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28 Oct 65

III MAF "VC Attack of Marble
Mountain Airfield &
Chudai Airfield"

286 014

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100988 65
16 DEC 1965

SECRET (Declassified upon removal of enclosure)

From: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
To: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Viet Cong Attack of Marble Mountain Air Facility and
Chu Lai Airfield of 28 October 1965; report of (U)

Ref: (a) CG III MAF/NCC ltr 103/DEW/am over ser 0042865
of 29 Nov 65

Encl: (1) Copy of reference (a)

[Add'l photo (from report, uncl) enclosed (4)]

1. Reference (a) has been reproduced by this headquarters and is forwarded as enclosure (1) for information.

V. H. KRULAK

Copy to:
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CG III MAF (less encl)

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HEADQUARTERS
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 Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
 C/O FPO San Francisco,
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From: Commanding General
 To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
 Subj: Viet Cong Attack of Marble Mountain Air Facility and Chu Lai Airfield
 of 28 October 1965, report of

Ref: (a) CG III MAF 272130Z Oct65
 (b) CG III MAF 280422Z Oct65
 (c) CG III MAF 281604Z Oct65

Encl: (1) VC Attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility
 (2) VC Attack on Chu Lai Airfield
 (3) I Corps G-2 evaluation of VC interrogation

1. References (a), (b) and (c) provided preliminary information regarding the Viet Cong attacks on Marble Mountain Air Facility and Chu Lai Airfield on 28 October 1965. Subsequently, more detailed information was collected, and the information contained herein presents an analysis and a reconstruction of the attacks and other related items.

2. A few minutes after midnight on 28 October 1965, the Viet Cong began a systematic destruction of aircraft and other equipment in two different enclaves of the III Marine Amphibious Force. Upon receiving notice, almost simultaneously, of the attacks on Chu Lai and Marble Mountain, III MAF placed all units in the Da Nang Enclave on 100% alert. The Da Nang Air Base Defense Battalion augmented the perimeter defense. The enclave of Hue Phu Bai was alerted. Enclosures (1) and (2) provide a description of the intelligence leading up to the attacks, the VC attacks, the damage, and the defenses as they existed at the time of the attacks.

3. A detailed analysis of other Viet Cong activities within the Da Nang TAOR during the night 27/28 October 1965, indicates that other VC attacks may have been planned to coincide with the attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility. First, at 1930H 27 October, 1st Battalion 1st Marines received a fairly reliable agent report which indicated that a VC Force estimated at battalion size was moving out of the mountains towards their positions. As a result, 680 rounds of HE artillery fire were fired into the area of the last reported location. A subsequent report from a different source indicated that a VC battalion had been moving in the area of impact, and were forced to disperse by this fire. Second, at 2005H 27 October a squad from 3d Battalion, 9th Marines ambushed what is believed to have been the

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advance party of a VC company. The time, direction of movement and distance from the Da Nang Air Base were such that this company could have been in position to attack this installation or Marble Mountain Air Facility at the time the actual attack took place (See enclosure (1), Paragraph 3).

4. Reference (c) reported that interrogation of four wounded prisoners revealed essentially identical stories regarding the Marble Mountain attack, i.e., that the VC had moved by small boat from the Hai Van Pass area to the beach north of Marble Mountain; that a second force was to land south of Marble Mountain; and that each force numbered about 200. Enclosure (3) contains an analysis of prisoner interrogations made by the G-2, I Corps ARVN. This analysis is considerably more detailed, even to the details of VC's birthplace and of their training. However, a report received from the Hoa Vang District Chief (Enclosure 1, para 2b) in certain respects appears to be more plausible. An assembly area located north of MCB-9 coincides with the route described in this report. The total numbers appear to be somewhat high; however, there is insufficient information available to determine the number of VC that operated to the south of Marble Mountain complex. None of the reports can be given complete credibility in that inconsistencies appear throughout. As an example, enclosure (3) indicates a boat trip of 45 KM through an area well patrolled by VNN and USN units in three hours time, while the original interrogation indicated that the trip began at 1400H. The retirement route of the report provided by the Hoa Vang District Chief corresponds with a report from the Central Registry Detachment, which this Hq rated as F/5, that VC wounded were located south of Marble Mountain. This same report stated that 20 VC were killed, 25 VC were missing and 34 VC were wounded. This number of VC reported missing coincides quite closely to the MAG-16 confirmed count of 17 VC killed and 4 VC captured. Consideration must be given to the fact that the prisoners referred to in enclosure (1) and enclosure (3) are the same VCC.

5. Although the time of the two attacks could have been a coincidence, it is much more likely that they were coordinated. The size of the unit involved at Chu Lai was considerably smaller than the unit at Marble Mountain. Therefore, the attack at Chu Lai could have been for diversionary purposes rather than a concerted effort to destroy aircraft. This is supported, somewhat, by the fact that the skill displayed by the sapper group at Chu Lai indicated considerably less adroitness at handling explosives than the group at Marble Mountain. See Enclosure (2).

6. The VC at both Marble Mountain and Chu Lai were highly skilled at infiltration. They were able to penetrate both the physical barriers and military defenses unannounced. Although there are conflicts in statements and reported routes of attack, analysis of the facts supports the thesis that the first indication of VC presence coincided very closely with explosions around or in the aircraft. The signal in the Marble Mountain attack may have been given by firing mortars. In any case, it has been impossible to differentiate between the time of the mortar attack, the time the aircraft began to burn and the time of the attack on the U. S. Naval Hospital. The main point appears to be that some of the sappers were in position and ready to begin their systematic destruction upon signal or at an appointed time (Enclosure 3 tends to confirm the fact that the destruction began on signal).

