

Monograph of a Company Executive Officer
in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
During Operation Desert Storm

5-91



by Captain Michael J. Repetski

Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990 in response to supposed Kuwaiti crimes. Within hours, elements of the 82nd Airborne (ABN) deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to defend it from a likely Iraqi invasion. Before August was over, the 24th Infantry Division (I.D.) and the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) [ABN (AASLT)] also began deploying to the Kingdom. I deployed with C Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 101st ABN (AASLT). I was the executive officer (XO).

The deployment caught certain units of the 101st ABN(AASLT) off guard. Although SOPs existed, few people really expected to see a division level deployment. The infantry battalions and their habitually associated combat support elements were able to deploy on short notice. The administrative and logistics units, however, required greater effort to deploy. The same was true of the division's aviation brigade. Although the helicopters themselves were fairly deployable, the maintenance and logistics units required to go with them were not. This, coupled with the fact that the whole brigade was deploying, only compounded the assets required to move it. The 101st ABN(AASLT), as part of its rapid deployment mission, had a contingency plan for the deployment of an infantry brigade, with its necessary combat support elements, to fly to a combat area. However, the current situation dictated that a majority of the division's equipment had to move on ship to Saudi Arabia. The division hastily put together a plan to move equipment on trucks and in convoy, not on trains, to the port in Jacksonville, Florida. At Jacksonville, the equipment was uploaded on ships to make the journey to Saudi. Troops and absolutely

essential equipment went on aircraft.

When the Iraqi invasion occurred, I was the acting commander. The commander, Captain (CPT) Tim Fahy, and the first sergeant (1SG), Johnny Moreno, were on leave, as was about half the company and battalion. Although we were not yet on alert, soldiers began to return. On 10 August the division was alerted and we called everyone back from leave. We started in earnest to train. The primary focus was on physical training, individual NBC skills, and the refinement of individual and squad level skills. Squads conducted live fire exercises, and the majority of other training, although planned at company or battalion level, was squad leader led. The squad level training improved the self confidence of the squad's NCOs and the squad itself.

As the XO though, my concerns were getting all of the company's equipment operational and getting a lot of expendable supplies. A long budget crunch had forced deferring a large amount of maintenance, mostly Class IX expendable parts. It also prevented the purchase of tape, rope, and other Class II items to include rucksack and helmet parts. At Fort Campbell, a civilian depot level weapons maintenance facility existed that we never had direct access to until the alert. The civilians serviced all of the company's weapons. My armorer, SPC Hanner, excelled in keeping the company's weapons and night vision goggles (NVGs) functioning and in a high state of repair from this moment until well after the war. Class IX parts trickled in but never really arrived en mass until January 1991. Desert uniforms, chemical suits, jungle boots (we were never issued the desert boots) and other supplies just

kept arriving. The supply sergeant, SSG Hensley, and his clerk, SPC Thigpen, performed herculean efforts. They issued equipment and got list after list to the battalion supply officer (S-4). They also closed out the company and outloaded the supplies to Saudi in a CONEX and on two separate pallets. They tracked every item of company property throughout the deployment and Company C lost no property. Just before Labor Day, the conex and company's vehicles left to go to port. On 11 September, the company deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The company arrived at Dharan (Map 1, Point 1) and moved on buses to King Fhad International Airport (KFIA). The division had established Camp Eagle II, the divisional base camp, on the surrounding parking lots (Map 1, Point 2).

Initially the 101st ABN(AASLT), 82nd ABN, and 24th I.D. acted as a covering force to delay the expected Iraqi invasion. The idea was to defend in depth and to destroy Iraqi armor in selected engagement areas using Air Force and Navy air craft and Army attack aviation. In early October, the 1-187th Infantry Battalion convoyed on buses to a location west of Nariya in Saudi (Map 1, Point 3). It was the brigade reserve and was situated in a giant bowl like terrain feature in the desert. It displaced several times, but it seemed to have no real mission. Company C conducted patrols and built and practiced assaulting a trench network. We had no blank ammunition and very little live ammunition. We did not even test fire our weapons. Batteries were in short supply, so we had to limit our use of radios and NVGs. We were almost out of communication wire, too. But we survived the heat, the flies, and

[REDACTED]

the seeming futility of our mission. Actually, my battalion had several missions, none of which the commander could discuss at the time. The battalion was not only the forward reserve for the expected covering force battle, it was also the mobile reserve to counter any Iraqi breakthroughs in the sector. Also, it was responsible for the reinforcement of the defense of KFIA and Camp Eagle II, and for planning contingency offensive operations (Kinnison).

