

RDF Sourcebook



When we got to Bremerhaven, we found that instead of going to America, we could ship out to the Persian Gulf and join the U.S. Central Command (the RDF, some still call it).

I should have known better...especially when he started talking about needing "experienced combat veterans, like you men."

RDF Sourcebook is different from other *Twilight: 2000* publications. It is not an adventure in itself, but instead, sets the stage for a series of adventure modules.

The *RDF Sourcebook* contains:

- A map of southern Iran.
- Character generation tables for Americans (USMC, USN, and USAF), British, Iranians, Iraqis, and others.
- An Order of Battle for the remaining forces in the area: U.S., Soviet, Iranian, Iraqi, Saudi, and the British, among others.
- Details and specifications in *Twilight: 2000* terms, of over 30 vehicles and weapons, including selected French, Israeli, British, German, and Brazilian equipment.
- Short descriptions of the major personalities and organizations opposing each other in the Persian Gulf.
- A mission resolution system, allowing referees to take their players on a variety of military missions, ranging from conventional patrol and escort missions to special operations deep behind the enemy lines.

Design: Frank Frey

Development & Additional Design: Loren Wiseman and Frank Chadwick

Research Assistance: Stephanie Robbins

Art Director: Barbie Pratt

Interior Illustrations: Tim Bradstreet and Liz Danforth

Back Cover Illustration: Steve Venters

Sample file



Twilight: 2000™

Series Module

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RDF Sourcebook

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Credits

Design: Frank Frey

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Research Assistance: Stephanie Robbins