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7. Conclusions. Considering all factors available, in conjunction with analysis of occurrences, the following conclusions appear valid:

a. The probable route used by VC to the Marble Mountain Air Facility was from the southwest, across the Tourane River west of the Air Facility, to an assembly area at (BT 055745).

b. The route of penetration into the Chu Lai enclave has not been determined.

c. The quick response of the Marines on duty, both at Marble Mountain and Chu Lai, prevented the VC from inflicting considerably more damage. As examples; at Marble Mountain, the northern sapper group was stopped completely and one of the western sapper groups was reduced to two persons who failed to reach the helicopter parking area; at Chu Lai, the group which had proceeded down the west side of the runway was turned back from the aircraft parking area by the actions of members of the crash crew.

d. The size of the force attacking the Marble Mountain Complex is estimated at 60-90.

e. The size of the force attacking Chu Lai is estimated at 15-20.

f. There is no evidence to corroborate the Hoa Vang District Chief's statement that the VC were from NVN. To the contrary, evidence indicates that VC were from Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces.

g. The size of the force, scheme of maneuver, completeness of plans, analysis of weapons, and examination of the VC killed, indicate that a hard core, main force VC unit, well trained and resolute in purpose, attacked the Marble Mountain complex.

h. The size of the force, scheme of maneuver, actions of the force, analysis of weapons, analysis of placing weapons and examination of the VC killed indicate that the Chu Lai attack group was not as highly trained as the unit which attacked Marble Mountain.

i. Time of the attacks, in conjunction with method of attack, substantiate the thesis of a planned coordinated attack in two enclaves, with the strong possibility that a third was planned on Da Nang airbase.

j. The VC have the capability of infiltrating small groups into any of the enclaves.

8. Action by Command

a. The skill exhibited by the infiltrators indicated that permanent barriers of type utilizing double apron cyclone fences, augmented by carefully placed mine fields, sensitive electronic or seismic intrusion devices, counter mortar radar and powerful lighting are required around all military

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installations where critical equipment and materials are kept. Materials are enroute for the Da Nang Air Base. Plans are being expedited for other areas including POL and ammunition storage.

b. Pending construction of permanent barriers the following action has been taken:

- (1) Expediting Class IV Materials, especially wire and concertina.
- (2) Strengthened perimeter defense of Marble Mountain area with additional infantry units.
- (3) Continuing the high level of patrols and ambushes throughout the enclaves.


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VC ATTACK ON MARINE NON TAIN AIR FACILITY1. Prior Intelligence Indications

a. Commencing in the latter part of July, there was a series of reports that the Viet Cong were developing plans for operations in the Quang Nam Sector. According to reports of various degrees of credibility, the VC plans included the following:

- (1) VC would increase cadres in Danang and other key areas for the purpose of sabotage, inciting demonstrations and conducting acts of terrorism;
- (2) Units in the coastal areas would be reinforced with troops from Quang Ngai and Quang Tin;
- (3) Attacks in southern Quang Nam would be made to draw attention from the Danang airbase;
- (4) Surprise attacks would be launched against the Marines; and
- (5) Suicide troops would be used to attack the Danang airbase.

b. There also were several reports that two high ranking VC officers were in the Quang Nam area. These were General Van Tien Dung, Chief, General STARR, PAVN, who led the forces which defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu, and Senior Colonel Nguyen BA PHAT, a veteran of operations against the French in Quang Nam Province, former CO of Military Region V and CO of a Military Region in North Vietnam.

c. Other reports indicated that special mission units were being organized for purposes of sabotage, terrorism and suicide attacks against the airbase, and there have been reports of the VC infiltrating conditions into the Danang area and of political teams being employed to incite demonstrations.

Of particular significance were the following reports:

(1) A Combined Studies Division secret agent report of 22 September, rated B/B by the Quang Nam Census Grievance Committee, concerning VC actions against the Danang area, was received by III MAF on 1 October 1965. The report stated the VC had moved troops to form a sizable force to attack Danang and its airbase during the rainy season. Reported plans included the employment of human wave tactics, and the use of 100 suicide agents armed with bombs to assault the airfield. Simultaneously, the VC would organize meetings to incite the people to march on Danang. The report also stated that the VC were willing to lose large numbers of men to create repercussions throughout the world. According to the reporting agent, the VC commenced bringing explosives to Danang prior to 22 September.

(2) On 13 October, I Corps Advisory Group provided III MAF with copies of three ARVN I Corps messages; the information contained in these

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messages was generally consistent with that reported above.

d. During the 60 days prior to the attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility, III MAF contact with the VC was limited to squad and platoon size units, except for an engagement of an element of 3d Bn, 9th Marines, on 3 October, which probably involved at least a VC company. In recent weeks there has been an increase in the frequency of VC contacts, particularly in the south and southwest portion of the Danang TAOR; however, there was no confirmation of large VC units (Bn) moving in the vicinity of the Danang TAOR.

2. VC ATTACK AT MARBLE MOUNTAIN AIR FACILITY

a. General. At approximately 0009, 28 October 1965, a VC Force estimated at 90, and possibly including some personnel from North Vietnam, launched a well planned and well coordinated attack on the Marble Mountain Air Facility. Based on other VC activities at this time (see paragraph 3), this attack appeared to be part of a large scale offensive operation directed against friendly forces during the night of 27/28 October. The attack on Marble Mountain Air facility included:

(1) The infiltration by three, possibly four, VC demolition teams, composed of 10 men each, into the Marine Aircraft Group 16 helicopter ramp, and the systematic destruction of helicopters.

(2) The firing of mortars, automatic weapons and small arms fire into the area occupied by Mobile Construction Battalion Nine by an estimated 10 VC from the high ground 600 meters to the north-northwest.

(3) The infiltration by one, possibly two, VC demolition teams, composed of 10 men each, into the area under construction as U. S. Naval Hospital, and the systematic destruction of buildings and other facilities.

(4) The firing of automatic weapons and small arms into the area occupied by Mobile Construction Battalion Eight.

(5) The firing of small arms harassing fire into positions occupied by 1st Battalion, 9th Marines.

