

CONTENTS

MONOGRAPH: Sustainment During Combat Operations, by CPT Greg E. Metzgar, IN.

APPENDIX A: Naylor, Sean D. "Flight of Eagles, 101st Airborne Division's Raids into Iraq." Army Times, July 22, 1991: 8-14.

McMichael, William H., SSG. "Looking for Clues." Soldiers, April, 1991:25-27.

Caslen, Robert L., MAJ, USA. "Desert Storm: A Christian's Perspective." Command, Fall/Winter 1991:25-27.

"LTG J.H. Binford Peay III Remarks." The Screaming Eagle. SEPT-OCT 1991:26-27.

Steele, Denis. "155 Miles into Iraq, The 101st Strikes Deep." Army. August, 1991:30-35.

THE RAKKASANS. Thursday, 21 FEB 91.

APPENDIX B: Map of Saudi Arabia/Iraq. "The Gulf Warzone." Newsweek. A series of Hammond pullout maps.

Main supply routes, Saudi Arabia.

"101st Airborne operations in Iraq." Army Times, July 22, 1991.

Western Scheme of Maneuver, extracted from "Thunder in the Desert." MAJ James Blackwell, USA (Ret). Bantam Books. OCT 1991.

"Area of Operation Eagle." Al Khidr, Iraq. Map Series 5152 III. Defense Mapping Agency.

APPENDIX C: Support Platoon organization for combat operations.

3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Combat Trains layout, 27 FEB-10 MAR 91.

Logistical After-Action Review.

"With the Rakkasan's on D-Day and D+1 of Desert Storm." Rakkasan Shimbun. Summer 1991.

MONOGRAPH: "The Screaming Eagles of Desert Storm." CPT Mark Esper. Assistant S-3, 3-187th IN, during

operations in Iraq.

APPENDIX D: Operations Order 91-6.

SUSTAINMENT DURING COMBAT OPERATIONS

The key to the successful execution of combat operations into Iraq by the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) was its unique ability to sustain itself through a well rehearsed logistical element at the brigade and battalion levels. The logistical element of the 3rd Battalion began preparing for the logistical battle while still at Fort Campbell. To meet the demands of sustaining a combat ready air assault battalion, it took careful integration of the imperatives of sustainment listed in FM 100-5, OPERATIONS. The anticipation of the requirements had to be considered to accomplish the mission. Iteration of all available assets and continuity of the elements involved added to the responsiveness of the support elements. Improvisation had to be used occasionally to meet the commander's intent. During operations in Southwest Asia, the logistical elements fought the war from the first minutes that they arrived in Saudi Arabia. After the war was over, it was noted during a syndicated news program that almost anyone can deal in tactics, but that true professionals deal with logistics. Operation Desert Storm proved this theory again.

THE BEGINNING

The Iraqi invasion was said to have caught American military forces off guard. For the soldiers and officers of the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, the sudden invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was not expected. Prior to the invasion on 2 AUG 90, the battalion had been in the field conducting live-fires and training at the small unit level. The battalion commander had recently published his training guidance for the upcoming quarter, and the focus was upon small unit operations to capitalize on the recent deployment of the battalion to the Jungle Operations Training Center (JOTC), conducted in April, 1990. With the December 1989, success of Operation 'Just Cause,' there was a renewed emphasis on contingency operations in Latin America. The last thing that anyone was thinking about was the possibility of conducting desert operations in the Middle East.

Earlier in the year, the battalion had gone through a massive turn-in of excessive equipment under brigade directive, and part of that turn-in for the support platoon was its desert camouflage nets. The last time the battalion had been to the desert en-mass was during 'Gallant Eagle' conducted at 29 Palms, California, in the mid-1980's. The anti-armor company had gone to the National Training Center (NTC) in 1988 to act as opposing forces, and a small contingent of selected officers and non-commissioned officers deployed again in 1989 to act as observer/controllers, while 2nd Battalion went through a heavy-

light rotation with the 197th Infantry Brigade (Separate). By August 1990, some elementary planning had been done at the staff level to prepare a 'battle book' for a NTC rotation that was to occur in October, 1992.

For the soldiers of Fort Campbell, 1 August, 1990, was like any other humid summer day. But by the end of that day, events that were to occur half a world away would soon effect their lives in a manner never thought possible. I remember that day very clearly, because I had the staff duty officer (SDO) for that night. The battalion had been to the rifle range firing to qualify for the upcoming Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) testing that was to occur later in the month of August. The soldiers and officers were busy concentrating on getting the maximum amount of people qualified. The battalion commander had stated that his priority was to get at least 90% of the battalion their EIB's. During my midnight checks of the battalion, I happened to notice that two of the company commanders had not gone home, but had stayed in their day rooms watching the Cable News Network (CNN) with their soldiers. The company commanders and soldiers were glued to film footage of Iraqi forces going into Kuwait the day before. One company commander, who was rather rambunctious to begin with, told me that I needed to get back to the headquarters because he felt certain that the call would be coming to alert us for deployment.

The next day, 3 AUG 90, the battalion was buzzing with soldiers wondering if they were going to the middle east. The thoughts of facing an army that had weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and potential nuclear weapons; missiles; aircraft that were as sophisticated as ours; and experienced combat personnel that were equipped with first line tank and fighting vehicles and artillery, proven in battle for the last eight years with Iran, did excite everyone. The battalion had a few combat veterans from Vietnam, but they were a minority. The battalion was untested in combat but were veterans of numerous extensive field problems and one deployment out of the country, to the JOTC in Panama.

By the end of the first week in AUG 90, the planning for deployment had begun. The companies prepared their equipment and started to process their personnel for deployment. By 9 AUG 90, the guessing was over and official notification came that the 101st Airborne Division was deploying in support of what had become known as Operation Desert Shield. Already units from Fort Campbell had left for Saudi Arabia. The 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (Attack), had taken its AH-64 Apache helicopters out by Air Force C-5A and C-141B aircraft. The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) also deployed. As soldiers saw their neighbors and friends depart, the realization that this was not a drill began to sink in. The combat units were still preparing to move, but a massive logistical element was being set

into motion that would continue long after combat operations were to cease seven months later.

On 15 AUG 90, the support platoon left Fort Campbell to convoy equipment and vehicles south along the highways to the Port of Jacksonville, Florida, to be loaded into ships for transport to Saudi Arabia. The same ship that carried the division to Vietnam some twenty years earlier was called again to carry the division to a new crisis (refer to the article in Annex A, entitled "LTG J.H. Binford Peay III Remarks," The Screaming Eagle, September-October 1991).

Although the battalion equipment was gone, the training still continued with a renewed vigor, especially in the area of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Warfare (NBC). Even with the organic vehicles gone, the battalion commander and S-3 expected the intensity of training to continue. To meet his guidance, the support platoon had to use vehicles from the Transportation Motor Pool (TMP), on post. With other battalions training with the same intensity across Fort Campbell, it became quite a battle getting buses and pick-up trucks from the TMP to procure ammunition and move soldiers to training sites or ranges. Rising to the challenge, the support platoon was able to improvise and get the needed vehicles, and training continued with minor interruptions. In the two and half weeks prior to deployment, the battalion conducted more live-fires and consumed more ammunition than it normally would have during a regular fiscal year. By 8 SEP 90, the training began to wind down, and one last weekend was spent with family members. On 11 SEP 90, the battalion loaded into civilian jetliners and deployed to Saudi Arabia.

ARRIVAL INTO SAUDI ARABIA

After experiencing some engine trouble in flight and having to stay in London, England, at the same airfield that the 101st Airborne used to launch its parachute assault into Normandy during 1944, we finally arrived in Saudi Arabia on 14 SEP 90. The battalion was moved to the King Fahd International Airfield parking garage. The conditions were very spartan, and soldiers scrambled to find a spot that they could claim as their own. The aviation units had taken the upper floors of the garage and the 5th Special Forces Group had occupied a lot of the space, establishing their headquarters. The situation was very nervous, since no one knew at that time exactly what Iraq was going to do, and the Americans' only had a small contingent of military forces in the theater at that time. The threat of terrorism was a growing fear in the battalion, and immediately the commanders set about devising a plan to defend the parking garage.

The logistical picture was very discouraging at the time. The battalion commander wanted to know when the soldiers were going to get their ammunition. Back at Fort Campbell, the ammunition for rapid deployment was submitted on a DA 581 (ammunition request form) each year that was to provide a basic allocation of ammunition for each weapon system that a company had, like their M16 rifles, M60 and M249 (SAW) machine-guns, M203 grenade launchers and the M47 Dragon anti-tank missile. This request (DA 581), was kept at the division ammunition office (DAO). Once the unit was notified it was going to deploy, the DAO would issue the ammunition so the unit could disembark with small arms ammunition (known as 'to accompany troops' or TAT) and non-TAT (i.e. mortar rounds, hand grenades, etc.), which would meet them at their destination. The terrorist threat only fueled the growing tension with the commanders an increased their demand for ammunition. The thought of being bombed by a terrorist, such as what happened to Marine forces in Lebanon in 1983, was paramount on everyone's mind. When the ammunition did arrive it was in the back of an engineer dump-truck, and company executive officers were just handed crates of small arms ammunition. Once the ammunition was given out and we finally moved across the airstrip to Camp Eagle II, the battalion commander wanted to account for all of the ammunition issued and prevent accidental discharges. To ensure troop safety, the only one allowed to handle the loaded magazines were the squad leaders. They would issue out the ammunition only on the commander's approval. It is hard to say if we ever did get an accurate count on the number of rounds that we had, but it did cause a lot of headaches trying.

Moving into Camp Eagle II was both frustrating and hard work. The living conditions were not the greatest but did improve over time. The soldiers were moved into locally procured tents with carpet floors. The carpet soon started wearing out due to the rocks that were underneath it. The soldiers put old ration boxes under the carpet to make it last until wood floors arrived. The wind would pick up in the afternoon and cover the insides of the tents with dust, not to mention the weapons that required cleaning several times each day. As the camp started getting into working shape, the norms of garrison life started to creep in. There started to be standard operating procedures (SOP's) for how to set up the tents inside, times when you could do laundry and let it dry outside, and where and when you could eat to help ensure sanitation. It even got to the extreme that the soldiers had to align their tent stakes up in straight rows.

The commanders also began demanding a lot of items for their units such as ice, ammunition, sundry items to supplement the meals ready-to-eat (MRE's), wood to build floors or tables in tents, and even simple items such as boot polish. With the logistical effort still getting started, it seemed almost impossible to get the basic items needed. To help augment the

battalion, a system was set up to locally purchase items from nearby Dhahran. This took care of some problems but soon only caused more when the demands went past just the basic items needed for day to day survival. The commanders and soldiers grew increasingly impatient with the initially slow logistical response. After the logistical element went into full swing several months later it was apparent the commanders were not satisfied with what they were getting; they only wanted more.

The battalion vehicles and equipment started coming in around the end of SEP 90. Intensive efforts were made to account for all items and to get the vehicles serviced after spending three weeks at sea. Most of the vehicles had items that were missing, such as tools and locks. Some vehicles were found in other units motor pools, being used to augment their vehicle fleet. By the end of September, the remaining equipment was accounted for.

Training was confined to the local area. The companies concentrated on getting soldiers acclimatized to the local conditions and heat, which rose to temperatures of 120+ degrees in the afternoon. Road marches during the evening hours, land navigation and helicopter static load training at the airfield, made up the bulk of the training. Emphasis continued at squad level on NBC, communications, and battle drills. Supporting this was relatively easy since it was all local and we could get buses from the division transportation section to move soldiers to training sites.

Some soldiers had problems adjusting to being deployed and facing possible war. They were concerned about wives who had to run the household alone for the first time. The rear detachment commander stayed busy trying to remedy the problems and take care of the families. At the end of September, mail began to arrive and as word of family support reached the soldiers and more continuity of communications began, tensions eased. Prior to mail arriving, the chaplain had to take a few soldiers to the division chaplain office so they could call home, because some soldiers just could not handle the separation and uncertainty. More intelligence began to filter down, and this helped to stop the fears of an imminent invasion by Iraq. The leaders were confronted with the soldiers everyday, instead of being able to escape them in the evenings like at Fort Campbell. This constant exposure helped to identify who was doing his job as a leader and built confidence in one another and the team. Infantryman attended church regularly since the thought of war seemed to sober them up and bring home the point that they were mortal (see annex A: Caslen, Robert L. MAJ, USA. "Desert Storm: A Christian's Perspective." Command, Fall/Winter 1991: 25-27). By the first of OCT 90, the battalion seemed ready to execute its first mission, and we knew Operation Desert Shield was going to keep us here awhile.

THE COVERING FORCE MISSION

By mid-October 1990, the battalion was moved along main supply route Audi (MSR) to establish its positions in the covering force area (refer to maps in annex B). The division had established a forward operating base (FOB) known as Bastone, near the town of An' Nuayriyah. The brigade established a logistic assault base (LAB) known as Sukchon, about twelve miles to the southeast of the FOB. This mission proved very demanding and also helped to train the support elements for the meticulous logistical missions it would face in Desert Storm.

The first rotation provided the support platoon with extensive training in helicopter resupply missions. During the first month-long rotation the platoon flew everyday, delivering five hundred gallon water blivets, rations, various equipment and fuel in cargo nets slung below UH-60 and UH-1H aircraft. Each day members of the platoon were charged with delivering the nets to the combat trains. Every soldier in the platoon became extremely proficient in the ability to not only rig the loads, but to actually assist the aviators in finding the areas that supplies were needed and controlling the helicopters on the pick-up and landing zones (PZ/LZ). This continuous effort had a very prominent outcome on the abilities of the support platoon soldiers.

The soldiers were also kept busy moving over land delivering supplies. The field trains and the combat trains were located about twelve miles apart, and the only way to them was to navigate across the open desert. The larger trucks had difficulty traversing it, especially with a trailer in tow. The M998 high mobility, multi-wheeled vehicle (HUMMWV) could move with very little difficulty and was called upon in most occasions. Through the undeviating needs of the battalion, the support mission went around the clock. By constantly being out the support soldiers became proficient in day/night navigation while mounted in both vehicles and in helicopters. The demands required the soldiers learn how to guide resupply efforts as well as the platoon leader and platoon sergeant. The soldiers were given a lot of trust and flexibility to accomplish their mission. The ability to do their job gave them the confidence that they needed and showed just how capable they were. The support platoon soldiers could get missions accomplished, often on short notice.

The techniques and procedures developed in OCT 90 were again put to the test in DEC 90, as the battalion assumed the covering force mission for the second time. It would be different since the United Nations' approval of the use of force against Iraq being ratified. The division began to focus on more offensive operations (See annex A: Naylor, Sean D. "FLIGHT OF EAGLES- 101st Airborne Division's raids into Iraq." Army

Times July 22, 1991: 8-14. Refer also to annex C for monograph written by CPT Mark Esper, 3-187 Assistant S-3). Throughout the theater, the Central Command (CENTCOM) was positioning more forces and logistical sites arriving from the United States and Germany. About five miles to the east of the LAB, a major army support center was established while the battalion was recuperating at Camp Eagle II and the MSR's became flooded with more trailers moving supplies and armor north to the border.

The brigade started preparing before Christmas by conducting a military operation on urban terrain (MOUT) exercise. This was conducted with an air assault from the LAB going to a deserted Saudi village nicknamed 'Q-town.' To support this, the platoon moved from the field trains to the combat trains and prepared to systematically pick-up the companies for shuffle into the LAB. Once the exercise was completed, the transportation section had to move the soldiers back to their positions in the sector, about a thirty mile one-way trip. To augment the battalion S-4, who was responsible for coordinating the logistical effort in accordance with the battalion commanders guidance, the ammunition sergeant was attached to him, along with a vehicle and driver. The ammunition sergeant was a crucial link in developing the logistical situation on the ground once the battalion air assaulted into Q-town. The decision was made at that time to keep a small contingent of support personnel with the S-4 for all missions to facilitate faster processing of supplies and distribution. With the ammunition sergeant organizing and leading supply missions, the S-4 was free to forecast and arrange at the brigade level for needed future logistics. Support soldiers in the LAB assisted the brigade support units in netting their extra equipment and supplies that were air lifted into Q-town once it was secured. This system worked out extremely, well and it consolidated the battalion's support platoons under the brigade S-4's control. By having this ability, the brigade S-4 could push supplies forward quicker and under better control. For the tactical situation to be successful, the logistical elements had to consolidate and work together.

During the MOUT exercise, the battalion also built a full-scale Iraqi defensive position. The intent was to move soldiers immediately from the MOUT site to the Faisal Range Complex, set up and run by the 24th Infantry Division, and conduct walk-through and actual live-fire rehearsals on breaching and destroying the defensive position. To meet the battalion commander's guidance an intensive logistical effort was launched to obtain additional ammunition to conduct the training. This was no easy task, since all Class V (ammunition) was being tightly controlled by CENTCOM. Additional ammunition was obtained through the brigade S-4, and training was able to take place.

Massive amounts of barrier materials, such as plywood sheets, timber, and concertina and barbed wire had to moved to

the site by the battalion vehicles. The support soldiers had to move right from Q-town into the range complex, sixty miles away to the south. Most of the battalion's equipment, such as general purpose medium tents, light sets, generators, and so on were moved to support the range. Some support personnel made three trips a day to ferry equipment. To get the Class V to the range, it became necessary to move it from the FOB to the LAB and then net it and fly to the ammunition transfer point that was being constructed by the engineers on the range complex. Although busy, the vehicle operators and mechanics were able to maintain the vehicles and rapidly turn those around that became inoperable. Amazingly, for the long distances and hours that were put in establishing the live-fire range, no accidents or mishaps occurred. Once the range was installed, the support elements spent the next twenty-four hours moving the companies. Once everyone was on the range, the entire support platoon vehicle fleet and personnel stayed there to shuttle the companies and range workers around. For about four days, the platoon sergeant and platoon leader worked in the field trains pushing water, rations, and additional equipment by helicopter to the site. The ammunition sergeant ran the range site and coordinated the platoon efforts with the assistance of the battalion executive officer.

Once the range complex live-fires were completed, the support platoon moved the battalion back out into the sector and prepared for additional missions to assist in soldier comfort. The 1st Cavalry Division had established phone centers north of the FOB and the commanders wanted their soldiers to have the opportunity to call home before Christmas. On the same day that the support platoon was moving the last of the battalion equipment from Faisal Range, the word came to move soldiers to the phone centers the next morning. The intensive exercises at Q-town, and then Faisal Range, had taken a toll on the support vehicles and drivers who operated at an almost around-the-clock pace for the last two weeks. After arriving in the field trains at 2300 hours, several vehicles were broken, and efforts had to be launched immediately to fix them. The support platoon missed its start time of 0600 the next morning due to vehicle and driver fatigue. The commanders were upset that they had to wait, and this was evident when the battalion executive officer and S-4 came into the field trains that morning. The support soldiers felt bad in getting a late start, but the situation was beyond their control. The commanders had grown accustomed to seeing the support element meet every demand that came forward but were inflexible when the system became strained and could not give them the high rate already established.

The covering force mission provided great tactical training to the soldiers of the battalion and allowed commanders the ability to work their company in a way never dreamed possible at Fort Campbell. To the support elements, training for combat was

done everyday. The support platoon soldiers took great pride in their ability to think out the logistical demands and always seem to be a step ahead of the staff and commanders in knowing what needed to be done. The platoon knew its mission and had the full confidence of the battalion, knowing that they would arrive with the needed resources to accomplish the mission. If the battalion had an 'Achilles heel', it was the support platoon. If the ability to provide support and transportation failed, then the battalion would not be successful in attaining even the simplest of missions. The battalion commander summed it up best in a note to the support platoon soldiers after they returned to Camp Eagle II in early January, 1991;

TF 3-187 SUPPORT PLATOON-

Collectively & Individually, your performance in the CFA mission was magnificent! I have never seen a more cohesive, motivated, concerned and safety focused group of men in my 18+ years of service. We are a strong TF- perhaps the strongest in the Division- all because of you! Your leadership is the best I have seen & you do your duties in a manner that makes me proud and honored to be your Commander. Thanks!
RAKKASAN!

G. Thomas Greco
Commander

THE COMING OF 'DESERT STORM'

When the new year started, the battalion found itself in a fresh and improved Camp Eagle II. While the soldiers were in the second covering force mission, the rear detachment had been busy installing lights in each tent, and wood floors, and everyone now had a cot on which to sleep. Across from the main gate was a national guard support unit which provided hot showers to personnel at night. To the surprise of everyone, there was even a phone center that serviceman could call home and a small exchange which provided some 'extras' like cigarettes, soap, razors, candy, soda, etc.

There was no guessing about going to war, and last minute hopes that the Soviet peace plan would work quickly diminished. The battalion commander had received the offensive plan from the division commander and plans were being developed. Selected staff and specialty platoon leaders began reporting to the brigade secure area and we saw the plan unfold. Without saying anything, the troops knew that the 101st was going deep. In SEP 90, Newsweek magazine had a series of articles on how the U.S. might attack the Iraqi's in Kuwait. It depicted an air assault

force moving behind Kuwait City to block fleeing Iraqi forces and Marine forces landing on the beach to push them back. Those that read and remembered the article were not too far off the mark.

The planning prior to 16 JAN 91 consisted of figuring out the best way to bring in supplies during the upcoming operations. The vast experience gained in the past months began to show. One concern the battalion commander had was how to ensure that enough ammunition and supplies (namely water and medical items) got transported in on the initial air assault. During the rehearsals of DEC 90, the support platoon developed the ideas of kick-bundles. Although the idea of kick-bundles are not new, the support personnel adapted them to fit our situation in Saudi Arabia. The platoon obtained duffel bags and loaded extra ammunition, based on an analysis of what was expected. The medical platoon developed medical bundles, and other sections produced mission essential equipment that was organized to fit into supplementary duffel bags. By putting equipment into the duffel bags, it allowed easy transport and consolidated storage. With the aircraft compartment load (ACL) of 22 personnel, the support soldiers riding inside could fill the extra spaces not taken up by soldiers with kick-bundles. A marking system was developed for easy recognition of what was inside, to include using colored chemical lights for easy identification at night. When the combat trains organized to move into Iraq during the air assault, the kick-bundles and 55-gallon water blivets could be loaded into the resupply aircraft and kicked off on the LZ by the support soldiers riding inside.

The platoon leader and platoon sergeant organized the platoon to operate in split sections. One element would capitalize on experience gained in the MOUT rehearsal and be tasked to be with the S-4 during the air assault in to provide consolidation and resupply help in the combat trains. The other element would load and push the battalion equipment as part of the field trains. This organization ensured that the battalion had experienced personnel at both ends of the supply effort which could push logistical sustainment when needed.

By 16 JAN 91, the battalion had been in Saudi Arabia for 127 days. The day was tense, since it was the last day before the United Nations deadline of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The alert status of Camp Eagle II was increased due to the threat of terrorism. The battalion's physician assistant (PA), concerned about the possibility that the support platoon soldiers were going to be exposed to handling dead bodies, received enough vaccine to treat four soldiers with the Hepatitis-B series. All medical personnel are inoculated to prevent the disease being transmitted to them during treating wounded soldiers, and it was crucial to treat the support elements as well. Before leaving Fort Campbell, the gruesome training started for remains recovery and transport, a subject that was neglected in peacetime

training, but a real part of the support platoon mission training planning. The failure to focus on this reality of war in peacetime made the battalion commander and staff scramble to identify correct procedures for handling dead and press into service some hasty SOP's. The soldiers were not gratified with the idea of handling soldiers killed in action, but they accepted it as any other mission.

At around 0400, on 17 JAN 91, the King Fahd airfield began to shake with the rumble of aircraft taking off. It had gone unnoticed during the day that there were no aircraft flights. The chemical officer burst into the tent that I was living in and said that air strikes had gone into Iraq and he had the radio turned on to the Armed Forces Radio Network and was getting live broadcasts from Baghdad. We all heard the replay of CNN correspondent Bernard Shaw, reporting the allied air attack from inside of Iraq;

"This is [pause] something is happening outside...The skies over Baghdad have been illuminated. We're seeing bright flashes going all over the sky."

In the United States; parents, wives, and girlfriends of the soldiers in the battalion heard Marlin Fitzwater make the announcement at just after seven p.m. that, "The liberation of Kuwait has begun." For the soldiers of the battalion, it would still be another six weeks before they would become an active part of that liberation. To get the battalion ready to move, the commanders started briefing their subordinates on the planning of the past several weeks. Everyone seemed surprised to learn that they were going far to the west, in what is now described as the 'Hail-Mary play' and sit right on the Iraqi border.

To get the battalion ready, the support soldiers quickly moved to consolidate the non-mission essential equipment for storage in Camp Eagle II. The mission essential equipment was loaded onto stake and platform trailers that were obtained from a national guard unit. The soldiers moved to the airfield and were flown to the town of Rafha (refer to MSR map and Saudi map in annex B). The logistical elements remained in Camp Eagle II for an additional three days taking down the camp and loading or securing equipment. During the loading out process, the efforts were hampered by alerts of SCUD missile attacks from Iraq. The soldiers of the battalion were able to witness several Patriot missile intercepts of the enemy missiles from the Patriot battery that was co-located near the airfield. The threat of one possibly carrying a chemical round had a very sobering effect on all of us.

On 21 JAN 91, while loading vehicles, the 1st Brigade, which was across the road from our battalion, had an accidental discharge of an AT-4 anti-tank rocket. The explosion was first

mistaken as a SCUD hit, but was quickly offset when personnel began yelling for a medic. Several of the combat life savers and medics who were with the battalion rear element to move the ambulance to the task force assembly area, ran to assist. It was later discovered that an inexperienced soldier was handling the live round that had been issued out in preparation for their move to the border and shot it off into another tent. About thirteen soldiers were seriously injured in the incident. A heightened awareness of ammunition safety permeated the units afterwards.

On 22 JAN 91, the battalion vehicles and our attached national guard trucks, about sixty vehicles altogether, moved down MSR's Toyota, around Riyadh, up Sultan to the town of Hafar al' Batin and then down Tapline Road to Task Force Assembly Area Campbell (TFAA), about five kilometers off the Iraq border. The trip took two days to complete and covered more than six hundred miles (refer to maps in annex B). When we pulled into the field trains location at about 2330, 23 JAN 91, we received word that a possible Iraqi tank unit had crossed the border. It was complete chaos as the S-4 told us to get the vehicles out of the area. With the assistance of the support platoon sergeant, we got the convoy turned around and moved back to Tapline Road.

