



OPÉRATION DAGUET, OPERATION BROCKET (1990–1991)

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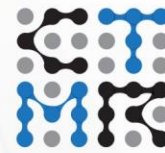
Abstract: *This paper following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, the president of the French Republic, Francois Mitterrand, announces on August 9 the dispatch of the forces of the French army, in particular the aircraft carrier «Clemenceau» and the ships of the National Navy, in order to ensure the protection of the Persian Gulf. This is operation «Salamander». But when on September 14, 1990, the Iraqi army violates international laws and invests the French embassy in Kuwait City, a new operation is set up: «Operation «Daguet»».*

Key words: *participation, coordination, communication, additionnent, lancement.*

Introduction

It consists of the participation of the French division, the «Daguet» division, in the international coalition invested against Iraq. From this date, «Operation «Desert Shield»» («Desert Shield») begins, which marks a long period of preparation of the troops before the allied offensive baptized «Desert Storm». Coordination of operation is ensured by General Michel Roquejeoffre. The Daguet Division was commanded by General Jean-Charles Mouscardes, from September 22, 1990 to February 8, 1991, when he was replaced for health reasons by General Janvier. «Desert Shield» is an important strategic phase for the French army because it mobilizes more than 16,000 soldiers and deploys impressive technical and logistical means to establish the French army camps in the heart of the Saudi desert. This phase allows the unhindered participation of French soldiers in the offensive of the coalitions launched on January 17, 1991. After the launch of a powerful air action aimed at weakening the enemy's reaction capabilities and guaranteeing control of the airspace of the theater of operation, the so-called «lightning» air offensive makes it possible in about a hundred hours to lead the allied forces to success and to the Iraqi surrender.

The strategy of the American General Schwarzkopf foresaw from December 7, 1990, the conduct of a powerful air action in order to weaken the enemy reaction capabilities and guarantee the control of the airspace of the theater operation. This action was to last as long as necessary, that is in principle a fortnight. The Allies adopted a global air strategy articulated around four main types of missions, which could overlap at times, to neutralize the Iraqi living forces, the lines of communication, the air defense and finally the divisions of the Iraqi battle corps. The first mission was



aimed at acquiring air superiority and supremacy by destroying the Iraqi air potential, simultaneously conducting a defensive and offensive battle. The defensive part consisted in intercepting possible enemy air attacks and destroying all the planes in flight. The air superiority was acquired in about ten hours after the start of operation, thanks to the defense system set up.

Material and Methods

The offensive air battle was aimed at destroying or neutralizing Iraqi air capabilities on the ground, and destroying the command and control system of operations: operation centers, radars, transmissions. It also included attack airfields, aircraft shelters and Scud missile ramps. The neutralization of the runways, the destruction on the ground of the protected aircraft in hardened installations and the destruction of the missile ramps took time. The systematic destruction of aircraft shelters led to the flight, around February 1, of 122 Iraqi aircraft to Iran. Total supremacy was obtained after seven to ten days. The second mission of aviation concerned the strategic objectives: nuclear installations, chemical and biological plants, weapons plants, power plants. 30% of the main strategic objectives were destroyed during the first night, especially in the outskirts of Baghdad, by the F-117 stealth aircraft. Over time, priority has been given to other missions and strategic objectives have been attacked with less intensity. The third mission aimed to cut off the supply routes of the Iraqi ground units and to harass the latter to weaken them. Bridges, communication routes, depots of equipment and ammunition were systematically destroyed, and elite units systematically bombed. The Iraqi presidential guard was bombed day and night by allied aircraft and B-52 bombers. This phase lasts about three weeks. The last mission was aimed at preparing and directly supporting the ground offensive. This one having lasted only a hundred hours and the front line evolving very quickly, this phase of aerial action was less significant.

Results

On the way to al-Salman, a rocky desert area allows the Iraqi defense to bury its tanks and its positions in the sand and rock. Covered by a RICM squadron and by MILAN (Regiment of Dragons) advance towards the enemy and launch an attack: 155 mm shots, and rocket bludgeoning. The 44 AMX-30 blinds of the 4th RD progress in turn towards the Iraqi fortifications: Iraqi soldiers surrender from the first minutes. Once the fight ends, they are taken care of by the porpoises of the 2nd RIMa (Marine Infantry Regiment). Rochambeau is taken. The next day, the attack is launched at 6:00 in the morning, on the central axis: an artillery support allows the porpoises to move towards their final objective, the al-Salman airfield.



Discussion

On February 26, at 7 am, a section of the 4th company of the 3rd RIMa, the 1st MIPRa (Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment) and some American elements enter the al-Salman village where psychological action begins in order to gather and protect the civilian population. At the same time, the village of al-Salman must be searched to eliminate all the traps. At 13:30, the site is fully controlled 24 hours ahead of schedule. The French soldiers take the last 18 prisoners, which add up to the 219 of the previous day. The units of the Marine troops then ensure the internal and external security of the village. But this same day also marks a tragedy for the French army. While the staff of the CRAP (Intelligence and action Commando in the depth) of the 1st MIPRa penetrate the fort of al-Salman, PC of the Iraqi division, they are victims of a first explosion of mines. A second, a few moments later, brings to 23 the number of wounded. Thanks to the organization of the 9th ACA (Aerotransportable surgical antenna), Puma medical helicopters evacuate the wounded who are transferred to Orly by Transall C-160 transport plane or by Boeing C-135-FR on the night of February 27 to 28.

Conclusion

The adapted structures of the French Air Force allowed it in a short time to set up an important and complete device, committing 55 combat aircraft to 7,000 km from the metropolis. The French air force coordinated with the Allied air force, mandatory behavior in a restricted airspace where more than 2,000 planes were leaving per day. The ground combat launched on February 24 made it possible to achieve the assigned objectives without fail and to complete the success of the French mission in an effective military cooperation within the allied coalition. During the months of March and April 1991, the French detachment continues its operations of demolition of the beaches of Kuwait City. The first beach completely cleared by the sappers of the parachute engineer is inaugurated at the beginning of April, in the presence of General Roquejeoffre and Georgina Dufoix, president of the French Red Cross. Characterized by the decision of President Francois Mitterrand not to involve the calls of the contingent and by his political will for a carefully measured French commitment, French intervention in the Gulf represented a laboratory of the concept of modularity and contributed to redefine French military tool at the end of the Cold War, by orienting towards the professionalization of the armed forces.

Acknowledgement

Iraq accepts the twelve resolutions of the Security Council. The ceasefire takes effect at 8 am. The French embassy in Kuwait, which had been occupied by the Iraqi



army since September 14, 1990, in violation of international laws, is taken over by a commando of paratroopers and at 13:30, the tricolor flag is hoisted there during a ceremony in honor of its reopening in the presence of journalists. Colonel Michel Monier Vinard, commander of the detachment in Kuwait, then declares: "The flag of France is flying again on our embassy in free Kuwait. International law has been restored, thanks to the authority of the United Nations. This victory was paid for by the sacrifice of the lives of some. We will observe a minute of silence to honor their memory, because on its side, the French army also pays a heavy.

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