(6) The mining of the MSR just north and south of the MAG-16 area. From reports received, it appears that all of these instances occurred within minutes of each other. For area locations see TAB A.

b. VC Infiltration. Initial interrogation reports indicated that the VC forces had embarked aboard an estimated 50 boats of various size and departed from the area in the vicinity of HAI VAN PASS, AT 9691, at intervals commencing at 1400. Although all four Viet Cong captives indicated that they landed at a point on the beach approximately one kilometer north of the MAG-16 area at 2300, it is doubtful that such a force could have moved a distance of 45 kilometers in this time without being detect-

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ed; the Naval Advisory Group reported no suspicious activity in this area during this period. A more probable method of infiltration, and one which more realistically supports the VC attack, is contained in a report received by the Hoa Vang District Chief from an agent he rates B/2. This report indicates that at 0830 27 October, approximately 300 men, plus 200 porters, were sighted coming from the direction of Thanh Quit, BT 053635, moving towards Khue Dong, BT 056705. At Khue Dong they split into two groups. The first group embarked in sampans and went up the river to My Thi, BT 054743, just northwest of MCB-9. The second group crossed the bridge just southwest of Marble Mountain, BT 072702, and were equipped with one AA machine gun, which fired at the flare ship. (See TAB B)

c. General Conduct of VC Operation. (See TAB A). Based on reports received and on-the-spot investigations, the following is considered a reasonably valid reconstruction of the general conduct of VC operations. After arrival at My Thi, a VC force of approximately 90 assembled on the eastern slope of the high ground 600 meters to the north-northwest of MCB-9. At this point the force split into the units which were tasked with the following missions:

(1) Unit number 1, estimated at approximately 10 men, remained in position with the mission of taking MCB-9 under mortar and automatic weapons fire. This unit was armed with at least two 60mm mortars and several automatic weapons. For details see paragraph 2.f.

(2) Unit number 2, estimated at four 10-man teams, moved 1200 meters south in defilade behind and to the east of the MCB-9 area, to a tree line which runs west to east to the MSR. After moving to the MSR, the unit took advantage of the cover afforded by the crest of the road to move to a position just opposite the MAG-16 helicopter ramp and shop area. The unit then split into four groups, and three of these groups attacked the MAG-16 area. Meanwhile another 10-man team from this unit moved east from the assembly area, crossed the MSR and approached MAG-16 from the north; this team probably mined the road north of MAG-16. For details of this attack see paragraph 2.e.

(3) Unit number 3, estimated at approximately one or two 10-man teams, moved with unit number 2 to the MSR. At the point, this unit moved into the U. S. Naval Hospital area and, with covering small arms fire, systematically destroyed buildings and facilities in the northern portion of the Naval Hospital, and, after blowing a hole in defensive wire to the west, withdrew in that direction. It is felt that this unit may also have mined the MSR south of the MAG-16 area. For details of this attack see paragraph 2.g.

(4) Unit number 4, estimated at 10 men, moved into positions to the north and northeast of MCB-8 and commenced to deliver a heavy volume of fire into that area at 0100. This fire continued intermittently until about 0300. For details see paragraph 2.h.

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(5) Unit number 5, estimated at 10 men moved into positions to the north and west of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, and commenced to deliver small arms harassing fire at 0005. This fire continued intermittently against different positions until 0045. For details see paragraph 2.i.

d. VC Withdrawal. Based on reports received and on-the-spot investigations, it appears that the VC withdrew after the attack through the villages to the west of HCB-9 area and the U. S. Naval Hospital area. This supposition is based upon the discovery of a considerable number of imprints in the sand which led from the mortar positions to the village to the west. These imprints appear to have been made by dragging bodies of KIA or WIA. This route of withdrawal is corroborated by the same report given by the Hoa Vang District Chief concerning infiltration. In this report it was further indicated that, after the attack, the VC withdrew to the vicinity of Khue Dong at 0230, with 90 KIA/WIA. When they were reassembled there, they came under artillery fire which resulted in an additional 50 KIA/WIA. The report further stated that the VC continued to withdraw to Man Quon, BT 035688, and Than Thuy.

c. IMG-16. (See TABS A and C)

(1) At approximately 0009 28 October, the MAG-16 area was attacked by an estimated four VC demolition teams, each with 10 men. Coordinated enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire was received from two areas; approximately 730 yards NNW, BT 058747, and 750 yards NW, BT 055743, from the NW corner of the MAG-16 ramp. Though the facility did not come under an actual mortar attack, three 60mm rounds impacted behind the tent line, and one fell on the west portion of the pierced steel planking mat. These are evaluated as overshots from HCB-9 attack. The concurrent actions of the four teams for the duration of the attack can best be described by treating each separately, using arbitrary numerical designators. For graphic depiction see TAB C.

(2) The machine gun bunker guarding the main access road was put out of action by the grenades of Teams 1 and 2, who were then penetrating the IMG-16 perimeter.

(a) Team 1 proceeded north and went through the VMO-2 tent spaces throwing grenades. One VC was killed by squadron personnel in this area. The attack continued north to the HAMS-16 Supply and Maintenance area (Butler Buildings), where the VC commenced a systematic destruction of the UH1C helicopters on the adjacent pad by placing or throwing grenade-package satchel charges in or under the aircraft. A Chief hospital Corpsman standing his med-evac watch in the ready helicopter was killed. Working their way east across the parking ramp the VC were opposed by members of the crash crew. One crash crew member was killed in this action. Sentires and a covering machine gun took the VC under fire in this area. One VC ran through a crash crew tent ripping out communications wire and then went back onto the ramp. After moving through the

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UH-1E's on the line, the team split and went south through the rows of parked UH-34's of HMM-263 and HMM-361, placing grenades and charges as they went. On the southern end of the ramp, their attempt to get to helicopters parked on the runway was foiled by defenders between the ramp and runway. The greatest destruction was in the initial action against the VAO-2 UH-1E helicopters; intensity and damage diminished as the team worked south through the UH-34's.