Art Director: Barbie Pratt

Interior Illustrations: Tim Bradstreet and Liz Danforth

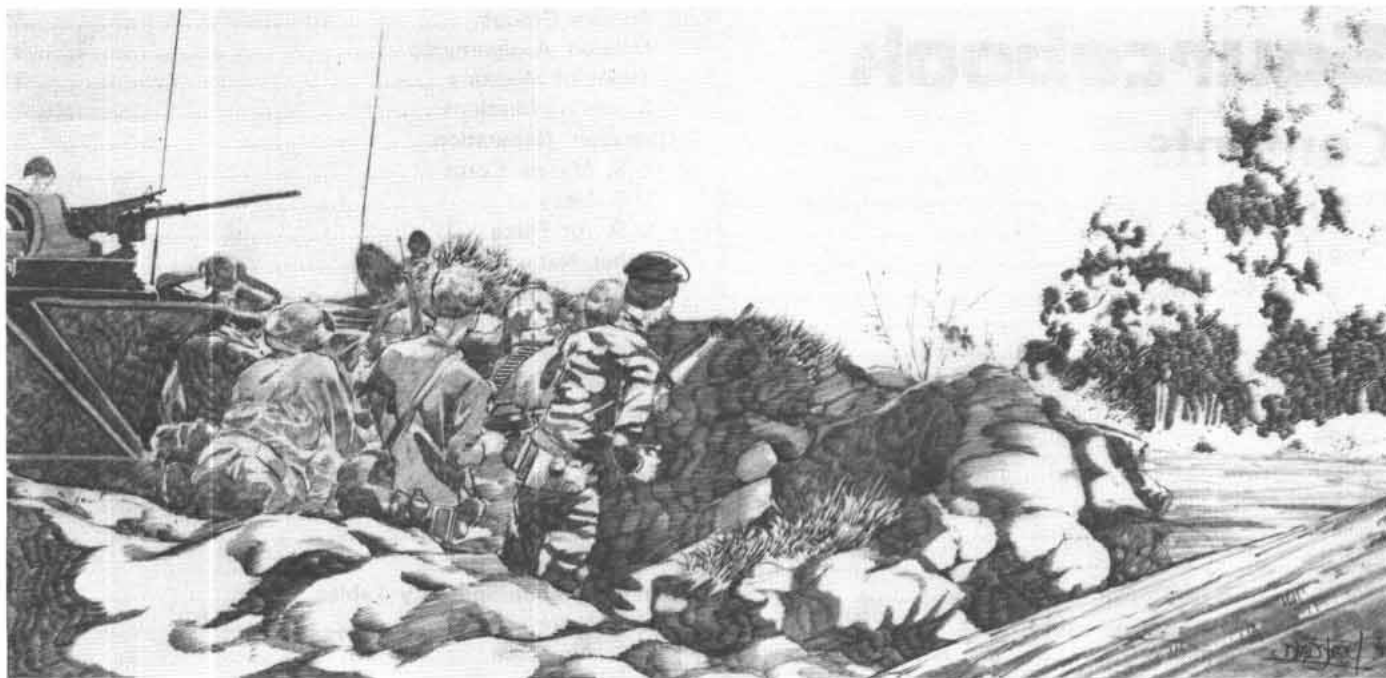
Back Cover: Steve Venters

Game Designers' Workshop

PO Box 1646

Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

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Introduction

The RDF Sourcebook is different from previous *Twilight: 2000* publications in that it is not an adventure, but instead provides the setting and backdrop for a series of adventures. Subsequent modules will present more details of individual regions, but this sourcebook will give a broad overview of the countries, military and political organizations, and personalities involved.

The RDF Sourcebook is intended to familiarize referees (and players, to a lesser extent) with the region around the Persian Gulf which has become the primary "stomping grounds" of the U.S. Central Command. It is in this area (where a few remaining oil refineries produce a trickle of fuel) that the war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is still being fought on something resembling the old terms.

1988-1990

In the early 1990's, several events took place that changed the face of Middle Eastern politics. Following the death of Ayatollah Khomeyni's successor, the *Iran Nowin* (New Iran) movement came into power. Although still committed to the Islamic Revolution, *Iran Nowin* took on more of a nationalist outlook than a religious one. Mullahs were now beginning to preach that the "Great Satan" (the United States) had been properly humbled and was now repenting.

In foreign affairs, the *Iran Nowin* government began a de-escalation of the war with Iraq. The first step was a cease-fire. This quickly became a truce and within a year, a treaty was signed, mandating both sides to withdraw to their pre-war boundaries.

The most important change, however, came about in Israel. American foreign policy, since the late 1980s, had been to bring increasing pressure to bear on the Israeli government to negotiate a settlement with its neighbors. The Jerusalem government realized that loss of US support would maroon them in a sea of enemies, and reluctantly bowed to the inevitable.

The resulting treaties (collectively called Camp David II) established a non-territorial Palestinian state (Palestinians

living in either country would hold dual Israeli/Jordanian citizenship). A treaty between Jordan and Israel was signed and the previous Israeli/Egyptian agreement was re-affirmed.

Extremists on both sides denounced these developments and vowed to continue the fight, but in spite of occasional terrorist incidents, the Camp David II agreements held up. All sides settled in and accepted the new order of things. American prestige and influence hit an all time high in the region.

As the Soviet government became increasingly preoccupied with a rapidly modernizing China, their influence in the Middle East slowly waned. The war in Afghanistan dragged on interminably. Despite a steady influx of men and materiel, the Soviets were no closer to a solution than they were twelve years earlier. The gains that Moscow had made in the Middle East in the 1970's became increasingly difficult to maintain.

1991

In 1991, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Oman signed peace treaties with Israel. Iraq and Syria, however, were heading towards war. The newly formed Organization of Middle Eastern States (OMES) brought pressure to bear on both sides to settle their differences peacefully.

The Soviets, however, had other plans. A pair of coups were covertly engineered. Strongly pro-Soviet governments were installed in Damascus and Baghdad, and the two new governments were urged to patch up their quarrels.

The effect on world opinion was not what had been anticipated, however. Instead of being hailed as peacemakers, the Soviets were denounced by most of the world's governments. Soviet prestige did not improve.

1992-1994

With the invasion of China, one of the major problems facing the Soviet Supreme Command (VGK) was what the US response would be. In particular, the VGK was concerned about the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) whose area of operation included Iran and Pakistan. The Soviets feared a U.S.-Iranian

or U.S.-Pakistani combined operation against their southern borders, in support of China.

To prevent this, the Soviets began infiltrating agitators and terrorists into several pro-western countries in the area. Among the many cover groups formed in the year before the Sino-Soviet war was the *Mourabitin-al-Islam* (Guardians of Islam), formerly a group of Lebanese Islamic Marxists who were now reinforced and re-equipped. Their expanded area of operations included Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan.

