If you visualize an enemy force out there that needs to be taken down..., visualize an armor force which would be obviously a strong opponent to us . . . . We would go out 150 kilometers and start working that force with our Apaches and take most of that force down.

We would only introduce our close battle forces for one or two reasons. One is to help clean that force up if that is necessary. The other is to establish a gas station for our Apaches so we can continue that fight even further.

That is how we would use our close battle forces. Now, they are used in other situations. You need close battle forces (foot infantry) to control populations; you need them to control facilities; you need them to take ownership of ground as you process yourself into a country because that is going to drive you to the center of gravity; that is going to drive you to the war termination event; that is going to drive you to victory.

Now, I'm not minimizing the importance of that force. But, what I'm suggesting to you is how you introduce it and when you introduce it is very different in terms of how we employ this force in the 10lst today and in the 1990s.

MG Keane
CG, 10lst Airborne Division (Air Assault)
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INTRODUCTION

The Evolution of the Air Assault Division

Air assault operations arose from the "airborne idea," one of several solutions suggested to break the brutal trench deadlock of World War I's (WWI) Western Front. In simplest terms, the airborne idea looked to new technology-the airplane-to transport fighting forces across contested front lines into the enemy's vulnerable rear areas.

During WWI, United States Army (USA) Air Corps pioneer Colonel Billy Mitchell drew up plans to parachute the 1st Infantry Division directly into the German-held city of Metz. The war ended before he could try this ambitious plan.

Experimentation before and during World War II (WWII) led to the creation of sizeable airborne forces in Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States. All powers developed parachute troops built around light infantry formations. Each country also activated glider troops centered around more heavily armed combined arms forces which possessed some artillery, vehicles, and even, by 1944, some light armor.

Both parachute and glider forces displayed strengths and weaknesses. The paratroopers often flew from distant bases directly into battle. They could fight upon landing, conducting what we now call a forced entry. But, with their limited array of handheld weapons and their tendency to scatter wildly on night drops, parachute units often could not exploit the initial surprise of their landings.

Glider units could also launch from far-off bases into combat to force an entry. Gliders usually landed a more coherent, heavily armed element on the ground-provided the men and gear inside

survived the impact. However, being at the mercy of their towing airplanes, gliders typically spread out far from their assigned objectives. Therefore, even though the glider force could land a stronger force, it could rarely organize rapidly enough to capitalize on the element of surprise.

The airborne divisions of WWII enjoyed some noteworthy successes. German *falschirmjaegers* pounced on Belgium and Holland in 1940 and seized Crete in 1941. British and American paratroopers secured the beach exits at Normandy in 1944; a smaller contingent helped ease the Rhine crossings in 1945. Despite these triumphs, the constraints of 1940s technology stunted fill development of the airborne idea's potential. As good as airborne soldiers were, they were only able to conduct one assault landing per campaign. And, their lack of heavy armament and available motor transport made them slow in exploiting opening drops. Faced by enemy mobile reserves or stiff opposition on their drop zones (DZs), the paratroopers and glidermen suffered inordinately high casualties, bloody reminders of their lack of firepower and deficient battlefield mobility.

After WWII, technological and doctrinal developments changed the nature of parachute and glider forces. Carried in faster, larger aircraft and equipped with dramatically better airdrop equipment, parachute troops gradually evolved into today's all-weather, more heavily armed airborne units. Even more impressive developments altered the glider portion of the equation.

Army aviation, built around increasingly sophisticated rotary-wing aircraft, grew from an adjunct player to a primary member of the combined arms team. During the Korean War (1950-1953), the Army experimented with aerial medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), and the Marine corps attempted to move fighting men by helicopter. The helicopter offered all the advantages of a glider with two important additions: a pilot could steer it directly onto target, and he could repeat the process again and again.

The 1960s witnessed the birth of Army airmobility, an interim stage between the glider era and modem AASLT methods. The jet-powered utility helicopter (UH)-1 Iroquois (the ubiquitous Huey of Vietnam fame) provided the means. Lieutenant General Hamilton Howze's famous study group suggested the doctrine. The Vietnam War (1965- 1973) provided the testing ground.

In Vietnam, most all units used helicopters to fight, move, and resupply in the dense jungles and mountain ranges. Two divisions, the 1st Cavalry Division and the 101st Airborne Division, fought airmobile formations structured around the speed, range, and lifting power of the new turbine-powered Huey and cargo helicopter (CH)-47 Chinook helicopters.

Despite the many frustrations that dogged the Army in Southeast Asia, airmobile operations clearly showed great promise. However, the nature of the Vietnam War did not demonstrate the full potential of airmobility. Platoon and company engagements against an elusive light infantry opponent offered only the barest hints of the tempo, range, and hitting power of forces fighting aboard rotary-wing aircraft.

The goals in Vietnam were almost exclusively tactical—gaining and maintaining contact. Airmobile forces never struck deep into the enemy's unprotected vitals. Day operations, limited attack aviation roles, and company-size landings typified Vietnam-era use.

