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Appendix I (Case Study: Operation SOMERSET PLAIN) to Combat After Action Report, Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

CASE STUDY: OPERATION SOMERSET PLAIN

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P R E F A C E

This case study of operation SOMERSET PLAIN was prepared to illustrate techniques developed by the 101st Airborne Division when operating along distant lines of communication against a wily, evasive enemy in areas where terrain and the vagaries of weather tend to favor the enemy.

Included in this study are the development of forward supply areas and fire support bases, methods of resupply, combat assault techniques, the use of artillery and tactical air support, a method for employing minefields with sensor devices at night, the use of smoke for screening landing zones and pickup zones, and the employment of BLU-52 bombs.

It is hoped the information contained herein, and the lessons learned by this division will be instructive for other military organizations, whether tasked with training officers, enlisted men or entire units for deployment, and for forces employed in a similar environment.

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The last elements of the 101st Airborne Division were withdrawn from the A SHAU Valley on 19 August 1968, thus marking the termination of Operation SOMERSET PLAIN. This was the initial large scale operation conducted by the division since the beginning of its reorganization to conform with the airmobile concept. Early in July the Commanding General, XXIV Corps, considered an operation in the A SHAU Valley, and at the urging of Major General Melvin Zais, Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division, the Corps Commander selected the Screaming Eagles for the mission. Final planning for the operation commenced when the Corps Commander stated, "The 101st Airborne Division will conduct offensive operations in the A SHAU Valley with one US brigade, plus a two-battalion task force from the 1st Division, Republic of Vietnam, to interdict enemy lines of communications, to destroy North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong forces, caches and installations, and on order, to establish designated barriers."

General Zais decided to employ the First Brigade as the US element because battalions of this brigade were favorably disposed in the direction of the valley. The Commanding General of the Army of Vietnam's 1st Division provided the 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Regiment; the Black Panther Company, which is an elite reaction force; and artillery and engineer support. (See Appendix I, TASK ORGANIZATION.) With this as a brief introduction, let us take a closer look at a period in the history of this famed division, a period which was to test the imagination of senior commanders and staff officers, and the stamina and determination of the individual paratroopers - the inheritors of the spirit of the

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airborne engendered at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, in 1942, and proven in combat at Carentan, Eindhoven, Bastogne, Tuy Hoa and Dak To.

The verdant A SHAU Valley and adjacent mountains, pleasing though they are to the eye, present problems of communication and movement to the ground combat soldier. The valley averages a kilometer and a half in width. It is an undulating plain with local relief up to fifty meters, and it is covered with brushwood, clear forests and tall elephant grass. The RAO LAO River flows through the valley from southeast to northwest until it reaches TA BAT where it turns to the west, and continues on into LAOS. The mountains on both sides of the valley rise sharply up to heights of almost 5,000 feet. Most of the mountains are covered with double or triple canopy jungle. Undergrowth is very dense in most places, limiting rapid foot movement to trails, which are usually along ridgelines and streambeds. In some places, craggy peaks rise above the jungle growth. The principal road in the area is Route 548, which is a fair-weather improved road, varying in width from three to six meters. Routes 547 and 547A are subsidiary roads from one to three meters in width. (See Sketch Map 1.)

Weather conditions conformed generally to preoperation forecasts, except for the predicted occurrence of early morning fog and the height of afternoon ceilings. Early morning fog was prevalent, but it had usually dissipated by 0800 hours, earlier by some two hours than predicted. Fog caused a change in the sequence of combat assaults, but this had no impact on operations. Mountains were usually obscured by

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low ceiling between 0600 and 0800 hours. Afternoon cumuliiform ceilings favored a height of 3,500 to 4,000 feet thus placing cloud bases above most of the ridgelines. Because of these generally favorable conditions, factors of weather did not usually adversely affect aviation operations.

The importance of the valley to the enemy is palpable. His activities there since the US Special Forces camp near the town of A SHAU was overrun in February 1966 only reinforce the obvious. The valley has served as one of the enemy's principal lines of communication into the I Corps Tactical Zone. A special intelligence study published on 22 July indicated enemy activity had increased subsequent to Operation DELAWARE, which was conducted by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during the period 19 April to 17 May. Enemy units identified as probably operating in the vicinity of the valley were: the 29th North Vietnamese Regiment; the 6th North Vietnamese Regiment; the 9th Independent North Vietnamese Battalion; the 40th Battalion, 65th Artillery Regiment; elements of the 280th Air Defense Regiment; the 33d Battalion, 308th Engineer Regiment; Military Station 7, 559th Transportation Group; an unidentified signal battalion; and, possibly, the 3d Battalion, 203d Armored Regiment. Enemy units identified positively during the operation were the 816th and 818th Battalions of the 9th North Vietnamese Regiment. This was one of the most significant aspects of the intelligence effort because the 9th Regiment had not been identified since the TET Offensive, and had been dropped from Order of Battle holdings.

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Against this array of enemy power, the division commander decided on a concept of conducting the operation in five phases. Phase I (4-5 August) was the combat assault of maneuver battalions into the valley, except for the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, which would provide security for the construction of fire bases, and conduct reconnaissance in force operations along Route 547A. In Phase II battalions conducted reconnaissance in force operations, and combat assaults to the west, to interdict enemy lines of communications near Objectives HOPTOWN and PERRY. One US company attacked to clear and hold the high ground designated as Objective BEAK. Phase III was the searching out and destruction of enemy forces in the vicinity of Objectives HOPTOWN, PERRY and ESSEX. The denial plan of Phase IV consisted of placing mines and sensor devices along choke points to impede enemy movement, and to inflict casualties after the withdrawal of friendly units from the valley. The brigade coordinated the extraction during Phase V of the Vietnamese units on E-Day and the US maneuver battalions on E+1.

Before these operations could be launched, however, the significant problems of resupply and fire support had to be resolved. Daily tonnage requirements of all classes of supply, helicopter lift assets and flight times from existing logistical support points to the valley were subjected to a detailed analysis. The operation could have been supported directly from Camp Eagle; however, a forward supply point would obviously reduce the cost of the operation in terms of fuel and flying time. Another

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consideration was to reduce the time expended for gunships to refuel and rearm, thus providing more support by these assets in the area of operations. The forward facility had to be completed by 30 July because Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, attached to the 101st for the operation, was scheduled to start operations on that date.

The Commanding General decided to expand an existing fire base, BIRMINGHAM, to enable the optimum use of resources. The expansion included two Class V helipads, each of which could accommodate two CH-47's; one Class I, II, and IV, III and water helipad with a capacity for three CH-47's; four CH-47 refuel points; a pick-up zone for fifty UH-1 troopships with an adjacent fifteen point refuel facility; a refuel/rearm pad for eighteen gunships; and a staging area for two infantry battalions. (See Sketch Map 2.) Construction started on 26 July and was completed on schedule four days later. By establishing the forward supply point, the flight time for each CH-47 sortie was reduced nine minutes, and for each UH-1 sortie, it was reduced ten minutes.

A five-day level of all classes of supply, except Class III, was prestocked at BIRMINGHAM. The Class I stock was based on unit strengths, and Class V was based on the number of weapons and a six month usage factor. One hundred thousand gallons, or two days, of Class III were stored at this facility, because this amount would support the two days of maximum expenditure, i.e., the days on which combat assaults were conducted. As an emergency measure, three days of supplies for two

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infantry battalions were rigged for air drop, and USAF air controllers were attached to maneuver units. This latter procedure is now standard for all large division operations.

With the logistical support problem resolved, attention was focused on constructing fire bases near the valley to insure infantry units would always operate within the range of at least one artillery unit. An aerial reconnaissance was conducted by senior infantry, artillery, engineer and signal commanders. Their purpose was to make certain fire bases could be constructed and defended on the proposed locations, that necessary artillery support could be provided, and that communications between fire bases and rear areas could be established and maintained. It was determined that four fire bases would be required. A lesser number would have sufficiently covered the area of operation, but the terrain restricted the number of artillery pieces which could be placed on any one fire base. To construct a large fire base would require moving a considerable amount of earth. Therefore, the decision was made to construct more and smaller fire bases.

The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, operating in the vicinity of Fire Base VEGHEL, was given the mission of providing security for the additional bases. To do this, the battalion commander directed one company to attack west from VEGHEL up the valley of the RAO NHO River, and then south to the site of Fire Base SON. En route, the company encountered light and sporadic resistance, and captured three 85mm field guns. This march, a distance of about nine kilometers, required eight days to

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complete. The infantrymen cut a landing zone large enough for a UH-1 helicopter to lift in engineer troops with chain saws and demolitions on 19 July. The engineers used this equipment to sufficiently expand the landing zone for a CH-47 helicopter to bring in a M-450 tractor (Airborne Minidozer) on 20 July. By 22 July the engineers, with the capability of the minidozer, had enlarged SON enough to allow a CH-54 helicopter to introduce a D5-A; an additional D5-A was brought in on each of the two succeeding days. In addition to clearing the area of trees and undergrowth, the engineers prepared tactical command posts for 1-327 and the 1st Regiment, 1st Division, South Vietnamese Army, and artillery emplacements for one US 105mm battery, one US 155mm battery, and four 105mm and two 155mm howitzers manned by South Vietnamese artillerymen. Battery A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 320th Artillery, was lifted to SON from VEGHEL on 23 July.

This battery supported the combat assault of Company B and the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1-327, onto Fire Base EAGLE'S NEST on 26 July. This fire base had been used by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during Operation DELAWARE. Two thousand pound fuze extension bombs (daisy cutters) were dropped on the fire base prior to the assault, to neutralize mines and booby traps, which had been emplaced by the enemy after the withdrawal of the 1st Cavalry. The assault was delayed for two days because clouds obscured the summit, and on the day of the assault by the infantrymen, the ceiling was only 100 feet. The area of EAGLE'S

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NEST was so rocky and constricted that only three 155mm howitzers could be placed there. The altitude was too great for a D5-A bulldozer to be lifted in to construct the positions. A T-6 bulldozer, which is lighter, was borrowed from a naval construction regiment to aid in the construction. This peak is extremely precipitous, but determined effort by all paratroopers involved converted it into an effective fire base. EAGLE's NEST was completed on 30 July, in spite of the harrowing experience of operating heavy equipment in the area.

From EAGLE'S NEST infantry security elements and a squad of engineers attacked down the southeast ridge on 28 July to the site of Fire Base GEORGIA. These personnel moved overland because this was the quickest means of getting into the area and starting construction. Using D-5A bulldozers the engineers completed, on 1 August, positions for two 105mm batteries and three 155mm howitzers, plus an artillery battalion command post and fire direction center.

Other infantry elements from EAGLE'S NEST continued the attack past GEORGIA to the location of Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN. Some trails had been used on the move to GEORGIA, but from there to BERCHTESGADEN, the paratroopers had to cut their way through the jungle. Because of the altitude and triple canopy the undergrowth was not extremely thick, and the march was completed in one day. The area around BERCHTESGADEN contained many booby traps, which had to be destroyed before construction could begin. Using two T-6 and two M-450 bulldozers, engineers from Company A, 326th Engineer Battalion (Airborne) completed construction of this fire base on 2 August. Positions were prepared for two 105mm batteries,

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plus tactical command posts for the 1st Brigade, the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry and the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry.

Helipads for cargo and for visitors were also leveled on all of the fire bases. The density of personnel, weapons and equipment was very great, restricting movement within the fire base area. The problems encountered in leveling areas for the various installations on each fire base were monumental. That the engineers accomplished their mission in a hostile environment, and in terrain so steep that men had to secure handholds to pull themselves up the slopes, is a tribute to their determination to support their infantry comrades-in-arms. The sketch of Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN (Sketch 3) portrays vividly the obstacles presented by the terrain.

Meanwhile, many other preparations for the operation were undertaken. A chemical supply point, established at BIRMINGHAM, stocked CS-1 riot control agent for the contamination of bunkers and tunnels, E-8 CS cartridge launchers for the employment of nonpersistent CS against enemy personnel, and SFG-2 fog oil and ten and thirty pound smoke pots for dispersion by UH-1 helicopters. A forward supply point for CS-1 and SFG-2, and a filling and recharging point for portable flame throwers were located at Fire Base VEGHEL. Chemical maintenance teams inspected all M17 protective masks in the 1st Brigade. Two hundred and sixty defective masks were replaced. Five defoliation missions were flown in the vicinity of Fire Bases SON and VEGHEL, to

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supplement similar missions flown by the USAF from May to July along highways 547 and 547A.

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A XXIV Corps 01-H provided a daily minimum of ten hours of visual reconnaissance of the valley on the days immediately preceding the operation. Forward air controllers of the USAF also conducted reconnaissance missions and directed air strikes against gun positions, fortifications, and troops. The air cavalry troop, attached from the 1st Cavalry Division, provided valuable assistance through armed reconnaissance. The troop averaged seven sightings or engagements daily beginning on 1 August, located numerous trails and bunker complexes, and confirmed proposed landing zones for assault forces.

Complete aerial photo coverage of the valley was provided by the USAF. The Imagery Interpretation Section of the 101st Military Intelligence Detachment disseminated information gained from read-outs of these photographs, and assembled mosaics for distribution down to battalion level.

Eight batteries of artillery were displaced to the new fire bases prior to D-Day (see Sketch Map 4). Each 105mm battery stockpiled 3,000 rounds on position, and each 155mm battery, 2,000 rounds. Two batteries of the 1st Battalion, 83d Artillery (175mm), which were located at Fire Base BASTOGNE, supported the operation without displacing.

Also during this period, two companies, 1-327, attacked astride highway 547A from VEGHEL to the valley. Their mission was to check for enemy activity and installations along this artery. The mountains were covered with triple canopy, and the terrain was succinctly described

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by those who toiled laboriously over it as "straight up and straight down." As the companies approached the valley, they discovered an increasing number of fortified positions, but contact with the enemy was light. The only significant contact was made by Company C about four kilometers east of the valley where they gunned down two members of an enemy squad. On 4 August these two companies occupied blocking positions near highway 547A and overlooking the valley.

On the last two days of July, the 2-327 and the 2-502 were moved from Fire Base BRICK to CAMP EAGLE for a stand down. While at CAMP EAGLE, these battalions prepared weapons and equipment, and received briefings on the A SHAU operation. They were trucked to their forward staging area at BIRMINGHAM on 3 August.

As dawn broke on D-Day, 4 August, they waited, thoroughly briefed and combat loaded, for the order to board their helicopters, and swoop majestically through the early morning stillness onto their landing zones at TA BAT and A LUOI. Unheard by the paratroopers, perspiring under their heavy loads at even this early hour, the stillness of the valley had already been interrupted by the crashing roar of bombs on enemy positions. Fourteen B-52 strikes were flown against enemy locations just prior to the operation. Eleven of these missions were flown in the twenty-four hours preceding the combat assault. The last of these devastating raids occurred at 0850 hours on 4 August, followed immediately by four flights of tactical aircraft which dropped "daisy

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cutters" on the two landing zones. As the last of these aircraft completed its mission, the ensuing quiet was again broken. This time the thunderous roar of artillery pieces firing and shells exploding reverberated throughout the objective areas. Additionally, eight suspected enemy locations and infiltration routes were contaminated with persistent CS dropped in BLU-52 A/B bombs by F-4 aircraft. This system is more accurate than drum drops by CH-47 helicopters, but the disadvantage is the F-4 is the only aircraft presently capable of delivering the system, and this plane can carry only two BLU-52 A/B.

The combat assault plan designated the 2-327 to land first at TA BAT followed by the 2-502 at A LUOI. At 0730 hours a forward air controller reported TA BAT obscured by fog, while the fog around A LUOI was rapidly dissipating. Commanders, already airborne in command and control helicopters, reversed the planned order of insertion.