Although small in numbers, the groups proved highly effective. The *Mourabitin* movement was especially effective in Iran where they joined with the Iranian Communist Party (the *Tudeh*). Ironically, much of their local support came from Islamic fundamentalists who saw the *Mourabitin/Tudeh* movement as a means of discrediting the *Iran Nowin* government. Another source of covert aid was the *Shir Iran* (Lion of Persia) movement. The *Shir Iran* movement, comprised of diehard Iranian Royalists, hoped to play the fundamentalists off against the Marxists, to the detriment of all but themselves. They would then return the deposed Iranian royal family to the throne.

The Iranian military, still recovering from the recent Iran-Iraq war, had its hands full dealing with the violence. They did, however, have more popular support than the opposition had counted on. This helped turn the tide and by the winter of 1994 only isolated pockets of resistance remained.

The *Mourabitin's* operations in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia never really got off the ground. Most of the *Mourabitin* were quickly rounded up or killed. In Pakistan, *Mourabitin* agitators managed to gain small footholds in the Baluchi Nationalist Movement.

1995

As the first Soviet armored columns roared over the Sino-Soviet border, the *Tudeh* guerrillas again became active and began attacks against Iranian military and civilian targets. In response to this, the *Iran Nowin* government reluctantly allowed the reforming of the *Pasdaran* (Revolutionary Guard), the Islamic Fundamentalist militia.

The Soviets responded by mobilizing the Transcaucasus Front, a reserve force of the southern theater of military operations (TVD). This was ostensibly done to provide more troops for the Sino-Soviet war. The KGB's Transcaucasus Border District also went on full alert and began receiving heavy equipment.

The pro-Soviet Syrian and Iraqi governments withdrew from OMES. They claimed that treaty obligations made it impossible for them to comply with policy. The Syrians denounced OMES as a tool of Western imperialism. The Iraqis didn't say much, but they did sell their oil exclusively to the Soviet Union.

With potentially hostile forces sitting on its northern and western borders, Iran was forced to adapt a policy of neutrality. This policy was unpopular among the Islamic Fundamentalists whose hatred of the Soviet Union was long and deep. The Iranian government sold oil only to "selected non-belligerents".

Relations between Israel and Syria deteriorated rapidly. A demilitarized zone (DMZ) had been established in the Golan Heights following the '87 war. This DMZ was occupied by a UN Peacekeeping Force. When the UN General Assembly fell apart in June of 1995, these troops were left out on a limb.

The Syrians responded quickly. Syrian army units moved to their jump-off points. Syrian commandos began infiltrating UN forward positions. The Israelis began deploying into the Golan Heights. Minor skirmishing broke out, but before things could

get too hot, the Syrians withdrew.

The OMES informed the Syrian government that if Syria started a war with Israel, they would wind up fighting the rest of OMES as well. Faced with the possibility of a war with Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the Syrians withdrew from the DMZ. The Israelis re-occupied the Golan Heights. The UN force was withdrawn.

In September of 1995, a pro-Syrian Lebanese Christian Faction seized power in Lebanon in a bloody coup. They called themselves the Lebanese National Unity Party. They immediately requested Syrian aid. Since Lebanon was not a member of OMES, there was nothing that organization could do about it. The Israelis began shifting units northward while the Syrians moved into southern Lebanon.

The western nations' response to events in the Middle East was mixed. Most NATO nations didn't want to do anything to disrupt the flow of vitally needed oil. Some, however, sent troops. The Sultan of Oman had requested British assistance and London responded by sending the newly formed Middle Eastern Field Force (MEFF). This force consisted of two Gurkha battalions, a battalion of the Parachute Regiment and an infantry battalion (The Kings Own Scottish Borderers). These troops were used mainly for security and training.

Not to be outdone, the French activated the Foreign Legion Operational Group (GOLE) and deployed them to Djibouti. The US government committed the rest of the 7th Special Forces Group and a ranger battalion for anti-terrorist duties.

1996

At the first of the year, the Americans began reinforcing their units in the Gulf region. Air force units were shifted to bases in Saudi Arabia. American military equipment was stockpiled in Saudi Arabia.

