

THE SCREAMING EAGLES OF DESERT STORM

A Monograph By

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On February 25, 1991, the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) conducted one of the largest heliborne assaults in modern warfare as part of Operation Desert Storm. The air assault, integral to the famed "Hail Mary" play of theater commander General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, penetrated deep into Iraq to block enemy forces moving along their main line of communication. The brigade's plan, Operation Shenandoah II, was a critical part of the coalition's operational plan and a key to the war's swift conclusion.

I Alert and Deployment

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi ground forces and warplanes invaded their oil-rich neighbor to the south, Kuwait. The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, proclaimed Iraq's historical legitimacy to ownership of Kuwait and declared it Iraq's newest province. President Bush's response was the immediate deployment of a ready-brigade of American paratroopers from the 82d Airborne Division on August 4th. This "trip wire" force, accompanied by American warplanes, accounted for the first of over 500,000 American soldiers ultimately deployed to Saudi Arabia (Newsweek, p. 94).

Meanwhile, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, home of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the Commanding General, Major General Binford H. Peay, was instructed to begin planning and preparations for the deployment of the division to Saudi Arabia. By the 10th of August, the division's three brigade commanders were briefed on Operation Desert Shield, the United States' defense of Saudi Arabia. This "line in the sand," that would be drawn with the bayonets of American soldiers, was intended to deter further Iraqi aggression and preserve the sovereignty of Saudi Arabia and its crucial oil fields. Thus, on August 21, a brigade-sized task force from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) departed for Saudi Arabia, marking the first operational deployment of Screaming Eagle soldiers overseas since the Vietnam War (Army Times, p. 8).

As the initial elements of the division began deploying, soldiers and leaders of the 3d Brigade continued to train and prepare for deployment. The most immediate tasks at hand were loading storage containers for transport and preparing the brigade's vehicles for movement to the division's port of embarkation, Jacksonville, Florida. The

plan was to ship the heavy equipment, the majority of vehicles, and all non mission-essential equipment early, attempting to time the thirty-day ship movement to Saudi Arabia with the arrival of troops by air transport (See Map A, p. 26). The plan proved to be highly successful.

Meanwhile, the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, one of the three battalions of the 3d Brigade, focused on a litany of skills deemed critical to fighting the Iraqis in the desert: NBC training, employment of mines and anti-tank weapons, medical care, enemy tactics and equipment, physical training, and live-fire exercises. Items such as family care and personal and financial matters also were addressed prior to the battalion's deployment. By the first week of September, the battalion was prepared to go to war. And, on September 12, 1990, the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, departed for Saudi Arabia, fully anticipating the possibility of arriving eighteen hours later in the middle of a mid to high-intensity conflict.

II Organization of the 3-187 Infantry Regiment

At the time of deployment and through Operation Desert Storm, the 3-187 Infantry Regiment was organized as a battalion task force. The infantry battalion itself consisted of over 650 soldiers organized as follows: three rifle companies with 132 soldiers each; an anti-tank company with 90 soldiers, twenty armored TOW missile HMMWVs, and an additional twelve command and control vehicles; and a headquarters company which was comprised of the scout platoon, mortar platoon, communications platoon, medical platoon, support platoon with vehicle assets, dining facility, and the battalion headquarters and staff sections.

Task Force elements with which the battalion habitually trained were: C Battery, 3-320th Field Artillery; 3-320th Field Artillery Fire Support Element (FSE) with COLT Team; an Air Force tactical air control team from the 5077th Tactical Air Control Party (TACP); 3rd Platoon, C Company, 326th Engineers; and 3rd Platoon, C Battery, 2-44th Air Defense Artillery with Stinger missiles. These elements, except for the FSE and TACP, were either attached to the battalion or massed at brigade on a mission basis. The FSE and TACP remained attached to the task force throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The battalion's anti-tank weapon systems consisted of twenty TOW missile launchers, eighteen M47 Dragon missiles with day and night sights, and AT-4s and LAWS. The rifle companies each had six M60 machine guns, eighteen squad automatic weapons, and eighteen M-203 grenade launchers in addition to M16A2 rifles. And, more than fifty percent of

the soldiers had PVS-7 night vision goggles, while the remainder possessed the older PVS-5 model. The standard radios in the battalion were primarily the AN/PRC-77 and AN/PRC-126 man-portable radios. Finally, the battalion's indirect fire assets consisted of two 60mm lightweight mortars per rifle company and four 81mm mortars in the battalion mortar platoon.

III Operation Desert Shield

Arriving in mid-September at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, the battalion moved thirty miles north to its yet unbuilt home, Camp Eagle II. With temperatures averaging around 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoon, the first tasks at hand were acclimation, accountability, construction of a tent city, and sustainment of soldier skills. Tactical planning concentrated on defense of Camp Eagle II. As the days passed and the companies began training locally in the desert, the battalion began focusing on the mission it was soon to assume: the conduct of covering force operations to the north.

These operations were centered on the small Saudi town of An Nu'ayriyah, located eighty-five kilometers south of the Kuwaiti border. The town was relatively insignificant but for its placement at the junction of the two major north-south roads linking Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the enemy's probable avenue of approach. Needless to say, it was decisive terrain in the allied defensive strategy. The division's operational plan was to array three brigades on line in the event of enemy attack, covering an area over 70 kilometers wide and 35 kilometers deep. The 2d Brigade, 3d Brigade, and the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment--attached to the division for the CFA mission--were arrayed from west to east, with the division's 1st Brigade deployed immediately north of 2d Brigade. With attack helicopters screening forward, the division's task was to delay the movement of enemy forces south, attempting to disrupt their formations, decipher their battle plan, and attrit them in depth. As the 101st fought its way some twenty kilometers south, it would conduct the battle handover with the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in the main defensive area (See Map B, p. 27).

The division's training plan dictated, therefore, that brigades would spend 30-day rotations planning and preparing their sector of the covering force area. The plans were exhaustively developed, briefed, war-gamed, and rehearsed. Upon return to Camp Eagle II, the units would focus for two weeks on morale activities, base defense against level I and II threats, physical training, and maintenance of soldier

skills. The plan was effective in accomplishing its objectives, and the structure allowed soldiers and leaders to plan their activities effectively.

By October, the 3d Brigade was ready for its first rotation in the CFA. Thus, during the first week of October the brigade began the 130 kilometer movement north, by helicopter and ground convoy, to relieve the 2d Brigade of its covering force duties. Stretching across an arid patch of desert, with 3d Brigade's sector over 40 square kilometers in size, the covering force area had been named AO Normandy. And, An Nu'ayriyah was dubbed Forward Operating Base Bastogne, reminiscent of the division's heroic efforts during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Opposing the Screaming Eagles to the north were two Iraqi armored divisions and one mechanized infantry division.

The covering force mission gave the battalion a true sense of mission and purpose and relief from "garrison" activities at tent city. While the battalion staff and commanders studiously conducted their mission analysis and IPB, the soldiers trained diligently on mission-related skills and tasks: battle drills; employment of the LAW, AT-4, and Dragon; land navigation; and lifesaving skills in particular. Within a week, the plan was completed and briefed. Companies then began the arduous task of preparing fighting positions, with Delta Company and its TOW HMMWVs receiving the priority of work. The brigade's DS engineer company prepared over seventy, hull-defilade, TOW firing positions for Delta Company alone, over a five day period. The exhaustive efforts of the companies were complemented by the detailed backbriefs, war-gaming sessions, and rehearsals conducted by the battalion commander. By the end of the fourth week, and the successful completion of brigade and division rehearsals, the battalion was fully prepared to accomplish its covering force mission.

During the battalion's second CFA rotation in early December, the training focus changed significantly with the advent of the United Nations' resolution authorizing force to extricate the Iraqis from Kuwait. Offensive operations became the priority for training. Once the defensive scheme of maneuver to defend in the CFA was re-validated, the companies began practicing battle drills, military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) techniques, movement formations, and offensive mission essential tasks. A brigade level MOUT exercise was conducted in a deserted Saudi village to train the battalion's battlefield operating systems, while infantrymen practiced clearing rooms and buildings at night. Meanwhile, other elements worked feverishly to construct a company-size live fire assault range. The range replicated multiple Iraqi defensive positions, prepared in depth and to exact detail, and

covered a four square kilometer area. Following the MOUT exercise, the rifle companies transitioned quickly into the live fire exercise on this range. Employing all of their organic weapons and indirect fire assets, the companies trained exhaustively day and night to perfect their skills and tactics. By late December, the battalion was prepared to go to war, confident in its equipment and weapons, its systems and tactics, and its people. December 1990, though, marked change at all levels of the confrontation. More "heavy" divisions began arriving from Europe, official rhetoric spoke more of offensive capabilities and options, and ultimatums were exchanged with increasing threat and belligerence.

The battalion returned to Camp Eagle II from its final tour in the CFA the first week of January 1991, and began preparing for its force protection mission around Tent City. The soldiers were always kept busy with either guard missions or skills training, but Camp Eagle II was an oasis nonetheless. Soldiers returning to the camp from the CFA were always greeted with more morale and comfort items. October brought phone booths and a mini PX, and January brought hot showers and VCR movies. The luxuries, regardless of their triviality, always provided a sense of hope and comfort to the soldiers, and reminded everyone that maintenance of soldier morale was critical in a combat zone.

Almost immediately upon return, the battalion commander and operations officer were briefed on the division's tentative offensive plan. The 101st's mission was to block Highway 8 and destroy any reinforcing or retreating Iraqi forces moving on the road or through the area. Highway 8 served as the main line of communication for the Iraqi army. It linked Baghdad to Basra, paralleled the Euphrates River, and was the Iraqi major supply route. The division's plan required establishment of a forward operating base deep in Iraq and the subsequent seizure of two Iraqi cities on the Euphrates River: An-Nasiriyah and As-Samawah. The plan's mission essential task was to destroy the bridges that spanned the Euphrates River in order to block enemy movement. The 3d Brigade's role was to support the assault on the first city and attack as the main effort during seizure of the second. The cities were very large and heavily populated, and after a week's worth of planning in a top secret facility, the mission was changed.

Instead of becoming decisively engaged and risking significant casualties in a MOUT scenario, the division would block the highway in a rural, but restricted, area halfway between the cities. Near the town of Al-Khidr in the Euphrates River valley, Highway 8 paralleled closely the snaking river, with restrictive terrain on both sides of the road. It was at this most vulnerable point that the division would strike and block enemy movement. The

operation, however, would not be briefed to the soldiers until the air campaign began, and the division completed its move north to a tactical assembly area immediately south of the Iraqi border.