The S-4 was irritated that we had moved so far away and recalled us back. Adding more to the confusion, we turned around and ended up about three hundred meters from where we started. The ammunition sergeant, who had arrived with the battalion when it flew, in was trying to download anti-tank weapons that the companies were screaming for. It seemed that every company executive officer was out for themselves in the confusion of the moment. About one hour later, it was reported that attack helicopters flew the border and did not detect the 'phantom' force. This was certainly not the last incident of war jitters, or false alarms, that was to happen in the battalion while it was in the TFAA.

TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY AREA CAMPBELL

By the end of JAN 91, the battalion was moved into its new desert home and began establishing local security. This move coincided with the division moving into place on the border. Virtually over night there were tents and camouflage nets everywhere. By the first part of FEB 91, the battalion was making reconnaissance patrol near the Iraqi border (see annex A; McMichael, William H., SSG, USA. "Looking for Clues." Soldiers, April 1991: 25-27). To support this mission, the support platoon supplied HUMWV's and drivers to transport the patrols. There were some outposts on the border, and after armed patrols and aircraft began to make regular trips north, they were abandoned by their Iraqi occupants.

The support platoon also kept busy supporting the logistical requirements of the battalion. The commanders did not want to burn trash by their forward deployed companies, so each day a vehicle had to go around and pick-up the trash to be burned in a rear area by the field trains. The dining facility had to use four of the 2 1/2 ton trucks, every other day, to receive rations at the division support area about twenty miles away. Keeping the unit supplied with water occupied the vehicles during the rest of the week. It took nearly four thousand gallons of water a day to sustain the battalion.

The normal logistical requirements were interrupted by other events such as taking soldiers to the phones in Rahfa when they received a Red Cross message. Several soldiers had to be taken to the airfield in Rahfa and flown home on emergency leave. These cases normally occurred during the late night hours, and the support platoon driver would have to find his way up to the company in the dark due to blackout driving conditions. To make the trip forward and return to Tapline road toward Rahfa took at least four hours. The companies would not make the trips with their HUMWV's because they were afraid of getting their driver lost on his way back or needing the vehicle to take the commander to the TOC or get food in the field trains. Mail was also brought in daily, and we had to dispatch one of the 2 1/2 ton trucks to pick it up and bring it back to the field trains. A bus was obtained to take soldiers from their company position to the shower point in the division rear. Every day, the soldiers would be rotated in small numbers of about forty to get a hot shower. This did wonders for the morale, since it was cold and rainy most of the time.

The biggest time consuming event in the TFAA was that of planning. Daily we would hear the tactical plan, conduct rehearsals and then go back with the logistical cell (the S-1, S-4, Support Platoon Leader, Platoon Sergeant, and Ammunition Sergeant) to consider the logistical concerns for the operation. The ammunition sergeant spent numerous hours trying to develop a matrix that would calculate the weight of the ammunition the individual soldier would have to carry for each mission planned. Every week, the brigade's support platoon leaders spent time with the brigade S-4 trying to figure out how the logistical sustainment was to function once the ground offensive started. The ammunition sergeant and platoon sergeant made daily trips to the division rear area to get ammunition and push logistical support forward. It seemed that the sustenance requirements of the battalion took around-the-clock efforts.

From the planning and talk through, we developed the best course of action to support the battalion in its upcoming ground mission. The plan called for a deep penetration into Iraq, and the support platoon would have to be broken into teams to cover every area that the battalion would be spread (see annex D for

OPORD 91-6 describing the plan for attacking). One team would have to be forward in the combat trains (a lesson learned from experience gained in the MOUT rehearsal, DEC 90). With the battalion maneuver elements going in by helicopter, the organic vehicles going in would be very limited. Follow-on aircraft to bring in the field trains would not be available. This forced the field trains to travel into Iraq to a forward operating base by ground convoys along a secured MSR. Some vehicles would travel north from the FOB into the area of operations (AO), but this would only be a small element of mission essential vehicles for the tactical operations center (TOC).

By the middle of FEB 91, the support platoon was organized for the upcoming mission known as 'Operation Shenandoah.' The support platoon sergeant would move with the initial brigade element during the first ground convoy, into what was to become known as FOB Cobra. The field trains elements would assist in moving soldiers to the PZ and repositioning equipment to storage sites in the division rear. After the battalion air assaulted into the AO, they would move the mission essential equipment along the MSR and assist in pushing helicopter logistical packages (LOGPAC's) north from the FOB. The last element, the combat trains, would load helicopters on the PZ with the kick-bundles and 55-gallon water blivets, and air assault in with the last serial of aircraft going into the AO. Once on the ground they would assist the S-4 in conducting resupply operations to the combat units (refer to annex C; SUPPORT PLATOON ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS).

Until the ground war actually started the support elements rehearsed along side the maneuver units. The brigade S-4 conducted several talk-walk rehearsals on a football field size terrain model of the AO located outside the brigade administration and logistics center (ALOC). The support platoon did daily map recons of the route it would drive to the FOB and also studied the AO with great detail to learn the graphics overlay. The platoon leader rehearsed with Task Force Randal, which was the brigade element that was going north from the FOB. TF Randal consisted of a battery of six towed 105mm howitzers, six 20mm Vulcan's, and elements of the 311th Military Intelligence Battalion. The battalion was allowed to have only four vehicles travel in this TF, so the TOC took the priority and filled it with their HUMV's. We would rehearse the convoy procedures and the contingencies for chance contact with either armor, aircraft, or possible chemical attacks at least three times a week, to include full scale rehearsals with the vehicles on terrain that we would be travelling. With the howitzers and 20mm cannons, the TF was a fairly potent force to contend with if attacked. For security we would practice withdrawal procedures, and if needed, could defend from a 'wagon wheel' defense supported by direct fire of the howitzers and 20mm's. The TF was under the leadership of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery

executive officer.

THE GROUND OFFENSIVE BEGINS

On 20 FEB 91, a heightened awareness began to go through the battalion that the ground phase was rapidly approaching. The soldiers began to grow restless as they continued to practice and prepare. At night, the support platoon sergeant could tune in the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC) radio program, and the platoon members would gather around to hear how the air war was proceeding. Earlier on the morning of the 20th, the S-4 came into the field trains and stated that the TOC reported about five vehicles near the border, and C Company had been sent to intercept them. It caused quite a flurry of activity, and by mid-afternoon the S-3 and battalion commander were out forward with the company to see what was going on.

Although the battalion did not find or see anything, the 1st Battalion did make enemy contact that day. On an air strike north of the border, A-10 aircraft and AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters attacked and destroyed some Iraqi fortified positions north of the TFAA. The 1st Battalion air assaulted in two rifle companies to secure prisoners of war (PW's), as they openly surrendered to the aircraft. The 7-101st Aviation Battalion was called in to evacuate the PW's by CH-47 Chinook's (see 'The Rakkasan's', Thursday, 21 FEB 91, in annex B). This brought the first taste of combat to the brigade.

The news was encouraging, as later intelligence reports from the PW's said they were ready to surrender because of the heavy bombing brought upon them each day by the coalition aircraft. The bombing was noticed in the TFAA as well. During the evening, soldiers could hear air strikes clearing the air corridors that the helicopters would fly on G-Day. On several occasions artillery shells or air delivered bombs would strike very close to the border. The explosions it caused would shake the mettle of the leaders and soldiers. It was clearly seen in the faces of everyone that going into combat for the first time was taking its toll on nerves and patience. The anxiety was causing short tempers and the hurried atmosphere of trying to accomplish everything at once brought tension between personnel, so naturally a few 'misunderstandings' did arise.

By 23 FEB 91, we began to get reports that Arab Coalition Forces had cleared lanes into Kuwait and were ready to launch the ground offensive. Reports also came that Iraq was lighting oil wells as part of their defensive scheme. The waiting was finally over; word came that the ground invasion was on. The afternoon of 23 FEB 91 was marked by active preparation of the support and ground elements. Equipment was consolidated and moved to the division storage point. Mission essential equipment, which had

been identified earlier, was loaded onto support vehicles and parked near the field trains. Companies began to clear their forward positions and move to the brigade PZ near the field trains. The support platoon elements identified for each phase of the mission began to move to their assigned duties (see organization in annex C).

The field train element organized to get the equipment consolidated at the division rear. The combat trains element worked instantaneously to build cargo nets loaded with pre-identified classes of supplies. The combat trains element also worked to get pre-positioned equipment on the PZ that would be loaded into the helicopters when they air assaulted in the following night. The support platoon sergeant went to brigade as part of the advanced party that travelled into Iraq as Forward Operating Base Cobra was established on G-Day. His efforts in the FOB greatly enhanced the ability of the field trains to establish themselves once they arrived in Cobra and began to support the battalion in the Euphrates River Valley.

On the evening of the 23rd, the support platoon had accomplished all of its major objectives. The platoon was excited, yet somewhat apprehensive to start combat operations. To calm their nerves, the support platoon assembled in the platoon operations tent and conducted its own bible study and prayer service. The soldiers shared their favorite bible verse and also gave words of encouragement. After an hour they broke up and retreated back to their fighting positions to ensure they had packed everything on their vehicles. Late in the night, the word was given to start taking the nerve agent pre-treatment tablets (Pyridostigmine Bromide USP 30 MG, NSN 6505-01-178-7903). In the event of being exposed to a nerve agent chemical attack, these tablets were supposed to help the soldier offset the harmful effects and greatly increase the survival rate.

On the morning of 24 FEB 91, helicopters began carrying troops from the first brigade into FOB Cobra to secure it. By 0500, the battalion support platoon was up and running to execute the first phase of the operation (refer to OPORD 91-6 in annex D). The battalion commander's intent, in the order, ensured that a flexible and innovative approach be taken to sustain the task force. The plan was bold and daring and, in the end, would ensure a piece of history for the division. The intent was a follows:

"I want to block all Iraqi forces moving through our sector in AO Eagle and thereby deny his use of that MSR. We will accomplish this through interdiction and destruction of his forces in EA Packer using the combined arms effects of CAS, attack aviation, artillery, TOW's, Dragons, AT-4's and small arms. Key to success is the orderly link-up in sector, demo HWY 8

in EA Packer and prevent movement of all enemy vehicles and dismounted units of PLT size or larger in assigned sector. Maximum standoff of all weapons systems will facilitate direct fires while protecting the force. EA Packer will be blocked by BMNT G+2."

The intent alone required that the logistical cell be up to standard to give the battalion what it needed to conduct and execute the plan.

By 0800 on the 24th, the full invasion was under way. The main bulk of the VII Corps forces waited for the 1st Infantry Division to breach the defenses of the Iraqi's in the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO). The 2nd Armored Cavalry and the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division was moving in the east. In the west the French moved at 0530 hours toward As Salman and quickly defeated the Iraqi 45th Infantry Division. The first brigade of the 101st Airborne Division moved fifty miles into Iraq and established Forward Operating Base Cobra (FOB). With four battalions, they carved out, and secured a twenty mile piece of desert. By that afternoon, the division began to pour in thousands of gallons of fuel, tons of ammunition, and supplies to support the coming days mission into Area of Operation Eagle (AO). In Washington, the President announced that the final phase of Operation Desert Storm was underway, and the Pentagon began a virtual news blackout, not wanting to compromise on-going ground operations. For the members of the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, the first phase of Operation Shenandoah was under way.

PHASE I: AIR ASSAULT TO LZ SAND

Before the battalion could be moved north by air it had to arrive to the brigade PZ by ground. The support platoon was busy on the morning of 24 FEB 91, moving the battalion from its forward positions to the PZ. All the platoon vehicles were decisively engaged moving equipment to the division rear in the morning. In the afternoon, the platoon moved the soldiers to the field trains, where one last hot tray-ration meal was served by the dining facility. This meal helped to greatly improve morale and reduce the growing tension.

During the course of the day, the battalion executive officer made visits to note the progress of the consolidation effort. He was impressed with the platoon's sense of mission and how well it adapted to the ever changing situation. The rehearsals and planning prior to the ground offensive were paying off. The S-4 also stopped in several times to see how the effort was taking shape. In the tension of the consolidation process, the S-4 became very rude and caused some friction with the working relationship of the platoon and its chain of command. On more than one occasion, he would bypass the platoon leader and go

the platoon sergeant to change missions. Although this never caused a permanent disruption, it did throw the synchronization of the platoon leader and platoon sergeant.

By the end of the 24th the platoon sergeant had gone north along Main Supply Route New Market (MSR) with the initial brigade advance party (ADVON) to establish the battalion field trains in the FOB (see map in annex B). The combat trains element of the support platoon had worked to get the vehicles of the battalion staged and rigged for sling-loading. Because a new technique of rigging was developed known as 'shot-gunning,' by the division Pathfinders and taught to members of the support platoon during the early weeks in the TFAA, and the support platoon rigging team became crucial in getting the rigging completed. A corporal from the support platoon, assisted by the S-3 (Air), taught the battalion this new technique in classes organized before the ground war started. The combat trains element also built nets of equipment that would be moved by air into the FOB for eventual resupply in the AO if needed. They also pre-positioned their supplies that were going into the AO during the air assault by helicopter the following night.

The consolidation and positioning of the battalion soldiers and supplies had gone better than could be expected. Late in the afternoon, Team Jerry air assaulted into LZ Sand to secure it and recon north along Route 41-A which would be travelled by the main effort, TF Rakkasan, coming in the next night. They gave feedback to the TFAA on a trafficable route in the AO via tactical satellite. The initial reports were not good and the brigade commander had to risk going in as scheduled, or let the bad weather which was coming pass, and then go in. He elected to stay with the plan.

Across from the PZ, the support platoon leader fell in with TF Randal and prepared to move north along the MSR in the morning. The night did not bring much news about the tactical success, except that things were going 'according to plan.' The field trains element of the support platoon finished the last minute packing of the TFAA site and lined up with Team Tom, which was lead by the headquarters company commander. Team Tom would come north to the FOB on G+2, after the battalion had successfully lifted off of the PZ. On the afternoon of 25 FEB 91, TF Rakkasan was in LZ Sand and had made link-up with Team Jerry. The battalion had started to execute phase II of the operation, ground movement into AO Eagle.

G+1: PHASE II/III, MOVING INTO IRAQ

By the morning of 25 FEB 91, the battalion was north and establishing itself in AO Eagle. The division began moving more vehicles north on the MSR, and TF Randal was just one of the numerous convoys going north that day. The MSR was like a super

highway by this time. So many vehicles had flowed north that they actually had several lanes of traffic in some portions. The trafficability was even good, so good in fact that the division actually brought double-decked commercial buses north to transport PW's back to the holding area.

By later in the afternoon, rain clouds had gathered and were threatening movement north. By mid-evening, it began to rain and cause the roads to become muddy and hard to travel. The rain greatly reduced the effectiveness of the night observation devices (NOD's) we wore during blackout conditions. The vehicles finally made it into the FOB late that night. Once we linked up with the brigade executive officer, things flowed smoothly as we were staged by the ADVON. I linked up with the support platoon sergeant who told me that the battalion had made it to the AO safely and had no casualties. The two companies that were air assaulted to block Highway 8 (C and A Companies), had made some contact with small squad-sized elements.

Throughout the night, the rains and high winds continued across the theater. We began to wonder why the battalion did not include rain gear on the packing list; at least the headquarters company commander said that rain garments were not on the list. The headquarters company commander stated that he would take actions against anyone that violated the packing list. Most soldiers ignored this command since rain had been forecasted prior to G-Day. Those who did follow the packing list as told were upset by seeing that others had their rain garments. Having protection against the elements outweighed the burden of carrying a few extra pounds. The statement by the headquarters company commander did not reflect good common sense.

PHASE IV: BLOCKING HIGHWAY 8

By the morning of 26 FEB 91, the battalion in AO Eagle was firmly established and improving its blocking positions. The two forward companies had conducted combat patrols forward including engineers who made the highway inoperable with cratering charges. Signs were posted in Arabic which warned that U.S. combat forces were in the area conducting operations and that civilians needed to stay out of marked areas. Most activity had ceased in the zone.

As soon as the sun started to rise, huge dust storms began to take their toll on operations throughout the theater. The dust was so bad that by noon, all combat operations had ceased. The movement of TF Randal north was put on hold. Although the dust provided security to the forward elements in the AO, it did not cease their uneasiness with the situation. The weather reports grew worse as the afternoon closed. By 1630, the sun finally broke through the dust storm, and the winds died down.

The war had renewed itself with vigor, and units moved to continue the thrust north. The forward units worried that Iraqi elements could have somehow slipped up Highway 8 during the dust storm, moving back to Baghdad. As the sun set it brought rejuvenated tension to the companies in their blocking positions.

In Cobra, the decision was still being contemplated as to whether TF Randal would go north in the morning. One reason for not wanting to travel north was that there had been no MSR set up that went north out of the FOB. To get into the AO, the convoy would have to rely on the global positioning system (known by its nickname as 'The Slugger'), with which to navigate. Also, it was not sure if security could be provided by attack aviation. With the uncertainty of the situation up north, the firepower that TF Randal could provide outweighed the risk in moving it north.

By 2330, 26 FEB 91, the field train elements of the support platoon had made it to the FOB with Team Tom. The NCOIC of this element said that the going was rough across the MSR which had been chewed up by the heavy rains. The dust storm halted movement of the battalion vehicles on the MSR and caused several people to get lost. No accidents occurred in movement during the heavy dust storm. Several tires were blown out on the 2 1/2 ton truck which carried the mess equipment the cooks exceeded the weight limit with kitchen implements. The battalion maintenance section had their parts trailer break open and spill its contents just prior to entering the FOB. The support platoon sergeant took charge of the incoming vehicles and positioned them according to his plan for the field trains. The headquarters company commander established his command post in the center and laid wire for a telephone hook-up with the brigade tent.

MOVEMENT OF TF RANDAL NORTH TO AO EAGLE

The early morning hours of 27 FEB 91, did not give any hope to the end of the war. With a lot of uncertainty as to what the Iraqi armed forces were planning and the vulnerability of the brigade in the AO, the brigade commander decided to call TF Randal forward. At 1030 hours, the convoy was assembled and ready to go. I told the support platoon sergeant that I was unsure when, if ever, the field trains would be called forward. He assured me he would keep the platoon ready to go at a moments notice if the order came to push forward and conduct phase V of the ground tactical plan (phase V of OPOD 91-6 called for future operations, refer to annex D). The tactical situation was so much in flux that it was impractical to unload and set up the field trains at that point in time. Had the word come to continue the war the field trains would have taken hours to tear down and repack. His task was not easy, since the personnel in the field trains wanted to unload all of the equipment and set up

living conditions that would be easier to tolerate. The headquarters company commander kept insisting on down-loading and setting up, not following the battalion commanders intent on keeping the field trains loaded for pushing north. The support platoon sergeant had no one to turn to that could stop the vehicle down-loading with the myself, the S-4, and battalion executive officer all in the AO. Had the order come to move immediately, the field trains would have lost valuable time tearing down and loading.

By 1530, TF Randal had to stop and fix several flats that the Vulcan platoon had on their vehicles. The convoy passed through several small farms, and this caused some apprehension because we were unsure of hostility toward U.S. forces. The route was checked regularly by attack helicopters moving from the FOB and the AO. The Slugger was crucial to the navigation effort, and to travel without it would have been almost impossible. The only problem with the Slugger was that near midnight, the convoy had to stop for thirty minutes. Apparently the satellites that the Slugger received data from had fallen below the horizon, but once they came up we were able to resume our progress north.

By 0200, 28 FEB 91, TF Randal had arrived in the AO. We were told to halt south of the brigade administration and logistics center (ALOC). There was some contact being made in the north and a fire mission was being called in on the highway. Also reported was enemy vehicle traffic near 2nd Battalion. At 0230, effective link-up occurred with the ALOC, and we were guided into a staging position on the road near the brigade TOC. The convoy remained there until the morning. With the enemy contact uncertain, the brigade commander did not want to risk possible fratricide by moving to link-up points with the vehicles. At the same time, we parked the convoy, the brigade S-4 was calling in a parachute re-supply drop in the field near us. With NOD's on, you could see the bundles exit the C-130's and land in the field. Retrieving the supplies later on would be difficult because the field was a mud swamp from the rain of the last twenty-four hours.

At 0330, 28 FEB 91, we received word via short wave radio that belonged to the captain in charge of the military intelligence element that the president had ordered a cease fire for 0800. It was exciting to hear that the war could possibly be over, but still unbelievable as we reflected on the track record of Iraq the last few months.

SUSTAINMENT EFFORTS IN AO EAGLE

By 0730, I went to the brigade TOC and obtained the location of the battalion field trains. By 0800, the battalion S-4 linked

up with me and gave me a quick run down of the situation and showed me the direction of the battalion TOC. The vehicles that were brought north belonging to the TOC were taken there and dropped off. The S-4 then showed me the location and layout of the brigade administration and logistics center (ALOC). He was very succinct in his introduction to the area. Once arriving in the combat trains, I linked up with the ammunition sergeant (refer to annex C for the combat trains layout and also photos). The ammunition sergeant said that things had been non-stop since they flew in on the initial air assault. He did not speak favorable of the S-4, who would not allow the support element to conduct its job. He said that the S-4 and the his assistant had done all of the work taking supplies forward with cargo HUMWV's obtained from D Company. It was easy to see that the S-4 was beginning to become frustrated and short-tempered by overworking himself. As I was in the area, I hoped to take the support element and conduct the resupply efforts as practiced in rehearsals, freeing the S-4 to coordinate with brigade and battalion.

During that morning, the assistant S-4 was busy moving rations and 55-gallon water blivets forward by helicopter to the companies on the highway. We also had to move a platoon of soldiers forward to C Company. I am unsure as to why they were in the combat trains. During the last shuttle forward, I rode with the assistant S-4 to see the exact locations of the companies. Since the companies had not been supplied since they first arrived into the AO, there was a great sense of urgency to push water and rations forward. According to the ammunition sergeant, an emergency resupply by ground had gone out the night before with the S-4 and assistant S-4 leading it. Only two support platoon soldiers were taken. After the resupplies were completed that morning, the battalion commander and S-3 arrived to take the helicopter and fly north to C and A companies.

For the next several days, the combat trains worked to rebuild the stocks of supplies in the combat trains and then to push them forward to the companies by helicopter. Several weaknesses began to become evident. First of all, there were no support platoon vehicles brought forward in the initial air assault. The S-4 had taken D Company cargo HUMWV's for ground resupply efforts. These vehicles did not have radios, and once they were sent out, contact could not be made with them. The support platoon had two HUMWV's that were radio equipped, but they remained in the FOB. During rehearsals, this was invaluable to keep contact with resupply efforts and this point was known from back in DEC 90. As the S-4 and I were going out on missions no one could monitor who was coming or going. The S-4 would send out vehicles while I was out of the combat trains and then wonder where they were in their resupply efforts. There was also the danger of resupplies going out not being able to keep abreast of the higher situation.

By not allowing the ammunition sergeant to conduct the resupplies with the support platoon element in the vehicles or the helicopter it put the burden of the effort on the S-4. During the rehearsals in DEC 90, it was clearly evident that the ammunition sergeant had to conduct the resupply missions, and the S-4 had to coordinate with the battalion staff and brigade S-4 to meet the battalion commanders intent. By constantly being on the go, he set himself up to greater fatigue and stress. The support element had practiced and was extremely proficient in conducting resupply efforts themselves. The element lost faith with the S-4, and this caused a leadership challenge for the support platoon leader and platoon sergeant to overcome. When the battalion had withdrawn to the FOB, the S-4 talked to the soldiers involved and explained that the situation could not warrant failure, and he trusted in their abilities. His decision to lead everything himself was based on the fact he did not want anything to go wrong. Even with his explanation, the soldiers had a lot of misgivings about the circumstances, and it reflected on their opinions and the perceived lack of trust that they felt the S-4 had toward them.

With the battalion S-4's involvement in resupply efforts, it seemed that the vital link with the battalion commander and S-3 was missed in planning. Supporting the tactical plan became increasingly harder because information was getting passed onto the support element late. The S-4 really needed to be in the trains, talking with the TOC and trying to organize and plan to stay ahead of them. Instead, orders came at the last minute, and everything seemed to be a priority. No clear focus could be given to the support elements soldiers as to why they were doing things from one moment to the next.

From the time the cease-fire occurred until 1 MAR 91, resupplies were conducted daily to take water and rations out to the companies by vehicle and helicopter. On about the 1st of March, three HUMWV's got stuck in the mud by the brigade ALOC. The drivers were from D Company, were not used to the logistical resupply standards, had somehow gotten conflicting information, and drove into the field where supplies had been parachuted in. The vehicles were so far off the road that the field artillery five ton trucks could not get a cable out to winch them from the mud. This slowed the resupply rate and greatly dismayed the S-4. The next day, a CH-47 had to sling-load the three vehicles back up to the hard ball road. The question still remains that if the drivers had come from the support platoon, who were used to the logistical supply procedures, would the vehicles have become stuck in the first place? By using inexperienced drivers from D Company, not used to demands of logistical operations, the S-4 had to start from the beginning in vehicle support to the battalion.

B COMPANY DESTROYS IRAQI ARMORY

On the morning of 2 MAR 91, all resupply efforts were halted. A platoon from B Company, located west of the combat trains, had found an abandoned Iraqi Armory belonging to the Iraqi 197th Reconnaissance Battalion. That morning, the cargo HUMV's were ordered to B Company to take elements forward to destroy the base. The resupply helicopter that we had come to count on was also taken away so that the battalion commander and the S-3 could fly forward and overwatch the actions of B Company. The vehicles were gone all day transporting soldiers and also back-hauling captured equipment to the brigade TOC to be processed by the brigade S-2. Items captured consisted of brand new, American made AN/PVS-5 night observation goggles, West German made light amplifying binoculars, and cases of Iraqi army manuals and texts. Later in the evening when the vehicles and drivers returned, they relayed stories of the mass quantities of equipment captured and the craziness and lack of common sense the company had shown trying to destroy it all, or haul it away.