When the Pact offensive began to stall in the spring, many leaders took this to mean that the Soviet Union would not be able to effectively intervene in Iran or anywhere else in the Middle East. As the VGK committed more and more divisions and resources to the Far East, the pro-Soviet states in the Middle East became more apprehensive. Soviet military, economic, and political aid was dwindling rapidly.

Israel moved first. Border incidents with Syria increased, then there were artillery duel and cross border airstrikes. The Israelis launched a surprise offensive during Passover.

Initially taken by surprise, the Syrian army recovered quickly. There was heavy fighting in the Bekaa Valley. The Syrians launched a counteroffensive, and only the timely arrival of Israeli airborne troops prevented total disaster.

After this setback, the campaign settled into a stalemate. The Israeli armed forces had deteriorated badly in the years since their sweeping victories of the 1960s and 1970s, becoming less of a European style army, and more of a Middle Eastern one. Damascus eventually fell, but only after a long and costly siege.

While this went on, the situation in Iran steadily worsened. The *Tudeh* guerrillas became bolder in their attacks. They controlled large portions of northeastern Iran. The *Tudeh* not only fought, they established a political infrastructure. *Tudeh* rule was harsh and sometimes brutal, but at least it brought a modicum of stability.

Another powerful faction, the *Pasdaran* militia established a power base in the area around the city of Qom. The Imams of the *Pasdaran* enforced a strict fundamentalist interpretation of the *Shariah* (Islamic Law), often at the point of a gun.



However, they did keep order and suppressed the *Tudeh* guerrillas in their area. The *Pasdar* soon began making demands on the Iranian government. They insisted that their mullahs (holy men) be attached to regular Iranian armed forces units to insure their spiritual purity. The Iranian government refused, fearing a return to the type of fundamentalist government that had nearly ruined Iran a decade before.

In March, *Pasdar* units tried to storm the Soviet Embassy in Tehran. The Iranian Army and National Police stopped them after several hours of hard fighting. The Soviet Embassy closed, but the Soviets maintained a low-key diplomatic presence through the Cuban Embassy.

The northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz fell to the *Pasdar* in April. This precipitated a crisis in the Iranian government. Many members of parliament were openly advocating recognition of the *Tudeh* as a counterbalance to the growing power of the *Pasdar*. The Islamic Fundamentalist Party pushed for a return to rule by the mullahs. As the parliament argued, the country was falling apart around them. *Iran Nowin* became a minority government.

The Iranian military had had enough. With the tacit approval of the *Iran Nowin* government, they dissolved parliament, declared a state of national emergency and placed the country under martial law. A National Emergency Council, composed of military and civilian leaders came to power. The various militias were ordered to either lay down their arms or place themselves under military control. They did neither.

The *Tudeh* party ignored the proclamation. The *Pasdar*'s reaction was more active. They saw the National Emergency Council as a group of secular warlords out to destroy the purity of Islam. One group, calling itself the Anti-Satanic Army, began marching on Tehran. Other *Pasdar* units (along with several bands of marauders) joined them.

The Council, realizing that it would only be a matter of time before Soviet troops crossed the border into Iran, decided to evacuate Tehran. By mid-June, the withdrawal was complete, and a provisional capital established at Esfahan.

The U.S., France, and the UK began sending military and economic aid. The Soviets also sent covert aid to the *Tudeh* guerrillas in the form of heavy weapons and some old tanks.

By July, northern Iran had become a free fire zone. Various

warlords and their militias fought among themselves for control of Tehran and other cities. The *Pasdar* and *Tudeh* militias had a particularly bitter war going on between them. More and more refugees headed south to seek the relative safety of the National Emergency Council's area of control.

On the 1st of July, the Soviet Transcaucasus Military District got a new commanding officer, Colonel-General Pioter Alexanderayvitch Suryakin. General Suryakin was considered by many western experts to be one of the Red Army's leading specialists in mobile warfare. The official line from Moscow was that Suryakin had been seriously wounded in the recent battle for Shenyang. He had been placed in command of the military district as a temporary appointment until his injuries had healed.