Fifty UH-1 helicopters were used to lift the two battalions onto their landing zones. They followed the flight route (shown in Sketch 5), in groups of five, heavy left, and landed in a staggered trail. The groups of five were spaced at thirty-second intervals. Gunships fired a three-minute preparation, which terminated immediately prior to the landing of the first lift. For subsequent lifts, gunships orbited in the vicinity of the landing zones to provide support as needed. The 2-502 landed without incident, but the 2-327 received heavy ground fire from a position about 500 meters west of their landing zone. Gunships scooted in immediately to suppress the fire.

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The commanders concerned controlled the combat assault from their helicopters to insure preparatory fires were placed exactly where they were planned. The nimble-footed paratroopers cleared the landing zone as if they were running on eggs in hopes of not activating mines and booby traps. The 2-502 commenced reconnaissance in force operations to the west, and the 2-327 remained in the vicinity of TA BAT to secure the landing zone for the combat assault of the two battalions of ARVN on 5 August. The efficacy of preparatory fires was evident because no troop-carrying helicopters were lost on either day. The gunships supporting the assaults were not so fortunate. Ground fire from west of A LUOI downed one gunship and forced another to make a precautionary landing. One crew member of the former was wounded, and the ship was recovered later in the day by a CH-47. The second gunship was flown to BIRMINGHAM after the crew determined it was flyable. Even more intense was the fire directed against gunships supporting the combat assault of 2-327 onto the landing zone at TA BAT. One was hit and crashed 200 meters north of the landing zone, resulting in one crew member wounded and the aircraft destroyed. Another was hit at almost the same time. It burst into flames, crashed and burned, resulting in one crew member killed and the other three wounded.

After the combat assaults, 1-327 placed one company in the vicinity of TA BAT, while the remainder of the battalion started a reconnaissance in force toward Objective ESSEX. It soon became

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evident the enemy had no installations in that area so the battalion's mission was changed to conduct eagle flights, in order to search out the maximum amount of the valley floor. Eagle flights are characterized by small units (usually no larger than a platoon), conducting combat assaults onto preselected landing zones, or onto landing zones selected in flight. Their purpose is to check areas which appear suitable for enemy caches or the concealment of small enemy forces. They remain on the ground no longer than necessary to thoroughly search the area. If nothing is found, they radio to be extracted, and move on to another area. Company D was given the mission of conducting a combat assault against Objective BEAK, which had originally been part of the mission of the 2-502. The rationale for taking and holding this piece of commanding terrain was that it was being used as an artillery base or an artillery observation post. As Company D waited in the vicinity of A LUOI to be picked up by helicopters, a heavy concentration of artillery fire crashed into their position. The company suffered a few casualties, but fortunately the concentration hit about fifteen minutes before the helicopters were scheduled to arrive. The combat assault was canceled, and after darkness enveloped the area, the company marched across the valley to an attack position in the vicinity of the objective. The next morning, as the paratroopers attacked up the steep ridgeline, they encountered very stiff resistance. The enemy employed 60 and 82mm mortars, artillery, rocket-propelled grenades, recoilless

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rifles and small arms fire, but the undaunted Screaming Eagles held their position. Tactical aircraft dropped napalm and 2,000-pound bombs on enemy positions, and artillery pounded the enemy incessantly, but he could not be blasted out of the caves and extremely well-constructed positions. The heroic paratroopers fought the enemy at close quarters for four days before they were withdrawn from the hill. The decision was made to withdraw because the weather was closing in, and enemy activity outside the valley was attracting the attention of higher headquarters. As this action was taking place, another company of the 1-327 reconnoitered the hills along the northern side of the valley to the east of BEAK. Contact in this area was light although many signs of recent enemy activity, including base camps and training areas, were observed. Another company of this battalion provided security for Fire Base SON, and one platoon secured Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN. EAGLE'S NEST and GEORGIA were secured by forces provided by the 2d Brigade.

After the battalions of the 1st ARVN Regiment landed and moved south, the 2-327 began reconnaissance in force operations to the west. The battalion commander's plan placed A and C Companies on the north side of the RAO LAO River, and B and D Companies on the south side with the Reconnaissance Platoon protecting the battalion's south flank. Though there was no canopied jungle in the valley, movement was slow and tedious because of secondary growth and dense elephant

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grass. As an illustration of the difficulty posed to foot movement, it required Company A three days to move from the TA BAT airstrip to spot elevation 518, a distance of 2.5 kilometers. With four companies abreast, pushing to the west, and spoiling for a fight, in the main they were disappointed. The enemy elected to withdraw rather than face the aggressive, determined troopers.

Vietnam Paper says Aug. 11

A tragic incident occurred on 10 August when an airstrike called for by Company D went awry, and killed seven and wounded fifty-four members of the company. The battalion commander immediately deployed the reconnaissance platoon to the area to reinforce the stricken unit. The division commander landed his helicopter near Company D, and his presence stabilized the situation. The division G1 diverted all available replacements to this company, and by 13 August it was once again at combat strength.

After its combat assault, the 2-502 conducted reconnaissance in force operations south and southwest of A LUOI. In one significant contact on 8 August, Company D killed seven members of a North Vietnamese platoon, which was supported by mortars and snipers concealed in trees. The battalion also searched for the enemy throughout the mountainous area west of Fire Bases EAGLE'S NEST and GEORGIA. In this area, the battalion, anxious to develop a fight with a large enemy force, encountered sporadic resistance from small numbers of enemy lurking in well-concealed positions. The enemy refused to

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make a stand against the "Strike" troopers, preferring instead to retreat toward his sanctuary in Laos.

The contribution of the Republic of Vietnam's infantry battalions and Black Panther Company -- the latter landed on the TA BAT airstrip on 6 August -- was very significant as they accounted for nearly half of the enemy killed during the operation. Their commanders and staff exhibited professional competence and knowledge of the enemy, and the courage and aggressiveness of the individual South Vietnamese soldier was unsurpassed by any others in the operation. Tragedy also struck in their area when a 155mm shell fired from SON fell short and killed ten and wounded eighteen. Two of those killed and two wounded were US advisors; the remainder were ARVN soldiers.

In addition to presenting fleeting targets for the infantrymen's weapons, the enemy conducted harassing rocket and mortar attacks against fire bases and night defensive positions. A total of 181 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed during the operation, and four more were taken prisoner. Forty-five individual and thirteen crew-served weapons, twelve tons of rice, eleven 122mm rockets, eighteen cases of 12.7mm ammunition, thirty-two cases of small arms ammunition, fifty-four mines and miscellaneous signal and medical equipment were removed from the enemy's inventory. Seven 2-ton trucks were destroyed. Friendly aircraft losses due to enemy action were one F-4 fighter bomber, four UH-1 gunships and one light observation helicopter. Friendly personnel losses were extremely light.

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The denial phase of SOMERSET PLAIN was instituted to prevent the enemy from moving through the valley and storing supplies there after the withdrawal of friendly forces. Minefields and sensor devices were placed across three choke points in the valley. Engineers and Long Range Patrol teams were helilifted from VEGHEL to the three selected locations. The mines and sensors were emplaced during the hours of darkness on 16-17 and 17-18 August with the aid of off-set illumination. Each mine was booby-trapped with an antilift device, and a chemical time fuze was inserted into each one to destroy it after a determined period of time. Knotted ropes were valuable in determining the location of each cluster of mines. Personnel who possessed extensive experience in mine warfare were the only ones entrusted to arm the mines at night.

The Long Range Patrol teams emplaced sensor devices to detect enemy movement in the vicinity of the minefields. A division artillery sensor monitoring station was established on EAGLE'S NEST with a quick-fire channel to the fire direction center of the 2-320th Artillery. This resulted in an immediate artillery response to enemy movement revealed by the sensors. The coded identification markings on sensors must be protected because there is a tendency for the markings to become obliterated, especially during the rainy season. Each sensor emits a specific signal when nearby movement is detected. If the markings are not discernible, there is a possibility a sensor will be placed in a location different from the planned position. Should

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this occur, the artillery fire would not land in the area of enemy activity. Painting the identification markings on the sensors was one means used to insure compatibility of the signal received with the area fired upon.

Republic of Vietnam units were extracted from the valley on 17 and 18 August. On both days, smoke screens placed by UH-1 helicopters obscured the pickup zones from enemy observation. The air mission commander observed the flight path of the helicopter used for dispersing the smoke, to insure the screen was placed precisely where he wanted it. Especially capable pilots were assigned to this mission to develop their expertise. In one case, the smoke was used to mask the pickup zones, while in another instance, it was used to obscure suspected enemy locations in the proximity of the area to be used for the extraction. The Black Panther Company was extracted on 17 August from the valley directly to the HUE airstrip by thirty UH-1 helicopters. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Regiment, were picked up on 18 August by thirty-three troopships in four lifts, and were moved to a secure landing zone near VEGHEL. From there, they were transported to HUE by CH-47 helicopters.

On 19 August, the three US battalions were extracted from multiple pickup zones to the vicinity of VEGHEL. Eight flights, varying from twenty-two to thirty troopships, were used in this operation. From VEGHEL the 1-327 was lifted by CH-47 to CAMP EAGLE for a stand

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down, the 2-327 was deployed to SON by CH-47, and the 2-502 occupied VEGHEL. The repositioning of these units was accomplished in about four and one-half hours.

Numerous lessons, which will prove valuable for future division operations, were learned during SOMERSET PLAIN. The procedures developed for constructing fire bases will enable infantry units to engage the enemy in any part of the country with artillery support continually available. The key to rapid completion of fire bases is the early introduction of D5-A or T-6 bulldozers. One-man chain saws were not effective in felling large trees. Since speed is a more important consideration than the weight of the equipment, two-man chain saws should be used to accelerate fire base clearing operations. Further, the heavier chain saws would reduce down-time of the equipment, and carbide tips would cut through hardwood trees more rapidly.

Fire bases must be evacuated with the same care that is taken when they are constructed and occupied. The first step is the retrograde of heavy equipment. All supplies except the minimum amounts of Class I and V should then be moved to permanent base areas. At the same time, the phasing out of communications equipment should be started. In the next step artillery units should fire all remaining ammunition, followed immediately by the extraction of all artillery pieces, and remaining communications equipment. The tactical command post of the infantry followed by security elements should then be extracted. The final step is the contamination of the fire base with persistent CS to

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inhibit enemy access to the abandoned areas. In many instances, fire support for the evacuation can be provided from other fire bases, and certainly by tactical air and gunships. By starting with the evacuation of the fire base most distant from permanent base areas, it may be possible to provide artillery fire support for the evacuation of all of them.

Close coordination between aviation and artillery planners resulted in the designation of flight routes which prevented the disruption of artillery fires. Preparatory fires for combat assaults were shifted rather than terminated when gunships approached for their preparation of landing zones. After the shift, every fifth round fired was white phosphorous. This technique assisted gunship pilots in locating impact areas. Aircraft control was established at EAGLE'S NEST. Pilots of CH-47 helicopters contacted this control station on take-off and were directed to fly either the north or south route depending on artillery fire. Since the artillery units usually fired in one general direction, helipads were constructed to the rear of gun positions as another means of preventing the discontinuance of supporting fires. (See Sketch Map 6.)

The concept of the forward supply point at BIRMINGHAM proved very valuable. Unit field trains operated from CAMP EAGLE and BIRMINGHAM, and combat trains were located at BERCHTESGADEN and SON. Each infantry battalion normally had two UH-1 helicopters for the daily resupply of

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units in the valley. A total of 7,176 short tons of supplies were used during the operation. Aviators flying logistics missions were provided with a card describing the load, the receiving unit, and that unit's location, radio call sign, and frequency.

In the field of signal operations, it was discovered that shock waves created by the firing of howitzers can damage the TPS-25 radar. To preclude this damage, the TPS-25 should be located a minimum of 200 meters from any artillery piece. The new FM radio, AN/PRC-77, which is a PRC-25 with a KY-38, was used for the first time in this operation to provide secure voice radio communications down to company level. The PRC-77 weighs fifty-two pounds, increasing the weight of the equipment carried by the rifle company radio operators, but its value was considered to be worth the additional weight. Some units employed it as a one-man load, others as a two-man load, and still others had the KY-38 brought in on evening logistical flights, and retrograded it the following morning. The liaison teams with Republic of Vietnam units must be provided with secure radio facilities. In many cases, intelligence and operational information were delayed from these units to control headquarters, degrading the value of intelligence and the operational capability of the units.

The most significant lesson learned was the enemy does not own the A SHAU Valley. The 101st Airborne Division can effectively operate for extended periods of time in the valley. The division can make it extremely costly to the enemy, if he should decide to defend his

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installations against the superior firepower, mobility and aggressiveness of the Screaming Eagles. These traits were exemplified in the true airborne spirit during Operation SOMERSET PLAIN.

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APPENDIX I

TASK ORGANIZATION

Task Force I

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| HHC 1/101 Abn Div | A/326 Eng (DS) |
| 1-327th Inf (-) | 1st FASCP 501 Signal |
| D/1-502 Inf (OPCON 27 Jul - 6 Aug) | 1/101 MP Co |
| C/1-505 Inf (OPCON 9 Aug - 19 Aug) | 1/265 RRC |
| 2/C/1-502 Inf (OPCON 29 Jul - 6 Aug) | D/326 Med |
| 2/D/1-501 Inf (OPCON 31 Jul - 6 Aug) | 1/B/801 Maint |
| 2-327 Inf | 45th PI |
| B/1-327 (OPCON 4 Aug - 20 Aug) | Tm 101 MI Det |
| 2-502 Inf | 42d Inf Plat (Scout Dog) |
| 2-320 Arty (DS 1/101) | 557th Inf Plat (Combat Tracker) |
| B/1-9 Air Cav (OPCON 1/101 30 Jul - 19 Aug) | TACP |

101 Abn Div Troops

HHC, 101st Abn Div
326 Eng Bn (-)
501 Sig Bn (-)
F/58 Inf (LRP)
101st Admin Co
101st MP Co (-)
265 RRC
58th Inf Plat (Scout Dog)
10th Cal Plat
36th Cal Det
20th Cal Det
22d Mil Hist Det
25th PI Det
101st MI Bn (-)
181st MI Det

101st Abn Div Artillery

HHC, 101st Div Arty
C/1-321 Arty (Reinf 2-320)
2-11 (-) Arty (GS 101st Div Arty)
B/2-11 Arty (GS-R 2-321)
C/2-11 Arty (GS-R 2-320)
C/6-16 Arty (GS-R 2-320, o/o
 Reinf 1-321)
C/6-33 (GS-R 2-321)

160th Aviation Group

HHC, 160th Avn Gp
101st AHB
159th ASHB
163d Avn Co (GS)

Div Spt Cmd

HHC & Band
5th Trans Bn
426th Sup & Svc Bn
801st Maint Bn (-)
326th Med Bn (-)

Task Force - 1st ARVN Regiment

2d Bn, 1st Regt
3d Bn, 1st Regt
HAC, BAO (Black Panther Co)
A Btry, 11th Arty (105mm) (towed)
Plat, A Co, 34th Arty (155mm)
Plat, 1st Eng Bn

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APPENDIX II (LOGISTICS) TO CASE STUDY, SOMERSET PLAIN

During SOMERSET PLAIN, the following supplies were used:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Class I | 341 Short Tons |
| Class II and IV | 1850 Short Tons |
| Class III | 2150 Short Tons |
| Class V | <u>2835 Short Tons</u> |
| TOTAL | 7176 Short Tons |

In addition, an erdalator capable of producing 1,500 gallons of potable water per hour, was operated by division engineers at BIRMINGHAM. A total of 11,850 gallons of purified water was helilifted to fire bases and maneuver units in water trailers and fifty-gallon capacity rubber drums.