The battalion worked feverishly during the second week of January. The U.N. deadline of January 15th was nearing, and the battalion was instructed to prepare for the concurrent ground convoy and air movement of all combat equipment; the deployment date was uncertain, but 14 January was emerging as the deadline. Soldiers packed massive rucksacks, vehicles were prepared for either ground or air movement, and additional ammunition and rations were drawn from supply points. By 15 January, the 3d Brigade was prepared to move, and on 16 January, the coalition's air campaign began. Operation Desert Shield was transformed by aggression into Operation Desert Storm.

IV Operation Desert Storm

As dramatically as the air war began, the division began moving to neighboring King Fahd Airport to begin its deployment. Within a week, the brigade moved by ground convoy and C-130 aircraft to Tactical Assembly Area Campbell, near the small Saudi border town of Rahfa. And, by the end of February, the division was assembled in the north. TAA Campbell sat ten kilometers short of the Iraqi border, with the division's 1st and 3d Brigades on line, parallel to it, and the 2d Brigade assembled further to the south (See Map C, p. 28). The battalion's mission was simple at this point: to protect the force and prepare for combat operations. The companies dug in and conducted as much small unit training as possible. By late January, the battalion began conducting limited armed reconnaissances north toward the border (See Map D, p. 29). The missions were a combination of counter-reconnaissance and collection of detailed information on the few Iraqi outposts positioned just across the border. But the majority of the battalion's efforts focused on the planning, preparation, and rehearsal of Operation Shenandoah II.

Operation Shenandoah II, if executed, would be one of the largest and deepest airborne assaults in military history. The operation was 3d Brigade's answer to the division's tasking and, therefore, relied heavily on the initial success of the 1st Brigade's mission: to air assault prior to first light on G-Day (the start of the ground campaign) to seize and establish a forward operating base 150 kilometers into Iraq. This base, named Cobra, would support the 3d Brigade's subsequent assault into the Euphrates River valley on the following day (Army Times, p.

14). 3d Brigade's mission remained unchanged: air assault to block Highway 8 and prevent enemy movement along Iraq's main line of communication with the Kuwaiti theater (See Map E, p. 30).

Shenandoah II would be a multi-phased operation, whose culmination would have two infantry battalion task forces arrayed in battle positions, on line, immediately south of Highway 8; the third battalion task force would establish a battle position southeast of the brigade sector to guard against enemy forces retreating northwest from Kuwait. The brigade's area was named Area of Operations Eagle and the brigade commander's intent was as follows:

"...to prevent Iraqi forces from moving through our sector in AO Eagle and thereby deny his use of that MSR. At the same time we must avoid decisive engagement. We will accomplish this by destroying his forces in our engagement areas using the combined arms effects of CAS, attack aviation, artillery, TOWs, Dragons, AT-4s and small arms. Success is defined as stopping movement of all enemy vehicles and dismounted units of platoon size or larger in sector of AO Eagle (TF 3-187 IN OPORD 91-6, p. 1)."

Blocking the highway using demolitions, artillery, and anti-tank fires would not be difficult, but moving the heavy elements 155 miles into their zones would be. A major obstacle was the limited range of the CH-47 Chinooks, which were to lift the brigade's TOW vehicles and artillery pieces. A task force was formed, therefore, to air assault several hours premature of the main body, land and assemble within 50 kilometers of AO Eagle, and then conduct a cross-country, tactical road march north to its release point in AO Eagle. The task force would then link up with its parent units, already inserted by UH-60, in zone. That element, named Task Force Rakkasan, would be comprised of over 120 vehicles, to include the brigade's anti-armor TOW vehicles, two artillery batteries, troop carrying HMMWVs, command and control vehicles, and 600 plus soldiers.

Task Force Rakkasan would air assault into Iraq on the morning of G+1. The remainder of the brigade would air assault into AO Eagle that evening via UH-60 helicopters; the Blackhawks possessed the range to fly into AO Eagle and return safely to FOB Cobra. Once in the Euphrates River Valley, the battalions would establish their battle positions and begin blocking Highway 8. Meanwhile, TF Rakkasan would continue its movement north under the cover of darkness. Once at its release point in AO Eagle, Task Force Rakkasan would be dissolved as its sub-units linked up with and returned to their parent battalions. The brigade

would then be whole again and completely prepared to execute its mission (See Map F, p. 31).

V Operation Shenandoah II: Preparation

By February 5th, slightly more than two weeks after arriving in TAA Campbell, Operation Shenandoah II was planned, written, and distributed to the battalion. While reconnaissance and force protection activities continued, detailed preparation and rehearsal of the operations order commenced immediately, although G-Day was still unknown. Because of the multi-phased nature of the operation, the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry was faced with the challenging task of planning and rehearsing two separate, but interrelated, missions. The battalion was charged with establishing Battle Position Austin following the brigade's UH-60 air assault on the evening of G-Day plus one. And the battalion commander was tasked to command, plan for, and prepare TF Rakkasan for its integral role in the operation. To prevent the misunderstanding that is often bred by complication, the battalion operations order was also divided into distinct phases, with command and control responsibilities outlined in each. The maneuver paragraph of the battalion's operation order is paraphrased as follows:

"Maneuver. This operation will be conducted in five phases. During PHASE I, AASLT to LZ Sand, TF Rakkasan (commanded by the battalion commander) air assaults the brigade's anti-armor companies and artillery assets to LZ Sand. Phase I commences with the air assault of Team Jerry (battalion scouts) into LZ Sand to recon Route 41A and conduct LZ and choke point surveillance, and ends when TF Rakkasan's air assault is complete. During PHASE II, Ground Movement to AO Eagle, TF Rakkasan moves along Route 41A to AO Eagle. It begins with TF Rakkasan crossing the SP and ends when the TF occupies the RP south of AO Eagle (and its elements are linked up with their parent units). During PHASE III, Air Assault to AO Eagle, TF 3-187 (-) (commanded by the battalion executive officer) attacks to secure battle positions in AO Eagle. It begins with PZ posture and ends when BPs are secure. PHASE IV, Link-Up and Block, includes the link-up of task force wheeled vehicles, the consolidation of command under the battalion commander, and the preparation and execution of Engagement Area Packer. During PHASE V, Future Operations, the task force continues the attack to the east (TF 3-187 IN OPORD 91-6, pp. 2-3)."

With the issues of command, control, and mission execution resolved, the battalion began the task of briefing the key leaders and rehearsing the companies. Initially, the battalion command group attended brigade planning and backbrief sessions which tackled issues such as ROE and conduct of the air assault; these sessions would continue daily up until conduct of the mission. By the 8th of February, a key leader chalk talk was conducted separately for both TF Rakkasan and TF 3-187 (-) personnel. The chalk talks included movement of personnel and equipment on a large game board and terrain model, respectively, discussion of unit tasks and purposes, issues of command and control, contingencies, and "what if" scenarios.

On 10 February, TF Rakkasan conducted its first rehearsal which included key leaders, all vehicle drivers and TCs, and some vehicles. The rehearsal entailed PZ staging, LZ occupation at full scale, unit marshalling with the assistance of the Scouts, ground movement along an abridged route, and simulated link up with parent units at the release point. This rehearsal was successful in exercising the mechanics of the plan, but it was apparent that additional planning and a more thorough understanding of the operation by the soldiers was required. A "full dress" rehearsal was planned for later in the week following war-gaming sessions by the key leaders. The second rehearsal was executed in the same manner as the first, but on a greater scale and under the terrain and weather conditions anticipated in Iraq. All vehicles participated in the exercise, and the rehearsal lasted from early morning to late evening, according to the operations order. Although the rehearsal produced some additional items requiring refinement or change, the exercise was invaluable and proved to be a success. All of the soldiers at the rehearsal now had a basic understanding of the mission and, more importantly, an understanding of its importance and magnitude. The plan became less complicated and confusing for all; everybody knew what to do.

TF 3-187 (-) also conducted rehearsals in the form of TEWTs on the 12th and 13th of February. All leaders and key personnel were involved in the rehearsals, which included a terrain walk on a terrain model that covered a 50 square meter area and depicted all operational graphics. Like the TF Rakkasan rehearsals, the first day produced an abundance of questions. By the second rehearsal, comprehension was achieved and only minute refinement of the plan remained. These finer operational details would be answered and the plan reviewed again a few days prior to G-Day. The third session was also complemented by a brief review of the ROE, a "what if" discussion, and a final talk by the battalion commander.

VI Operation Shenandoah II: Execution

By the 21st, the battalion was informed that G-Day was scheduled for February 24th. Final preparations began that week as soldiers began repacking the huge rucksacks that would accompany them into battle, and the duffel bags that would remain in the rear. Vehicle load plans were prepared and reviewed, and a timetable and plan for movement to the PZ was briefed. At the soldier level, SOPs were reviewed and checked, and battle drills practiced when time allowed. For the most part, however, the battalion was kept busy with armed reconnaissance missions to protect the force and gain intelligence. As G-Day approached, the enemy outposts were destroyed by attack helicopters and the battalion focused exclusively on preparation for combat.

The morning of 24 February, G-Day, saw a flurry of activity as the battalion's home for the past month was disassembled and the units prepared their vehicles for movement. Meanwhile, delayed by poor weather, the first lift of the 1st Brigade air assaulted to seize FOB Cobra around 0730 hours. By 1000 hours, Task Force Rakkasan's three march units had assembled and began moving the fifteen kilometers northwest to the PZ. The PZ selected for TF Rakkasan's air assault was actually the one prepared and used by the 1st Brigade. It was on flat ground in a depression, and surrounded by several small hilltops. The PZ had also been sprayed down with an oil based substance by the engineers to reduce the dust that was typically kicked up by the helicopters; the treatment produced only marginal results. TF 3-187 (-)'s PZ was located a few kilometers southwest of the battalion TOC and was shared with the remainder of the brigade.