The end of that first 30 day rotation brought on some changes. United States and coalition forces continued to arrive in the Kingdom, and supply channels gradually opened. The planning shifted officially to offensive operations. Even though the company would do two more rotations into the Nariya region, the emphasis became preparation for the offense. Our target date was 15 January 1991, the United Nation's imposed date for Iraq to get out of Kuwait. During our final rotation the battalion got access to the 24th I.D.'s range complex and quite a bit of live ammunition. We conducted squad and platoon missions and test fired a lot of weapons. The battalion staff put together a complex, combined arms live fire exercise. It involved the seizure of a town and not the expected clearing of a trench complex. Each company performed a different mission; Company D moved dismounted to set up a blocking position; Company B seized a key bridge and set up a blocking position; Company A seized a portion of the town and set up a blocking position on the far side of it; and Company C seized and secured a bulk of the town itself. It went well. Of course, there were no helicopters, so we had to simulate the air

[REDACTED]

part of the air assault. But it did go well. It was a good thing that it did, because that training mission, on a town made of 2" x 4"'s, burlap, and sandbags, by coincidence and default, was a rehearsal for our actual mission into Iraq two months later.

The division consolidated back in the base camp, Camp Eagle II, for the new year and waited. The 15th of January arrived and nothing happened. We anxiously waited. Just after midnight on the 17th, I groggily awoke to an Armed Forces Network radio broadcast of the air strikes on Baghdad. Minutes later, the air raid/chemical attack alarms started going off. Someone had decided to test the system. Soldiers hurriedly masked, and many crawled back in their sleeping bags. They figured that if this was a real attack, they would hear the PATRIOT missiles launch from the nearby battery at KFIA. I was not so smart and paced around awaiting the all clear signal. This would happen several times before I left Camp Eagle II. I went north on 18 January to establish the company's new position on the Saudi/Iraqi border.

The 101st ABN(AASLT) flew or convoyed to Rafha (Map 1, Point 4), then established Tactical Assembly Area Campbell about 20 km east along Tapline road (Map 1, Point 5). Company C's position was about 10km from the border. Initially, there was nothing and nobody for miles, but within days camouflage net towns began appearing everywhere. That was how one navigated, moving from distinguishable camouflage net terrain feature to the next one. If a unit suddenly appeared or disappeared, or a driver made a wrong turn, it would take hours to recover and get back on track. The company dug in and endured high winds, rain, and the cold.

[REDACTED]

After about a week Company C conducted a patrol to the border to see what was out there. The patrol consisted of one rifle platoon and the battalion's scout platoon in M998's, cargo 1 and 1/4 ton HMMWV's, and one TOW platoon. We headed out just after midnight in company wedge formation, using bounding overwatch. Looking back, it was a bit ridiculous, but at the time it was very intense. We were going out to THE BORDER. Imagine our surprise when we actually saw the border manned. The guards apparently ignored our presence. The company dismounted, and set up an overwatch position. In a short time, we picked out three border buildings about two kilometers between each, a rather extensive base of about three buildings, and bunkers and trenches around each. CPT Fahy called all this in to battalion. Evidently no one else knew that the Iraqis still manned these border posts. We waited for the word to destroy the posts. The scouts went forward and reconed to within 300 meters of the base. The Iraqis ignored them. Suddenly, elements of the AH-64, APACHE, battalion arrived on site. Then the Iraqis moved. Over 40 soldiers left buildings all along the border and dove into bunkers. The APACHES overflew the various buildings, seemingly trying to draw fire but not firing themselves. Word of our discovery went up the chain. Brigade said, "shoot," then Division said, "wait." At almost noon, the APACHES left, and battalion ordered us to withdraw. The Army or Theater commander said, "no." The reason, as we afterwards discovered, was that the Allied command wanted to draw as little attention as possible to the area west of Kuwait prior to the start of the ground war (Kinnison). The troops all had mixed feelings.

Many had wanted to destroy those buildings and could not understand why we had even bothered going out there. The 1SG commented afterwards that it was just like Vietnam, in that we were unable to engage known enemy due to imaginary lines and nebulous rules of engagement. I figured we were just pinpointing targets for when the ground war started. However, it was tough to leave those positions untouched. The most aggravating part was when we looked back and saw one Iraqi "moon" us. We would continue to run those patrols as part of the battalion's overall patrol schedule, and I led one myself, but we never again saw Iraqis up there.