CONSOLIDATING THE TASK FORCE FOR WITHDRAWAL

By 3 MAR 91, word began to go through the battalion that it would begin pulling out. The resupply effort had begun to change and return to a more normal course, much like what was practiced in the times before in the TFAA. The word came from higher that we were to collect the anti-armor weapons and secure them in cargo nets to be airlifted back to the FOB. Evidently, the commanders were worried that an anti-tank missile would get accidentally discharged on the flight out of the AO. The ammunition sergeant started going to companies to collect their LAW's, AT-4's, and Dragons. The companies also unloaded their hand grenades, thermite grenades, and Claymore mines, in essence it began to be a dumping ground for all of the companies to get rid of their ammunition responsibilities. But the next night, a valuable lesson was to be learned.

The following night, reports began to come in that unidentified vehicles were coming down the road. Because it was at night, a clear confirmation could not be made. The companies began to feel very vulnerable without their anti-armor weapons, and the order went out to break the nets down and take them back out to the companies. The support soldiers quickly broke the nets down, and vehicles were loaded. After a few minutes had passed, the threat was off as the vehicles turned away. Had there been a threat, the companies could have been in a world of hurt with no weapons to destroy vehicles. For the support soldiers, it was just a perplexing situation having to react all of the time to the situations around them.

By 5 MAR 91, the battalion began to move out of sector. The sunny and warm weather that had blessed us for the past several

days was gone. Rain and cold hampered the efforts to move the companies from the hardtop road near the combat trains to the Daraji Oil Pumping Station, about twenty kilometers to the east. With the assistance of some vehicles that the S-4 of the 1st Battalion gave us, transportation began en-mass.

By 0500 that morning, the TOC had relocated to the pump station, and efforts were being made to get A and C companies from their positions. Relocating over four hundred soldiers in adverse weather with limited vehicle resources took the entire day. At 2300 that evening, the battalion was moved to the pump station. Each time a group of vehicles came in, you would see soldiers cleaning the mud off of their uniforms and equipment. This was the first chance they had at any personal hygiene since air assaulting in. With the battalion safely consolidated, the S-4 went to the brigade ALOC to report on the situation of the battalion. His vehicle became stuck in the mud, and we were forced to use the brigade S-4's until the vehicle could get retrieved the following day.

With the battalion at the pump station, the combat trains became the farthest unit in the western sector. The trains had to remain in position until 7 MAR 91. On the seventh of March, two CH-47's came in to extract the cargo nets of ammunition and the support element. At 1530 hours that afternoon, the support platoon was back together for the first time since the ground campaign started. The platoon's soldiers were exuberant to be linked back together and the stories they told to each other grew with exaggerations from 'up north.' The platoon members who had remained in the field trains had a few stories of their own, since everyone wanted to unload the trucks and set up luxurious living conditions and the platoon sergeant had to battle the headquarters company commander and first sergeant to prevent this.

CONCLUSION

Although the sustainment efforts in combat were over by 7 MAR 91, the logistical system was still having to work just as hard as ever. By 9 MAR 91, a fragmentary order was given out to prepare for possible movement back to the AO, as it appeared that Iraq was balking on its commitment to the peace accords. We did not have to go back but were put on alert as reserve when 1st and 2nd battalions redeployed north.

Sustainment in the FOB became as hectic as always. The commanders wanted to improve their soldiers conditions and morale, and rightly so. The support platoon sergeant went back to the TFAA and brought the duffel bags forward so troops could have access to clean clothes. The dining facility began to serve

hot coffee and have plenty of water to shave and clean up. This only meant that water and rations runs had to be conducted daily to promote the plan.

By 13 MAR 91, the ammunition sergeant had to consolidate the ammunition and prepare it for turn-in. This was a very intensive effort since the ammunition had to be cleaned and re-packaged. The soldiers also were increasingly restless about wanting to get home. They had sat in the Middle East long enough and were ready to be reunited with their families. That afternoon, the companies began to prepare to airlift out by helicopter. The support platoon went back out the MSR to the TFAA and consolidated the equipment in the TFAA.

On 23 MAR 91, the long haul of equipment was repeated back across the Saudi Desert, much in the same way that it had travelled in January. By the afternoon of 25 MAR 91, we pulled through the gate of Camp Eagle II, and it was a welcome sight to everyone.

There were numerous lessons learned (see the logistical after action review in appendix C). The logistical system, like all wars, took some undue criticism. Had it not been for the logistical effort, the war would have gone a lot tougher. The support platoon mission did not change from peacetime to war. The soldiers had to be trusted to accomplish their mission and use initiative to get it done. The leaders had to trust the support soldiers in their ability to accomplish the mission and leave them the flexibility to do it, something which did not occur all of the time. The soldiers in a support platoon have to adhere to the basic skills expected of all infantryman, but if they are poorly trained and led in peacetime, the wartime mission of the battalion will fail. Detailed SOP's can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the support soldier and should not be changed when conflict comes.

The battalion commander can enhance his logistical training by forcing the tactical situation to operate without support for limited times. This will force commanders to appreciate the sacrifices the support elements makes, and learn to survive on alternate plans. In Saudi Arabia, we found out the hard way that it was not like peacetime where you could depend on "going back to garrison for what you forgot!" The bottom line is that old parable which occurs in every conflict we have fought; 'Take care of the soldier, and he will take care of you!'

The historical significance of the Persian Gulf War will be debated for years to come. The battalion did not see heavy action, only small isolated engagements, but in the big picture it played a crucial part in the success of Operation Desert Storm. The vice-president of the United States said on Memorial Day, 1991;

"Make no mistake about it: Operation Desert Storm was truly a victory of good over evil, of freedom over tyranny, of peace over war."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg E. Metzgar graduated from Boise State University in 1986 with a degree in International Relations. While a member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps program he completed Airborne School and was awarded the George C. Marshall award, the highest honor and ROTC cadet can receive. After being commissioned into the Infantry in May 1986, he attended the Infantry Officer's Basic Course and Ranger School. In July 1987, he reported to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry. While serving at Fort Campbell, he was a rifle platoon leader, anti-armor platoon leader, executive officer and support platoon leader. While assigned as the support platoon leader he assisted and supported the battalion during numerous field training exercises and a deployment to the Jungle Operations Training Center in Panama. While still serving as the support platoon leader he deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield in September 1990 and later for Operation Desert Storm. Once he returned to the United States he was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Meritorious Service Medal for his vigor during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Before leaving the battalion he served as the battalion S-4. In August 1991, he reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, to attend the Infantry Officer's Advanced Course.

Slicing into Iraq inside UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, some of the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault units were wedged in crevices between air-captions, supplies and their buddies, sitting on the metal floor panels—a position that completes a connection between the aircraft and the raw nerve that runs from the tailbone to the brain. The nerve sends lightning-quick, unimpeded signals of every shudder, dip and bump the helicopter encounters or creates, along with the incessant throbbing of the engines, straight out the top of the head.

The helicopters flashed across the landscape so close to the deck that the sand, rocks and scrub brush were seen as almost a blur from the side windows—(if you had a window position—that is, which meant the risk of having your face mashed against the Plexiglas)—by the rest of the soldiers inside the helicopter.

It was a little more than an hour-long ride—long enough for your limbs to go to sleep and almost too long to think about what lay ahead.

At the apex of the operation, 101st Airborne troops would be planted about 60 miles from Baghdad, a sword-point thrust into the interior of the country.

The day after the start of the ground campaign, G + 1, soldiers from the 101st Airborne for the second time in as many days made an air assault into enemy territory. The 1st Brigade had established a forward operating base (FOB) Cobra 80 miles inside Iraq on G-Day, and supplies to sustain the future operations were pouring into it by air and up a main supply route named New Market.

The objective on G + 1 was to airlift elements of the 3rd Brigade beyond FOB Cobra from their staging positions at tactical assembly area (TAA) Campbell inside Saudi Arabia, a distance of some 150 miles. A third assault would be launched from FOB Cobra on G + 3 as 2nd Brigade went 80 miles east to secure FOB Viper.

The G + 1 operation was the division's deepest penetration of Iraq.

Third Brigade's objectives lay within AO

area operations (AO) the north being an area of which was the Euphrates River at which it ran westward to approximately 30 kilometers away from the division base area and the 24th Infantry Division. Most of the AO was inside An Nasiriyah.

Within AO Eagle were battle positions: BP Austin, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry; objective BP Abilene, 2nd Battalion, 187th Infantry; objective and Objective Base (OB) which would be the objective for the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry; AO Eagle, a whole, belonged to the 187th Infantry, known as "The Rakkasans."

BP Austin and BP Abilene overlapped Highway 1, the road running from Baghdad to Basra, Kuwait, along the Euphrates

155 Miles into Iraq

which could carry reinforcements from the west or retreating Iraqi forces from the east, depending on how the campaign progressed.

Objective Boston was a strategic pumping station that straddled the oil pipeline running from fields in the east.

The 101st Airborne's general mission to clear and occupy the area and then stand ready to interdict or block Iraqi forces with AO Eagle regardless of whether they were

reinforcements headed east or retreating elements of the Republican Guards that might slither away from the U.S. mechanized infantry and armored units working their way toward the Euphrates River on their right. Meanwhile, on the 101st Airborne's left, the French 6th Light Armored

Division and attached elements of the 82nd Airborne Division were driving north to form a screen on that flank.

During the opening phases of the campaign, however, the 101st Airborne would be way ahead of the armored and mechanized units on its flanks, leaping over as much ground in a couple of hours as a heavy division could move in a day or more and gouging out defensive/offensive pockets

By Dennis Steele
Staff Writer

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) on the first and second days of the ground phase of Operation Desert Storm staged air assaults well into Iraqi territory. For soldiers inside the helicopters, the sorties will not be forgotten.

The 101st Strikes Deep

A door gunner wearing a chemical protection suit scans the horizon for enemy activity during an air assault into Iraqi territory.

well inside enemy territory.

Second and 3rd Battalions would take care of the main avenue of approach, but the pipeline was considered another possible avenue of approach as it was the only other predominant line upon which the Iraqis could guide. Because of the generally featureless terrain, the Iraqis would probably depend on following man-made landmarks like the highway or pipeline. If they followed the pipeline, 1st Battalion would be waiting.

* * *

Although soldiers often call helicopters birds, a nickname conveying an image of grace and speed, the birds that carried the spearhead elements of 1st Battalion when the 101st Airborne launched its Black Hawks on G+1 were anything but agile. It's almost a wonder they clawed their way into the air at all, considering their loads.

At TAA Campbell—named for the 101st Airborne's home base, Ft. Campbell, Ky.—soldiers crammed themselves into the bellies of the Black Hawks for the operation. Helicopters were packed almost deck to overhead and bulkhead to pilots' seats with men and equipment. Troop seats had been removed. Instead of a normal combat load of 11 soldiers, the helicopters' capacity had been increased to accommodate up to 15, plus overstuffed rucksacks that could weigh more than 150 pounds in some cases.

The soldiers were going far and planning to stay there for a long time if necessary.



Should they be forced to endure sporadic resupply, they could live and fight out of their rucksacks.

SSgt. Sean M. O'Brian can remember exactly what he carried inside his rucksack that day almost without thinking about it, rattling off the items in quick sequence as if he had prepared for a test: "Two Claymore mines; two 60-mm mortar rounds; two hand grenades; three smoke grenades; two star clusters [illumination flares]; ten magazines of 5.56 ball ammo; six quarts of water; nine MREs (meals, ready-to-eat); a poncho and liner; pen and paper; 50 sandbags; extra socks; one IV (intravenous fluid) set; and other first-aid supplies."

He also managed to squeeze in a few toilet items and three cartons of cigarettes. He is not proud about the latter. Like every

soldier, he also possessed MOPP (mission oriented protective posture) suit, protective mask, load-bearing equipment, protective vest, Kevlar[®] helmet and individual weapon.

Besides all that gear, he also carried the weight of responsibility for leading a nine-man squad into a combat zone.

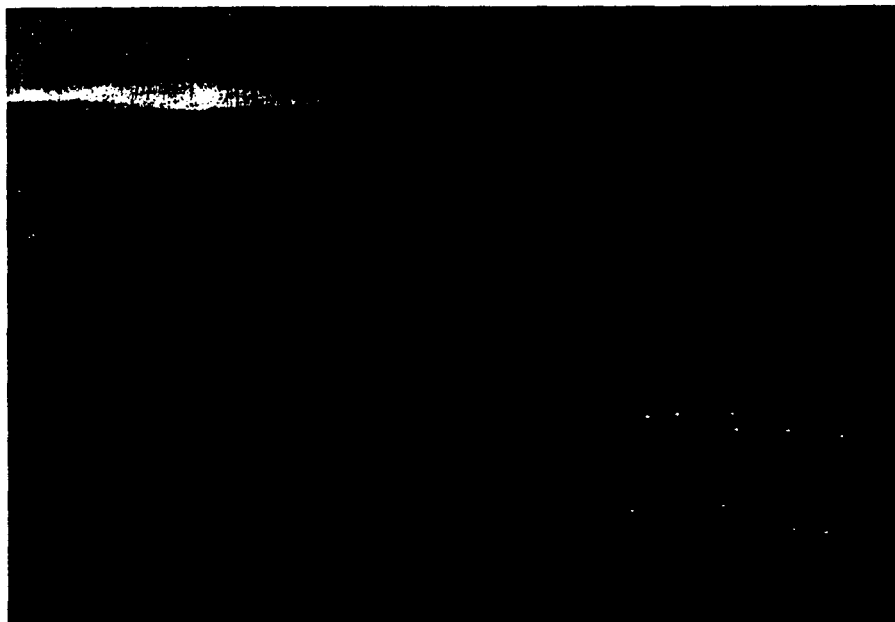
SSgt. O'Brian is the squad leader of 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company C, of the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry.

During the late afternoon of G+1, and a drizzle that peppered TAA Campbell, 1st Squad climbed aboard the helicopter. SSgt. O'Brian, Sgt. Mark H. Schindler, Sp. Jose W. Lourido, Cpl. Christopher P. Sp. Shawn D. Sawyer, Sp. Johnny W. H. Sp. Wess W. Schultze, Sp. Andrew W. and PFC Kevin E. Bosworth helped get the gear other inside.

Their Black Hawk, along with 64 other helicopters dedicated to the mission, soon lumbered into the air, using a rolling takeoff to gain air speed because of the weight of the equipment and fuel load. The operation would stretch the limits of the Black Hawk in making the flight from TAA Campbell to AO Eagle and then to FOB Cobra for refueling.

The takeoff, regardless of how difficult it had been, was nothing compared to the landing that awaited.

Before that, however, were minutes that seemed like hours inside the Black Hawk.



Sgt. Dan Janutolo

A CH-47D Chinook from the 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, carries a double sling load of supplies to FOB Cobra inside Iraq.



From their staging area inside Saudi Arabia, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) soldiers prepare to board UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and move to the interior of Iraq.

Sp. Wendy M. Westlake

as it sped across the bare landscape. Each man was lost in his own thoughts.

"We were in the air about one and a half hours, but it seemed a lot longer," Sp. Hall recalled. "We had that whole time to think about it. I was scared. I was thinking what would happen if my friends got shot. How would I react? What would happen if I got shot? Would I keep my cool? I started looking around at everybody; they all had straight faces, trying not to show they were scared. A couple of them were playing around, but they were scared, too. I closed my eyes for a couple of seconds and prayed."

"I did a lot of thinking during that ride," Sp. Sawyer said. "But I also tried to psych myself up, getting ready. I worried, too, whether I or anybody in my squad or platoon or even company would get shot, whether I'd see my family again. It was the longest helicopter ride I've ever taken."

"Everything was going through my head," Sgt. Lourido recalled. "Whether I'd come back or not, and since I'm a team leader I was thinking about how I was going to do things. Some of the squad looked out the windows for a while, but nobody said anything. I put my head down, and when I looked up everybody else had his head down, just waiting. You could feel the tension."

The landing zone (LZ) stood about 1,000 meters from the edge of the objective. The swarm of Black Hawks descended. A tre-

mendous rainstorm had pelted the area. What would have been a flat, hard LZ two days before had been turned into a clay slick, slippery as grease, and the helicopters would have to make rolling landings because of their loads.

They came straight in.

"We landed flat, and we seemed to slide forever," SSgt. O'Brian said. "The bird on one side slid by us as we slowed to a stop, and the bird on the other side slid by. I was waiting for the next bird to slide into us."

"The landing was the wildest ride I've ever been on," PFC Bosworth added. "We landed at almost full speed. At the time, it was scary. Now I think about it as fun, but still I wouldn't want to land like that again."

"It was wild—thick, packed clay, fish-

tailed," Sgt. Schindler noted. "I was thinking 'Oh boy, gotta have faith in the pilot.' Then, suddenly, we were throwing stuff out so the bird could get off the ground."

The first step off the bird, each soldier sank ankle deep into the muck.

* * *

Objective Boston, the pumping station, was more or less a square compound bordered by high berms and wire fences. A radio tower stuck above the berm line.

Soldiers struggled to the edge of the LZ, sinking into the clay under their heavy rucksacks, and soon were carrying extra pounds of mud caked to their boots. They dumped the rucksacks in preparation for the clearing operation.

First squad had been tapped to breach the wire and lead its platoon to clear the



101st Airborne Division troopers practice urban fighting at a site inside Saudi Arabia as the division prepares for combat.

Sgt. Dan Janulato

cluster of buildings inside the compound. Dusk approached.

As they neared the facility, it became apparent to the troops that the compound was far larger than they had expected and contained many more buildings than they had been led to believe by intelligence reports.

What struck the troops as the helicopters thudded into the distance, out of earshot, was the dead silence that surrounded them, made relatively more acute because of the din 65 helicopters had been making only moments before. Nevertheless, there was a great sense of being way inside Indian territory surrounded by nothingness itself, not even sound. It was eerie.

They still had a thousand meters to cover before reaching the compound.

* * *

An extra ration of adrenaline seemed to kick in. Sgt. Lourido observed that everyone was taking great pains to perform precisely. "Everybody wanted to be in the right place, doing the right things," he said. "It was real quiet except for some barking dogs, which after a while started getting on people's nerves."

It took about 15 minutes to reach the compound. They breached the perimeter and moved in. Company C scrambled through a hole in the fence.

Approximately 20 structures were scattered inside the facility. Alternating between covering and clearing teams, the soldiers carefully entered each building, making certain it was empty before moving to the next.

"I was worried that I would miss something—like a room—and let somebody jump the other guys," PFC Bosworth recalled.

Kicking in doors, the squad moved through the compound. Ultimately, no one was found. The buildings had been abandoned but only recently—the last of the occupants probably fled as the helicopters landed. Dinner was found prepared in one of the buildings. The guess was that 30-50 people had been there. More than likely, they belonged to the Iraqi militia, judging by the uniforms found, and they had been completely caught off guard. All that remained were papers, ammunition and pictures of Saddam Hussein.

Suddenly, the battalion radio net crackled. "Movers in the compound" was reported, but the report went unconfirmed.

First squad reached the main gate area. A burst of automatic fire echoed from a bunker complex outside.

"From where we were, we couldn't pinpoint it," SSgt. O'Brian said, "which is why we had to go down and clear the area to make sure Company A didn't get caught as



Sp. Wess W. Schultze

they made a passage through lines to take ... the airfield."

By then it was closing in on dusk, and 1st Squad—having already completed the nerve-stretching job of clearing buildings—was tasked to go into the bunker.

As the commander of 1st Battalion, 1st. Col. Henry L. Kinnison, later put it, "As an infantryman, I can't think of anything I would rather do less than going into a bunker."

"I was scared, no other way to put it, scared for me and my guys," SSgt. O'Brian said. "It was raining, foggy, a moonless night."

Using night-vision goggles and laser sighting devices, the squad methodically moved from bunker to bunker, clearing around ten altogether.

"We could tell what was going on outside," SSgt. O'Brian said. "But the worst part—when we were most vulnerable—was working our way inside the bunkers. It was very close quarters. It took 30-45 minutes to complete the job, but it seemed to take forever. We never did find the guys who were shooting. We were disappointed about that on one hand and relieved on the other."

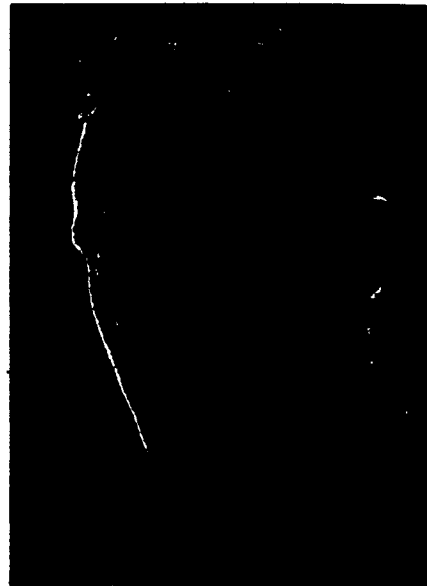
Objective Boston, nevertheless, was secure.

* * *

G+1 ended as troops throughout AO Eagle finished digging in. At Objective Boston, 1st Squad, like everybody, endured driving wind as a storm lashed the area—wind so intense that if anybody stood up straight on top of the berm it would almost send him reeling down the side. Filling sandbags was a slow job; a third of a shovel full would end up in the bag, and the rest would scatter downwind.

The soldiers scraped defensive positions in the ground and spent a restless night waiting for fleeing or reinforcing Iraqis to approach within range. Nobody came.

The next day, additional troops were airlifted to the area, and weapons platoons arrived by convoy. Within 48 hours, they



Sp. Shawn D. Sawyer



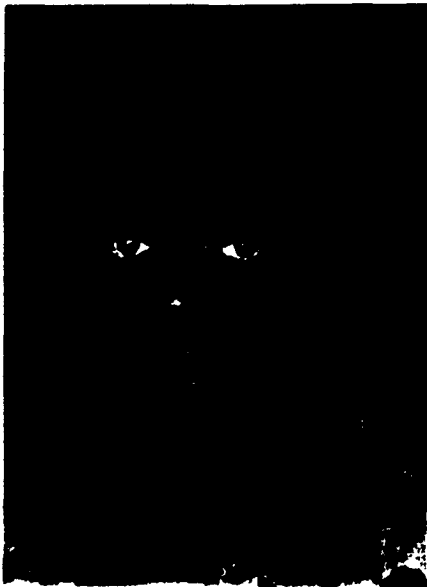
Sgt. Mark H. Schindler

would hear news of the cessation of offensive operations over their radios.

They manned their positions until 10 March, when orders dictated that they pull back to FOB Cobra. Soon, however, they were ordered back to AO Eagle to emphasize the necessity of negotiating in good faith to the Iraqis. Once again, Objective Boston was cleared.

This time it was easier. They knew what to expect. They knew where the hiding spots were.

* * *



Sp. Johnny W. Hall



PFC Kevin E. Bosworth



SSgt. Sean M. O'Brian



Sgt. Jose W. Lourido

Back at Ft. Campbell, 1st Squad reflected on their experience. As they talked, the nation staged mammoth celebrations to welcome home the soldiers of Desert Storm. The country was showering its "heroes" with praise and thanks.

Did the men of 1st Squad consider themselves heroes according to their own definitions?

"I don't feel like I'm a hero," SSgt. O'Brian answered. "But I feel proud that the whole Army proved itself. I feel especially good for the 101st Airborne because we got the chance to prove the air assault concept. I'm grateful for the celebrations, but anybody with a conscience feels sorry for the Vietnam vets. What we're getting now should

have gone to them. The Vietnam veterans I've met [since I returned] support us; they're not jealous. They more or less say, 'Take the ball and run with it. Enjoy it while it lasts.' But we'll always respect them."

"Do I feel like a hero? . . . Well, kind of," Sp. Hall replied. "It [the combat] wasn't anything like Vietnam—and I'm glad it wasn't—but I'm also glad that people respect me for what I did. We all did what we were supposed to do; we went over there and showed them who's best. I didn't know the Army was that good until I went over there and saw it for myself."

"I don't really feel like a hero, but I feel like I did something right," PFC Bosworth offered. "I wasn't popular in school—not a football star or anything like that—but now everybody [back home] knows me, and that makes me feel good. At least people aren't rejecting us like the Vietnam vets. I wish they hadn't rejected them. They deserve recognition; they really had it rough."

"Do I feel like I'm a hero? Yes, I guess so, because of what all of us did," Sgt. Lourido

said. "If we hadn't been there, nothing would have been accomplished—the freeing of Kuwait—and everybody who served over there had something to do with it."

Sgt. Schindler: "What is a hero? My idea of a hero is somebody who has a job, does his job and does it well—no fancy stuff involved. Am I a hero? Yeah, I think so, if my definition holds out. I think everybody involved in the whole operation is a hero in that sense. It took everybody working together to make it happen. Everybody did his job and that's why it was a success."

"No, I don't really feel like I'm a hero," Sp. Sawyer answered. "I define a hero as someone who saves someone else's life without worrying about what happened to themselves. But it does make me feel good that [the public] isn't treating us like they did Vietnam vets."

Sp. Schultze: "What's a hero? Gen. [H. Norman] Schwarzkopf is a hero. Basically, he's the one who pulled it off—the one who made it happen, but I guess you could say that all of us who went over are heroes in some respect . . . no matter what we did or where we served over there. I remember that we landed [back in the States] at 2 A.M., and hundreds of people were there, waving flags and taking pictures. I enjoyed it, but I think the celebration did more for them than it did for us. I'm not a warmonger . . . but I think America needed this war. I hate to say it—but it's true—she was losing her pride. America needed to feel good about herself again."

Headed Home

As Operation Desert Storm was ending and the returning troops were being greeted as heroes, I was on stateside Army Reserve weekend duty. As I arrived at the airport in uniform for a one-hour flight home, other passengers seemed to be watching me with unconcealed pride.

When I reached the check-in desk at the boarding gate, the airline gate clerk smiled broadly and asked me, "Headed home?"

Not wanting to claim any of the glory of the Desert Storm forces, I said, "Yes, but not from where you think."

Without hesitation, she said, "Soldier, going home is *going home*."

My short flight took on a whole new meaning.

