

22 NOVEMBER 1967/WWH

79

O 221325Z

FM GEN ABRAMS DEPCOMUSMACV

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS

INFO ADM SHARPE CINCPAC HAWAII

GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV

~~SECRET~~ MAC 11239

IT IS 1800 NOVEMBER 22, IN SAIGON AND I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM KONTUM PROVINCE. I SPENT SOME TIME WITH PEERS AND LTCOL LUAT, THE SPECIAL ZONE COMMANDER FOR PLEIKU AND KONTUM AND HIS ADVISOR COL KAUFFMAN. I VISITED BRIEFLY WITH COL JOHNSON 1ST BRIGADE 4TH AND COL RATTAN 1ST BRIGADE 1ST CAV, AND A GOOD TALK WITH SCHWEITER OF THE 173D. I THEN FLEW OVER MUCH OF THE BATTLE AREA.

IN LATE OCTOBER INTELLIGENCE INDICATED THAT THE 1ST NVA DIVISION WAS PREPARING TO ATTACK DAK TO.

DEPLOYMENTS TO KONTUM

DATE	US	ARVN
NOV	UNITS	UNITS
1	1BDE, 4TH DIV	1/42 ARVN
2	3/12; 4/503; 3/8	3/42; 2/42 ARVN

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By iss, NARS, Date 5-7-84

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5

CP 173D ABN BDE

1/503

9TH ABN

7

8

23RD RNGR (REPLACED 2/42)

9

2/503

10

1/8

11

1/12 CAV

12

13

3RD ABN

14

HQS 1ST BDE 1ST CAV

2/8 CAV

15

2ND ABN & TF HQS (REPLACED 9TH ABN)

16

17

18

19

20

1/12 INF

7TH ABN; 22ND RNGR

21

22

(3/42 DEPARTS)

TOTAL

9 US BNS

6 ARVN BNS

DAK TO LIES ON A VALLEY FLOOR ADJACENT TO A RIVER.
TO THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST DAK TO IS SURROUNDED
BY MOUNTAINS RIDGES AND PEAKS EXTENDING FOR MANY
KILOMETERS IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THESE PEAKS AND RIDGES
VARY BETWEEN 800-1300 METERS IN HEIGHT. THE
SLOPES ARE STEEP, THEY ARE COVERED BY TREES 100 TO 200
FT HIGH AND UP TO FOUR FEET IN DIAMETER AND TOPPED WITH

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DOUBLE AND TRIPLE CANOPY. IN ORDER TO PREVENT AN ATTACK ON DAK TO YOU MUST SECURE THE HIGH GROUND AROUND IT. THIS THE 4TH DIV BEGAN ON 4 NOV AND MADE ITS FIRST CONTACT ON THE FIRST RIDGE SOUTH OF DAK TO. ON SUCCESSIVE DAYS THE 1ST BRIGADE 4TH PUSHED SOUTH AND WEST FROM DAK TO, THE 173D PUSHED WEST AND THEN SOUTHWEST AND THE ARVN PUSHED OUT TO THE NORTH, NORTHEAST AND EAST. THEY HAVE ALL FOUND THE ENEMY IN DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ON THE TOPS OF THE PEAKS AND RIDGES. I VIEWED ONE POSITION TODAY CONSISTING OF 3 CONCENTRIC TRENCHES MAKING 3 COMPLETE CIRCLES AROUND THE TOP OF ONE MOUNTAIN. I AM INFORMED THAT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TRENCH ARE SOME HORIZONTAL HOLES DUG BACK INTO THE MOUNTAIN WHERE THE ENEMY STAYS DURING BOMBING AND ARTILLERY.

THE PATTERN OF ENEMY DEPLOYMENT NOW APPEARS TO BE THE 24TH REGIMENT WITH ITS 4TH AND 5TH BATTALIONS AND THE 304TH VC BATTALION NORTHEAST AND EAST OF DAK TO. THE 1ST NVA DIVISION WITH THE 66TH, 32D AND 174TH REGIMENTS AND THE 6TH BN OF THE 24TH REGIMENT SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST AND WEST OF DAK TO. IN THE LAST 2 DAYS THE 4TH BN OF THE 95 B HAS MOVED IN WEST OF KONTUM CITY.