Helicopters of the division's 160th Aviation Group transported 2,675 troops during combat assaults. A total of 6,621 passengers and 5,954 tons of supplies were lifted to fire bases by CH-47 helicopters. The group's aviators flew 2,604 hours during the operation; 367 hours by gunships, 1,285 hours by UH-1 troop carriers, and 952 hours by CH-47 helicopters.

Items of equipment which required major repairs were evacuated to BIRMINGHAM by helicopter and then by road to CAMP EAGLE. A total of 292 items were repaired by the 801st Maintenance Battalion during the operation.

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Helicopter ambulances were stationed at the forward fire bases, and a medical clearing station was established at BASTOGNE. Ninety-five missions were flown to evacuate 257 patients. The flight time from field locations to the clearing station averaged less than fifteen minutes. This facility proved to be especially valuable during the evacuation of the mass casualties caused by the errant on strike on 10 August.

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demolition charges and RPG-7 and RPG-2 fires, the enemy broke through the outer perimeter wire and moved toward the bunker line. Intense friendly SA/AW and LFT fires, in addition to direct fire artillery Beehive rounds repulsed the enemy attack. Artillerymen of the 2d Battalion, 320th Artillery, fired 4 rounds of Beehive at the enemy attempting to breach the perimeter and killed twelve. The enemy fled from the area at 0500 and gunships continued to place effective fire on the retreating enemy forces. A sweep of the area at daylight revealed that enemy losses were: 54 NVA KIA, 2 NVA PW, 11 individual and 5 crew-served weapons, 40 satchel charges, 30 bangalore torpedoes, 50 RPG rockets, 4x90mm RR rounds, and miscellaneous SA ammunition and field equipment. Friendly losses were: 13 US KIA, 52 WIA (16 evac). Damage to base camp equipment and station property was light.

(6) From 21 May to 27 May extensive efforts were made by the 101st Airborne Division and closely cooperating ARVN Forces to deny the enemy the yield of the coastal plains rice harvest. Reconnaissance in force operations, in addition to a program of extensive and aggressive night ambushes were established throughout the Division's area of operation. During the period a series of brief engagements with enemy forces in the coastal plains area, and heavy contact with NVA elements near the edges of New Base Area 114 took place.

(7) Company A, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry, reacting to intelligence reports indicating increased enemy activity 20 km east of Hue (YD 923208), conducted a combat assault to engage a suspected enemy company in the area on 28 May. Upon insertion, contact was quickly established with a reinforced enemy platoon. The Aero Rifle platoon (ARP) 2-17 Cav and B/2-17 Cav maneuvered to Company A's position, and while Company A established a blocking position vicinity YD 923215, they attacked southeast over the enemy's position. Enemy losses for the battle were: 34 KIA, 1 VC PW, and 5 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were: 1 US KIA, 8 US WIA (8 evac) and 1 APC damaged.

(8) Also on 28 May elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, while conducting reconnaissance in force operations along Highway 547A discovered a significant vehicle and weapons cache. The equipment and weapons captured brought the major items of equipment captured west of FB VEGHEL to a total of 54 trucks (1 1/2 ton), 8x23mm AA guns, 5x85mm field artillery guns, 2x12.7mm MG and large amounts of 85mm, 76mm (tank), 75mm recoilless rifle, 82mm and 60mm mortar, 23mm AA and small arms ammunition.

(9) On 29 May Company A, 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry discovered a large weapons cache 5 km north of FB VEGHEL. The 175 weapons captured brought the total of weapons captured in three consecutive

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days to 507 individual and 87 crew-served weapons.

(10) Due to intelligence data indicating that rice was being stored in the area north of the village of Phuong Quan Cua, 8 km north of Hue (YD 5632), D Company, 1st Battalion, 502 Infantry on 30 May conducted reconnaissance in force operations in the area and captured 36.5 tons of rice. The rice was evacuated and delivered to the district chief of Quang Dien.

(11) Intelligence indicated increased enemy activity in the village of Le Xa Dong, 12 km east of Hue (YD 8823). In response to the intelligence reports, a combined operation involving the 2-17 Cav and the 3/3 ARVN Infantry Battalion was initiated on 30 May. The 3/3 Infantry (ARVN) moved overland to establish a blocking position at the southern end of the village, as Troop A, 2-17 Cav and one Popular Force platoon began reconnaissance in force operations from FB FORWARD south toward the village. As 2-17 Cav elements attacked south into the 3/3 Infantry's (ARVN) position, initial contact with the enemy was established. Artillery, TAC Air and Light Fire Team fires were immediately placed on the enemy position as the 2-17 Cav elements assaulted forward to develop the contact. At 1430 Company B, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry was alerted to conduct a combat assault into the eastern portion of the village to establish an additional blocking position and to contain the retreating enemy forces. The 2-17 Cav attacked again driving the enemy into established blocking positions, and at sunset since Troop C of the 2-17 Cav was not able to attack through the village, and a tight cordon was formed around the enemy's position. Throughout the night continuous illumination and artillery were employed to prevent the enemy's escape. Action for the operation terminated on 31 May as elements of the 2-17 Cav with a platoon from Company C, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry conducted a sweep through the village and destroyed the remnants of the enemy force and resistance. The enemy losses during the combined operation were as follows: 142 NVA KIA, 46 PW, and 69 weapons captured. Of these enemy losses, ARVN Forces were responsible for 51 NVA KIA, 27 PW, and 35 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were: 6 US WIA, 2 PF KIA, and 2 PF WIA.

(12) On 1 June a combined cordon operation involving US and ARVN forces was established around the village of Trung Phuong, 16 km east of Hue (YD 9419). Troops A and B, 2-17 Cav, Company B, 2d Battalion, 501 Infantry, B Company, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry, and Task Force 7, 1st ARVN Infantry Division attacked on parallel axis to engage enemy forces which were reported in the area by intelligence data. Contact was maintained throughout the afternoon of 1 June and a cordon was established around the village during the early evening. The results of the battle were: 8 US WIA, 38 VC KIA,

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of the intensive searches, saturation patrolling, extensive night ambushes, and rapid exploitation of intelligence information, the existent lines of continuity within the Viet Cong infrastructure were dissolved. The operation terminated on 6 November and the final results were as follows: 56 VC KIA, 66 VC/FW, and 60 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were 1 US KIA, 6 US WIA, 3 ARVN KIA, 12 ARVN WIA, 1 RF/FF KIA, 7 RF/FF WIA.

s. The 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry and elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, and 7th ARVN Cavalry initiated a cordon operation on Nui Tranh Peninsula in response to a Hoi Chanh's information concerning the existence of an enemy force between 150 and 200 men on the peninsula. Throughout the operation sweeps of the area, ground contamination and demolitions were employed to root out and destroy the enemy and his places of refuge. Results of the operation were minimal as regards to body count, but a large number of enemy fortifications and installations were destroyed denying him further use of the area.

t. In the 1st Brigade area of operation the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, 2/7 ARVN Cav Troop, Hoc Boa Company, and Phu Loc Popular Forces and National Police Field Forces conducted a cordon operation in the vicinity of Phu Loc District Headquarters. During the eight day operation which began on 3 November and terminated 10 November over 1300 suspects were interrogated and approximately 70 were detained as prisoners of war. In addition 4 enemy were killed, and US Forces sustained only 4 wounded, and those as a result of booby traps. On 3 November the western and northern boundary was extended (See Inclosure 2: Area of Operation) to include part of the area vacated by the 1st Cavalry Division when it deployed to III Corps. With previous extensions the Division's area of operation encompassed 108 kilometers from north to south.

u. Following Operation Phu Vang III (26 October - 6 November), the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, a task force from the 7th ARVN Armored Cavalry, the 13th Coastal Group, and elements of the National Police Field Forces, and Regional and US Naval Forces were involved in a soft cordon and search operation 6 km southeast of Phu Bai, the the Troui River area. As a result of the cordon operation 1,294 personnel were detained and processed through the Joint Intelligence Center; 25 of whom were classified as members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure. In addition to the detained personnel, 10 Viet Cong were killed and 10 individual weapons were captured.

v. On 18 November the 2d Battalion, 501 Infantry, and elements of the 3d ARVN Regiment were involved in operation Nam Hoa I. Intel-

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an enlarged clearing station proved to be particularly valuable in providing timely medical treatment for casualties suffered throughout the operation.

(1) In addition, elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry conducted extensive sweep operations along Highway 547A to clear enemy forces from the area and along the flight path of the combat assault forces.

(2) On 4 August units of the 1st Brigade— 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry— conducted combat assaults into the A Shau Valley in the vicinity of A Loui and Ta Bat, respectively. On the following day elements of the 1st ARVN Regiment, 1st ARVN Division conducted combat assaults into the valley in the vicinity of Ta Bat. During the period 5 August - 17 August, both the 1st Brigade and 1st ARVN Regiment elements conducted extensive reconnaissance in force operations throughout the Valley. The enemy employed delaying and harassing tactics as the US-ARVN forces conducted reconnaissance in force operations in the Valley. No major enemy installations or caches were discovered by the combined forces. On the nights of 16-18 August elements of the 326th Engineers emplaced minefields and sensor devices at three choke points in the valley. The sensor devices monitored by a station positioned on EAGLE'S NEST were exploited immediately by artillery units located nearby. Aerial reconnaissance indicated that this procedure denied the enemy use of this principal line of communication for over two weeks following the extraction of maneuver elements on 18 and 19 August. The results of the combat operations in the Valley by US/ARVN Forces were:

a. US Totals:

| <u>Friendly Losses</u> | <u>Enemy Losses</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19 US KIA | 93 NVA KIA |
| 104 US WIA | 1 NVA PW |
| 2 US MIA | 23 Individ Wpns Capt |
| | 11 Crew-served Wpns Capt |

b. ARVN Totals:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 15 ARVN KIA | 88 NVA KIA |
| 57 ARVN WIA | 3 NVA PW |
| 2 ARVN MIA | 22 Individ Wpns Capt |
| | 2 Crew-served Wpns Capt |

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Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat After Action Report,
Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

1. Unit Strengths

a. Strengths as of 17 May 1968:

| UNIT | NEVADA EAGLE | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|----|------|-----------|----|------|-----------|-----|
| | AUTH | OFF ASG | PD | AUTH | WO ASG | PD | AUTH | EM ASG | PD |
| <u>1st Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 36 | 34 | 18 | 3 | 3 | 180 | 200 | 188 |
| 1/327 Inf | 43 | 26 | 24 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 787 | 714 |
| 2/327 Inf | 43 | 29 | 26 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 682 | 650 |
| 2/502 Inf | 43 | 34 | 30 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 760 | 715 |
| <u>2d Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 32 | 32 | 18 | 4 | 4 | 180 | 127 | 154 |
| 1/501 Inf | 43 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 838 | 811 |
| 2/501 Inf | 43 | 36 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 809 | 790 |
| 1/502 Inf | 43 | 36 | 35 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 792 | 772 |
| <u>Div Arty</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 28 | 27 | 25 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 165 | 159 | 144 |
| 2/320 Arty | 41 | 48 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 416 | 462 | 430 |
| 1/321 Arty | 43 | 41 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 391 | 402 | 382 |
| 2/11 Arty | 30 | 36 | 36 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 552 | 582 | 564 |
| <u>3d Bde, 82d</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 69 | 89 | 89 | 14 | 11 | 11 | 750 | 782 | 733 |
| 1/505 Inf | 36 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 754 | 624 | 601 |
| 2/505 Inf | 36 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 633 | 588 |
| 1/508 Inf | 36 | 43 | 43 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 754 | 670 | 612 |
| 2/321 Arty | 39 | 50 | 47 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 416 | 337 | 324 |
| <u>DISCOM</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HH&B | 27 | 28 | 24 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 134 | 206 | 186 |
| 326th Med | 52 | 39 | 35 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 313 | 275 | 214 |
| 801st Mn | 22 | 17 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 311 | 351 | 321 |
| 426th S&S | 26 | 17 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 448 | 397 | 343 |
| <u>Aviation</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 101st ASHB | 63 | 30 | 28 | 124 | 47 | 41 | 653 | 304 | 250 |
| 308th CAB (Redesignated 159th ASHB) | 20 | 19 | 16 | 3 | 13 | 13 | 90 | 160 | 150 |
| <u>Div Trp</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 2-17 Cav | 41 | 30 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 588 | 407 | 389 |
| 326th Engr | 33 | 32 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 543 | 540 | 520 |

Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Nevada Eagle, 101st Airborne Division (U)

| <u>UNIT</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>OFF</u> <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>WO</u> <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>EM</u> <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| <u>Div Trp (Con't)</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 501st Sig | 13 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 336 | 287 | 222 |
| 101st MP Co | 7 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 157 | 154 | 149 |
| HHC, Div | 62 | 76 | 68 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 132 | 214 | 150 |

b. Changes to strength during Operation NEVADA EAGLE.

On 19 October 1968 the 3rd Brigade, 82d Airborne Division departed at the following strength:

| <u>UNIT</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> | <u>AUTH</u> | <u>ASG</u> | <u>PD</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| <u>3rd Bde, 82nd</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 69 | 87 | 87 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 750 | 773 | 754 |
| 1/505 Inf | 36 | 39 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 703 | 672 |
| 2/505 Inf | 36 | 40 | 39 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 680 | 663 |
| 1/508 Inf | 36 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 673 | 649 |
| 2/321 Arty | 39 | 47 | 46 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 416 | 389 | 370 |

On 17 October 1968 the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division joined at the following strength:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|---|----|-----|-----|-----|
| <u>3d Bde, 101st</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 32 | 41 | 18 | 6 | 14 | 180 | 142 | 140 |
| 1/506 Inf | 43 | 34 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 823 | 748 |
| 2/506 Inf | 43 | 35 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 783 | 724 |
| 3/187 Inf | 43 | 31 | 31 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 775 | 718 |
| 2/319 | 43 | 45 | 41 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 391 | 373 | 334 |

c. Strengths at close of Operation NEVADA EAGLE.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| <u>1st Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 29 | 29 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 180 | 206 | 194 |
| 1/327 Inf | 43 | 43 | 43 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 810 | 777 |
| 2/327 Inf | 43 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 808 | 782 |
| 2/502 Inf | 43 | 41 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 817 | 789 |
| <u>2d Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 37 | 37 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 180 | 233 | 218 |
| 1/501 Inf | 43 | 39 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 786 | 762 |
| 2/501 Inf | 43 | 38 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 748 | 712 |
| 1/502 Inf | 43 | 38 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 769 | 726 |
| <u>3d Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 33 | 33 | 18 | 12 | 11 | 180 | 226 | 218 |
| 1/506 Inf | 43 | 40 | 39 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 875 | 798 | 697 |

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Inclosure 5 (Chemical) to Combat After Action Report, Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

h. (U) Chemical maintenance support. Inspection and repair teams for all chemical items of equipment were provided to division units on their request. Prior to Operation Somerset Plain, chemical maintenance teams inspected and classified all M17 Protective Masks in the units participating in the operation. Serviceable masks were available for all units by D-Day. Since the start of NEVADA EAGLE, over 15,000 protective masks, 61 portable flame throwers and 8 miscellaneous items of chemical equipment have been inspected and/or repaired.

i. (U) Chemical Munitions in Perimeter Defense.

(1) The flame fougasse, a 55 gallon drum filled with 8% thickened fuel, and the E-8 Tactical CS Launcher, were extensively used around perimeters of NDP's, FB's, LZ's, etc, to assist in the defense of these locations.

(2) 1,243 flame fougasse and 242 E-8's have been installed in the division AO throughout this period.

j. (C) Bunker Seeding Operations.

(1) Persistent CS-1 is also used to seed bunker, cave and tunnel complexes to deny use to hostile forces.

