This failing is especially troubling when fighting a military whose basic tenet of war was unambiguously stated in 500 BCE—all warfare is based on deception.[4]

The factors at each level that played into the dramatic success of the Chinese intervention, after the earlier surprise of the North Korean attack, are complex. In Washington, critical factors included divisive national politics over who "lost China" to the Communists and strategic intelligence failures. Considerable ambiguity existed in American policy circles regarding the newly established Communist regime in China not to mention its relationship to the Soviet Union and North Korea. There was certainly hubris in General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters; his staff conspicuously overlooked and underestimated the capabilities of the newly victorious, battle-hardened Chinese Red Army—a formation that had been at war for more than a quarter of a century against an American ally, the Chinese Nationalists.

Finally, no one in the Far East or in Washington comprehended the full extent the of strategic and operational risk of the Truman Administration's consistent application of austerity measures to the national defense budget. The consequences of a comprehensive unpreparedness of the military units in the Asian theater were dire. They were thrown into a conflict their leaders had not anticipated. Although there was some foreboding regarding the overall readiness of the Eighth Army in Japan, no one either foresaw or planned to mitigate the unique challenges of fighting an expeditionary war in Asia. The surprise North Korean attack that drove UN forces to the southeast corner of the peninsula appeared unstoppable until it wasn't. Likewise, the UN counterattack from Pusan and Inchon to the Yalu that brought China into the war was a rout, until it wasn't.

Setting the Stage—Fool Me Once

In October, 1949, Mao Zedong announced the establishment the People's Republic of China (PRC). The forces of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had defeated the American-supported Nationalist forces led by Jiang Jieshi in the rekindled civil war after the Allied defeat of the Japanese in 1945. By late 1949, the Nationalists had retreated to the island

of Taiwan. Thereafter, Generalissimo Jiang reconstituted and rearmed the Nationalist forces maintaining key garrisons on several outlying island groups near the Chinese mainland. However, there was little doubt that Mao and the Communists were determined to seize Taiwan, destroy Jiang's regime, and eliminate these offshore enclaves occupied by the Republic of China (ROC).

On 12 January 1950, the American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, gave a speech implying both the ROC on Taiwan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) were outside of the American defense perimeter in the Asia Pacific area.[5] In late January and early February, Mao and his Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai (Zhou Enlai), travelled to Moscow to meet with Stalin. On 14 February the partners signed a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance.[6] In early March of the previous year, Stalin and Kim Il-sung, the newly installed leader of North Korea, had met to discuss military and economic issues. The three Communist countries slowly but surely built a close and supporting relationship inimicable to the United States.

In response to the growing global Communist threat, President Truman directed a joint State-Defense Department committee to re-examine US national security strategy in light of changes to the global security environment since 1945. On 14 April 1950, this committee issued *A Report to the National Security Council–68*, better known as *NSC-68*. In it, the United States operationalized the strategy of containment first outlined by George F. Kennan in "the Long Telegram." The document focused on the Soviet Union as the primary future threat and Europe as the expected theater of conflict.[7] In light of Acheson's Press Club speech and the wording of *NSC-68*, Washington appeared to have established a new policy toward China and Northeast Asia as a secondary theater. The ambiguity of America's attitude toward developments in mainland Asia created a strategic opportunity for Kim, and for his allies in Moscow and Beijing.[8]

About two months later, on 25 June 1950, the armed forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), with the acquiescence of the Soviet Union and China, attacked south to unite the peninsula under Communist rule. As outlined in in T.R. Fehrenbach's classic account, *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness,* the United States was not ready, as a nation or as a military, for a major conflict to contain Communism, especially in Asia. The vast majority of America's ground units in the theater had spent most of the postwar period conducting occupation duties in Japan. These units were under-strength, poorly equipped, and in small garrisons with few training opportunities for large-scale exercises, due to the lack of maneuver areas in occupied Japan.

Four Army divisions and one regiment constituted the occupation force in Japan and Okinawa. The American units (a corps and two divisions) that had occupied Korea south of the 38th parallel in September of 1945 had all been withdrawn by June 1949. Not expecting an outright invasion of its ROK ally, the United States military only had about 500 American personnel in-country. These personnel were part of the Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG) advising and assisting the ROK in its ongoing counterinsurgency campaign.[9] The total size of the entire United States Army worldwide in June of 1950 was 591,000 with just ten combat divisions.[10]

In contrast, when North Korea attacked on 25 June 1950, Mao Zedong had already established the robust Northeast Border Defense Army. By July the PLA began transferring four additional armies (PLA armies equated to a US corps in terms of combat strength) to Manchuria and the border. This movement was conducted virtually out of sight of American intelligence collection assets in keeping with the Red Army's long-practiced methods of clandestine movement of large formations. Mao also ordered intelligence personnel and observers to North Korea. In August and September, as the North Korean offensive at first succeeded and then rolled back as the UN forces counterattacked, two additional Chinese army groups (armies) with six more armies (corps) plus artillery and anti-aircraft artillery units began to move to the area.[11] The Chinese intelligence assets on the ground in North Korea observing the retreat were aware of the general disposition of the attacking forces and the potential gaps forming between major elements, especially where the weaker ROK Army formations were deployed.

A key question, both at the time and today is, how could this have happened without American strategic intelligence capabilities detecting the movement? Jiang's ROC was still at war with the PRC. His human intelligence sources would certainly have passed this information on to the United States. In early July, General Douglas MacArthur, without the permission of President Harry S. Truman, visited Taiwan to consult with Jiang and some of his senior officers. Jiang offered Nationalist troops to fight in Korea, but when Truman learned of the offer, he politely refused it, fearing it would provide a justification for Chinese intervention. He did, however, order the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait. Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership interpreted this act as a sign of a US shift to a broader anti-PRC strategy and a sign the US wished to play larger role in the defense of Taiwan.[12] Strategically, the potential for Truman's moves to be misinterpreted or misunderstood by Mao, and the scope of

Figure 9.1. Members of the 24th Division's Task Force Smith Deploying to Korea.

the emerging conflict based on such a misunderstanding were ignored by key decisionmakers and planners from the beginning, in both Washington and in the Far East.

Once a credible Chinese high government official warned the Truman Administration not to cross the 38th parallel, the failure to focus strategic intelligence collection assets to detect further movement and the disposition of those forces already deployed to the border posed an even larger problem. How did MacArthur's Far East Command (FECOM) miss hundreds of thousands of troops and supporting equipment being moved to an area adjacent to the DPRK? FECOM either lacked or did not properly task the strategic collection assets available. Historian Christian Heller argues there was a systemic problem in the FECOM intelligence community in "manning and skill sets, erroneous target prioritization, and failure to integrate tactical intelligence into strategic analysis."[13] Given the information available, the belief that the Chinese would not enter the conflict became difficult to justify and defend, both then or now. By early July 1950, UN forces no longer doubted the success of the attacking divisions of the North Korea army. The attack completely surprised Washington, the ROK leadership and its supporting KMAG advisors both in its scale and timing.

Within 48 hours of the North Korean invasion President Harry S. Truman ordered American air and naval assets into the fight. On 1 July, under the overall command of General MacArthur, who had been designated to lead United Nations Command (UNC), elements of the US 24th Infantry Division left Japan to deploy to Korea. By 5 July, the division's ill-fated Task Force Smith engaged in a bitter, but ineffective defense against North
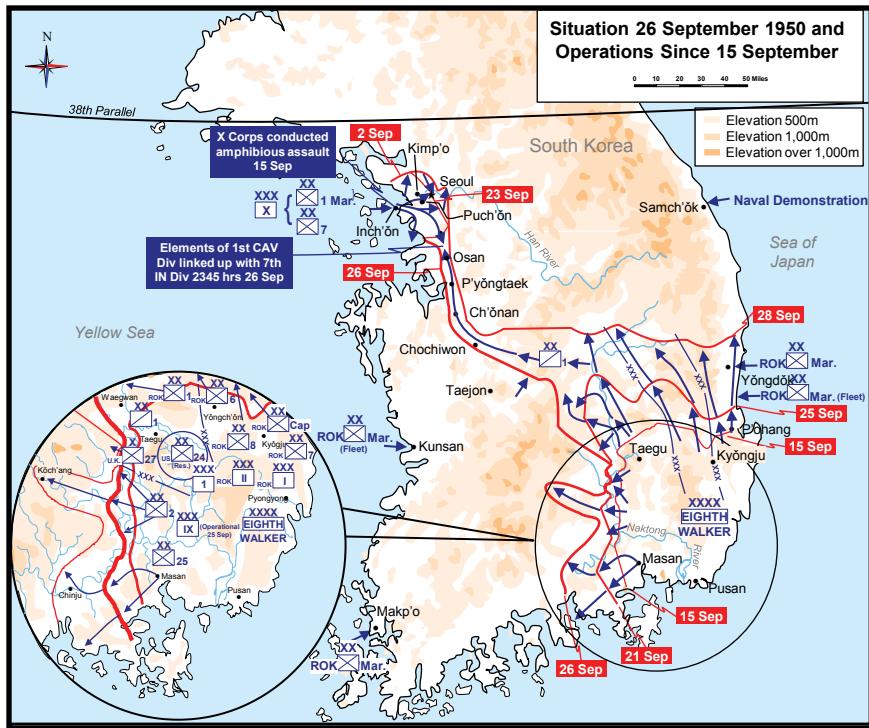
Figure 9.2. Situation 28 September 1950 and Operations Since 15 September. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

Korean Army (KPA) forces south of Seoul, the national capital. For the next month Republic of Korea (ROK) and the American-led UNC forces received steady reinforcments from Japan, Okinawa, Hawaii, and the US mainland. Lieutenant General Walton Walker's Eighth Army conducted a fighting retreat back to the Pusan Perimeter in the far southeast corner of the country. By early September, the Eighth US Army, with significant support from allied airpower, was holding its own. Elements of four US Army divisions (1st Cavalry, 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry) and one Marine division now contributed to the defensive effort. On 15 September, MacArthur ordered Walker to prepare for a counterattack from Pusan while X Corps with two divisions conducted an amphibious landing at Inchon near Seoul.

On 25 September 1950, the X US Corps consisting of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division successfully established a beachhead at Inchon and moved inland to cut the North Korean line of communication near Seoul. They quickly secured the capital and elements of the 7th Division linked-up with Eighth Army units from the Pu-

san perimeter on 27 September.[14] This two-pronged offensive decisively blunted, and then reversed, the DPRK invasion. MacArthur was now determined to continue the offensive and complete the destruction of the North Korean forces. On 27 September the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized MacArthur to continue the attack north of the 38th Parallel, but with caveats. This was followed on 29 September with approval by Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall. President Truman, however, demanded that the offensive could only continue if there was no Soviet or Chinese intervention, out of a desire to avoid any military confrontation with either of those two nations.[15]

MacArthur planned to have the Eighth Army pass through X Corps and continue up the western side of the Korean Peninsula toward Pyongyang. He also wanted to re-insert X Corps in a second amphibious assault on the east coast. However, the collapse of the KPA and the UN advance across the width of the peninsula was so rapid, X Corps entered the North Korean port of Wonson already in the hands of ROK forces. MacArthur's plan was for the UNC to get to the Yalu River as soon as possible. Within weeks of merely hanging on in the face of a concerted effort by the KPA to push the the defending forces off the peninsula, UN forces were now poised to complete the destruction of those same forces.

As early as 30 September, ROK units had crossed crossed into North Korea. The US 1st Cavalry Division, the leading element of Eighth Army, remained north of Seoul prepared to continue the offensive when ordered. On 3 October, MacArthur officially announced that forces of the UNC had crossed had crossed the 38th parallel. ROK President Syngman Rhee "said that he did not expect the UN forces to stop at the 38th Parallel, but if they did, he continued 'we will not allow ourselves to stop.' And stop the ROK troops did not."[16] In his outstanding analysis of the conflict from the tactical to the strategic level, David Halberstam argues, "On the American side, the decision to cross the thirty-eighth parallel and head north was in a way a decision that made itself."[17] For MacArthur and his UN forces, the die had already been cast. The offensive to reunite the Korea Peninsula had become irresistible. However, Mao's commitment to oppose a UN drive north of the 38th Parallel and the destruction of his North Korean ally was just as powerful. By late September, moving at night and by forced marches, more than 250,000 Chinese troops had assembled on the north side of the Yalu River while more were moved into the area.[18] The true extent of this massive build up was masked by the ingrained deceptive practices of the PLA now called the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) under the command of Chinese Marshal Peng Dehuai.

On 7 October, elements the Eighth Army's vanguard, the 8th Cavalry Regiment, led the US 1st Cavalry Division into North Korea. Its advance had been proceeded by numerous ROK units across the the width of the peninsula.[19] In early October, the military defeat of Kim Il-Sung's forces appeared to be a foregone conclusion. Only a massive third-party intervention could stop the UN offensive. Nevertheless, the extent of the operational movement of China's forces was not known and MacArthur remained convinced the Chinese would not intervene.

"On 15 October, five and a half years into his presidency Harry Truman finally met Douglas MacArthur. By that time, MacArthur's troops were racing toward the Yalu, and Chinese troops were four days from crossing the river and heading south."[20] In this controversial meeting with Truman on Wake Island, when asked by the President about the chances of Chinese or Soviet interventions, "MacArthur answered, 'Had they intervened in the first or second month, it would have been decisive. We are no longer fearful of their intervention. We no longer stand hat in hand. The Chinese have 300,000 men in Manchuria.' Of these only 100,000 to 125,000 were situated along the Yalu, and only 50,000 or 60,000 could have gotten across."[21] His numbers were off by two-thirds. MacArthur, the architect of the brilliant victory at Inchon, now led his forces to disaster in an unanticipated major confrontation with China's huge land army. For this endeavor he had Truman's qualified blessing.

Setting the Trap—Fool Me Twice

About two weeks earlier, on 2 October, the Indian government had passed on to the UN in New York a warning that they had received through their ambassador in Beijing from the Chinese foreign minister, Zhou Enlai. During China's war with Japan (1937-1945), Zhou had been Mao's liaison to the Nationalists and their US advisors in Chongqing. During this time, and for over a year after the Japanese surrender, he was well known to, and had worked closely with, General George C. Marshall. Zhou's message was unambiguous—if UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded North Korea, China would have to respond to protect itself and its ally. Yet, by mid-October, UN forces had not only crossed the 38th Parallel, they had taken Pyongyang, and were at or near the Yalu. This was an indication that the Chinese were not going to intervene. This played into China's deception and MacArthur's perception and predisposition. Their inability to act thus far suggested that they did not intend to do so.

The Chinese Communists had prepared for this possibility even before Kim Il-sung had begun his invasion. In late October of 1950 when

Situation 26 October 1950 and Operations Since 7 October

Figure 9.3. Situation 28 October 1950 and Operations Since 7 October. Graphic created by CSI Press Staff.

UN forces reached the Yalu, 24 Chinese divisions out of a planned 39 had already deployed to the China-North Korea border.[22] More than "a study in unpreparedness," FECOM's willful self-deception stands as the archetype of strategic and operational negligence. General MacArthur, supported by his long-serving and devoted intelligence officer (G-2), Major General Charles A. Willoughby, had assured President Truman that the Chinese would not enter the conflict in strength, if at all. He went on to speculate that what forces they might put into the fight would be too little, too late. MacArthur and his headquarters staff continued to plan and conduct operations under these untested assumptions. To further hamper a full appreciation of the danger, MacArthur's forces pushed forward too rapidly to fully implement proper security precautions or intelligence collection practices.[23]

On 4 October, Marshal Peng Dehuai traveled to Beijing from his post in west-central China at Mao's command. One of China's "Ten Marshals," Peng owed his rank, the equivalent to the American military's five stars, to his superior service to the Chinese Communist armed forces through decades of conflict against the Nationalists and the Japanese. At this critical meeting of the Party Central Committee in Beijing, he received command of the PLA's forces designated for service should the need arise. In order to provide a level of deniability regarding direct Chinese involvement, these forces would fight collectively under the banner of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV). Peng's understanding of American motives and of Mao's reasons for providing aid to the DPRK are outlined in *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal*, his official biography published in English by the Foreign Language Press Beijing:

> The US occupation of Korea, separated from China by only a river, would threaten Northeast China. Its control of Taiwan posed a threat to Shanghai and East China. The US could find a pretext at any time to launch a war of aggression against China. The tiger wanted to eat human beings; when it would do so would depend on its appetite. No concession could stop it. If the US wanted to invade China, we had to resist its aggression. Without going to a test of strength with US imperialism to see who was stronger, it would be difficult to build socialism. If the US was bent on warring against China, it would want a war of quick decision, while we would wage a protracted war, it would fight regular warfare, and we would employ the kind of warfare we had used against the Japanese invaders.[24]

Concerned, first and foremost, with protecting his newly-founded state, Mao initially committed the PRC to send Peng and a half a million men to Korea. His decision, made in secret, received the support of the key leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, one of the most experienced and competent Chinese generals on either side of the civil war and conflict with Japan received orders to defend the nation's sovereignty, ideology, and future. As Peng's explanation above indicates, this looming confrontation would not be a demonstration or feint to frighten MacArthur, nor would it be a limited, economy of force, engagement. MacArthur's perceptions and assumptions could not have been more wrong. The Magruder Principle of the power of self-deception was clearly evident. The race to the Yalu resulting in attenuated supply lines and significant gaps on the flanks of the attacking units had left the UNC unprepared to move to the defensive. Worse, a northeast Asian winter

Figure 9.4. Chinese soldiers crossing the Yalu River in November 1950.

rapidly approached adding the threat of poor vehicle mobility and freezing temperatures to that of large-scale combat against the combat-tested troops of the CPV. The Eighth Army and X Corps had unwittingly blundered into a trap Peng would soon spring.

