

# 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division Armored Doctrine and Standard Operating Procedure

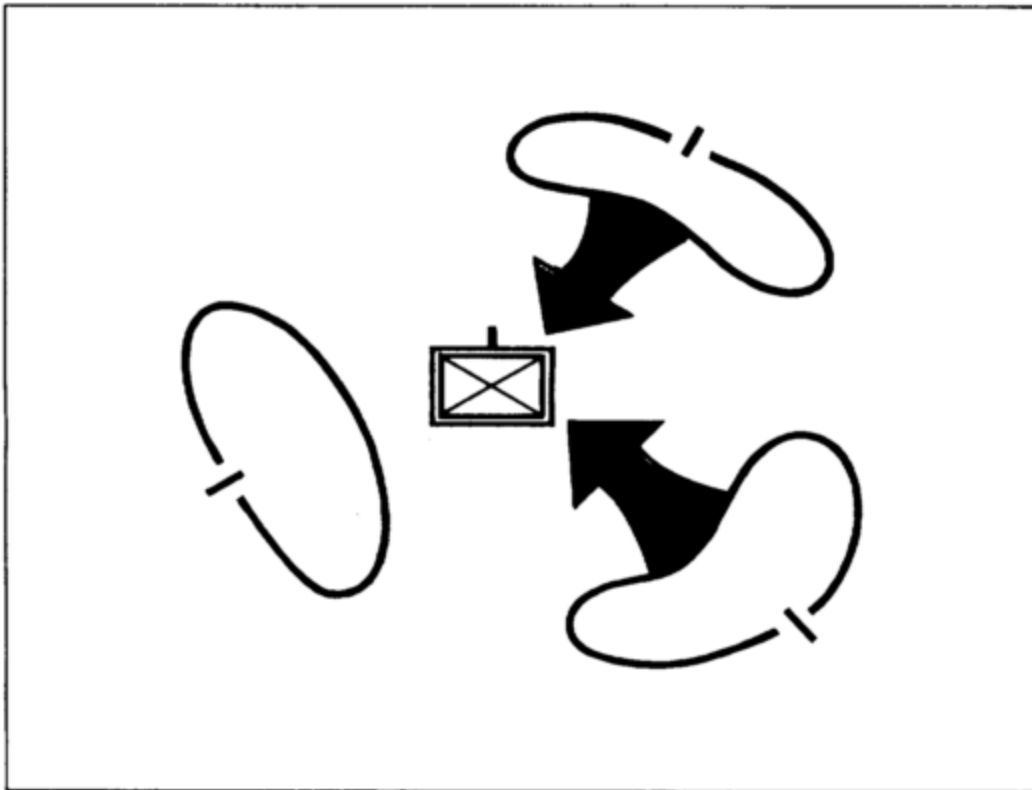
## Conceptual Theory

**At the root of armored warfare is the judgment that the enemy should be destroyed.**

Historically eradication in warfare was first implemented in the years preceding the Hellenistic period (ca. 323 BCE to 146 CE) during Alexander the Great's campaigns against the Persian Empire. Prior to Alexander way of war was to clash elements of spearmen (hoplites) in frontal engagements of attrition; victory was usually accomplished when the enemy force was exhausted and retreated, or the two sides mutually agreed to retire. Alexander's theorists when matched with the overwhelming numerical odds levied against them in the Persian Empire were forced to innovate beyond this tactic or face defeat, as a frontal back-and-forth attrition battle would soundly result in defeat for the Macedonians, regardless of their superior equipment and drill training. The "hammer and anvil" and "pincer movement" evolved as a result, two concepts which are at the heart of modern armored warfare and hopefully, the tactics of 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon.

Alexander used fast maneuvering elements, heavy cavalry called Hetaroi (Companions), to penetrate a particular point in the enemy line, charging deep into enemy lines and encircling a part or the entirety of the enemy force, forming a "pocket" by assaulting from the rear (the "hammer"), the enemy reduced by the "anvil" of steadily approaching spearmen. This bold new method of using force relied upon a highly trained, disciplined and cohesive fighting force, as the exposed "pincers" (the attacks which penetrated and encircled the force) were vulnerable to flanking attacks from the enemy's own maneuver forces. Alexander's maneuver elements had to be better, for lack of a better word, than their Persian equivalents, while also having the discipline and personal courage to operate behind enemy lines until the main infantry force arrived to relieve them from the front.