General Suryakin, contrary to Moscow's statement, was not there to recover from his wounds. His orders from the VGK were to secure the Persian Gulf region before the Americans could intervene. The Syrians were in no position to help. The Iraqis seemed rather hesitant to go to war again with Iran. Still, Suryakin had other cards he could play.

In October, the situation in Germany took everyone by surprise. The United States placed all its regular military forces on full alert and mobilized the National Guard and Reserves. The Soviets increased the call-up of Category 3 and 4 Divisions.

The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported itself ready for deployment to the Middle East on October 21st. CENTCOM's forward headquarters element was already camped in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The commanding officer of CENTCOM, General Vincent Barbaneri, urged the Joint Chief of Staff to deploy CENTCOM immediately before the Soviets moved into the region.

The Americans discovered that while they could mobilize an impressive military force, transporting it to where it was needed was another matter entirely. Troop movements were placed on a priority basis. Most available transport was used to move troops to Europe. General Barbaneri was told that CENTCOM would begin deploying in December.

In December, when the first American units crossed the East German border, the situation drastically changed. The United States and the Soviet Union were at war, and CENTCOM's deployment would be delayed until after the first of the year (all available transport was needed to support the war in Europe).

General Suryakin took advantage of the situation. The lead division of the 7th Guards Army advanced into northwestern Iran, and encountered fanatical resistance from the *Pasdar* militia. The Soviets countered this by using chemical weapons on a massive scale as they had in China.

The *Pasdar* exacted a heavy price for their lives (two Soviet divisions were severely mauled), but the offensive rolled on. Tabriz fell to the Soviets on Christmas Day and Tehran was occupied by year's end. As the war in Iran proceeded, tensions between India and Pakistan grew.

1997

The first units of CENTCOM began to arrive in Saudi Arabia. The 82nd Airborne Division, the 75th Infantry Regiment (Ranger) and the 5th Special Forces Group were flown in by priority airlift.

The Soviets committed two more armies, the 4th and the 45th to the campaign in Iran. They linked up with the *Tudeh* militia. By February, Qom had fallen.

It had been eight months since the Iranian People's Army had withdrawn from northern Iran. The Iranian High Command had used the time well. Ammunition and supplies had been stock-

piled in underground cave complexes. The Iranian Air Force had been dispersed to numerous small airfields. After seeing what had happened to the *Pasdaran*, the army intensified its chemical warfare training.

As the first elements of the 82nd Airborne Division began landing in Saudi Arabia, the Soviets resumed their offensive. The first phase of the offensive was a series of commando raids by air assault and airborne units. These operations were only partially successful. Several strike teams were wiped out by Iranian commandos. Other teams reached their assigned targets only to find that they were dummy installations. The raids caused some disruption but the results were less than had been expected. *Spetsnaz* teams attacked American airfields in Saudi Arabia. US Air Force Security units stopped these raids with a minimal loss of aircraft and lives.

For the next three days, massive air battles raged over central and southern Iran. Iranian Tornados and American F-15's tangled with Soviet Mig-23's and Su-27's. Losses on both sides were high and the tempo of operations slowed as both sides wished to conserve aircraft and crew.

The Soviet ground offensive got rolling again in mid-February. The 7th Guards Army attacked the positions of the Iranian I Corps in the Kermanshah-Hamadan-Borujerd area. The Soviet 4th Army launched a drive to take Esfahan by way of Arak and Kashan, an area defended by the Iranian II Corps. The 45th Army was held in reserve. Hamadan fell on the first of March. Kashan and Arak fell three days later. By mid-March, Borujerd was taken after very hard fighting.

The Soviet advance was greatly aided by the Iranian *Tudeh* guerrillas. Operating in small units, they infiltrated bases and staged rear area raids. Faced with these tactics and massive Soviet firepower, the Iranian People's Army was hard pressed to hold on. The key city of Kermanshah fell on the 29th of March.

While the Soviets and the Iranians were fighting, CENTCOM was being reinforced. In March, the 101st AAD, the 24th ID, and the 6th ACCB arrived in Saudi Arabia. The 24th ID began arriving in Saudi Arabia at the end of March.

The tempo of operations slowed down in April. The Soviets were busy consolidating their gains in northern and central Iran. A People's Democratic Republic of Iran was proclaimed and the *Tudeh* Party established its capital in Tehran. Syria and the Soviet Union were the only two governments that recognized the new regime.

