

FILE

PRESENTATION TO RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Anzio Room, Main Officers Open Mess

15 December 1964

SUBJECT: AIR ASSAULT II

I am delighted to be here tonight to participate in your program.

I know General Heintges was originally scheduled to be here, and he planned to discuss "Our Progressive Army." He very much regrets that he was unable to attend, but perhaps you will invite him on another occasion.

For this, and other reasons, the subject I have selected for this evening is AIR ASSAULT II. General Kinnard spoke to this group some time ago and told you about the 11th Air Assault Division and the 10th Air Transport Brigade. I thought you would be interested in being brought up to date on what we have done since General Kinnard's presentation, particularly about our recent exercise in the Carolinas. I would like to make this a very informal discussion. Consequently, if you have questions at any time, please feel free to interrupt. If you prefer, you may hold your questions until the conclusion of the period.

My general approach will be to tell you about the area in which we operated during AIR ASSAULT II, the forces involved, highlights of the exercise as it was planned, and a few of the details on how it was executed. I also have a short movie which I think you will find interesting, and I hope that by watching it, along with my explanation, you will get a little better feel for the air assault concept.

VU-GRAPH 1

AIR ASSAULT II took place over a 4 1/2 million acre portion of real estate in North and South Carolina. As shown in this chart, the area was approximately 150 miles long and 50 miles wide. It included both Fort Jackson and Fort Bragg. Two important terrain features which I will refer to frequently this evening are the Pee Dee River and Wateree Pond. I would like to make it clear at the very outset that we did not have free and unrestricted use of this area. There were many off-limit areas, which frequently made our operations most difficult. (HOLD UP 1/250,000 MAP)

VU-GRAPH 2A

Shown on this chart are some of the forces that we had available to us on AIR ASSAULT II. First we had the Neutral Forces, which included the Exercise Director Headquarters. This was headed up by General Rich, and included all the controllers, umpires, data collectors, communicators, and other support type personnel. Also there was a support force which included the 5th Logistical Command, appropriate US Air Force support and post support from Fort Bragg for the aggressors and from Fort Jackson and Fort Gordon for the Blue Forces.

VU-GRAPH 2B

On this next slide are shown the two player forces, the Blue and the Red. Blue is the 11th Air Assault Division, which included 6 infantry battalions, the other elements of the division were represented on a 100% basis.

For one phase, we borrowed 2 infantry battalions from the 82d Airborne Division. We also had the 10th Air Transport Brigade, the 72d Air Traffic Control Company, and the 14th Depot Battalion from Atlanta. On the Red side, we had the 82d, commanded by General York. During most of the exercise, they participated with 6 infantry battalions and one tank battalion, which was represented by Army personnel carriers, a Hawk battery, which was attached throughout the exercise, and an artillery AW battalion, which was equipped with dusters.

VU-GRAPH 3

With this chart, I would like to give you an idea of the locations of various units that participated in the exercise. The area outlined in black is the area I just described to you. This black line is the international boundary; it follows the Pee Dee River. In general, the 82d operated on the east side of the Pee Dee, and the 11th Air Assault Division operated from its base southwest of the Wateree. (Describe area behind Wateree) The Exercise Director Headquarters was located at Fort Jackson. The 5th Log Command and the 10th Air Transport Brigade operated out of Fort Gordon, and the 14th Aircraft Maintenance and Support operated out of Atlanta. The Air Force support came from Shaw, Myrtle Beach, and Pope Air Force Bases.

VU-GRAPH 5A

The next two charts show the schedule of events for AIR ASSAULT II. I would like to point out that this was just the formal portion of the exercise. We actually went up to the Carolinas in the first part of September and spent

a month training and getting ready for the test. (DESCRIBE SCHEDULE FROM CHARTS.)

VU-GRAPH 5 B

VU-GRAPH 6

Using this chart, I would like to set the stage for AIR ASSAULT II. You should know at the outset that this exercise was designed to represent a limited war situation in a semi-sophisticated area. Counter-insurgency was not stressed and nuclear warfare was played on a very limited basis. This chart shows the general positions of key units when the war started. Once again, the Pee Dee River was the international boundary. It is shown in red on this particular chart. The 11th Division was on the Wateree Pond. The border was patrolled by para-military forces and a Corps Recon Squadron. The 4th and 5th Mech Divisions were 3 - 4 days away from the area, and the Corps Headquarters was at Fort Jackson. On the other side of the border, there were two Aggressor Divisions and numerous support units.