By mid-October 1950, UNC advanced units conducting offensive operations had reached the Yalu River. Along the way they had captured and successfully interrogated not only North Korean soldiers, but also soldiers from the CPV who provided detailed information on the movements and pending operations of their units. American units in contact thus possessed solid intelligence indicators of imminent major Chinese involvement. Unfortunately, as the raw reports traveled up the chain of command from northern Korea to Willoughby at MacArthur's headquarters they were filtered and generally rendered devoid of meaning. Division- and regimental-level staffs on both sides of the Korean peninsula possessed unambiguous evidence of the Chinese presence in North Korea. Nevertheless, MacArthur and his staff continued to maintain that there would be no significant action by the Chinese and the UN forces should continue advancing across a broad front to fully consolidate the gains of the offensive.[25] UN units were still attacking when the Chinese hit on 18 October.

> In the hour of its defeat, the Eighth Army was a wholly modern force technologically, sprung from a nation which prides itself on being as well informed as any of the world's people.The Chinese Communist Army was a peasant body composed in the main of illiterates. Much of its means for getting the word around was highly primitive. In recent centuries,

its people had displayed no great skill and less hardihood in war. But they matured their battle plan and become the victors on the field of Chongchon because they had a decisive superiority in information.[26]

 Russell Spurr's *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War Against the US in Korea, 1950-51* provides a detailed account, tactically and operationally, of how the Chinese People's Volunteeers drove headlong into the X Corps in the northeast and Eighth Army in the northwest. In the east the Army and Marine divisons of X Corps retreated to a near miraculous "Dunkirk" at the port of Hungnam where the US Navy evacuated thousands of UN troops as well as refugees. In the west, Peng's forces drove the Eighth Army south past Pyongyang, and then south of Seoul, in November and December of 1950. The near-complete collapse of UNC was a close run possibility. It did not establish a stable defensive line south of Seoul until January, 1951, when the first Chinese offensive lost its momentum and reached a culminating point.

Peng's attacking army, consisting overwhelmingly of semi-literate, but hardy peasants, lacking significant air cover, artillery, and armor won a campaign of movement, maneuver, and infiltration. The CPV supported Peng's deception throught the use of superior operational security, an unsurpassed ability to conceal its staging areas and movements, and the discipline of its massed light infantry. The great underlying flaws of the unprepared UN forces, masked in the September rout of the North Korean Army, reappeared with a vengeance as gaping holes developed between divisions, regiments, and battalions. Flanks were exposed and opened, and large-unit cohesion nearly lost.

The innate weaknesses of a dismounted, logistically challenged enemy, allied air power, small unit leadership, a good deal of luck, and the heroism of individual soldiers eventually saved the day. Hard-pressed, forward-deployed units of the Eighth Army and X Corps provided the breathing space for the UNC to recover as it conducted a fighting retreat south of Seoul. According to Peng's brief account, to accomplish the defeat of the UN forces in October and November, the Chinese conducted five campaigns. Within the larger strategic deception of the Chinese intervention, his units conducted a series of operational and tactical offensive actions unforeseen and for the most part, undetected by UN forces in the limited engagement in October and the major offensive in November.

Marshal Peng Dehuai's account of what he calls the "First Campaign" begins, "At dusk on October 18, 1950 I crossed the Yalu with vanguard

units of the Chinese People's Volunteers."[27] Within seven days his Fortieth Army, one of eleven armies that would cross the Yalu over the next four weeks, had achieved a decisive victory against US and ROK units in this first action near Bukjin and Unsan.[28] The sharp and bloody engagement ended abruptly after which the Chinese broke contact and disappeared. This confirmed the assumption and fed into the deception that China was not conducting a full scale attack, but was merely warning that the UN offensive must stop.

"We employed the tactic of purposefully showing ourselves to be weak, increasing the arrogance of the enemy, letting him run amok, and luring him deep into our areas."[29] MacArthur having already ignored the Zhou diplomatic warning, moved into Peng's trap by ordering the attack to the Yalu to continue. Although there were now elements of six Chinese armies in North Korea, Peng followed his initial attack with a period of seeming inactivity. CPV forces across the Yalu dispersed, went into hiding, and attempted to avoid contact with UN forces. Additional Chinese forces, traveling only a night, continued to cross at multiple locations along the border. They took full advantage of knowing the patterns used by UN air and ground reconnaissance flights and patrols to avoid detection. Peng assessed the situation and prepared for the next more expansive offensive.

In preparing for the "Second Campaign" Peng acknowledges, "the US, British, and puppet [ROK] troops were able to withdraw speedily to the Chongchon River and the Kechon Area, where they started to throw up defensive works. Our troops did not pursue the enemy because the main enemy force had not been destroyed even though we had wiped out six or seven battalions of puppet troops and a small number of American troops."[30] Another key to the Chinese deception was to attack ROK units and avoid the strong American forces. This created not only confusion as to the size and strength of CPV forces, but also the seams between units the Chinese later exploited as they positioned themselves for an attack into the flanks and rear of US forces. Peng's second campaign began when MacArthur launched his offensive on 20 November.

"We sent small units to engage the enemy and to lure him to come after these units. It was nearly dusk when the enemy penetrated to the Unsan-Kusong line—the place we had planned for our counterattack… then our main forces swept into the enemy ranks with the strength of an avalanche."[31] 30 November found the Eighth Army and X Corps fighting a desperate withdrawal, retreating south in an attempt to avoid encirclement. Chinese special units infiltrated dressed as ROK forces collecting intelligence, attacking logistics units, and creating confusion as to the dis-

position of Chinese forces. The CPV armies and divisions consistently outmanuevered and outflanked the UN divisions continuously unhinging any attempt at a cohesive defense, with casualties and confusion continuing to mount. "The battles along the Ch'ongch'on River were a major defeat for Eighth Army and a mortal blow to the hopes of MacArthur and others for the re-unification of Korea by force of arms."[32] Peng's Third Campaign consisted of breakout and pursuit operations. He put sufficient pressure on the X Corps' three divisions, the 1st Marine, and the 3rd and 7th Infantry, to force a retreat. After some very difficult fighting around the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir, the Marines and the remnants of the 31st Regimental Combat Team fell back to the port of Hungnam for evacuation. The Chinese main effort against the Eighth Army continued even though it was taking significant casualties and outrunning its bare-bones sustainment capabilities. The mobility and staying power of the massed Chinese light infantry continued to unnerve the defending UN forces. Despite their losses, the Eighth Army formed successive defensive lines. According to Peng, "in the evening of December 31, 1950, our troops stormed across the 38th Parallel, captured Seoul, and crossed the Hangang River to recover the port of Inchon and drive the enemy to the 37th Parallel."[33]

Peng fought his "Fourth and Fifth Campaigns" over the next two-and-a-half years with over five Chinese field armies. These operations consisted of costly and ineffective attacks and counterattacks back and forth across the 38th Parallel. The Chinese People's Volunteers had successfully defeated the UN forces sent north to reunite the peninsula, liberated North Korean territory, and protected China's sovereignty. The surprise of the KPA attack in June, and the one-two punch in October and November conducted by the CPV were significantly enabled by American self-deception at all levels. Military deception played a vital role in China's victory over UN forces in the ending months of 1950 and led to stalemate, negotiation, and a situation on the Korean peninsula that continues today under the armistice signed in July 1953. As Sun Tzu cautioned, "Therefore I say: Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant of both the enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril."[34]

Conclusion

American military officers had observed, studied, supplied, trained, advised, and fought alongside Chinese Nationalist and Communist forces from 1937 until early 1949. Neither force in the Chinese Civil War constituted an unknown. Since the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, US Army units had

maintained a continuous presence in China through 1949. Brigadier General John M. Magruder headed the American Military Mission in China beginning in 1941 to coordinate the distribution of Lend Lease aid and to advise and assistance in its use. From 1942 through 1945, Generals Joseph S. Stilwell and Albert C. Wedemeyer led the mission to organize, train, equip, and advise in combat thirty-nine Nationalist Chinese divisions.

After the arrival of General George C. Marshall in November of 1945, the US Army began planning to train and equip several Chinese Communist divisions at the request of Zhou Enlai. American Army officers, among them, Colonel David C. Barrett, had served alongside Mao and the Communists with the Dixie Mission in Yenan for more than two years beginning in August of 1944 and had reported on their observations. The last general officer advisor to the Chinese Nationalist Army, David C. Barr, later commanded the 7th Infantry Division in Korea during the conflict. The United States was not fighting an alien enemy or ideology. Senior American military leaders were aware of the hardiness, courage, and quality of Chinese soldiers when they were well led. The Chinese exploited the American penchant for not looking closely at our own history and experience.

Two major themes stand out in this analysis of how the United States Army was deceived in Korea. The first, and most obvious is hubris, the dismissal of the Chinese peasants against the American professionals. This was accompanied by the dismissal of the scale and sophistication of the potential capabilities of the PLA's "Korean Volunteers" and their generals. The Red Army (after 1949, the PLA) fought the Japanese and a decades-long civil war with American allies, the Nationalists. In complex campaigns involving units from guerrilla squads to conventional army groups of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, the Communists had gained valuable experience in the conduct of war.

The second major, and related factor, is willful self deception. Several *a priori* judgments that the enemy could not or would not attack unduly influenced intelligence assessments and, therefore, operations. This occured despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary at all levels (strategic warnings, large scale operational movement and manuever, and available tactical intelligence). These themes relate directly to Sun Tzu's verities, as noted, and a more modern warning from a noted American military writer, "Concentrated in a tight maneuver mass, guarded by an entrenched screen, north of the river, the Chinese Communist Army was a phantom which cast no shadow. Its every main secret—its strength, its position, and its intentions—had be kept to perfection, and

Figure 9.5. Wet, stinging snow and ice add to the problems of a soldier as he carries as much equipment as he can manage during the withdrawal from Kot'o-ri to the sea.

thereby it was doubly armed.[35] Failing to understanding the enemy and the tenets of our own doctrine of military deception risk defeat on the modern battlefield. The Army's Field Manual 6-0 offers excellent advice on how to replicate Peng's achievements. In Chapter 11 "Military Deception" the reader is urged to "exploit target biases" in order to force him into acting in a way inimical to his own interests. To paraphrase, the Chinese offered the targeted decisionmakers (MacArthur and his subordinates) information carefully calculated to reinforce known American biases, in a classic example of the Magruder Principle.

In a 2006 visit to the the People's Liberation Army Museum in Beijing, the author was surprised to see a captured US Army regimental flag from the Korean War. Displayed among the artifacts that included American military equipment from the Korean and Vietnam Wars stand the colors of the 31st United States Infantry captured at Changjin in November 1950.

The presence and status as battlefield trophies in the museum of a former, and potentially future enemy should warn today's military professional, if they listen, of the exceptional power of military deception in war. Their sad fate highlights the cost of failing to heed such a warning:[36]

> War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied.[37]

Notes

1. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/13/catastrophe-on-yalu-americas-intelligence-failure-in-korea. 3-6.

2. See US Army, Field Manual (FM) 90-2, *Battlefield Deception* (Washington, DC:1988).

It is generally easier to induce an enemy to maintain a pre-existing belief than to present notional evidence to change that belief. Thus, it may be more useful to examine how an enemy's existing beliefs can be turned to advantage than to attempt to change his beliefs.

3. S. L. A. Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet: Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November, 1950, in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1987), 1.

4. Sun Tzu, Samuel B. Griffith, and B. H. Liddell. Hart, *The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 1971), 67.

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6. Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 111.

7. National Security Council Policy Paper 68. Full text available at: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nsc-68/nsc68-1.htm. Accessed 30 July 2018.

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14. Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong: North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History Dept. of the Army, 1961), 536-537 and 594-595.

15. B. C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1990), 18.

16. Appleman, *South to the Naktong,* 614-615

17. David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion Books, 2008), 323.

18. John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Morrow, 1993), 248.

19. Appleman, *South to the Naktong,* 623.

20. Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter,* 364

21. Halberstam, 367.

22. Toland, *In Mortal Combat*, 248.

23. https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Korean%20War/Korea13.gif

24. Dehuai Peng, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal: The Autobiographical Notes of Peng Dehuai* (Foreign Languages, 1984), 473.

25. Halberstan, *The Coldest Winter,* 370-383. This section of the book describes in great detail MacArthur's "professional sins" of "hubris and vanity" and how the intelligence coming up from the lower level units on the Chinese did indeed exist and was manipulated.

26. Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet,* 1-2.

27. Peng, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal,* 474.

28. Peng, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal,* 474-475.

29. Peng, 476.

30. Peng, 475.

31. Peng, 476.

32. Korean War Commemorative Brochures," *CMH Publications Catalog – The Korean War: The Chinese Intervention*, 13, accessed 8 April 2018, https://history.army.mil/catalog/pubs/19/19-8.html.

33. Peng, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal,* 477.

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37. Sun Tzu, Griffith, *The Art of War,* 63.

Chapter 10

From Maneuvers to War

The Egyptian Deception Plan on the Eve of the Yom-Kippur War

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On 6 October 1973, the armies of Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel. This was the culmination of a long process of preparation on the side of the Arab states which included the planning and execution of an elaborate plan of political and military deception, especially on the Egyptian side. The offensive started with a heavy artillery bombardment and aerial attacks on Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) force concentrations, command and control, and logistics installations. In parallel with the artillery bombardment, thousands of Egyptian soldiers started to cross the Suez Canal, with artillery and tanks on the west bank of the Canal providing covering fire and pinning down the Israeli soldiers in the posts along the Canal. The Egyptian troops circumvented most of the Israeli posts, moving eastward in order to expand the bridgehead. They laid down improvised minefields and posted anti-tank ambushes in order to hit the Israeli armor, moving toward the Canal.

The Egyptian plan worked perfectly, and the Israeli troops were completely surprised. The IDF was logistically unprepared and the IDF's Southern Command could not put together a complete picture of the front, especially concerning the size and composition of the Egyptian forces and the location of the crossing points. Israeli tank formations moving toward the canal had to split apart because of the heavy artillery fire and sustained serious losses to the Egyptian tank-hunter teams. Thus, the Egyptian army prevented the Israeli armored forces from taking their prepared posts, supporting the military firebases along the Canal, and repelling the attack. Air defense units, operating from the western bank of the Canal, inflicted heavy damage on the attacking Israeli Air Force (IAF), effectively preventing it from supporting the Israeli ground forces by attacking the Egyptian invading force and destroying the bridges built by the Egyptians across the Canal. Thus, Egypt successfully neutralized the same force components of the IDF that had inflicted a humiliating defeat on Egypt in the Six-Day War.

The Golan Heights front also saw a massive Israeli surprise. Although, in the weeks leading to 6 October, the Israeli forces in the Golan Heights were put in a state of high alert, the Israeli expectation was that Syria

would conduct a limited operation, which would last less than one day. Either way, the simultaneous offensive by Egypt and Syria caught the IDF unprepared, and thus the first days of the war were extremely costly in terms of Israeli casualties. This inflicted a national trauma which had a decisive influence on the IDF force building in the following decades, and remains an open wound in the Israeli national memory.

This chapter will analyze three main issues. The first one will try to explain why Egypt needed such an elaborate deception plan. It is a common aspiration to gain a strategic advantage by disrupting the surprised enemy's equilibrium, causing them to make erroneous military decisions, stemming from its shock and surprise and inability to grasp the entire scenario. In other words, to surprise the IDF and catch them unprepared, in order to attain the goals of the war. The second part will dissect the Egyptian approach to deception, while the third part will analyze how the Egyptian deception plan was based on the understanding of the Israeli security policy, and how the Egyptian plan worked in order to strengthen the Israeli belief that Egypt was incapable of starting a war. Therefore, the assessment of the Egyptian deception plan will be based on evaluating the Israeli intelligence picture before the start of the war.

The emphasis in this chapter will be the analysis of the Egyptian deception plan, because the Egyptian army had to cross an artificial water obstacle (the Suez Canal), at which point its forces would be extremely vulnerable. Additionally, the crossing of the Canal required meticulous preparations, such as accumulating and deploying the equipment needed for the crossing and training the units for the coming war. Thus, there was a critical need to disguise the preparations, the training and the deployment of the equipment in the staging areas.

Conversely, it is difficult to learn about the Syrian plan of deception because, unlike Egypt, where senior generals and politicians have written their memoirs after the war, no such books have been written in Syria. Additionally, Syrian archives are not open to researchers. However, there is no doubt that the Syrian deception plan was not as sophisticated as the Egyptian plan. It is obvious in retrospect that the Syrian army succeeded in maintaining strict compartmentalization so that the Syrian commanders only found out on the morning of 6 October that they would be going to war on the same day.