LT. COL. GREG BAXTER
U.S. Army Reserve

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Desert Storm

A Christian's Journey



Major Caslen, center, in the Middle East with Lieutenant Brad Golden, at left, and Lieutenant Colonel Cal Benedict.

by Major Robert L. Caslen, Jr., U.S. Army

On the morning of 2 August 1990, I formed up my thirty-five man detail on a CSA aircraft for an overseas mission. As an infantry battalion executive officer, I was taking our battalion's advance party to Panama, in preparation for jungle operations training. As we formed up, a noncommissioned officer told me CNN had just reported that Iraq had invaded Kuwait. Aware of this possibility through intelligence reports we had received in earlier weeks, and knowing that our division, the 101st Airborne (Air Assault), had contingency plans for this region, I asked the pilot if we were being diverted to the Middle East. He assured me we were heading south.

Our battalion followed a few days later. We were in our first week of training when we received orders to cease operations and return to the United States to prepare for a subsequent deployment to Saudi Arabia. I was able to call my wife. Our conversation was tense. I remember telling her to pray as never before, because I knew our lives would be changed dramatically. During that first week in Panama, a small group of officers met for Bible study. I did not anticipate it then, but that study eventually led to a battalion officers' study in Saudi Arabia with

participation by up to twenty of our officers.

We flew to the Middle East in early September. Upon arrival, our initial mission was to defend Saudi Arabia against further Iraqi offensive action. The division had a base camp in the Dammam area, from which we rotated brigades to our northern covering force. The trials on these rotations were incredible. Uncertainty and homesickness slowly eroded our morale, and the physical environment challenged us in ways we've never before experienced. In some places, the flies were so bad that, in order to eat a pre-packaged meal, I'd swish them away and quickly take a bite of food. Leaving the spoon in my mouth, I'd swish them away again so I could return the spoon to the MRE packet! The heat, of course, was unbearable. We'd set a cup of water in the sun for a half hour to cook coffee!

I can't begin to express how God met my needs during those first weeks. My children attend a Christian school, and my son's fourth grade class sent me a card with Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Although I have often studied Joshua 1:8, I never before realized the blessings

of Joshua 1:9. When I shared that verse with our Bible study group, it became our theme verse.

Our Bible study's first focus was the book of Joshua. We couldn't think of a more fitting topic than to study the life of a leader of God's army at a key point in the history of Israel. During this study, God

revealed to us a portion of what I believe was the unfolding of His plan for the days ahead. In Joshua 11, we found a short summary of Joshua's battles in verses 16 through 20. But what was interesting (and frightening in its prophetic tone) was verse 20, where God Himself had hardened the hearts of these kings so that they *would* wage war, so that they *would* be destroyed.

As we saw Saddam Hussein snub his nose at every offer of peace, we knew his heart was hardening. As we saw the tactical array of his military forces, particularly the way his right flank was so open and how he so strongly defended against an allied marine amphibious deception on his left flank, we knew that God had hardened Saddam's heart and was leaving the way open for his power to be destroyed militarily. Even as we heard of the millions of people who were praying for peace, we knew in our hearts that God's plan was different. Although we wondered why God would not answer the prayers of so many people, we believed that God's will in all of this was revealed through Joshua 11:20.

During rotations north, our soldiers developed an ever-increasing desire to learn about spiritual things. This provided a great opportunity to witness, disciple and minister to their needs. It was also a great opportunity for our chaplains, and I was blessed to have a born-again, evangelical chaplain. I enjoyed talking with him about our soldiers' spiritual programs, praying with him and studying Scripture with him. During these rotations, we bap-

The author's driver takes a gulp of air as he is baptized in the Saudi Arabian Desert.

tized more than seventy-five of our men, including my driver, in whatever water source we could find. Normally it was in a container designed for water storage during chemical decontamination procedures!

How I praised God to see the spirit of Jesus Christ alive, and so strongly and powerfully moving in a land totally opposed to Christianity. I was proud of our chaplains as they flew their Christian flag, boldly, wherever we were set up. Even though they were given the "option" to remove their cross insignia, they kept them on as a witness of their faith and of the power of Jesus Christ. I praise God for our division commander, who publicly said he did not want his chaplains to remove their crosses. Interestingly enough, the Arabs with whom we came in contact were in no way offended by the symbol of the cross. In a land where religion and faith carry so much importance in everyday life, they respect commitment to one's faith. I believe they would have been surprised had we tried to hide our Christianity.

After our first rotation, we began to shift our focus to "possible" offensive operations. With this shift, we began to plan for a behind-the-lines air assault insertion. The medical analysis estimated that within our battalion alone we could expect from ten to forty percent casualties within the first forty-eight hours. Part of our casualties would come from the expected loss of four helicopters from anti-aircraft fire enroute or from a catastrophic failure on the landing zone. With fifteen soldiers packed into each helicopter, and knowing the indiscriminate nature of these accidents, I was faced for the first time with the reality that I might be among those statistics. I have to confess that started to gnaw at me. But God gave me a significant verse, Isaiah 26:3, which says, "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." I understood the fact that the peace in my heart is directly related to my ability to trust God and His perfect will. Perfect trust yields perfect peace. The peace, or lack of peace, in my heart was a barometer of my trust in God. The more I trusted Him, the more peaceful I was about the situation. When I found myself anxious and nervous, I knew I needed to pray for grace to trust God more. Eventually, I grew to a point where I knew God's will



Surely anyone with any spiritual sensitivity had at one time or another recognized God's omnipotent hand at work in this war.

was perfect, that He was in control of all that was occurring and about to happen and that I was *exactly* where He wanted me to be. Understanding the truth of Isaiah 26:3, I decided that I might as well sit back and enjoy the ride!

During the ground war, the 101st Airborne Division's mission was to air assault 155 miles behind Iraqi lines to the Euphrates River to cut the main supply and reinforcement route from Baghdad into the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO). Our battalion was chosen to be the main effort of the brigade, the 101st Division, and the XVIII Airborne Corps in this phase of the operation. That means we were the tip of the spear that was the "left hook" of General Schwarzkopf's "thunder and lightning" attack.

As I sat on the pick-up zone waiting to board our helicopter, I appreciated the feelings of soldiers in prior wars. I took my small Bible out of my fatigue

pocket and asked the Lord what He would have me to know. I turned to Isaiah 41:10-13. Have you ever opened the Bible and God gave you the very word you needed at that moment? That's exactly what He did with this verse:

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who wage war against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.

I read that and cried. I couldn't believe what the Lord had just showed me. It was as if God Himself was face to face with me, telling me exactly what I needed to hear. As my four-year-old son would jump on my lap during a thunderstorm, and I would throw my arms around him to comfort him, so now God was throwing His arms around me and

The more I trusted Him, the more peaceful I was about the situation...

comforting me. As my son would reach up to hold my hand as we crossed the street, God was reaching down to hold my hand as we crossed over into combat into the valley of the Euphrates River.

I drew great comfort from verse 11. As we all found out from the results of the 100-hour conflict, it was prophetic. But when I read verse 12, I was confused. Our mission was to cut off the reinforcing access highway and to be the blocking anvil for any retreating forces. As the brigade's main effort, our battalion had the blocking mission. We were expecting as many as four Republican Guard divisions to hit us as they were being pushed back by the armored assaults of VIIIth Corps. For the Lord to say we would not "find" our enemy in these verses, I thought perhaps that this verse didn't apply.

Our air assault went practically without a hitch. All the aircraft made it in, and we had no contact on the ground. I knew God was with us by the fact that every aircraft landed safely in spite of our casualty estimates at this stage of the mission. During the next forty-eight hours, our men got into some fierce firefights, and at times the enemy was just fifty feet away. In one contact, our friendly mortars fired within thirty to fifty meters of our men's positions. Many of our men were decorated for valor because of their heroic work. I say this to illustrate the incredible protection God gave us, because not a single soldier of ours received even one scratch from any enemy contact! It was truly a miracle, and it was the answer to so many prayers.

Once the VIIIth Corps hit the Republican Guards, initial Iraqi movement was along the highway we occupied. Interrogation of Iraqi high-ranking officers revealed, however, that as soon as they knew we had cut their retreat, they turned and decided to go north through Basra. As soon as they made their turn, they ran into the grasp of other allied mechanized divisions, to include the 24th and 1st Infantry Divisions. These armored forces were much better equipped to fight the tanks

of the Republican Guards, compared to our light-skinned infantry TOW carriers. When I heard these Iraqi officer reports, I immediately realized that the Scripture verse I had questioned on the pick-up zone on G-day (Isaiah 41:12) was indeed correct. Although some enemy did come upon our positions, they were not the Republican Guard forces of the Iraqi main effort. Yes, we surely did search for them, but we did not find them. Why? Because they turned away and were trapped by allied armor. Praise God!

Once the cease fire was announced, we were deluged by Iraqi nationals who sought asylum in Saudi Arabia, displaced Kuwaiti citizens who had been in hiding for eight months and desired our assistance to return home, Iraqi resistance fighters seeking military assistance, and Kuwaiti citizens who had been freed from imprisonment. The pain and agony were horrific. Since the Arab often speaks of *en shalla* which means, "if it is God's will," I was proud to tell them that it was the will of our God and Savior Jesus Christ to have the American Army involved in their liberation from oppression from Iraqi tyranny. It was a great opportunity to witness to internationals about the mercy, love and power of Christ.

Up to the very last day of my time in Iraq, God continued to bless me with His word. On 1 March, the day after the cease fire, I read Isaiah 48:20-22, which includes the command to "announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth." I am writing this article because of this command. Yes, I *do* want to announce God's leadership, and how He provided for us and protected us, with shouts of joy. On my last day in Iraq, 22 March 1991, God gave me Jeremiah 50:8, "Flee out of Babylon, leave the land of the Babylonians." Believe me, I did not argue with Him!

I would be remiss were I not to speak about our return to America and the impact of our experience. God warned the Israelites through Moses in Deuteronomy 8 not to forget Him. He warned them that when they arrived in the Promised Land, after wandering in the desert for forty years, some would become proud and forget it was the Lord Himself who had brought them out of slavery. He warned them that the prosperity experienced in the Promised

Land would harden their hearts and would lead them to say it was their own power and strength that protected them, freed them and provided for them.

As our soldiers returned to America, our "Promised Land," it concerned me to hear our soldiers and leaders repeatedly speak of our great technology, tactics, operational plans and courage, without speaking about how God had worked in all of this. Surely anyone with any spiritual sensitivity had at one time or another recognized God's omnipotent hand at work in this war.

During our latter days in Saudi Arabia, one of the Christian officers in my battalion brought me a Bible he had just found in a nearby dumpster. As the soldiers cleared their tents and packed their belongings, their non-essential

It was as if God Himself was face to face with me, telling me exactly what I needed to hear.

books and papers were discarded. How convenient it was to throw a Bible in the dumpster as excess baggage, now that the war was over and this soldier was still alive. Surely God's warning to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 8 is also true for us. My prayer is that we, who so intimately experienced the mercy and love of God throughout this war, do not create a "God of the dumpsters" by throwing Him away now that we have returned to the "promised land."

Our technology was incomparable, our operational plans were effective, and our soldiers performed magnificently. But let us continue to give credit to Almighty God, Who reigns over heaven and earth, Whose will is still perfect, and Who rules in the affairs of kings and men. †

Bob Caslen is the operations officer for the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division. He is a 1975 graduate of the United States Military Academy. In this article he recounts his experiences as executive officer for the 2nd Battalion, 187th Infantry, which was the main effort for the XVIII Airborne Corps ground attack during Desert Storm. He and his wife, Shelly, have three sons: Bob, 12, Nick, 10, and Jeffrey, 5.

LTG J.H. Binford Peay III Remarks

101st Airborne Association Reunion
Sparks, Nevada, 17 August 1991



Left to right: Corporal Thomas E. Hanson, LTG J.H. Binford Peay III and Command Sergeant Major Stephen J. Weiss (photo by Parsons)

Distinguished guests, hosts from the California Chapters, fellow veterans and soldiers ... and friends.

I'm delighted to be included in this 46th Annual gathering which perhaps can be considered the last of many homecoming celebrations for the Eagles of the desert and a fitting conclusion to another glorious chapter in the Division's history. The 101st Airborne Division ... a national treasure ... a national history ... a national tradition!

The father of our Division, General Bill Lee, is best remembered for his prophecy in General Order Number 5, 19 August 1942, "That the 101st had no history, but it has a rendezvous with destiny". Scarcely a year ago, I spoke to our reunion in Washington D.C. and used General Lee's words: "That the 101st, shall be called upon to carry out operations of far reaching military importance ... going into action when the need is immediate and extreme". Once again this gentlemen proved to be a most accurate prophet, foretelling our operations in the Persian Gulf. Never in my wildest dreams did I envision that within the month the nation would once again call upon the Screaming Eagles to carry the message of liberty to a people enslaved by a tyrant's army. That army learned that to fight America is to risk being struck from the sky by the ferocious soldiers with eagles on their shoulders.

Our Division has had more than its fair share of spirited soldiers. The Privates, the Sergeants, the Lieutenants. PFC Joe E. Mann (H Co, 3/502 PARA Regt), severely wounded, demanded to return to his unit to stand guard during Operation Market Garden in Sept of '44. PFC Milton A. Lee (B Co, 2/502), despite serious wounds, pressed the attack providing covering fire for his platoon during Operation Nevada Eagle in May of '68.

The new generation of Eagles showed, too, that they had what it takes.

The time—0530 hours, 26 February 1991. The place—Al Khidr, Iraq. Though pinned down, PFC Charles H. Woody (C Co, 3/187th Infantry Regt) moved forward, exposing himself to enemy fire and

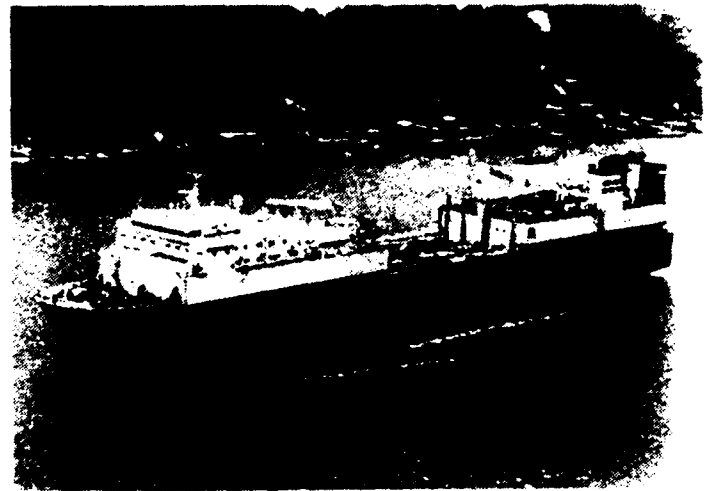
delivers pinpoint squad automatic weapon (SAW) fire on an Iraqi armor vehicle, forcing it and its crew of 6-8 Iraqis to withdraw.

What made these spirited soldiers act? Where will we find such men and women in the future? The answer to both questions is in this audience this evening.

Ours is a Division which has been steadfast over time. Our history is a history filled with firsts. 0130 hours, D-Day, first into Normandy, five hours before the lead elements of V and VII Corps land at Utah and Omaha Beaches. 6 July 1965, our 1st Brigade becomes the first stateside combat unit to totally deploy by strategic air to Vietnam ... and again in Operation Desert Shield we were the first full Division to close in the theater of operations; the first to fire in the offensive campaign destroying radars in Iraq thus opening up the airway for the Air Force fighters and bombers headed towards Baghdad, and ... your Division conducted the largest and longest Air Assault of its type in the history of warfare.

These desert examples serve but to show you veterans that the trails you blazed in the hedgerows of Europe and in the highlands of Vietnam, were well marked for those of us that followed. We acted as you taught us to act, we served as you wanted us to serve - - with pride and determination. We met each task; we remembered you throughout.

General Lee said when we were called upon, "The need would be immediate and extreme". In a repeat of history, in August 1990, lead elements of the Division deployed by strategic air within 48 hours after we were alerted. The need was extreme. Within hours of their arrival, our Aviation Task Force was posted on the Kuwaiti border, backstopping thin Saudi forces with Apache helicopters, the best tank killers in the world. And simultaneously our equipment moved by convoys thru Atlanta and Chattanooga enroute to our seaport at Jacksonville ... the 1st ship being the American Eagle which carried the Division to Vietnam (as well) some 25 years earlier. Thus began what I call the first of two wars we fought in the desert.



American Eagle

The first war was the covering force war. It lasted six months — August 1990 until after Christmas. Our mission was to shore up the Saudi defense, protect the oil access lanes and prepare ourselves for what lay ahead.

It has been often said that the character of people changes as the nature of war changes. Before we deployed, the Division training focus was training, maintaining, leading and soldier discipline — the cornerstones of combat readiness. It was well understood that the physical, mental and spiritual fitness of our soldiers provided the mortar that bound the cornerstones. If there was a change in our soldiers during that first six months in the desert it was not of the

revolutionary variety; rather, it was evolutionary. We operated in 120 degree heat and later felt the freezing cold winds of the desert; sanded and repainted our helicopter blades at night; learned to navigate over enormous distances, and turned "Desert Tough". The training and principles which guided us in peace, were the same that guided us in war; training was tough by design. Our noncommissioned officers instilled the highest standards of discipline and endurance; team building and bonding took on new meaning. Each step of our plan was designed to sharpen the edge and maintain our character. **Timeless principles!**

And may I mention another intangible that was constantly in the minds of us who fought in Vietnam. We remembered you Vietnam veterans who fought with us. Our experience in the jungle together was with us in the desert. Mentally, we swore that victory would never again be taken from us after it was won on the battlefield. Never again would veterans be forgotten. With this sentiment, Camp Eagle II, the Division's Saudi Arabia Base Camp (consisting of 2500 Saudi tents erected on the hot desert floor), was named in memory of Camp Eagle I veterans in Vietnam.

The second of the two wars the Desert Eagles fought was the long deceptive move to the west and the execution of the now famous "Hail Mary" end run on the Iraqi's, you've heard so much about. This phase of the campaign, like the first, rested squarely on the shoulders of the divisional leadership — Corporal to General. It brought out the best in all our planners, and in many ways it was a classic airborne operation ... conducted by helicopters, air assaulting from the sky deep in the enemy's rear in the early morning hours. We set up an enormous logistical fuel base ... a 7-11 store ... larger than Ft. Campbell to further the attack from deep behind his lines.

Long distance moves became the norm. Tactical assembly area Campbell was 567 miles from Camp Eagle, about the distance from Nashville to Washington D.C. Our first G-Day (Ground Day) objective (Forward Operating Base Cobra) was 93 miles from the line of departure. The Euphrates River Valley was 55 miles further north. Forward Operating Base Viper was another 93 miles to Cobra's east and our final engagement area (EA Thomas) was an additional 75 miles northeast of Viper or the distance from Philadelphia to New York. We were literally spread over an area equaling the northeast portion of our country. Despite severe weather, sand storms and near zero visibility on occasion, the Division pressed forward to establish blocking positions on the Euphrates River and to cut his escape routes north of Basra. This effectively closed the door — the "Bottom of the Bag" along Highway 8.

The Division along the way occupied some historical and specially named bases like Normandy, Dak To, A'Shau, Oasis, Bastogne and a few with a local flavor, like Cobra, Viper, Sand and Scorpion.

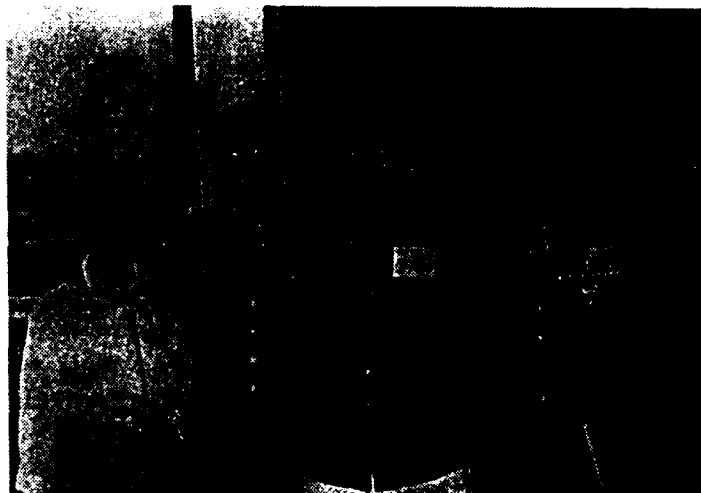
Let me say something now about the most recent veteran among you — the Desert Eagles. Theirs was an experience of war in every way comparable to yours, except for the tragedy of numerous deaths in battle. They were spared that tragedy partially because of luck, but largely because of skill, proving — perhaps by the best example in military history — that sweat in preparation prevents blood in battle. Our tenets for combat were simple — **ethics always; discipline ensured; courage to fix when tired, bored and scared; training in combat a must and most importantly, out-front leadership.** Veterans are a great asset if there are future conflicts, just as you of World War II and Vietnam were a treasury of experience for the Army that went to the Gulf. You can be sure that the experience of desert veterans will be equally valuable if America goes to war again. They have — indeed have demonstrated — what it takes to secure victory. They will teach these lessons well to upcoming generations of soldiers.

Tonight the Eagle on my right shoulder looks back at this supreme experience of my life ... you here tonight know best how I feel. There must be a benevolent virus that infects us from the time we first sew on the patch, producing an unknown electricity that stimulates whatever it is that makes a soldier proud. Then there is a contagion of excellence when such soldiers work together. You can't describe it except in metaphysical terms, but you feel it and you know it.

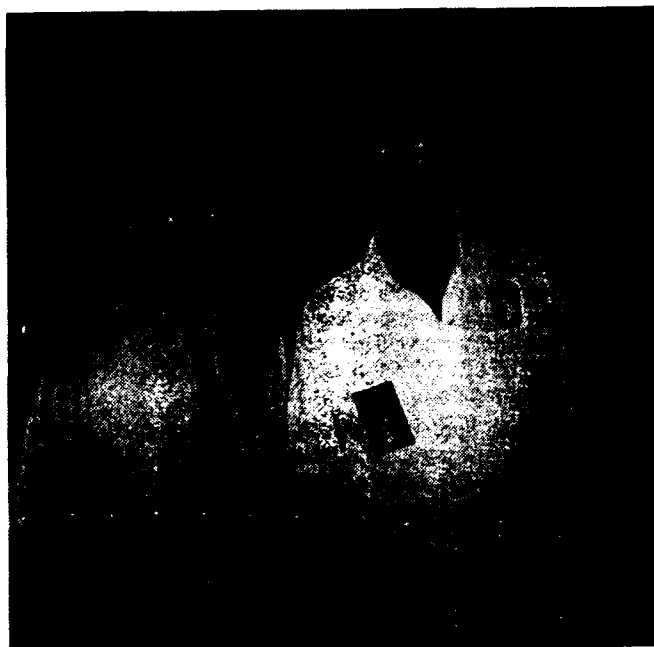
The Army has placed a first rate team at Fort Campbell headed by Major General John Miller and Command Sergeant Major Stephen Weiss ... two of my fondest friends. All of us look forward to reading about their and the Division's exploits in the weeks to come.

Finally, let me share one last anecdote with you. Several months ago as the main elements of the Division were about to redeploy from Saudi Arabia, General Norm Schwarzkopf visited the Division. During the course of his farewell, he told the troops that "The heavy divisions were the thunder", then paused and said, "But, ... the 101st Airborne Division was the lightning of Desert Storm". That short description sums up the spirit and professionalism I've been talking about. It captures the essence of who and what all of us are ... and what we did.

Now we can celebrate and give thanks for God's mercy, that the Screaming Eagles are safely home. Thank you for being our spiritual reserve in the desert. We knew you were there ... behind us all the way. Airborne and Air Assault!



Before the western theme Awards Dinner (L to R): Ruth Brock, MG John E. Miller, Jerry Stumpus and LTG J.H. Binford Peay III pose for Chuck VanderLuitgaren. (photo by VanderLuitgaren)



Left to right: Former Secretary Walter Miller, Jr. (327) and John Battey (Sp. Troops) (photo by Parsons)



A TOW gunner with Co. D, 3rd Bn., 187th Infantry, on the northern Saudi Arabian border takes a quick breather during his two hour shift. "At a distance," said one soldier, "six or seven camels can look like a convoy."

Before the ground war began, scouts, mortarmen and TOW missile gunners patrolled the northern Saudi Arabian border...

Looking For Clues

Story and Photos by
SSgt. William H. McMichael

"OK, I've got a hot spot," Sgt. Mike McGee called out. He peered through his large thermal telescope, something like a TOW missile launcher without the missile, and refocused.

Capt. Roy Henson, standing next to the Humvee, looked up. "What is it?" he asked. "I don't know," McGee quietly replied. "It's big. But it's not a fire." He shot a laser beam at the light and read the

return. "Range is 7,500 meters."

Suddenly, there were more lights. Two, four, six ... To the naked eye, only one was clearly visible. But through the night optics on McGee's scope, distinct, bright white dots were strewn along the horizon. As he spotted a new blip, he passed the location and distance down to Henson's radioman, Spec. Chris Conley.

"Sir, we've got 12 possible targets," he finally said. "I'll call them in to battalion."

What were they? Henson was un-

sure. "We've never seen any of these," he said. The images were too indistinct. But the scope had been trained on a west-northwest azimuth. Were they Iraqi vehicles? Unknown. He radioed the spot report, and they moved to a new position.

Henson is the commander of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 187th Regimental Combat Team, which was on the leading edge of the 101st Airborne Division's Desert Storm task force in northern Saudi Arabia before the start of the ground war. Several dozen members

DESERT STORM!



Clockwise, from top: Co. B soldiers pass the time before moving out on patrol. • The mood is all business as the patrol begins. • En route to the next checkpoint, an artilleryman verifies the patrol's exact position with "The Slugger," a Global Positioning System device which provides a precise ground location via satellite.

of his infantry company, along with mortarmen, scouts and TOW missile operators, were working in teams to patrol a portion of the volatile northern Saudi Arabian border. Others manned fixed observation posts. Sometimes on vehicles, sometimes dismounted, the soldiers walked a dangerous path through the pitch-black night as they looked and listened, trying to see and hear enemy activities.