VU-GRAPH 7

The war began on D-1. Red Land forces crossed the border at 1800 hours on D-1 and are shown as two penetrations on this chart. Shortly after this took place, Corps ordered the 11th to attack and destroy the Aggressor forces and to restore the international boundary. Our basic plan was to attack at 0900 hours on D-Day with two air assault brigades. The 2d Brigade in the north was to go in with 2 infantry battalions with helicopters, and the 1st Bde on the south was to parachute in with 3 battalions, one from the 11th Division and two that we borrowed from the

82d for this particular operation. This was to be followed up by air landing another infantry battalion about an hour after H-Hour in the area of the 1st Brigade.

The 3d Brigade with 2 infantry battalions was to be held in Brigade Reserve behind the Wateree. For convenience, the 1st Brigade staged its airborne operations out of Pope Air Force Base.

VU-GRAPH 8

By D+1, the situation looked something like this. Covered by the Air Cavalry Squadron, the remaining elements of the Division moved in by Caribou aircraft to undertake offensive operations against aggressor elements on the west side of the Pee Dee. During D-Day and D+1, the Division conducted numerous local air assault operations. Initially, the overall operations were quite successful; however, as the enemy succeeded in re-inforcing his positions at night, we were forced to adopt a mobile defense posture. Corps changed the Division mission and directed us to conduct delaying operations and to hold the enemy on the east of the Lynches River for 72 hours. The 4th and 5th Mech Divisions were to prepare defensive positions as fast as they could be brought up to this river line.

VU-GRAPH 9

By D+9, the situation looked something like this.

VU-GRAPH 10

At D+3, in order to cause the enemy further delay, we mounted a 2 battalion task force operation to strike deep in the enemy's rear to attack

his main supply route on the east of the Pee Dee River. This force went in late in the afternoon, accomplished its mission, and was withdrawn after dark to a position behind the Wateree. (Allude to forward refueling area and Cobra Force.)

VU-GRAPH 11

Late in the afternoon of D+4, the situation looked like this. The 4th and 5th Mech Divisions completed their preparation of their defenses along the Lynches River. After dark, our forces were withdrawn behind the Wateree. We then went into Corps Reserve and prepared for the next phase of the maneuvers.

I would like to stress that I have discussed only the first active phase of AIR ASSAULT II, which ran 5 days. For a change of pace, I would now like to show a movie of selected air assault operations, and then rather than discuss each of the subsequent phases in detail, I will go back and tell you a little bit more of the first day of operation of AIR ASSAULT II.

(SHOW 8-MINUTE MOVIE AND DESCRIBE AS APPROPRIATE.)

Now I would like to go back and cover in more detail the first day of AIR ASSAULT II and to focus attention on the activities of the 2d Brigade, the brigade on the north. In order to test the umpire control, communication, and evaluation systems, we really went through the first part of the first phase of AIR ASSAULT II twice. The operation I am about to describe is our first action against the 82d Airborne Division.

On the 2d of October, the 2d Brigade conducted the largest air assault

operation under the worst weather conditions that existed during the entire time the 11th Division was in the Carolinas. During the night of 1 - 2 October, the fringes of Hurricane Isbell began moving through the area, and on the morning of 2 October, the visibility and the ceiling were 0-0. By 0900, the weather lifted to a minimum of 50 feet and a maximum of 100 feet. The visibility was 1/8th to 1/2 mile. However, 0-0 conditions continued to prevail in many areas. The general aggressor situation was as indicated on my next chart. (VU-GRAPH 12)

VU-GRAPH 13 (2d Bde Mission)

The 2d Brigade was to attack with two battalions, one battalion on each side of the Pee Dee River. They were to destroy Red Land forces and to seize areas from which air assault operations could be conducted. In addition, they were to destroy bridges located at Sites 3 and 4 and to screen the Pee Dee River in zone.