Unlike the Egyptian front, the Syrians had deployed their army within hundreds of meters to several kilometers from the IDF. The tense operational situation between the two armies reached its peak in the aerial bat-
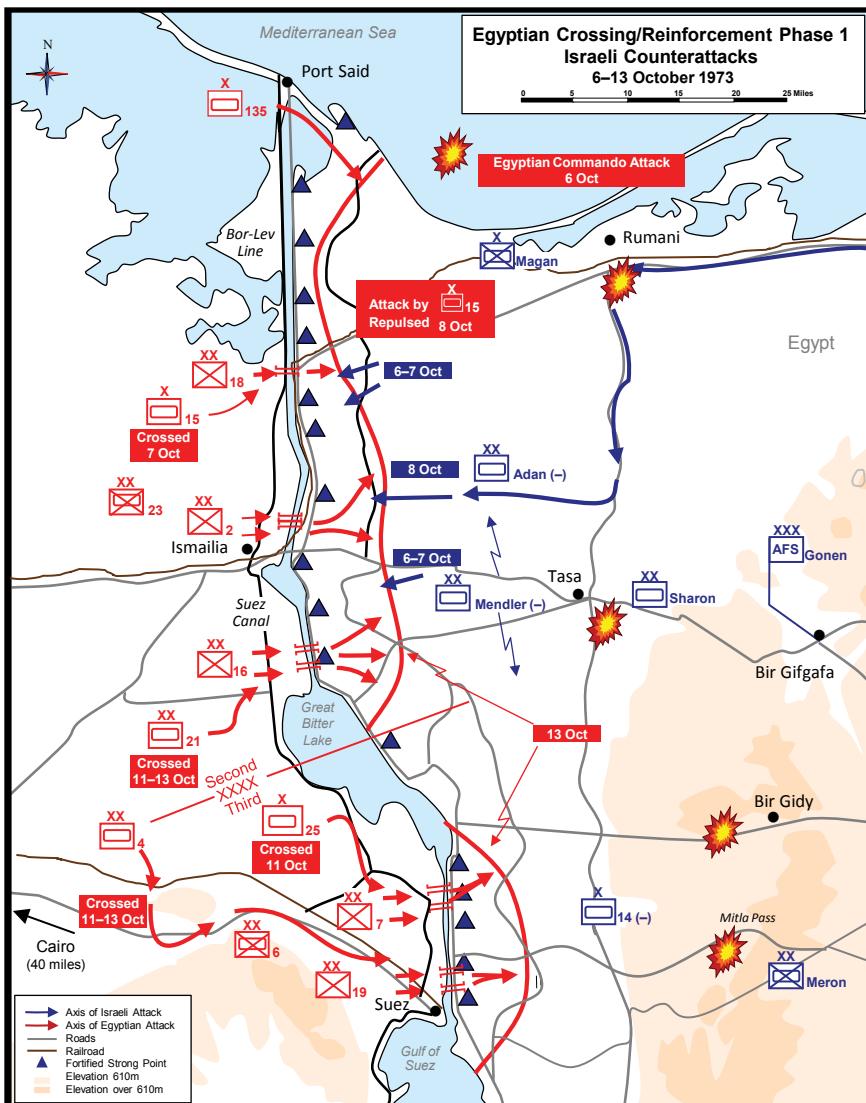
Figure 10.1. The Egyptian crossing and reinforcement phase, October 1973. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

tle, which took place on 13 September 1973, in which the IAF shot down twelve Syrian MiGs, with only one loss. This incident and the resulting closeness between the two armies was the main reason that the Syrian army only had to make minimal preparations in order to launch a sweeping surprise attack. Additionally, the Syrian army contained regular troops, on alert throughout the year. Thus the Syrian army could move from a defensive to an offensive deployment within a very short time, with hardly any

discernable preparations. [1] As it happened, Israeli intelligence interpreted the Syrian moves before the war as either defensive preventive measures or as preparation for a limited military operation at the northern Golan Heights. Although the Northern Command of the IDF remained concerned about the Syrian military setup, there was no indication that Syria was getting ready for an all-out war.

The Foundations of the Egyptian Deception

The Egyptian deception plan, Operation SPARK, had two layers – political and military, and was based on two principles. The first was adopting the Soviet doctrine of deception (*Maskirovka*) emphasizing the importance of deception as a precondition for embarking on a large scale assault. In the years before the Yom Kippur War, Soviet deception activity could be clearly discerned in the invasions of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). [2] In both cases, the Soviets camouflaged their military preparations under the guise of large-scale military maneuvers. Thus, the patterns of deception can be identified in the Egyptian plan, which disguised the preparations for war as a large-scale exercise.

Michael Handel maintained that deception is usually undertaken by armies that consider themselves weak in comparison with the enemy that they are facing. This is especially true for Egypt, which had been defeated by Israel three times. Thus, "the Arabs in 1973 had a much stronger incentive to employ deception." [3] The Egyptian war plans, developed immediately after the defeat of 1967, defined the goal as re-conquering the Sinai Peninsula and restoring the pre-war border. However, facing the IDF's superiority in air power and armor, as demonstrated in June 1967, Egypt's weakness in these domains, as well as its inability to attack strategic targets within Israel, led Egyptian strategists to gradually modify their war plans. This understanding forced Egypt to make two strategic decisions: The first was Sadat's decision, made in October 1972, to initiate a large-scale war with limited military goals, i.e. to deploy a massive military force not for the conquest of the entire Sinai Peninsula, but rather for taking control of a narrow strip of land about eight to twelve kilometers wide on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. The evolving plan provided extensive anti-air and anti-armor protection to the attacking troops. This defense would neutralize the Israeli superiority in the air and in armored warfare.

The second decision, highly relevant to this chapter, was the need for deception, which would prevent the Israeli leadership from realizing that Egypt was heading for a war, albeit with limited goals. [4] This is where the second element of the Egyptian deception plan falls into place. This aspect

was based on understanding the Israeli security perception and evaluating the intelligence indicators which would cause Israel to believe that Egypt was heading for war. In this way, the Egyptians lulled Israeli intelligence by reinforcing the prevailing belief that Egypt was not headed down the path to war.

As Israel had never issued a formal document defining the principles of Israeli national security, Sadat ordered a comprehensive analysis of the Israeli perception of national security, in order to identify its weaknesses. The analysis, which was an important step in planning the deception plan, relied on interviews given by the Israeli leadership to the media. At that time, the press was almost the sole channel of information for the Israeli public and was closely connected to the political and military establishment. In addition, a scheduled election in October 1973 brought about a plethora of statements addressing foreign relations and national security, including various predictions about the probability of a war against Egypt in the following years.

One of the key facts on which the Israeli assessment relied was the expulsion of the Soviet advisors from Egypt in June 1972. As far as Israel was concerned the removal of the Soviet advisors weakened the Egyptian army, especially since the thousands of Soviet advisors served not just as instructors to the Egyptian army, but also manned the Egyptian air defenses. Prime Minister Golda Meir, Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan and Chief of Staff, David Elazar clearly expressed this opinion in a series of public interviews.[5]

Israel's perception of national security relied on six principles.[6] Primarily, Israel must maintain a military and technological superiority against the Arab States, in order to convince them of the futility of war. This superiority will be achieved via the use of the IAF and the Armored Corps, whose superiority over the Arab counterparts had been proven in 1967. The second principle was the intelligence assessment that the Arab states were incapable of coordinating their efforts, and thus any war would be conducted against each Arab state independently. The third principle was relying on the buffer territories which Israel had conquered as a result of the Six-Day War. These strategic areas afforded Israel the coveted secure borders and gave it an advantage in the face of any future Arab offensive. The fourth principle stated that any war should be opened by an Israeli preemptive strike, initiated by Israel. Additionally, any war should be as short as possible, due to Israel's demographic and economic conditions, which make it hard to fight a prolonged war. This was also the basis of the fifth principle, stating that Israel's intelligence establishment must

predict an imminent war and provide an adequate warning, which will allow Israel to mobilize its reserve forces and launch preemptive air strike. The sixth principle stated that Israel must rely on one of the Superpowers, in order to assure itself of military and diplomatic support.

These assumptions resulted in the forming of a strategic perception, bolstered by the euphoria following the great victory of the Six-Day War and influenced by a disregard of the enemy's military capability. [7] This perception stated that Egypt would not attack Israel until it had obtained the strategic capability to attack targets deep within Israel. This was based on the fact that Israel had proven its operational capability to attack Egyptian strategic targets during the War of Attrition. The perception further stated that Syria would not go to war without Egypt. Thus, if Egypt was unable to start a war against Israel, Syria would not start a war on its own. Although Israel estimated that the Egyptians were capable of crossing the Suez Canal, they would be deterred from doing so by the fact that Israel had the capability to attack strategic targets within Egypt, including the capital, Cairo. Again, there was a basic assumption that while Egypt was unable, as part of the opening moves, to attack strategic targets within Israel, and especially to incapacitate the Israeli airbases, it would not start a war, and therefore Syria would not go to war either. This basic assumption gained credence from the belief that Israel possessed a decisive military and technological superiority, and that the Arab states were aware of the fact that there was nothing they could do against Israel, especially not win a major war. [8] It is important to note that Israeli Intelligence estimated that, at some point in time in the future, Egypt would go to war against Israel and that the Arab States had not abandoned the hope of retaking the territories which they had lost in 1967. However, at that point in time (the end of 1972 and throughout 1973), the Arab states and especially Egypt, have not yet acquired the military strategic capabilities needed in order to achieve this goal.

The events of December 1972 and even more so in April-May 1973 seemed to prove the Israeli Intelligence estimate. Israel started receiving intelligence reports stating that Egypt intended to initiate a war. The accumulating reports testified to the fact that Egypt was concentrating large forces, including artillery batteries and bridging equipment, on the west bank of the Suez Canal. Consequently, the IDF went on a high alert status and started mobilizing its reserve forces. However, the Commanding General of the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID), Major General Eli Zeira, stated that, as Egypt had not yet acquired the strategic capability to hit targets within Israel, it would not go to war and indeed, the war did

not break out in the spring of 1973. Although Israeli intelligence estimated that Egypt would eventually acquire the required military capabilities, the prevailing assumption was that they would not be operational before 1975-1976.[9] Moreover, in April 1973, during the presentation of the IDF multi-year work plan, both the chief of staff and the deputy chief of staff, Major General Israel Tal, stated that they did not expect a war to break out before mid-1977. [10]

The formula promoted by the MID, according to which Egypt would not go to war without attaining strategic weapons, and that Syria would not go to war without Egypt, was commonly known as "The Concept," and attracted dire criticism from the Agranat Commission, established in order to investigate the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the war.[11] As this "Concept" was based on Egypt's intentions and capabilities, the burden of estimating the probability of war fell on the shoulders of the intelligence officers who supervised the Egyptian front. The main failure of the "Concept" stems from the Israeli intelligence officers who focused on Egypt's capabilities, and neglected its intentions. This world view, which was often expressed by Israeli senior officials, played an important part in the design of the Egyptian deception plan, both at the political and the military level. The Egyptians took these statements by Israeli politicians and senior officers as accurately representing the moods and perceptions prevalent in Israel, and thus, the planners of the Egyptian deception plan used the Egyptian media in order to nurture the Israeli "Concept." The political aspect of the Egyptian deception plan, as will be presently shown, provided positive feedback to prevalent perceptions, in order to firmly set them within the Israeli consciousness. [12]

The Political Dimension of the Egyptian Deception

The political aspect of the Egyptian deception consisted of two components: The first was news items, published in the Egyptian media, in order to bolster the Israeli "Concept," the second was various statements by the Egyptian president made in several speeches given before the war. The team responsible for the executing the deception plan started its activity several months before the breakout of the war. [13]

Let us remember that during April 1973 the IDF increased its alert status, as a result of accumulating information, indicating that Egypt was planning to start a war, probably around mid-May. The code name for this high alert state was Blue-White, and within its scope, the IDF performed several significant preparative actions, such as establishing a new armored division, moving emergency logistic depots closer to the front, and re-

freshing the operational plan for repelling an invasion, while fighting simultaneously in two fronts.

However, the MID, headed by Major General Zeira, emphatically stated that the probability of the outbreak of the war was extremely low. As the expected time for the outbreak of the war passed, the alert status returned to normal, and Zeira's status within the military strengthened. It is unclear whether Egypt actually intended to go to war in May, but the fact that the IDF went to a high alert status required Egypt to lull Israeli intelligence back to sleep so that it would not be able to provide adequate warning of the coming war. Operational thinking expected IDF intelligence to provide a 24-48 hour warning before the outbreak of an Arab-initiated war. They would use this period of time to activate the reserve units, which comprised the main IDF fighting force, and send them to the relevant fronts. During this period of time, the Israeli air force would attack the enemy's air defense systems, achieving air superiority, and enabling it to support the ground forces.

The most important role of the deception team was to release statements to both Arab and foreign media, knowing that Israel would collect such information, concerning the lack of armaments, low maintenance status of combat equipment, and the general lack of preparation of the Egyptian army. According to these publications, the weakness of the Egyptian army resulted from the expulsion of Soviet advisors from Egypt, and the long-term effects of this action. In March 1973, the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* quoted Jim Hoagland, the Washington Post reporter in Cairo, who had reported, based on Egyptian sources, that the national air defense system was wide open to an Israeli air attack since the summer of 1972. The article further stated that the maintenance status of military equipment was extremely low and that the prevalent opinion in the Egyptian military was that renewing the war at that time would be suicidal. Indeed, during the months following the expulsion of the Soviet advisors, the Egyptian army was in a bad state, but its state of preparedness improved considerably as the war approached. However, as the Egyptians understood the Israeli interpretation of the significance of the expulsion of the Soviet advisors, they continued to use the subject in order to promote the deception.

An additional topic the deception team strongly promoted was leaked rumors about the existence of severe disagreements between Egypt and Syria. The purpose of these rumors was to strengthen the idea that Egypt and Syria would not be able to collaborate militarily. This played on an important element of the Israeli perception of security, which assumed that the Arab World was divided to the point where it could not launch

a coordinated attack. As mentioned above, one of the main elements of the Israeli concept was that Syria would not go to war without Egypt's support. Thus an atmosphere of "lack of coordination" between the two states, served to bolster the Israeli intelligence estimate that the probability of war was extremely low, and that war should not be expected in the short term. The third issue was presenting Egypt as having abandoned the military way in favor of a political and diplomatic struggle in order to force Israel to withdraw from the territories conquered in 1967. Again, this bolstered the Israeli belief that Israel had achieved deterrence and that the technological and military gap between Israel and the Arab states made a military solution of the conflict impossible.

Most of the leaked items emphasized the use of the "Oil Weapon." The Egyptian press published many articles about the use of the Oil Weapon in order to force the United States to apply pressure on Israel. According to these articles, the oil-producing Arab states, headed by Saudi Arabia, should establish a unified policy and a threat to the United States that, unless the American changed their policy, which was heavily biased towards Israel, Saudi Arabia would reduce the oil supply. Several editorial articles in *Al Ahram*, the official communications channel of the Egyptian regime, stated that the Zionist entity could be defeated by using the "Oil Weapon" and that Arab oil should be used against the United States, in order to force it to apply pressure on Israel.[14]

A series of meetings in the months preceding the war between senior Egyptian officials and the American administration, in an attempt to find a political formula for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai, further reinforced the turn to the diplomatic channel. It is impossible to determine, with any level of certainty, whether these meetings were part of the Egyptian deception plan. This is because the American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, having brought the war in Vietnam to an end, made peace in the Middle East his next main mission, and Israel remained concerned that the Americans would indeed push for a diplomatic solution that would cost them the Sinai buffer.

After the war, it became known that the Egyptian foreign minister, who had met with his American counterpart several times, was not privy to the deception plan, and that President Sadat left him outside the inner ring, which dealt with the deception.[15] It is also possible that Sadat had kept all the options in his hands, and, in parallel with the military preparations, also used the diplomatic channel. This may have been because he was afraid of a military confrontation with Israel and the failure of the deception plan. Research cannot provide a complete answer to these questions,

mainly because the relevant archival material is not available. In any case, the important point for the purpose of this chapter is that Israel believed that Egypt was heading for a diplomatic rather than a military solution, and thus the diplomatic deception had achieved its goals.

As an interim summary, we can state that the political elements of Egyptian deception tended to emphasize the military weakness of the Arabs against Israel's military might, the political rift between Egypt and Syria, and the power of the "Oil Weapon" as a tool allowing the Arab states to conduct a diplomatic struggle. The continuous promotion of these elements caused Israel to form a mental picture according to which Egypt had abandoned the way of war, and focused its efforts on resolving the conflict via diplomatic channels.

President Sadat implemented the second dimension of the deception plan via public statements, between June 1973 and his last speech at the end of September, which included a discernable change of tone. These speeches lack the extremist tone that characterized his first speeches, which stated that "what was taken by force can only be restored by force," and that the only way to resolve the conflict was the military way. His speeches adopted a more moderate tone and emphasized topics of internal policy. Thus, for example, in his speech in July 1973, during the celebrations commemorating the Officers' Revolution, Sadat emphasized the need to step up the diplomatic pressure via the United Nations. In other speeches, Sadat mentioned that, although the issue of liberating the occupied territories was still on the main agenda, in the near term, Egypt should focus on developing its economy for the welfare of its citizens. The implied meaning is that Egypt would not seek war in the near future, as war would be detrimental to the Egyptian economy, both because of its cost and because of Israel's ability to destroy strategic-economic targets within Egypt.[16] Thus, we can state that the political aspects of the deception plan were meant to create an illusion of safety among the Israeli decision makers. The Israeli media regularly reported these Egyptian statements and senior Israeli officials, political as well as military, concluded that Egypt was not going to war. Thus, the Egyptian deception effort gained feedback and could verify that the plan was indeed effective.