While we sat in our holes and waited, everyone it seemed was moving into the neighborhood. The French set up between the 101st and Rahfa; the 24th and other mechanized forces set up to our east. A wide assortment of combat service support units established themselves to our rear along Tapline Road. In early February, a field shower unit became operational, and the mission of the day was to get the company showered. We used every M998 and 2 and 1/2 ton truck we could scrounge from the S-4 to shuttle the company rearward for its first shower in about three weeks. When I got back there, the communications sergeant, SGT Braunston, and I discovered a bakery unit. The shift on duty was from the Puerto Rican National Guard. They were baking cookies for the 101st and had been for several days. We had not gotten any yet and assured the sergeant on duty that we had not. He gave us a bag full. I do not know who in the 101st got all those freshly baked cookies, but aside from that bag of peanut butter cookies, I never saw anything from that bakery delivered to the battalion.

In February, the battalion commander finally briefed the plan to liberate Kuwait to us, and our mission within that plan. The U.S. Marines, Arab coalition, and British forces would actually attack Kuwait. Meanwhile, the U.S. VII Corps would swing around Kuwait and isolate the Iraqis from Iraq. The 24th I.D. would flank the VII Corps on the west. The French and the 82nd ABN would in turn cover the 24th's western flank. The 101st would air assault into Iraq, establish a forward operating base (FOB) (Map 2, Point 6), then air assault a brigade into the Euphrates River Valley. This would put the division well north of any other conventional allied troops, and in an area, if not well defended, still crucial to move supplies to Kuwait. It was also a very high visibility mission, with a lot of helicopters in the sky. The Screaming Eagle patches, the 101st ABN(AASLT)'s symbol, were thought to significantly impress the Iraqis. They considered the fact that we wore the United States' national symbol, the eagle, on our uniforms to mean we were an elite force not to be trifled with. We did not really want them to trifle with us either, and whatever reason would cause them to surrender or flee was fine with us.

Within the division, the 1st Brigade would seize the FOB, the 2nd Brigade would serve as a reserve, and the 3rd Brigade would actually air assault into the Euphrates River Valley.

The River Valley region was a crucial one for the Iraqis. The major Iraqi supply depot for the Kuwaiti forces was in Basra, just north of Kuwait along the Euphrates. Highway 8 runs from Basra to Baghdad, the Iraqi capital. It parallels Euphrates River to the south and north of the major pipelines. The coalition planners

[REDACTED]

believed that any Iraqi reinforcement to, or retreat from, Kuwait would have to use that highway and the various pipeline access roads that parallel it. If the allies cut those roads, then they would trap the Iraqis in Kuwait and the VII Corps could crush them.

On 20 February, as we conducted last minute test fires and consolidated stay-behind equipment, battalion issued an urgent order. We were to get in PZ posture immediately because four CH-47 Ds, CHINOOKS, were inbound. Evidently, as one of the divisions' attack helicopter units overflew a unit of Iraqis, the Iraqis signaled a desire to surrender. The Iraqi unit was directly in the path of the air and ground route the division had designated to get to the proposed FOB site. The chain of command wanted those soldiers removed. Company B was attached to the Aviation Brigade to secure the prisoners and Company A was placed on standby. Company C was not involved in the operation initially. Company B, the first company in, landed in amongst the Iraqis. They just kept coming from all over with their hands up. Division decided to send in an entire battalion, so Companies A and C and the command group were sent in as well. Not long after we arrived, it started getting dark, and we returned to our camp. The battalion went back on the 21st to destroy any equipment left behind. The battalion captured 387 Iraqi soldiers and destroyed a battalion's worth of weapons (Kinnison). We also gained a lot of first hand intelligence on the status of the Iraqi soldier. The Iraqi battalion commander had not heard from his commander in weeks. Some of his men had spent eight years on the Iranian front and were weary of war. They were poorly fed and cared for. They had a lot

of ammunition, but many of their weapons were in bad repair and in need of a cleaning and oil. They were afraid for their families back in Iraq because they saw the airplanes flying all day and night and knew the planes were bombing the cities. They did not expect helicopters to land U.S. soldiers in amongst them. That is what finally broke them. They wanted an end to war. For us, it was just beginning.

On the 24th, the ground war officially started, and all along the front the Iraqis crumbled. All coalition forces made more than their expected first day goals. At the FOB, another Iraqi battalion surrendered. We waited and expected the war to end before we could fly in. Many soldiers and some officers debated on whether or not we would get the Combat Infantryman's Badge for the POW snatch mission. Another issue was how many helicopter assaults we would have to take to qualify for the Air Medal. I was wondering how I was going to carry my rucksack and when I would see SSG Hensley and SPC Thigpen again. They had left that day with the two company cargo vehicles, the ambulance, and the FO's vehicle all loaded down with company supplies we just might need and the extra 200 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition we could not carry. They went on a convoy to FOB COBRA with the battalion's field trains and remained there until the battalion left Iraq a month later.