(2) The 2/327 Airborne Infantry Battalion conducted an operation on the Nui Tron peninsula, during November, which uncovered approximately 50 bunkers and caves used by the enemy for storage and shelter. The 10th Chemical Platoon provided a CS bunker seeding team for this operation from 11-17 November. As 31 January 1969, the contaminated bunkers still could not be entered because of the effects of agent CS.

2. (U) Statistics:

| <u>TYPE OF MISSION</u> | <u>NUMBER OF MISSIONS</u> | <u>REMARKS</u> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Aerial Defoliation | 48 | Required 74 sorties with average expenditure of 150 gallons per mission |
| Ground Defoliation | 36 | Required 56 sorties with average expenditure of 500 gallons per mission |
| Aerial Insecticide | 58 | Required 87 sorties with average expenditure of 150 gallons per mission |

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100-443887-100

FD 302a

17

547

**CAMP
EAGLES**

PARTNER II

(X)
342

(X)
342

✓ MICHAEL

FB &
NORMANBY

PB
BRICK A

SONG HUU TRACH

A SHADY VALLEY



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THE

↑
LAOS
9km

1987
 (C) FB GAGLE'S NEST
 (X) FB GAGLE'S NEST
 1242 RMD NHE

FR
BECNUTSGAPEN

870 081
DATA
Son
801

730
547

614 579
959

④ 665 ⑤ 930

752

© 955



AMMO
STORAGE

FSB BIRMINGHAM

PARADE
CONTROL

CLASS III PAD
CLASS I PAD

REFUELING POINT

60X550 CH-47 REFUEL

CH-47 TRAFFIC

PICK-UP ZONE FOR TROOPS

SLICK REFUEL

BIRMINGHAM AREA

REFUEL
GUNS

TROOP STAGING
AREA

HUU TRACH RIVER

ARMY TRAFFIC FOLLOW RIVER
50' ABOVE RIVER

Loc
PRIESTOCK
Loc
HEAVY CH-47
PAD

N

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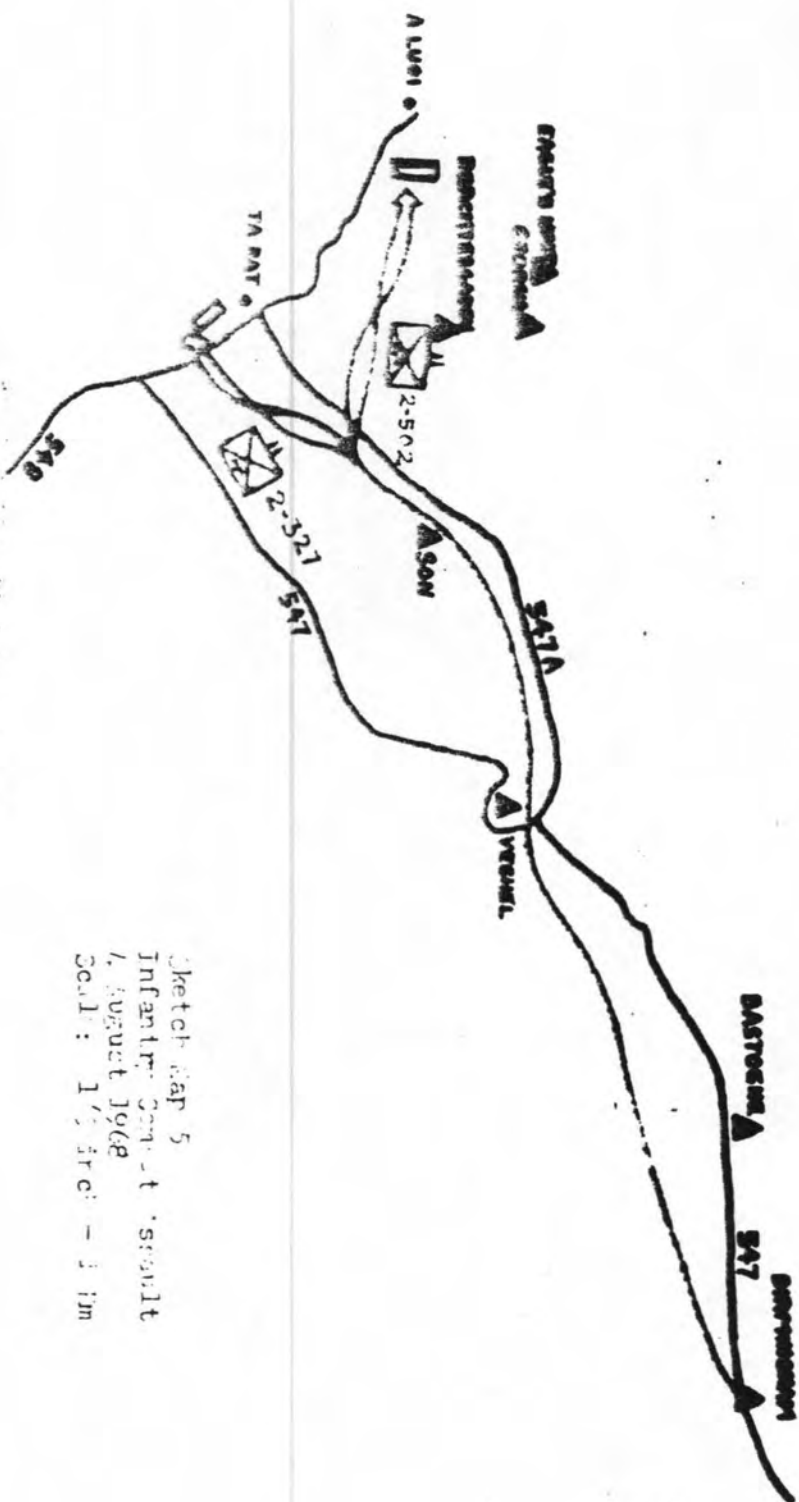
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400'

UH-1(SLICKS) 400'

SCALE: 1" = 600'

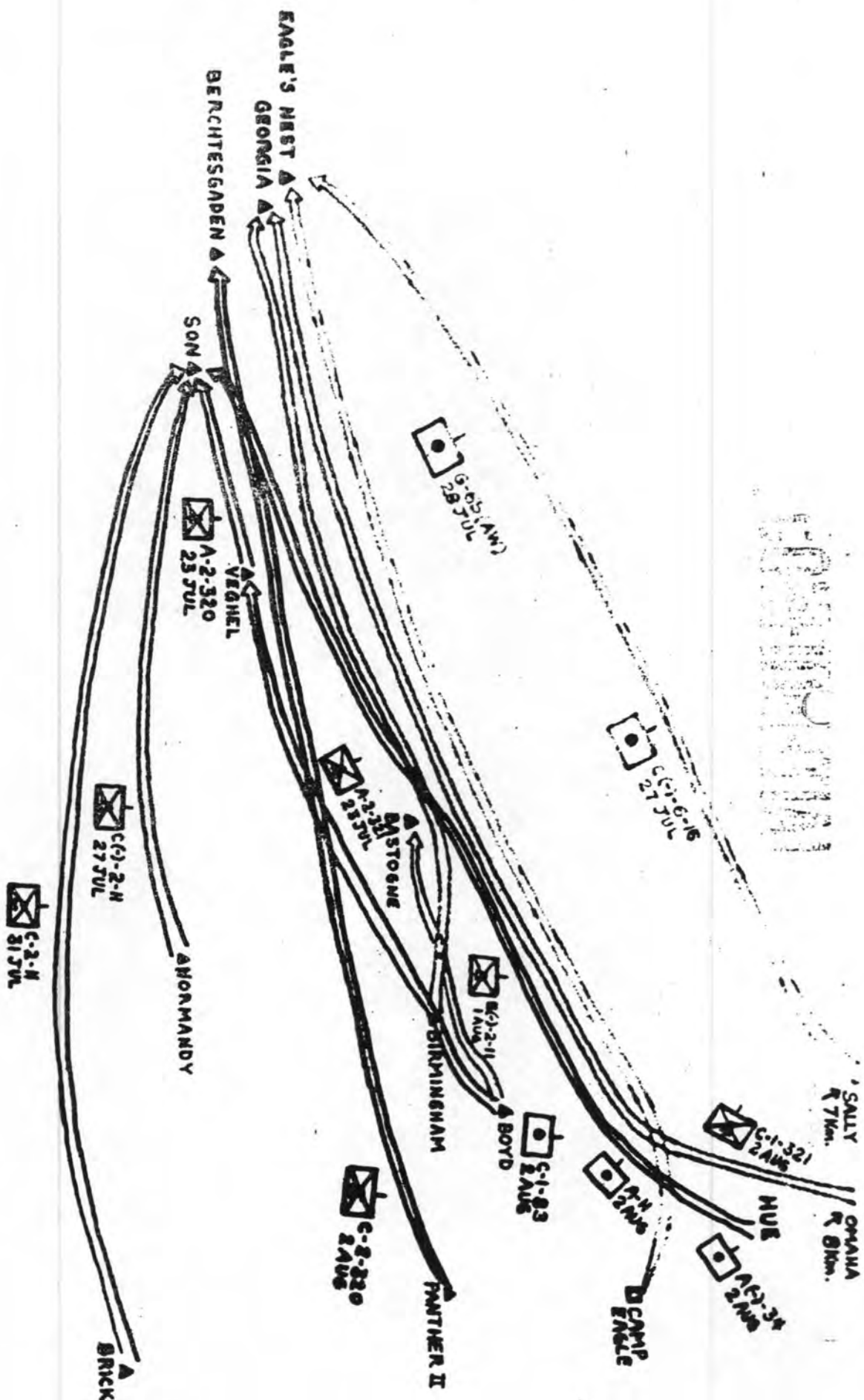
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Sketch Map 5
Infantry Contact - Street
4. August 1968
Scale: 1/4 inch = 1 km

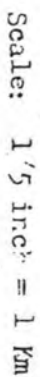
SALLY
R 7Km.

ORIANA
R 8Km.



Sketch map 4
artillery displacement
scale: 1" = 1 km

LAOS



2nd Fire Team [D Co?]



1st Fire Team [D Co?]

[D Co?]

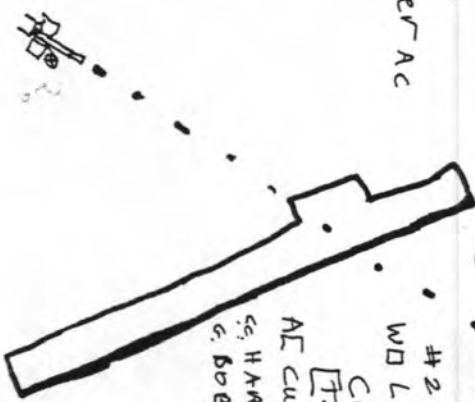
Spider 3D
PAW Wheeler AC
#3?

#2?
WOLARRY SPINER SS
CLARK
[TAVE]

AL CURT GASKINS
SS HARRY KIM
C. BOB BURTON?

C+C
CAPT SMITH?
Spider CO 188th

WIND SHIELD
SHOT OUT
RD IN HELMET?



Spider '30' (Killer)
TAIL BOOM OFF. TREE
SPAN IN.
FIRE OUT.
NO W.I.A.

Spider (Killer)?
ESCAPE + EVASION

FIRE

Spider 188th

color

red/white

red sliver
new Roof

Kingman - blue white

Blue stripe
on roof
↑
C towers



Tom HOLCOMBE
UH-1C GAUSHIP
FORCED DOWN
CO-D-160th AHC
"LANCERS"
A L Ovi
2/502



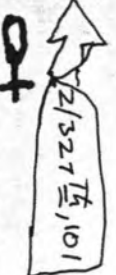
TA BAT Airfield [DESTROYED]



Δ EAGLES NEST

Δ BERCHTESGADEN

Black Widow 26 -
Geoffrey L. HAWDEL



Kingman CO. B
"18" Bill Grant AC # 16348
"25" Bill Meacham - "The Dog" # 16121



LARRY CARK
CPT. SMITH AC.
ATTACK AND SITE
Spider SS



Spider GS
HDE #471 "CLIMAX"
188th AHC - JOHN P. SOARS GAUSHIP PLATOON LEADER [CAPT]
(L2 SALTY)

Rejoined Capt Evans 1st CAU

12/31/75

IOIST ABN DIVISION

AFTER ACTION REPORT



Downgrading intervals:
Declassified after 12 years.

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DOD DIR 5200.9

12/31/75

Appendix I (Case Study: Operation SOMERSET PLAIN) to Combat After Action Report, Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

CASE STUDY: OPERATION SOMERSET PLAIN

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P R E F A C E

This case study of operation SOMERSET PLAIN was prepared to illustrate techniques developed by the 101st Airborne Division when operating along distant lines of communication against a wily, evasive enemy in areas where terrain and the vagaries of weather tend to favor the enemy.

Included in this study are the development of forward supply areas and fire support bases, methods of resupply, combat assault techniques, the use of artillery and tactical air support, a method for employing minefields with sensor devices at night, the use of smoke for screening landing zones and pickup zones, and the employment of BLU-52 bombs.

It is hoped the information contained herein, and the lessons learned by this division will be instructive for other military organizations, whether tasked with training officers, enlisted men or entire units for deployment, and for forces employed in a similar environment.

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The last elements of the 101st Airborne Division were withdrawn from the A SHAU Valley on 19 August 1968, thus marking the termination of Operation SOMERSET PLAIN. This was the initial large scale operation conducted by the division since the beginning of its reorganization to conform with the airmobile concept. Early in July the Commanding General, XXIV Corps, considered an operation in the A SHAU Valley, and at the urging of Major General Melvin Zais, Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division, the Corps Commander selected the Screaming Eagles for the mission. Final planning for the operation commenced when the Corps Commander stated, "The 101st Airborne Division will conduct offensive operations in the A SHAU Valley with one US brigade, plus a two-battalion task force from the 1st Division, Republic of Vietnam, to interdict enemy lines of communications, to destroy North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong forces, caches and installations, and on order, to establish designated barriers."

General Zais decided to employ the First Brigade as the US element because battalions of this brigade were favorably disposed in the direction of the valley. The Commanding General of the Army of Vietnam's 1st Division provided the 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Regiment; the Black Panther Company, which is an elite reaction force; and artillery and engineer support. (See Appendix I, TASK ORGANIZATION.) With this as a brief introduction, let us take a closer look at a period in the history of this famed division, a period which was to test the imagination of senior commanders and staff officers, and the stamina and determination of the individual paratroopers - the inheritors of the spirit of the

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airborne engendered at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, in 1942, and proven in combat at Carentan, Eindhoven, Bastogne, Tuy Hoa and Dak To.

The verdant A SHAU Valley and adjacent mountains, pleasing though they are to the eye, present problems of communication and movement to the ground combat soldier. The valley averages a kilometer and a half in width. It is an undulating plain with local relief up to fifty meters, and it is covered with brushwood, clear forests and tall elephant grass. The RAO LAO River flows through the valley from southeast to northwest until it reaches TA BAT where it turns to the west, and continues on into LAOS. The mountains on both sides of the valley rise sharply up to heights of almost 5,000 feet. Most of the mountains are covered with double or triple canopy jungle. Undergrowth is very dense in most places, limiting rapid foot movement to trails, which are usually along ridgelines and streambeds. In some places, craggy peaks rise above the jungle growth. The principal road in the area is Route 548, which is a fair-weather improved road, varying in width from three to six meters. Routes 547 and 547A are subsidiary roads from one to three meters in width. (See Sketch Map 1.)