(b) Team 2 entered through the HMM-263 and HMM-361 maintenance areas. Personnel from these squadrons who were standing watch took the team under small arms fire, killing 6 and wounding 2. A few VC broke contact and moved either south, or on through to the ramp to augment the first team with their demolitions, before eventually withdrawing to the southwest corner of the pad area. Later inspection of the withdrawal route to the south revealed blood stains and tracks of dragging feet, indicating an unknown number of escaping VC wounded.

(c) Simultaneously with the above two attack elements, a third team of approximately 11 VC attempted to penetrate the HMM-16 maintenance area from the north. This penetration was completely stopped by the squadron Avionics and Maintenance section personnel whose intense fire resulted in 7 VC killed and 4 wounded. Two of the WIA later died.

(d) A fourth VC unit, presumably another team, was observed and taken under fire along a sand dune to the south of the helicopter pad. A few casualties were observed in this group, but were removed by the VC during withdrawal.

(3) Immediately following the estimated 20 minute attack, increased perimeter defense and damage control action were initiated. Helicopters were then launched on medical evacuation missions. Intermittent small arms fire continued about the facility for approximately one more hour. A flare plane arrived on station at 0125.

(4) A M16-16 Mighty Mite (#422) and a M-50 water truck struck mines on the MSR approximately 825 yards to the north of the main entrance road between 0200 and 0230. Casualties in these incidents totaled one U. S. killed and 5 injured.

(a) Three bloody trails or impressions of bodies being dragged were found leading south from the air facility.

(b) Tracks heading into the facility probably made by the VC teams were also found. There were three or four in number; with each track there was an individual track made by crepe sole shoes.

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(c) One of the watches (made in USSR) recovered from the body of a dead VC was exactly one hour behind local time at the time of capture.

(d) At least one VC in one of the teams spoke English. When pinned down by friendly fire he was heard to say "don't shoot, don't shoot, we are friends."

(e) The Dai Uy Hoa (Capt Hoa) District Chief, upon examination of the VC dead and their equipment on the morning of 23 October, made the following comments: (Evaluation: B-3)

1. VC had all worn yellow shoes at one time or the other, because of yellow stains on their feet. They had not worn the rubber sandals of local forces in the region, because there was no evidence of straps marks on their feet. His conclusion, therefore, was that they were MF or NVN regular troops, and probably from the same unit.

2. Head hair of the VC was all about the same stage of growth and cut in the same manner; another indication that they were possibly from the same unit.

3. Callouses on hands associated with manual labor were absent; therefore, improbable they were guerrillas or local force.

4. They appeared well-fed.

5. Gold-filled dentures of VC indicated that dental work may have been done in North Vietnam.

6. Weapons carried by the VC are common to MF elements.

7. Capt Hoa stated he believed corpses were North Vietnamese.

f. Mobile Construction Battalion Nine (See TAB A).

(1) At 2055 27 October, MCB-9 security posts reported sporadic small arms fire to the west, in the rice paddies across the Tourane River. The firing was not considered significant as it is a usual occurrence in this area.

(2) At 0005 28 October, MCB-9 security posts reported small arms fire being directed at the MAG-16 area. Almost simultaneously, MCB-9 received 60mm mortar fire from undetermined location. A later crater analysis indicated that the principal target was officer's country. The mortar firing ceased at 0015, after 45 rounds were received. At that time the MCB-9 area came under intense automatic weapons fire from the north and east. This fire prevented personnel from moving rapidly to their positions, but all posts were partially manned at 0040.

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(3) Automatic weapons fire was then received from four positions in the village to the west. In all instances VC automatic weapons fire ceased when heavy volumes of M-60 BB fire were returned. Examination of VC automatic weapons firing positions the following day indicated that five VC may have been hit by MCB-9 fire.

(4) At 0135 MCB-16 fired heavy volumes of automatic weapons fire over the MCB-9 area into the village directly to the west.

(5) At 0150 MCB-8 reported movement in the village to the west of the hospital site. Indications were that the VC were making their withdrawal through the village directly west of MCB-9 and the village directly west of the hospital.

(6) At 0240 two of three vehicles moving north on the main road detonated two mines just south of MCB-9. One vehicle was destroyed and the other damaged.

(7) At 0241 the first helicopters arrived at MCB-9 for medical evacuation. A total of 39 persons were lifted by 9 helicopters.

(8) At 0314, a jeep moving south on the main road detonated a mine at a point about 500 meters north of MCB-9.

(9) At 0617 a patrol was dispatched to search the area for VC. The patrol located the mortar and automatic weapons firing positions to the north-northwest.

g. U. S. Naval Hospital. (See TABS A, D and E)

(1) At approximately 0010 28 October, a group estimated at 20 VC entered the construction site for the new U. S. Naval Hospital. At that time there were six members of MCB-9 conducting a roving patrol in the northern half of the hospital site, and one doctor and 23 naval corpsmen in billets to the south. Upon observing the movement and heavy firing from the VC, the patrol members withdrew to the south to join forces with the doctor and corpsmen. The VC pursued the group and kept all personnel pinned down with a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire. Meanwhile, other VC systematically emplaced charges in critical buildings and equipment. A later examination of damage indicated that the VC apparently had knowledge of the area, and had extensive skill in the use of demolitions.

h. Mobile Construction Battalion Eight. (See TAB A)

(1) At about 0010 28 October, MCB-8 observed what appeared to be mortar explosions in the MCB-9 and MCB-16 areas. At the same time a

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heavy volume of automatic weapons and small arms fire was received in the ADB-8 area from the north and northeast. This fire continued intermittently until 0300.

(2) At 0015 or 0020 three VC were seen running south from the MAC 16 area in an area about 15 meters across the road from NDB-8. One man appeared to be hit from behind and fall. It was later reported that all three had been hit, but no bodies were found in the morning.

(3) At 0300 a boat was observed drifting toward the eastern shore of the Vinh Dien River, but was finally lost from sight.

(4) No mortar rounds were received in the NDB-8 area, and the VC did not attempt to breach the defensive perimeter. There were no casualties in NDB-8, and it is believed that no VC casualties were inflicted.