The Military Dimension of the Egyptian Deception

The final version of the Egyptian plan had the Egyptian military forces cross the Canal in five divisional efforts, dig in along a strip several kilometers wide and repel the Israeli counterattacks. Thus, the need for deception stemmed from a critical operational need. Taking the IDF by surprise

became essential in order to prevent it from moving its regular forces from the depth of the Sinai Peninsula to block the Egyptian crossing and before it could activate its reserves. This meant that Israeli intelligence had to be prevented from providing an adequate warning.[17]

As mentioned above, the Egyptian deception effort relied on the Soviet *maskirovka* concept, meaning that Egypt intended to launch the assault as a continuation of a large-scale military maneuver.[18] Soviet doctrine states that going to war or a wide-scale military operation through military maneuvers is one of the best ways to camouflage one's intentions, which is why American forces on the Korean peninsula currently react to the annual North Korean war games with a high level of alert. This is because preparing an army for war under the guise of military maneuvers enables the attacker to bring its forces to a high state of preparedness and move them closer to the front without the victim suspecting anything.

Between 1968 and the breakout of the war, the Egyptian army executed a series of spring and autumn maneuvers, code name *TAHRIR* (Liberation), where the autumn maneuvers of 1973, *TAHRIR 41*, served as a cover for the Egyptian preparations for war.[19] The guidelines and planned scenario of the exercise were known to Israel, and the IDF concluded that it was a routine exercise, identical to those executed by Egyptian army during the previous years. For this reason it did not raise any alarms.[20] Thus, the purpose of the Egyptian deception was to convince Israel that its operations, including the massive concentration of troops and war materials near the Canal, were nothing but routine activity, part of the annual maneuvers, which had been conducted regularly since the end of the 1960s.

In order to understand the main characteristics of the military deception, we have to analyze the guidelines of *TAHRIR 41*. This exercise was defined as an exercise at the strategic and operational levels, with the participation of tactical units. The goal of the exercise was to execute an offensive operation which would include a crossing of the Canal, destroying the opposing enemy units (the Bar-Lev Line outposts), in order to reach the international border. The timeframe for the operation has been set for 1-7 October 1973.[21] As part of the exercise, we can discern three main deceptive measures, which prevented Israel from learning that the exercise was a cover for the Egyptian preparations for war. The first measure was a wide scale discharging of the reserve units that participated in the exercise. On 27 September, about 140,000 reserve troops were mobilized for active service. On 4 October, many of them were released, and the Egyptian general staff announced that the rest of them would be demobilized by the end of the exercise, thus creating the impression that this was a routine mobili-

zation.[22] These troops did not belong to front line units, as the main Egyptian fighting force was based on regular soldiers rather than on reserves. The operations order of the exercise stated that, at the end of the exercise, all the participating units would return to their peacetime stations.

The second deception measure was the way in which the Egyptians moved the bridging and crossing equipment to the front. This was essential, since the entire operation depended on crossing the Canal at several points simultaneously. Any convoy carrying bridging equipment required hundreds of vehicles, and thus the discovery of such huge convoys could provide a significant warning to Israeli intelligence. Therefore, the Egyptians transported most of the bridging equipment to the Canal Zone several weeks before the start of the exercise. Then, the convoys returned westward, after hiding some of the equipment near the Canal. The Egyptians executed these moves several times and in different areas, so that, by the scheduled start date of the exercise (actually of the war), all the equipment required for the first stage was positioned on the west bank of the Canal. The third deception measure was the definition of the goals of the exercise. The operations order defined the goal of the exercise as the conquest of the entire Sinai Peninsula within seven days. This fact helped reinforce the Israeli perception that this was just an exercise rather than preparation for war since the Egyptian army was clearly incapable of performing such a formidable task.

In addition to the military deceptive measures, we can discern two more modes of action. The first one was the imposing of strict measures for hiding and maintaining secrecy. Most of the Egyptian officer corps was unaware of the fact that *TAHRIR 41* was, in reality, a cover for preparing the army to war. [23] Thus, for example, division commanders only learned the date of the war breakout on 3 October, while brigade and battalion commanders were not notified until 5 October. The hiding of intentions included senior political officials, and thus when the war broke out, several Egyptian ministers were abroad, including the foreign minister.

The second mode of action was the continuation of everyday routine. Thus, for example, it was announced that Egyptian soldiers would be allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and that the units should form lists of the soldiers and officers who were interested. These messages were transmitted on open channels so that they could be intercepted by Israeli intelligence. Until the morning of 6 October, Israeli lookouts could see Egyptian soldiers in the Canal area, walking about without their weapons and helmets, or wearing sports apparel, or swimming and fishing in the Canal. Thus the Egyptians managed to inspire an atmosphere of tranquility

at the front. It is important to note that the civilian population working or living near the front was evacuated after the outbreak of the war. Thus we can state that during the weeks that preceded the war, Egypt was running a double set of activities: Maintaining routine while, simultaneously, preparing for war.

The routine of the Egyptian army was characteristic of an army that was not expecting combat operations in its near future. Troops were drafted and discharged, professional and command courses continued without a hitch and the training routine continued as in the preceding years, i.e. the training routine of an army which is preparing for a war without a specified date. Thus, for example, there were five infantry divisions protecting the Canal zone, all in defensive positions, which, throughout the exercise, gave no indication that they were about to change their posture and go on the offensive. Thus the deception plan was effective not only in misleading Israeli intelligence, but also the Egyptian army, and through it the Egyptian public in general.

The Israeli Intelligence Picture

On 30 September 1973, the Israeli general staff received the following intelligence picture: The Syrian army is positioned for war, without any need for special preparations. Additionally, the Egyptian army was scheduled to start a major exercise on the following day. The conclusion at the end of the discussion was that Egypt was not planning to go to war, and therefore Syria was unlikely to embark on an all-out war, although it might initiate a one day battle or launch a raid at the northern part of the Golan Heights. [24] The commanding general of MID reviewed Sadat's speech of 27 September, which, in his opinion, indicated that war was not imminent. MID explained away the massive force deployment throughout Egypt as part of the large military exercise, while it dismissed the Syrian position as defensive. Although the IDF started preparing for war on 5 October, MID was still excusing all the Egyptian activities which suggested an intention of going to war as part of the exercise, and the head of MID still stated emphatically that there was a low probability for war.[25]

Only early on the morning of 6 October did the MID intelligence assessment change, stating that a simultaneous Egyptian and Syrian offensive could be expected before the end of the day. [26] The war broke out around 1400, so Israeli intelligence ended up providing the IDF with ten hours of warning, instead of the expected 24-48 hours. As a result, the IDF was caught unprepared, and most of the reserve units could not be mobilized until after the outbreak of the war. The deception was complete,

and Egypt achieved the initial goals which it had set for itself.[27] Tens of thousands of Egyptian soldiers crossed the Canal and gained a foothold on the eastern bank. After having repelled some small, improvised counter-attacks, the Egyptians succeeded in stabilizing their bridgeheads and consolidated a defensive strip about eight to twelve kilometers wide.[28] Out of this defensive strip, they successfully fought-off the Israeli counterattack of 8 October, while inflicting heavy losses on the IDF, especially the IAF, thanks to fully-functional Soviet-built surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites across the canal in Egypt. Thus, Egypt had achieved an important military as well as a morale goal. Egyptian troops remained on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal until the end of the war.

Conclusion

The Egyptian Deception Plan was meant to achieve surprise as to the time of the offensive, as well as its location, and the plan achieved these goals, causing Israel to be surprised during the first phases of the war. The Egyptian Deception Plan was based on the Soviet concept of *maskirovka*, which promoted going to war as a direct continuation of a large-scale training exercise. Analysis of the Egyptian Deception Plan shows two dimensions: the diplomatic and the military. Diplomatic deception mostly relied on reinforcing the Israeli "Concept," as Egypt had invested considerable effort in understanding the Israeli theory of national security, in order to feed it with false information and cause Israel to act in ways that suited the Egyptian goals.

The Egyptians conducted the entire process of planning the war under a heavy shroud of secrecy, concealing it from ministers and senior officials of the Egyptian government. Even the military units, which were part of the operational plan, were unaware of the preparations, and their commanding officers learned of the attack only a few days before the outbreak of the war. Most of the preparations for war occurred while the Egyptian army was either under operational routine activity or preparing for the large autumn exercise. There is no doubt that Israeli Intelligence was aware of the entire activity of the Egyptian army, including the preparations for the large training exercise. However, it failed to properly analyze the wealth of information, and the MID vehemently clung to the "Concept," which stated that the probability of war was extremely low. The deception prevented Israel from getting adequate warning necessary for mobilizing its reserve units. As a result, Egypt and Syria achieved a strategic surprise, which drastically changed the balance of power at the front during the first days of the war. While Syria had lost all its military gains as early as 10 October, Egypt's surprise resulted in a successful defense of its gains,

and enabled it to meet the limited goals of the war that it had set for itself, and provide the necessary "face-saving," so critical in the Arab world, that allowed it to later agree to the Camp David Accords, exchanging formal recognition of Israel for the return of the Sinai. Thus, the Egyptian deception plan, and the tactical successes that followed, enabled it to achieve significant strategic and diplomatic effects, including a restoration of lost territory and a permanent peace along its eastern border.

Notes

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2. Department of the Army, *FM 100-2-1: The Soviet Army – Operations and Tactics* (Washington, DC, 1984), ch. 12, p. 8; ch. 15, p. 4; Peter deLeon, *Soviet View of Strategic Deception* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1981), 6-11. See also David M. Glantz, "The Red Mask: The Nature and Legacy of Soviet Military Deception," in Michael I. Handel (ed.), *Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), 177-180.

3. Michael I. Handel, "Introduction: Strategic and Operational Deception in Historical Perspectives," in Handel (ed.), *Strategic and Operational Deception*, 31.

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6. Matityahu Peled, "Israeli Military Doctrine," in Walter Laqueur, *Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics* (London: Wildwood House, 1974), 78-102. See also Aryeh Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence Assessment before the Yom Kippur War* (Brighton: Sussex, 2010), 25-33.

7. Jacob Erickson, "Israel and the October War," in Simiver (ed.), *The Yom Kippur War*, 30-36.

8. Michael I. Handel, *Perception, Deception and Surprise: The Case of the Yom Kippur War* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Post Press, 1976), 44-52

9. It is important to mention that the MID is charged with providing the national intelligence estimates to the political echelon. See: Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence*, 1-6.

10. Shimon Golan, *Decision Making of Israeli High Command in Yom Kippur War* (IDF Military History Department, 2013), 39-40. In Hebrew.

11. Report of the Agranat Commission (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1975), 19. In Hebrew. See also Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence*, 125-126; Erickson, "Israel and the October War," 36-40.

12. Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence*, 34-42.

13. Hassan el Badri, Taha el Magdoub, Mohammed dia el din Zohdy, *The Ramadan War, 1973* (Dunn Loring, VA: Dupuy Associates, 1978), 45-46.

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15. Mohamed Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan* (London: Collins, 1975), 36-37.

16. Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services* (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 291-292.

17. El Badri et al, *The Ramadan War, 1973*, 46-47.

18. On the impact of Soviet deception, see for example: Glantz, "The Red Mask," 239-253.

19. Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, 17.

20. Bartov, *Dado*, 321-322.

21. Black and Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars*, 295-296.

22. Saad El Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez* (San Francisco: American Mideast Research, 2003), 75.

23. El Shazly, 202, 206-209.

24. In view of the fear of a Syrian attack, the Northern Command raised the status alert in the Golan Heights. Engineering works for the bolstering of the anti-tank obstacles were accelerated and new minefields were laid. An additional armored brigade was sent to the Golan Heights to serve as a general reserve, and it was decided to mobilize an additional armored brigade. However, the prevailing opinion that Syria would not go on the warpath without active Egyptian support remained unchanged.

25. Golan, *Decision Making*, 245-249; Black and Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars*, 296-297.

26. Bartov, *Dado*, 367. See also Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence*, 113-123.

27. Badri, Magdoub, Zohdy, *The Ramadan War, 1973*, 51-52.

28. Allen, *The Yom Kippur War*, 66-70.

Chapter 11

Target San Carlos

British Deception during the Repossession of the Falkland Islands

Steven Paget

Private Alejandro Ramon Cano, an Argentinian paratrooper, reflected on the Falklands Conflict: "When they informed us that the English had taken the beach at San Carlos, then we knew we had lost, and that's how it goes."[1] While much hard fighting was to follow, the establishment and maintenance of the beachhead at San Carlos was fundamental to British success in repossessing the Falkland Islands following the Argentinian invasion on 2 April 1982. The Argentinian invasion was the culmination of a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of the islands, which are located east of the South American mainland in the South Atlantic Ocean, over 8,000 miles from the United Kingdom (UK).[2] The Falkland Islands are a UK overseas territory, but the ongoing dispute led to both sides claiming to have "repossessed" the islands—the Argentinians on 2 April and the British following the landing at San Carlos on 21 May.

Admiral John Fieldhouse, Commander Task Force 317, opined on 19 April prior to the operation at San Carlos: "Given good tactical intelligence from advanced force operations, the UK Amphibious Force has the capability to effect an amphibious landing with minimum casualties, if mounted outside the areas of the major concentrations of Argentine defences."[3] Generating the necessary conditions for a successful amphibious assault was a complex and diverse endeavor. It was acknowledged: "Much thought was given to a deception plan. This was posed on the belief that the Argentinians would expect us to follow American tactics and assault over a beach near Port Stanley."[4] Deception operations have been characterized as involving multiple elements, including misrepresenting "capabilities and vulnerabilities," the type of action to be taken, and the location and timing of operations.[5] During the planning and conduct of the successful amphibious landing at San Carlos on 21 May, the British acted to conceal the location and extent of some of their capabilities, while emphasizing others; fostered the misperception that hit and run attacks would be conducted rather than a consolidated amphibious landing; and created confusion over the timing and place of the landing. Although British forces required a land campaign culminating in the seizure of Port Stanley to repossess the Falklands, the troops needed not only to get ashore, but also
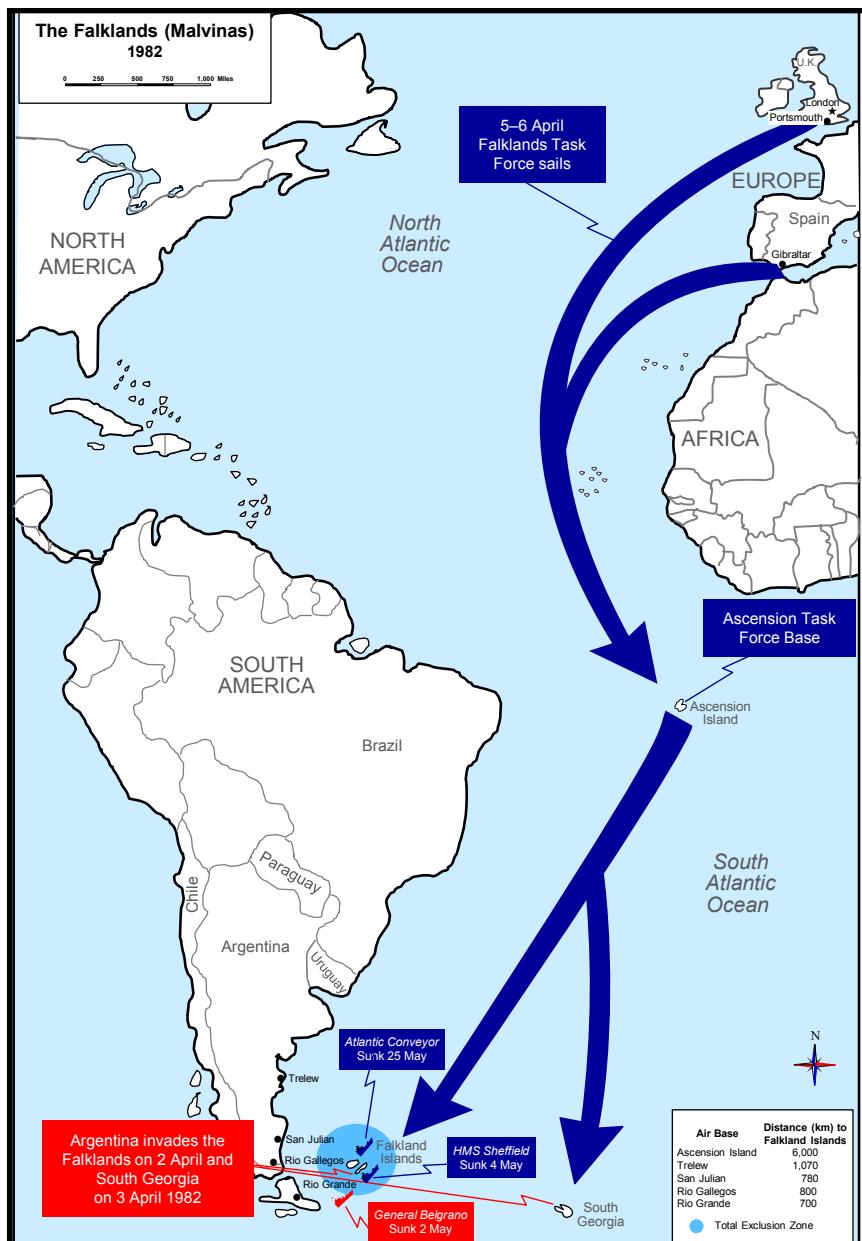
Figure 11.1. The Falklands. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

to develop a position of strength from which they would not be dislodged. The planning guide for the landing at San Carlos noted: "The amphibious operation exploits the element of surprise and capitalizes upon enemy weaknesses through application of the required type and degree of force

at the most advantageous locations at the most opportune times."[6] Deception operations were an important element in creating confusion about the location, timing, and nature of British operations and served to reinforce Argentinian misperceptions.