At dusk, on the way into the patrol zone, the contrails of three northbound B-52 bombers could be seen high overhead. As the convoy of Humvees continued into the gathering darkness, SSgt. Randall Pryor told his team, "If you haven't al-

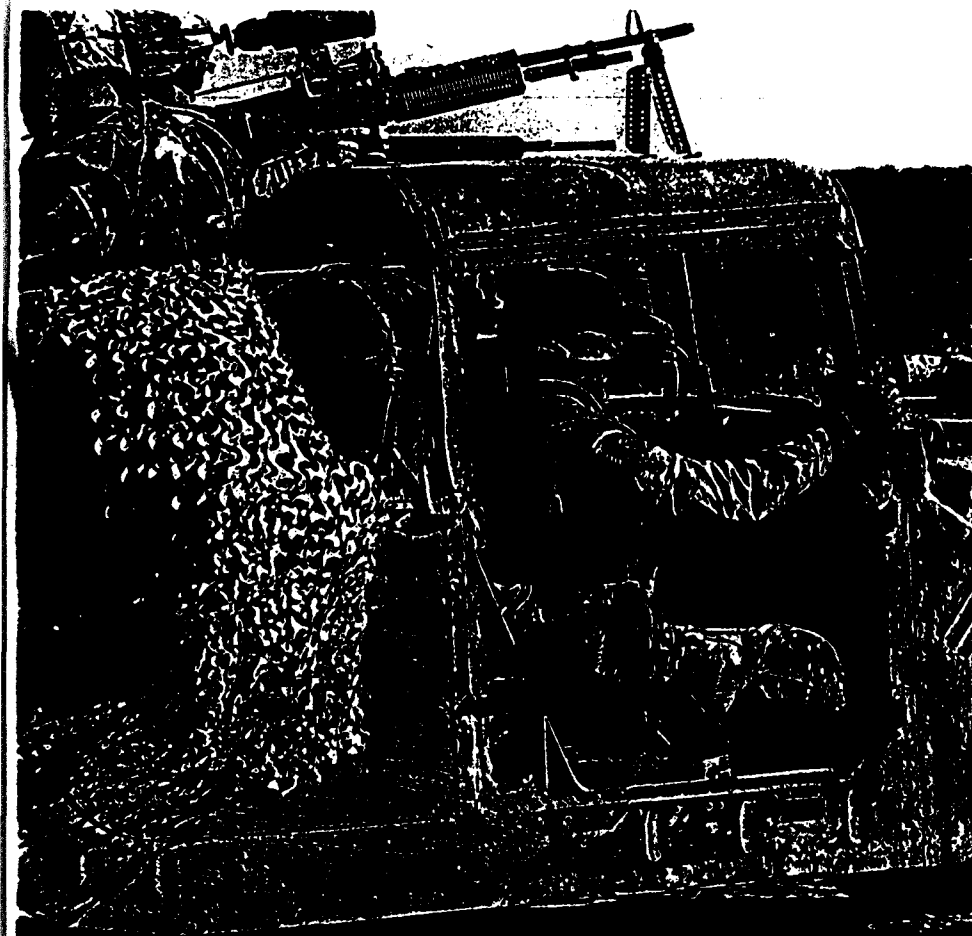
ready, lock and load." Drawn bolts clacked forward, chambering rounds.

Elsewhere on the border, U.S. Marines and Saudi forces had drawn the land battle's first blood during the Iraqi defeat at Khafji. But along this portion of the front, a strange cat-and-mouse game was being played. The patrols were looking for the clues that would help put together the intelligence puzzle that later allowed U.S. and coalition forces to rout the Iraqi army.

"We want to show them that we're here. But stealth is maintained," said battalion commander Lt. Col. Tom Greco. The patrols, noted Maj. Carlos Glover, 3rd Bn. operations officer, are "defensive in nature. They're not aimed at making contact with the enemy."

"We're getting close enough to see Iraqi soldiers, but it's too far away to see what they're doing," said PFC Hilmy Soldjadi, a Co. C machine gunner. But the first couple of days, Henson said, "we could see people diving into bunkers when our helicopters flew over."

The focus of the patrols was to gather information on nearby Iraqi forces that the electronic eyes in the sky couldn't see — things like uniforms, equipment and vehicles. "Putting together pieces, developing patterns," was battalion in-



telligence officer 1st Lt. Kevin Colyer's description. The Iraqis liked to use flares, so observers tried to note their color and location.

Front-line units could hear occasional distant explosions, but no one was sure what had been hit, or where. "Hard to say," Henson said, admitting his and his unit's lack of combat experience. "This is our first war."

"You can hear the bombing, but we don't know whether it's us or them," said Co. D's Spec. Garry Burkett, a TOW missile gunner. "The other night, we had a patrol out there, and they had something explode within 600 meters of them," he said. No one was sure what it was. Guesses included a stray anti-aircraft round or an artillery round fired at a Saudi Arabian outpost.

"They're trying to goad us," said Sgt. Michael Cordon of 3rd Bn.'s Headquarters Co., a mortarman positioned to cover the patrol if it were attacked. Stationary throughout the patrol movements, he moved slightly from side to side, trying to ward off the chill of an ice-cold night. He was not enjoying himself, but "it's one step closer to home."

Not long after Henson's team reported the light show on the horizon, a dismounted patrol called in from one of

the OPs. Five vehicles were spotted; two appeared to be wheeled vehicles with "gun-type turrets." Seven dismounted soldiers were also seen. They moved in the direction of the distant patrol, and Henson ordered them to get back in their Humvee. The enemy eventually withdrew.

After that, the night became very quiet. The inactivity made the cold seem all the more numbing. After a late spot report, the patrol called it quits at 1:30 a.m. and met at a predetermined point. As it crossed the desert in a lights-out convoy, an Army OH-58 observation helicopter flew alongside the formation. It finally turned north to join an aerial surveillance patrol.

During such patrols, the OH-58s and AH-64 Apaches came in low and fast, and then pulled up to scan their sectors with cameras that could see well across the border. When hovering, pilots flew just high enough to avoid making dust signatures. But the Iraqis got better at hiding, sometimes spreading large units out over wide areas.

"The enemy is adapting to being spotted and targeted," said Capt. Tim Gowan, an OH-58D pilot with Co. E, 1st Bn., 101st Aviation Brigade. "They've learned how to turn on, lock on, fire and

The soldiers walked a dangerous path as they looked for the enemy.

scoot. These guys have survived. They're the best they have."

Before a day recon mission, he warned the pilots that it could get hairy. "They've set up three anti-aircraft artillery pieces in the last 48 hours," he said.

Nearing the border, the small task force flew over friendly positions, drawing waves from the lonely outposts. "Screening" for those troops, the aerial spotters also verified the location of the friendly lines and looked across the border for AAA and radar sites.

Down below, the infantrymen of the 187th were spending their fifth month in country doing what all infantrymen do when they're not sleeping, eating, fighting, or on patrol: improving their fighting positions. The low, two-man gun nests were also their homes, a place to lie flat whether at rest, watching the perimeter or ducking under a "white-out" sandstorm.

Since no one could dig down more than a foot before hitting solid rock, the soldiers filled sandbags — and talked about their situation. Most said they'd be happy to see the Air Force bomb Iraq into submission. But if it meant waiting much longer in Saudi Arabia ... Co. C's Sgt. Ken Matthews' comments reflected those of many others.

"I'm kind of anxious to get started," he said. "I know we're going to lose some people, some that are close to me. We'll get more and more scared as we get into combat. But I'm really confident in the unit."

All along the front, the soldiers of the 187th were toughing it out. Hot meals, even hot MREs, were rare. After 11 days in position, soldiers could rotate to their support units for showers. For most, once a week would seem like a luxury.

"They've been doing superb," said Co. C 1st Sgt. Marcos Amador. "They only complain about basic soldier stuff. They want to get it on, get it over with and go home." And within a few weeks they would do just that. □

Army Times

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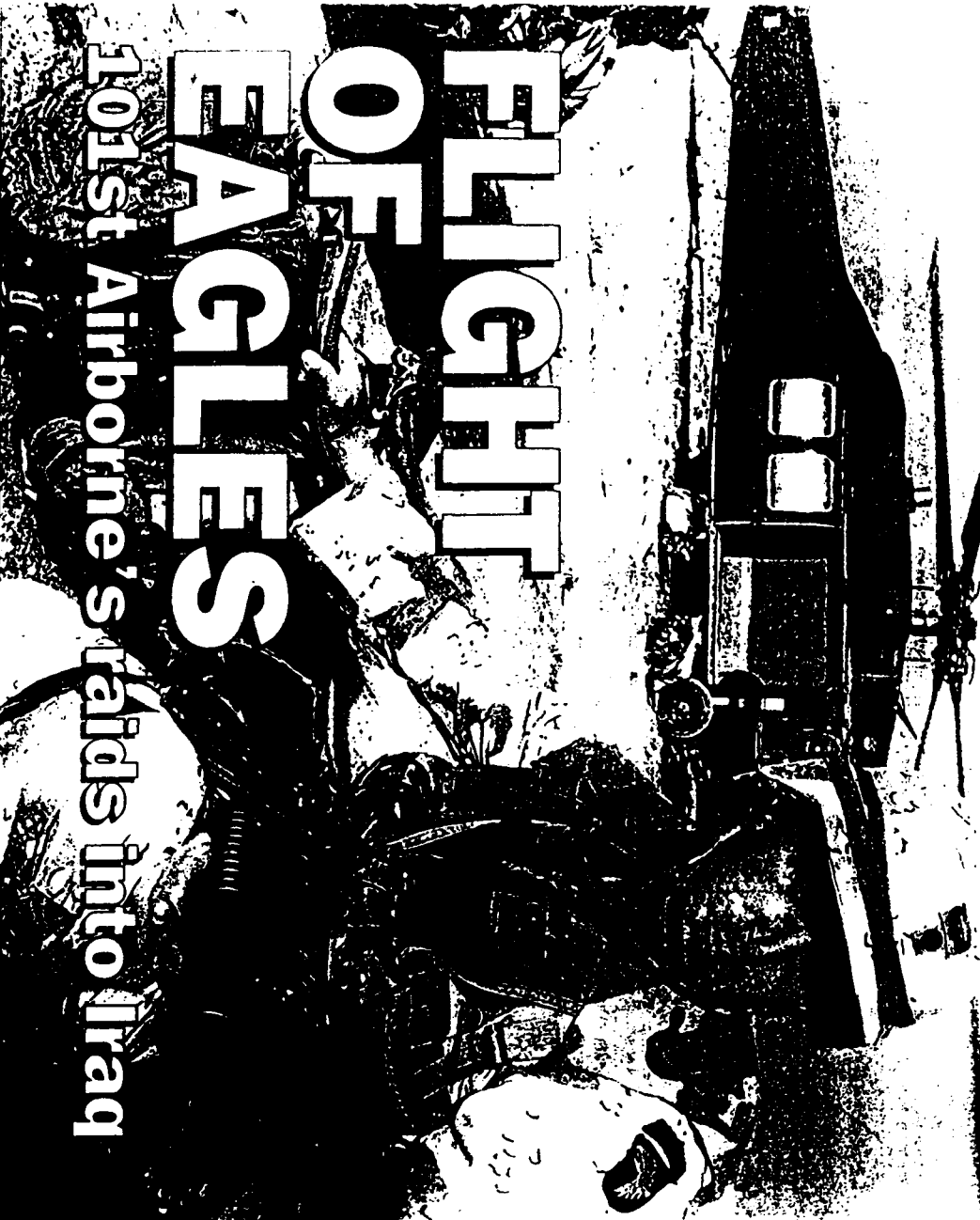
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101st Airborne inside Iraq



FLIGHT OF EAGLES

101st Airborne's raids into Iraq



DESERT STORM AFTER-ACTION REVIEW



Moving in: Members of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) establish positions in Iraq Feb. 24, the first day of the ground war.

FLIGHT OF EAGLES

101st Airborne Division's raids into Iraq

By Sean D. Naylor
Times staff writer

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — On Aug. 10, 1990, Col. Tom Hill got what he called "the most exciting birthday present" of his life.

Hill, commander of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) here, was spending his 44th birthday at Camp Atterbury, Ind., evaluating an Indiana Army National Guard unit, when the assistant division commander called to tell him a helicopter was on its way to bring him back to Fort Campbell.

As a brigade commander in a division earmarked by the Army for rapid deployment in times of crisis, Hill had been anticipating the call for days.

When he arrived here, Hill went straight into a briefing with a battalion commander. In the middle of the meeting, "a guy walked in and handed me a deployment order," Hill said. As he read the notice ordering his brigade to deploy to Saudi Arabia, Hill felt butterflies fluttering in his stomach and his adrenaline beginning to flow.

"It was really a hell of a feeling," he said. "I mean, you train all your life for that

kind of thing," he said, adding it was "the most exciting birthday present" of his life.

He was to prepare his brigade for immediate deployment with the division to Saudi Arabia.

Leaders, elements scattered

"It looked like the Iraqis were going to continue their attack and we'd be fighting almost immediately [after] we got off the airplane," said Lt. Col. Gary Bridges, commander of the 3d Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, part of the division's 1st Brigade. Bridges and most of his battalion were training cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., when Hill called him with the news.

When the soldiers of 3/327 Infantry heard of the impending deployment — delivered by Bridges over the academy public-address system about 9 that night — they clustered in small groups and quietly discussed the situation. The atmosphere was not one of bravado, but of quiet professional confidence, according to Bridges. Other key leaders and elements of the 101st were scattered across the United States and Central America when the division was ordered to deploy. Maj. Gen. Binford Pasy, the division commander, was vacationing with his family in Virginia Beach, Va., the night the 101st was alerted.

Getting up to full strength

The Screaming Eagles — the division's nickname — were at 86 percent strength

when they were alerted, and two weeks later, new personnel began arriving to fill the vacancies. This created some turmoil when new senior noncommissioned officers ousted junior NCOs; in 3/327 Infantry, morale problems eased only after the new NCOs became familiar with their units.

The battalion commanders, realizing their soldiers could be facing enemy fire within days of arriving in Saudi Arabia, wanted to spend some time on unit training. But that became increasingly difficult as equipment was packed up and shipped out. Instead, commanders focused on individual training: physical fitness, nuclear, biological and chemical warfare training, and weapons qualification. Rifle platoons conducted exercises in the post's urban warfare training area, preparing for a possible assault on Kuwait City. The soldiers also were briefed on the rules of engagement that would apply in a war against Iraq, and were taught some basic facts about Saudi culture.

War games

As best they could, battalion staffs played out possible Persian Gulf war scenarios using maps, aerial and satellite photographs and intelligence updates. "These sessions gave the staff an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Iraq order of battle, equipment, movement rates, and the battalion tactical [standard operating procedures]," Bridges said. "Later, these planning sessions proved to be invaluable as the staff was required to put together several plans in relatively short time and simultaneously."

Bridges said the most important lesson his staff members gleaned from the exercises was that they would have to seize and hold areas far larger than they usually trained for. Doctrinally, he said, a battalion is expected to defend an area with a frontage of no more than five kilometers. "When we did the map exercises we realized we'd be defending areas with a frontage of 7 to 10 kilometers... It scared the hell out of us."

In fact, he said, during the ground war, 3/327 ended up holding an area with a frontage of 12 kilometers.

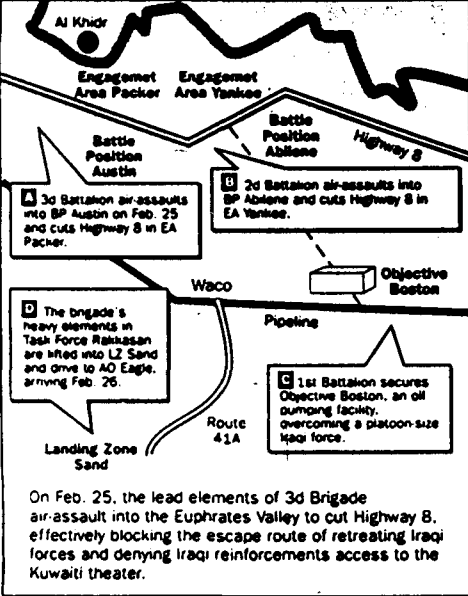
As the Army rushed to deploy units to Saudi Arabia, planners at Fort Campbell hurriedly assembled aviation and air assault infantry task forces to dispatch immediately to Southwest Asia. Included in the task forces were:

- 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Brigade, an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter unit.
- 2d Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, an XVIII Airborne Corps Apache outfit based at Fort Rucker, Ala., and attached to the 101st for this mission.
- Part of the 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, including the squadron's long-range surveillance detachment, its Pathfinderers, two command-and-control UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, three EH-60 Quick Fix electronic eavesdropping and jamming helicopters, and the 17th's A Troop's scout platoon and headquarters.
- 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, the ready battalion of the 2d Brigade, the division ready brigade at the time.
- 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, equipped with M102 105mm howitzers.
- B Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment. The 7-101st is made up entirely of CH-47 Chinook cargo helicopters.
- Task Force 9101, consisting of the 9th.

See FLIGHT page 10

101st Airborne operations in Iraq

Blocking Highway 8



As-Samawah
Al Khidr

4 Area of Operations Eagle

An-Nasiriyah

5 Forward Operating Base Viper

1 Forward Operating Base Cobra

IRAQ

Sequence of events

- 1** Feb. 24 1st Brigade and 1st Battalion, 2d Brigade, air-assault 80 kilometers into Iraq to establish FOB Cobra, and with aviation and artillery support subdue a dug-in Iraqi battalion. They are joined by 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade that afternoon.
 - 2** Feb. 24-25 Task Force Citadel, a 700-vehicle convoy, travels up MSR New Market to FOB Cobra.
 - 3** Feb. 25 Task Force Rakkasan, 3d Brigade's heavy armor elements, air-assault from TAA Campbell into LZ Sand and begins drive to AO Eagle. First lift of 3d Brigade air-assaults from TAA Campbell into AO Eagle and cuts Highway 8.
 - 4** Feb. 26 TF Rakkasan and second lift of 3d Brigade infantry troops reach AO Eagle.
 - 5** Feb. 27 1st and 3d Battalions, 2d Brigade, and 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade air-assault into FOB Viper, supported by 101st Aviation Brigade and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. 2d Battalion, 2d Brigade, joins 1st Brigade at FOB Cobra.
- Feb. 28 War ends.

SAUDI ARABIA

Tactical Assembly Area Campbell

Attack could have come any moment

FLIGHT from page 8

Battalion, 101st Aviation Brigade, and more command-and-control Black Hawks, Quick Fixes and Pathfinders from the 2717th.

In the middle of the night of Aug. 17, the first of the C-5 Galaxy strategic lift aircraft carrying the task force left Fort Campbell Army Airfield, headed for Saudi Arabia. Brig. Gen. Hugh Shelton, the assistant division commander, and Col. Thomas Garrett, commander of the division's aviation brigade, also flew out on the first wave.

The infantry task force left Aug. 21. Following hard on their heels was the rest of the 2d Brigade, commanded by Col. Greg Gue, which deployed by air into Saudi Arabia by Sept. 10.

The air deployment could not have been timed better. The division had just completed Slim Eagle, a project aimed at reducing the number of C-5 and C-141 StarLifter sorties needed to deploy the division while retaining the 101st's essential warfighting capabilities. After each unit had gone through its structure and equipment, consolidating and cutting unnecessary items, the division was able to reduce the number of C-141 sorties by 26 percent and C-5 sorties by 10 percent.

Lights out at Campbell

Meanwhile, the rest of the division's equipment began to deploy to the Port of Jacksonville, Fla., where it was loaded onto 10 ships for the 30-day voyage to Saudi Arabia. The division's helicopters flew to the port, but the other vehicles traveled in road convoys.

"The convoy was the first element to really experience the overwhelming support of the American people," Bridges said, describing the 3/327th's 84-vehicle, 787-mile trek to the coast. "As it traveled the interstate to Atlanta, people lined the overpasses and cheered... Young ladies drove alongside pledging their love and exposing their breasts. Morale was never higher."

The 3d Brigade was the next division element to deploy, flying to Saudi Arabia between Sept. 4 and 17.

The 1st Brigade was the last of the three infantry brigades to deploy, with 3d Battalion of the 327th the final battalion to depart. As he left, Bridges, the battalion's commanding officer, removed a light bulb from his office lamp and upon arriving in Saudi Arabia presented it to division commander Peay with the words, "The lights are out in Fort Campbell."

As soon as elements of the 101st began arriving in Saudi Arabia, they established a base camp at the unfinished King Fahd Airport, 50 minutes by road west of Ad-Dammam port. The idea of being headquartered at the airport was appealing initially, Garrett said. But when the 101st soldiers arrived, they found Air Force personnel and special operations forces occupying what little available shelter there was.

The temperature on the tarmac was 142 degrees, and getting the soldiers under shelter during the hottest hours of the day was an immediate priority. The 326th Engineer Battalion quickly got to work, and by mid-September had constructed a 2,500-tent, two-mile-by-three-mile base camp, complete with showers and latrine facilities. The engineers hired local labor to put in 1 million square meters of asphalt, including



Keeping order: Military policemen restrain Iraqi soldiers who surrendered to elements of the 101st Airborne Division.

a battalion assault pad, from which an entire battalion could be air-assaulted at one time, and several other helipads.

The camp also included a hardened ammunition storage facility "that would really have been protected against almost a direct Scud attack," said the engineers' commanding officer, Lt. Col. Robert VanAntwerp.

The division named the camp, about one mile from the main runway, Camp Eagle II. The original Camp Eagle had been the 101st's base camp in the II Corps area in Vietnam.

Temperatures were so high during the first weeks of the deployment, soldiers at Camp Eagle II were kept under cover from 10.30 a.m. until mid-afternoon, with most work being done in the evenings.

'A tenuous situation'

Besides heat, the soldiers had to cope with the knowledge that an Iraqi attack could come at any moment.

Aviation brigade commander Garrett was the first senior officer from the division to arrive in Saudi Arabia, and what he saw did not make him feel comfortable.

"We went in to find that we had very few combat forces in any position to do anything," he said. The 82d Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C., had one infantry brigade on the ground, and an Apache battalion positioned close to the Saudi port of Al Jubayl, Garrett said. "But it wasn't an entire battalion. It didn't have much of a support structure, so they were pretty lean."

To make matters worse, Garrett said, "The Saudis weren't on the border in the

force we thought they were, so what we found was a very tenuous situation and a very dangerous situation should [Iraqi President] Saddam [Hussein] have decided to continue south."

Although the 101st expects to be sent into conflicts at short notice, the paucity of allied forces on the ground, combined with the size of the Iraqi force opposing them, was unnerving.

"We were obviously concerned," Garrett said. "It's our mission to go in first, but based on what had just happened, and the strength and the speed with which the Iraqis took Kuwait — a capability nobody thought they had — if he made his move... it was going to be pretty exciting for us."

If forced to defend against a sustained Iraqi attack down the eastern Arabian Peninsula, the task force would have run out of ammunition within "a couple of days," Garrett said.

In the short term, there was nothing for the task force to do but prepare itself as quickly as possible to fight. The soldiers reached the helicopters of its Apache battalions for combat within a couple of days of rolling them out of the C-5s. They were loaded with what ammunition the task force had brought with it.

"We... were able to take over the screening mission from the 82d as far as being the trip wire," Garrett said.

Covering force

Once members of the 1st Brigade, the last brigade to arrive, had become acclimated, the division took up what was to be its mission for the rest of the year — a cover-

ing-force role in the desert far to the west of Camp Eagle II, in which the division was expected to stall an Iraqi invasion.

The 101st's task was to defend a region known as Area of Operations Normandy, or AO Normandy, about 130 kilometers northwest of Camp Eagle II, and approximately 85 kilometers south of the Kuwaiti border. At the center of AO Normandy was the town of An-Nasiriyah, which straddled the intersection of several major roads. Soldiers renamed the town Forward Operating Base, or FOB; Bastogne, after the former French city that served as a communications hub during the division's World War II campaign. The 326th Engineer Battalion renovated several existing buildings in a deserted oil company facility in Bastogne that served as a command post.

At the other forward operating base, called Oasis, about 40 kilometers west of Bastogne, the engineers enlarged an existing landing strip to enable up to three aircraft to sit on the ground at a time.

The 101st's infantry was on each side of the Tapline Road, the major route running northwest from Saudi gulf ports; it also ran through FOB Bastogne. A thin screen of Saudi troops was north of the 101st's infantry, while behind it sat the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Bliss, Texas, which had been attached to the division to give it added punch in the covering-force role.

Other units added to the division included the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, an Apache unit from Wiesbaden, Germany; and two field artillery brigades from Fort Sill, Okla. — the 75th Field Artillery Brigade and the 212th Field Artillery Brigade, both III Corps units. Between them, the artillery units boasted Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, M109 155mm self-propelled howitzers and M110 self-propelled 8-inch howitzers.

With the two aviation brigades watching the northern approaches, the infantry brigades divided Normandy into sectors. The 3d Brigade covered the eastern sector, the 2d Brigade, operating out of Oasis, covered the division's left flank with the cavalry squadron, while the northwestern sector was the 1st Brigade's responsibility. "Had the whole scheme unfolded the way we thought it would, I would have been the first American unit engaging in ground combat," said 1st Brigade Commander Hill, adding his unit was stretched over a tract of desert 70 kilometers wide and 35 kilometers deep.

'Eating his grits'

Three Iraqi divisions opposed the 101st's position: two divisions directly to the north, and another, mechanized, division to the northwest. The latter was expected "to come south and then punch into our side down Tapline Road," Peay said.

The 101st's mission, if the Iraqis attacked, was to hold them off as long as possible with Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire command-link guided, or TOW, missiles and Apaches, before retreating southwest and handing off the battle to the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Stewart, Ga., which was positioned directly south of Bastogne. Once this passage of lines had been completed, the

DESERT STORM AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

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101st would guard the 24th Mech's western flank.

High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles, or HMMWVs, mounted with TOW missiles were the principle antitank weapon system available to the 101st's three infantry brigades. Between them, they had 180 TOW HMMWVs, for which the division engineers dug 700 to 1,000 fighting positions. Each TOW company was paired with an infantry company to provide the HMMWV crews with added security and to help move ammunition.