The plan of attack called for the 2nd and 3rd battalions to actually cut Highway 8 and stop all traffic on it. The 1st Battalion would protect the brigade's right flank and block the pipeline access road. Initially, Company C would seize the pumping station then move east along the pipeline to stop all movement.

[REDACTED]

Company A would seize the Darraji Airfield to set up a blocking position north of Company C. Company B would arrive the next day and set up between A and C companies and conduct nightly ambushes in sector. Company B later established a battle position southwest of the pumping station. Company D, with one platoon to Company C and another to A would, slingload vehicles into the Brigade area. Then, it would set up a blocking position northwest of the pumping station (Map 3). Half of Company D's vehicles came in sling loaded on CH-47s. The rest convoyed up from Cobra two days later (Nixon).

The PZ was an impressive site. It could accommodate over 80 UH-60, BLACKHAWK, helicopters, although only 65 helicopters were used. They would arrive all at once, refuel, load up, then leave all at once. As we placed our equipment at each touchdown point, I wondered how we would fit. Each helicopter would carry 12 to 15 soldiers. Company C also had two dismounted TOW systems and six TOW rounds, eighteen Dragon rounds, six bags of pioneers tools, six bags of 81 mm mortar ammunition and a G/VLLD system to move. Each soldier had as his own equipment: two grenades, smoke or fragmentary; a LAW, or AT-4, or a Claymore; a 60mm mortar round; rifle; 200 rounds of 5.56 Ball; either a bandoleer of 7.62 or 5.56 machine gun ammunition; flakvests ; a mini-rucksack to hold our NBC protective clothing; batteries for systems; communications equipment and wire; NVGs; nine MREs; six quarts of water; eight heat tabs; wet weather gear; parka; poncho and liner; a few pairs of socks; and some toilet articles rounded out the soldier's load. (Dragon gunners, mortarmen, machine gunners, and TOW gunners

[REDACTED]

carried parts to make their weapons functional day and night.) Many soldiers carried more, despite several inspections, and some soldiers abandoned items. Generally, they left personal items or articles of clothing issue, but some bandoleers of machinegun ammunition and mortar rounds were found on the PZ and LZ. Some should not have even carried what they had to. A couple of senior NCOs and more than one soldier hurt their backs during the operation. When we dropped rucksacks while waiting for the helicopters, many soldiers groaned in relief.

The BLACKHAWKS landed and refueled, and, then, we loaded the bags of tools and ammunition, rucksacks, and finally personnel. The crews had removed the seats. This was the first time many of us had flown in a UH-60 without seats. The ride was about an hour in length, and we were contorted in a variety of positions to fit everything in the helicopter. I wondered if I would be able to walk, let alone assault the objective, upon landing.

CPT Fahy's plan to seize the pumping station, BOSTON SOUTH on the battalion operations order, was simple and straight forward (Map 4). Since little full scale rehearsal was available, it was also largely based upon the live fire exercise done in December. The 2nd Platoon would serve as the battalion reserve and would move with the battalion commander. The 3rd Platoon would provide overwatch for the assault and send out flanker teams to the northeast and southwest corners of the station. These teams had Dragons and PRC-126 squad radios and were to destroy any vehicles around the objective and provide early warning. The 1st Platoon would enter the complex and clear it. Following the clearance of

the complex, the company would move east along the pipeline 1500 meters to set up a defense. The 1SG would ensure the LZ was clear, then set up a casualty collection point and await the arrival of the surgical team. I was to remain flexible, and as soon as 1st platoon secured the objective, go and establish the defensive position. That part was shaky. Evidently, I was to go alone, and since there are only six PRC-77 radios in the company, without communications. The 3rd Platoon Sergeant, SFC Rivera, and I worked out a plan, and he would go with me with one of his teams and his FO's radio. The company had rehearsed CPT Fahy's plan repeatedly on sand tables, in walk throughs, and brief backs. Every soldier was familiar with the plan and his part in it. Last minute aerial photographs provided the first look of the objective. Its actual title was "AS SAMAWAH Pumping Station #2" and was a batching and sorting plant, as well as a pumping station along the pipeline. We did not know if it was operational, how many personnel worked there, or even if it was defended. Although it looked big, we were confident we would take it out.