According to plan, the TF Rakkasan march units moved out at time intervals and road marched to their designated positions on the PZ. The PZ resembled a large, sand-covered parking lot, with HMMWVs parked side-by-side, in pairs, at 100 meter intervals. The vehicle pairs were arranged in neat columns from east to west, in the order that they would be sling loaded by the CH-47s. The vehicles would be loaded using a new side-by-side method, developed in the past year, which enabled vehicle crews to rig vehicles more quickly and safely, in contrast to the bumper-to-bumper method. The new technique, more importantly, allowed soldiers to de-rig the vehicles on the landing zone in less than two minutes, as opposed to five minutes using the older method. Overall, the organization of the PZ and the movement plan were relatively simple.

While TF Rakkasan had 24 hours to prepare itself in the PZ, Team Jerry was preparing to air assault into LZ Sand behind 1st Brigade. The Team, which consisted of the battalion scouts and a TACSAT team, were OPCON to the 2-17th Cavalry until TF Rakkasan arrived the following day (the 2-17th Cavalry was an AH-1 attack helicopter unit organic to the division). Team Jerry's mission was to conduct a recon of route 41A, TF Rakkasan's planned route from LZ Sand to AO Eagle, to determine its trafficability. The team's additional tasks were to provide surveillance and tactical intelligence on LZ Sand and at a designated choke point along Route 41A, and to provide terminal guidance at LZ Sand for TF Rakkasan. With less than 15 soldiers and 4 motorcycles, Tm Jerry air assaulted from TAA Campbell at around 1500 hours to conduct its mission. The Cavalry provided aerial overwatch and support during the day, and the 1-101st Aviation Battalion (Apache) provided the same during limited visibility.

Team Jerry arrived at LZ Sand late that afternoon and immediately set about its tasks. Two motorcycle teams of two soldiers each departed the LZ to conduct the route recon. Not far into their mission, the bikes failed and the soldiers continued the mission on foot. Behind enemy lines, without means of transportation, the soldiers covered over 25 kilometers of rugged terrain, dismounted, to accomplish their mission. Meanwhile, at LZ Sand, the remainder of the team reconnoitered the area and then hunkered down to prepare for the arrival of TF Rakkasan.

The night of the 24th was marked by briefbacks, news of the coalition's successes on the first day of the ground offensive, and poor weather. Threatening storm clouds overhead reminded everyone of the one thing that could delay the mission--bad weather--and more of the same was forecasted for the next 36 hours. The brigade headquarters informed the battalion that it was raining in southern Iraq, and so trafficability of route 41A became the decisive issue. By 0400 hours on the 25th, the scouts reported to brigade via TACSAT that trafficability of the route was "fair to marginal" and "bad" north of checkpoint 26. The report, unanticipated in its qualification of the terrain, required a critical decision by the brigade commander: continue the air assault according to plan or delay it. While Team Jerry continued to operate in southern Iraq without its planned helicopter support, the question of the route's trafficability remained through the morning.

Deciding to accept risk on Route 41A's trafficability and attempt to beat the incoming bad weather that was forecasted, the Brigade Commander launched the task force two hours early. If the route proved untenable, then the task force would remain at LZ Sand overnight and air assault

forward the next day. Consequently, the Brigade Commander also decided to launch the remainder of the brigade earlier than planned. TF 3-187 (-) and the other battalions would air assault beginning at 1500 hours. TF Rakkasan commenced the air assault at 1000 hours on the 25th with the first serial of eight vehicles launching to secure the LZ. But the task force commander adjusted the plan by dispatching an anti-tank platoon, under command of the task force S-3, to conduct a route recon. Their mission was to assess the route's trafficability and report immediately before the task force departed LZ Sand for AO Eagle.

Upon landing at LZ Sand, the TOW platoon proceeded north along Route 41A with one of the scouts. The route was found to be trafficable up to checkpoint 26, at which point it became very treacherous due to mud and water. Nonetheless, the route was trafficable beyond checkpoint 26, although the remaining 28 kilometers would be very slow and tedious. As the TOW platoon continued its reconnaissance, it encountered two Iraqi vehicles also moving north along the road. Acting quickly and decisively, the platoon forced the vehicles to halt and subdued their occupants. Twelve armed Iraqi soldiers from a Commando unit and their vehicles were captured, one of which was a fuel truck. Acting within the Brigade Commander's guidance, the fuel truck was commandeered and moved south to a more secure and trafficable area. During the movement, however, the vehicle was almost destroyed by friendly fire because of its markings. Only the prudence and discipline of the ambush element, and simple luck, prevented fratricide.

By 1630 hours, the 32 CH-47 Chinooks transporting TF Rakkasan were nearing completion of their second lift and returning to FOB Cobra. As the task force assembled into its three distinct march units, the brigade's first lift of 66 UH-60 helicopters passed by in the distance, enroute to AO Eagle. The S-3, still with the forward recon element, reported that the remainder of the route was trafficable, and so the first march unit commenced its movement north at 1700 hours. By 1730 hours, the brigade (-) had safely landed in AO Eagle and established its battle positions. Resistance was light, but there was still concern that Iraqi units retreating from the south would be difficult to handle without TF Rakkasan's assets. On the other hand, jeopardizing the task force on a cross country, night movement through enemy territory could be even more hazardous. After consulting with the brigade commander, the task force commander decided to delay the remaining two march units' movement north until morning. It was hoped that available CH-47 aircraft could air assault the task force forward at first light. And even if aircraft were not available, the task force would still improve its chances of safely linking up with the brigade in AO Eagle by moving in daylight. The first march unit, however, eventually linked

up with the S-3 at checkpoint 26. Together, they moved north to within two kilometers of the RP, where they remained until morning.

In AO Eagle, Alpha and Charlie companies of Task Force 3-187 IN (-) landed unopposed at Landing Zone Kentucky (See Map G, p. 32). The sight of the helicopters, assaulting nap-of-the-earth en masse, frightened enemy soldiers in the area; they were observed egressing to the nearby villages. Once on the ground, the soldiers began the grueling movement north to their battle positions. Because of the precipitation, and the fact that they were traversing a river delta, the soldiers sunk into knee-deep mud. The 120 plus pound rucksacks exacerbated the problem, and the soldiers began to show fatigue. Faced with a 1500 meter movement made worse by the sporadic sniper fire of enemy soldiers, the commanders decided independently to drop rucksacks and press forward. Moving with only weapons, ammunition, and LCE, Alpha Company was engaged around dusk by an enemy squad, which it quickly repulsed with small arms and 60mm mortar fire. Around 0300 hours on the 26th of February, Charlie and Alpha Companies arrived at and occupied their battle positions, BPs 2 and 4, respectively. Once established and prepared to block the highway, the companies dispatched squads back to the LZ to retrieve rucksacks, while platoons moved forward to ambush vehicles and personnel on Highway 8. During the remainder of the morning, from darkness until noon, the companies engaged and destroyed a handful of vehicles and soldiers which had wandered unsuspectingly into the engagement area. One enemy squad also engaged Charlie Company at dawn, only to be neutralized by small arms and 60mm mortar fire. Highway 8 was effectively blocked (Cook and Kane Interviews).

Meanwhile at LZ Sand, night fell quickly as the weather worsened. Intermittent rain, high winds, and dropping temperatures did not offer much hope for the next day's move, but it did improve the task force's survivability. Moreover, planning continued that night, and by early morning a plan was developed to air assault the task force forward. At daylight, the task force (-) moved quickly into PZ posture in preparation for the helicopters. Unexpectedly, the aircraft were cancelled and, in yet another example of flexibility, the task force (-) reformed into march units and proceeded with its road march north.

Moving cross country, the task force (-) meandered north through rock and sand, and then mud and water. With more than 20 kilometers remaining to the release point, the column halted. The forward element that had captured 12 prisoners and two vehicles the day prior was now stuck in the mire with its prisoners. The decision was made to leave the platoon--fortified with additional supplies--and to

continue movement north while calling for CH-47s to extricate the platoon and the EPWs from the mud.

By 1400 hours, TF Rakkasan had arrived at the release point as sub-elements returned to their parent units in the area of operations. The RP also served as the drop off point for the two rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition that each vehicle was required to haul. This procedure greatly augmented the artillery's basic load and therefore enabled them to support the brigade better.

Task Force Rakkasan reported mission complete to the brigade commander and then moved to link up with TF 3-187 (-). In the TF 3-187 sector, the tactical CP was established in a deserted, brick pump station that serviced the irrigation ditches; the ditches ran in all directions across the delta, which was now home to the 3-187 Infantry. By late afternoon, the command post was established and control of the battalion was assumed by the battalion commander. Security was maintained and soldiers continued to prepare survivability positions in shifts. As night fell on 26 February, Alpha Company reported vehicles assembling on Highway 8 to the west, just beyond the town of Al Khidr. Based on the company's experience the night before, it was expected that the Iraqis would attempt to run the gauntlet at night. Charlie Company, to the east, had emplaced obstacles on the highway consisting of destroyed vehicles and rubble. In the absence of the cratering charges, which moved with the engineers in TF Rakkasan, the obstacles were effective in slowing down vehicles to facilitate direct fires. It was not until the morning of 27 February, when the highway could be secured for obstacle preparation, that the engineers would eventually crater the road with demolitions.

The delay of the engineers and their demolitions was not the only part of the operation requiring change. The original plan was for Charlie and Alpha companies to block Highway 8 from battle positions two and four, respectively, until the heavy assets in TF Rakkasan arrived in AO Eagle. Each rifle company would initially have three rifle platoons and one dismounted TOW section. Upon arrival in the 3-187 IN (-) sector on the evening of 25 February, Delta Company (-) would relieve Alpha Company in sector and receive two rifle platoons from A Company in the process; Alpha Company (-)'s dismounted TOW section would also be attached to C Company. Alpha Company (-) would then move south from BP 4 to occupy BP 1, thus protecting the task force from infiltration from the southwest. Delta Company (-)--now Team Delta--with two mounted TOW platoons and two rifle platoons, would then block enemy forces moving through EA Packer 2, as the main effort. Meanwhile, Charlie Company would block enemy forces in EA Packer 3 with three rifle platoons and one dismounted TOW platoon. D Company (-)'s

remaining two TOW platoons would be detached to Bravo Company (-) in BP Waco, to serve as the Brigade Reserve. The OPORD, however, did not survive the trafficability problems that delayed TF Rakkasan for over twelve hours, and the plan was modified effectively to capitalize on the rifle companies' initial success.