Each TOW HMMWV had a primary, secondary and tertiary fighting position, positioned at least 500 meters apart, according to 1/502 CSM Jonathan Smalls. If the Iraqis attacked, the TOWs would hold them off as long as possible from the primary position before retreating to the secondary and then tertiary positions, he said.

"Our intent was to maximize the tank-killing capabilities of our division," Peay said, referring not only to the TOWs but to the six battalions of attack helicopters under his operational control, the two field artillery brigades and the 3d ACR.

Once all the 101st's combat assets had arrived in the covering-force area, and the division had had time to rehearse its plan in map exercises and command post exercises, Peay said he felt good about his soldiers' ability to acquit themselves well in the covering-force fight. "Frankly, I don't think [the Iraqis] would have gotten through the covering force," he said.

"Had he attacked, we would've eaten his guts," echoed Lt. Col. James Donald, commander of the 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade.

Rotations and relief

The division established a rotation system under which each brigade would spend 30 days in the covering-force area, followed by 15 days relaxing at Camp Eagle II. The base camp seemed relatively luxurious to the soldiers after the Spartan conditions in Normandy, where soldiers slept in what Peay described as "literally 5-foot-by-2-foot kinds of foxholes," displaying a photograph of a 101st trooper dozing in just such a foxhole with a Meals, Ready-to-eat box as a pillow.

Hill credited the trips back to Camp Eagle II with helping maintain the division's morale. "Each time we came back there was something nicer in the base camp," he said. "We got some TV, [videocassette recorders], Cokes, hot showers... I think it gave us a leg up that some of the other units didn't have."

By all accounts, the soldiers needed the break, because while in the covering-force area they worked relentlessly to hone their battle plans and fighting skills in case of Iraqi attack.

"Every night we refined our war plan so that whatever forces we had in the country were ready to go that night," Peay said.

Officers said much of the credit for the dramatic success the 101st achieved in the ground war can be attributed to the extensive training opportunities afforded by the covering-force mission.

Col. Robert Clark, 3d Brigade commander, said his units were able to indulge in some innovative battalion-sized live-fire exercises at night.

"We rehearsed the war plans with as many live-fire exercises as we could," said 2d Brigade commanding officer Col. Theodore Purdom.

Saudi sensibilities

However, several officers said they had problems getting Saudi permission for live-fire exercises. "Initially, the Saudis weren't anxious for us to do much live-fire training," said Col. Randall Anderson, division artillery commander.

Peay acknowledged that high Saudi government officials had to approve the use of live-fire range areas, a process that could take two weeks or longer. Despite these "challenges," he said, the division got in "some of the best [live-fire training] we've ever had" during the last three months of 1990.

Saudi sensibilities also hampered the engineers' attempts to install a series of obstacles and minefields aimed at blunting and channeling an Iraqi advance. "The Saudis at the time were very reluctant to give any permission to go ahead and put something in that might be there [for] years to come," VanAntwerp said. Prevented from laying minefields, the engineers stored mines as far forward as they could, and planned to put as many as possible in the ground in the six hours' warning they would have before invading Iraqi troops reached the defenses.

"We wouldn't have gotten a lot in, to tell you the truth," VanAntwerp said. In the short time available, his soldiers planned to lay minefields in a few key locations, "trying to make him come where we wanted him to rather than where he wanted to."

The leadership of two of the division's infantry brigades changed hands as the soldiers were put through their paces in the covering-force role. Clark assumed command of the 3d Brigade from Col. John McDonald Nov. 7, and Purdom took over the 2d Brigade from Col. Greg Gile Oct. 27. Both changes in command had been scheduled long before the units got to Saudi Arabia, and according to Clark, taking charge in the field carried some advantages.

"I inherited the plan, all I had to do was execute it," he said. Also, "it was an easy way to get to know the people because you're thrown together, living with each other 24 hours a day enduring the same hardships."

"In many respects it was a hell of a lot easier than taking command in a garrison environment in the continental [United States]," Clark said.

While the new commanders settled in, a feeling of restlessness began to grow among some of the soldiers as the weeks in the covering-force role lengthened into months. When then-chief-of-staff Gen. Carl Vuono visited the division at Thanksgiving, many soldiers asked when they would go home, Garrett recalled.

"[Vuono] flat looked at them and said, 'It would take me three divisions to replace the 101st because of your capability, because of the amount of terrain you can operate over, because of the distances you can cover. We knew right then we might rotate some units, but we weren't going home,'" Garrett said.

Shift to offense

Not only was the 101st not going home, but in mid-November, the division's training, which previously had been defensive in nature, began to take on a notably offensive character.

By this time, theater commander Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf had briefed his subordinate commanders on his "Hail Mary" plan for the ground war. "It was generic in

nature," Peay said. "It had large sweeping moves of how he thought the corps would fight. By early December, the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps had general plans they were working under."

As Peay explained it, the plans for the 101st went through several permutations, but it was clear from the start the division would have a major role to play in the ground conflict.

Under the division's initial plan, code named Desert Rendezvous One, after the 101st's motto, "Rendezvous With Destiny," the 101st was to launch an assault deep into Iraq northwest of the Saudi town of Rafha. The 2d Brigade was to assault the town of As-Samawah and establish a forward operating base there. The 3d Brigade, which received the plan Dec. 26, was to follow the 2d into As-Samawah and then conduct an assault into An-Nasiriyah in conjunction with the 1st Brigade. The assault was aimed at cutting Highway 8, a major thoroughfare that runs through central Iraq roughly parallel with the Euphrates River.

The 2d Brigade then would have moved southeast and attacked Tallil air force base.

A risky mission

Neither part of the plan, however, survived close scrutiny by senior commanders in the XVIII Airborne Corps and above. Too much time and too many theater assets were required to move the corps that far west, Peay said, adding, "Gen. Schwarzkopf wanted to bring the entire corps further to the east, and not go that far west."

In addition, Peay said, Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had concerns that the division might get bogged down in house-to-house fighting if Desert Rendezvous One was followed.

His anxiety was shared by several of the division's senior commanders. "I'm glad we never executed Desert Rendezvous One," VanAntwerp acknowledged. "Desert Rendezvous One had us going into built-up areas and destroying bridges and stuff in some of the larger towns... That would have been a very risky mission for us."

Although the 101st regularly trains for urban warfare, the prospect of rooting out Iraqi troops from the streets of As-Samawah and An-Nasiriyah was not one VanAntwerp relished. "We've practiced that enough to know that you're going to take some casualties when you're going building to building and door to door," he said.

Thus, on Jan. 10, the 3d Brigade was advised its mission would be changed to one requiring it to launch an assault to cut Highway 8 in a sparsely populated region that became known as Area of Operations Eagle, about halfway between As-Samawah and An-Nasiriyah. Five days later it received official confirmation of this warning in the form of another operations plan, Desert Rendezvous Two.

The assault into Tallil was retained in the initial version of Desert Rendezvous Two, but eventually was dropped on account of the high risks entailed in attacking such a well-defended complex. "We were concerned about the enormous air defense arrayed around Tallil, and the fact that it would unquestionably be a hot LZ," or landing zone, Peay said.

"Some of the airfield targets we looked at definitely caused a hump in your throat," said Lt. Col. Robert Johnson, commander of the 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Bri-

gade. In addition to upwards of 50 anti-aircraft systems, most airfield targets had chemical weapons stored in bunkers, and all were defended by tanks and armored vehicles.

Go where they ain't

"Some of them looked like pretty tough targets, especially on paper," Johnson said. "We looked at some of the targets and thought we were looking at some fairly heavy casualties."

VanAntwerp said he had expected to take casualties among the engineers disposing of the chemical munitions stored at Tallil, even if they did not come under fire.

Tallil's bristling anti-aircraft defenses persuaded the division staff to make it only a secondary objective for the 2d Brigade. A new primary objective for the brigade was chosen: Objective Gold, an Iraqi ammunition supply point about 30 kilometers southeast of Tallil along Highway 8. "The division's plan evolved more into: 'Let's go where they ain't' — which I thought was a smart move," Johnson said.

Throughout December, even before the plans were finalized, the division trained hard for its offensive mission.

The 3d Brigade concentrated on scenarios involving air assaults behind enemy lines and linking with a converging friendly ground unit. The training was conducted in the abandoned village of Ayn Qassan, or "Q Town," in the covering-force area, and included live-fire exercises for each battalion.

The 1st Brigade, meanwhile, began training Dec. 1 for its expected mission to establish a forward operating base deep in Iraqi territory, from which an air assault toward the Euphrates could be launched.

"We were supposed to rotate back [to Camp Eagle III] on Jan. 1," brigade Commander Hill. "We did not, we stayed up in there, because we already knew the air war was going to start."

The end of the year found both the 2d and 3d brigades at Camp Eagle II. The 3d Brigade had deployed back to the base camp for its scheduled two-week rest, but, as brigade Commander Clark recalled, there was a palpable feeling that conflict was imminent.

"It became apparent that the air war was drawing closer and it was very likely that our next move was not going to be back to the covering force, but rather some sort of staging area for the ground offensive," he said.

Change of mission

The 2d Brigade was also at Eagle II, and had been since mid-December. "In late December, the decision was made we would remain in Camp Eagle II rather than go back up in the covering force as the overall offensive plan was being developed," said Purdom, the brigade's commander.

Then, instead of deploying with the rest of the division to the staging area for the 101st's air assault into Iraq, Purdom's brigade unexpectedly was handed a new mission Jan. 8: Form a brigade task force and swiftly deploy to the town of Hafar al-Batin, about 80 kilometers south of the neutral zone between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, in support of VII Corps.

VII Corps needed reinforcements because it was experiencing delays in moving its heavy armor up the Tapline Road.

Purdom, at the time on a reconnaissance

See FLIGHT next page

Deadline spurs an urgent move north

FLIGHT from preceding page
trip with Peay and the 101st's other major unit commanders, hurried back to Camp Eagle II from King Khalid Military City with the division's chief of staff, Col. William Bolt.

At 11 p.m. Jan. 9, Purdom got the order to execute the mission. Starting the next morning, the brigade moved three infantry battalions, an artillery battalion, an Apache battalion and the division's Black Hawk battalion to Hafar al-Batin. "The task force moved basically 3,800 people, 700 vehicles [and] 79 aircraft 500 kilometers in about 43 hours," Purdom said.

When the brigade arrived, it came under the tactical control of the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, and was given the task of defending the Al Qaysumah airfield, about 25 kilometers southeast of Hafar al-Batin. The Syrian, Saudi, Egyptian and Kuwaiti forces were arrayed to the brigade's north from left to right.

Fear of attack

Great urgency was attached to the brigade's move. Allied planners feared, as the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait drew closer, Iraq would launch a pre-emptive attack down the Wadi al-Batin, a 20-kilometer-wide dried-up river valley that forms the western Kuwait-Iraq border and continues southwest into Saudi Arabia, terminating at Hafar al-Batin.

Concern centered on Hafar al-Batin and King Khalid Military City, a large military complex about 40 miles southwest of Hafar al-Batin.

On Jan. 13, a U.S. intelligence message seemed to confirm these fears. Purdom showed a copy of the message to Donald, commander of 1502 Infantry. As Donald recalled, the message "suggested that reliable information had it that [the Iraqis] would attack down the Hafar-al Batin wadi complex, starting on the 13th, so we didn't sleep very well that night."

That afternoon, VII Corps commander Lt. Gen. Frederick Franks, who saw the potential Iraqi assault on Hafar al-Batin as a major threat, augmented 2d Brigade with four heavy engineer battalions to help the 101st soldiers dig in as they braced for the attack.

With the help of the engineers, the brigade dug an 8½-kilometer-long tank ditch, positioned more than 4,000 mines, dug in all 60 of the brigade's TOWs, and developed a defense of the north side of the Tapline Road that tied into the forward units of the 1st Cav.

The expected attack never came. Donald credited the elements. "The weather turned extremely bad around the 13th and 14th. Trafficability would have been a problem, visibility would have been a problem for the Iraqis," he said.

The cold, wet conditions were no picnic for the defenders, either. "I had soldiers in foxholes that were knee-deep in water who were trying to dig deeper," Purdom said.

Donald theorized the change in the weather robbed Saddam of his last chance to mount a pre-emptive attack. Three days later, on Jan. 17, allied air forces launched Operation Desert Storm.

While the 2d Brigade soldiers shivered in their foxholes, the start of the air war found 1st Brigade still in the covering-force

area and 3d Brigade ensconced in Camp Eagle II. Initially, a somber mood prevailed at the base camp, according to 3d Brigade Commander Clark.

"The mood was very, very serious," he said. "There was no bravado, no chest beating, no wild-eyed enthusiasm..."

"But I have to tell you, the morning after it started, every radio in tent city was tuned into Armed Forces Radio," Clark continued, "and when the initial reports started being heard by the soldiers, there was just great enthusiasm. When a major bombing run was made on a certain facility, I could hear them whooping it up. It was quite an emotional high."

But the soldiers' euphoria at the success of the allied air campaign soon was tempered by the realization that air power alone was not budging the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. It soon would be the infantry's turn to taste combat.

Recalled Clark, "The common phrase in our brigade was: 'The road home is through Iraq.'"

Not all 101st Airborne soldiers were spectators at the start of the air war.

In the early hours of the morning of Jan. 17, eight Apaches from the 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Brigade, commanded by Lt. Col. Richard Cody, escorted by four Air Force MH-53J Pave Low special operations helicopters, crossed the Iraqi border to destroy two early warning radar sites in far western Iraq. It was a vital mission: The sites had to be knocked out simultaneously to create a corridor through which allied jets could fly with impunity on their way to Baghdad, Iraq.

First shots

The crews had been training for the mission for two months, but up to the last moment they weren't sure they would be called upon to fire the first shots of the war.

"We sat down by the aircraft and waited for the president to call down and say go, and that's when we went," said CW2 Joseph Bridgforth, an Apache gunner/navigator on the mission. Once they got the order to go, the butterflies rose in the crew members' stomachs. "I myself stood out by the aircraft and screamed for 10 minutes to get a bit of the tension off," Bridgforth said.

The mission was a complete success. The Apaches destroyed both stations, and took no anti-aircraft fire on their way in, much to Bridgforth's surprise. "Wouldn't you expect to get shot at if you were 80 miles over the border shooting at them?" he asked. "We really didn't expect it to go off as easily as it did." A search-and-rescue Black Hawk hovered at the border, but was not needed. The task force lost no aircraft and sustained no casualties.

Ground war countdown

The day after Cody's Apaches fired the first shots of the war, the 101st began a massive movement to the northwest in preparation for the start of the ground war. Within seven days, the division moved in ground convoys and C-130 Hercules aircraft about 900 kilometers from Camp Eagle II to Tactical Assembly Area Campbell, approximately 75 kilometers southeast of the Saudi town of Rafha, and 10 kilometers southwest of the Iraqi border. It was

from there the division was to launch its assault into Iraq on G-Day, as the opening day of the ground war came to be known.

With G-Day set for Feb. 24, the division rehearsed its plan of attack, which included establishing an enormous forward operating base named Cobra deep inside Iraq, from which 3d Brigade would air assault into the Euphrates Valley.

During the 10 days before G-Day, the division's aviation elements flew reconnaissance missions into Iraq, reconnoitering the route to Cobra planned for a ground convoy, which was to link up with the airborne soldiers at the base. This route was known as Main Supply Route, or MSR, Newmarket.

Bunker busters

Feb. 17, a week before the ground attack, D Troop of the divisional cavalry squadron, 2/17 Cavalry, along with five of the squadron's Pathfinders, became the first 101st soldiers to capture Iraqi troops.

Operating from the squadron's search-and-rescue Black Hawks, D Troop assaulted an Iraqi bunker complex, taking prisoner 10 Iraqis who had just survived a fierce attack on their position by Apaches of 2/229 Aviation.

Three days later, AH-1F Cobra attack helicopters from 3/101 Aviation stepped up the division's bunker-busting program. The battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Mark Curran, was tasked with attacking another Iraqi position on MSR Newmarket.

All three of the battalion's companies strafed the target with 20mm rockets and TOW missiles. They were joined by Apaches from A and C companies of 2/229 Aviation, as well as four Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II close air support aircraft.

The pounding continued for the better part of the morning of Feb. 20 with little or no apparent effect, according to Johnson.

"Then somebody sent for a single Black Hawk and the loudspeaker team and a translator, and as soon as they hooked up the loudspeaker and asked them to surrender, the hands came up and the white flags," he said.

Not all Iraqis were eager prisoners

The 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment of the division's 3d Brigade was called in to police the prisoners. But when B Company was flown in, they discovered the bunker complex was far larger than the aviators had thought, and eventually called in the other two companies for assistance.

While most of the Iraqis were eager to surrender, according to Lt. Col. Hank Kinnison, commander of the 1/187th, a group of about 40 put up somewhat stiffer resistance and had to be subdued with fire.

"Those hard-core guys... clearly did not want to surrender, and it could have easily swung the other way," he said.

By the end of the operation, 1/187th had captured about 435 Iraqi troops, including four wounded in the firefights, and destroyed several tons of materiel.

The division named the bunker complex Objective Toad, because it was "a toad in the road," threatening to obstruct progress up MSR Newmarket, Hamlin said.

"If we hadn't found it that convoy would never have made it to FOB Cobra," he added.

Hamlin sent air cav teams into Objective Toad the next day to pick up the pieces and round up any Iraqi stragglers. While conducting this operation, one of his scout teams consisting of a Cobra and an OH-58C Kiowa had a lucky escape. The team was engaged by two SA-8 Gecko surface-to-air missiles that came within 50 meters of the OH-58C, Hamlin said.

Confidence-builder

The capture of Objective Toad proved an intelligence bonanza for the division. During the interrogation process, the prisoners revealed the location of other dug-in Iraqi units and air defense sites between the division's jumping-off point at Campbell and its objective at Cobra.

But the operation also boosted the Screaming Eagles' confidence, according to Peay and battalion commander Johnson, surging through the soldiers of the 101st as they made their final preparations as the clock ticked down to G-Day.

"We felt more comfortable with things after that happened," Johnson said. "We knew there'd be pockets of resistance and we didn't think the Republican Guard would be pushovers, but it's nice to see the rank-and-file Iraqi soldier and know that he's anxious to go home in one piece."

With but a few days left before the invasion of Iraq, Schwarzkopf paid Peay a visit. The gruff general left the 101st commander in no doubt about what was expected. Recalled Peay: "He wanted to be very sure that the leaders were competent, were aggressive, understood their mission and would want to move."

Cover of darkness

But not all of the 101st's soldiers had to wait until G-Day to invade Iraq. The first soldiers in were four long-range surveillance detachment teams attached to 2/17 Cavalry. They flew in on the night of Feb. 23, the day before the ground war started.

The six-man teams were inserted under cover of darkness in two shuttles. The 24 men of the surveillance teams were trained to operate behind enemy lines as the forward eyes and ears of the division, and were the first soldiers to set foot in Objective Cobra. "Their mission was to report back any enemy activity entering Cobra or any reinforcements coming along the other side," Hamlin said.

Three of the teams were inserted into Objective Cobra. One was sent farther north to scout a two-lane highway, designated MSR Texas, leading from Rafha north to Highway 8. The teams in Cobra were recovered as planned the next morning when the first units landed.

The team at MSR Texas stayed on to watch for Iraqi reinforcements. Alone and exposed, the team had a lucky escape.

On the afternoon of Feb. 25, Iraqi civilians spotted the commandos. An urgent call went out to the two Black Hawks and two Apaches that had been kept on alert to extract and cover the long-range patrols. They were dispatched immediately to rescue the stranded men.

The helicopters got there in the nick of time. The soldiers scrambled aboard one of the Black Hawks as Iraqi soldiers in vehicles closed in on them, a mere half-mile away.

DESERT STORM AFTERACTION REVIEW

The road home led through Iraq

RUCRT team page 12
Assault on Cobra

The initial brigade to launch on G-Day was Col. Tom Hill's 1st Brigade, supported with US22 Infantry of the 2d Brigade. Their mission was to secure the area planned for FOB Cobra, 80 kilometers into Iraq, 35 kilometers east of As-Salman.

Hill's soldiers were primed for the attack, anxious to carry out the plan they had refined and practiced for months in the desert.

The road home led through Iraq. In their months of duty in Saudi Arabia, the soldiers of the 101st had learned that the desert environment was more complex than an unending sea of sun and sand. Winter, while a relief from the heat of August and September, was cold. And it could be wet.

Liftoff at last
At 7 a.m., several hours behind schedule because of poor weather, three more Pathfinder teams were inserted along the route with helicopters to help guide the air assault force. Twenty-five minutes later, with the fog only slowly clearing, the 1st Brigade's lead force, consisting of 67 Black Hawks, 30 Chinooks and 10 UH-1 Huesars, finally began to lift off.

The lead company in the assault was the A Company, US27 Infantry, commanded by Capt. John Russell. The night before the attack, the soldiers slept by the helicopters. "Everybody was a little on edge," Russell recalled. "A lot of us sat up and talked, just trying to get rid of some of the nervousness."

Russell said he didn't get much sleep that night. "You look around at your soldiers, and you're responsible for them. And you want to bring them back, you want to bring them all back."

The two-hour delay, which robbed them of the chance to assault at night, did nothing to settle the soldiers' butterflies. "It turned the tension a notch or two," Russell said. Forty-one minutes after liftoff, the first group of four Black Hawks carrying Russell and 89 other members of A Company touched down in Objective Cobra. Intelligence reports had indicated sporadic enemy activity around the LZ during the build-up to G-Day, but to Russell's surprise and relief, they took no Iraqi fire as they got off the aircraft. "I really thought the LZ would be hot. It wasn't," he said.

"Two kilometers to the north of the landing zone, however, the soldiers could see Cobra and A-10s engaging Iraqi positions. The company's LZ originally was planned for the exact location being engaged by the Cobras, but after Apache reconnaissance flights spotted the Iraqi positions, the LZ was moved three kilometers south. "Head we not allowed that LZ, we would have been in a major fight on literally the first ships going in," Hill said.

Some obvious we were going to have to do something," Russell said.

Doing something turned out to mean hitting the Iraqi positions with artillery, in the form of the 10thm howitzers of C Battery, 2/320 Field Artillery. With Russell leading a four-man observer team, the battery was able to work rounds up the ridge where most of the Iraqi bunkers were. As the gunners reported they were running short of ammunition, the first Iraqi to surrender began emerging from their hideaways.

Cobra attack helicopters headed the prisoners down the slope, into the waiting arms of Russell and the men of A Company. By the end of the day, 34 prisoners had taken 350 prisoners. In addition, several injured Iraqi troops were evacuated by helicopter from the ridge that evening.

According to an intelligence report, the captured Iraqi battalion commander was overwhelmed by the speed and ferocity of the 101st's assault, and decided "he owed Iraq more than Saddam." He chose to save his soldiers, all veterans of the Iran-Iraq War.

The Iraqi commander's decision came as something of a relief to some members of A Company's 3d Platoon, whose responsibility the Iraqi troops became. "The way they were dug in, it would've been hard to take and hard to fight," PFC Ronald Gurnick said. "I would've cost a lot of casualties."

Desert gas station
Securing Cobra was the key to the desert's pain, but it was just the first step. Even as the 1st Brigade's Infantrymen were securing Cobra's perimeter, the 228th Supply and Transportation Battalion, part of the Division Support Command, labored to establish the rapid refuel point, a gas and hopper gas station needed for the 3d Brigade's planned assault into the Euphrates Valley.

Without the refuel point, helicopters carrying the 3d Brigade's 1st Battalion, the 1st and 2d Battalions, and the 101st Aviation Brigade, would not have been able to launch their assault. The 101st Aviation Brigade, while they considered their position at Cobra, 3d Brigade needed itself for its launch up the Euphrates.

The plan called for the brigade to assault all three infantry battalions into the three landing zones in Area of Operations, or AO, Eagle, just south of the Euphrates near the town of Al Khid, the night of Feb. 25.

But that morning Pavy called brigade Commander Clark to tell him the weather forecast for the evening was bad. Clark had to decide whether to launch early to beat the weather or not to go at all. Clark opted to go early, sacrificing the protection from air defense systems afforded by the dark.

The 187th Infantry Regiment, which consisted of the 3d Brigade, is known as the Rakkasans. The regiment earned the nickname name — which means "falling umbrellas from the sky" — when it was an airborne unit on occupation duty in Japan after World War II.

Task Force Rakkasan also included two artillery batteries, three antitank companies, two mounted rifle companies and four engineer vehicles. At noon, the first lift of four CH-47s, with eight TOV HMDAR's aboard, lifted off from Campbell. Morning the entire task force took the next six hours.

Task Force Rakkasan assaulted into Landing Zone Sand, while the 1st Brigade's assault flew directly to AO Eagle. Sand was still 40 kilometers south of Eagle. From LZ Sand, the task force drove north along a dirt track — dubbed Route 41A, after the highway that runs past Fort Campbell — to link with the air-assault troops in AO Eagle.

Engines to Eagle
At 3 p.m., the infantry began its assault on Eagle. The first wave of about 1,000 soldiers was carried on 66 Black Hawks. Sgt. Steven Edwards, a squad leader in 1st Platoon, B Company, 2187 Infantry, was in the fourth Black Hawk. In. When the pilot reported they were five minutes out, the soldiers were each other up. It was time to start "winding your head together."

Edwards said "I'm the guy on one radio; you open the door and you start going that way every second — and I have to admit that was scary."

The first Black Hawks touched down about 4:15 p.m. They landed just south of their objective, designated Battle Position Ashura. As battalion commander Lt. Col. Andy Barty remembered, he and his soldiers dismounted into thick mud. His first thought was, "I'm 43 years old and I'm too old to be doing this stuff."

The battalion's job was to block Iraqi forces retreating on Highway 8 from the east. The battalion did this by setting up two engagement areas — essentially killing zones — along the highway in the eastern section of AO Eagle.

The 3d Battalion's mission was similar. It was to block Iraqi reinforcements from the west. At 10 p.m., A and C companies from 3187 Infantry closed off the highway in Engagement Area Packer after returning a fire against a weak Iraqi probe of the landing zone.

The highway was severed completely when engineers blew a large crater in Engagement Area Yankee, to the east, and collapsed a bridge in EA Packer.