As the helicopters landed, a very light rain was falling, but it had rained heavily earlier. My helicopter skidded for ten meters and left ruts twelve inches deep. Soldiers and equipment fell out once the crew chiefs opened the doors. We moved about ten meters away from the helicopters, consolidated the load in one pile, and moved toward the objective. The aerial photos made it look big. It was. First, we noticed the huge radiotower that loomed several hundred feet into the sky. Then, we saw the several large buildings around it and then, the berm. There was a berm

[REDACTED]

around the whole thing. A berm, five feet high, a ditch five feet deep, then another berm twelve feet high, surrounded the entire complex. The 3rd Platoon rapidly sent out the teams and manned the high berm to provide overwatch for 1st Platoon as it assaulted and cleared the pumping station. From the high berm, I saw several bunkers, concrete elevated air defense artillery platforms, and a chain link fence surrounding the complex proper, but no Iraqis. As the lead elements of 1st Platoon, SSG O'Brien's squad, and 2LT Dave Priatko, moved to breach the fence and start clearing the buildings, I saw CPT Fahy and his RTOs, SSG Braunston and SPC Hanner, my como sergeant and armorer, moving almost at point. I knew from experience that the commander would stay very near point throughout the clearing mission. I could either move at the trail of 1st Platoon so that if he got shot, I could hastily take charge of the assault, or I could stay with 3rd Platoon and its radio to either bring up the reserve or establish a defense quickly. I chose to stay with 3rd Platoon because this offered me the most flexibility, and my follow-on mission was to set up the defense.

The operation of clearing the buildings was going smoothly, but no one was relaying that information. The 3rd Platoon could no longer provide overwatch for the 1st Platoon, and it was getting dark and starting to rain. I used the 3rd Platoon RTO to contact the commander's RTO for some sort of situation report and inform him that I was going to set in the defense and clear the equipment off the LZ. Before I said anything, CPT Fahy told me to clear the net. If he had anything to tell me, he would tell me. With that, I decided to consolidate the 3rd Platoon along the east berm, set

[REDACTED]

in a hasty defense, and start clearing off the LZ. The rain was turning the soil to a sticky goo that stuck to everything and walking was difficult. I linked up with the 1SG, and he started directing soldiers into positions. The mortars had already set in a position, and I emplaced the two dismounted TOW systems. The commander relayed that we were going to stay along the berm, so I directed everyone to start digging fighting positions. Teams started collecting their equipment off the LZ. I joined a team and eventually found my rucksack. The 1000 meter movement back to the perimeter was extremely painful, and in the middle of it shots were fired. As Lt. Priatko told me later, after his platoon secured the main complex, CPT Fahy walked out ahead of the company. He wanted to link up with the lead elements of Company A as it passed around to secure the Darraji Airfield. CPT Buche, the Company A commander, was walking point for his company. Additionally, LTC Kinnision, the battalion commander, and the TOC was up there too. Evidently some fleeing Iraqi fired a few rounds into the air at that moment. No one was hurt, and no Iraqi was found. The 1st Platoon conducted a very thorough clearing operation of the assorted shacks outside the perimeter. I was on the LZ when the shots were fired. Initially, no one moved, then we just kept moving with our rucksacks back to the perimeter. I figured if it was important, I would be told about it.

I initially set in a defense around the access road entering the pumping station with the 3rd Platoon and one TOW covering the road and the other TOW covering to the southwest. During the night, the battalion's 81mm mortar platoon moved to an area in the

northwest corner of the perimeter. After midnight, the 1st Platoon and the commander joined us. The next day we received permission to stay along the berm. CPT Fahy expanded the defense to cover the whole western berm (Map 4). The other two TOW systems and four gun vehicles arrived from their air assault. The ever resourceful soldiers scrounged doors and metal grates to use for overhead cover. This was more to defend against the weather than Iraqi artillery.

On several occasions, individuals claiming to be Bedouins tried to enter the pumping station. A linguist would come down from the battalion command post and usually the supposed Bedouins left quietly. Most were actually fleeing Iraqi government or Ba'ath party officials. The populace south of the Euphrates rose in revolt against their government, and these officials were escaping north. Only one time did an actual combat patrol go out shooting. Two individuals approached along the access road late at night. A patrol from 1st Platoon went out to intercept them. They fired a lot of M203 40mm rounds, but the individuals turned east and kept on running.

We were only supposed to remain in the area for three to five days. After two weeks, we finally prepared to leave. We boarded helicopters on 9 March and flew into FOB COBRA. Evidently, this was not according to the theater commander's plan because 18 hours later we were back. On 21 March, elements of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment linked up with us. We finally departed Iraq on 23 March.