This chapter will contextualize the importance of deception operations by assessing the limited number of suitable low-risk landing sites available to the British and the importance of convincing the Argentinians that the landings would occur somewhere other than San Carlos. It will address the range of deception measures undertaken by the British from the feint conducted by the Carrier Battle Group during the transit to the Falklands to the diversionary attacks that coincided with the amphibious landing. It will also analyze the role of misinformation and media manipulation in generating confusion about the timing, location, and nature of amphibious operations. Ultimately, the article will consider the orchestration of air, land, and maritime power in conjunction with strategic, operational, and tactical deception plans to determine how the attackers achieved surprise and launched a successful amphibious assault.

Selection of San Carlos

Although the Argentinians expected the British to land near Port Stanley, they ruled the area out due to the proximity of the main enemy force and the risk of inflicting civilian casualties and destroying property. The British chose the eventual landing site, San Carlos, after extensive reconnaissance and evaluation. Like the selection of Normandy over the Pas de Calais for the D-Day landings, it represented a "compromise" based on the "requirements for the different forces involved" and a "net balance of the risks."[7] The amphibious objective area (AOA) needed to be defendable against surface and submarine threats and the anchorage had to be calm and suitably deep to accommodate the ships. The topography needed to be sufficiently low for ships' radars to detect aircraft at range, but high enough to inhibit the long-range targeting of ships. It required multiple beaches with suitable gradients and the prospect of dry landings, as well as sufficient space for a beach support area. The beaches needed to be out of range of both Argentinian artillery and counter-attacks, but close enough to the nearest high ground for it to be occupied quickly. The terrain to Stanley needed to be fair and, ideally, the route had to avoid bottlenecks.[8]

Planners considered 19 beaches for the amphibious landings, eventually narrowing the choice of landing site down to three: Berkeley Sound, Cow Bay/Volunteer Bay, and San Carlos. A variety of sources shaped decisions about the landing site and courses of action. Major Ewen South-

by-Tailyour was the "great guru" of local knowledge—having produced a sailing directions manuscript of the islands—and his experience compensated for dated official surveys of the Falklands that lacked soundings close to the beaches.[9] Southby-Tailyour's information was vital, but it needed to be verified. The Special Boat Service (SBS) was tasked by Commodore Michael Clapp, the Amphibious Task Group Commander, with beach reconnaissance that continued right up to the landing and the Special Air Service (SAS) was tasked by Brigadier Julian Thompson, the Commander of 3 Commando Brigade and Landing Force Commander until Major General Jeremy Moore assumed command, to ascertain enemy dispositions.[10] The intelligence not only helped to rule out sites, but also confirmed the worthiness of San Carlos.

West Falkland was ruled out by the amphibious planners as it was closer to the Argentinian mainland, thereby increasing the aerial threat, as well as a greater distance from the British carriers. While the Argentinians would undoubtedly have struggled to reinforce it, the British would ultimately have been compelled to conduct a second landing on East Falkland, with all the risks that would have entailed.[11] With East Falkland almost certainly the landing site, planners debated the merits of a number of possibilities near Stanley. They eliminated Cow Bay, north of Stanley, due to the enemy presence, poor terrain to the capital, the route leading to a bottleneck at Green Patch, and its susceptibility to poor weather.[12] The Berkeley Sound area was problematic due to the proximity of the enemy, the potential for Argentinian artillery to be moved into range, and the threat of mines.[13] Port Salvador initially seemed an "ideal place, militarily," but the narrow entrance presented a risk as mines or a sunken ship could block it and the surrounding ground was also sufficiently high to inhibit advanced warning of air attacks, but was still low enough to allow attacking aircraft to identify targets at range.[14] It remained a back-up option if San Carlos proved infeasible, but "casualties in ships and men would have been very heavy" if it had been used.[15]

San Carlos was not without its limitations, but it had many advantages. San Carlos Water was navigationally sound, there were two entrances, it was sheltered against wind and weather, it could be defended from surface threats, and it contained three suitable beaches.[16] Planners also considered the topography conducive to an amphibious landing and deemed the terrain suitable for Rapier defense, while the surrounding hills inhibited air attacks and the beaches had sufficient space for a support area. They expected the area to be largely unguarded and an attack there posed minimal risk to civilians. The absence of enemy forces was crucial as the British

The map contains the following labels:

The Falklands (Malvinas)
1982

0   10   20   30 Miles

South
Atlantic
Ocean

HMS *Coventry*
Sunk 25 May

Night of 20–21 May
3 Commando Bde lands

Night of 14–15 May
raid by SAS

HMS *Ardent* and
HMS *Antelope*
Sunk 21 May

6–8 June
5 Infantry Bde
(2 Scots Guards and
1 Welsh Guards) lands at
Bluff Cove and Fitzroy

RFA *Sir Galahad* and
RFA *Sir Tristram*
damaged by
Argentine aircraft
8 June

Sounders
Island
Keppel
Island
Pebble
Island
Teal Pass
Douglas
San Carlos
Teal
Inlet
King
George
Bay
Port Howard
West
Falkland
East
Falkland
Passage
Island
Stanley
Bluff Cove
Queen
Charlotte
Bay
Swan
Island
Darwin
Goose Green
Fitzroy
Falkland Sound
Lively
Island
Port Stephens
Low
Bay
Bleaker
Island
Sea Lion
Island

N

Airfield
FAA Skyhawk A-4
Elevation 500m
Elevation 1,000m

Figure 11.2. The Falklands, 14 May-8 June 1982. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

had "very limited assault capability" and were not equipped to land at a "well-defended beach."[17]

The only disadvantage, from a landing force perspective, was that it was fifty miles from Stanley "as the crow flies."[18] There were further concerns on the naval side as the entrance could be mined (even after the initial landing), submarine activity could not be ruled out, and the British carriers would be a significant distance away to the east, limiting the time aircraft could spend over the amphibious forces.[19] There were, ultimately, risks involved in using any of the sites, but Brigadier Thompson assessed San Carlos as the most, if not the only, viable option, noting, "San Carlos, in retrospect, was the only place you could go."[20]

Argentinian Perceptions

Eliot Cohen and John Gooch have opined that "it is a cardinal principle of deception that the deceiver succeeds by reinforcing his opponent's misconceptions."[21] The British based their planning in the Falklands on the belief that the Argentinians would expect the landing to occur somewhere other than San Carlos. The Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) presented an appreciation of the defense of the Falklands from the per-

spective of the military governor, Brigadier General Mario Menéndez, at the Chiefs of Staff meeting on 14 April 1982. It revealed that the British perceived that the Argentinians expected them to land at Stanley, Lafonia or West Falkland.[22] Commodore Clapp acknowledged that the Task Force conducted deception operations to "help the Argentinians in their almost certain assumption that we would land, USMC (United States Marine Corps) style, directly into or very close to Stanley in a once-only *coup de main* (or even a *coup de grâce*!)."[23]

Argentinian assessments demonstrated a lack of clarity about British intentions. The mining of the Cape Pembroke sea area and the beaches used to land their own forces indicated that the Argentinians believed that the British intended to land near Stanley.[24] They regularly overlooked San Carlos—even when they considered other locations. Reports prepared for Brigadier General Menéndez, by his Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Américo Daher, and his Chief Intelligence Officer, Colonel Francisco Cervo, listed fourteen and eleven possible landing options, respectively, but San Carlos did not feature in either.[25] An Argentinian document produced in mid-May focused on the likelihood of a direct assault on Stanley or a low-risk landing to the north east of the capital. San Carlos did feature as one of three other landing options, alongside Fitzroy and Port Louis, but the Argentinians dismissed it as "disadvantageous" due to the distance to the capital.[26] Following helicopter flights around the Falklands by President Leopoldo Galtieri and Brigadier Generals Menéndez and O.L. Jofre, the latter recalled, "San Carlos was mentioned but was dismissed as being too far away…so it was decided that our main force would remain around Stanley, with only our Special Forces to harass any landings further away."[27] Importantly, the Argentinians assumed that the British would employ harassment and distraction troops prior to the main landings.

British planners exploited Argentinian misconceptions about a potential landing at Stanley on a number of occasions in early May. Following naval gunfire on 1 May that was intended to simulate the preparatory bombardment prior to an amphibious landing, Argentinian soldiers Horacio Benítez and Juan Diez recalled, "We thought that the British were trying to land but our artillery drove them off."[28] It soon became clear that these were not the much-anticipated landings, but the Argentinians remained concerned. Lieutenant Colonel David Comini, Commanding Officer of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, incorrectly reported on 8 May that 16 launches were approaching the beach at Port Harriet and would land within 15 minutes, with the false alarm potentially having resulted from a "spoof" message.[29]

Argentinian assessments changed over time, with the British official history noting that by mid-May, "Argentine commanders had a reasonably accurate grasp of British strategy—to attack and destroy targets of opportunity…and to infiltrate reconnaissance units…while preparing for an assault in a lightly defended area under protection of diversionary attacks elsewhere."[30] A 62-man force known as the "Eagle Detachment"—or the "Mob" to the British—moved to Fanning Head on 15 May. Although the Argentinians intended the move to provide warning of any landing in that area and to protect the entrance to Port San Carlos and the northern entrance to Falkland Sound following HMS *Alacrity*'s transit through the area on 12 May, there is no evidence that they considered it a serious risk at that time.[31] Even after 3 Commando Brigade landed at San Carlos, the perceived threat of 5th Infantry Brigade landing at or near Port Stanley continued to constrain Argentinian action. The British exploited Argentinian misperceptions at every stage of the campaign to maximize their strengths and minimize their vulnerabilities.

Operation TORNADO: The Conduct of British Deception Operations

Deception had underpinned the success of historical British operations such as in Palestine in the First World War and at El Alamein, Sicily and Normandy in the Second World War, as discussed in previous chapters. That lineage was continued during the Falklands Conflict. British planners considered deception to be extremely important and recommended that "some or all of the following gambits should be co-ordinated to achieve distraction and disguise:"

>   Deceptive grouping and routing
>
>   Communications jamming, spoofing and simulated security breaches
>
>   Interference with shore air navigation radio aids and IFF
>
>   Use of chaff, flare drops, diversionary bombardment and underwater acoustic deception to suggest a false beachhead
>
>   Diversionary attacks by Special Forces before D Day.[32]

The British practiced deception from the moment that the Carrier Battle Group set sail for the Falklands. After reaching the 8th Parallel, Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, Commander of the Carrier Battle Group, initiated a "long feint towards the South American mainland" to further the notion that the British might launch a preparatory strike directly against Argentina.[33] They employed chaff to deceive reconnaissance aircraft by creating the

appearance of a much larger fleet, thereby suggesting that the amphibious forces were in tow.[34] They hoped that the threat of an early landing would force the Argentinians to maintain a higher state of alert and induce fatigue prior to the amphibious operation.[35] Rear Admiral Woodward revealed, "In this way I suspected, rightly, they would believe, wrongly, that we were on our way to Port Stanley for a full-frontal assault."[36]

The disposition of British forces could not be concealed forever and required further deception measures to prolong the Argentine confusion. The British initiated Operation TORNADO, a "ruse" involving naval bombardments and air strikes on and around Stanley airfield to convince the Argentinians that the area was being softened up for an amphibious landing.[37] In addition, Clapp arranged for the operation of false radio circuits and floated ashore documents relating to an amphibious landing near Stanley.[38] The leaked signals referred specifically to Operation TORNADO, a supposed "large combined operation against mainland and Falkland Islands targets to be launched in near future."[39]

Operations commenced in dramatic fashion on 1 May, with naval bombardments on infrastructure and troops near Stanley airfield, Vulcan bomber strikes on the airfield, and twelve Sea Harrier sorties; eight on the airfield and four at the air strip at Goose Green.[40] Woodward was realistic about the limited prospects of the air strikes doing serious damage to the airfields, but he anticipated that they would convince the Argentinians for at least 24 hours that a landing would take place at Stanley and provide an opportunity to land reconnaissance forces.[41]

The Royal Air Force (RAF) conducted two of an eventual five Vulcan strikes—codenamed Operation BLACK BUCK—before the amphibious landing.[42] The first strike on 1 May dropped twenty-one 1,000-lb. bombs and caused sufficient damage to prevent both A-4 Skyhawks and Dassault Super Etendards from using the runway.[43] The Ministry of Defence (MoD) made a public announcement soon after the raid as the "political, diplomatic, military context," made it imperative to establish that the "precision" strikes had avoided civilian casualties, as well as to emphasize British strengths and highlight Argentinian vulnerabilities.[44] The perceived threat to the Argentinian mainland prompted the redeployment of Mirage aircraft to focus on home defense rather than offensive operations. The strike also helped reinforce the notion that the British were focused on Stanley, especially when a second raid bombed near the western end of the runway on 3-4 May.

HMS *Hermes* launched three waves of Sea Harriers on 1 May; the first suppressed Argentinian anti-aircraft defenses at Stanley, the second

targeted the runway, and the third attacked the Goose Green airstrip. The so-called "Three Musketeers"—Her Majesty's Ships *Alacrity*, *Arrow*, and *Glamorgan*—peppered Argentinian facilities before withdrawing from their bombardment positions. When the ships returned, the resultant confusion caused by the bombardments provided the necessary cover for the infiltration of reconnaissance parties. The British, in sum, encouraged the Argentinians "in every way possible to believe" that 1 or 2 May would be "D-Day."[45]

British forces maintained pressure against Argentinian facilities and forces at Stanley in order to conceal their true intentions. British aircraft dropped 51 tons of ordnance in total; 30 from the RN's Sea Harriers and 21 from the RAF's Vulcans prior to the amphibious landing.[46] Ships from the Carrier Battle Group conducted twelve bombardments of Argentinian positions between 1 and 20 May, with improvements in accuracy demonstrating the concentric nature of British operations following reconnaissance reports from Special Forces that identified key targets such as ammunition dumps, artillery and radar.[47] No. 846 Squadron conducted covert helicopter support activities, flying 26 sorties on 12 different nights across the same period.[48] The purpose of British activities was once again multi-faceted; harass the enemy, keep attention focused on Stanley, and attrite Argentinian aircraft by provoking attacks on the ships.

Deception and preparation activities came to a crescendo on 20-21 May. Captain Michael Barrow, *Glamorgan*'s Commanding Officer, received an order to conduct a "one-man amphibious landing."[49] With the ship stationed off Stanley peninsula, *Glamorgan* bombarded positions between Mount Brisbane and Berkeley Sound using a combination of high explosive and star shells. Wessex helicopter sorties and the transmission of false signals to simulate the commencement of an amphibious landing further augmented the ruse.[50] Pre-emptive measures were taken to ferment the idea of an imminent "all-out attack" near Stanley. A Radio South Atlantic broadcast on 18 May noted that the "softening-up" of defenses had already begun to "wear down the garrison."[51] The bombardments, therefore, appeared as an intensification of action against the vicinity of Stanley. *Glamorgan*'s bombardments on 20 May provoked "a number of explosions and a large amount of tracer," prompting Navigating Officer, Commander Ian Inskip, to assess that the Argentinians "were anticipating imminent invasion."[52] Menéndez received reports about activities near Berkeley Sound that seemed to affirm the long-held assumption that the British would attack somewhere around Port Stanley. Captain Barrow assessed Operation TORNADO to have been "largely successful" and Clapp

heralded it as "a most useful exercise in deceit that I hoped helped to keep significant forces well away from the west of East Falkland."[53]

Preparatory and Diversionary Operations

Extensive preparatory operations underpinned British success during the amphibious landing. Woodward was directed to provoke intense air and sea confrontations with the intention of achieving local sea and air superiority as part of the tasking he received on 27 April.[54] The threat posed by the Argentinian Navy needed to be counteracted prior to the landing. The submarine HMS *Conqueror*'s sinking of the cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* had major ramifications for the conflict as it led directly to the withdrawal of the Argentinian fleet, including the carrier *Veinticinco de Mayo*, and ensured that the British did not encounter their enemy's major warships for the duration of the conflict.[55]

A British memorandum warned tellingly, "We are assured of sea control. Total and lasting air superiority is less assured."[56] Air and sea superiority had been deemed necessary precursors to an amphibious landing and, while the naval threat had been diminished, the air battle was ongoing.[57] Woodward hoped that the combination of naval gunfire and air strikes on 1 May would prompt a reaction that would expose the enemy's defensive plan and allow for the attrition of Argentinian aircraft but achieved mixed results.[58] The Argentinians initially believed that a landing was imminent and their reaction offered portents about their likely approach when the real thing eventuated. The anticipated attritional air battle, however, did not occur. Three Mirages and one or two Canberras were destroyed, with *Arrow* and *Glamorgan* suffering minor damage in return.[59] Woodward assessed, "Their air force had tried its best…and failed. I could not have asked for a better response to the deception plan."[60] The British were, nevertheless, unable to inflict the level of losses that they desired and would not have the same luck in provoking air action prior to the landings, undermining the process of attrition.

Thompson had informed the Land Deputy to Admiral Fieldhouse, Major General Moore, on 6 May that without air superiority the British risked "losing [a] large part of Brigade, possibly before we get ashore" and warned that "amphibious operations cannot be successfully carried out in [a] hostile air environment."[61] The threat made the SAS raid on Pebble Island on 15 May an important preparatory measure as light aircraft that could have interfered with the amphibious landing used the grass air strip there. *Glamorgan* illuminated the airfield and also bombarded both aircraft and Argentinian positions, while the SAS conducted operations.[62] The at-

tacks wrecked or rendered unserviceable all eleven aircraft, including six FMA Pucarás, and destroyed ammunition and fuel stores. The raid diminished the Argentinian air threat, reduced morale and may have reinforced the notion that British forces preferred hit and run attacks rather than a consolidated amphibious assault.