SINCE THE FIGHTING BEGAN 4 NOVEMBER IT HAS BEEN HARD AND TENACIOUS ON BOTH SIDES. A DEFECTOR FROM THE 32D REGIMENT SAID HIS UNIT HAD NOT HAD FOOD FOR SIX DAYS. THIS IS NOT A GENERAL CONDITION EVEN IF TRUE IN HIS UNIT. THE BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE 4TH BN 24TH WAS CAPTURED AND LATER DIED OF WOUNDS. HE HAD ON HIS PERSON A HAND WRITTEN DIRECTIVE THAT HE WOULD DEFEND HIS POSITION TO THE LAST MAN. THIS IS THE POSITION ASSAULTED

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AND TAKEN BY THE ARVN AIRBORNE TASK FORCE. ON THE
4, 15, AND 16 THERE WAS A LULL EXCEPT FOR THE MORTAR
ATTACKS ON THE DAK TO BASE. ON THE 17TH HEAVY FIGHTING
BEGAN AGAIN AND CONTINUES TO NOW. THIS IS BROUGHT ABOUT
BY FRIENDLY FORCES PRESSING FURTHER OUT. TODAY THE FIGHT-
ING CONTINUES FOR HILL 875 ABOUT 8 KM FROM THE BORDER
AND 882 ABOUT 5 KM FROM THE BORDER. MANY SECONDARY
EXPLOSIONS COME FROM ALMOST ALL STRIKES IN THE VALLEYS
WEST OF THE RIDGES.

FRIENDLY CASUALTIES

UNIT	KIA	WIA	MIA
1ST BRIG 4TH	76	355	5
4TH DIV ARTY	2	22	
DIV TROOPS	4	4	
SUPPORT NON DIV	6	17	
173D	157	430	11
1ST BRIG 1ST CAV	4	15	
TOTAL US	249	843	16
ARVN	47	182	3
2D; 3D; 7TH AIRBORNE			
3/42D REGIMENT			
22 RANGER BN			
CIDG	2	19	
MIKE FORCE	5	19	
TOTAL			
ALL FORCES	303	1063	19

THE MEDICAL OFFICERS ESTIMATE THAT OF THE WOUNDED

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EVACUATED 75 PERCENT TO 80 PERCENT WILL BE RETURNED TO DUTY FROM IN COUNTRY FACILITIES. SOME MEN IN THE 2D OF THE 503D WERE WOUNDED UP TO 48 HOURS BEFORE BEING EVACUATED. SOME MEN OF THE 3/8TH INF WERE WOUNDED UP TO 24 HOURS BEFORE BEING EVACUATED. THIS WAS BECAUSE OF INTENSE FIRE ON THE LZ AND IN ONE CASE THE DUST-OFF WAS HIT BY A B40 ROCKET IN THE LZ AND EXPLODED AND BURNED. THE LZ HAD TO COOL OFF AND BE CLEARED BEFORE EVACUATION COULD BE RESUMED. SERIOUSLY WOUNDED ARE TAKEN FROM DAK TO TO THE 71ST EVAC IN PLEIKU IN A SPECIALLY FITTED AND EQUIPPED CHINOOK - MEDICAL PERSONNEL, PLASMA, WHOLE BLOOD, ETC. OF THE WOUNDED WHOSE EVACUATION WAS DELAYED ONLY 2 LATER DIED INTHE HOSPITAL.

SINCE THE 4TH OF NOVEMBER 1408 TAC AIR SORTIES HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THIS FIGHT. ON ONE SMALL POSITION ALONE 40 SORTIES LOADED WITH 1000 LB BOMBS WERE APPLIED. 194 B 52 SORTIES HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THESE OPERATIONS.

ARTILLERY	TUBES	ROUNDS FIRED
105	50	77,748
155	17	15,784
175	4	2,120
8IN	6	4,483

TOTAL	77	TOTAL 100,135

AND 6 AERIAL ARTILLERY PIECES.