Weather conditions conformed generally to preoperation forecasts, except for the predicted occurrence of early morning fog and the height of afternoon ceilings. Early morning fog was prevalent, but it had usually dissipated by 0800 hours, earlier by some two hours than predicted. Fog caused a change in the sequence of combat assaults, but this had no impact on operations. Mountains were usually obscured by

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low ceiling between 0600 and 0800 hours. Afternoon cumuliiform ceilings favored a height of 3,500 to 4,000 feet thus placing cloud bases above most of the ridgelines. Because of these generally favorable conditions, factors of weather did not usually adversely affect aviation operations.

The importance of the valley to the enemy is palpable. His activities there since the US Special Forces camp near the town of A SHAU was overrun in February 1966 only reinforce the obvious. The valley has served as one of the enemy's principal lines of communication into the I Corps Tactical Zone. A special intelligence study published on 22 July indicated enemy activity had increased subsequent to Operation DELAWARE, which was conducted by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during the period 19 April to 17 May. Enemy units identified as probably operating in the vicinity of the valley were: the 29th North Vietnamese Regiment; the 6th North Vietnamese Regiment; the 9th Independent North Vietnamese Battalion; the 40th Battalion, 65th Artillery Regiment; elements of the 280th Air Defense Regiment; the 33d Battalion, 308th Engineer Regiment; Military Station 7, 559th Transportation Group; an unidentified signal battalion; and, possibly, the 3d Battalion, 203d Armored Regiment. Enemy units identified positively during the operation were the 816th and 818th Battalions of the 9th North Vietnamese Regiment. This was one of the most significant aspects of the intelligence effort because the 9th Regiment had not been identified since the TET Offensive, and had been dropped from Order of Battle holdings.

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Against this array of enemy power, the division commander decided on a concept of conducting the operation in five phases. Phase I (4-5 August) was the combat assault of maneuver battalions into the valley, except for the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, which would provide security for the construction of fire bases, and conduct reconnaissance in force operations along Route 547A. In Phase II battalions conducted reconnaissance in force operations, and combat assaults to the west, to interdict enemy lines of communications near Objectives HOPTOWN and PERRY. One US company attacked to clear and hold the high ground designated as Objective BEAK. Phase III was the searching out and destruction of enemy forces in the vicinity of Objectives HOPTOWN, PERRY and ESSEX. The denial plan of Phase IV consisted of placing mines and sensor devices along choke points to impede enemy movement, and to inflict casualties after the withdrawal of friendly units from the valley. The brigade coordinated the extraction during Phase V of the Vietnamese units on E-Day and the US maneuver battalions on E+1.

Before these operations could be launched, however, the significant problems of resupply and fire support had to be resolved. Daily tonnage requirements of all classes of supply, helicopter lift assets and flight times from existing logistical support points to the valley were subjected to a detailed analysis. The operation could have been supported directly from Camp Eagle; however, a forward supply point would obviously reduce the cost of the operation in terms of fuel and flying time. Another

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consideration was to reduce the time expended for gunships to refuel and rearm, thus providing more support by these assets in the area of operations. The forward facility had to be completed by 30 July because Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, attached to the 101st for the operation, was scheduled to start operations on that date.

The Commanding General decided to expand an existing fire base, BIRMINGHAM, to enable the optimum use of resources. The expansion included two Class V helipads, each of which could accommodate two CH-47's; one Class I, II, and IV, III and water helipad with a capacity for three CH-47's; four CH-47 refuel points; a pick-up zone for fifty UH-1 troopships with an adjacent fifteen point refuel facility; a refuel/rearm pad for eighteen gunships; and a staging area for two infantry battalions. (See Sketch Map 2.) Construction started on 26 July and was completed on schedule four days later. By establishing the forward supply point, the flight time for each CH-47 sortie was reduced nine minutes, and for each UH-1 sortie, it was reduced ten minutes.

A five-day level of all classes of supply, except Class III, was prestocked at BIRMINGHAM. The Class I stock was based on unit strengths, and Class V was based on the number of weapons and a six month usage factor. One hundred thousand gallons, or two days, of Class III were stored at this facility, because this amount would support the two days of maximum expenditure, i.e., the days on which combat assaults were conducted. As an emergency measure, three days of supplies for two

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infantry battalions were rigged for air drop, and USAF air controllers were attached to maneuver units. This latter procedure is now standard for all large division operations.

With the logistical support problem resolved, attention was focused on constructing fire bases near the valley to insure infantry units would always operate within the range of at least one artillery unit. An aerial reconnaissance was conducted by senior infantry, artillery, engineer and signal commanders. Their purpose was to make certain fire bases could be constructed and defended on the proposed locations, that necessary artillery support could be provided, and that communications between fire bases and rear areas could be established and maintained. It was determined that four fire bases would be required. A lesser number would have sufficiently covered the area of operation, but the terrain restricted the number of artillery pieces which could be placed on any one fire base. To construct a large fire base would require moving a considerable amount of earth. Therefore, the decision was made to construct more and smaller fire bases.

The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, operating in the vicinity of Fire Base VEGHEL, was given the mission of providing security for the additional bases. To do this, the battalion commander directed one company to attack west from VEGHEL up the valley of the RAO NHO River, and then south to the site of Fire Base SON. En route, the company encountered light and sporadic resistance, and captured three 85mm field guns. This march, a distance of about nine kilometers, required eight days to

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complete. The infantrymen cut a landing zone large enough for a UH-1 helicopter to lift in engineer troops with chain saws and demolitions on 19 July. The engineers used this equipment to sufficiently expand the landing zone for a CH-47 helicopter to bring in a M-450 tractor (Airborne Minidozer) on 20 July. By 22 July the engineers, with the capability of the minidozer, had enlarged SON enough to allow a CH-54 helicopter to introduce a D5-A; an additional D5-A was brought in on each of the two succeeding days. In addition to clearing the area of trees and undergrowth, the engineers prepared tactical command posts for 1-327 and the 1st Regiment, 1st Division, South Vietnamese Army, and artillery emplacements for one US 105mm battery, one US 155mm battery, and four 105mm and two 155mm howitzers manned by South Vietnamese artillerymen. Battery A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 320th Artillery, was lifted to SON from VEGHEL on 23 July.

This battery supported the combat assault of Company B and the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1-327, onto Fire Base EAGLE'S NEST on 26 July. This fire base had been used by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during Operation DELAWARE. Two thousand pound fuze extension bombs (daisy cutters) were dropped on the fire base prior to the assault, to neutralize mines and booby traps, which had been emplaced by the enemy after the withdrawal of the 1st Cavalry. The assault was delayed for two days because clouds obscured the summit, and on the day of the assault by the infantrymen, the ceiling was only 100 feet. The area of EAGLE'S

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NEST was so rocky and constricted that only three 155mm howitzers could be placed there. The altitude was too great for a D5-A bulldozer to be lifted in to construct the positions. A T-6 bulldozer, which is lighter, was borrowed from a naval construction regiment to aid in the construction. This peak is extremely precipitous, but determined effort by all paratroopers involved converted it into an effective fire base. EAGLE's NEST was completed on 30 July, in spite of the harrowing experience of operating heavy equipment in the area.

From EAGLE'S NEST infantry security elements and a squad of engineers attacked down the southeast ridge on 28 July to the site of Fire Base GEORGIA. These personnel moved overland because this was the quickest means of getting into the area and starting construction. Using D-5A bulldozers the engineers completed, on 1 August, positions for two 105mm batteries and three 155mm howitzers, plus an artillery battalion command post and fire direction center.

Other infantry elements from EAGLE'S NEST continued the attack past GEORGIA to the location of Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN. Some trails had been used on the move to GEORGIA, but from there to BERCHTESGADEN, the paratroopers had to cut their way through the jungle. Because of the altitude and triple canopy the undergrowth was not extremely thick, and the march was completed in one day. The area around BERCHTESGADEN contained many booby traps, which had to be destroyed before construction could begin. Using two T-6 and two M-450 bulldozers, engineers from Company A, 326th Engineer Battalion (Airborne) completed construction of this fire base on 2 August. Positions were prepared for two 105mm batteries,

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plus tactical command posts for the 1st Brigade, the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry and the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry.

Helipads for cargo and for visitors were also leveled on all of the fire bases. The density of personnel, weapons and equipment was very great, restricting movement within the fire base area. The problems encountered in leveling areas for the various installations on each fire base were monumental. That the engineers accomplished their mission in a hostile environment, and in terrain so steep that men had to secure handholds to pull themselves up the slopes, is a tribute to their determination to support their infantry comrades-in-arms. The sketch of Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN (Sketch 3) portrays vividly the obstacles presented by the terrain.

Meanwhile, many other preparations for the operation were undertaken. A chemical supply point, established at BIRMINGHAM, stocked CS-1 riot control agent for the contamination of bunkers and tunnels, E-8 CS cartridge launchers for the employment of nonpersistent CS against enemy personnel, and SFG-2 fog oil and ten and thirty pound smoke pots for dispersion by UH-1 helicopters. A forward supply point for CS-1 and SFG-2, and a filling and recharging point for portable flame throwers were located at Fire Base VEGHEL. Chemical maintenance teams inspected all M17 protective masks in the 1st Brigade. Two hundred and sixty defective masks were replaced. Five defoliation missions were flown in the vicinity of Fire Bases SON and VEGHEL, to

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by those who toiled laboriously over it as "straight up and straight down." As the companies approached the valley, they discovered an increasing number of fortified positions, but contact with the enemy was light. The only significant contact was made by Company C about four kilometers east of the valley where they gunned down two members of an enemy squad. On 4 August these two companies occupied blocking positions near highway 547A and overlooking the valley.

On the last two days of July, the 2-327 and the 2-502 were moved from Fire Base BRICK to CAMP EAGLE for a stand down. While at CAMP EAGLE, these battalions prepared weapons and equipment, and received briefings on the A SHAU operation. They were trucked to their forward staging area at BIRMINGHAM on 3 August.

As dawn broke on D-Day, 4 August, they waited, thoroughly briefed and combat loaded, for the order to board their helicopters, and swoop majestically through the early morning stillness onto their landing zones at TA BAT and A LUOI. Unheard by the paratroopers, perspiring under their heavy loads at even this early hour, the stillness of the valley had already been interrupted by the crashing roar of bombs on enemy positions. Fourteen B-52 strikes were flown against enemy locations just prior to the operation. Eleven of these missions were flown in the twenty-four hours preceding the combat assault. The last of these devastating raids occurred at 0850 hours on 4 August, followed immediately by four flights of tactical aircraft which dropped "daisy

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cutters" on the two landing zones. As the last of these aircraft completed its mission, the ensuing quiet was again broken. This time the thunderous roar of artillery pieces firing and shells exploding reverberated throughout the objective areas. Additionally, eight suspected enemy locations and infiltration routes were contaminated with persistent CS dropped in BLU-52 A/B bombs by F-4 aircraft. This system is more accurate than drum drops by CH-47 helicopters, but the disadvantage is the F-4 is the only aircraft presently capable of delivering the system, and this plane can carry only two BLU-52 A/B.

The combat assault plan designated the 2-327 to land first at TA BAT followed by the 2-502 at A LUOI. At 0730 hours a forward air controller reported TA BAT obscured by fog, while the fog around A LUOI was rapidly dissipating. Commanders, already airborne in command and control helicopters, reversed the planned order of insertion.

Fifty UH-1 helicopters were used to lift the two battalions onto their landing zones. They followed the flight route (shown in Sketch 5), in groups of five, heavy left, and landed in a staggered trail. The groups of five were spaced at thirty-second intervals. Gunships fired a three-minute preparation, which terminated immediately prior to the landing of the first lift. For subsequent lifts, gunships orbited in the vicinity of the landing zones to provide support as needed. The 2-502 landed without incident, but the 2-327 received heavy ground fire from a position about 500 meters west of their landing zone. Gunships scooted in immediately to suppress the fire.

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The commanders concerned controlled the combat assault from their helicopters to insure preparatory fires were placed exactly where they were planned. The nimble-footed paratroopers cleared the landing zone as if they were running on eggs in hopes of not activating mines and booby traps. The 2-502 commenced reconnaissance in force operations to the west, and the 2-327 remained in the vicinity of TA BAT to secure the landing zone for the combat assault of the two battalions of ARVN on 5 August. The efficacy of preparatory fires was evident because no troop-carrying helicopters were lost on either day. The gunships supporting the assaults were not so fortunate. Ground fire from west of A LUOI downed one gunship and forced another to make a precautionary landing. One crew member of the former was wounded, and the ship was recovered later in the day by a CH-47. The second gunship was flown to BIRMINGHAM after the crew determined it was flyable. Even more intense was the fire directed against gunships supporting the combat assault of 2-327 onto the landing zone at TA BAT. One was hit and crashed 200 meters north of the landing zone, resulting in one crew member wounded and the aircraft destroyed. Another was hit at almost the same time. It burst into flames, crashed and burned, resulting in one crew member killed and the other three wounded.

After the combat assaults, 1-327 placed one company in the vicinity of TA BAT, while the remainder of the battalion started a reconnaissance in force toward Objective ESSEX. It soon became

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evident the enemy had no installations in that area so the battalion's mission was changed to conduct eagle flights, in order to search out the maximum amount of the valley floor. Eagle flights are characterized by small units (usually no larger than a platoon), conducting combat assaults onto preselected landing zones, or onto landing zones selected in flight. Their purpose is to check areas which appear suitable for enemy caches or the concealment of small enemy forces. They remain on the ground no longer than necessary to thoroughly search the area. If nothing is found, they radio to be extracted, and move on to another area. Company D was given the mission of conducting a combat assault against Objective BEAK, which had originally been part of the mission of the 2-502. The rationale for taking and holding this piece of commanding terrain was that it was being used as an artillery base or an artillery observation post. As Company D waited in the vicinity of A LUOI to be picked up by helicopters, a heavy concentration of artillery fire crashed into their position. The company suffered a few casualties, but fortunately the concentration hit about fifteen minutes before the helicopters were scheduled to arrive. The combat assault was canceled, and after darkness enveloped the area, the company marched across the valley to an attack position in the vicinity of the objective. The next morning, as the paratroopers attacked up the steep ridgeline, they encountered very stiff resistance. The enemy employed 60 and 82mm mortars, artillery, rocket-propelled grenades, recoilless

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rifles and small arms fire, but the undaunted Screaming Eagles held their position. Tactical aircraft dropped napalm and 2,000-pound bombs on enemy positions, and artillery pounded the enemy incessantly, but he could not be blasted out of the caves and extremely well-constructed positions. The heroic paratroopers fought the enemy at close quarters for four days before they were withdrawn from the hill. The decision was made to withdraw because the weather was closing in, and enemy activity outside the valley was attracting the attention of higher headquarters. As this action was taking place, another company of the 1-327 reconnoitered the hills along the northern side of the valley to the east of BEAK. Contact in this area was light although many signs of recent enemy activity, including base camps and training areas, were observed. Another company of this battalion provided security for Fire Base SON, and one platoon secured Fire Base BERCHTESGADEN. EAGLE'S NEST and GEORGIA were secured by forces provided by the 2d Brigade.

After the battalions of the 1st ARVN Regiment landed and moved south, the 2-327 began reconnaissance in force operations to the west. The battalion commander's plan placed A and C Companies on the north side of the RAO LAO River, and B and D Companies on the south side with the Reconnaissance Platoon protecting the battalion's south flank. Though there was no canopied jungle in the valley, movement was slow and tedious because of secondary growth and dense elephant

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grass. As an illustration of the difficulty posed to foot movement, it required Company A three days to move from the TA BAT airstrip to spot elevation 518, a distance of 2.5 kilometers. With four companies abreast, pushing to the west, and spoiling for a fight, in the main they were disappointed. The enemy elected to withdraw rather than face the aggressive, determined troopers.

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A tragic incident occurred on 10 August when an airstrike called for by Company D went awry, and killed seven and wounded fifty-four members of the company. The battalion commander immediately deployed the reconnaissance platoon to the area to reinforce the stricken unit. The division commander landed his helicopter near Company D, and his presence stabilized the situation. The division G1 diverted all available replacements to this company, and by 13 August it was once again at combat strength.

