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● Daring sea-borne landing saves besieged camp

Rescue troops enter Pooneryn

By Sugeeswara Senadhira and W. G. Gooneratne

In a daring sea-borne operation, ordered by President D. B. Wijetunge, about 200 crack army commandos landed on the beach front of the Pooneryn camp and linked up with the 1000 besieged soldiers yesterday. Military sources said that at 11.55 a.m. the troops landed on the beach front of the camp and penetrated the defence put up by the heavily-armed Tiger terrorists after destroying the terrorist outpost on the coast.

The reinforcements from Kankasanturai reached Pooneryn by crossing the Jaffna Lagoon in small boats with powerful out-board motors and landed at the beach front near the camp. They were guided by some troops from the besieged camp who swam to the boats dodging Tiger fire. Lt. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne was monitoring overall operations from a ship near Pooneryn.

"We have now gained the upper hand and the Tiger terrorists are fleeing," said Defence Secretary, General Hamilton Wanasinghe yesterday.

Col. Shantha Kottegoda, Commanding Officer of the Kayts Island, Major Lalith Davulagala Commanding Officer of 3 Gajaba Regiment led the landing group which included troops from the Commando Unit and the Gemunu Regiment. "With air, artillery and naval cover the troops linked-up with the besieged soldiers at Pooneryn", a military source said.

This has strengthened the group which had succeeded in re-grouping within the camp premises and are valiantly fighting the heavily-armed Tiger terrorist groups who overran a section of the camp. Military sources confirmed that heavy fighting was going on for the third day since the surprise pre-dawn attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Thursday.

The landing operation yesterday succeeded after two attempts made on Friday to send reinforcements had failed mainly due to bad weather conditions.

According to military intelligence obtained through LTTE radio interceptions 407 Tigers have been killed in the battle field. About half the dead are reported to be from the Eastern Province. Nearly 20 per cent of the dead are said to be officers of the LTTE military wing. The Army and Navy casualty figures are not available but it is estimated to be around 300. Large number of bodies are scattered all over the 12-kilometre radius of the Forward Defence Line (FDL) of the Pooneryn camp and adjacent Nagaventurai Naval Base, reports said. The Voice of Tigers has admitted that 200 LTTE cadres including a few unit leaders were killed.

Military sources said: "Tigers launched two major attacks

Fighting in Pooneryn will continue - PM

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says that fighting in Pooneryn is still continuing and will continue. The fighting on Friday was compounded by the fact that there was bad weather from 12 noon on Friday.

Mr. Wickremesinghe said that the senior Service Commanders were now all in Jaffna directing operations and their efforts has stabilised the situation.

Pointing out that it was still too early to give the number of casualties on both sides he said: "Any war will come to an end and it was only then that reports can be made. He

said that the thoughts of the Government and everyone else were with the families of all the servicemen in Jaffna. More so to those who have suffered the death of their loved ones.

On behalf of the Government and the Parliament he conveyed these thoughts to the relations of service personnel in the Pooneryn battle.

He appealed to the Opposition and others to first concentrate on the efforts made by the Service Commanders to stabilise the situation to save lives and consolidate the present positions, rather than getting involved in a debate of what happened.

"It is too early to say anything. Any battle will finally end and at that stage we can send in reports to Parliament and invariably an inquiry will be held. At present all I could do is to wish all success to the Service Commanders and to our troops in Pooneryn and in Jaffna" he said.

on Friday on the re-grouped soldiers but both were successfully repulsed by the soldiers fighting under the command of Lt. Col. Ranjith Silva, inflicting heavy casualties on the Tigers." Before the reinforcements landed the Tigers were trying to prevent three or four groups of soldiers re-grouped outside the main camp from reaching either the camp or the beach-head. They continuously fired at the naval crafts which were attempting to land. The helicopters also were unable to land because of the long-range, 50 guns mounted around the FDL by the Tigers.

Meanwhile, as a diversionary tactic, the LTTE launched another attack at the Vasavilan outpost at the Palaly base camp in Jaffna. Five soldiers died and another 40 were injured in the attack. Twelve Tigers were killed during the attack. Military sources said that the injured were rushed to Colombo hospitals.

The Air Force has bombed several "known LTTE targets" in Jaffna. The Defence Ministry announced that curfew in the Northern Province would continue until further notice.

In Colombo, a Defence Ministry source regretted that a church and an office building were damaged during these aerial strikes.

A military source also said: "Our first task is to evacuate the wounded. At the same time we will help the scattered troops to re-group with the main group fighting the terrorists within the FDL (Forward Defence Line) of the camp", he said.

Get back Pooneryn at any cost - President

By Ananth Palakidnra



President D.B. Wijetunga has directed the three service commanders who are currently in the North directing the operations to rescue the trapped and the wounded soldiers at any cost and to win back Pooneryn, Defence Secretary General Hamilton Wanasinghe said yesterday.

General Wanasinghe held a press briefing yesterday at the Army Headquarters to explain the present situation at Pooneryn.

"The reinforcements comprising the elite commandos of the Sri Lanka Army had landed at Pooneryn and linked themselves with the ground troops who were scattered following the surprise attack launched by the LTTE last Thursday," General Wanasinghe said.

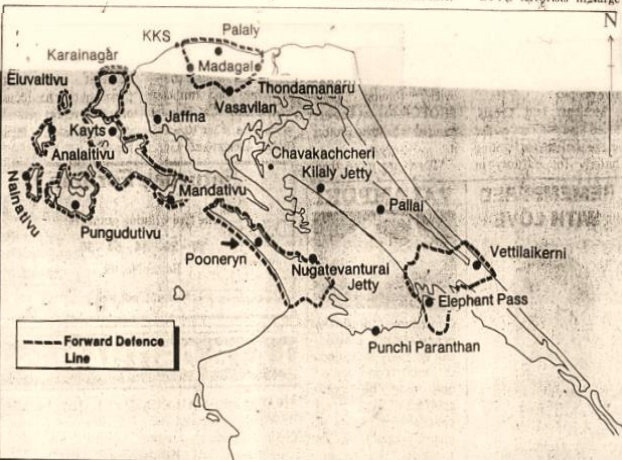
Headed that the Inter-

ment forces. The airmen have also destroyed two waterjets and two battle tanks captured by the LTTE," he added.

Commenting on the operations taking place in Jaffna, he said that the Air Force planes had attacked the headquarters of the Tamil Eelam Police Force situated at Old Park Jaffna.

The Defence Ministry issued the following press release yesterday:

"In the early hours of the morning of Thursday 11th November 1993, LTTE terrorists in large



national Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), had informed the Army about arrangements to hand over the bodies of the dead.

"We have intercepted the LTTE communication and found that the LTTE has lost 294 cadres including 66 women. Currently the Air Force is active in destroying the LTTE cadres who are retreating following the landing of the crack rein-

forcements staged a four-pronged surprise attack on the military positions in the Pooneryn sector. Pooneryn is located at the tip of the mainland on the Southern flank of the Jaffna Lagoon, approximately 20 miles North West of Kilinochchi. The military positions included - 2 Army Camps and 1 Navy Establishment consisting of 1,800 troops.

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