A tense night
The weather worsened and as dusk closed in, the only forces Clark had on the ground at AO Eagle were barely 1,000 light infantrymen. With Task Force Rakkasan still grinding its way through the mud of Route 41A, the heaviest weapons systems at his disposal were dismantled TOV's, which proved difficult to move in the knee-high quagmire. "You talk about a mobility problem," Clark said. "Things were a little tense that first night."

Repeating a determined counterattack, especially one by armored forces, would be next to impossible. Nevertheless, using its

own mortars, anti-armor rockets, grenade launchers and light machine guns, the brigade destroyed a handful of Iraqi vehicles that night on the highway. B Company, 2187 Infantry, killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded 17 in a firefight in Engagement Area Yankee. The wounded Iraqi, who all survived, were evacuated and treated at the battalion's aid station.

Reinforcements
The next day, Feb. 26, the bulk of Task Force Rakkasan, commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas Green, arrived at AO Eagle after capturing a small number of Iraqi prisoners and vehicles and breaching a series of irrigation ditches. Later that night, the weather cleared enough for the second lift of UH-60s to make it up to AO Eagle, raising the brigade's strength to 2,500.

The reinforcements were timely, for that second night also saw the heaviest fighting on the Euphrates, with most of the action concentrated in EA Yankee. Sgt. Edwards' squad was involved in one of the night's biggest engagements. Edwards and three of his men were blocking Highway 8 with two captured Honda Pre-ludes when he got a radio message that an Iraqi military truck was headed his way.

Edwards and his men started running back to where the rest of his squad was, but only got 20 meters off the road when the truck came around a bend in the highway. As the four men crowded in the darkness, the truck tried to ram its way through the Honda, sporting a sign in Arabic that said: "U.S. Forces — Keep Out."

"I waited and waited, then all of a sudden I heard these guys [in the truck] back and load," Edwards remembered. "And that's when I gave my guys the order to open fire."

"We didn't get any fire back from them... We just shot 'em up," Edwards himself had emptied two full M16 magazines — 60 rounds — into the truck.

The other members of Edwards' squad watched from an ambush position behind him, but were unable to fire on the truck for fear of hitting their four colleagues.

Once they had finished firing the four approached the truck to find all 13 occupants dead inside, Edwards said.

The Army awarded Edwards a Bronze Star with Valor for his actions. The next day, other units destroyed four vehicles on Highway 8. The 2d Brigade, except for 2692, which stayed behind providing security for the corps rear area, followed the 1st into Cobra on G-Day, but then was grounded by the weather. As the allied advance into Kuwait, and Iraq continued well ahead of schedule, the planned missions for the brigade — an air assault into either Tallil air base or an Iraqi ammunition supply point south-east of An-Nasiriyah — were canceled. Instead, on the ground was the third day, the brigade was given a mission to air-assault 150 kilometers due east to establish Forward Operating Base Viper at a targeting range for the Iraqi air force.

Early the next morning, the brigade's 1st and 3d Battalions, along with 3257 from 1st Brigade escorted this mission, supported by Apaches from the 101st Aviation Brigade and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. The soldiers received no fire during the assault, and took about 40 prisoners, most of whom were armed Bedouins who eagerly surrendered.





THE RAKKASANS



WORLD WAR II - KOREAN WAR - VIETNAM WAR - WAR WITH IRAQ

Issue No. 10, D+35

TAA CAMPBELL

Thursday, 21 Feb 91

Rakkasans Bag 472 EPW's

The strike began early on Feb. 20 with Air Force A-10 Thunderbolts and AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters of 3rd Bn, 101st Avn Rgt, attacking Iraqi fortified positions forward of TAA Campbell.

When linguists using loudspeakers demanded the Iraqis surrender, approximately 472 gave up. The Iraqis had been occupying a battalion defensive position.

Company A, 1-187th Inf Rgt commanded by CPT Joseph Buche and Company B, 1-187th Inf Rgt commanded by CPT Thomas Jardine, air assaulted into the objective area in UH-60s from 4th Bn, 101st Avn Rgt.

These infantrymen swept through the objective area and captured the prisoners. After searching them and clearing the positions, the EPW's were flown to the Division's EPW cage in CH-47 Chinooks of the 7th Bn, 101st Avn Rgt. Engineer support will be required to destroy enemy bunkers and equipment at a later date.

Two days earlier, 2nd Brigade brought back 41 enemy prisoners of war on a similar mission.

"Also News..."

* Following the capture of so many EPWs, Iraqi soldiers now have more flying hours in the division's aircraft than do American troops.

* Saddam Hussein has three doctors in his underground bunker: a cardiologist in case of a heart attack; a podiatrist to keep his feet in good shape; and a proctologist in case he has a brain tumor.

You can tell the Rakkasans are in the field when... Saudis are seen floating down Tapline Road on prayer rugs due to flash floods.

BBC 20 FEB 91

* Italy publicly endorsed the Soviet Union's peace plan. This is the first member of Allied countries to publically announced support of the plan. Italy stated that the plan meets all of the United Nation's resolutions.

* General Schwarzkopf stated that the Iraqi military machine was on the verge of collapse. He says if he was receiving the reports which Saddam should be receiving, he would be very concerned. Allied air strikes are now destroying approximately two tank battalions each day.

* Iraqi's Deputy Prime Minister made an unexpected visit to China in an apparent attempt to convince China to endorse the Soviet Union's peace plan. However, peking continued to call for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

* The Soviet Union's peace proposal continues to generate a flurry of activity. President Bush initially stated that the proposal fell "well short" of what was needed to bring the war to an end. The U.N. Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar, called the plan a real chance for peace. A spokesman for the United States now says that President Bush has not rejected the plan, but had sent a detailed response to President Gorbachev. The world is still awaiting the formal response of Iraq to the plan. Although secret, one of the provisions would apparently call for a 24 hour cease fire, after which Iraqi troops would begin to withdraw.

FOR THE REGIMENT

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Continuing with our conversation between a Rakkasan (RAK) and a soldier on the ARCENT Staff (Special):

RAK: Well Special, I see it's almost lunchtime. Anything exciting to eat today?

Special: No, just the ole stuff, you know, probably hamburgers and fries.

RAK: Hamburgers and fries?!

Special: Yea, one of us usually makes a run to Hardee's and picks up lunch.

RAK: I didn't even know they had Hardees in Saudi Arabia!

Special: Oh yea, and Kentucky Fried Chicken and Baskin-Robbins too!

RAK: I see. I also couldn't help but notice how shiny your boots look.

What's your secret?

Special: Well, I usually polish and spit-shine my boots every morning, but it's a constant battle. These tile floors scuff boots quickly, and I'm always hitting them on the legs of my desk.

RAK: I'm sure you must be disappointed that the shine is damaged so easily.

Special: Yes, but it's just one of the hazards we face here.

RAK: I'm sure. Well, is it fair to say that you and a real soldier, like a Rakkasan, have nothing in common?

Special: Of course we don't!

One of a unit's most significant symbols are "the colors." Throughout the history of military warfare, the colors were proudly born into battle, often accompanied by a drummer or the bagpipes. The units placed such importance on them as the embodiment of a unit's past performance in combat, that the colors were highly sought after by the enemy. Similarly, the Rakkasans' colors give testimony to numerous victories in far away lands. Our streamers tell a story which includes five Presidential Unit Citations for Tagatay Ridge, Sukchon, Trang Bang, Dong Ap Bia, and Inchon; two Valorous Unit Awards for Thua Thien Province and Binh Duong Province; one Meritorious Unit Commendation for Vietnam 1968; one Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for 17 October 1944 to 4 July 1945; and two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations for Korea 1950-1952 and Korea 1952-1953. Our legacy should inspire pride, spark camaraderie and elicit a challenge - to equal the courage of our predecessors and to surpass even our own standards. No doubt our regiment will rise to the occasion as we fly into battle with blood in our eyes and our colors unfurled!

RAKKASAN NICKNAME QUIZ

Match the nicknames on the left with the names on the right. (Answers below)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Lizard | a. CPT Pound, 1/187 |
| 2. Snokin' Joe | b. CPT Walburn, HQ |
| 3. Dangerous Dave | c. CPT Ballard, 311th |
| 4. Spandex Man | d. CPT Talley, HQ |
| 5. Judge | e. CPT Chenery, 1/187 |
| 6. Kainan | f. COL McDonald, FCDR |
| 7. House | g. LTC Berdy, 2/187 |
| 8. Duck Man | h. BG Kinzer, FCDR |
| 9. Big Mac | i. LTC Greco, 3/187 |
| 10. Secret Squirrel | j. MAJ Murphy, 3/320 |

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

MEDIA COVERAGE

Reporting on the war in the Gulf should be excellent for the 401st ABN DIV (AASLT). The coverage will include a 3 man NBC video team, a New York Times reporter, an Associated Press reporter and a newspeak. The coverage will be broadcast to the 401st ABN DIV and would be a valuable addition to the coverage of the war in the Gulf.

RAKKASAN DESERT STORM BIRTHS

Carol Locklear, wife of SPC Ronney (Co A, 2-187), gave birth to a healthy baby girl, 7 lbs, 13 oz, on 17 Feb.

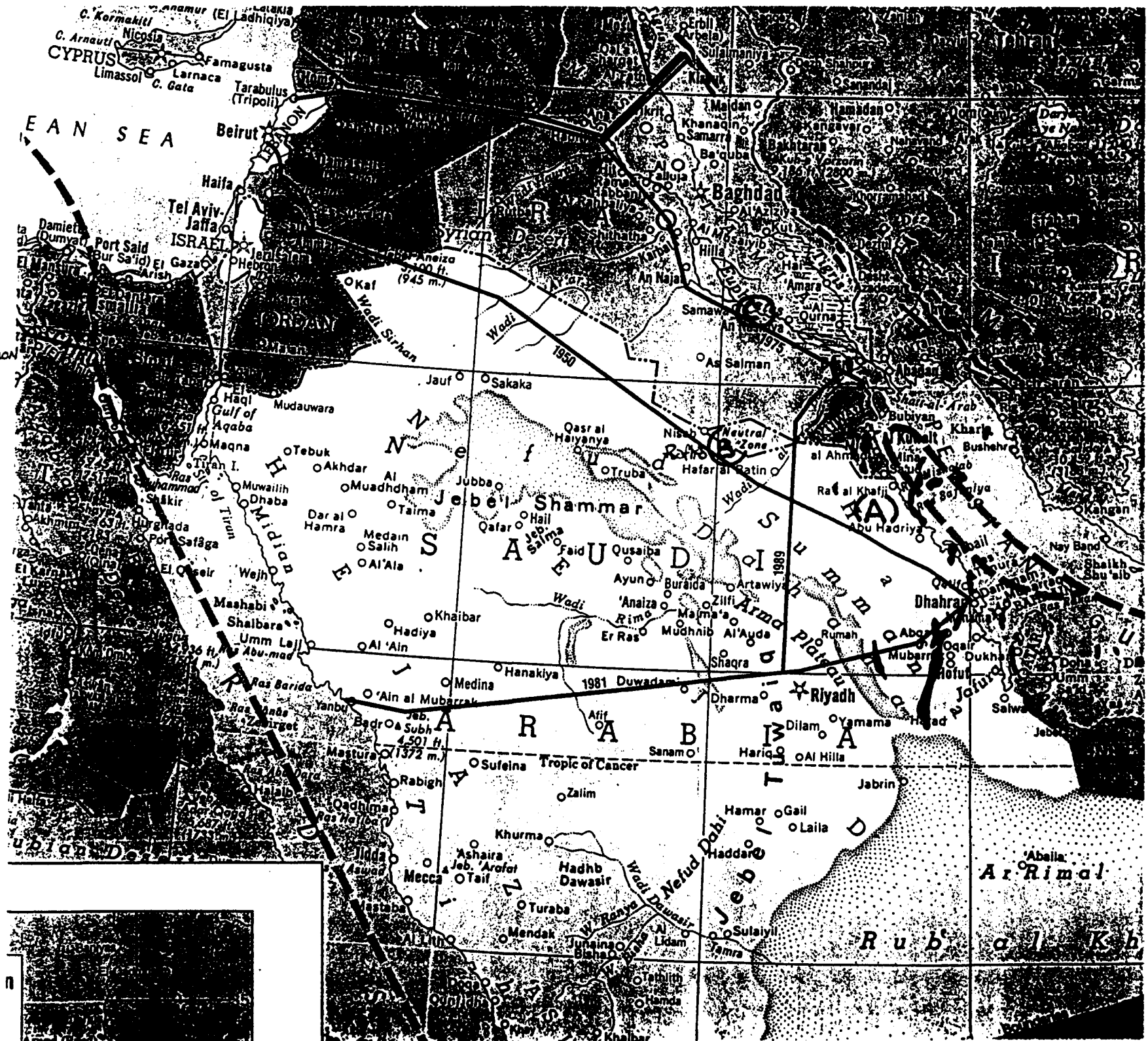
SPC Aubrie Efty's (Co D, 1-187) wife, Mary, gave birth to their son, Michael Thomas (7 lbs, 13 oz, 20 inches), on 17 Feb.

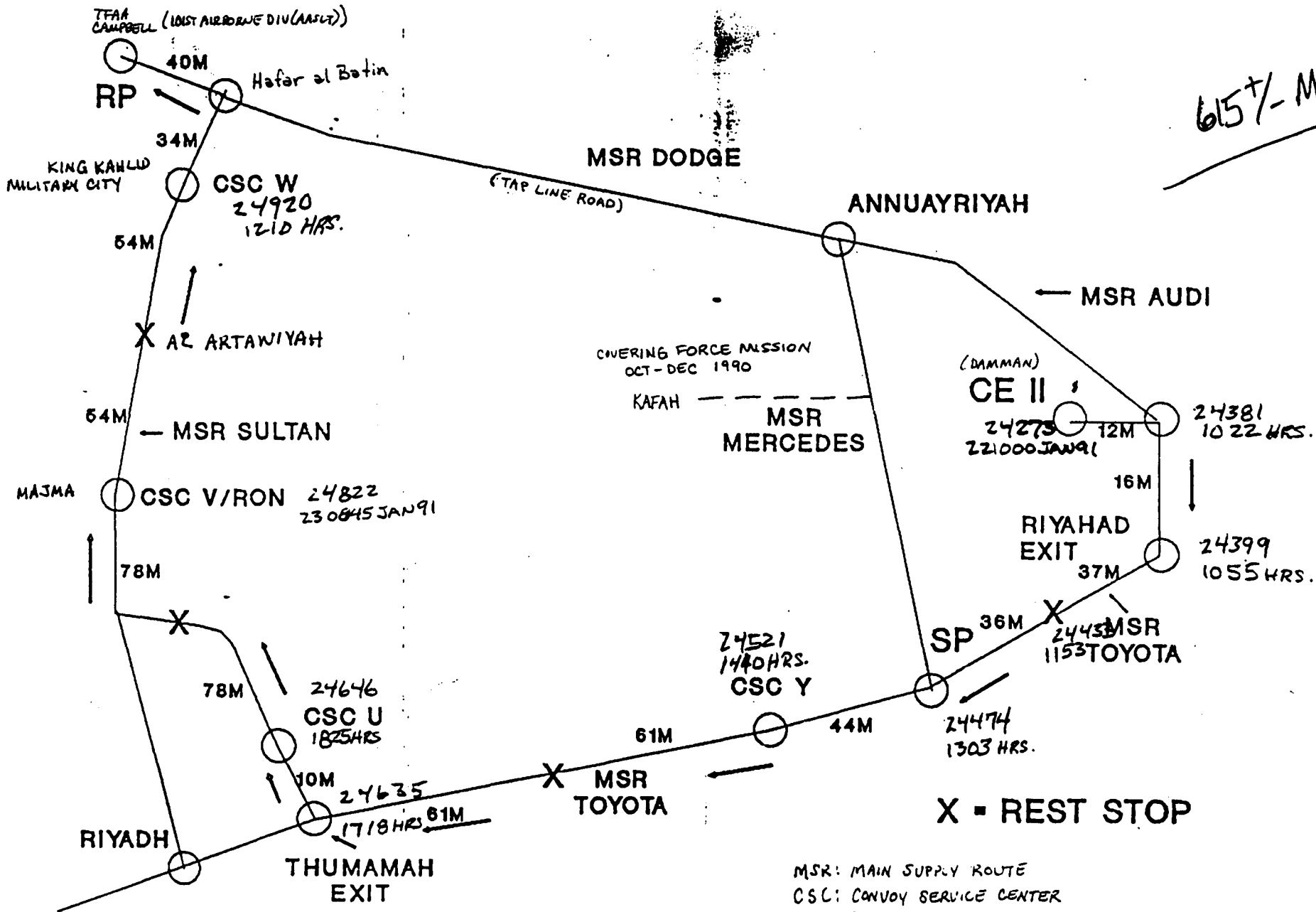
A: COVERING FORCE MISSION
OCT-DEC 1990

B: TFAA CAMPBELL
FEB 90

C: AREA OF OPERATION EAGLE
MAR 90

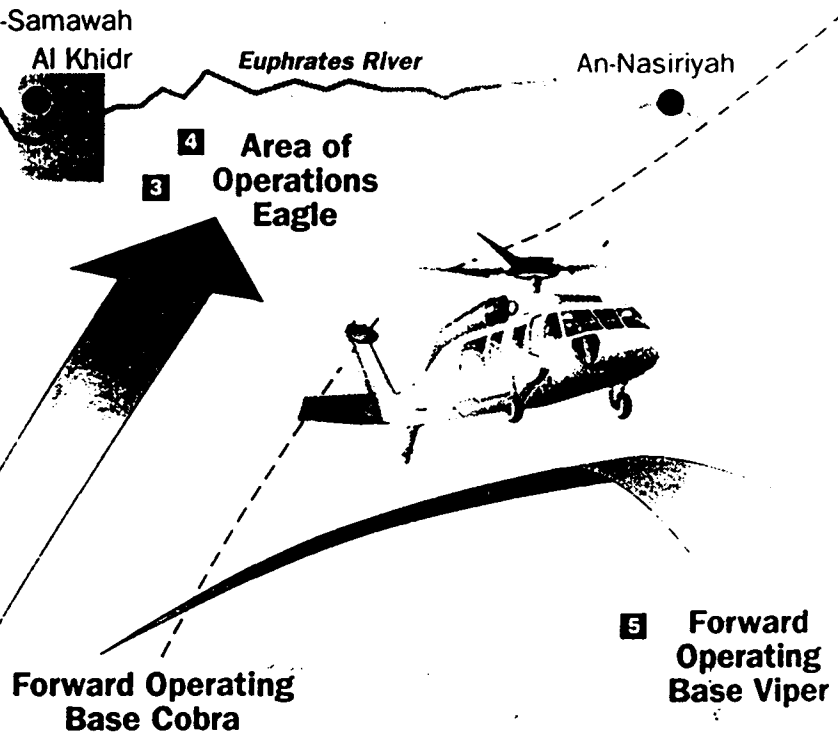
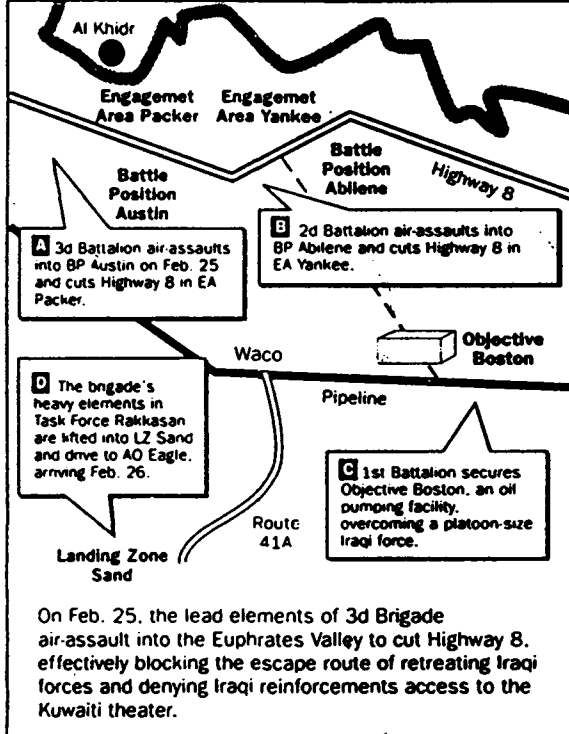
NEWSWEEK -
THE GULF WAR ZONE
A SERIES OF HAMMOND
PULL-OUT MAPS





101st Airborne operations in Iraq

Blocking Highway 8



Sequence of events

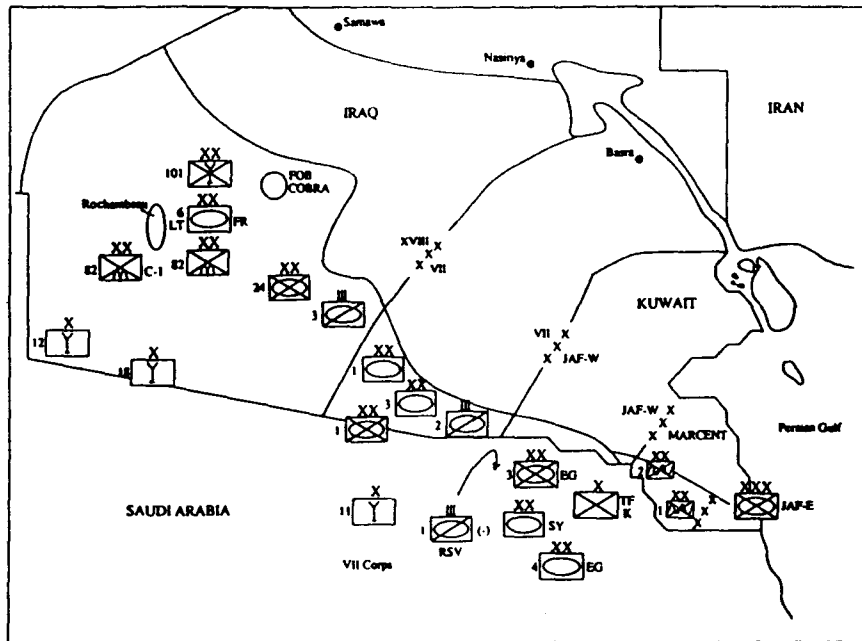
- 1** Feb. 24 1st Brigade and 1st Battalion, 2d Brigade, air-assault 80 kilometers into Iraq to establish FOB Cobra, and with aviation and artillery support subdue a dug-in Iraqi battalion. They are joined by 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade that afternoon.
 - 2** Feb. 24-25 Task Force Citadel, a 700-vehicle convoy, travels up MSR New Market to FOB Cobra.
 - 3** Feb. 25 Task Force Rakkasan, 3d Brigade's heavy elements, air-assaults from TAA Campbell into LZ Sand and begins drive to AO Eagle. First lift of 3d Brigade air-assaults from TAA Campbell into AO Eagle and cuts Highway 8.
 - 4** Feb. 26 TF Rakkasan and second lift of 3d Brigade infantry troops reach AO Eagle.
 - 5** Feb. 27 1st and 3d Battalions, 2d Brigade, and 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade air-assault into FOB Viper, supported by 101st Aviation Brigade and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. 2d Battalion, 2d Brigade, joins 1st Brigade at FOB Cobra.
- Feb. 28 War ends.