(5) At 0700 NDB-8 sent out a squad sized patrol to investigate the area just outside the defensive perimeter for mines. No mines were found. At the southeast corner of the hospital fence, however, many bare-foot tracks were found, and it appeared that one or more persons had crawled under the fence at that point.

i. 1st Battalion, 9th Marines

(1) At 0005 20 October, Battery D, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, located at BF 063680, received 12 rounds of semi-automatic rifle fire from approximately four VC. The fire was from an estimated distance of 250 meters from the south and east. Fire was returned, and the VC broke contact at 0020.

(2) At 0015 a squad from Company C, located at an old French bunker at BF 081697, received 10 rounds from one carbine and one automatic weapon from an estimated distance of 75 meters to the southwest. Fire was returned and the VC broke contact at 0035.

(3) At 0030 Company A, located at BF 092669, received 10 rounds of carbine fire from several directions from four VC. Firing ended at 0045.

(4) At 0115 the 3d Platoon, Company B, proceeded to BF 088696 to establish an ambush to block the VC withdrawal. At 0350 the platoon patrolled to BF 084703 and apprehended four VCS. They then proceeded to Tan An, BF 094687, then south to BF 097680, where they fired on three boats, sinking one.

(5) At 0445 the 3d Platoon, Company A, moved to join a patrol at BF 097661, and both moved to occupy blocking positions at BF 094685.

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(6) At 0030 the 81mm Mortar Platoon intensified normal H and I and illumination fires in areas of suspected VC activity.

3. Other Viet Cong Activities. During the night 27/28 October, the Viet Cong conducted other local activities which may have been part of the operations against Da Nang or diversionary. The following is a summary of these activities:

a. At 1930 27 October, a fairly reliable report received from an agent by 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, indicated that a VC battalion was moving out of the mountains and was located in grid squares AP 8468 and 8467. As a result, a total of 680 rounds of HE were fired into a 2000 meter unpopulated area. A subsequent report from another agent, received 24 hours later, revealed that this heavy artillery fire caused the VC battalion to break into small groups and scatter to villages nearby. All indications are that this battalion was part of an overall offensive operation and was moving towards Marine positions within the Da Nang TACR.

b. At 2005 27 October, a squad from 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, ambushed what is believed to have been the advance party of a VC company moving west to east at BE 030648. After the initial Marine fire, a search was conducted, and search teams received semi-automatic fire from an estimated 40 VC at BE 027643. The ambush returned fire and then withdrew under covering fire from 81mm Mortars and artillery. The VC suffered 15 KIA. Fire discipline of the VC was excellent, and they did not run when the ambush was sprung. At 0645 Company I (-) returned to the ambush site to conduct a thorough search. They found two bodies dressed in black, with one carbine magazine nearby, at BE 030642. Large amounts of Chinese brass were found in the area. The company also found a Vietnamese child who lives in the area, and who had an injury bandaged in a professional manner. It may be that it was done by the VC. At 0700 two VCS were apprehended at BE 030642 and taken to 3d IRT. It is believed this VC company was part of a coordinated attack on Da Nang, and the successful ambush by Marines caused it to withdraw prior to reaching its objective. This belief is supported by the fact that the company was moving in the direction of the Da Nang airbase, and time and distance being considered, the time of the attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility.

c. At 0230 28 October, a VC force estimated at three companies attacked an ARVN outpost at AP 878576, 14 miles southwest of Da Nang. Two of the three ARVN platoon positions were overrun. It is believed that this was in all probability a diversionary action.

4. Subsequent Intelligence. The following information was received by III MAF after 26 October 1965:

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a. On 30 October the Hoa Vang Sub-Section Advisor received a report from an agent, rated B/3 by the District Headquarters, indicating that on 29 October 1 NF VC regiment (PAVN), moved to Thanh Truong in the Dien Bien District. The regiment had suffered many casualties. Their mission was to attack the Hoa Vang District, Hoa Cam Training Center and Da Nang Airbase. The regiment picked up 50 workers in the village of Thanh Truong. It was reported that part of this unit had attacked Marble Mountain Air Facility on 28 October, and suffered 70 KIA and 113 WIA. The unit picked up 50 coffins in Thanh Truong.

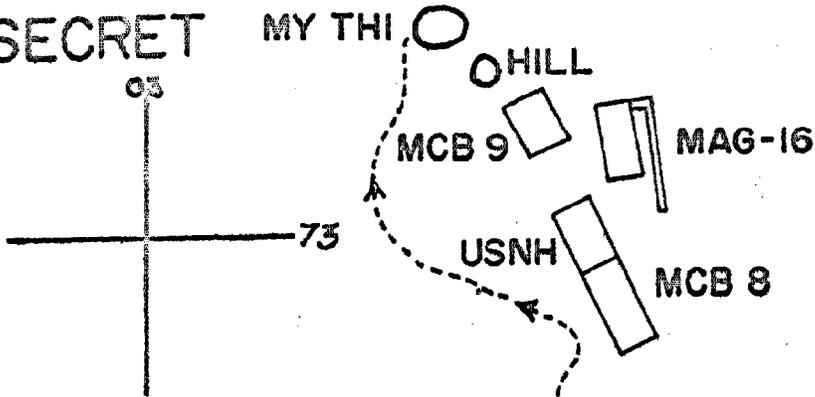
b. On 30 October the 1st Antrac Battalion discovered what was suspected to be two VC mortar positions at BF 039729. Positions were approximately four feet in diameter, had a sunken hole for a mortar tube and two triangular diagram imprints on the surface. One diagram pointed directly towards Marble Mountain Air Facility. These positions were approximately 2600 meters from the air facility, which is within 81mm mortar range.

c. At 1000 28 October, Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines conducted a sweep of My Thi Village, BF 056736, thought to be the infiltration and withdrawal point for forces involved in the attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility. There they found a 50 round link from a 7.62mm intermediate LMG, a Chinese copy of the Soviet RPD light machine gun. The RPD is a new weapon for the VC, and it has been issued only to NF units. This is the first time this weapon has been encountered by units of III MAF.