Alexander succeeded in drilling the most elite cavalry force the world had yet seen, and deployed them using his new tactics. The result was disastrous for the Persians, who were accustomed to simply overwhelming their opponents with a massive numerical superiority and lacked the training, linguistic cohesion and discipline to quickly respond to the fast moving cavalry. In every battle the significantly outnumbered Macedonians engaged the Persians, the Hetaroi would maneuver outward from the flanks, penetrate the mass of the Persian line, face and defeat the Persian's own cavalry, charge deeply in and turn about to attack from the rear as the impenetrable phalanx wall advanced steadily forward, trapping the enemy force between a hammer and anvil. The result was eradication, a fundamentally different outcome from the conflicts of attrition which had come before this innovative strategy.



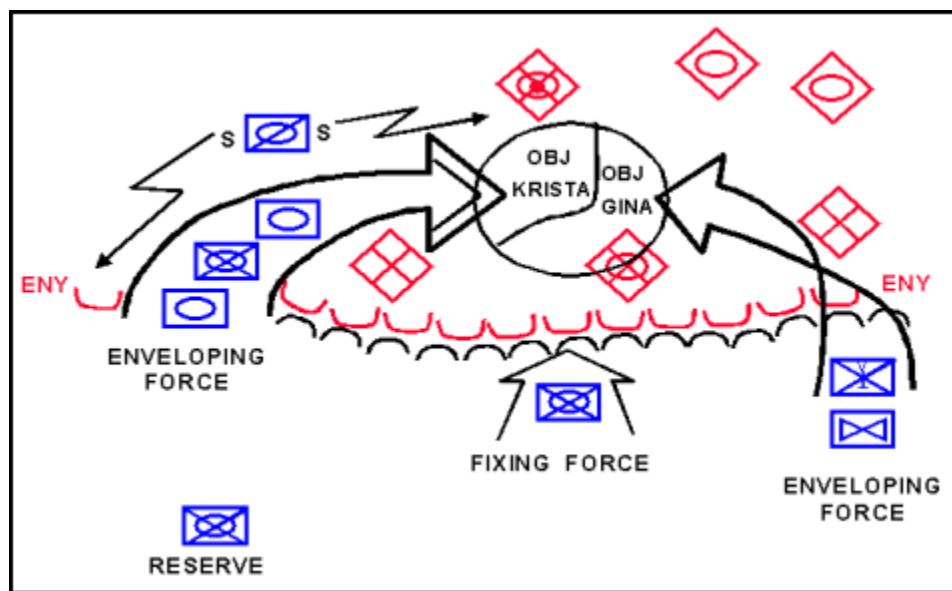
**Figure G-2. Hammer and anvil technique.**

This tactic became the “gold standard” of victorious armies up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reaching an apex with the Prussian military tradition. By the First World War enveloping attacks by cavalry had become impractical, as the weapons deployed were capable of inflicting massive immediate casualties to flanking forces, while the flanking elements remained nearly as soft as they had been in the days of Alexander. Warfare once again became attritional, and the First World War was soon dubbed “the war to end all wars” because it seemed impossible to ever truly defeat a modern country’s army. The machine gun simply dealt too many casualties: a tiny force, properly armed, fortified in a trench system, could reliably defeat a superior force. Flanking movements of cavalry were inhibited by deadly walls of interlocking automatic fire, trench systems, barbwire and mines. The days of maneuver warfare seemed to be at an end, and annihilation warfare with it.

In the years preceding World War II Heinz Guderian, a German military theorist, influenced heavily by his time as a Jaeger (‘hunter’ rapid assault infantry) during the Great War, his time working in signals and supply companies during the interwar period, the Prussian school of thought and the theoretical doctrine of J.F.C. Fuller, helped to train and implement the first modern tank divisions. Guderian essentially reinvented the “hammer and anvil” of the past ages with his concept of “schwerpunkt” (focal point), attacking from the flanks with a new type of cavalry resistant to casualties and focusing all local artillery and air support at a specific

breakthrough location to ensure successful penetration. Once penetration was successful the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the action was implemented: paralysis. During paralysis interdiction sorties, rapidly moving armored elements and (possibly) airborne attacks were implemented to quickly disable the enemy's ability to respond to the encircling force and to destroy the enemy's logistical system. The last stage of the action was the "cauldron battle" (Kesselschlacht) which included the tightening of a pocket around a finally encircled enemy force and its eventual liquidation by a concentric assault. To review:

1. Schwerpunkt: A focusing of force at a particular point to achieve penetration
2. Paralysis: Interdiction to disable enemy logistical and operational ability
3. Cauldron Battle: The destruction of the paralyzed enemy force through encirclement.