As darkness fell, therefore, the companies finalized their preparations for combat. Alpha Company (-), at BP 4, northwest of the TOC and 800m south of the highway, had one platoon arrayed to its west to block enemy dismounted infiltration. The second platoon was arrayed on line parallel to the highway, and at night would move forward to within 400m of the highway to maximize its weapons' effects. Alpha Company's remaining platoon was initially detached to the Brigade LOC for security, but was quickly relieved of its duties and attached to Delta Company. Charlie Company, east of Alpha Company (-) in BP 2, was similarly arrayed. One platoon was oriented east to block enemy dismounted movement, while the remaining two platoons were oriented north to block movement on the highway. While A Company (-) was oriented north to west on Highway 8, toward EA Packer 2, C Company was oriented north to east, toward EA Packer 3 (See Figure G, p. 32). Each of the companies located its 60mm mortar section to its rear, its security inherent to that of the company. Bravo Company (-), relieved of its duties as the brigade reserve, was located west of the TOC in BP 1, and oriented toward the southwest. B Company (-)'s task, with one dismounted TOW section attached and one rifle platoon detached to the Aviation Brigade, was to block any mounted or dismounted enemy movement from that direction. Delta Company (-), as originally planned, was to have had one dismounted TOW section detached to both Alpha and Charlie Companies. However, instead of relieving A Company (-) in sector and adjusting the task organization, D Company (-) now had one mounted TOW platoon, one mounted TOW section, and one rifle platoon--Alpha Company (-)'s Brigade LOC security platoon--located forward at BP El Paso. Delta Company (-)--now Team Delta--was oriented generally north and northeast, and prepared to engage enemy forces attacking from those directions. D Company (-)'s remaining two platoons were held as brigade reserve in BP Waco, but were eventually released to increase the battalion's combat power forward. Meanwhile, the Scouts screened west, well forward of Bravo Company, to prevent enemy infiltration into AO Eagle from the west. The battalion mortars were located center sector to provide 360 degree support to the task force (See Map G, p. 32).

Moving from the west and east, Iraqi soldiers in military and civilian vehicles began to travel down the highway. As they entered Engagement Area Packer, the vehicles were violently engaged with anti-tank, mortar, and small arms fire. At least two vehicles were obliterated

immediately. The remaining vehicles were disabled, and the soldiers that managed to dismount and return fire were repulsed as well. Brief firefights, to include encounters with dismounted elements, continued infrequently throughout the night. The soldiers remained alert that evening, and by morning emerged unscathed. Moreover, no casualties resulted from what was the greatest fear of the soldiers in Charlie Company--that of friendly artillery fire. Earlier in the evening, during an engagement on the highway, artillery was directed onto the highway from an unknown source. The rounds impacted less than 300 meters from a forward platoon, and "check fire" was immediately called without any soldiers being wounded. The issue was never completely resolved, but requests for artillery continued without further incident.

By the morning of the 27th, morale and confidence remained high. Many soldiers listened to the BBC on short wave radios to learn of the war's progress. It was clear that the coalition was doing great, and it was hoped that a swift victory would preclude the six to eight week war that had been projected earlier. The soldiers were also briefed on the latest intelligence reports, which stated that Iraqi forces were retreating north, through Basra. It was confirmed that the Iraqis originally began moving north along Highway 8, but turned back when they heard that a "large American airborne force" had seized the highway. Consequently, coalition air force elements and the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) had apparently caught a Republican Guard division attempting to turn back on Highway 8, and had annihilated it during the confusion. The report was a tremendous boost to the soldiers' confidence and pride.

At approximately 2000 hours on the night of 27 February, the first convoy of six Iraqi vehicles proceeded down Highway 8 from the west. Upon approaching A Company, they were engaged with small arms fire, anti-tank weapons, and TOWs. The first vehicle was destroyed immediately, thus blocking the road and forcing the following five to turn back. In the confusion, four additional vehicles were destroyed or disabled with the accompanying fires of 60mm mortars. Some enemy soldiers attempted to dismount the vehicles and return fire, but were quickly suppressed by direct and indirect fires. When the smoke cleared, it was apparent that one vehicle safely escaped back to AL Khidr.

A second brief engagement ensued no more than two hours later, with the remainder of the evening relatively calm. The only other gunfire marking the evening afterward was that seen and heard from Al Khidr. In that direction, as in each of the past two nights, anti-aircraft fire could be heard and tracers observed, piercing the sky in a haphazard manner. It was unknown whether Iraqi soldiers were engaging allied aircraft or whether the rounds were merely ricochets

from fighting within the town between rebel and government forces. The absence of any further encounters with enemy forces on that night seemed to be in keeping with what was happening with the war in general. Iraqis were fleeing or quitting the battlefield in the face of insurmountable allied forces and were suffering a stunning defeat. Surprisingly, the battalion awakened on the morning of the 28 February to news of the cease fire.

Word of the cease fire on 28 February also brought orders from brigade to withdraw some of the battalion's forward elements. The cease fire agreement established a demilitarized zone one kilometer north and south of the Euphrates River, and the brigade was not going to violate it. The orders also came with clear and prudent guidance not to expect all Iraqis to have learned of the cease fire. Thus, the battalion's soldiers, although joyous of the victory and the thought of going home, remained vigilant. The need for vigilance became more apparent as civilians began wandering into the battalion area. Some of these civilians, moving suspiciously in small groups and wearing items of military apparel, came increasingly forward requesting food and medical supplies. These people claimed to be either Iraqi civilians in desperate need of food and medicine, or Kuwaiti citizens, captured during the August 1990 invasion, who desired repatriation to Kuwait. Nonetheless, all personnel were treated as EPWs. It could only be assumed that these personnel were soldiers, who had recently laid down their arms, or would-be martyrs attempting to strike unconventionally at the Americans. Although all offensive actions were prohibited, the rules of engagement would not change until the battalion departed AO Eagle.

The better part of 28 February, though, was consumed by a brigade tasking to secure a downed helicopter. The aircraft, an AH-1 Cobra, had been forced to land near Al Khidr due to engine problems. The pilot had been quickly extracted, but it was also essential to protect the aircraft. On less than 20 minutes notice, the commander of B Company (-), with an interpreter and two soldiers, air assaulted to secure the aircraft. Upon landing, they encountered a potentially dangerous crowd of civilians that turned out to be more curious than aggressive. Additional loads of soldiers soon arrived by helicopter to reinforce the security element. The people, consequently, were intimidated by the American soldiers and therefore kept their distance. Within a few hours, the aircraft and soldiers were extracted without incident.

Further west, a mounted platoon from B Company (-) encountered sniper fire during a route reconnaissance mission. Attack helicopters were dispatched to suppress the sniper and support the platoon, and the encounter ended

quickly. The platoon took no casualties, but the soldiers emerged with a better appreciation for the tenuous nature of cease fire agreements. The reconnaissance did, however, uncover an abandoned weapons and equipment warehouse that had been the logistical hub of the Iraqi 197th Reconnaissance Battalion. On the following day, 1 March, an element augmented with engineers was dispatched to destroy the captured equipment. The mission was accomplished without incident, but not without amazement at the quantity, quality, and value of the caches.

VII Homeward Bound

The remaining time in the Euphrates River Valley passed peacefully, and by March 15, the brigade returned by helicopter to FOB Cobra. The 3rd Battalion remained at FOB Cobra for another ten days before returning to TAA Campbell, and eventually back to Camp Eagle II. Two weeks of intensive cleaning, maintenance, and preparation for overseas movement would follow. And by April 7, 1991, the 3-187 Infantry would return home to Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

February 25, 1991, marked another "Rendezvous With Destiny" for the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). The Division's 3d Brigade conducted one of the largest and deepest heliborne assaults in military history, blocked Iraq's main line of communication with Kuwait, and stood ready at the enemy's doorstep, prepared to strike again. Operation Desert Storm was certainly a well planned and superbly executed operation, and Operation Shenandoah II was integral to the coalition's strategic plan and a key to the war's swift conclusion. But while the tenets of AirLand Battle were the foundation of both operations, the battalion's training and the soldiers' discipline were the sublime factors that transcended brilliant planning and brought about success. Operation Desert Storm was not only a great victory for the United States and its allies, but a victory as well for tough, realistic training and competent leadership.

VII Major Lessons Learned

1. Scouts.

SUBJECT: The employment of scouts to provide information on the LZ, and to conduct a route recon forward into zone, was critical to mission accomplishment.

DISCUSSION: By inserting the scouts at LZ Sand hours prior to the Task Force Rakkasan air assault, the battalion and brigade commander had access to accurate, on-site, real-time information about their zone of attack. The scouts provided invaluable data about enemy dispositions and composition. Moreover, the scouts provided imperative information on the trafficability of route 41A. The scouts also provided terminal guidance for the helicopters and facilitated the overall organization and movement of forces at the LZ.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to deploy scouts forward and prior to commitment of the unit's combat power. Scouts, however, must be given specific mission tasks and the resources to accomplish them. Although the use of HMMWVs by the scouts at LZ Sand would have increased their chance of compromise, an experienced driver navigating a vehicle along route 41A could have confirmed its degree of trafficability. At the time, however, this option was constrained by aircraft availability.

2. Lateral Communications.

SUBJECT: Lateral communications are key to avoiding fratricide between adjacent units and to the exchange of relevant tactical information.

DISCUSSION: On at least one occasion, fratricide was avoided because soldiers possessed the discipline and leaders possessed the prudence to think before reacting, and to communicate before acting. Lateral communications also afforded the immediate and accurate transmission of tactical information between adjacent units.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiative must be instilled in subordinate leaders to talk laterally with adjacent units. Moreover, the commander must give them the freedom to talk laterally at the expense of his command net.

4. Soldier's Load.

SUBJECT: Soldiers overburdened by equipment and supplies tire quickly, are less mobile, and are therefore less effective fighters.

DISCUSSION: Soldiers on the initial air assaults were carrying loads well in excess of 100 pounds. Such loads reduced their endurance, their ability to react quickly, and their ability to move great distances.

RECOMMENDATION: Soldiers must be trained to live in an austere environment, while the logistics system trains to support their every need and action. Commanders must make the system work.

5. Weapons Effectiveness.

SUBJECT: It is imperative that soldiers and leaders know and understand the capabilities, limitations, and effectiveness of their weapons and subordinates.

DISCUSSION: The battalion's ability to block enemy movement along Highway 8 was due primarily to four weapon systems: the M60 MG was very effective at disabling or stopping moving vehicles; the LAW and AT-4 effectively destroyed moving targets; the 60mm mortar proved surprisingly effective at disabling vehicles, and as expected, killing soldiers; and the M-203 grenade launcher was also an effective indirect fire, area weapon. Weapons capabilities notwithstanding, the soldiers were well trained in employing their weapons against moving and stationary targets, both day and night.