TAB A: Sketch Map of Marble Mountain Air Facility
 TAB B: Probable VC Approach Route
 TAB C: Attack on MAC-16
 TAB D: Sketch Map of U. S. Naval Hospital Damage
 TAB E: Damage to U. S. Naval Hospital
 TAB F: MAC-16 Defensive Posture
 TAB G: RQB-9 Defensive Posture
 TAB H: Viet Cong Losses
 TAB I: U. S. Losses
 TAB J: Photos

PROBABLE VC APPROACH ROUTE TO MARBLE MOUNTAIN AIR FACILITY

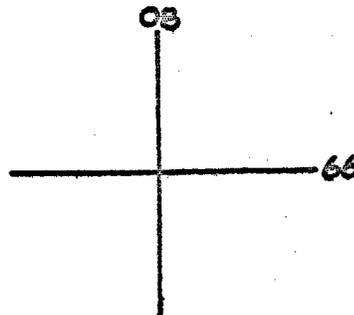
SECRET



GROUP NO. 1
IN SAMPANS
TO MY THI

KHUE DONG

GROUP NO. 2 OVER
BRIDGE TO POINT
SOUTH OF MARBLE
MOUNTAIN



SCALE: 1:50,000
TAB B TO ENCLOSURE (2)

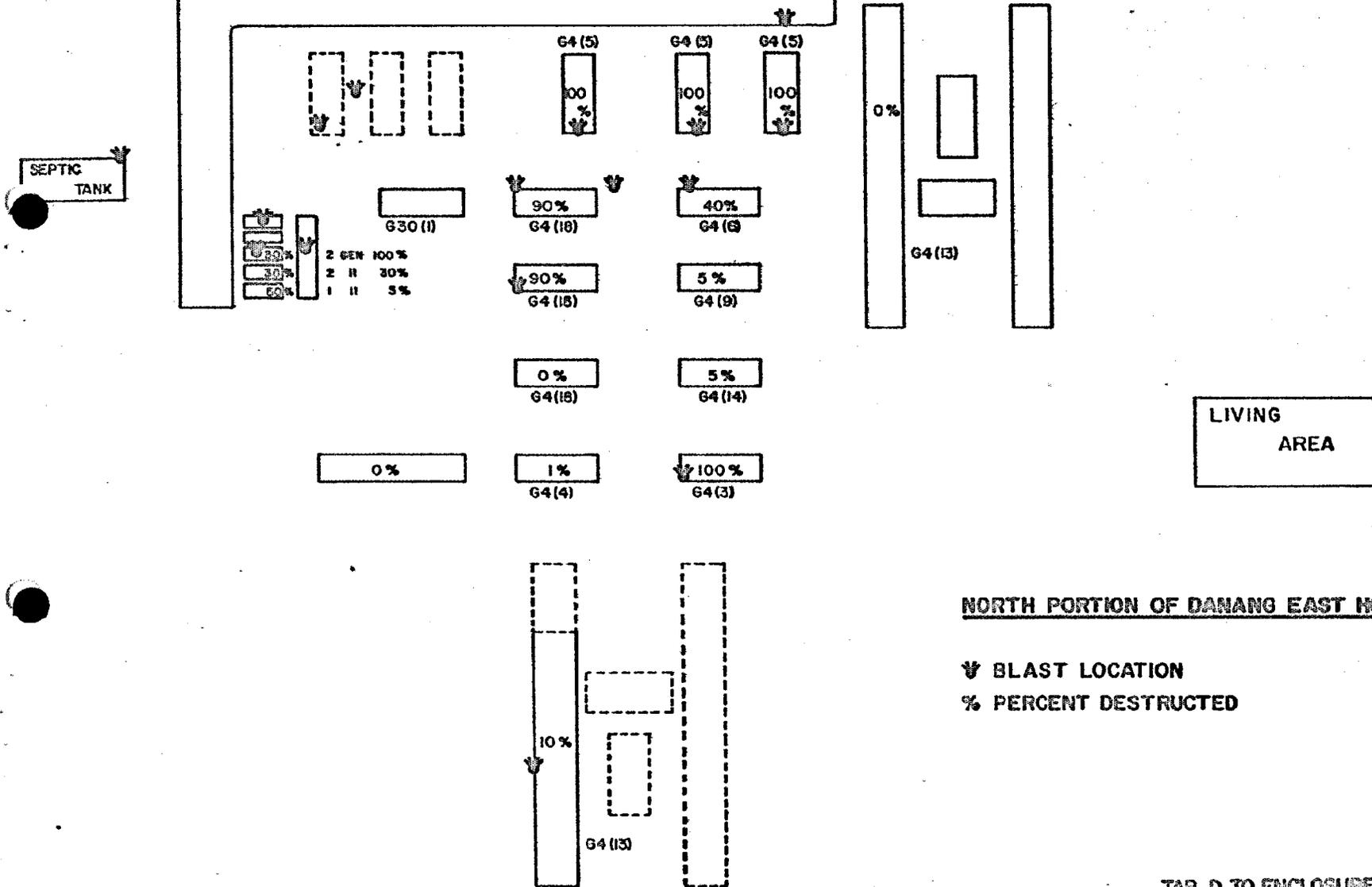
THANH QUIT
DEPARTURE DURING
27 OCTOBER 1965

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TAB D TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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DAMAGE TO U.S. NAVAL HOSPITAL

1. 3 Receiving Wards	100% Destroyed*
2. Surgery NR 1	100% Destroyed*
3. X-ray Building	100% Destroyed*
4. Laboratory	100% Destroyed*
5. Sterilizer	100% Destroyed*
6. Surgery NR 2	5% Damage
7. Pharmacy	5% Damage
8. Storage	Less than 5% Damage
9. Generator Station	
All electrical switching	100% Destroyed
2 100 KW Generators	100% Destroyed
1 100 KW Generator	Damaged but repairable
2 100 KW Generators	Operable

* Refers to Building only. Does not refer to foundation and concrete floor.

