

The Big Picture – Pentomic Seventh Army

Narrator: The use of helicopters reinforces the mobility potential of a Pentomic Army. It turned out the alert was only practice, but we were not to return to camp. A full-scale combat exercise had been ordered. Our mission: to move by air to a drop zone near a group of villages 50 miles away.

Quickly, gun-mounted jeeps were hooked up to H34 helicopters. The jeeps are soon headed toward our destination. It's a lot easier than driving all the way. Loaded with gasoline, ammunition and other supplies, the choppers hover over the drop zone. It's quick work to unload the gun-mounted jeep.

All of us participating in the combat exercise had been airlifted to the area. Soon to come, the closest thing to the real thing: a mock attack on nearby towns where there is simulated enemy resistance.

Meanwhile, the commanding officer detailed a plan of attack. Sure by atomic standards, this was not to be a big deal, strictly a few twigs in a brushfire action, but we have to be prepared for all kinds of warfare, nuclear and conventional. Right up to the move out, we checked our ammo, 81 and 105 millimeter shells, grenades, M1 clips, mortar shells. The combat exercise would be simulated, but there was nothing phony about the stuff we'd be firing...