The departure from Iraq to Saudi to the United States went

fairly fast. We left Iraq on the 23rd and returned to our pre-war positions along Tapline Road in Saudi Arabia. We turned in almost all of our ammunition, and the next day we flew out of Rahfa on C-130s back to Camp Eagle II. We began in earnest the process of cleaning and packing our equipment for the return trip to America. On 4 April, the conex full of company property, and our two cargo HMMWV vehicles passed a customs inspection and departed for the port at Dhahran. Finally, on 7 April, we left Saudi Arabia.

Now, using the battlefield operating systems (intelligence, maneuver, fire support, mobility/coustermobility/survivability, air defense, combat service support, and command and control from FM 7-10 (1-6 - 1-7)) I am going to comment on Company C's performance between 23 February and 23 March. I will comment on the battalion's conduct or operations outside the given time period only if they affected or influenced the company.

Intelligence: There was no opportunity for company level intelligence gathering prior to the air assault mission. All of our information came from battalion. The battalion commander tasked the intelligence officer (S-2) to gather as much information as possible while we prepared for the mission. We had access to only a couple of maps of the area ,an aerial photograph, and some sketches. We did not know how many people worked at the pumping station or what was actually on the objective. Sources at higher headquarters (division, corps, or theater) should have provided the battalion better Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) products, particularly an enemy situational template. As it was, our S-2, through his independent collection and analysis of the available IPB products, developed decent, if incomplete, battalion level IPB products. During the mission security was well maintained through the use of the GSR, the TOW sights, and a vigorous patrol plan.

Maneuver: During the operation, only one platoon, 1st, was involved in the actual seizing of the objective. The supporting platoon, 3rd, was unable to provide support after the initial

[REDACTED]

breech into the complex. Either the commander or I should have brought the 3rd Platoon forward to better support the main effort. We did not develop a plan to do that prior to the mission and therefore forgot to do it during the mission. During the defensive phase, CPT Fahy effectively positioned the platoons and TOWs to engage targets throughout the sector.

Fire Support: Artillery was not available during the air assault. Army attack aviation was supposedly on station, but I did not see any. The mortar platoon was initially on the LZ but, due to the timing of the operation, was not readily available either. The company's 60mm mortar section initially set up on the LZ then rapidly moved into the bermed area. However, they had limited ammunition with them. Each soldier in the company had a mortar round, but I did not consolidate it until the company was in the defense later that night. The mortars should have moved with the 3rd Platoon both for security and be nearer ammunition. The company Fire Support Team was well read into the plan and had planned for the use of all available or potentially available fire support assets.

Mobility/Counter mobility/Survivability, to include NBC protective measures: Company level assets for this system were well used throughout operations in Iraq. I was not aware of any battalion or higher level plan for decontamination operations had the Iraqis used chemical munitions against us. The battalion surgeon and his team were well trained on working in a chemical environment, but they had limited resources. I believe that the division and corps would have been hard pressed to evacuate us.

However, treatment facilities did exist, and I am confident that once evacuated they would have effectively treated us.

Air Defense: The enemy air threat was negligible throughout our stay in Iraq. The battalion did place a dismounted STINGER team and a towed VULCAN in the company's sector during the defensive phase. The company was not responsible for supporting either of the teams nor was their positioning coordinated with the company. It was an awkward situation initially. After a 24 hour period, I went out to each site and briefed them on the company's defensive plan. I also asked if they needed anything. I did this every day thereafter and relayed to battalion any of the teams' logistical requests.

Combat Service Support (CSS): As the XO, I was the company's CSS planner and executor. I relied heavily on the supply, communication, and NBC sergeants, and the armorer to perform their missions with little supervision and varying amounts of guidance from me. They and their clerks all admirably served the company. The attached medics were a tremendous asset. They developed a excellent relationship with their platoons and were well trained. During the operation itself the 1SG established the casualty collection point near the breach. The need to move it forward never arose, but the 1SG and the senior medic had a well thought out plan for the handling of casualties. Soldier load was a major problem. Rucksacks over 100 lbs. were not uncommon, particularly among RTOs and crew served weapon teams. We took nothing that we considered frivolous, yet we carried too much. Push packages, pre-planned, and dropped on the company from

helicopter, would have eased the loads both on the helicopters during the assault and on the soldiers once on the ground.