After its combat assault, the 2-502 conducted reconnaissance in force operations south and southwest of A LUOI. In one significant contact on 8 August, Company D killed seven members of a North Vietnamese platoon, which was supported by mortars and snipers concealed in trees. The battalion also searched for the enemy throughout the mountainous area west of Fire Bases EAGLE'S NEST and GEORGIA. In this area, the battalion, anxious to develop a fight with a large enemy force, encountered sporadic resistance from small numbers of enemy lurking in well-concealed positions. The enemy refused to

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make a stand against the "Strike" troopers, preferring instead to retreat toward his sanctuary in Laos.

The contribution of the Republic of Vietnam's infantry battalions and Black Panther Company -- the latter landed on the TA BAT airstrip on 6 August -- was very significant as they accounted for nearly half of the enemy killed during the operation. Their commanders and staff exhibited professional competence and knowledge of the enemy, and the courage and aggressiveness of the individual South Vietnamese soldier was unsurpassed by any others in the operation. Tragedy also struck in their area when a 155mm shell fired from SON fell short and killed ten and wounded eighteen. Two of those killed and two wounded were US advisors; the remainder were ARVN Soldiers.

In addition to presenting fleeting targets for the infantrymen's weapons, the enemy conducted harassing rocket and mortar attacks against fire bases and night defensive positions. A total of 181 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed during the operation, and four more were taken prisoner. Forty-five individual and thirteen crew-served weapons, twelve tons of rice, eleven 122mm rockets, eighteen cases of 12.7mm ammunition, thirty-two cases of small arms ammunition, fifty-four mines and miscellaneous signal and medical equipment were removed from the enemy's inventory. Seven 2-ton trucks were destroyed. Friendly aircraft losses due to enemy action were one F-4 fighter bomber, four UH-1 gunships and one light observation helicopter. Friendly personnel losses were extremely light.

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The denial phase of SOMERSET PLAIN was instituted to prevent the enemy from moving through the valley and storing supplies there after the withdrawal of friendly forces. Minefields and sensor devices were placed across three choke points in the valley. Engineers and Long Range Patrol teams were helilifted from VEGHEL to the three selected locations. The mines and sensors were emplaced during the hours of darkness on 16-17 and 17-18 August with the aid of off-set illumination. Each mine was booby-trapped with an antilift device, and a chemical time fuze was inserted into each one to destroy it after a determined period of time. Knotted ropes were valuable in determining the location of each cluster of mines. Personnel who possessed extensive experience in mine warfare were the only ones entrusted to arm the mines at night.

The Long Range Patrol teams emplaced sensor devices to detect enemy movement in the vicinity of the minefields. A division artillery sensor monitoring station was established on EAGLE'S NEST with a quick-fire channel to the fire direction center of the 2-320th Artillery. This resulted in an immediate artillery response to enemy movement revealed by the sensors. The coded identification markings on sensors must be protected because there is a tendency for the markings to become obliterated, especially during the rainy season. Each sensor emits a specific signal when nearby movement is detected. If the markings are not discernible, there is a possibility a sensor will be placed in a location different from the planned position. Should

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this occur, the artillery fire would not land in the area of enemy activity. Painting the identification markings on the sensors was one means used to insure compatibility of the signal received with the area fired upon.

Republic of Vietnam units were extracted from the valley on 17 and 18 August. On both days, smoke screens placed by UH-1 helicopters obscured the pickup zones from enemy observation. The air mission commander observed the flight path of the helicopter used for dispersing the smoke, to insure the screen was placed precisely where he wanted it. Especially capable pilots were assigned to this mission to develop their expertise. In one case, the smoke was used to mask the pickup zones, while in another instance, it was used to obscure suspected enemy locations in the proximity of the area to be used for the extraction. The Black Panther Company was extracted on 17 August from the valley directly to the HUE airstrip by thirty UH-1 helicopters. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Regiment, were picked up on 18 August by thirty-three troopships in four lifts, and were moved to a secure landing zone near VEGHEL. From there, they were transported to HUE by CH-47 helicopters.

On 19 August, the three US battalions were extracted from multiple pickup zones to the vicinity of VEGHEL. Eight flights, varying from twenty-two to thirty troopships, were used in this operation. From VEGHEL the 1-327 was lifted by CH-47 to CAMP EAGLE for a stand

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down, the 2-327 was deployed to SON by CH-47, and the 2-502 occupied VEGHEL. The repositioning of these units was accomplished in about four and one-half hours.

Numerous lessons, which will prove valuable for future division operations, were learned during SOMERSET PLAIN. The procedures developed for constructing fire bases will enable infantry units to engage the enemy in any part of the country with artillery support continually available. The key to rapid completion of fire bases is the early introduction of D5-A or T-6 bulldozers. One-man chain saws were not effective in felling large trees. Since speed is a more important consideration than the weight of the equipment, two-man chain saws should be used to accelerate fire base clearing operations. Further, the heavier chain saws would reduce down-time of the equipment, and carbide tips would cut through hardwood trees more rapidly.

Fire bases must be evacuated with the same care that is taken when they are constructed and occupied. The first step is the retrograde of heavy equipment. All supplies except the minimum amounts of Class I and V should then be moved to permanent base areas. At the same time, the phasing out of communications equipment should be started. In the next step artillery units should fire all remaining ammunition, followed immediately by the extraction of all artillery pieces, and remaining communications equipment. The tactical command post of the infantry followed by security elements should then be extracted. The final step is the contamination of the fire base with persistent CS to

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inhibit enemy access to the abandoned areas. In many instances, fire support for the evacuation can be provided from other fire bases, and certainly by tactical air and gunships. By starting with the evacuation of the fire base most distant from permanent base areas, it may be possible to provide artillery fire support for the evacuation of all of them.

Close coordination between aviation and artillery planners resulted in the designation of flight routes which prevented the disruption of artillery fires. Preparatory fires for combat assaults were shifted rather than terminated when gunships approached for their preparation of landing zones. After the shift, every fifth round fired was white phosphorous. This technique assisted gunship pilots in locating impact areas. Aircraft control was established at EAGLE'S NEST. Pilots of CH-47 helicopters contacted this control station on take-off and were directed to fly either the north or south route depending on artillery fire. Since the artillery units usually fired in one general direction, helipads were constructed to the rear of gun positions as another means of preventing the discontinuance of supporting fires. (See Sketch Map 6.)

The concept of the forward supply point at BIRMINGHAM proved very valuable. Unit field trains operated from CAMP EAGLE and BIRMINGHAM, and combat trains were located at BERCHTESGADEN and SON. Each infantry battalion normally had two UH-1 helicopters for the daily resupply of

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units in the valley. A total of 7,176 short tons of supplies were used during the operation. Aviators flying logistics missions were provided with a card describing the load, the receiving unit, and that unit's location, radio call sign, and frequency.

In the field of signal operations, it was discovered that shock waves created by the firing of howitzers can damage the TPS-25 radar. To preclude this damage, the TPS-25 should be located a minimum of 200 meters from any artillery piece. The new FM radio, AN/PRC-77, which is a PRC-25 with a KY-38, was used for the first time in this operation to provide secure voice radio communications down to company level. The PRC-77 weighs fifty-two pounds, increasing the weight of the equipment carried by the rifle company radio operators, but its value was considered to be worth the additional weight. Some units employed it as a one-man load, others as a two-man load, and still others had the KY-38 brought in on evening logistical flights, and retrograded it the following morning. The liaison teams with Republic of Vietnam units must be provided with secure radio facilities. In many cases, intelligence and operational information were delayed from these units to control headquarters, degrading the value of intelligence and the operational capability of the units.

The most significant lesson learned was the enemy does not own the A SHAU Valley. The 101st Airborne Division can effectively operate for extended periods of time in the valley. The division can make it extremely costly to the enemy, if he should decide to defend his

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installations against the superior firepower, mobility and aggressiveness of the Screaming Eagles. These traits were exemplified in the true airborne spirit during Operation SOMERSET PLAIN.

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APPENDIX I

TASK ORGANIZATION

Task Force I

HHC 1/101 Abn Div
1-327th Inf (-)
D/1-502 Inf (OPCON 27 Jul - 6 Aug)
C/1-505 Inf (OPCON 9 Aug - 19 Aug)
2/C/1-502 Inf (OPCON 29 Jul - 6 Aug)
2/D/1-501 Inf (OPCON 31 Jul - 6 Aug)
2-327 Inf
B/1-327 (OPCON 4 Aug - 20 Aug)
2-502 Inf
2-320 Arty (DS 1/101)
B/1-9 Air Cav (OPCON 1/101 30 Jul - 19 Aug)

A/326 Eng (DS)
1st FASCP 501 Signal
1/101 MP Co
1/265 RRC
D/326 Med
1/B/801 Maint
45th PI
Tn 101 MI Det
42d Inf Plat (Scout Dog)
557th Inf Plat (Combat Tracker)
TACP

101 Abn Div Troops

HHC, 101st Abn Div
326 Eng Bn (-)
501 Sig Bn (-)
F/58 Inf (LRP)
101st Admin Co
101st MP Co (-)
265 RRC
58th Inf Plat (Scout Dog)
10th Cal Plat
36th Cal Det
20th Cal Det
22d Mil Hist Det
25th PI Det
101st MI Bn (-)
181st MI Det

160th Aviation Group

HHC, 160th Avn Gp
101st AHB
159th ASHB
163d Avn Co (GS)

Div Spt Cmd

HHC & Band
5th Trans Bn
426th Sup & Svc Bn
801st Maint Bn (-)
326th Med Bn (-)

101st Abn Div Artillery

HHC, 101st Div Arty
C/1-321 Arty (Reinf 2-320)
2-11 (-) Arty (GS 101st Div Arty)
B/2-11 Arty (GS-R 2-321)
C/2-11 Arty (GS-R 2-320)
C/6-16 Arty (GS-R 2-320, o/o
Reinf 1-321)
C/6-33 (GS-R 2-321)

Task Force - 1st ARVN Regiment

2d Bn, 1st Regt
3d Bn, 1st Regt
HAC, BAO (Black Panther Co)
A Btry, 11th Arty (105mm) (towed)
Plat, A Co, 34th Arty (155mm)
Plat, 1st Eng Bn

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APPENDIX II (LOGISTICS) TO CASE STUDY, SOMERSET PLAIN

During SOMERSET PLAIN, the following supplies were used:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Class I | 341 Short Tons |
| Class II and IV | 1850 Short Tons |
| Class III | 2150 Short Tons |
| Class V | <u>2835 Short Tons</u> |
| TOTAL | 7176 Short Tons |

In addition, an erdalator capable of producing 1,500 gallons of potable water per hour, was operated by division engineers at BIRMINGHAM. A total of 11,850 gallons of purified water was helilifted to fire bases and maneuver units in water trailers and fifty-gallon capacity rubber drums.

Helicopters of the division's 160th Aviation Group transported 2,675 troops during combat assaults. A total of 6,621 passengers and 5,954 tons of supplies were lifted to fire bases by CH-47 helicopters. The group's aviators flew 2,604 hours during the operation; 367 hours by gunships, 1,285 hours by UH-1 troop carriers, and 952 hours by CH-47 helicopters.

Items of equipment which required major repairs were evacuated to BIRMINGHAM by helicopter and then by road to CAMP EAGLE. A total of 292 items were repaired by the 801st Maintenance Battalion during the operation.

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Helicopter ambulances were stationed at the forward fire bases, and a medical clearing station was established at BASTOGNE. Ninety-five missions were flown to evacuate 257 patients. The flight time from field locations to the clearing station averaged less than fifteen minutes. This facility proved to be especially valuable during the evacuation of the mass casualties caused by the errant on strike on 10 August.

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demolition charges and RPG-7 and RPG-2 fires, the enemy broke through the outer perimeter wire and moved toward the bunker line. Intense friendly SA/AW and LFT fires, in addition to direct fire artillery Beehive rounds repulsed the enemy attack. Artillerymen of the 2d Battalion, 320th Artillery, fired 4 rounds of Beehive at the enemy attempting to breach the perimeter and killed twelve. The enemy fled from the area at 0500 and gunships continued to place effective fire on the retreating enemy forces. A sweep of the area at daylight revealed that enemy losses were: 54 NVA KIA, 2 NVA PW, 11 individual and 5 crew-served weapons, 40 satchel charges, 30 bangalore torpedoes, 50 RPG rockets, 4x90mm RR rounds, and miscellaneous SA ammunition and field equipment. Friendly losses were: 13 US KIA, 52 WIA (16 evac). Damage to base camp equipment and station property was light.

(6) From 21 May to 27 May extensive efforts were made by the 101st Airborne Division and closely cooperating ARVN Forces to deny the enemy the yield of the coastal plains rice harvest. Reconnaissance in force operations, in addition to a program of extensive and aggressive night ambushes were established throughout the Division's area of operation. During the period a series of brief engagements with enemy forces in the coastal plains area, and heavy contact with NVA elements near the edges of New Base Area 114 took place.

(7) Company A, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry, reacting to intelligence reports indicating increased enemy activity 20 km east of Hue (YD 923208), conducted a combat assault to engage a suspected enemy company in the area on 28 May. Upon insertion, contact was quickly established with a reinforced enemy platoon. The Aero Rifle platoon (ARP) 2-17 Cav and B/2-17 Cav maneuvered to Company A's position, and while Company A established a blocking position vicinity YD 923215, they attacked southeast over the enemy's position. Enemy losses for the battle were: 34 KIA, 1 VC PW, and 5 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were: 1 US KIA, 8 US WIA (8 evac) and 1 APC damaged.

(8) Also on 28 May elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, while conducting reconnaissance in force operations along Highway 547A discovered a significant vehicle and weapons cache. The equipment and weapons captured brought the major items of equipment captured west of FB VEGHEL to a total of 54 trucks (1½ ton), 8x23mm AA guns, 5x85mm field artillery guns, 2x12.7mm MG and large amounts of 85mm, 76mm (tank), 75mm recoilless rifle, 82mm and 60mm mortar, 23mm AA and small arms ammunition.

(9) On 29 May Company A, 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry discovered a large weapons cache 5 km north of FB VEGHEL. The 175 weapons captured brought the total of weapons captured in three consecutive

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days to 507 individual and 87 crew-served weapons.

(10) Due to intelligence data indicating that rice was being stored in the area north of the village of Phuong Quan Cua, 8 km north of Hue (YD 5632), D Company, 1st Battalion, 502 Infantry on 30 May conducted reconnaissance in force operations in the area and captured 36.5 tons of rice. The rice was evacuated and delivered to the district chief of Quang Dien.

(11) Intelligence indicated increased enemy activity in the village of Le Xa Dong, 12 km east of Hue (YD 8823). In response to the intelligence reports, a combined operation involving the 2-17 Cav and the 3/3 ARVN Infantry Battalion was initiated on 30 May. The 3/3 Infantry (ARVN) moved overland to establish a blocking position at the southern end of the village, as Troop A, 2-17 Cav and one Popular Force platoon began reconnaissance in force operations from FB FORWARD south toward the village. As 2-17 Cav elements attacked south into the 3/3 Infantry's (ARVN) position, initial contact with the enemy was established. Artillery, TAC Air and Light Fire Team fires were immediately placed on the enemy position as the 2-17 Cav elements assaulted forward to develop the contact. At 1430 Company B, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry was alerted to conduct a combat assault into the eastern portion of the village to establish an additional blocking position and to contain the retreating enemy forces. The 2-17 Cav attacked again driving the enemy into established blocking positions, and at sunset since Troop C of the 2-17 Cav was not able to attack through the village, and a tight cordon was formed around the enemy's position. Throughout the night continuous illumination and artillery were employed to prevent the enemy's escape. Action for the operation terminated on 31 May as elements of the 2-17 Cav with a platoon from Company C, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry conducted a sweep through the village and destroyed the remnants of the enemy force and resistance. The enemy losses during the combined operation were as follows: 142 NVA KIA, 46 PW, and 69 weapons captured. Of these enemy losses, ARVN Forces were responsible for 51 NVA KIA, 27 PW; and 35 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were: 6 US WIA, 2 PF KIA, and 2 PF WIA.