As the NATO offensive into Poland gained momentum, the Transcaucasus Military District was tapped to provide reinforcements, mainly aircraft.

The Iranian High Command was grateful for the breathing space. Their forces were badly battered. Vehicle and aircraft losses had been high. The manpower losses were made up by a form of voluntary conscription. The material losses were harder to make up. The supply of available equipment was dwindling. The National Council moved its location from Esfahan to the more easily defensible city of Shiraz.

General Barbaneri had problems of a different sort. With the NATO offensive in full swing, there was increasing pressure from Washington to begin offensive operations. The 5th Special Forces Group had already begun working with Kurdish irregulars in western Iran, but this was not enough for the politicians who were anxious for a quick victory over the Soviets.

Logistics was General Barbaneri's main concern. He knew he could launch a successful offensive against the Soviets but he was uncertain if it could be sustained. Most of the available

transport was tied up shipping supplies to Europe. General Cummings lobbied on CENTCOM's behalf and managed to get a trickle of supplies into the Middle East.

To the east, the situation between India and Pakistan degenerated into total war. With Pakistan effectively neutralized, General Suryakin conceived a daring plan to secure the Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf. He would use the *Tudeh* guerrillas as an infiltration force to seize key installations. After this, Soviet airborne forces (the 103rd and 105th Guards Airborne Divisions, plus the 94th Air Assault Brigade) would be airdropped in to support them. A rapid overland advance making maximum use of chemical weapons to clear out pockets of resistance was to follow immediately. This plan suffered a setback when the Soviet chemical weapons stocks were severely depleted by airstrikes, but Suryakin decided to proceed anyway.

On April 21st, the Soviet *desantniki* (airborne) struck like thunderbolts. The 104th Guards landed at Bandar-e Khomeyni; the 105th Guards seized Bushehr while the 103rd Guards assaulted Bandar Abbas. The 94th AAB seized Chah Bahar. At the same time, Soviet artillery subjected Iranian positions to a massive bombardment. When the barrage lifted, the resupplied and re-equipped Soviet Armies surged forward.

The Iranian People's Army put up a fierce resistance, but nevertheless, the Soviets drove deeper into the Zagros Mountains. Esfahan fell on the 28th of April. By the end of the month, the 7th Guards Army was in the outskirts of Dezful, the 4th Army was advancing south to Esfahan and the 45th Army had taken Yazd. The Council at Shiraz was cut off by the Soviet advance.

With Soviet mechanized forces advancing towards the Persian Gulf, General Barbaneri ordered the US XVIII Airborne Corps into action. On May 3rd, the 82nd Airborne Division and two battalions of the 75th Infantry Regiment (Ranger) were airdropped into the Bandar-e Khomeyni-Khorramshahr area. US Navy surface units and gunships of the 6th ACCB provided fire support. The 101st AAD made an airmobile landing in the Bushehr area, supported by units of the Iranian Navy and two battalions of Iranian Marines.

The fighting was heavy. The 104th Guards was strung out between Bandar-e Khomeyni and Khorramshahr. The US Ranger battalions infiltrated the *Desantniki*'s positions, cutting roads and communications lines.

For the next three days, Soviet *desantniki* and American paratroopers engaged in a brutal war of small actions and skirmishes. The Soviets began to withdraw on May 6th, a battered, but still cohesive fighting force. The 82nd was ordered to hold their positions until the 24th ID could relieve them.

The 105th Guards, at Bushehr and Ganaveh, fared worse than the 104th Guards. Most of the divisions' personnel were newly raised conscripts. Their officers hadn't had much time to get used to working with each other. Command and control was a definite problem.

On the night of May 2nd, US Navy SEAL teams and Iranian Marine commandos made a series of devastating raids against the 105th's communications and command networks. The division commander and his chief of staff were assassinated. Command posts and supply dumps were destroyed. Those anti-aircraft positions not destroyed by ground operations were knocked out by airstrikes.

When the first assault waves of UH-60's and AH-64's made their pre-dawn landing, the Soviets were in a state of total confusion. By 1600 hours on May 3rd, the 105th Guards Airborne