Command and Control: Rehearsals were crucial to the successful execution of the operation. Key leader and small unit sand table walk throughs were just as important to Company C's success as the full scale live fire practice in December. Even though during execution the plans changed, because everybody fully understood the basic plan, the change was that much easier to execute. All leaders cannot walk point. In Company C, the lead squad leader, a very competent staff sergeant, had his platoon leader within ten meters of him. The platoon leader, the best rifle platoon leader in the battalion, had the company commander within ten meters of him. I do not dispute the importance of the commander's knowing the situation and being where he could best influence the battle. However, he should have trusted all of his subordinate leaders to accomplish tasks. Walking point with a shot gun and leading the command group over a confining route did not allow the commander to see more than a fraction of the picture he had to control.

Company C was successful in its mission for several reasons. The soldiers believed in their leadership, from the commander down to their team leaders, and the leaders believed in themselves. The commander had developed a simple plan and ensured that each soldier understood the mission and his part in its accomplishment. Finally, the company had worked together as a team for seven months and, in some squads and platoons, twelve to eighteen months. It was a competent outfit that knew its capabilities and limitations well

Works Cited

Al'Khidr, Iraq. Map sheet #5152 III, 1:50,000. DMA, 1970.

FM 7-10: The Infantry Rifle Company. 14 Dec. 1990.

Iraq and Kuwait and JNC-35 maps in The Desert Shield Fact Book.

Frank Chadwick. Bloomington: Game Designers' Workshop, 1991.

Kinnison, Henry L., IV, Lieutenant Colonel. Telephone interview. 01 Dec. 1991. (LTC Kinnison was the 1-187 commander during Operation Desert Shield/Storm.)

Nixon, Kevin, Captain. Telephone interview. 05 Dec. 1991. (CPT Nixon was the D/1-187 commander during Operation Desert Shield/Storm.)

Index and Legend for Maps and Charts

Map 1: Depiction of Company C's area of operation from 11 September, 1990 to 23 February, 1991 (Iraq and Kuwait):

Point 1: Dharan, point of entry into the theater.

Point 2: KFIA and Camp Eagle II, the 101st ABN (AASLT)'s base of operations.

Point 3: Area west of Nariya where company operated during Desert Shield.

Point 4: Airfield at Rafha where company landed at the opening stages of Desert Storm.

Point 5: Tactical Assembly Area Campbell where company prepared for the ground war.

Map 2: Blow up of southern Iraq where company operated during the ground war (JNC-35):

Point 6: FOB Cobra, the division's forward operating base.

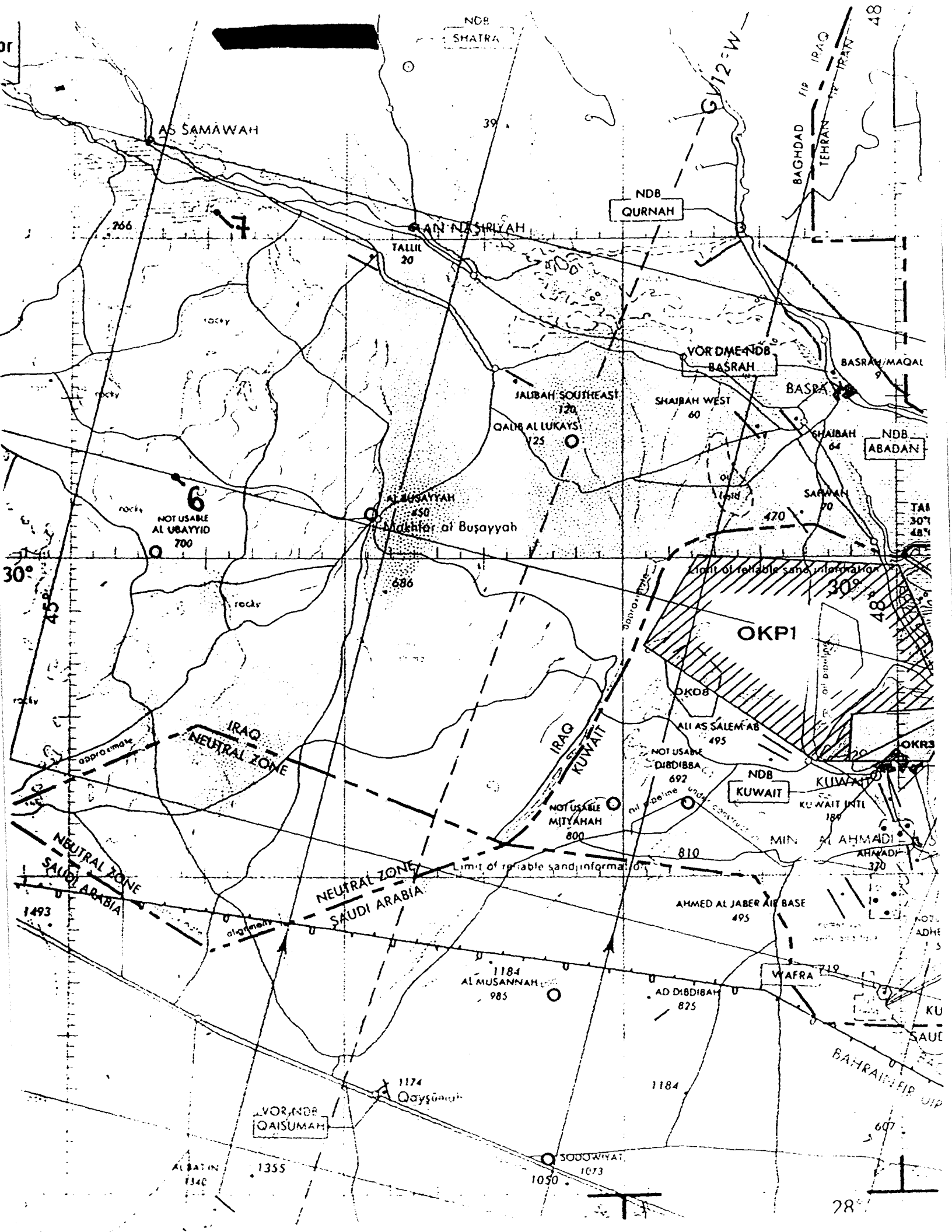
Point 7: AO Eagle, where the 3rd Brigade air assaulted to at the start of the ground war, and Boston South, Company C's objective during that air assault.