In addition to Pucarás and Aermacchis on the Falklands, the Argentinians could also employ mainland-based Super Etendards, A-4 Skyhawks, Daggers (a variation of the Mirage V) and Canberras. British planners held discussions about delaying the landing due to the air threat, but considered the operation viable if they conducted it at night and preceded it with diversions and deception to inhibit the Argentinian response. Clapp was cognizant that "with so many eggs in so few baskets the loss of just one major ship would spell disaster," but understood that the risk would have be tolerated, as unpalatable as it may have been.[63] Concerns over the loss of credibility, the potential to sustain troops at an effective combat level, the risk of attrition, declining weather, and the possible erosion of public support and international opinion militated against delaying the landing.[64] Woodward mused, "On paper, they still had air superiority and for all we knew had been saving themselves up for the day when the British finally moved in to re-take the Falkland Islands."[65]

It was essential, therefore, that the British provided no early warning of the landing to uphold the deception and maintain secrecy. The movement of the "Eagle Detachment" to Fanning Head added a necessary preliminary step to the landing as their infantry support weapons, including 105mm recoilless anti-tank guns, could have wreaked havoc on landing craft.[66] Two Wessex helicopters—one of which had been fitted with thermal-imaging equipment to help locate Argentinian forces and establish that there were no additional troops in the vicinity—covertly landed an SBS team to counter the threat.[67] The SBS attack, supported by naval gunfire, led to the position being abandoned after a short but aggressive engagement and, although elements of the "Mob" later shot down two British Gazelle helicopters, the attacks greatly diminished the threat to the landing.[68]

While planners deemed efforts to conceal the approach of the amphibious ships crucial, drawing Argentinian attention elsewhere by launching diversionary action acquired equal importance. Clapp has acknowledged:

> Any real deception landing would have taken rather more troops than we had, although one of the great advantages of Special Forces of the calibre of ours is that, with the modern

automatic weapons at their disposal against an inexperienced and frightened enemy, they can give the appearance of being a larger force than they actually are.[69]

The diversionary force, D Squadron, 22 SAS, infiltrated covertly to occupy the strategic reserve and proceeded with both force and speed to magnify the scale of their attack, utilizing machine guns, mortars, rockets and naval gunfire.[70] The raid achieved its objective. The garrison commander at Darwin conceded that he believed he was under attack by at least a battalion strength force and prisoner interrogations later conducted by 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment indicated that the Argentinians thought they were facing the main landing.[71]

Achievement of Surprise

It was hoped initially that the size of the islands would prevent comprehensive surveillance by observation posts and, consequently, it might be feasible to conduct an unobserved landing in darkness. The British were fortunate that the weather was in their favor initially, with Clapp's report of proceedings stating, "all prayers as to weather answered" due to the mist and drizzle.[72] This impeded the view of both Argentinian air patrols and shore-based lookouts and afforded extra time before the defenders discovered the landing.

The commencement of naval bombardments, however, prompted First Lieutenant Carlos Esteban to send a lookout to observe San Carlos Water. The lookout spotted the amphibious force, but some troops had already disembarked and further landing craft were in transit. The defenders requested air support from Goose Green, but only one of the first six Pucarás deployed was able to take off due to HMS *Ardent*'s bombardment and although that aircraft spotted and reported the presence of the amphibious force, a single Stinger missile shot it down.[73] An Aermacchi ordered from Stanley after news of the landing reached the capital attacked HMS *Argonaut* and took note of the number of ships involved, before the pilot reported the information to Menéndez.[74]

While there were some minor hitches including a navigational error that held up entry into San Carlos Water and delays in disembarking troops into landing craft, they were not critical.[75] Ivar Hellberg, Commanding Officer of the Commando Logistics Regiment, summarized, "Complete surprise was achieved and the amphibious landing plan worked like clockwork. All the main objectives were achieved by first light on 21 May and the fighting troops were ashore within four hours of 'H' Hour."[76] The only Argentinian forces encountered on land within the vicinity of the beach-

es were positioned at Port San Carlos and they dispersed in the face of oncoming British troops. The enemy failed to inflict any casualties on the British ground force during the actual landing, although the shooting down of the two Gazelle helicopters resulted in three deaths. Clapp noted succinctly, "My job had been to land the landing force 'without significant loss'…and I had."[77]

Several observers have heavily criticized the subsequent Argentinian response, after being caught unprepared by the landing. Woodward appraised tersely that the Argentinians had "screwed this operation up very badly" by allowing the uninhibited passage of the amphibious forces into San Carlos Water and then by attacking the "wrong" ships; the escorts rather than troop and supply vessels.[78] The Argentinian pilots, in fairness, had fewer than thirty seconds to identify and engage targets inside San Carlos Water. When the air attacks began, Clapp observed, "much of the shipping being off-loaded was…sufficiently well protected by the terrain to present a difficult target. Hence, although hits were received, little significant damage was done to the Amphibious Group and unloading was continued with little interruption."[79] The escorts rather than the troop and supply ships bore the brunt of the attacks, with *Ardent* sunk and Her Majesty's Ships *Antrim*, *Argonaut*, *Brilliant* and *Broadsword* suffering damage. Major General Moore adjudged that the Falklands Conflict demonstrated the "appalling shipping losses that can be suffered from even unsophisticated aircraft and weapons systems."[80] Indeed, further ferocious attacks on British ships followed, leading to the damage and loss of a number, including the sinking of HMS *Antelope* on 23 May and HMS *Coventry* on 25 May, but the attacks had not halted the amphibious landing.[81]

The Argentinian commanders were aware by 22 May that the British had solidified their position and could call on air defense and artillery, meaning that they needed extensive air operations to try to remove them.[82] Menéndez was not prepared to compromise the Argentinian defenses around Stanley or redeploy forces on the approach due to concerns that 5th Infantry Brigade might disembark elsewhere on the island. The limited availability of helicopters, moreover, would have hindered any such move.[83] It was also hoped vainly that the British might use the landing to restart political negotiations. The beachhead, in reality, was the staging post and logistical lifeline for the repossession of the Falklands. On the 25th anniversary of the landings, a British newspaper described 21 May as "the day Argentina knew [the] war was lost" as defeat seemed inevitable once the bridgehead had been established.[84] Three weeks of hard fighting followed as British forces "yomped" across East Falkland, culminating in

the Argentinian surrender at Stanley on 14 June, after notable engagements at Mount Longdon, Mount Kent, Mount Harriet, Two Sisters, Mount Tumbledown and Wireless Ridge.

Misinformation and Media Manipulation

Lawrence Freedman has pointed out that "any military operation will involve factors beyond the professional remit of the military" and that was undoubtedly the case during the Falklands Conflict.[85] Both the government and the media have been scrutinized over various security breaches, with the announcement by the BBC that the Amphibious Task Group and Carrier Battle Group had rendezvoused on 18 May being a particular source of criticism due to the potential for compromising the hard-won achievement of surprise. Once the capacity to land forces had been made known to the Argentinians, it was essential that the nature and timing of the landings remained a mystery.

Newspaper and television coverage was inevitably rife with speculation about likely courses of action with a range of opinions being expressed about when and where the landing would occur, as well as whether it would be opposed. The MoD determined that information should be withheld until well after the beachhead had been established to avoid provoking Argentinian air attacks during the landing phase. Consequently, it was necessary to both control and shape media reports. Although the conflict pre-dated social media and fitness tracking applications that have the potential to compromise secrecy, restrictions needed to be placed on correspondents with the Task Force. Copy had to be vetted locally and cleared through the MoD Press Office and could only be released after official press releases. Correspondents were also prevented from utilizing MARISAT (maritime satellite communications) while reporting restrictions were in place.[86] In addition, the vulnerability of the amphibious ships prompted the MoD to allow "a degree of misinformation to be promulgated," which "contributed positively to the successful outcome of an audacious landing plan."[87]

An un-attributable briefing by the Permanent Under-Secretary of the MoD, Sir Frank Cooper, played an important role in the misinformation campaign. Indicating that there would be an "increase in pressure," Cooper declared, "Don't see this as a great World War II epic, a sort of great D-Day and everybody goes storming across the beaches."[88] The suggestion that the "screw will be turned" in a "variety of ways" and at a "variety of points" prompted the media to speculate that the attackers would conduct "hit and run" and "smash and grab" raids.[89] In accepting retrospectively

that he did not tell the "whole truth," Cooper contended that conjecture about British plans was "very helpful."[90]

The official announcement at noon on 21 May downplayed British action and indicated that raiding parties had been landed during the night. Cooper met with media editors again once the landing was under way, but was more forthcoming this time. He requested that the media appear "confused" about the nature of the operation as "light was breaking in the Falklands and we had got the whole of the stores and a lot of people still to get ashore…and we did not want to give any information to the Argentines as to where we were, what our intentions were, and what forces were going there."[91] Tellingly, early evening news broadcasts back in Britain were still reporting, based on Argentinian sources, that British forces had conducted a number of raids, including a major one at San Carlos. A post-operation public relations report emphasized, "The media is naturally keen to report conflict as fully and as quickly as possible, but the MoD and operational commanders are bound to be less concerned with immediacy than the need to preserve operational secrecy to ensure that the reporting of operations does not prejudice their success, put lives at risk or give away valuable intelligence."[92] The promulgation of inaccurate and misleading information by the media aided the deception and helped maintain secrecy, even when it was done unknowingly.

Conclusion

In a speech about the landings at San Carlos, John Knott, the Secretary of State for Defence, declared triumphantly on 24 May 1982, "Argentinian forces did not interfere to any significant extent with the landing itself. The amphibious ships involved in the first stages of the operation were able to withdraw without incident to safer waters."[93] While the Falklands Conflict demonstrated that "an ability to assault a defended beach is not always required when alternative landing sites are available," cultivating the prospect of landing unopposed requires significant planning and preparation to ensure the necessary element of surprise.[94]

While it could be posited that Argentinian errors were of greater significance than the web of deception spun by the attackers, the exploitation of confusion limited reappraisals of likely British intentions. Deception was a force multiplier as the preservation of secrecy and the fermentation of confusion about the nature, location and timing of amphibious operations created conditions conducive to a successful landing with limited assault capability. It was important, therefore, that the deception operations conducted both in theater and back in Britain complemented one another.

Breaches of security at the strategic level had the capacity to undermine deception operations and erode secrecy at the operational and tactical levels.

Lani Kass and J. Phillip London have observed that deception is intended to "cause the adversary to commit the critical errors that will serve one's own plan; increase an opponent's susceptibility to our actions; and deny him the opportunity to capitalize on our vulnerabilities."[95] British planning and operations succeeded in all three areas. Deception was of great significance in the Falklands because it helped to affirm pre-existing Argentinian misperceptions and precluded the reinforcement of San Carlos, the laying of mines, and the early intervention of air and naval forces. The later air attacks at Bluff Cove on the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries (RFAs) *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram*, which were transporting Welsh Guards to Fitzroy on 8 June, as well as the sinking of a landing craft from HMS *Fearless* carrying British vehicles, demonstrated the dangers inherent in the venture.[96] Fifty men lost their lives in the attack, which resulted in the abandonment of both RFAs, with around three times as many injured, as well as a further six fatalities aboard the landing craft. The attacks further emphasized the importance of deception and, ultimately, the achievement of surprise at San Carlos.

The landings at San Carlos hold contemporary relevance, in addition to their historical significance, due to the importance attached to unopposed amphibious landings. The House of Commons Defence Committee reported in February 2018, "The more recent doctrine and tasking of amphibious units places great emphasis on unopposed landings, ideally at night, to maximise stealth, surprise and the amount of time available to get reinforcements and equipment ashore before the enemy is in a position to counterattack."[97] Any amphibious operation involves cooperation between the services and the landing at San Carlos was no exception; combining air, land and maritime forces to great effect, as well as deception operations in all three of these domains. Complementary tactical, operational, and strategic-level deception, including the manipulation of the media at the political interface, created the environment for the successful amphibious landing. The landing at San Carlos was, ultimately, a truly joint operation underpinned by a wide range of carefully planned and highly effective deception measures.

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13. Julian Thompson, *3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands: No Picnic* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2013), 32.

14. Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Reasons in Writing: A Commando's View of the Falklands War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1993), 147.

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16. Sandy Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 189.

17. TNA, Admiral 202/815/1, Staffs, COMAW and HQ 3 Cdo Bde (RM), "An Appreciation of the Situation in the Falkland Islands," 15 April 1982; Julian Thompson, *The Royal Marines: From Sea Soldiers to a Special Force* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2000), 560.

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Chapter 12

Deception in the Desert

Deceiving Iraq in Operation DESERT STORM

Donald P. Wright

Operation DESERT STORM remains one of the shortest and least costly of America's military victories. The Coalition campaign that began in January 1991 opened with five weeks of air strikes that attacked both strategic targets and tactical units. With Iraqi forces reeling from the air campaign, the ground offensive began on 24 February and in less than 100 hours, dislodged Iraqi forces from Kuwait and compelled Saddam Hussein to capitulate. The victory came at the cost of less than 250 lives on the Coalition side.

The success of Operation DESERT STORM was founded on the decisive advantage in training, armament, and leadership held by US air and ground forces. Equally important, however, was the way in which senior Coalition commanders employed these advantages against the Iraqi Army. The plan for the ground campaign featured a broad Coalition attack on Iraqi units in Kuwait that fixed them in position. At the same time, mobile and lethal armored forces enveloped the Iraqi Army from the west, by driving deep into southern Iraq, aiming for the Iraqi Republican Guards divisions, Saddam's Hussein's strategic reserve and Praetorian Guard. This envelopment proved to be the devastating blow that forced the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait and into a headlong retreat northward into Iraq.

Deception played a key role in the way this plan developed. Given the size, capability, and deployment of the Iraqi Army, deceiving the Iraqi chain of command at both the operational and tactical levels became critical to Coalition commanders. This chapter examines the development and implementation of the Coalition deception plan, including the plan's objectives, the ways and means used to achieve these goals, and the degree to which the plan succeeded in misleading Iraqi commanders.

Operation Desert Shield—Defending Saudi Arabia

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi military forces attacked Kuwait and quickly took control of the small state on the Persian Gulf. As justification for the invasion, Saddam Hussein claimed that Kuwait was historically a province of Iraq, a dubious assertion at best. In reality, after the long and expensive war against Iran left Iraq with large debts, Saddam was far more

interested in debt forgiveness from his allied neighbors or control over Kuwait's large oil reserves that would provide an infusion of much-needed capital. In a matter of days, Iraqi forces not only seized Kuwait but took position on the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, posing a clear threat to the Saudi oil fields. The Saudi king requested international support on 6 August and a global coalition led by the United States immediately answered the call.

Within three days US Air Force aircraft took position just behind the Saudi-Kuwaiti border and a brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division secured key military sites inside Saudi Arabia. Over the next two months, US ground forces continued to flow into the country and pushed out toward the Kuwaiti border to join Saudi units in defensive positions oriented against a possible Iraqi attack. By the end of September, the rest of the 82nd Airborne Division had arrived along with the other main elements of the XVIII Airborne Corps—101st Airborne Division, the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment—as well as the 1st Marine Division. A significant amount of air power provided by the Saudi Air Force, US Air Force, and US Navy complemented the expanding ground defenses. The US Navy had also positioned a US Marine amphibious force consisting of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) in the Persian Gulf just off the Kuwaiti coast.

The defense of Saudi Arabia, called Operation DESERT SHIELD, quickly became a multi-national effort. Egypt, Syria, France, and the United Kingdom joined the Coalition and began sending forces to Saudi Arabia in the fall of 1990. By the end of October, Coalition partners had deployed over 200,000 troops to DESERT SHIELD—130,000 of which were American.[1] Central Command (CENTCOM), led by US Army General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, served as the overall theater headquarters for the campaign. Most US ground forces fell under the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters and occupied positions behind the Saudi and Arab partner units on the front lines along the Kuwaiti border. However, CENTCOM maintained amphibious forces afloat, expanding in October the number of Marine units prepared to conduct operations along the Kuwaiti and Iraqi coastline.

On the other side of the border, Iraqi forces had consolidated into a defensive posture. Iraqi records seized in 2003 show little evidence that the senior Iraqi leadership had serious intent to invade Saudi Arabia in 1990.[2] However, Saddam Hussein remained determined to retain his hold on Kuwait and, in August, began deploying more forces along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border. By late September, twenty Iraqi divisions occupied Kuwait. Nine

of these divisions deployed along the Saudi frontier where they construct-ed complex defenses comprised of dug-in positions protected by mine-fields.[3] Mobile mechanized forces, armed with modern weaponry and ca-pable of mounting counter-attacks against Coalition attacks, backed up the front-line divisions. To counter a Coalition amphibious landing, the Iraqi military command placed several infantry divisions along the Kuwaiti coast. As his reserve, Saddam positioned the Republican Guard Forces Command, a corps of eight elite divisions, in southeastern Iraq just north of the Kuwaiti border. In early October, the total Iraqi force in Kuwait and southeastern Iraq numbered approximately 430,000.[4]

The Shift to the Offensive

In mid-September 1990, when it appeared that Saddam Hussein no longer posed a threat to Saudi Arabia, CENTCOM began planning for offensive operations designed to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.[5] The planning process sped up in the month that followed as it became clear that peaceful means would not secure an Iraqi withdrawal. In October, General Schwarzkopf's planners initially conceived of an air-land offen-sive that relied on the forces immediately available in Saudi Arabia and the region. For the land operation, this meant the XVIII Airborne Corps, the recently arrived 1st Cavalry Division, the 1st Marine Division, and Arab, British, and French forces. The early versions of the plan offered a straightforward concept: after an air offensive destroyed command net-works as well as other strategic targets and attrited Iraq's ground units, Coalition forces would attack along three axes directly into Kuwait.[6] The main effort would attempt to outflank the strongest Iraqi defensive posi-tions by attacking up the Wadi al Batin, a dry streambed that formed the western Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and had served repeatedly as an invasion route between the Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia. This main force would drive north up the wadi toward Kuwait's northern border, cutting off Iraqi forces in the southern part of Kuwait. Because much of the combat power in the plan came from XVIII Airborne Corps, this became known as the "One Corps" concept.

