

= Operation Corridor 92 =

Operation Corridor 92 (Serbian : ?????????? ???????? 92 , Operacija Koridor 92) was an operation conducted during the Bosnian War by the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) against the forces of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) and the Croatian Army (HV) in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina between 24 June and 6 October 1992 . The objective of the offensive was to re-establish a road link between the city of Banja Luka in the west of the country and the eastern parts of the territory controlled by the Bosnian Serbs . The offensive was prompted by the capture of Derventa by the HV and the HVO ? a move that blocked the single overland road between the VRS and controlled territories .

The VRS successfully recaptured Derventa and pushed the HVO and the HV north , capturing several towns in the process . In the second phase of the offensive , the VRS reached the Sava River , the border with Croatia , and destroyed a bridgehead held by the HV and the HVO at Bosanski Brod . The offensive involved more than 60 ,000 troops and resulted in heavy casualties for all sides , especially the HVO . The outcome later caused speculation that it was the result of a political arrangement between Serb and Croatian leaders to secure a land trade .

= = Background = =

As the Yugoslav People 's Army (Jugoslovenska narodna armija ? JNA) withdrew from Croatia following the acceptance and start of implementation of the Vance plan , its 55 ,000 officers and soldiers born in Bosnia and Herzegovina were transferred to a new Bosnian Serb army , which was later renamed the Army of Republika Srpska (Vojska Republike Srpske ? VRS) . This reorganisation followed the declaration of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 9 January 1992 , ahead of the 29 February ? 1 March 1992 referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina . This declaration would later be cited by the Bosnian Serbs as a pretext for the Bosnian War . Bosnian Serbs began fortifying the capital , Sarajevo , and other areas on 1 March . On the following day , the first fatalities of the war were recorded in Sarajevo and Doboj . In the final days of March , Bosnian Serb forces bombarded Bosanski Brod with artillery , drawing a border crossing by the HV 108th Brigade in response . On 4 April , JNA artillery began shelling Sarajevo .

The JNA and the VRS in Bosnia and Herzegovina faced the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine ? ARBiH) and the Croatian Defence Council (Hrvatsko vijeće obrane ? HVO) , reporting to the Bosniak and Croat dominated central government and the Bosnian Croat leadership respectively , as well as the HV , which occasionally supported HVO operations . A UN arms embargo introduced in September 1991 , had hampered the preparation of the various forces , but in late April , the VRS was able to deploy 200 ,000 troops , along with hundreds of tanks , armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and artillery pieces , while the HVO and the Croatian Defence Forces (Hrvatske obrambene snage ? HOS) could field approximately 25 ,000 soldiers and a handful of heavy weapons . The ARBiH was largely unprepared , however , lacking heavy weapons and possessing small arms for less than half of its force of approximately 100 ,000 troops . By mid-May 1992 , when those JNA units which had not been transferred to the VRS withdrew from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the newly declared Federal Republic of Yugoslavia , the VRS controlled approximately 60 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina .

= = Prelude = =

Following its successful defence of Bosanski Brod in March , the HVO , reinforced by HV troops , pushed the JNA and the VRS south from the town and captured the towns of Modriča and Derventa by the end of May . The capture of Derventa also severed the last road available to the Bosnian Serbs spanning VRS and controlled western Bosnia around Banja Luka and the VRS held territory in the east of the country , adjacent to Serbia . That prevented the supply of Banja Luka as well as the bulk of the territory gained by the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK) and Croatian Serbs

in Croatia since the initial phase of the Croatian War of Independence .

The loss of the road link caused substantial supply problems in Banja Luka and the surrounding area , and resulted in a VRS counterattack against the HVO and HV forces in the area . At the same time , the VRS and the JNA captured Doboj and Bosanski ?amac to the east and south of the HVO / HV advance . In June , the VRS 1st Krajina Corps initiated preliminary operations against the HVO / HV @-@ held area around Derventa , attempting to improve VRS positions needed to launch a major attack there . By 20 July , the VRS captured the villages of Kotorско and Johovac north of Doboj and achieved the main objective of the preliminary advance .

The deaths of twelve newborn babies in Banja Luka hospital due to a shortage of incubator bottled oxygen were an immediate cause for the action .

= = Offensive = =

= = = Order of Battle = = =

According to Croatian author Jerko Zovak , the VRS deployed 40 @,@ 800 troops at the beginning of Operation Corridor 92 , and the force was increased to 54 @,@ 660 by the end of the initial phase of the offensive . The VRS tasked the 1st Krajina Corps with the main effort of the offensive . The corps and the operation were under command of General Momir Tali? . The RSK also contributed troops to the offensive , and these forces were commanded directly by the RSK Interior Minister , Milan Marti? .

According to Zovak , the HVO and the HV had 20 @,@ 000 troops in the region at the outset of the VRS offensive , but the troop levels declined to about 5 @,@ 000 by October . Those forces were commanded by HV Major General Petar Stipeti? . The troops under his command , organised as Operational Group Posavina , included the 101st and 103rd Brigades of the HVO and elements of a large number of HV units . According to Stipeti? , those included the bulk of the 108th Infantry Brigade based in Slavonski Brod , and fragments of the 109th , 111th , 123rd and 127th Brigades based in Vinkovci , Rijeka , Po?ega and Virovitica , as well as several Osijek @-@ based units . The 3rd Guards Brigade was also instructed to deploy to Bosanski Brod , but the order was cancelled before the unit had been moved . The piecemeal nature of the deployment , and the refusal of further units to fight in the area , was a consequence of the Croatian Defence Minister Gojko ?u?ak 's order that only volunteers could be deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina . According to Stipeti? , a parallel chain of command existed in respect of the 108th Infantry Brigade , which remained under the control of civilian authorities in Slavonski Brod , the Croatian city just across the Sava from Bosanski Brod .