Map 3: Boston, the battalion's objective, with operational graphics (Al'Khidr).

Map 4: Blow up of Boston South, company C's objective, with operational graphics (Al'Khidr).

Chart 1: Organization of 1-187 Infantry

Chart 2: Organization of C/1-187 Infantry



67 68 69 70 71

Numerous

72 73

19

Derraji Airfield
Hard surface
12

Pipeline

02

Tower
Pumping station/powerplant

3 FINAL

1 FINAL

1 FINAL

3 INITIAL

A

TAC

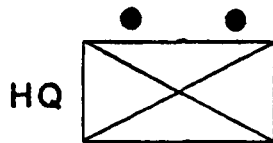
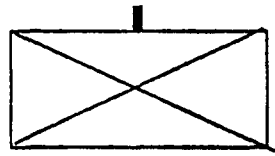
1(-) INITIAL

LE RED

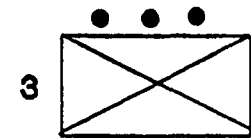
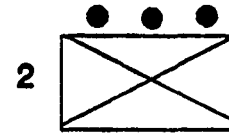
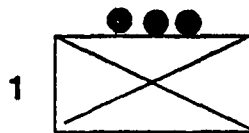
02

Dir

**ORGANIZATION OF COMPANY C, 1st BATTALION, 187th INFANTRY
DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM**

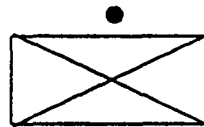


HQ
COMMANDER
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FIRST SERGEANT
COMO SERGEANT/RTO
NBC SERGEANT
ARMORER/RTO
FIRE SUPPORT OFFICER
FIRE SUPPORT NCO
FSO'S RTO
SENIOR MEDIC
MEDIC



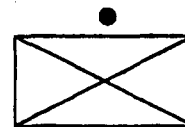
EACH PLATOON WAS ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

HEADQUARTERS



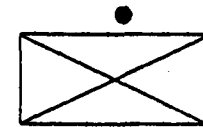
PLATOON LEADER
PLATOON SERGEANT
RADIOMAN
FORWARD OBSERVER
FO'S RADIOMAN
MEDIC

WEAPON'S SQUAD

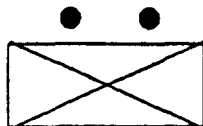


SQUAD LEADER
M-60 MACHINE GUNNER (X2)
ASSISTANT GUNNER (X2)
M-47 DRAGON GUNNER (X2)
ASSISTANT GUNNER (X2)

RIFLE SQUAD (X 3)



SQUAD LEADER
TEAM LEADER (X2)
M249 SAW GUNNER (X2)
M203 GRENADE (X2)
RIFLEMAN (X2)



MRT
2 X 60mm MORTARS

**** ADDITIONALLY AT FIELD TRAINS:**

**** SUPPLY SERGEANT, SUPPLY CLERK, COMPANY CLERK, THREE DRIVERS
 AND A RESERVE PLATOON SERGEANT/ CONVOY SECURITY NCO