VU-GRAPH 14 (2d Bde Task Organization)

VU-GRAPH 15 (2d Bde Plan)

The 1/511th Infantry supported by 75 UH-1 helicopters was to seize Objective 22 on the east side of the Pee Dee and to destroy the bridge at Site 3 at the appropriate time. One company was to seize Objective 20. The 2/38th Infantry was to seize Objective 21 and to destroy the enemy on the west side of the Pee Dee in the vicinity of bridge sites 4 and 4A. Troop D of the 17th Cavalry was under operational control of the 2d Brigade and was given the mission of screening the Pee Dee and

to destroy the bridge at Site 2. The 1/15th was attached to the 2d Brigade and had one battery in direct support of each infantry battalion, and one artillery battery centrally located to provide re-inforcing fires, as required. The artillery was to be in position prior to the assault in order to fire a preparation.

The plan was to have two assault helicopter battalions lift the 2d Brigade into the objective area subsequent to arrival. One battalion was to be released to the 1st Brigade and the other was to provide one company each to the 511th Infantry and the 38th Infantry for them to conduct local air assault operations from their objective areas, as required. (IF TIME PERMITS, describe task organization innovation.)

Two re-inforcing companies of CH-47 aircraft was to provide the lift required for the artillery battalion to move into their positions on the west side of the Pee Dee River. Mohawks were to provide column cover for the movement from the Wateree Pond to the Pee Dee River. On the morning of D-Day, the weather was so bad that we were faced with two problems; one, was to get the aircraft to the pickup zones to marry up with the infantry and the artillery, and the other was to move the units to the Objective Area, a combined distance of 170 km or 106 miles.

(SHOW VU-GRAPHS ON WEATHER, IF AVAILABLE.)

After two attempts, we were finally able to get the Hueys into the pickup zone by flying in one platoon at a time of four aircraft each with two-minute intervals between platoons. While the aircraft were enroute to the pickup zone, weather ships were sent out to the objective area and

reported back that the weather was practically 0-0 all the way. They actually had to fly right at tree-top level over half the distance. They stated, however, that the mission could be accomplished by using special marginal weather techniques which had been developed prior to the exercise. About that time, heavy rains completely covered the pickup zone area and stayed over that area until about 1220. Then, the clouds at one end of the field lifted slightly. After consultation with Colonel Lynch, 2d Brigade Commander, and Colonel Seneff, Aviation Group Commander, I ordered the mission executed. I then joined the column in my command helicopter.

VU-GRAPH 16

The flight route is shown on this next chart. The aircraft lifted off at 1235 and arrived in the objective area at 1334. There were approximately 100 helicopters involved in the operation, and only slight deviations from the assigned flight routes were made. By adjusting air speed and maintaining pin point air-to-ground navigation, the entire fleet landed within 15 seconds of the planned ETA.

VU-GRAPH 17.

As shown on this chart, one task force made a diversionary landing north of Objective 21 in order to attract enemy attention away from the primary landing zone. One battalion of helicopters was then released to proceed directly to the 1st Brigade area some 18 miles away. Both assault battalions continued to conduct air assault operations throughout the remainder of the day.

RESULTS OF THE OPERATION

VU-GRAPH 18

All missions were successfully accomplished and in addition to the personnel and equipment that were destroyed by firepower, 24 members of the 82d, to include the Executive Officer of their 1st Brigade, three 3/4 ton trucks and three 1/4 ton trucks were captured. The bridges over the Pee Dee River were destroyed and the desired blocking positions were established to prevent the enemy from using the main avenues of advance. The Aggressor's attack into Blue Land was slowed down, the Brigade Base of Operations, to include a CV-2 strip was established and two company-size task forces were established and operated in the area to conduct air assault operations against enemy forces in the 2d Brigade zone.

Actually, the Commander of the Aggressor Brigade didn't believe that we had moved this force into the objective area by helicopters.

In summary, I would like to say that during the time we were in the Carolinas, we flew a total of 47,300 hours - this has caused some wives to protest.

VU-GRAPH - CARTOON

Based on Army-wide standards, we had a very enviable safety record. We had a most cordial relationship with the civilians of North and South Carolina.

STORY

And, finally, we think we made a significant contribution to the Army's effort to determine the validity of the Air Assault Concept.