However, no one at CENTCOM was satisfied with this plan. In the eight years of war against the Iranians, Iraqi military leaders had success-fully learned how to plan and conduct defenses in depth. Moreover, by October 1990, it was clear to Coalition commanders that Iraqi positions in Kuwait were complex and manned by a force roughly equal in size to the one they had available for the ground offensive. Even if the air campaign succeeded in wearing down Iraqi combat power in Kuwait, the ground campaign would still likely face staunch resistance. After the war,
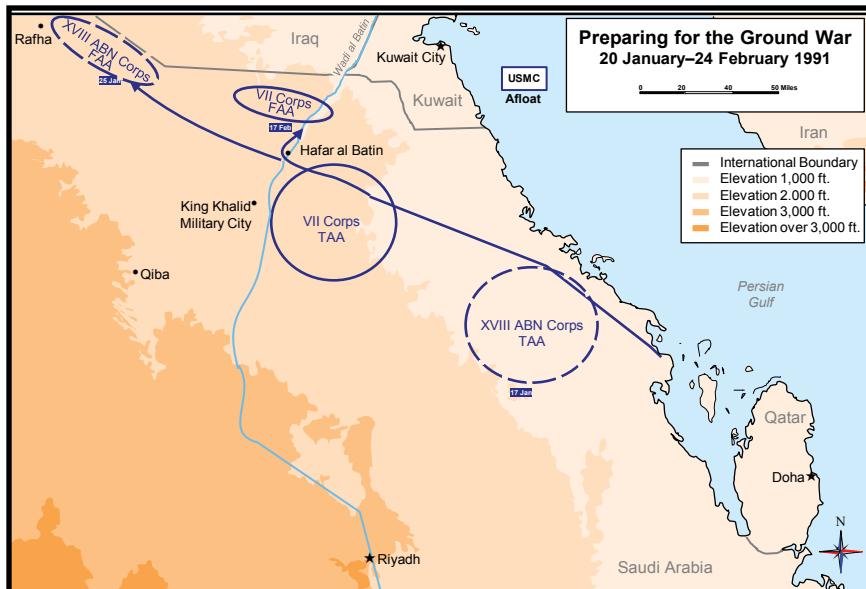
Figure 12.1. Preparing for the ground war, January-February 1991. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

Schwarzkopf described the "One Corps" concept as a "straight-up-the-middle charge right into the teeth of the Iraqi defenses" that lacked any element of surprise and would likely incur "substantial" Coalition casualties, threatening popular support at home.[7]

On 11 October, the CENTCOM staff briefed this plan to President George H. W. Bush and his national security staff. Neither Bush nor his advisors were comfortable with the "One Corps" concept and encouraged Schwarzkopf to be more imaginative. Four days later, the CENTCOM commander told his planners to develop a new concept for the offensive that included a second US Army armored corps. Schwarzkopf's new vision featured a bold envelopment of Iraqi forces from west of the Kuwait border. The Iraqi Army had arrayed its defenses along Kuwait's east coast and its southern border. But the Iraqi defensive line terminated just west of the Wadi al Batin and there were no forces along Kuwait's western border. This defensive scheme presented a right flank vulnerable to the type of envelopment Schwarzkopf had envisioned.

The new CENTCOM plan—labeled the "Two Corps" concept—took advantage of the open Iraqi flank. First, a supporting attack by the XVIII Airborne Corps, US Marines, and other Coalition units would drive directly into Kuwait to seize Kuwait City, an action that would effectively fix Iraqi forces. In what eventually became known as the "Left Hook," the

newly-added armored corps would then move quickly north from its attack positions west of the Kuwaiti border (on the Coalition left flank) into Iraq and strike deep to the Euphrates River thereby cutting off Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Then the corps would attack east toward to destroy the Republican Guards Force Command, their main objective, located on Kuwait's northern border.[8] On 8 November, President Bush formally ordered the US Army's VII Corps, consisting of two armored divisions, a mechanized infantry division, and an armored cavalry regiment, to deploy from Germany to Saudi Arabia. Schwarzkopf would soon have the two corps that made his plan of envelopment a reality.

As November progressed, however, concerns in CENTCOM grew about the forces required to attain both objectives of the envelopment: cutting off Iraqi forces in Kuwait and destroying the Republican Guards Forces Command. To address this, CENTCOM strengthened the "Left Hook" by adding the XVIII Airborne Corps to it. The four divisions in this corps would now serve as the western-most elements of the envelopment and strike deep toward the city of An Nasiriyah. The VII Corps would also receive reinforcement in the form of the British 1st Armoured Division, giving the corps a total strength of three armored divisions, a mechanized infantry division, and an armored cavalry regiment. Additionally, to make an amphibious landing in Kuwait more feasible, Schwarzkopf added the 5th MEB to the Marine forces afloat.

The new "Two Corps" concept—with the envelopment force as the new main effort—drew its viability from the element of surprise. To help guarantee this, the CENTCOM commander and staff began to develop a complex deception plan designed to mask Coalition intent at the operational and tactical levels. From CENTCOM's perspective, the Coalition effort could not succeed unless the Iraqis had been deceived about the true scheme of the offensive campaign.

The Deception Plan

In the fall of 1990, several doctrinal works provided the foundation for the development of military deception plans. Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations* (1986), stated that deception was integral to operations and established the optimal characteristics of deception, emphasizing simplicity and believability. Equally important was the manual's contention that the most effective form of military deception was the exploitation of the enemy's preconceptions, stating that commanders should try to "convince an opponent to believe what he wants to believe anyway-that his current course of action is correct."[9] Known as Magruder's Principle, this form of

deception is based on the idea that it is far easier to exploit the enemy's beliefs than to alter those beliefs.[10] The most common example used to illustrate Magruder's Principle is the elaborate plan created by the western Allies during the Second World War to deceive the Germans as to where the invasion of France would actually take place. Hitler and his generals believed strongly that the invasion site would be the Pas de Calais. Accordingly, the Allies created a plan that reinforced this preconception and successfully exploited it to assist the actual landings in Normandy, over 200 miles from the Pas de Calais.

FM 90-2, *Battlefield Deception* (1988), went into far greater detail on how commanders and staffs develop deception plans. The US Army had not practiced operational deception in large-scale combat operations since the Korean War. Before DESERT STORM, the most recent use of military deception by the US Army as part of Operation JUST CAUSE in 1989. In that operation, Army planners had focused deception at the tactical-level, mainly using repetitive small-unit exercises and movements to lull the Panamanian Defense Forces into a sense of complacency. [11] The US Army published FM 90-2 to help revive the US Army's ability to integrate deception into operations at all levels. The manual offered the maxims of deception including Magruder's Principle as well as historical cases of successful and unsuccessful deception efforts. FM 90-2 contended that successful battlefield deception rested on three "cornerstones:" Intelligence Support, Integration and Synchronization, and Operational Security.[12] Further, FM 90-2 directed planners to identify the main objective of the deception, the target of the operation, and the "story" they would communicate to achieve the objective. CENTCOM employed all these elements in the DESERT STORM deception plan.

The development of the CENTCOM deception plan began on 6 November 1990 when General Schwarzkopf formally approved the "Two Corps" concept. To create the plan, he turned to a special cell in the CENTCOM Plans (J5) staff section.[13] Schwarzkopf gave the planners in the cell a simple objective: prevent the Iraqis from learning about the two corps envelopment from the west.[14] The best way to do this was to keep the Iraqi focus on Coalition forces just south of Kuwait and afloat in the Persian Gulf to the east.[15] Saddam Hussein and his military commanders had to be convinced that Coalition attack would come either from across the border to the south or from the waters to the east. Preferably they should think that the ground invasion would include both an attack north across the Saudi-Kuwaiti border and an amphibious landing from the Persian Gulf. The Iraqi national command should not have any indication of a Coalition

invasion of Iraq directly from its western flank. If it worked, this deception plan would prevent the Iraqis from repositioning forces to that open flank, making the envelopment far more likely to secure Coalition objectives swiftly and with relatively few casualties.

Magruder's Principle served as the foundation for the plan. By November 1990, the Iraqi defensive array in Kuwait served as strong indication of how Saddam Hussein and his generals understood Coalition intent. The Iraqi command had significantly strengthened its defenses on the southern Kuwaiti border as well as on the Persian Gulf Coast. They had deployed several additional infantry divisions just west of Wadi al Batin but had done nothing to protect its open western flank. For the CENTCOM deception cell, the best means to achieve the goal set by Schwarzkopf was to reinforce the Iraqi preconception of the Coalition offensive campaign. To do this, the CENTCOM planners determined that their main target was Saddam Hussein who, in 1990, oversaw all aspects of Iraqi military operations, to include the placement of Iraqi forces in Kuwait and southern Iraq.[16] The "story" aimed at the Iraqi leader was simple: Coalition forces deployments, actions, and announcements all indicated a ground offensive featuring amphibious landings from the gulf and attacks from the south toward Kuwait City and up the Wadi al Batin.

The Deception Begins

The most important part of the deception plan involved the disposition and movement of the two US corps that made up the "Left Hook." The locations of the VII and XVIII Airborne Corps had to support the deception story until the Iraqis were no longer capable of detecting their move to attack positions on the western flank. For this reason, both the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps remained in tactical assembly areas dozens of miles south of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border until after the air campaign began on 17 January 1991. The VII Corps' assembly area was forty miles south of the Saudi-Kuwait border just east of Wadi al Batin, a location that reinforced the Iraqi presumption of an attack up that streambed into Kuwait. According to the CENTCOM deception plan, early air strikes eliminated specific Iraqi intelligence sensors, including observation posts and radar sites that might have identified the relocation of the two US corps to the western flank. At roughly the same time, Army counterintelligence teams moved into the area near the Saudi town of Hafr al Batin to spread the story of an imminent US attack north up the Wadi al Batin among suspected Iraqi agents.[17]
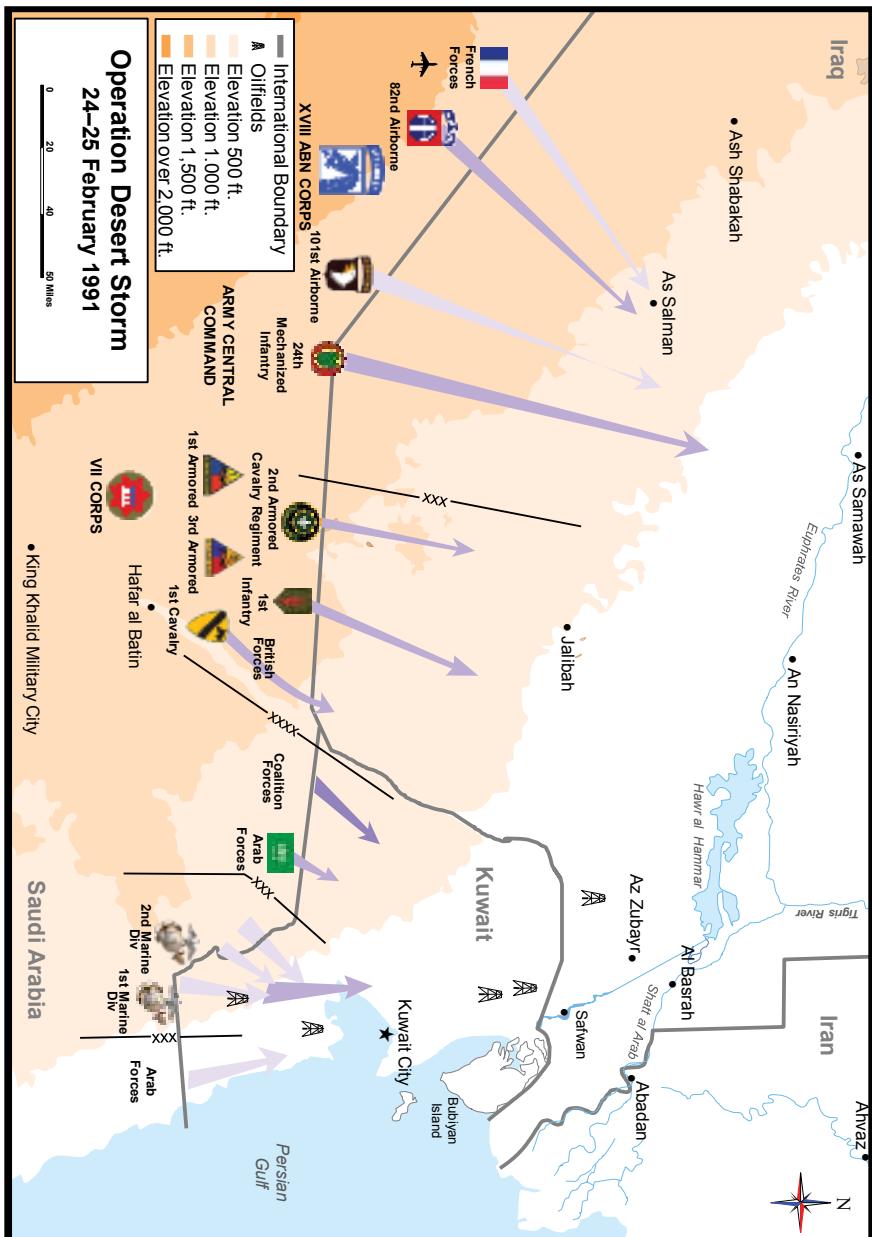
Figure 12.2. Operation Desert Storm, 24-25 February 1991. Graphic created by CSI Press staff.

On 20 January, after the Coalition had essentially achieved air superiority, the units of the XVIII Airborne Corps started moving west toward their attack position approximately 125 miles west of Wadi al Batin, near

the Saudi town of Rafha. Moving mostly at night, by both ground and air, and following strict operational security measures, the corps completed its 300-mile movement on 25 January. The VII Corps delayed its movement west until 15 February, nine days before the scheduled beginning of the ground offensive, for two reasons: its attack position was much closer to its assembly area—approximately forty miles west of Wadi al Batin; and the longer its units remained east of Wadi al Batin, the more the corps reinforced the Iraqi belief that the Coalition planned to attack directly north into Kuwait.

Because synchronization of the deception plan across the theater was so important, the CENTCOM deception plan directed several critical actions to occur simultaneously with the movement of the two corps into the attack positions. On the operational level, CENTCOM directed the Marines afloat in the gulf to increase their preparation and rehearsals for an amphibious assault in January and early February. Schwarzkopf had used amphibious exercises in the fall to induce the Iraqi leadership into thinking that an attack would come from the sea. After the air campaign began, he hoped to reinforce this belief. The CENTCOM commander stated that after the air campaign began:

> We continued our heavy operations out in the sea because we wanted the Iraqis to continue to believe that we were going to conduct a massive amphibious operation in this area…we wanted him [Saddam Hussein] to concentrate his forces [in Kuwait]—which he did.[18]

To assist in this effort, CENTCOM allowed the media to cover the Marines as they rehearsed amphibious operations and broadcast stories about those preparations. General Schwarzkopf also made very public visits to Marine Amphibious units on 15 February, a move designed to keep Iraqi attention on the Persian Gulf.[19] On 24 February, the first day of the ground offensive, the Marines and Navy mounted an amphibious feint that consisted of the battleship USS *Missouri* firing on an island just east of Kuwait City and SEAL teams landing on the Kuwaiti coast to detonate explosives simulating the first phase in Coalition amphibious landings.[20]

CENTCOM integrated and synchronized the deception plan at the tactical-level as well. Two weeks before the ground offensive began, Schwarzkopf's staff held a deception planning conference and disseminated guidance to lower level units.[21] That guidance emphasized the larger objective: reinforce the Iraqi belief that the main attacks would be made directly into Kuwait. To mask the operational shift to the west, the Iraqis had to

believe that both the VII Corps and the XVIII Airborne Corps remained in their assembly areas and intended to attack into Kuwait, east of Wadi al Batin. The XVIII Airborne Corps nested its own deception plan under the CENTCOM deception framework. The corps fielded a twelve-person deception cell which had deployed to Saudi Arabia with camouflage decoys, communication emulators, and other equipment. Each of the four divisions in the corps had their own deception teams and equipment. On 13 February, 300 Soldiers, including the deception teams, PSYOPS teams, a signal company, an engineer platoon, a smoke platoon, and an infantry platoon, moved into what were called "deception tactical assembly areas" near the Kuwaiti border. These forces communicated and conducted operations that emulated major XVIII Airborne Corps units. The corps reinforced the deception story by dropping half a million surrender leaflets on Iraqi units to the immediate north of the deception assembly areas and spreading messages in nearby Saudi communities about an impending attack due north.