(12) On 1 June a combined cordon operation involving US and ARVN forces was established around the village of Trung Phuong, 16 km east of Hue (YD 9419). Troops A and B, 2-17 Cav, Company B, 2d Battalion, 501 Infantry, B Company, 1st Battalion, 501 Infantry, and Task Force 7, 1st ARVN Infantry Division attacked on parallel axis to engage enemy forces which were reported in the area by intelligence data. Contact was maintained throughout the afternoon of 1 June and a cordon was established around the village during the early evening. The results of the battle were: 8 US WIA, 38 VC KIA,

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of the intensive searches, saturation patrolling, extensive night ambushes, and rapid exploitation of intelligence information, the existent lines of continuity within the Viet Cong infrastructure were dissolved. The operation terminated on 6 November and the final results were as follows: 56 VC KIA, 66 VC/FW, and 60 individual weapons captured. Friendly losses were 1 US KIA, 6 US WIA, 3 ARVN KIA, 12 ARVN WIA, 1 RF/PF KIA, 7 RF/PF WIA.

s. The 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry and elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, and 7th ARVN Cavalry initiated a cordon operation on Nui Tranh Peninsula in response to a Hoi Chanh's information concerning the existence of an enemy force between 150 and 200 men on the peninsula. Throughout the operation sweeps of the area, ground contamination and demolitions were employed to root out and destroy the enemy and his places of refuge. Results of the operation were minimal as regards to body count, but a large number of enemy fortifications and installations were destroyed denying him further use of the area.

t. In the 1st Brigade area of operation the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, 2/7 ARVN Cav Troop, Hoc Boa Company, and Phu Loc Popular Forces and National Police Field Forces conducted a cordon operation in the vicinity of Phu Loc District Headquarters. During the eight day operation which began on 3 November and terminated 10 November over 1300 suspects were interrogated and approximately 70 were detained as prisoners of war. In addition 4 enemy were killed, and US Forces sustained only 4 wounded, and those as a result of booby traps. On 3 November the western and northern boundary was extended (See Inclosure 2: Area of Operation) to include part of the area vacated by the 1st Cavalry Division when it deployed to III Corps. With previous extensions the Division's area of operation encompassed 108 kilometers from north to south.

u. Following Operation Phu Vang III (26 October - 6 November), the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, a task force from the 7th ARVN Armored Cavalry, the 13th Coastal Group, and elements of the National Police Field Forces, and Regional and US Naval Forces were involved in a soft cordon and search operation 6 km southeast of Phu Bai, the the Troui River area. As a result of the cordon operation 1,294 personnel were detained and processed through the Joint Intelligence Center; 25 of whom were classified as members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure. In addition to the detained personnel, 10 Viet Cong were killed and 10 individual weapons were captured.

v. On 18 November the 2d Battalion, 501 Infantry, and elements of the 3d ARVN Regiment were involved in operation Nam Hoa I. Intel-

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an enlarged clearing station proved to be particularly valuable in providing timely medical treatment for casualties suffered throughout the operation.

(1) In addition, elements of the 1st Battalion, 327 Infantry conducted extensive sweep operations along Highway 547A to clear enemy forces from the area and along the flight path of the combat assault forces.

(2) On 4 August units of the 1st Brigade— 2d Battalion, 502 Infantry, 2d Battalion, 327 Infantry— conducted combat assaults into the A Shau Valley in the vicinity of A Loui and Ta Bat, respectively. On the following day elements of the 1st ARVN Regiment, 1st ARVN Division conducted combat assaults into the valley in the vicinity of Ta Bat. During the period 5 August - 17 August, both the 1st Brigade and 1st ARVN Regiment elements conducted extensive reconnaissance in force operations throughout the Valley. The enemy employed delaying and harassing tactics as the US-ARVN forces conducted reconnaissance in force operations in the Valley. No major enemy installations or caches were discovered by the combined forces. On the nights of 16-18 August elements of the 326th Engineers emplaced minefields and sensor devices at three choke points in the valley. The sensor devices monitored by a station positioned on EAGLE'S NEST were exploited immediately by artillery units located nearby. Aerial reconnaissance indicated that this procedure denied the enemy use of this principal line of communication for over two weeks following the extraction of maneuver elements on 18 and 19 August. The results of the combat operations in the Valley by US/ARVN Forces were:

a. US Totals:

Friendly Losses

19 US KIA
104 US WIA
2 US MIA

Enemy Losses

93 NVA KIA
1 NVA PW
23 Indiv Wpns Capt
11 Crew-served Wpns Capt

b. ARVN Totals:

15 ARVN KIA
57 ARVN WIA
2 ARVN MIA

88 NVA KIA
3 NVA PW
22 Indiv Wpns Capt
2 Crew-served Wpns Capt

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Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat After Action Report,
Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

1. Unit Strengths

a. Strengths as of 17 May 1968:

| UNIT | NEVADA EAGLE | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|----|------|-----------|----|------|-----------|-----|
| | AUTH | OFF ASG | PD | AUTH | WO ASG | PD | AUTH | EM ASG | PD |
| <u>1st Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 36 | 34 | 18 | 3 | 3 | 180 | 200 | 188 |
| 1/327 Inf | 43 | 26 | 24 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 787 | 714 |
| 2/327 Inf | 43 | 29 | 26 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 682 | 650 |
| 2/502 Inf | 43 | 34 | 30 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 875 | 760 | 715 |
| <u>2d Bde</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 32 | 32 | 18 | 4 | 4 | 180 | 127 | 154 |
| 1/501 Inf | 43 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 838 | 811 |
| 2/501 Inf | 43 | 36 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 809 | 790 |
| 1/502 Inf | 43 | 36 | 35 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 792 | 772 |
| <u>Div Arty</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 28 | 27 | 25 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 165 | 159 | 144 |
| 2/320 Arty | 41 | 48 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 416 | 462 | 430 |
| 1/321 Arty | 43 | 41 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 391 | 402 | 382 |
| 2/11 Arty | 30 | 36 | 36 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 552 | 582 | 564 |
| <u>3d Bde, 82d</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 69 | 89 | 89 | 14 | 11 | 11 | 750 | 782 | 733 |
| 1/505 Inf | 36 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 754 | 624 | 601 |
| 2/505 Inf | 36 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 633 | 588 |
| 1/508 Inf | 36 | 43 | 43 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 754 | 670 | 612 |
| 2/321 Arty | 39 | 50 | 47 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 416 | 337 | 324 |
| <u>DISCOM</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| HH&B | 27 | 28 | 24 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 134 | 206 | 186 |
| 326th Med | 52 | 39 | 35 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 313 | 275 | 214 |
| 801st Mn | 22 | 17 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 311 | 351 | 321 |
| 426th S&S | 26 | 17 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 448 | 397 | 343 |
| <u>Aviation</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 101st ASHB | 63 | 30 | 28 | 124 | 47 | 41 | 653 | 304 | 250 |
| 308th CAB (Redesignated 159th ASHB) | 20 | 19 | 16 | 3 | 13 | 13 | 90 | 160 | 150 |
| <u>Div Trp</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 2-17 Cav | 41 | 30 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 588 | 407 | 389 |
| 326th Engr | 33 | 32 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 543 | 540 | 520 |

Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Nevada Eagle, 101st Airborne Division (U)

| UNIT | AUTH | OFF ASG | PD | AUTH | WO ASG | PD | AUTH | EM ASG | PD |
|-----------------|------|------------|----|------|-----------|----|------|-----------|-----|
| Div Trp (Con't) | | | | | | | | | |
| 501st Sig | 13 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 336 | 287 | 222 |
| 101st MP Co | 7 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 157 | 154 | 149 |
| HHC, Div | 62 | 76 | 68 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 132 | 214 | 150 |

b. Changes to strength during Operation NEVADA EAGLE.

On 19 October 1968 the 3rd Brigade, 82d Airborne Division departed at the following strength:

| UNIT | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD |
|---------------|------|-----|----|------|-----|----|------|-----|-----|
| 3rd Bde, 82nd | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 69 | 87 | 87 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 750 | 773 | 754 |
| 1/505 Inf | 36 | 39 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 703 | 672 |
| 2/505 Inf | 36 | 40 | 39 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 680 | 663 |
| 1/508 Inf | 36 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 754 | 673 | 649 |
| 2/321 Arty | 39 | 47 | 46 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 416 | 389 | 370 |

On 17 October 1968 the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division joined at the following strength:

| UNIT | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD |
|---------------|------|-----|----|------|-----|----|------|-----|-----|
| 3d Bde, 101st | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 32 | 41 | 18 | 6 | 14 | 180 | 142 | 140 |
| 1/506 Inf | 43 | 34 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 823 | 748 |
| 2/506 Inf | 43 | 35 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 783 | 724 |
| 3/187 Inf | 43 | 31 | 31 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 775 | 718 |
| 2/319 | 43 | 45 | 41 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 391 | 373 | 334 |

c. Strengths at close of Operation NEVADA EAGLE.

| UNIT | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD | AUTH | ASG | PD |
|-----------|------|-----|----|------|-----|----|------|-----|-----|
| 1st Bde | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 29 | 29 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 180 | 206 | 194 |
| 1/327 Inf | 43 | 43 | 43 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 810 | 777 |
| 2/327 Inf | 43 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 808 | 782 |
| 2/502 Inf | 43 | 41 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 817 | 789 |
| 2d Bde | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 37 | 37 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 180 | 233 | 218 |
| 1/501 Inf | 43 | 39 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 786 | 762 |
| 2/501 Inf | 43 | 38 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 748 | 712 |
| 1/502 Inf | 43 | 38 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 875 | 769 | 726 |
| 3d Bde | | | | | | | | | |
| HHC | 25 | 33 | 33 | 18 | 12 | 11 | 180 | 226 | 218 |
| 1/506 Inf | 43 | 40 | 39 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 875 | 798 | 697 |

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Inclosure 5 (Chemical) to Combat After Action Report, Operation NEVADA EAGLE, 101st Airborne Division (U)

h. (U) Chemical maintenance support. Inspection and repair teams for all chemical items of equipment were provided to division units on their request. Prior to Operation Somerset Plain, chemical maintenance teams inspected and classified all M17 Protective Masks in the units participating in the operation. Serviceable masks were available for all units by D-Day. Since the start of NEVADA EAGLE, over 15,000 protective masks, 61 portable flame throwers and 8 miscellaneous items of chemical equipment have been inspected and/or repaired.

i. (U) Chemical Munitions in Perimeter Defense.

(1) The flame fougasse, a 55 gallon drum filled with 8% thickened fuel, and the E-8 Tactical CS Launcher, were extensively used around perimeters of NDP's, FB's, LZ's, etc, to assist in the defense of these locations.

(2) 1,243 flame fougasse and 242 E-8's have been installed in the division AO throughout this period.

j. (C) Bunker Seeding Operations.

(1) Persistent CS-1 is also used to seed bunker, cave and tunnel complexes to deny use to hostile forces.

(2) The 2/327 Airborne Infantry Battalion conducted an operation on the Nui Tron peninsula, during November, which uncovered approximately 50 bunkers and caves used by the enemy for storage and shelter. The 10th Chemical Platoon provided a CS bunker seeding team for this operation from 11-17 November. As 31 January 1969, the contaminated bunkers still could not be entered because of the effects of agent CS.

2. (U) Statistics:

| <u>TYPE OF MISSION</u> | <u>NUMBER OF MISSIONS</u> | <u>REMARKS</u> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Aerial Defoliation | 48 | Required 74 sorties with average expenditure of 150 gallons per mission |
| Ground Defoliation | 36 | Required 56 sorties with average expenditure of 500 gallons per mission |
| Aerial Insecticide | 58 | Required 87 sorties with average expenditure of 150 gallons per mission |