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TAB E TO ENCLOSURE (1)

E-1

SECRET

MAG-16 DEFENSE POSTURE

MAG-16 perimeter defense consisted of 15 machine guns positions located from the NE corner of the camp around to the SE corner of the airfield. Machine gun positions were augmented by foot patrols between positions. 75 personnel were involved with perimeter security. An additional 25 personnel were assigned to internal security plus 30 personnel involved with damage control. Each squadron has a provisional company designated as a reserve force. All units within MAG-16 are connected with a wire alert system. MAG-16 maintains communications with units in the complex by both radio and wire.

As Marble Mt Installation Coordinator for Defense, CO MAG-16 issued a Defense Coordination Plan on 10 Oct 65. This plan was formulated to prevent mutual interference, facilitate the exchange of information, and providing mutual support by coordinating and reinforcing fields of fire and by establishing special lines of communication. This plan involved MCB-9, MINE-8, U. S. Naval Hospital and Marine Air Group 16.

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TAB F TO ENCLOSURE (1)

F-1

SECRET

MCB-9 DEFENSE POSTURE

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 9 Defense plan envisages three separate states of readiness. A 40 man permanent guard force is detailed from within the battalion. This force is responsible for manning the 10 main bunkers located on the perimeter under normal readiness condition three. When information is received that enemy activity is anticipated perimeter defenses are augmented by two duty sections. These duty sections are broken into fire teams which man the perimeter between the main bunker positions during periods of reduced visibility one member of each fire team mans a position on the perimeter to insure sight contact all the way around.

Under condition one (actual attack) all personnel man their positions on the perimeter minus those designated for roving internal patrols, damage control and command post duties.

An underground Command Post has been constructed and contains both wire and radio communications. A sound power system links all main bunkers with the Duty Officer and Duty Chief.

A double apron fence is constructed completely around the camp. Single strand wire and concertina form the outer barrier. Between the outer and inner barriers, the area has been leveled and cleared. Fox-holes and slit trenches are constructed adjacent to all tents and buildings throughout the area.

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TAB G TO ENCLOSURE (1)

G-1

SECRET

VIET CONG LOSSESMARBIN MOUNTAIN AIR FACILITY1. Casualties:*

KIA:	17
WIA(VCC):	4
VCS:	1
UNCOMPLAINED KIA/WIA	8

2. Weapons, ordnance and equipment:

- a. 7 Kalashnikov (AK) assault rifles, 7.62mm
- 1 Tokarev pistol M1933
- 2 U.S. pistol cal .45
- 5 Bangalore torpedoes
- 1 B-40 rocket launcher with three rounds
- b. Approximately 30 pounds of personal equipment and papers.

* ORD Report of 4 Nov 65 indicated 20 VC killed, 25 VC missing, 34 VC wounded in attack.

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TAB H TO ENCLOSURE (1)

E-1

SECRET

U. S. LOSSES

MARBLE MOUNTAIN AIR FACILITY

1. Casualties:

KIA: 4 (3 MAC-16, 1 MCB-9)

WIA: 108 (24 MAC-16, 84 MCB-9)

2. U. S. Aircraft and equipment losses:

<u>a. Aircraft</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Major Damage</u>	<u>Minor Damage</u>
UH 1 B	13	2	2
UH 34	6	9	17
OH 37	0	0	5
<u>b. Vehicles:</u>			
M50 Water Truck	1	0	0
M422 Truck (Nighty Mite)	1	0	1
M35 Crash Truck	0	1	2
M63 Gas Truck	0	1	0

c. Miscellaneous:

15,000 square feet of matting destroyed.

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TAB I TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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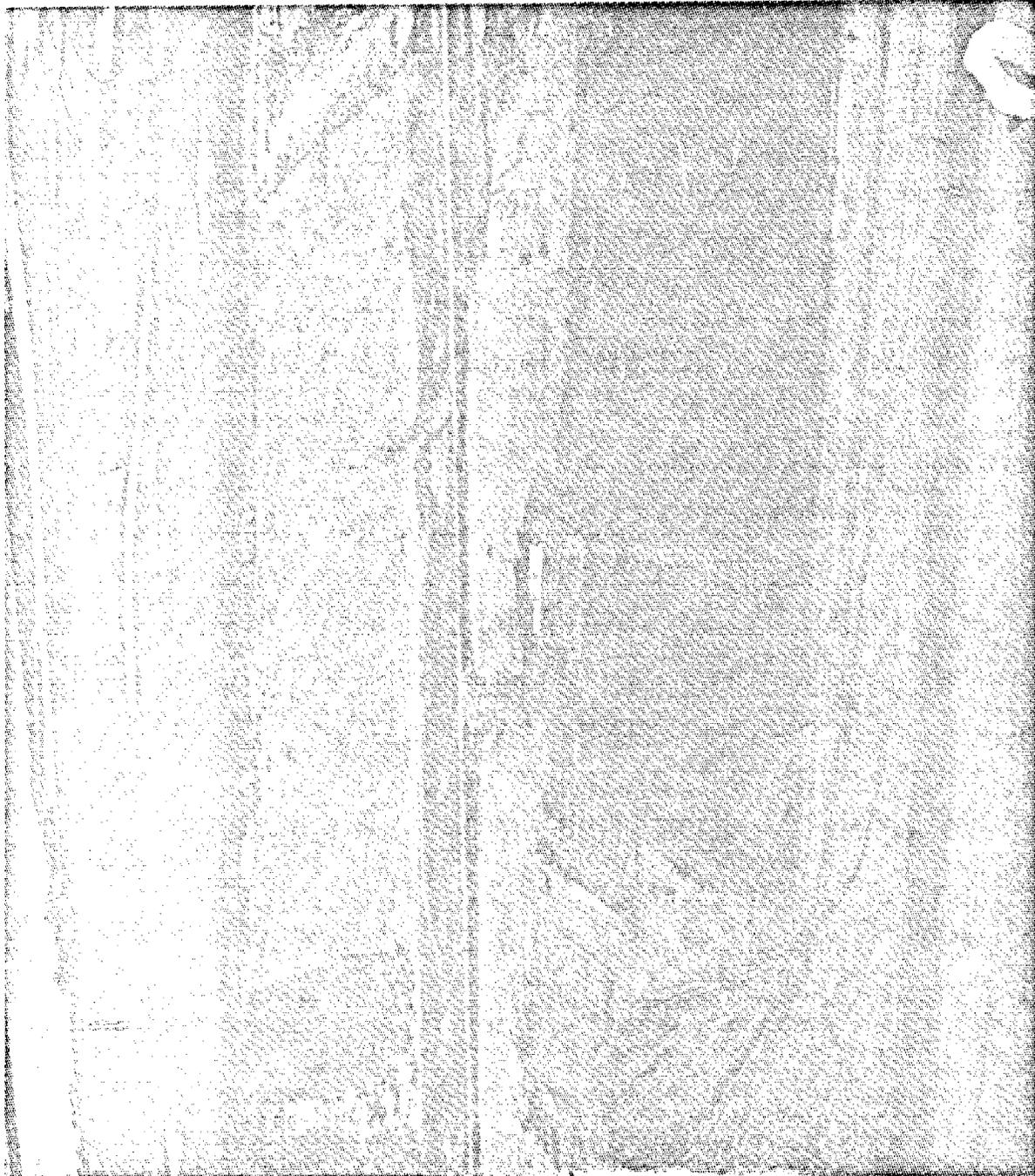
NORTH END HELICOPTER PARKING RAMP - MARBLE MT.
 FIGURE 1 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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MIDDLE PORTION HELICOPTER PARKING RAMP - MARBIE MT.
FIGURE 2 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