IRAQ

SAUDI ARABIA

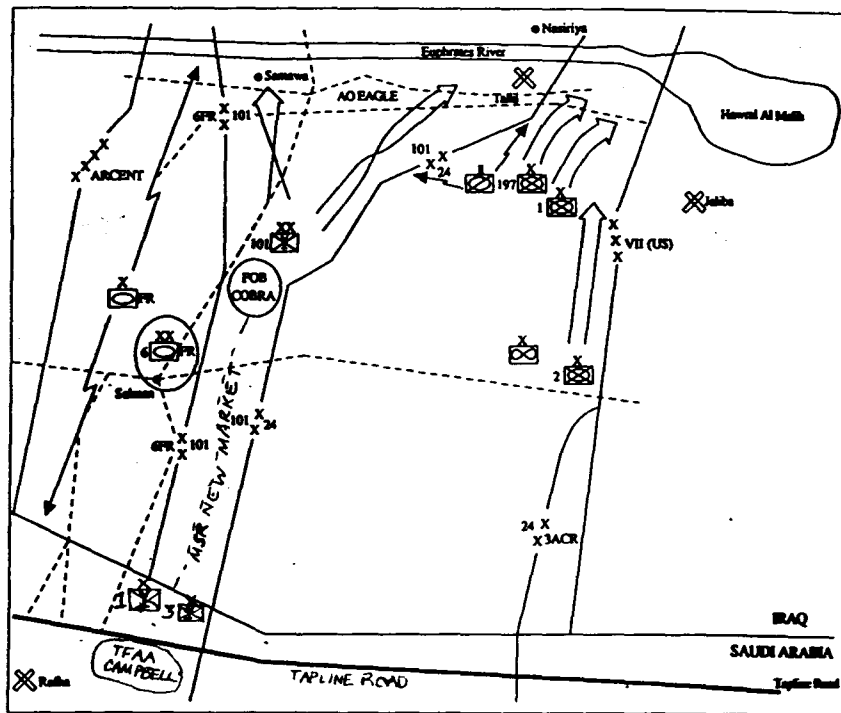
Tactical Assembly Area Campbell

Main Supply Route New Market



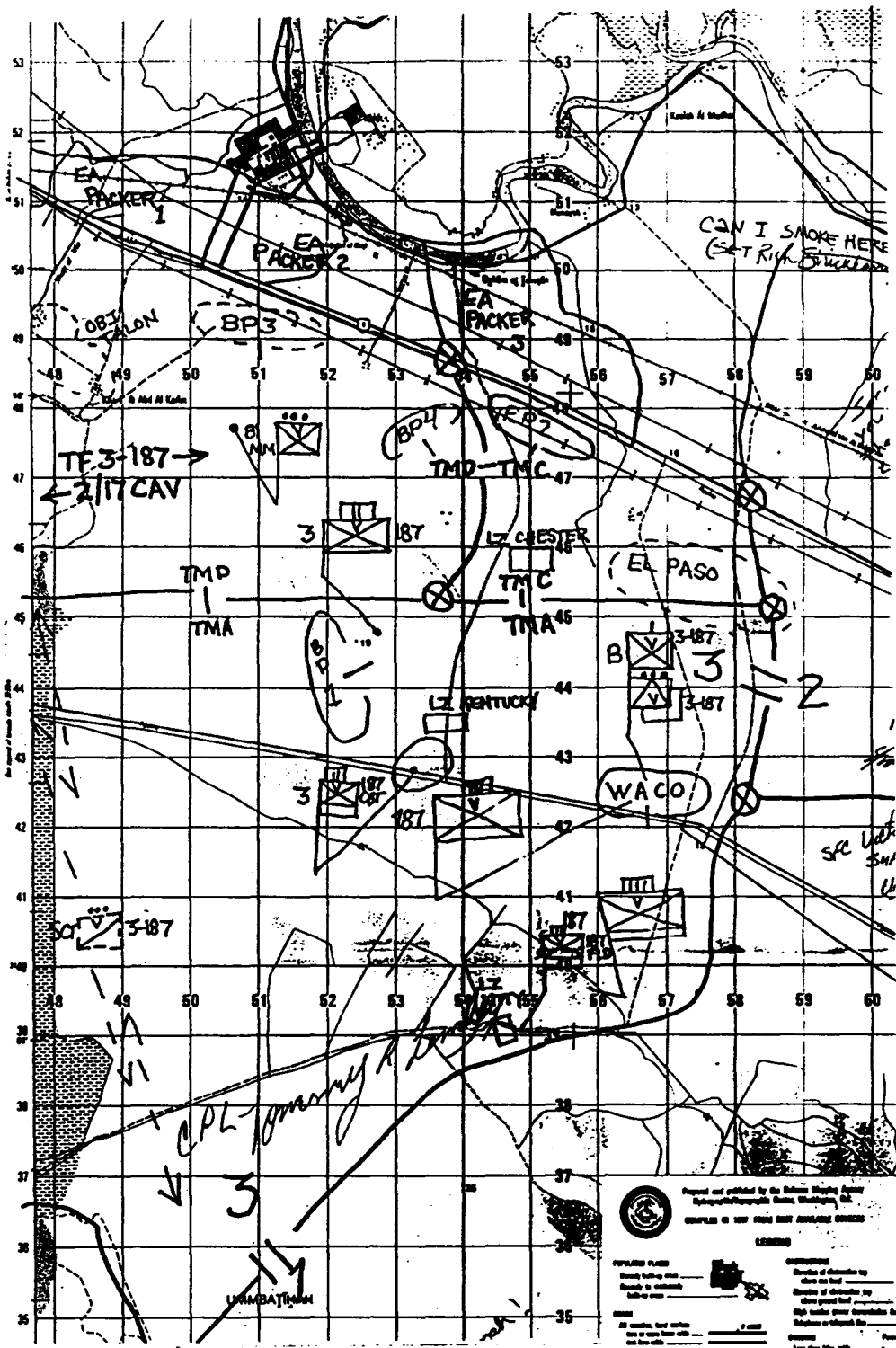
WESTERN SCHEME OF MANEUVER DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM

Line of Advance at End of G-Day



XVIII Corps Operations, February 25, 1991

MAPS EXTRACTED FROM: 'THUNDER IN THE DESERT,' THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, BY MAS, JAMES BLACKWELL, (USA RET). BANTAM BOOK, OCT 1991, PP. 196-197.



Prepared and published by the Defense Mapping Agency
 Hydrographic Center, Washington, D.C.
 COMPLETION OF THIS MAP WAS ASSISTED BY THE

LEGEND

SYMBOLS	CONTOURS	GRID	SCALE
<p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p>	<p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p>	<p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p>	<p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p> <p>Symbol description</p>

LIMITED REVISIONS AS OF 1970

NOTES

Check the information on this map for accuracy.
 All symbols are in purple and black.
 If symbols are not in purple and black, they are obsolete.

REVISIONS IN PURPLE

LEGEND

Symbol description	Symbol description
Symbol description	Symbol description

GLOSSARY

Word description

ELEVATIONS IN METERS
 CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 METERS

EXPLANATION

Symbol description

Symbol description

Symbol description	Symbol description
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SUPPORT PLATOON ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS
AREA OF OPERATIONS EAGLE
24 FEB-7 MAR 91

FORWARDING OPERATING BASE COBRA (ADVANCE PARTY)

SFC Victor L. Jeffries (Support Platoon Sergeant)
PFC Sonny Groves (driver/RTO)

On the morning of 24 FEB 91, SFC Jeffries along with his driver formed up at the convoy assembly area in TFAA Campbell and prepared to move north into FOB Cobra with the brigade executive officer. He was the first member of the battalion into Iraqi territory. His mission on the ADVON was to establish the 3rd Battalion Field Trains site and direct follow-on convoys to their assigned areas in the FOB perimeter.

3RD BATTALION FIELD TRAINS

SGT Richard Strickland (NCOIC)	CPL Robert S. Trusty
SPC Allen M. Brunner (PL's RTO)	SPC James W. Kettner
SPC Randall A. Fraser	SPC Stuart Closson
SPC Larry H. Pirnie	PFC Thomas M. Davis
CPL Tommy R. Lemley (AMMO AST.)	

On 24 FEB 91, under the leadership of SGT Strickland the field trains element assisted to consolidate the battalion's equipment at the division storage area, and then move the companies to the pick-up zone. Later on that evening the field trains element loaded the remaining essential combat equipment on the platoon's seven HUMV's and five 2 1/2 ton trucks and prepared for ground convoy into FOB Cobra. They arrived into FOB Cobra on 26 FEB 91, at 2330, then established positions in FOB Cobra and remained there until moving back into Saudi Arabia.

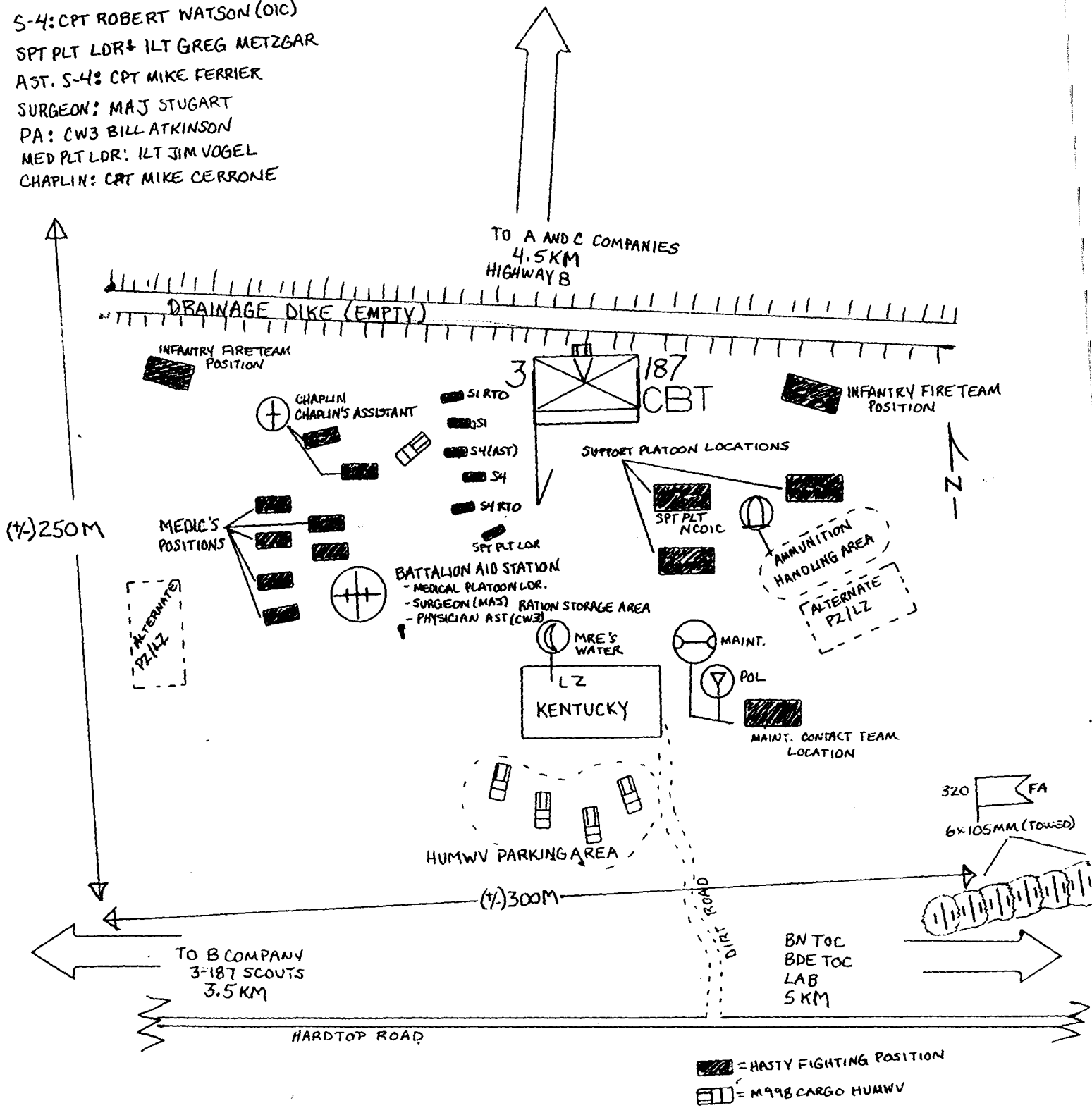
3RD BATTALION COMBAT TRAINS

1LT Greg E. Metzgar (OIC)	SSG Jose A. Vidales (NCOIC)
CPL William E. Agsaoay	PFC Matthew S. Rouse
CPL Kenneth R. Bope (2NCOIC)	SPC David T. Guth, Jr.
PFC Lacy L. Strickland, Jr.	SPC Christopher S. Mancuso

Under the leadership of SSG Vidales and CPL Bope, the combat trains element assembled water, rations, and ammunition bundles on the pick-up zone with the S-4 and internally loaded it into UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. When the battalion air assaulted into AO Eagle they landed in LZ Kentucky and began to consolidate and reorganize the combat trains. When 1LT Metzgar arrived into AO Eagle with TF Randal, he linked up with the element and remained there until they were airlifted out of AO Eagle on 7 MAR 91.

3RD BATTALION, 187TH INFANTRY
 COMBAT TRAINS NV 538435 (AL KHIDR, IRAQ 5152 11)
 29 FEB - 10 MAR 91

S-1: CPT FRED JOHNSON
 S-4: CPT ROBERT WATSON (OIC)
 SPT PLT LDR & ILT GREG METZGAR
 AST. S-4: CPT MIKE FERRIER
 SURGEON: MAJ STUGART
 PA: CW3 BILL ATKINSON
 MED PLT LDR: ILT JIM VOGEL
 CHAPLIN: CPT MIKE CERRONE



LOGISTICAL AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Compiled with the assistance of MAJ Mike Oates, 3rd Brigade S-4 during operations in Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

CLASS I: SUBSISTENCE

* Meals, Ready to Eat (MRE) for extended periods of time (30 day rotations in covering force mission for example) were a morale killer.

* Distribution of supplements (soda, bread, fruit, etc.) were unevenly distributed through units. Rear areas consistently had a better way of life. The forward units, especially infantry units were at the bottom of the distribution cycle.

* The use of the forward area water point system (FAWPSS) enhanced the success at the tactical levels.

* Individual companies should be allowed to have 55-gallon rubber water drums for large capacity water handling.

* Host nation water sources (wells) could have been used with water purification units to avert a lot of work at the brigade level having to transport water.

CLASS II; INDIVIDUAL, AND TO&E EQUIPMENT

* Replacement of worn or damaged uniforms items was practically nonexistent.

* Focus by division appeared to be on 72-hour operations such as 'Just Cause' and long term sustainment suffered.

* Soldiers in the brigade wore the same uniforms home that they deployed with seven months earlier.

* It was hard for the Division Support Command (DISCOM) to understand that infantry units wear out their equipment faster than other units.

CLASS III; PETROLEUM, OIL, LUBRICANTS (POL)

* Use of the aviation fuel carriers greatly assisted the brigade to support its fuel demands. The organic fuel truck in each battalion could not meet the demands for fuel.

* Fuel changing from diesel (CONUS) operations to multi-fuel JA1 or JA8 caused numerous injector, engine troubles in Saudi Arabia.

* Consumption of Class III (packaged) was considerably higher than experience has shown at the National Training Center rotations.

CLASS IV; CONSTRUCTION/BARRIER MATERIALS

* Infantry units must develop a pre-packaged, light weight,

prefabricated units that can provide some type of overhead cover, especially in regions like Saudi Arabia.

* Sandbags were almost non-existent and locally purchased sandbags were expensive and of poor quality.

* Units must become proficient in using locally available substitutes for protection. For example using car hoods for overhead cover, or ammunition crates filled with earth.

* Concertina wire was a problem to transport. Some wire could be tied on hoods, but mass quantities were hard to load once vehicles were loaded with equipment.

CLASS V; AMMUNITION

* We used less than we planned for. The result was a heavy soldiers load and slow movement.

* Dragon medium anti-tank weapons often went erratic when fired. It was not worth the extra weight carrying it and the day/night tracker versus the reliability.

* LAW's must be retained as a 'bunker buster.'

* Anti-tank mines were too heavy for the soldier to carry and to fly the mines out in cargo nets required more than the battalion had.

* The terms basic load, mission load, training load, and authorized load were not understood by anyone. When the ground war started we took whatever we could get our hands on. The terms did not really have a meaning or relevance to combat operations.

CLASS VI; SUNDRY ITEMS

* Soldiers do not carry extra items (paper, toothpaste, etc.) in their rucksacks. The sundry packs that arrived did not contain sufficient quantities of key items (razors, toilet paper, tobacco or boot polish). Soldiers were not allowed to visit the local civilian stores so they relied on people at home to send them items they needed.

* Units can overcome this problem by loading needed items into their deployment lockers prior to leaving their home station.

CLASS VII; MAJOR END ITEMS

* Enough cannot be said about this class. It is imperative that leaders know that they go to war with the same equipment that they train with.

* If an item broken before the war, it will stay broken during the war. Proper PMCS and identification of shortfalls is crucial during peacetime.

CLASS VIII; MEDICAL SUPPLIES

* Due to the low casualty rate, there is no way to really evaluate this class. We always seemed to be well stocked.

CLASS IX; REPAIR PARTS

* DISCOM kept the maintenance assets well to the rear which caused delays in repairing and returning items.

* The automated systems (Unit Level Logistics System computer) works well except in hot, dry, and dusty regions. The computers often failed causing the unit to revert back to the old manual system.

* The manual system never failed, unless soldiers had not been trained in the procedures during peacetime.

* Items most commonly broken were; seals, fan belts, filters, windshields, canvas, radiators, and electronic control modules on the HUMWV's.

SERVICES;

LAUNDRY AND BATH:

* This is worth its weight in gold when you can take soldiers to a shower point.

* Laundry facilities were few and far between. When they were located and the collection and distribution of was a nightmare.

GRAVES REGISTRATION (GRREG):

* We never practiced in peacetime, and it showed

* Support platoon members that are on GRREG need to immunized with Hepatitis-B series like medical personnel, since they will be handling dead remains.

* Soldiers need to carry on them, and be able to use the casualty feeder forms and witness statements.

* Company leadership (CO, XO, 1SG, PL/PSG) need to know how GRREG works and have SOP's to cover this area.

* Battalions need to incorporate GRREG training into field exercises.

TRANSPORTATION:

* Everything depends on the units ability to transport and the battalions did not have enough organic transportation to met the needs. The S-4 and the support platoon leader had to be audacious in their pursuit to get either civilian or corps level vehicles.

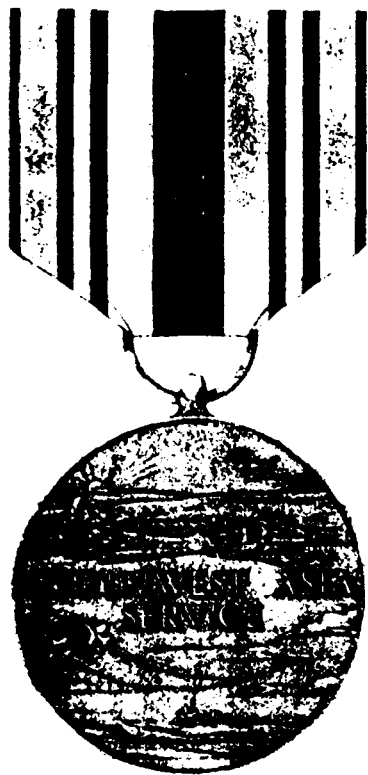
* Peace time training relied heavily on being able to

return to garrison several times and get items that were forgot or could not be loaded on the first time. This fooled commanders into thinking that transportation will always be available to get what they wanted.

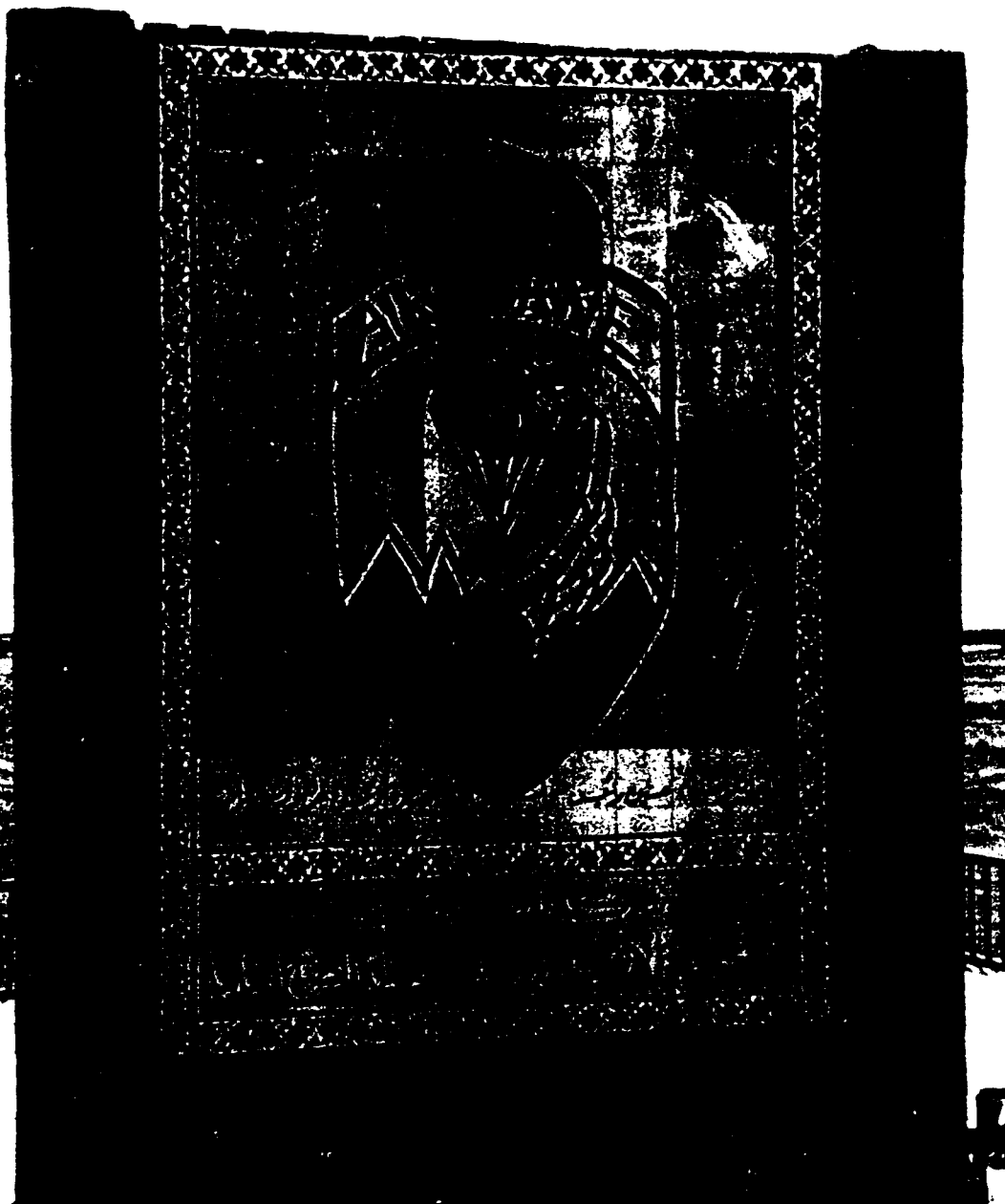
* Army aviation is great when you can get it dedicated to the logistical support, but sometimes it gets taken away to fill some type of tactical mission. Helicopters also are not reliable due to their mechanical conditions or maintenance postures.

RAKKASAN SHIMBUN

ラッカサン シンブン



Southwest Asia
Service Medal



Daraji Pump Station
The Rakkasans were here!

SUMMER 1991

Voice of The Steel Berets

The Rakkasans! Of Airborne Regiments -- The Right of The Line

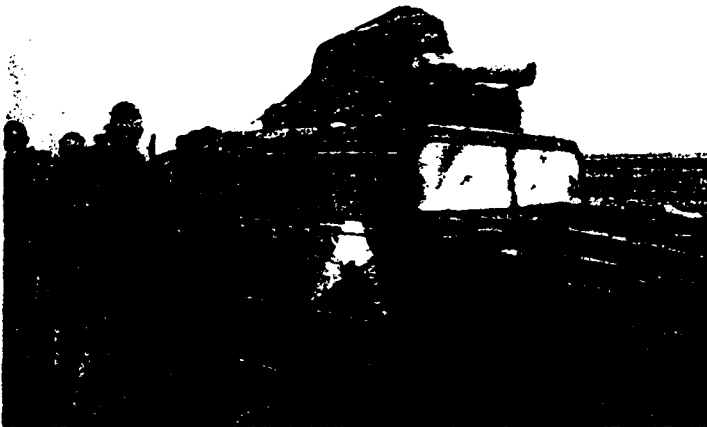
With the Rakkasans on D-Day and D+1 of Desert Storm



Processing captured equipment



Moving captured equipment out by UH-1H



Soldiers of "D" Company, 3/187



Mud, mud, mud! Getting a stuck M998 out



Driving deep into Iraqi territory



UH-1H moving supplies by air to BPs on Highway 8



CH-47 taking ammo out of 3/187th combat trains



500-gallon water blivets. Med/Evac Blackhawks in background



Filling 55-gallon water blivets



Iraqi village near 3rd Brigade ALOC

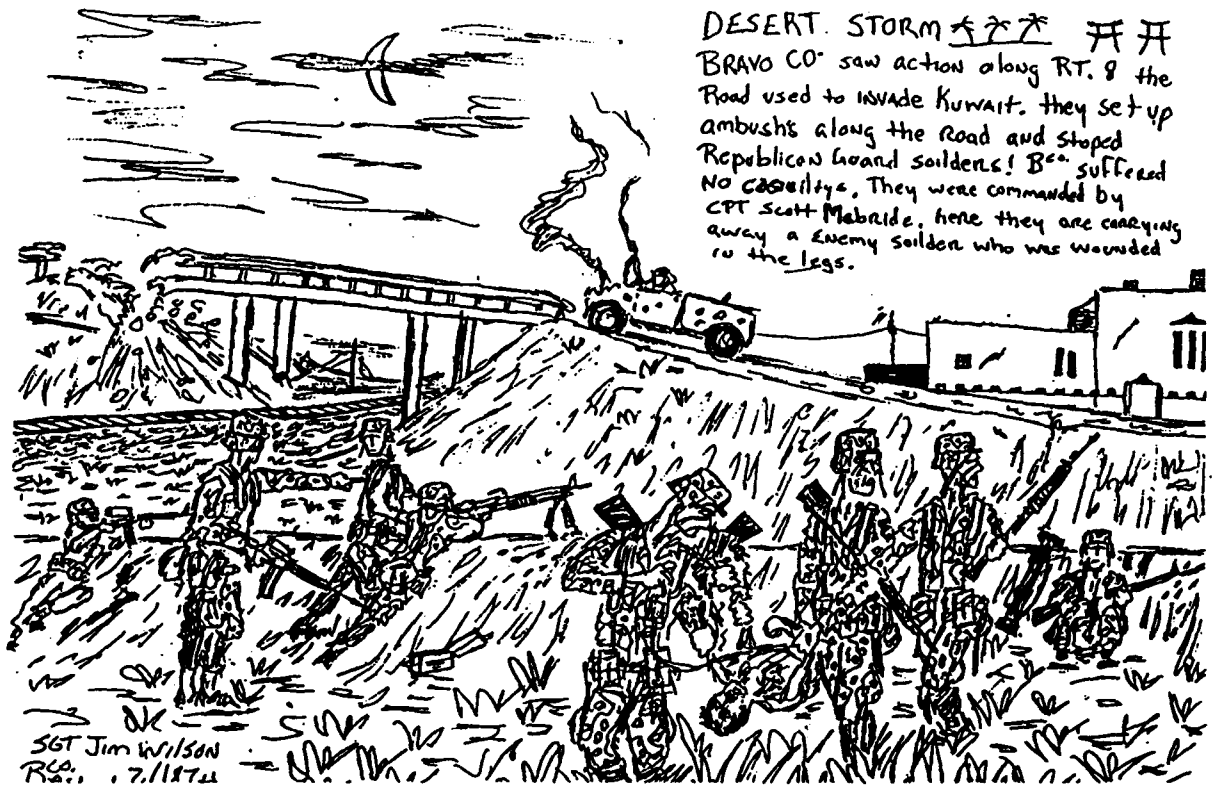


Iraqi prisoner of war in 3/187th combat trains



More captured equipment

Sgt. Jim Wilson illustrates Desert Storm action



DESERT STORM * * * *
 BRAVO CO saw action along RT. 8 the
 Road used to invade Kuwait. they set up
 ambushes along the road and stopped
 Republican Guard soldiers! Bravo suffered
 No casualties. They were commanded by
 CPT Scott Mabride. here they are carrying
 away a enemy soldier who was wounded
 in the legs.



AMBUSH along
 Euphrates River
 BCo. 2/187

SGT. James Wilson
 2/187th Scout Attached
 Lt. RCo.