= = = Timeline = = =

On 24 June , the 1st Krajina Corps of the VRS began the offensive codenamed Operation Corridor 92 . Its first objective was to break through the HVO and HV @-@ held positions between Modri?a and Grada?ac , and link up with the East Bosnian Corps . The secondary effort consisted of attacks towards Derventa and Bosanski Brod . The first objective was achieved after two days of heavy combat on 26 June . Afterwards , the VRS advanced towards Modri?a and captured the town on 28 June . The secondary advances , facing considerably stiffer resistance by the HVO and the HV , gained little ground .

The second phase of the offensive was launched on 4 July . It comprised VRS advances towards Derventa , Bosanski Brod and Od?ak , aiming to reach the Sava and thereby the border with Croatia , north of the three towns . Derventa was quickly captured on 4 ? 5 July and the VRS continued to roll back the HVO and the HV troops . On 12 July , the VRS captured Od?ak and arrived at the riverside near the town two days later . By that time , VRS troops had advanced 10 to 15 kilometres (6 @.@ 2 to 9 @.@ 3 miles) , and reached a position within 10 kilometres (6 @.@ 2 miles) of Bosanski Brod . The HVO and the HV were reduced to a bridgehead around the town .

In August and September , the VRS launched several attacks against the Bosanski Brod bridgehead for little gain . In mid @-@ September , the HVO and the ARBiH deployed near Br?ko , further to the east , attacked the same east ? west road the VRS aimed to secure through Operation Corridor 92 . The counterattack managed to capture a section of the road south of Ora?je , at the eastern end of the Br?ko corridor . However , the VRS restored its control of the road quickly thereafter .

Another push against Bosanski Brod was launched on 27 September . The advance initially had moderate success , until 4 October when the VRS rebalanced its forces , changing the sector of the bridgehead against which the 1st Krajina Corps was concentrated . The move managed to disrupt the HVO and HV defences and the VRS achieved a breakthrough , capturing Bosanski Brod on 6 October . In response , the HV and the HVO withdrew their troops and equipment in an orderly fashion , and the bridge spanning the Sava between the town and Slavonski Brod was demolished on 7 October .

= = Aftermath = =

In mid @-@ October and early November 1992 , the HVO briefly cut the Br?ko corridor south of Ora?je two more times . In turn , the VRS launched a major offensive against the HVO @-@ held bridgehead at Ora?je . After some initial success , the VRS offensive failed and the HVO drove the attacking force back to the positions they had held prior to the advance . Aiming to improve the security of the Br?ko corridor , units of the VRS 1st Krajina and East Bosnian Corps turned south of Br?ko , and advanced 2 to 3 kilometres (1 @. @ 2 to 1 @. @ 9 miles) against defences held by the HVO and the ARBiH . That last push widened the Br?ko corridor to just 3 kilometres at its narrowest point .

During the offensive , which captured 760 square kilometres (290 square miles) of territory , the VRS and its allies lost 413 troops killed and a further 1 @, @ 509 wounded . According to Zovak , the HV sustained losses of 343 killed and 1 @, @ 996 wounded , while the HVO lost 918 killed and 4 @, @ 254 injured during the fighting that took place in the region between April and October . In the same period , the city of Slavonski Brod came under bombardment from VRS artillery and aircraft . A total of 11 @, @ 651 artillery shells and fourteen 9K52 Luna @-@ M rockets were fired against the city , and 130 bombs were dropped from the air , resulting in the deaths of 116 civilians . According to German historian Marie @-@ Janine Calic , the VRS used ethnic cleansing to break the resistance of the local population and claim the area it termed the " corridor of life " because of its high strategic value .

The outcome of the battle shocked the Croatian commander and later resulted in speculation about its cause . Stipeti? blamed the 108th Infantry Brigade for the collapse of the Bosanski Brod bridgehead and the failure of the defence . He claimed the brigade had been pulled back from the battlefield by civilian authorities in Slavonski Brod and thought the outcome of the battle was predetermined by the Graz agreement of the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat leaders , Radovan Karad?i? and Mate Boban . His view regarding the Graz agreement is echoed by British historian Marko Attila Hoare , who claims that the area conceded by the Croats during Operation Corridor 92 was traded for western Herzegovina . While some sources have proposed that the area was traded for the JNA @-@ held Prevlaka Peninsula near Dubrovnik , a Central Intelligence Agency analysis concluded that there is no direct evidence of such arrangements .

Conversely , Croatian historian Davor Marijan concluded that the battle was too complex for the HV and especially for the HVO . He also pointed out that the HV and HVO suffered from ineffective command structures and poor intelligence , noting that they had failed to detect the presence of the VRS 16th Motorised and the 1st Armoured Brigades early on . Marijan also claims the HV had demobilised ten infantry brigades shortly before the battle , and his view is supported by Colonel General Novica Simi? , commander of the VRS 16th Motorised Brigade , assigned to Tactical Group 1 , which had been established by the 1st Krajina Corps to carry out the offensive .

In 2001 ? 03 , three Bosnian Serb officials were tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia for war crimes committed after the capture of Bosanski ?amac . The defendants ,

Blagoje Simi? , Miroslav Tadi? and Simo Zari? , were charged with unlawful arrest , detention , beatings , torture , forced labour , deportation and forcible transfer . The three were found guilty , and the convictions upheld in the appeals process . Simi? was sentenced to 15 years in prison , while Tadi? and Zari? received prison terms of eight and six years respectively .