RECOMMENDATION: Fielding of the M60 machine gun, M-203 grenade launcher, 60mm mortar, and the LAW/AT-4 must continue. Leaders at all levels must possess expert knowledge of their weapons and their soldiers. Additionally, training on these weapons must be increased and expanded to incorporate the following: utilization of M-203 ammunition during LFXs; moving target training for all direct fire systems; more direct use of 60mm mortars on LFXs; and continued employment of AT weapons during training.

6. Anti-Armor Weapons.

SUBJECT: The dismounted TOW and Dragon anti-armor weapons systems proved less effective on the battlefield than expected.

DISCUSSION: The dismounted TOW and Dragon weapon systems were marginally effective in AO Eagle for two principal reasons: the weight and bulkiness of the equipment inhibited soldier and unit mobility; and the complicated nature of the systems, and their vulnerability to poor weather, reduced their operability in many cases.

RECOMMENDATION: Improve the reliability, reduce the weight and bulkiness, or replace the TOW and Dragon weapon systems. Today's infantryman needs a lightweight, man-portable, fire-and-forget AT weapon system.

7. Live Fire Training.

SUBJECT: Live fire exercises, such as that performed by the battalion in December, 1990, are the best training tool to prepare soldiers for combat.

DISCUSSION: LFXs build confidence in the soldiers and their weapons, and in units and their fire support systems. LFXs also acquaint soldiers with the sights, sounds, and smells of combat, complemented by a measure of uncertainty due to the live ordnance and weapons being employed.

RECOMMENDATION: Live fire training must be conducted whenever possible. All available weapons and assets must be incorporated, and leaders must be given the freedom to maneuver within the limits of safe training.

8. Morale.

SUBJECT: Soldier morale items such as mail, telephones, or showers are critical to a unit's combat effectiveness and motivation.

DISCUSSION: Any item or gimmick that provides the soldier some luxury, comfort, or change of pace goes a long way to building unit morale and relieving stress.

RECOMMENDATION: Units that are motivated, disciplined, and train hard must be given the opportunity to relax and unwind. Commanders must endeavor to support soldier morale through sports programs, improved living conditions, better rations, addressing their needs, listening to their concerns, and explaining the "big picture" to them.

9. Recognition Signals.

SUBJECT: Recognition signals were key in identifying friendly from enemy vehicles and for, therefore, preventing fratricide.

DISCUSSION: Easily identifiable and unilaterally employed recognition signals definitely reduce fratricide. However, common sense and discipline are equally important in discerning enemy from friendly vehicles and elements.

RECOMMENDATION: Recognition signals must be employed in all training events, day and night, and at all levels: individuals, vehicles, buildings, etc. Soldiers must also be trained when to react, and when to think before acting. STXs and professional development classes are two different methods, out of many, for developing smart, aggressive leaders.

10. Logistic Push Packages.

SUBJECT: Push packages were key to keeping the companies supplied with mission essential items, and in organizing the logistics system to maximize its effectiveness.

DISCUSSION: Logistic push packages were developed to quickly resupply forward units with prepared bundles of mission essential items. These items included Class V bundles (further broken down into AT weapons bundles, demolition kits, small arms resupply, and hand grenades), Class I bundles, Class VIII bundles, and other essential supplies. The items were pre-packed in duffel bags or configured for easy movement and color-coded to indicate their supply class. The packages were also employed on initial air assaults to serve as a resupply point at the LZ, and to sustain the units for 24 hours until the logistics network was established.

RECOMMENDATION: Units must routinely prepare and practice with logistic push packages during training exercises. Loads must be standardized and bundles marked for easy recognition. This system should be employed to reduce the soldier load problem.

11. Translators.

SUBJECT: Translators were key in solving communications problems with EPWs and civilians and were a definite combat multiplier.

DISCUSSION: Translators were very useful during the handling and questioning of EPWs. They also assisted by keeping potentially hostile crowds away and by using loudspeakers to convince enemy soldiers to surrender. Translators were also helpful in dealing with the civilian population. They assisted in explaining our area of operations and intent to the civilians, what help that we may provide them, and addressing any problems that they had.

RECOMMENDATION: Translators should be employed at least down to battalion level and in pairs. They are most effective at the lowest level, though, where they are frequently employed. However, translators must be trained in military terminology (operational words and phrases) to maximize their effectiveness. Additionally, soldiers must be educated on basic words and phrases that can be used in the absence of a translator.

12. Army Airspace Command and Control.

SUBJECT: A2C2 was ineffective in AO Eagle.

DISCUSSION: The principles of A2C2 were violated on innumerable occasions in AO Eagle, by both ground and air elements. Helicopters entered the task force's airspace several times without "checking in" to ensure that no direct or indirect fires were being employed. On at least two occasions, mortars were being fired near an aircraft's flight route. Fortunately, no accidents occurred. Conversely, the task force did not effectively "check fire" when aircraft entered its airspace.

RECOMMENDATION: A2C2 was not executed well during training exercises prior to Operation Desert Shield. On today's AirLand battlefield, units must constantly train within a strictly controlled, 3-dimensional operational area. SOPs must be established by ground and air units to accommodate the safe, but effective, accomplishment of both elements' missions. Such measures will prevent fratricide and preserve valuable assets.

13. Communications.

SUBJECT: Infantry battalions require secure, long range radios, as well as additional FM radios, in order to facilitate operations over large distances and to allow for redundancy in C2 assets.

DISCUSSION: During Operation Desert Storm, Task Force Rakkasan did not have the organic assets available to communicate with the Scout Platoon at LZ Sand, from TAA Campbell, in a secure mode. The attachment of a TACSAT team notwithstanding, the Scout Platoon Leader still could not communicate effectively with his forward teams which were conducting a reconnaissance of Route 41A. The teams had to relay information to the platoon leader, and then only after moving by foot to within range of one another.

Secondly, 3-187 IN had to employ three command and control elements (TF 3-187 (-), TF Rakkasan, and March Unit 1) during Operation Shenandoah II. The battalion did not have enough AN/PRC-77 radios organic to the battalion to adequately conduct the mission. Consequently, subordinate elements were tasked to provide radios, resulting in degradation of their communications capabilities. Additional radios were also borrowed from other units to accomplish the mission.

RECOMMENDATION: A long range, secure-capable radio must be fielded so that infantry scouts may communicate internally and with higher headquarters, and so that infantry companies are also capable of communicating with the battalion headquarters over long distances. This requirement is definitely holds true for airborne and air assault units. Moreover, the number of AN/PRC-77 FM radios currently allotted to infantry battalions must be increased by no less than five to accommodate redundancy in C2 systems.

14. Night Vision/Targeting Devices.

SUBJECT: PVS-7 Night Vision Goggles, complemented by PAQ-4A target designators, are definite combat multipliers.

DISCUSSION: Without question, the fielding of PVS-7 NVGs give the U.S. Army an unparalleled night fighting capability. Moreover, the PAQ-4As are the perfect complement to PVS-7s. The PAQ-4A allows soldiers to acquire and engage targets at night more quickly and with greater accuracy. Its other capabilities include: allowing leaders to designate clear sectors of fire at night through use of the device; allowing leaders to designate targets and direct fires at night; and providing an alternate means to communicate with and signal friendly forces.

RECOMMENDATION: PVS-7s and PAQ-4As should be made available to every combat soldier and leader. The equipment is indispensable and integral to the U.S. Army's continued superiority in night fighting. These devices notwithstanding, continued night training at all levels is the key to success on today's battlefield.

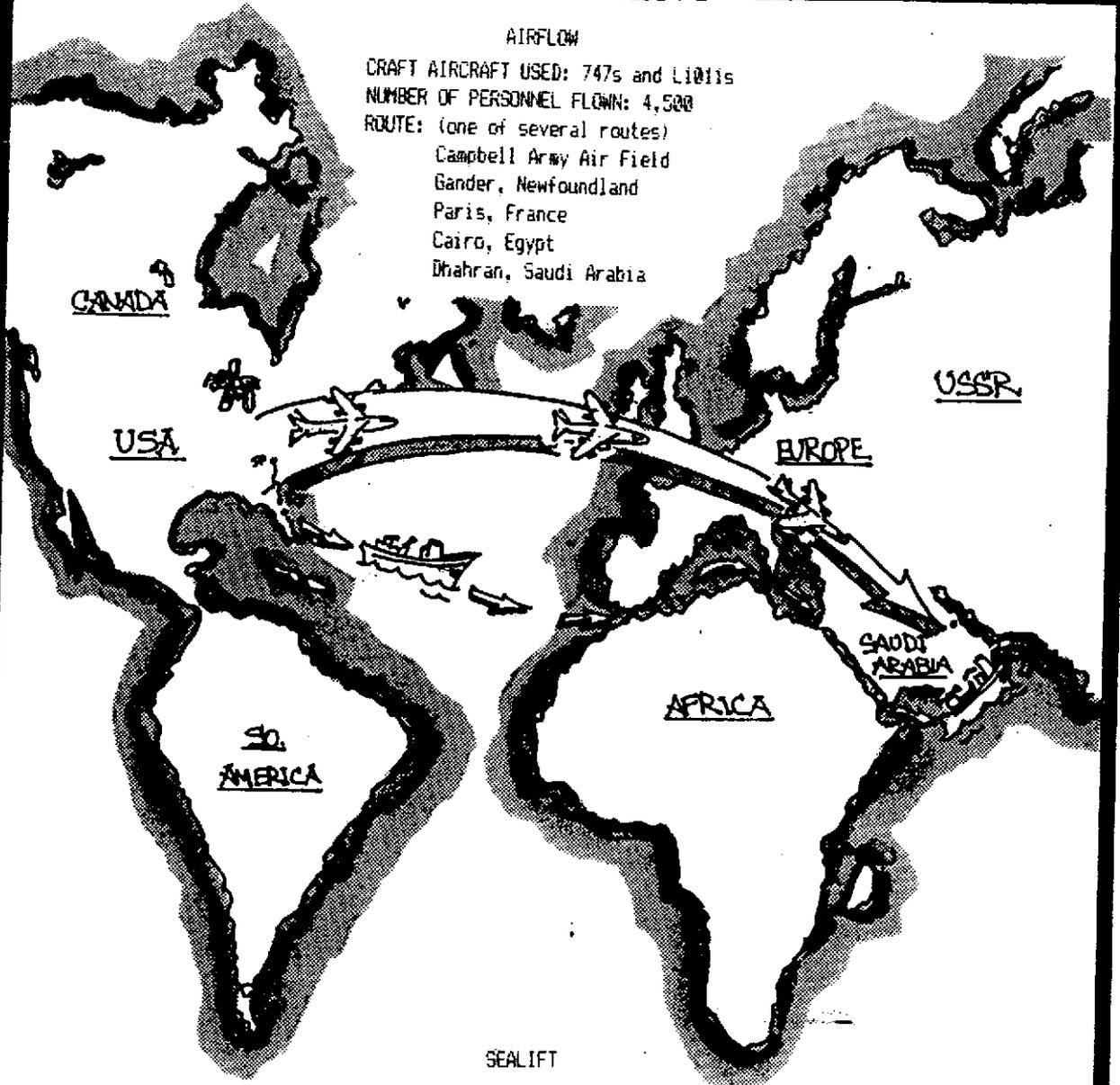
15. Mission Preparation.