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SONG IN US 1940

HUE

CAMP
ENCLOS

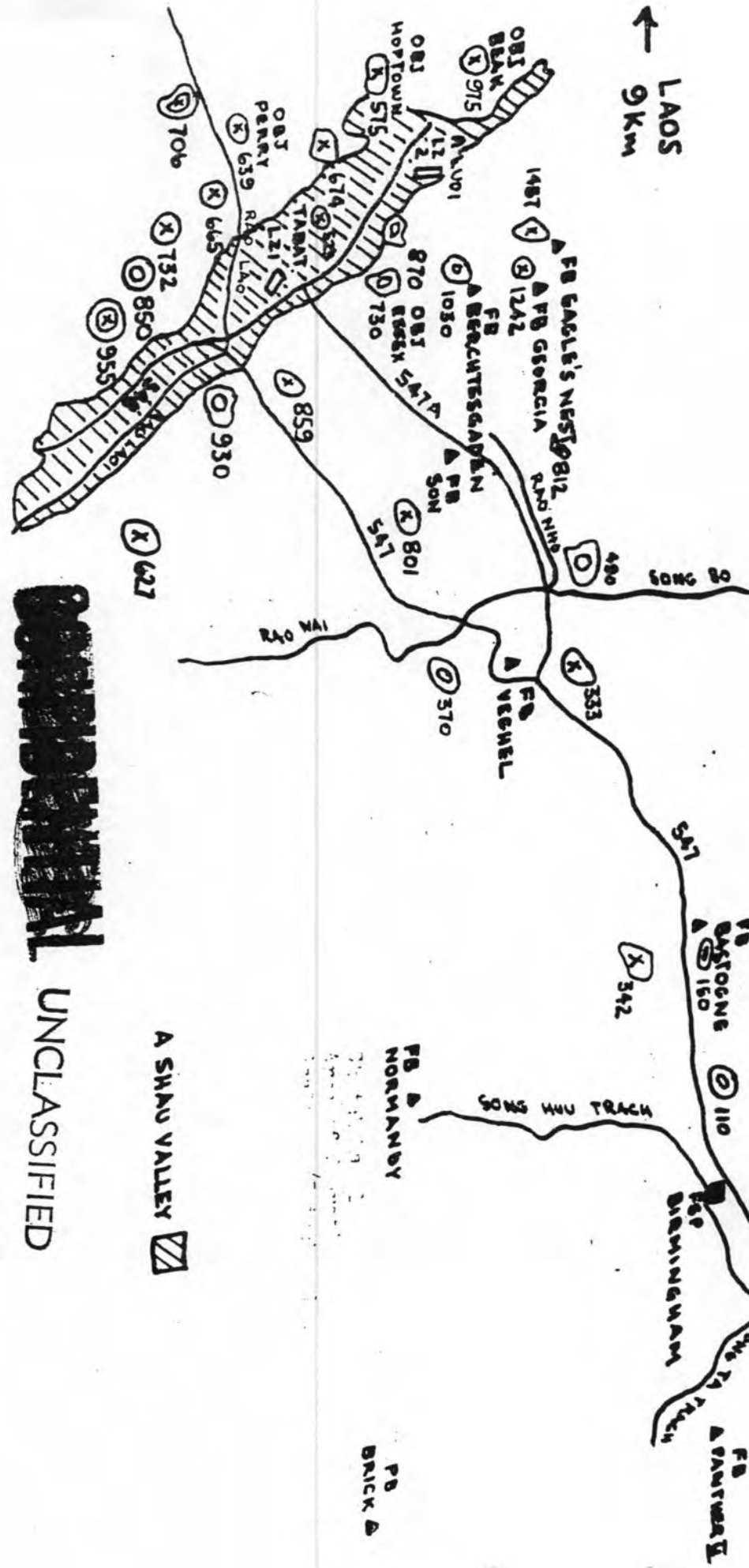
FB D
NORMANDY

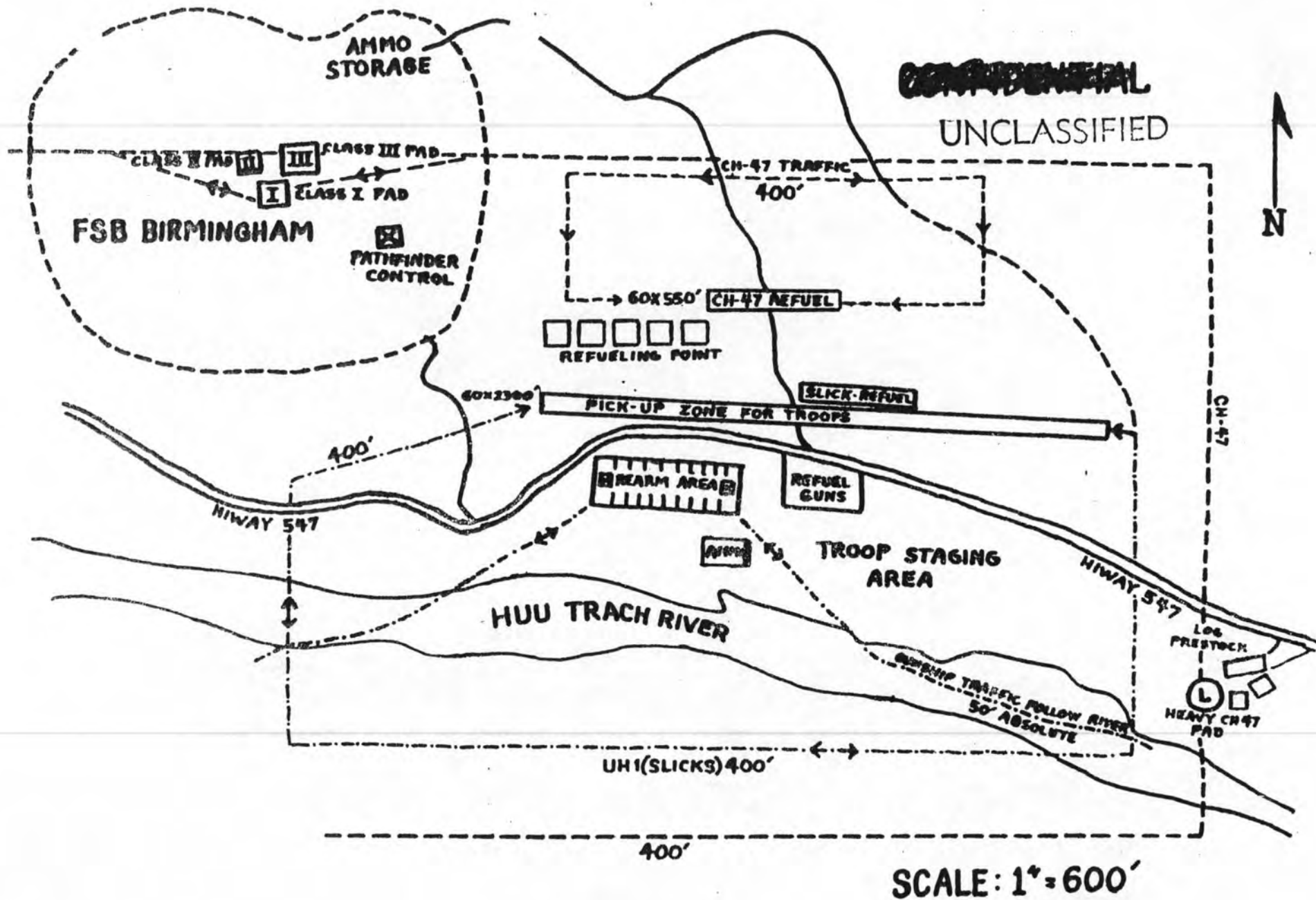
PB
BRICK A

A SHAU VALLEY 

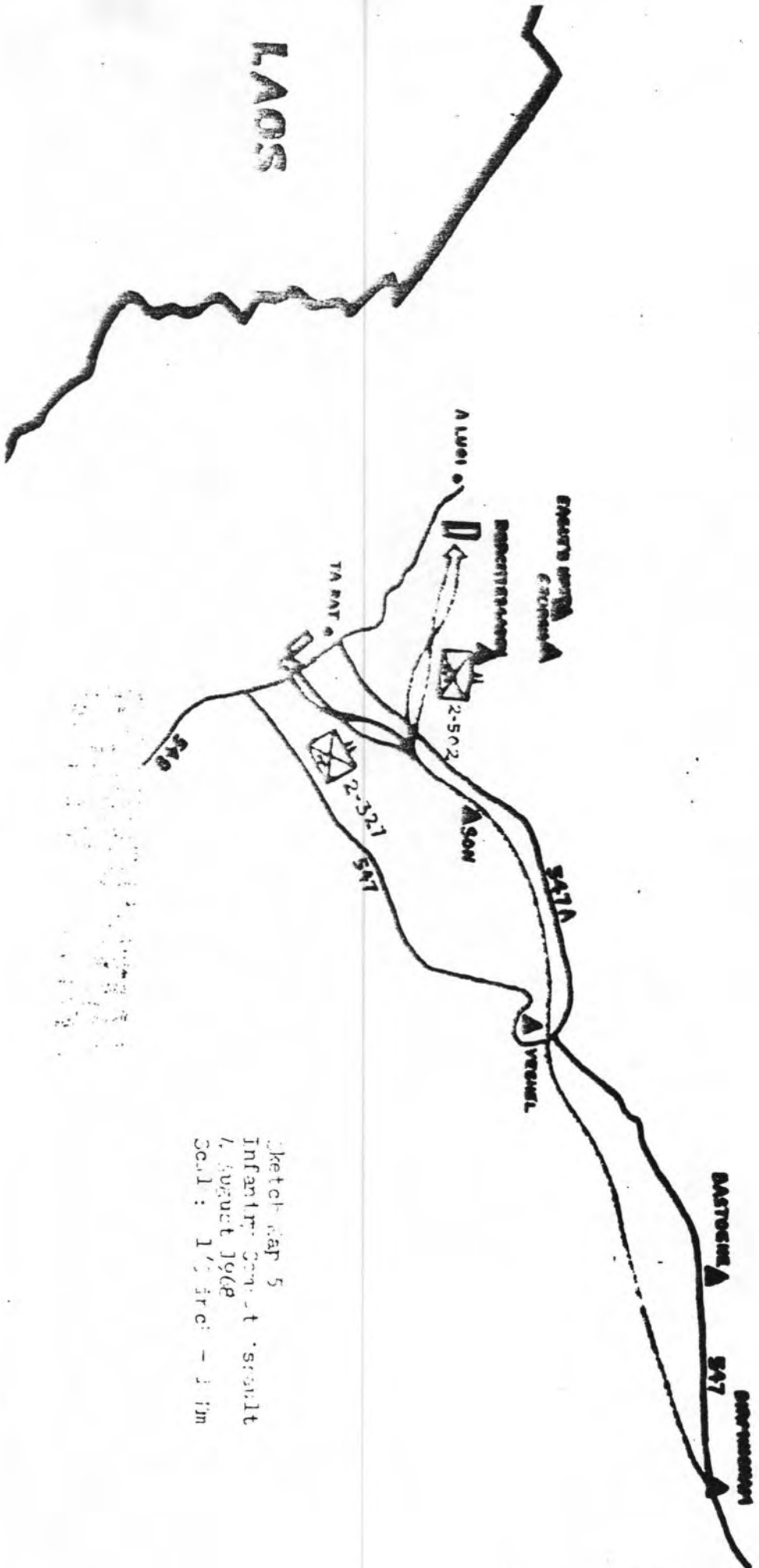
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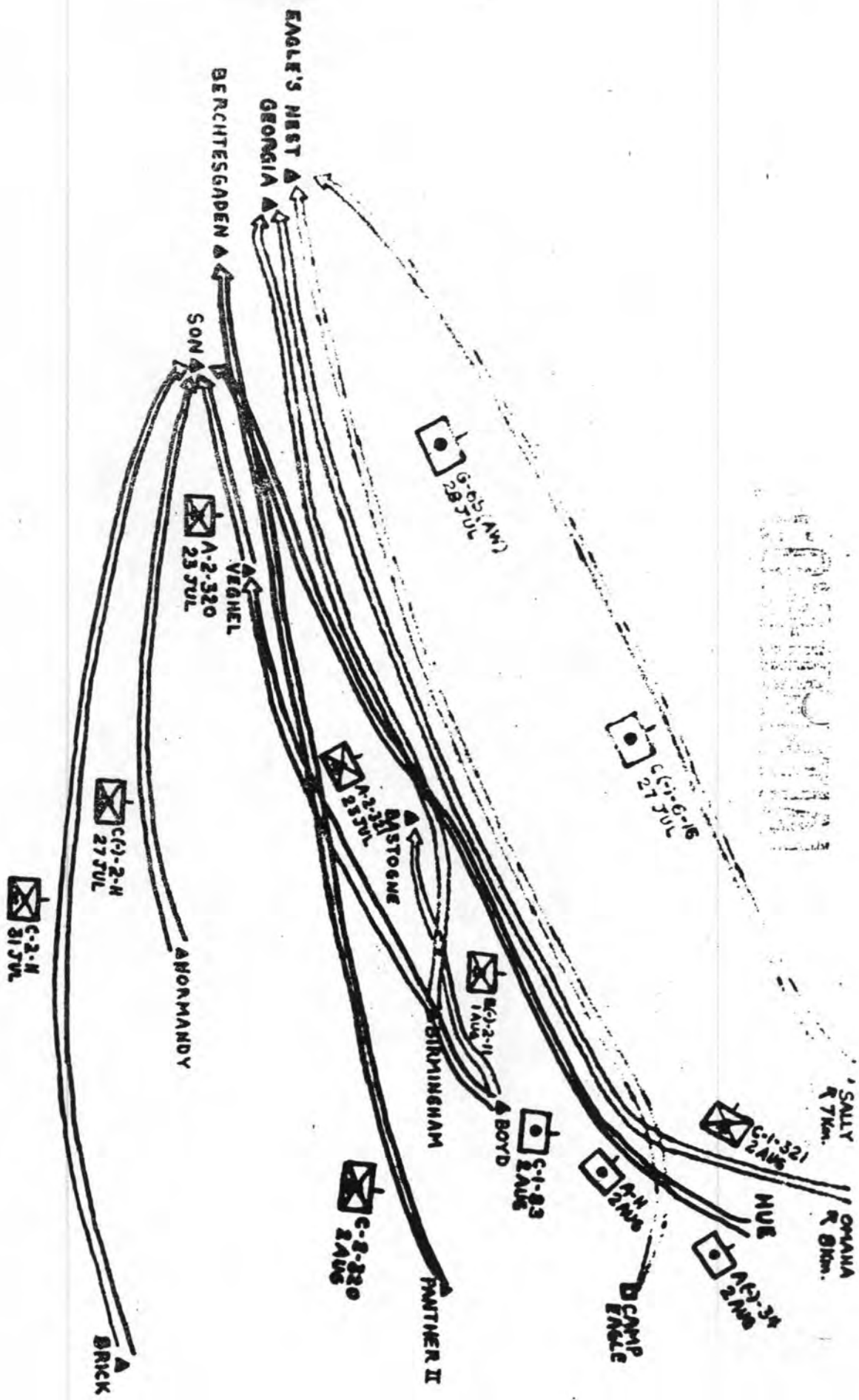


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Sketch Map 5
Infantry Combat School
4 August 1968
Scale: 1 1/2 inch = 1 km

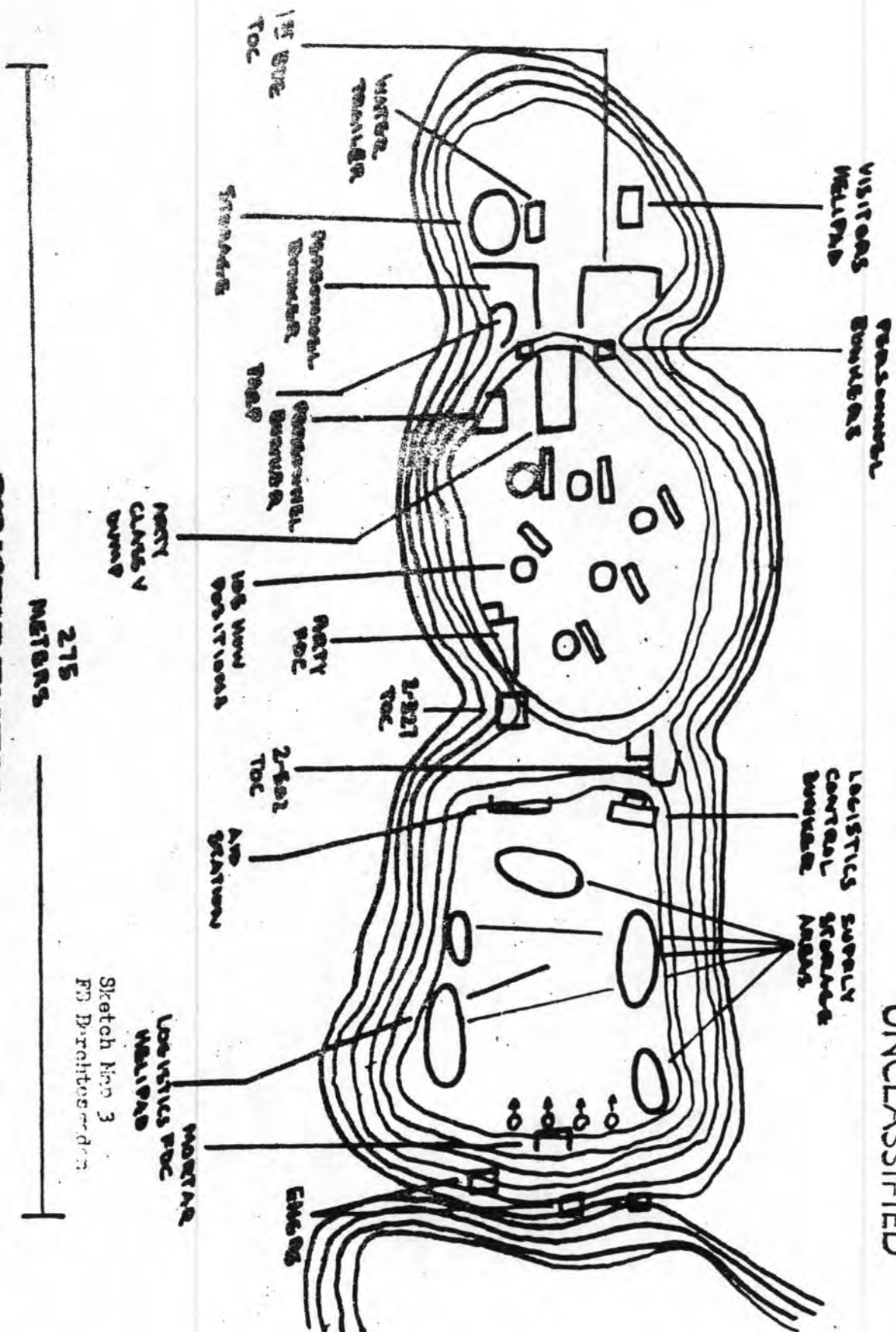
SECRET



Sketch map 4
 Artillery Displacement
 Scale: 1" = 1 Km

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