LOGISTICS-295 TONS PER DAY BY AIR TO DAK TO. 532 TONS PER DAY BY TRUCK FROM QUI NHON TO DAK TO (246 KM). 200 TONS PER DAY BY TRUCK FROM QUI NHON TO KONTUM CITY.

THE PERSONNEL STRENGTH IN ALL UNITS IS GOOD EXCEPT

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THE 173D THEIR BATTALION SHOULD HAVE A FOXHOLE STRENGTH OF 450. THE 1/503 HAS TODAY 360, THE 2/503 HAS 203 AND THE 4/503 HAS 292. THERE ARE 179 REPLACEMENTS AT AN KHE FOR THE 173D.

ENEMY CASUALTIES BODY COUNT

1ST BRIG 4TH	457
1ST BRIG 1ST CAV	9
173D	434
ARVN	255
MIKE FORCE, CIDG	4

TOTAL 1159

AND 19 PRISONERS

I BELIEVE THAT THE ENEMY OBJECTIVE WAS TO ATTACK DAK TO AND PROBABLY BEN HET THE NEW SITE UNDER PREPARATION FOR CIDG. BY THIS ATTACK HE WOULD DRAW FORCES TO KONTUM WHERE HE WOULD CAUSE MAXIMUM ATTRITION TO OUR FORCES. CAPTURED DOCUMENTS INDICATE THAT EACH ENEMY REGIMENT WAS CHARGED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF ONE US BATTALION. A PRISONER FROM A TRANSPORTATION UNIT STATED THAT FOR ALL OF OCTOBER ALL TROOPS WERE EMPLOYED CARRYING SUPPLIES AND AMMUNITION INTO KONTUM AND PREPARING POSITIONS. TODAY THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AT HAND THAT HE IS WITHDRAWING. HE MAY BE FIGHTING HARD TO GET HIS SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT OUT. GEN SCHVIETER FEELS THE 173D HAS MADE INEFFECTIVE 4 ENEMY BATTALIONS FROM THE 66TH AND 174TH.

WE DEPLOYED TO DAK TO BASED ON INTELLIGENCE. WE WENT OUT FROM DAK TO TO PREPT HIS ATTACK AND TO FIND

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HIM AND DESTROY HIM. WE HAVE PRESSED OUTWARD AND BELIEVE WE ARE ASTRIDE HIS MAIN AVENUES OF WITHDRAWAL BETWEEN HIS MAIN FORCES AND THE BORDER. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS HIM BRINGING THE FULL WEIGHT OF FIREPOWER TO BEAR.

THE BATTLEFIELD IN KONTUM RESEMBLES A CHESS BOARD AT PLAY. WE HAVE UNITS AND FIRE BASES ON PEAKS AND RIDGES AND THE ENEMY HAS TOO. WE SHIFT OURS BY HELICOPTER TO CHECK HIM OR GET BEHIND HIM OR ASSAULT HIM. EXTENSIVE USE IS MADE OF LRRP, MIKE FORCES, CIDG, THE PEOPLE SNIFFER, AIR OBSERVERS AND ALL OTHER MEANS TO LOCATE THE ENEMY. WHEN FOUND MAXIMUM FIRE POWER IS PUT ON HIM. I BELIEVE WHEN THE ENEMY COMES FORTH FROM CAMBODIA OR LAOS WITH HIS PRINCIPAL FORMATIONS LOOKING FOR A FIGHT WE MUST GO OUT AND FIGHT HIM. THE LEADERS WE HAVE TO DO IT - PEERS, SCHWIETER, JOHNSON AND RATTAN ARE AMONG THE MOST TALENTED.

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS UNTIL WE HAVE SWEEPED THE AREA UP TO WITHIN 3 KILOMETERS OF THE BORDER.

~~SECRET~~

NO REFERENCE SHOULD BE
MADE TO THIS MESSAGE IN
OTHER THAN USASSD CHANNELS

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