SUBJECT: Rehearsals, backbriefs, war-gaming sessions, and inspections were integral to Operation Shenandoah II's success.

DISCUSSION: TF Rakkasan and TF 3-187 (-) conducted numerous rehearsals, backbriefs, war-gaming sessions, and inspections. These events were conducted at the soldier, leader, and unit levels, and included specific equipment/vehicles. These sessions allowed leaders to refine the plan, make recommendations for improvement, clarify ambiguous or confusing instructions, and to develop a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the operation. The soldiers equally benefited from the preparations, with comprehension achieved mainly through participation in the rehearsals and observing the mechanics of the entire operation. Wargaming, or "what if" sessions, allowed leaders to develop battle drills, exorcise concerns, and to formulate contingency plans based on possible scenarios.

RECOMMENDATION: As our current doctrine states, rehearsals, backbriefs, war-gaming sessions, and inspections are critical to the success of any military operation. These pre-mission events must be practiced and refined religiously during training, and at every level of command.

DEPLOYMENT



AIRFLOW

CRAFT AIRCRAFT USED: 747s and L1011s
 NUMBER OF PERSONNEL FLOWN: 4,500
 ROUTE: (one of several routes)
 Campbell Army Air Field
 Gander, Newfoundland
 Paris, France
 Cairo, Egypt
 Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

SEALIFT

SHIPS: ROROs- "Roll on, roll off"	DATES: 9 August 1990 - 3 September 1990
LASHs- "Lighter aboard ships"	ROUTE: Jacksonville, FL -- Atlantic Ocean
EQUIPMENT SHIPPED: 650 vehicles	Mediterranean Sea -- Suez Canal
16 40 ft connex's	Red Sea -- Indian Ocean
24 small connex's	Strait of Hormuz -- Persian Gulf
12 personnel	

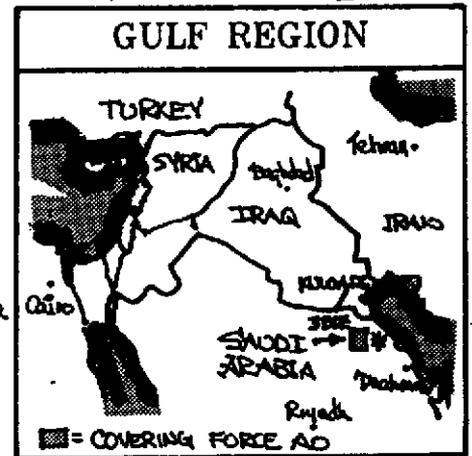
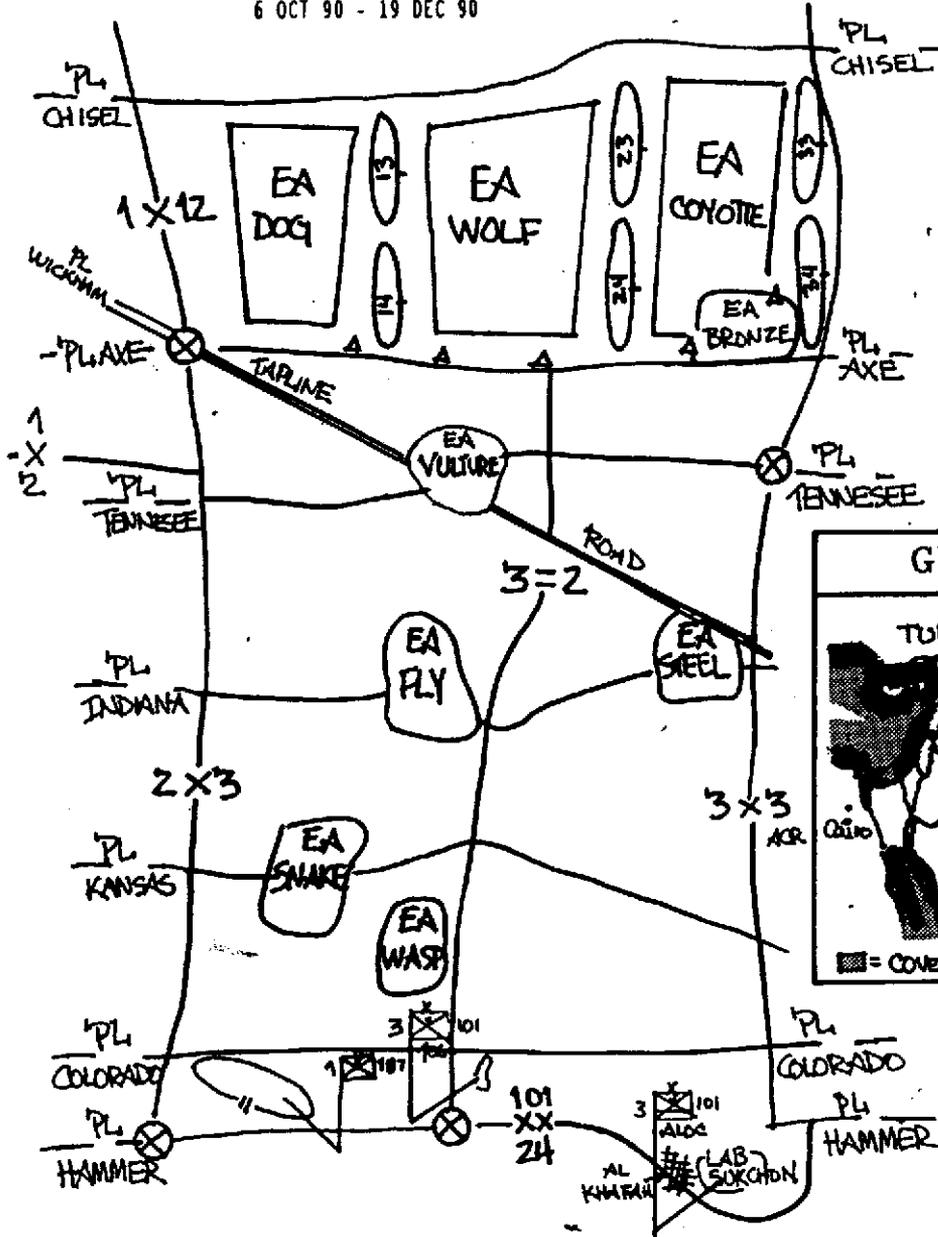
Note: The BDE conducted a 787 mile convoy from FTCKY to Jacksonville, FL on 5-7 Aug 90.

RAKKASANS

COVERING FORCE OPERATIONS

MISSION: On order, 3D BDE deploys to sector in AO NOMANDY while providing security for Camp Eagle II. Upon conduct of battle handover from 12th AVN BDE, disrupts and delays advance of Iraqi forces by destroying the lead enemy brigades and their CSS elements. On order, conducts passage of lines through 24th ID (M) to AO CARENTAN and guards the west flank of the XVIII ABN CORPS in sector. Prepares to counterattack or reinforce within CORPS sector in 4-6 hours of notification as corps/theater reserve.

6 OCT 90 - 19 DEC 90



* VIP visit- 11 OCT 90, GEN. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF, CINC, visited BDE TOC