Guderian's doctrine of armored warfare was hugely successful in the same way Alexander had been against his shocked enemies some two millennia earlier: every enemy force which the German military machine engaged was decisively defeated. During the opening phases of Barbarossa massive pockets containing millions of encircled Russian soldiers were liquidated using Guderian's method, as entire army groups were destroyed. His method was elegantly replicated at both corp and company level, serving a coherently universal doctrine. It could be argued that the war itself was not lost on the battlefield but defeat was more due to the bumbling incompetence of the highest level of command: Hitler failed to set consistent objectives during the most critical Russian Barbarossa campaign, and through his delusional politics and absurd expectations, led the technically superior German military to failure.

Today the theory of Guderian has essentially become what the Macedonian way of war was to those who followed in Alexander's wake: the standard way of war. Most recently Norman Schwarzkopf utilized Guderian's tactics to stunning success in the Gulf War, effectively destroying Saddam Hussein's army through rapid maneuver warfare and effective usage of close

air support and interdiction. **It is proposed that we continue this doctrinal legacy for 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon, using armor as a mobile force to penetrate, paralyze, encircle and destroy enemy forces.**

## The Culture of Command

For armor to be used effectively a certain culture must exist at every level of command so that friendly forces make decisions faster than the enemy forces and so outmaneuver them. In other words: the friendly “decision cycle” must be more effective than the “decision cycle” implemented by the opposing force. In ARMA, the decision speed of OPFOR is not immediate, so this concept can be replicated with general realism.

For the armor to be most effective in combat 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon must utilize “directive control.” Directive control involves a notification by superiors of intent and the role to which the ordered unit must fulfill in the upcoming engagement. The implementation of that intent (directive) then becomes a matter for the low-level commander to determine, suited best to the situation on the ground. In this fashion command burden is reduced at the highest levels and spread among commands more knowledgeable of their own situation. In this fashion significant decisions can be effected quickly, without burdening reliance on high command’s consent and knowledge. Initiative is the virtue of maneuver warfare, as it fosters implementation of the doctrine. Decentralization, assuming the low level commands are properly trained beforehand, leads to victory over a centralized and slow to respond opposing force.

## Essential Support

For maneuver armored warfare to be successful it must be supported with all the available air and artillery resources during the opening phase (“Schwerpunkt”) of the action in order to ensure penetration and consequent paralysis. Ideally armored platoon leaders would be able to call for close air support and momentarily receive effect on target. As pincer attacks are vulnerable to flanking attacks and being pocketed themselves, proper reconnaissance is a must: armored platoon commanders should have a reliable knowledge of the terrain and the opposing forces before them, provided by scout elements. As the attacking spearhead must think quicker than the opposing force, a lack of knowledge in this regard results in delay, and at worst, an effective counterattack against the pincer, resulting in loss of force. Delay is the vice of maneuver warfare, as in the words of Guderian: “success must be exploited without respite and with every ounce of strength, even by night. The defeated enemy must be given no peace.”

2<sup>nd</sup> platoon must be the central focus of support during the initial stages of an attack: all of the company’s resources must be at the platoon leader’s disposal, so that a successful

encirclement can be completed. The 227 must initially aid in the ground attack of OPFOR elements opposing penetration, and once the armored pincer is rolling behind enemy lines, switch to interdiction and reconnaissance sorties so that the tank commanders can quickly outmaneuver paralyzed OPFOR elements. As a practical example a platoon of OPFOR mechanized infantry, their vehicles neutralized through interdiction fire, should not be destroyed by the deeply penetrating armor force, but would better be bypassed so that the armored force can complete encirclement of the greater OPFOR force. The OPFOR mechanized element, already immobilized, can be liquidated by the “anvil” of approaching infantry or BLUFOR mechanized elements.

Without artillery, recon and aerial support tanks become expensive liabilities. The armored encirclement does not succeed because it destroys the enemy force itself, it succeeds because it outmaneuvers, outthinks and fosters the paralyzing of the enemy force; it is tact rather than brute strength which brings about victory.