After Vietnam, technology and doctrine evolved toward contemporary AASLT operations. A second generation of Army aircraft offered the right tools—squad-carrying UH-60 Blackhawks, medium-lift CH-47D Chinooks, and the attack helicopter (AH)-64 Apache gunships, all capable of flying and fighting at night. The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) developed the tactics and techniques for using these potent new flying machines.

During Operation Desert Storm in February 1991, a hundred miles into Iraq, AASLT forces came of age. The 101st Airborne turned the Iraqi flank and severed enemy withdrawal routes. Attack helicopters and air assault task forces (AATFs) ranged across an area some 300 by 200

miles deep conducting 3 brigade-scale air assaults in 4 days. In doing so, the AASLT division helped determine the outcome of the Persian Gulf War.

The Air Assault Division's Combat Power

The 101st Air Assault Division is a microcosm of Army aviation. Every battlefield operating system (BOS) element in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) uses Army aviation to accomplish its mission.

The AASLT division can extend Army operations to operational depth, habitually flying and fighting at night. Using organic Army aviation, the division can—

- Air assault one brigade with habitual attachments out to 150 kilometers (km) every 24 hours.
- Attack deep with three attack aviation battalions out to 150 kilometers every 24 hours.

As demonstrated by its performance during the Persian Gulf War, the division can operate at this pace for from 72 to 96 hours. After maintaining this operational tempo (OPTEMPO) for up to 96 hours, the division must reduce its OPTEMPO for a period of from 24 to 48 hours to plan, maintain, and sustain operations for division units.

The AASLT division rapidly deploys lead units by air to any contingency area in the world. When possible, it self-deploys its aviation assets to the contingency location.

The AASLT division's lead battalion task force (TF) can begin movement 18 hours after notification. Depending on the conditions in theater, the division can fly directly into a secure area in country or assemble at an intermediate staging base (ISB) outside the future area of operations (AO).

Working from an ISB, the division can conduct an AASLT forced entry. The division has the mobility and combat power to expand its initial forced lodgment in an aggressive, swift, and potentially decisive way. The remainder of the division deploys via airlift or sealift based on mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available (METT-T).

All types of Army divisions make important contributions to battlefield success. However, the AASLT division combines a particularly potent and impressive array of capabilities. It also operates farther and faster than other divisions and is generally free from terrain restrictions.

With the fire power of its attack aviation and the tenacity of its AASLT infantry, the AASLT division possesses the strength to hold its own against enemy armored regiments in conventional combat. Although much of the division normal] y deploys via sealift, the division's relatively light structure allows it to quickly move via airlift. Its aviation mobile combined arms punch makes it a force to be reckoned with in crisis-response contingencies. In short, the AASLT division constitutes a force designed to meet the majority of foreseeable armed conflicts or even operations other than war (OOTW).

Fundamentals of Air Assault Division Employment

The AASLT division is organized, equipped, and trained for decisive combat. Aviation and combined arms create remarkable agility bold leaders employ personal initiative to seize and hold battlefield initiative; and the division fights and sustains in the extraordinary depth unique to AASLT forces. To do this, they synchronize their efforts around the following five ideas (aligned with the tenets of Army operations):

1. FIGHT DEEP (depth). Potent combined arms teams jump the enemy's front lines and leap over forbidding terrain, all to get into the hostile rear area and hurt the enemy where he can least tolerate the damage. Over all other considerations, the wholehearted commitment to the tenet of

depth, exploiting the potential to go deep and slash at the enemy's vitals, characterizes the AASLT division.

2. FIGHT FAST (agility). Reaching almost four times the best speed of mechanized forces, an AASLT division can plan and execute actions faster than the enemy can react. Intensive training and a shared vision of the battlefield allow division leadership to see, think, decide, and act at an accelerated, synchronized tempo.

3. FIGHT HARD (initiative). Attacking deep into enemy rear areas with speedy rotary-winged aircraft, the AASLT division rapidly concentrates overwhelming combat power well behind enemy lines. Air assault commanders fight opportunistically, flying and marching to the sound of the guns, always alert for chances to destroy the enemy.

4. FIGHT OFTEN (synchronization). Decisive AASLT operations require the ability to deliver a relentless, synchronized succession of attacks, knocking the foe down and finishing him off. The division conducts combat operations on a continuous basis fighting around the clock. Division logistic units conduct sustainment operations both day and night to support the force. When necessary, the division conducts reconstitution operations for identified units.

5. FIGHT JOINT AND COMBINED (versatility). The AASLT division is a force-projection division, which can easily act in conjunction with air, naval, and space assets, and can fight as a partner with allied nations.

Synchronization of AASLT forces across time and space allows them to fight deep, fast, hard, and often. In an AASLT division, time is always at a premium. Synchronization measures must be routine and in place before fighting begins. Equally important, other Army commanders who direct the AASLT division should know how best to employ its unique capabilities.