RAKKASANS

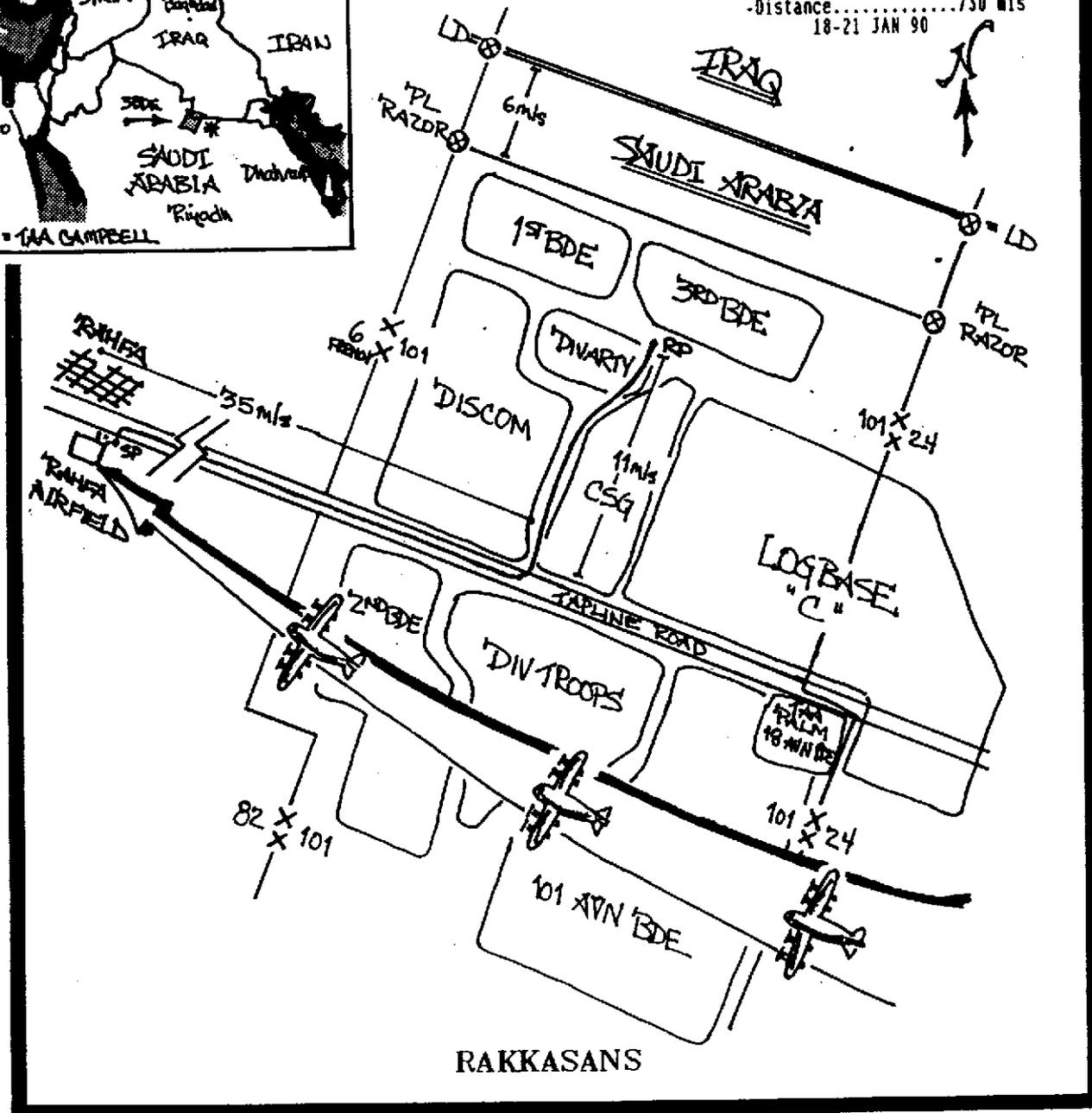
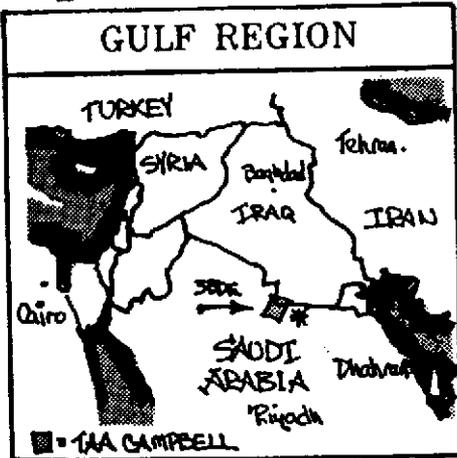
MOVE TO INTERMEDIATE STAGING BASE (TAA CAMPBELL)

AIRFLOW TO RAHFA

- C130 Sorties.....137
- Personnel.....over 2500
- Distance.....550 mls
- 17-19 JAN 90

GROUND CONVOY TO TAA CAMPBELL

- Number of vehicles.....475
- Distance.....730 mls
- 18-21 JAN 90

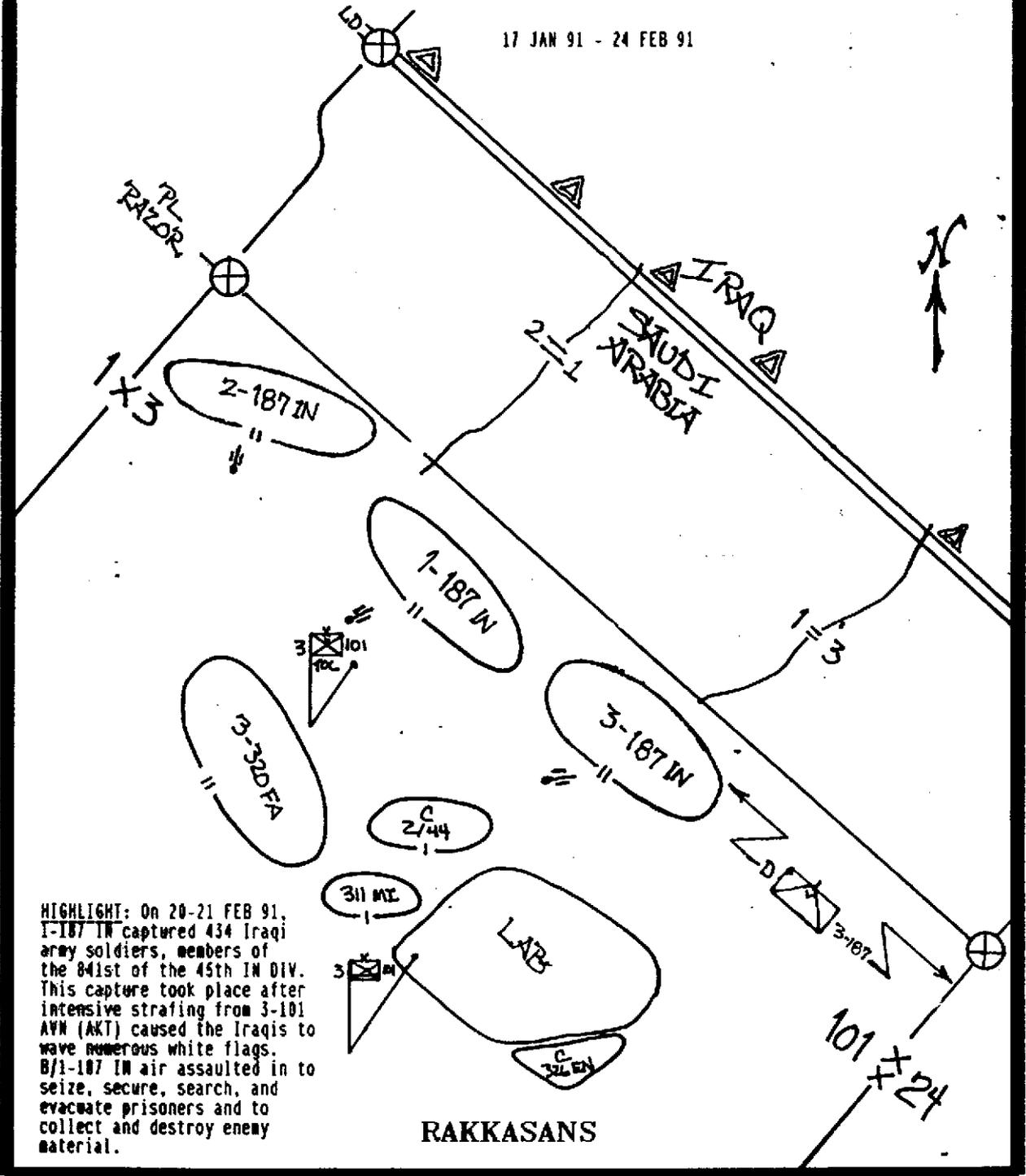


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BORDER OPERATIONS

MISSION: 3d BDE conducts zone reconnaissance in sector from PL RAZOR to LD (SAUDI-IRAQI border) to provide security for 101st ABN DIV (AASLT), gather intelligence, and locate and report targets of opportunity in sector. On order, 3d BDE will conduct an armed reconnaissance across the LD to destroy all Iraqi forces deployed along the border in the BDE sector.

17 JAN 91 - 24 FEB 91



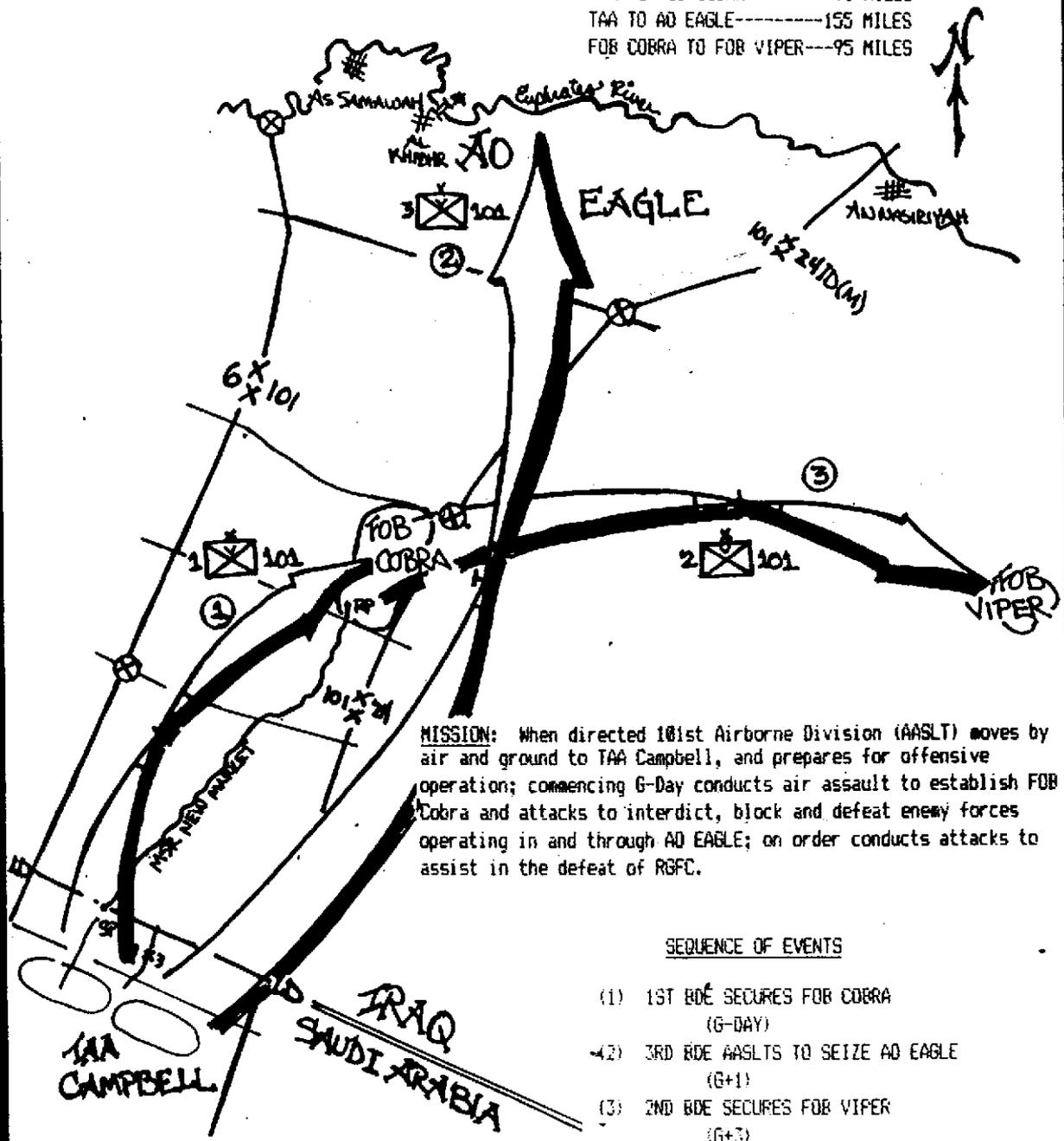
HIGHLIGHT: On 20-21 FEB 91, I-187 IN captured 434 Iraqi army soldiers, members of the 841st of the 45th IN DIV. This capture took place after intensive strafing from 3-101 AVN (AKT) caused the Iraqis to wave numerous white flags. B/1-187 IN air assaulted in to seize, secure, search, and evacuate prisoners and to collect and destroy enemy material.