## Practical Example

The following is an example of the doctrine in action: an AAR written by myself detailing the capture of Dolores using a numerically inferior armored force to paralyze, encircle and liquidate an enemy force. Originally from: <http://www.1st-cav.us/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=5804>

3/27/09 1755 est

Objective(s):

- 1) Capture Dolores
- 2) Effectively use Schwerpunkt tactics
- 3) Avoid losing our armor in the town
- 4) Avoid being bogged down as infantry support vehicles
- 5) Effectively plan and execute a urban assault without disintegration, using the tanks strengths to our advantage
- 6) Get the new armor recruits used to armor combat
- 7) Utilize effective cover against armored OPFOR; improve silhouetting

Roster:

In Attendance

- 1) PFC. Krause
- 2) SPC. Curtis
- 3) PVT. Levesque
- 4) PVT. Howe
- 5) PV2. Kirkwood

6)PVT. Mahon

7)SGT. Tyler

Weapons Used: Standard mechanized infantry pack, m-16/m4 with AT-4

Vehicles Used: 2 M1a1, 1 Harrier GBU (pre-op), 1 Repair Truck

Pre-op History:

Captured Cayo under the command of SPC. Curtis with Sgt. Tyler offering sporadic close air support via Harrier GBU. PVT. Mahon left before the assault on Cayo was complete. After mustering our armored force we arrived at the southern outskirts of Dolores, SPC. Curtis ordered an assault on the town but had to leave. PFC. Krause took command.

Tank 1 (set left):

PFC. Krause (TC/Gunner)

PV2. Kirkwood (Driver/assistant TC)

Tank 2 (set right):

SPC. Curtis (TC/Gunner - left pre-op)

PVT. Mahon (Driver - left pre-op)

PVT. Levesque (Driver)

PVT. Howe (Gunner/TC)

Repair Truck (pre-op and setup):

PVT. Howe (Engineer)

Assault Fireteam 1:

PFC. Krause

2 AT paratroopers

2 Rifle paratroopers

1 SPOF paratrooper

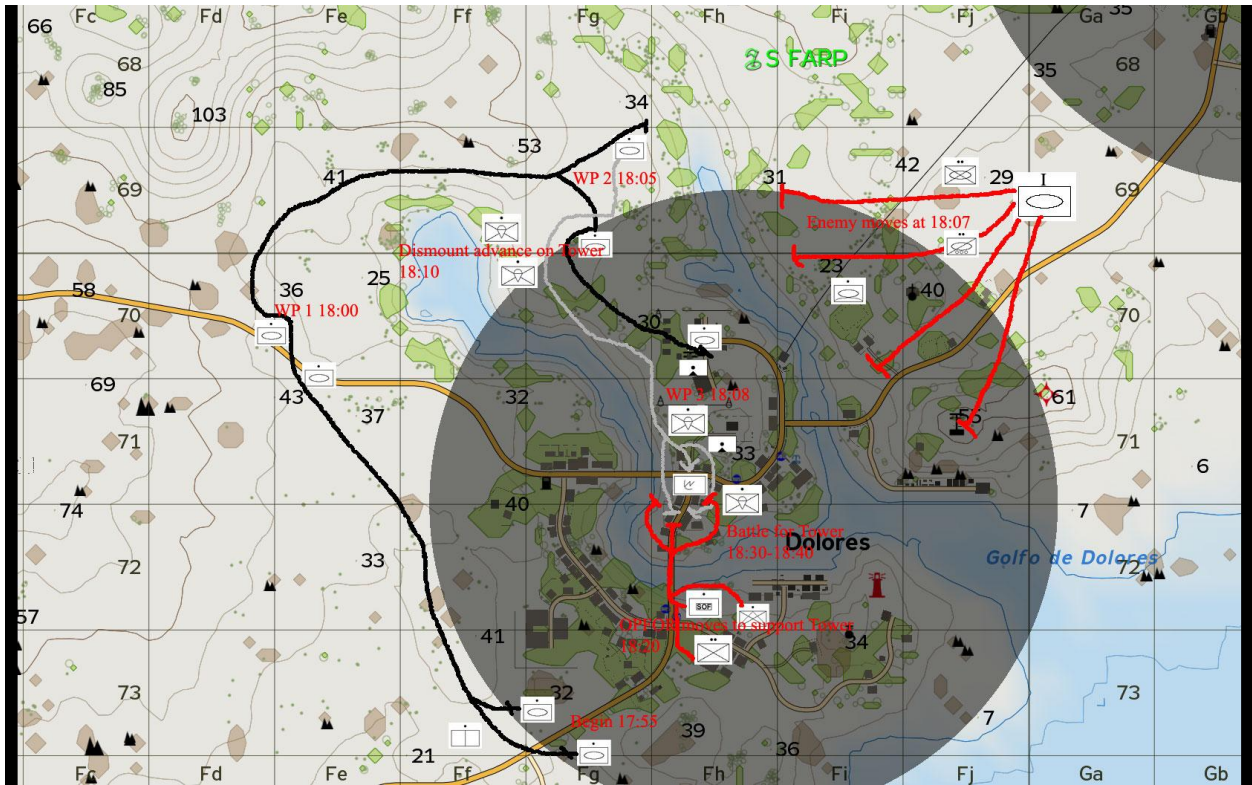
1 MG paratrooper

Assault Fireteam 2:

PV2. Kirkwood

Assorted paratroopers

Operational History:



Full size: <http://www.krauselabs.net/dump/aar2.JPG>

17:55

Tank 1 and 2 form line in FG73 500 meters from rear support truck and engage forward elements of OPFOR infantry while PFC. Krause checks the map to plan the attack. It is decided to bypass the bridges and avoid street to street fighting, an alternative plan is hatched. Completely bypassing the urban center and river, Tank Force will overwatch at WP1 and WP2 in preparation for an assault on the radio tower. From WP2 road 69 will be isolated from the town, barring mechanized and armor elements from relieving encircled OPFOR infantry. The radio tower will be captured by foot elements and tank 2 while tank 1 overwatch road 69. Once the radio tower is destroyed, tank 2 is to return to WP2 and reform line while foot elements secure town.

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Go order is called, advance toward WP1 in column, both tanks set right.

18:00

Infantry garrison and DH-30 engaged from overwatch WP1, as infantry shifts toward the highlands advance is ordered to continue.

18:05

Tank 1 and 2 form overwatch line at WP2. Scattered infantry contacts in the urban centre of Dolores, within 2 minutes OPFOR armored company is detected advancing to relieve the town and is engaged. ZSU-24 and BMP destroyed at Hill 23. Enemy rocket attack immobilizes Tank 1, PFC. Krause orders dismount, orders Tank 2 to cover at WP3, set left toward Road 69. Numerous BRDMs, BMPs, UAZs and T72s roll from the north and are destroyed while PFC. Krause and PV2. Kirkwood muster paratroopers to take the tower.

18:10

Assault Fireteam 2 (Kirkwood) screens the advance of Assault Fireteam 1 (Krause) toward Dolores centre.

18:12

DH-30 at WP3 (neutralized 18:05-18:10) captured, trained at road north into town. OPFOR armored and mechanized elements continue to move and engage Tank 2 - who use hill 30's barracks and strongpoints as enfilade against downward fire. Assault Team 2 continues forward, engaging forward elements of company-sized OPFOR infantry force advancing from hill 34.

18:20

DH-30 at Hill 33 (neutralized 18:00-18:05) captured and trained at north road. Together with DH-30 at WP3 and Tank 2, 3 interlocking cones of fire make advance by OPFOR armored and mechanized units into town impossible. Sporadic small arms engagement by OPFOR and BLUFOR elements as Assault Teams 1 and 2 approach and encircle the radio tower. Tank 2 is damaged by enemy armor but is not immobilized or disabled.

18:30-18:40

Tank 2 continues to engage numerous armored and mechanized targets, effectively using cover to cut off the armor advancing to relieve the town, ensuring encirclement. The support DH-30s as well as Tank 2 run black as the radio tower is finally reached by PV2. Kirkwood's team. Street-to-street fighting commences between OPFOR Infantry Company and Assault Team 1 and 2 encircling pincers, heavy casualties are inflicted upon OPFOR. At 18:40 the radio tower is destroyed by plastic explosives of PV2. Kirkwood.

18:40-18:60



Assault Teams 1 and 2, supported by Tank 2 secure the town. Tank 2 becomes black on SABOT and HEAT.

## Analysis

While in the past 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon was used as infantry support, screening the foot advance of infantry elements and often being used as AFVs in urban warfare, contributing to the routine immobilization and destruction of said vehicles. Armor was used in this example to isolate an urban centre from a relieving force while the “anvil” of the slower elements secured the town. With proper air support and additional armored fireteams, such an assault would have even been more effective than it was. I have personally attended many assaults on this same town headed by 1CD leadership where the old tactics had been employed: a slow infantry-supported crawl directly into the town, with no pincer movement or attempt to flank the enemy. The result was always the same: being bogged down in street to street fighting with heavy casualties, immobilization and abandonment of our tanks and prominence of the better positioned enemy armored company.

Under my command the town was bypassed entirely while the roads leading to it were isolated by armor elements, the OPFOR elements stranded in town effectively “encircled,” able to be slowly reduced by the anvil, with only one casualty (ironically occurring during the assault on the town rather than the encirclement). 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon’s armored pincer effectively cut off access to the immobile enemy force from the north and west, while a natural barrier of Dolores Golf provided the equivalent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> pincer enveloping from the right flank.

This is a mockup example of what becomes capable when using armored warfare properly, and it was accomplished without complete crews, with only minimal training by the 1CD members involved, and without inclusive air support.