In the VII Corps Tactical Assembly Area, the deception measures involved combat actions. On 20 January, the Syrian 9th Armored Division began pulling out of its position on the Saudi border just west of Wadi al Batin. The US 1st Cavalry Division, designated as the theater reserve, replaced the Syrians and faced several Iraqi infantry divisions dug in across the border.[22] The 1st Cavalry Division's mission was to attract Iraqi attention, masking the movement of VII Corps to its attack positions. The division's actions involved aggressive patrolling of the border by ground and air scouts as well as engineer operations consistent with preparations for an attack. Periodically, soldiers of the division fired artillery rounds or anti-tank missiles at Iraqi targets. The activity increased in intensity as the date of the ground offensive approached. On 19 and 20 February, the division commander sent mechanized units across the Iraqi border and up Wadi al Batin to conduct a reconnaissance. Finding Iraqi forces occupying well-prepared and complex defensive positions, the 1st Cavalry units became embroiled in a five hour battle that included artillery strikes and close air support. Throughout this month long period of increased combat, as the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps moved toward their attack positions on the western flank, the Iraqi units in the Wadi al Batin sector remained focused on the 1st Cavalry Division, as intended.

The Ground Offensive and the Deception Plan—An Assessment

Before dawn on 24 February 1991, a brigade from the 101st Airborne Division crossed the Saudi border and air assaulted deep into southern Iraq. The far edge of the "Left Hook" was now moving and the ground of-

fensive was underway. On the western flank, XVIII Airborne Corps units met little enemy resistance and those few Iraqi units they encountered were surprised by the sudden appearance of Coalition forces. So successful was the offensive on this edge of the flank that Schwarzkopf directed VII Corps to attack earlier than planned so that it could keep up with the XVIII Airborne Corps. VII Corps' divisions attacked from their positions west of Wadi al Batin and met little resistance from an unprepared enemy. As part of that attack, the 1st Cavalry Division executed the last action in the CENTCOM deception plan. As VII Corps began moving across their line of departure, the 1st Cavalry Division mounted a feint north up the Wadi al Batin that included artillery, attack helicopters, and a full brigade assault into Iraqi defensive lines. As the feint culminated 15 kilometers north of the border, VII Corps to the west pushed into Iraqi territory.[23]

On the eastern flank of the CENTCOM offensive, Arab and US Marine units attacked into the main Iraqi line of defense. They met far more resistance and progress was slower. However by day two of the ground campaign, the Coalition was far ahead of the plan's timeline. The XVIII Airborne Corps had already seized the highway near the city of An Nasiryah, over 100 miles inside Iraq. By day three, VII Corps turned northeast and began the attack against the divisions of the Republican Guard Forces Command. Marine units in the east reached the outskirts of Kuwait City, taking thousands of Iraqi prisoners and watching as other Iraqi soldiers streamed north toward Iraq and away from the fight. On the fourth day, VII Corps completed its near destruction of the Republican Guard, Arab forces liberated Kuwait City, and the Coalition announced a cease fire. The ground offensive had achieved all of its objectives in less than 100 hours.

To what degree had the CENTCOM deception plan succeeded? Deception planners at several levels devised means of confirming whether their actions were having the desired effect. The CENTCOM planners designated both airborne surveillance (JSTARS), special operations units, and other collectors to monitor Iraqi unit dispositions.[24] As the start of the ground campaign approached, the CENTCOM intelligence staff was certain that the Iraqis remained positioned to defend against an amphibious assault and attacks directly into Kuwait. On the tactical-level, the XVIII Airborne Corps deception cell received signals intercepts that verified Iraqi units believed the corps remained located just south of the Kuwaiti border rather than hundreds of miles west on the edge of the Left Hook.[25] In the immediate aftermath of the DESERT STORM, Schwarzkopf deemed the deception plan, especially the Marine amphibious threat, a critical suc-

cess.[26] As evidence of the deception plan's success, many participants in DESERT STORM and analysts of the campaign have pointed to the fact that through 24 February 1991, Saddam Hussein maintained many of his divisions along the Kuwaiti coast, few west of Wadi al Batin, and none on his western flank.[27] These dispositions suggested strongly that the Iraqis had not detected the two Coalition corps on the western flank.

Since 2003, assessments of captured Iraqi documents present a more complex story. Those records reveal that beginning in August 1990, Saddam Hussein and his senior Iraqi commanders expected the Coalition to launch a combined air and ground campaign to liberate Kuwait. Further, senior Iraqi officials were unanimous in their assumption that the main Coalition offensive would come on the Kuwaiti border, with a corps-level attack via the Wadi al Batin.[28] Concerns about an amphibious landing in Kuwait began in September 1990 with some of the Iraqi leadership expressing alarm as well about possible Coalition airborne operations to the north of Kuwait City.[29] By January 1991, Saddam and his advisors were clearly focused on enemy forces to the south of the Kuwaiti border and to the east in the Persian Gulf in expectation of attacks from both these directions.

In that month, however, the Iraqi leadership began to receive reports of US forces moving west. Saddam received a report of this on 23 January 1991 from his Military Intelligence Directorate, known as the GMID, which indicated "a massive movement of hostile forces with helicopters going towards Rafha."[30] The GMID director noted that this report correlated positively with information he was receiving from an Iraqi embassy in an unnamed country. At this point, the GMID interpreted this as an American move to protect their western flank during the coming ground offensive which they maintained would come across the Kuwaiti border.

In early February, the GMID reported more indications of a major concentration of Coalition troops on the western flank. One source reported US troops from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions near the Saudi town of Ar Ar, just west of Rafha. This area was in fact the western edge of the XVIII Airborne Corps attack position. The GMID director sent a memorandum to Saddam's office several days later which argued that previous assumption about a Coalition amphibious assault was likely a deception.[31] This information might have had a bigger impact on Saddam and his senior leaders if they were not also receiving intelligence about the concentration of US armor units near the Wadi al Batin as well as imminent amphibious and airborne assaults in Kuwait, all of which reinforced their presumptive understanding of the Coalition plan.[32] Still, in

the second week of February, reports from a variety of sources about large contingents of enemy forces on the western flank continued to flow into senior Iraqi headquarters, breeding confusion about Coalition intent.

By 18 February, confusion had given way to clarity. On that day, the GMID sent Saddam's office a report that offered a generally accurate assessment of the Coalition Left Hook, including a warning that the enveloping force could easily strike deep into Iraq and cut off Iraqi forces in Kuwait.[33] Thus a week before the ground offensive was scheduled to begin, Saddam Hussein and his senior commanders had received a clear picture of the Coalition threat on the western flank and an accurate estimate of the intent of those forces. Yet the Iraqis did essentially nothing to counter this danger. As with the attacks at Pearl Harbor and on 9/11, sometimes accurate indicators can be drowned out in a cacophony of false noise.

The captured records do not reveal how Saddam and his senior reacted to this GMID report or what plans might have been discussed to counter the Left Hook. As one analyst of the captured Iraqi documents has noted, by mid-February 1991, Coalition air superiority meant that the Iraqis could not shift ground forces without risking their destruction. Further, the identification of the Left Hook did not dissipate Iraqi concerns about the amphibious threat and the concentration of enemy forces along the Kuwaiti border, as the coalition remained capable of executing all three simultaneously. Iraqi preconceptions about Coalition intent had paralyzed Saddam Hussein's Army.

The CENTCOM deception plan ultimately proved a success. The use of Magruder's Principle as the foundation of the plan was the most critical factor in the successful deception. For over five months, CENTCOM's dispositions and actions reinforced the Iraqi assumption about how the Coalition would try to liberate Kuwait. CENTCOM's efforts to synchronize the elements of the plan in time and integrate the deception into the operational and tactical levels as well as between ground and maritime services were the reasons why Iraqi preconceptions endured well into February 1991. Clearly, CENTCOM had not been able to prevent the Iraqis from detecting the XVIII Airborne and VII Corps shift to the west. However, in retrospect, that failure was relatively unimportant given Iraqi operational limitations, especially after the Coalition air campaign achieved air superiority. All adversaries have vulnerabilities and good military deception plans take advantage of those weaknesses in order to increase the chance of winning on the battlefield. CENTCOM's deception plan did just this, strengthening the likelihood of victory by confusing the enemy and

preventing him from gaining accurate information about the exact time, place, and scale of the Coalition's successful effort to liberate Kuwait.

Notes

1. Richard M. Swain, *Lucky War: Third Army in DESERT STORM* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 38. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph P. Englehardt, SSI Special Report. *Desert Shield and DESERT STORM: A Chronology and Troop List* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1991), 23-25.

2. Kevin M. Woods, *The Mother of All Battles: Saddam Hussein's Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 125.

3. Woods, 139; Frank N. Schubert and Theresa L. Kraus (eds.), *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations Desert Shield and DESERT STORM* (Washington D.C.: US Army Center of Military History, 1995), 103.

4. Englehardt, *Desert Shield and DESERT STORM,* 22.

5. Swain, *Lucky War,* 76-77. Swain notes that planning for an air offensive began in August 1990.

6. Schubert and Kraus, *The Whirlwind War,* 9-10.

7. Norman H. Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography* (New York: Bantam, 1992), 356.

8. Swain, *Lucky War,* 92.

9. US Army, Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* (Washington DC: 1986), 53.

10. Office of Research and Development, Central Intelligence Agency, "Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore" (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1981), 5.

11. Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama: Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2008), 208.

12. US Army, Field Manual 90-2, *Battlefield Deception* (Washington DC: 1988), 1-30 – 1-32.

13. Lieutenant Colonel Douglas L. Tystad, "The Role of the Media in the Operational Deception Plan for Operation DESERT STORM" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1992), 15. This information obtained by author through interview of chief CENTCOM DESERT STORM planner.

14. Richard M. Swain, *Lucky War,* 89.

15. Stephen A. Bourque, *Jayhawk!: The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2002), 31.

16. Tystad, "The Role of the Media in the Operational Deception Plan for Operation DESERT STORM,"16.

17. Tystad, 20.

18. General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, CENTCOM News Briefing Transcript, 27 February 1991. Reprinted in Major Charles D. Melson, Evelyn A. Englander, and Captain David A. Dawson (eds.) *US Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington DC: USMC Histories and Museums Division, 1995), 49.

19. Tystad, "The Role of the Media in the Operational Deception Plan for Operation DESERT STORM," 31.

20. Tystad, 22.

21. The account of XVIII Airborne Corps deception operations in this paragraph is derived from Gary P. Melton, "XVIII Airborne Corps Deception" in James P. Finley (ed.) *US Army Military Intelligence History: A Sourcebook* (Fort Huachuca, AZ: US Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, 1995), 345-347. This article was originally published in *Military Intelligence* October-December 1991, 43-45.

22. This account of the 1st Cavalry Division's deception actions is derived from Stephen A. Bourque, *Jayhawk!,* 141-146.

23. Bourque, 206.

24. Tystad, "The Role of the Media in the Operational Deception Plan for Operation DESERT STORM," 22-23.

25. Gary P. Melton, "XVIII Airborne Corps Deception," 346.

26. General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, CENTCOM News Briefing Transcript, 27 February 1991, 51.

27. See Tystad, "The Role of the Media in the Operational Deception Plan for Operation DESERT STORM," 25.

28. Kevin M. Woods, *The Mother of All Battles,* 137.

29. Woods, 135.

30. Woods, 188.

31. Woods, 199.

32. Woods, 199.

33. Woods, 207.

Conclusion

The Future of Military Deception Operations

Conrad C. Crane

The first time I encountered the topic of deception in any detail during my professional military education was when I attended the Command and General Staff College in 1990-1991. All our major texts on the topic were translations from Russian sources. The main point I remember learning from those references was that most successful deceptions were based on exploiting existing enemy expectations, I never remember that being called the "Magruder Principle," however. We had no volume like this one to provide historical case studies or look at how other nations incorporated deception into their military campaigns. Yet we realized that somewhere along the line the senior commanders in DESERT STORM must have picked up some tips, as we watched our triumphant forces sweep the befuddled Iraqi army out of Kuwait.

That is the most recent case study in this collection, and a fine example of operational and tactical deception on our part. But that was almost 30 years ago, and the world has changed much since then. While the last 18 years of persistent limited-contingency operations might not feature the lethality or tempo of major combat with a peer or near-peer, in regards to matters of deception there is at least as much to learn from the American experience in 21st-century conflict as from these case studies from the 20th. In a world of constant and conflicting news coverage, ubiquitous social media, and a myriad of surveillance technologies and platforms, the possibilities, complexity, and importance of deception operations have only increased. They have now become a constant, beginning long before and sometimes even independent of combat operations to accomplish national objectives. If I were to suggest the addition of more case studies to this collection it would be examples like Korea where adversaries successfully deceived us, because arguably no enemies have been more successful at effective deception at all three levels of war as our recent foes in these "limited–contingency operations." In fact they have often been able to use tactical deception to obtain extensive strategic effects, collapsing the levels of war together through adroit information campaigns.

Our contemporary world has become so cynical about the nature of truth that almost every action or statement from any source is interpreted

as being deceptive by someone. That contributes to a number of observations worth making about modern warfare:

The Fog of War has become thicker and grayer. Potential adversaries are well aware of the power of American military forces, and will pursue policies designed to challenge us without crossing our threshold to resort to a violent response. Deception at many levels is an essential component of these "Gray Zone" approaches, which can involve the use of proxies, cyber operations, and many forms of subversion by peers and near-peers. This pits Clausewitz against Sun Tzu, with one side primed to see war as violent and the other trying to win without actual fighting. Identifying whether we are in conflict with an adversary, and the exact nature of that conflict, has become more difficult.

Perception is more important than reality. Modern warfare requires constant messaging on many levels. Target audiences include our own soldiers and people, adversary leaders and troops, and international observers. Often what those audiences think we have done is more important than actual accomplishments. And our enemies have been very adroit at exploiting that fact.

All lines of effort are cloaked in information operations. All actions have an information reaction. Because of the importance of shaping perceptions, planners must think carefully about how to control the impact of any task or operation. That includes dealing with unexpected outcomes and things that go wrong. And they must be prepared for attempts by adversaries to distort even the positive results achieved. This requires a continuous anti-deception focus.

Who controls the ground controls the message. This effort to counter adversary deception is made harder by our American penchant for long range precision strikes, whether with Special Operations Forces or smart bombs. Without persistent presence in a target area, our enemies will control post-strike imagery and narratives. A tactical success can become a strategic setback. This happened innumerable times in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Such dilemmas will not disappear in a major conventional fight, especially in heavily populated urban areas. Post-strike assessments must be done quickly and include plans to counter adversary information operations.

The more information you need, the more vulnerable you are to deception. American forces have come to expect almost instantaneous satellite communications with a broad array of headquarters, GPS guidance for targeting and navigation, enemy and friendly force trackers, and a

myriad of useful linked computer databases and software. All of these are vulnerable to enemy manipulation and exploitation.

Spoofing information is much more dangerous than cutting it off. While denying access to those information sources can cripple an operation and threaten the synchronization required to conduct multi-domain operations, even more serious consequences can be obtained by creating distrust in them. We can create all sorts of redundant and resilient systems to work around enemy attempts to deny access to information, but ferreting out false information can be much harder. If every bit of information must first be judged for its reliability, that creates an immense burden on soldiers and systems.

It is easier to deceive us than most of our enemies. There are a couple reasons for this disparity. One is our reliance on so many forms of information that can be subject to deception and disinformation campaigns. Our adversaries have the same exploitive technology that we do. ISIS has employed their own surveillance drones. North Korea has been termed a "cyber superpower" by some commentators. Most of our potential enemies are less reliant on as much information, or are better prepared to deal with its denial. Recent Russian military exercises have featured the use of messengers that not only provides a workaround when other communication means are denied but also reduces electronic signatures and vulnerabilities. This has been a common insurgent tactic in recent limited-contingency operations. Are we prepared to do the same? Our younger soldiers are also from a generation that is always connected with cellphones and social media. That creates more avenues for enemy exploitation, and also vulnerabilities for our own operational security. The other reason is that we have a much more open society than most potential adversaries. Can anyone imagine carrying out Operation FORTITUDE in today's media environment? How would American media react today to the sort of manipulation the British employed in the Falklands campaign? Deception campaigns against us will not just be conducted on the battlefield or in theater, they will also be aimed at the home front. This adds another dimension to the concept of multi-domain operations. And most of the American public has forgotten what war is really like, seeing it as resembling a video game of precision targeting where few people get hurt, making them especially vulnerable to real or distorted images of the actual costs of war.

But we also have more tools for deception. While me may be dependent upon more sources of information than many of our enemies, that also gives us more sources of deception to exploit. Perhaps future operations plans will include an annex on setting up a false trail in social media,

a series of Facebook posts designed to reinforce enemy convictions that we are undisciplined and careless in such communications. And as our enemies adopt many of the new surveillance technologies they can also be targeted. Initially radar appeared to make aerial deception impossible, but eventually we figured out how to jam and spoof it, creating still another pathway to deceive. We can do the same with emerging technologies today.

However, deceiving even relatively simple enemies requires sophisticated operations. As we have recently found in Afghanistan and Iraq, effective deception operations require a great deal of cultural understanding. We have had special difficulties in that arena with non-Western societies. And no matter who the adversary is, we still must deal with our own ubiquitous media, always digging for information and questioning what they get. Everyone seems to have surveillance drones these days, complicating battlefield deception. One careless picture on Facebook can also derail the most sophisticated plan. We are usually operating with allies, as well, with different information capabilities and requirements. In that respect the case studies in this collection are very useful in demonstrating the complexity of successful deception operation even in the twentieth century. Future warfare will magnify the difficulty with additions to the problem set that include urban terrain, lots of civilians, adversaries with very sophisticated information capabilities and countermeasures, an evolving cyber realm, ubiquitous media, distrust of fake news, unrealistic public expectations about weapon accuracy and collateral damage, and the dilemmas of gray zone conflicts. We may win, or lose, the next war, and never really know it.

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