RAKKASANS

101st AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIR ASSAULT) PLAN

DISTANCES

TAA TO FOB COBRA-----93 MILES
 TAA TO AO EAGLE-----155 MILES
 FOB COBRA TO FOB VIPER---95 MILES



MISSION: When directed 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) moves by air and ground to TAA Campbell, and prepares for offensive operation; commencing G-Day conducts air assault to establish FOB Cobra and attacks to interdict, block and defeat enemy forces operating in and through AO Eagle; on order conducts attacks to assist in the defeat of RGFC.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- (1) 1ST BDE SECURES FOB COBRA (G-DAY)
- (2) 3RD BDE AASLTs TO SEIZE AO EAGLE (G+1)
- (3) 2ND BDE SECURES FOB VIPER (G+3)

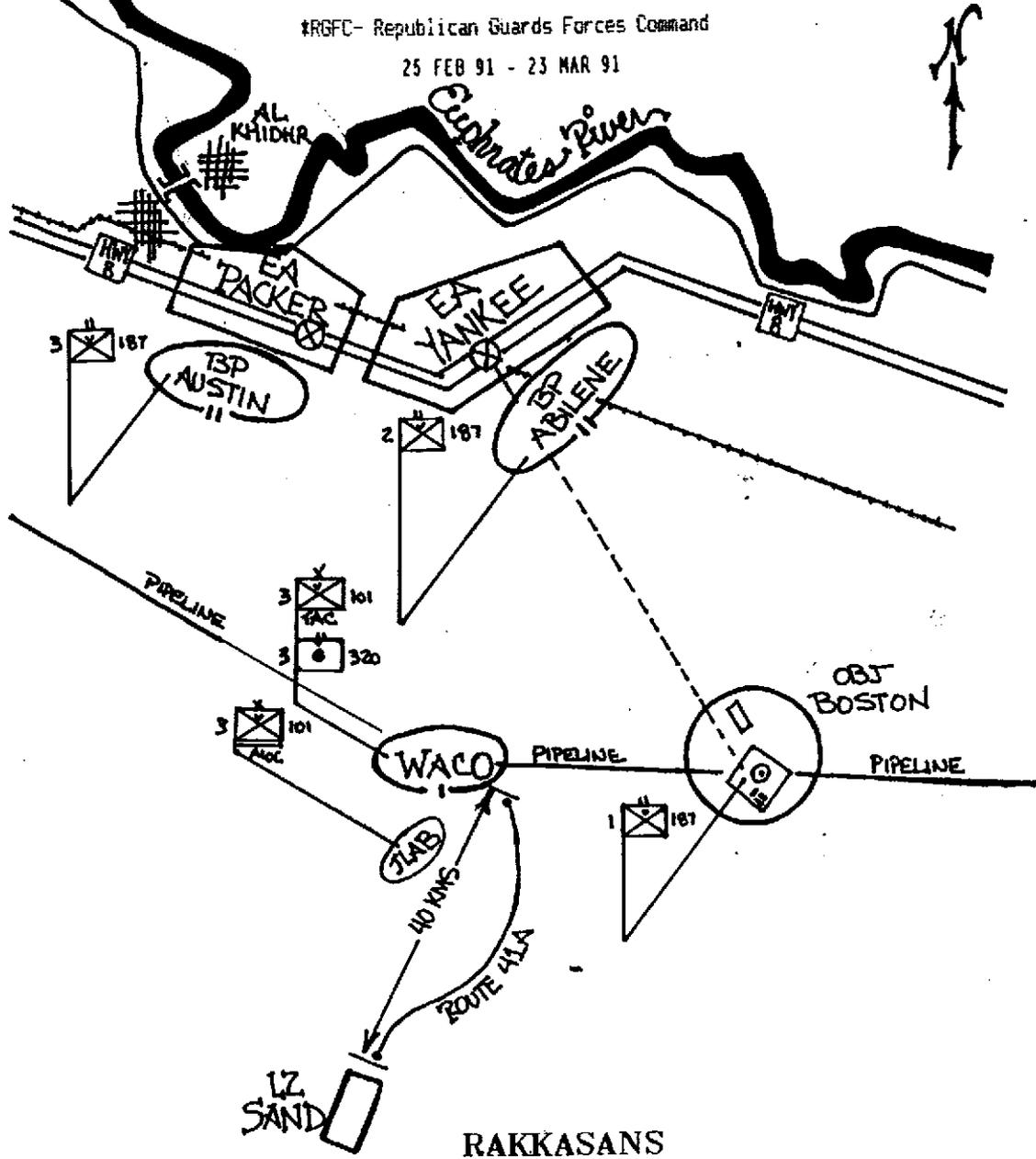
RAKKASANS

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS (AO EAGLE)

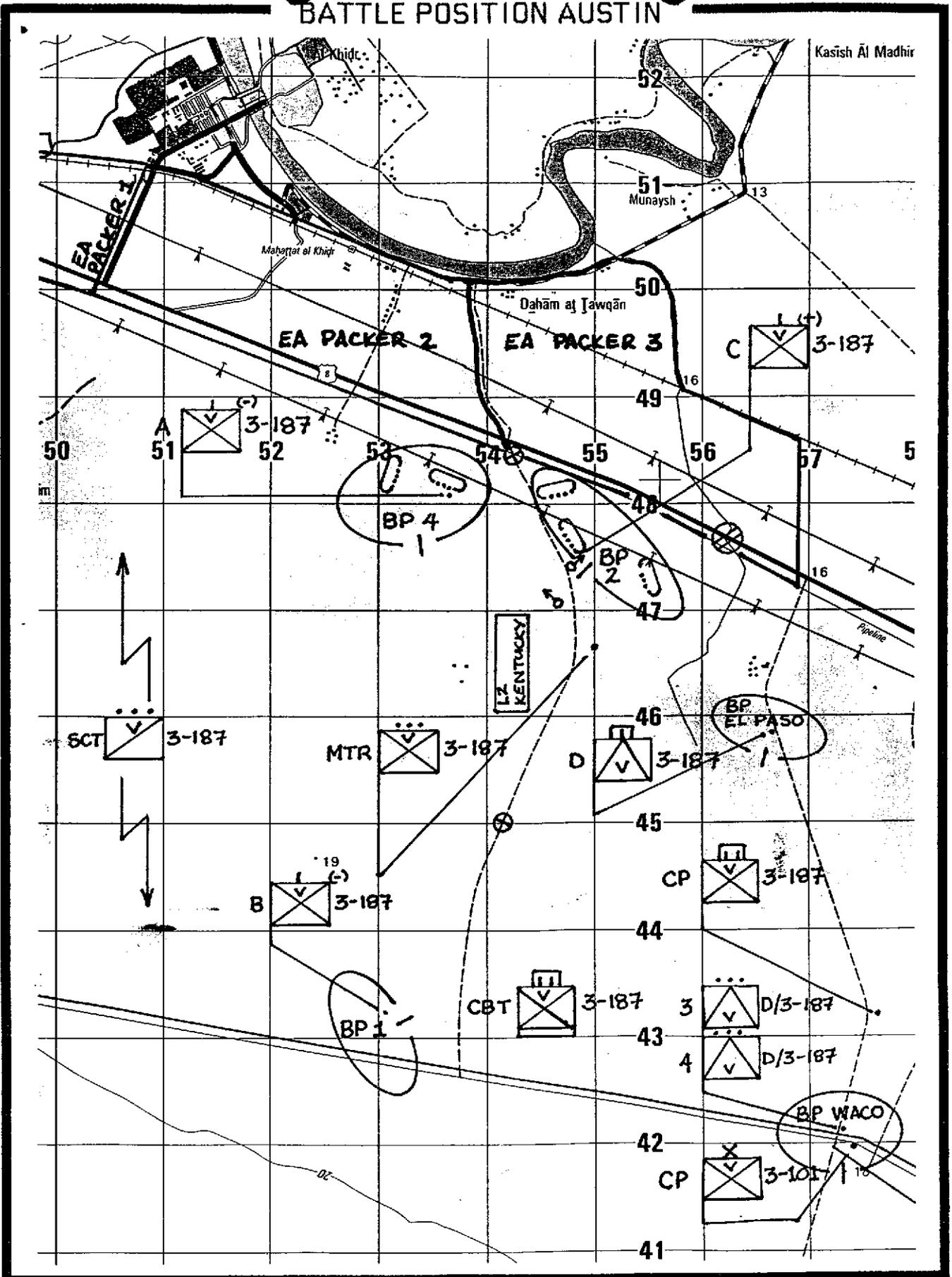
MISSION: At 6+1, 3d BDE attacks by air assault to establish battle positions in sector of AO EAGLE; defeats reinforcing/escaping Iraqi units to isolate Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti theater of operations (KTO); blocks the use of LOCs through sector to disrupt Iraqi combat operations. On order, continues the attack to the east to complete destruction of the RGFC.

#RGFC- Republican Guards Forces Command

25 FEB 91 - 23 MAR 91



BATTLE POSITION AUSTIN



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- MAJ Carlos Glover. Operations Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Editing and historical accuracy.
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- CPT Fred Kane. Executive Officer of Alpha Company/3-187 Infantry Regiment during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Historical accuracy and graphics.
- CPT Dave Cook. Executive Officer of Charlie Company/3-187 Infantry Regiment during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Historical accuracy and graphics.
- CPT Coyt Hargus. Executive Officer of Delta Company/3-187 Infantry Regiment during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Historical accuracy and graphics.
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