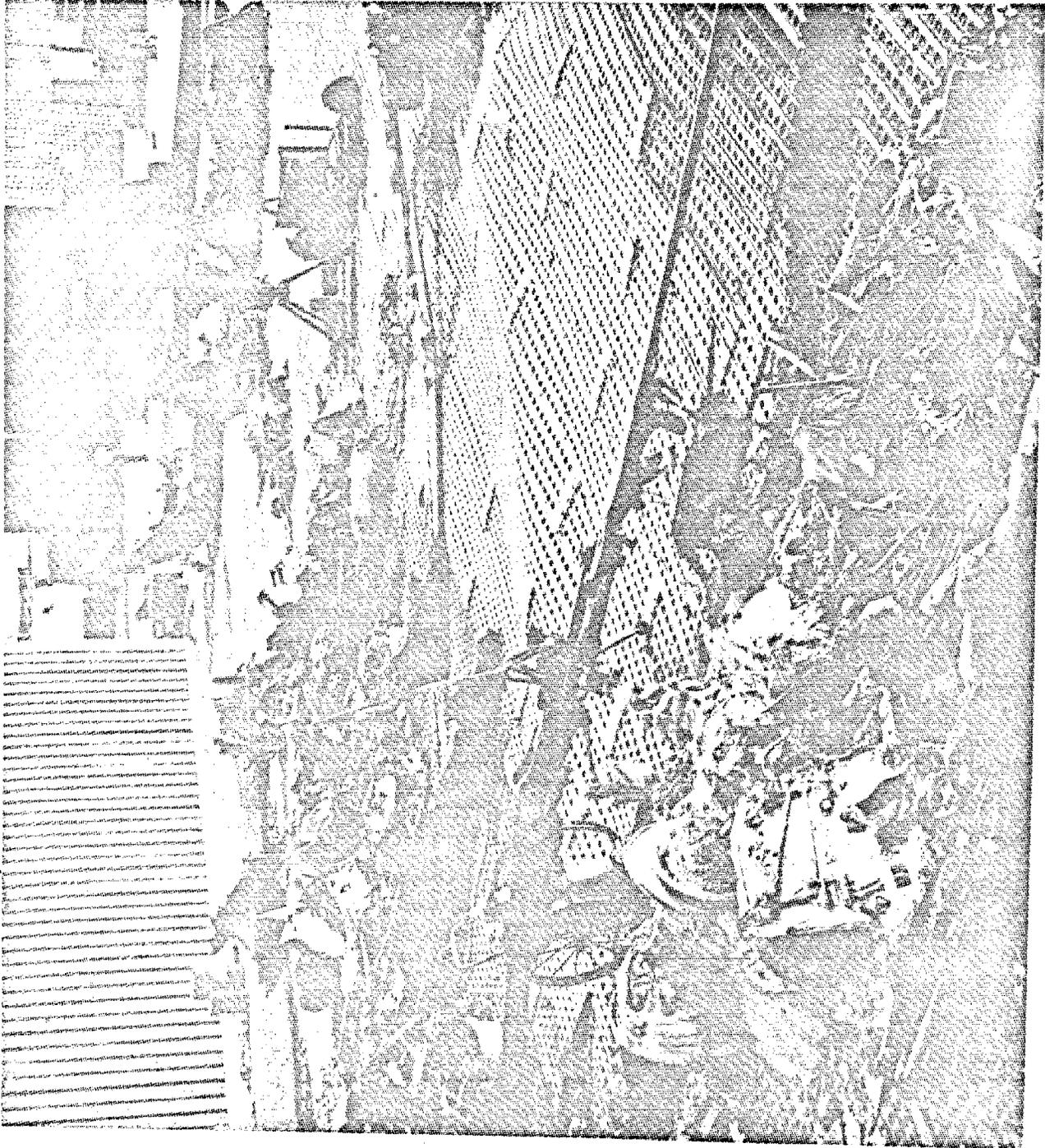
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SOUTH END HELICOPTER PARKING RAMP MARBLE MT.
FIGURE 3 NO TAB 3 TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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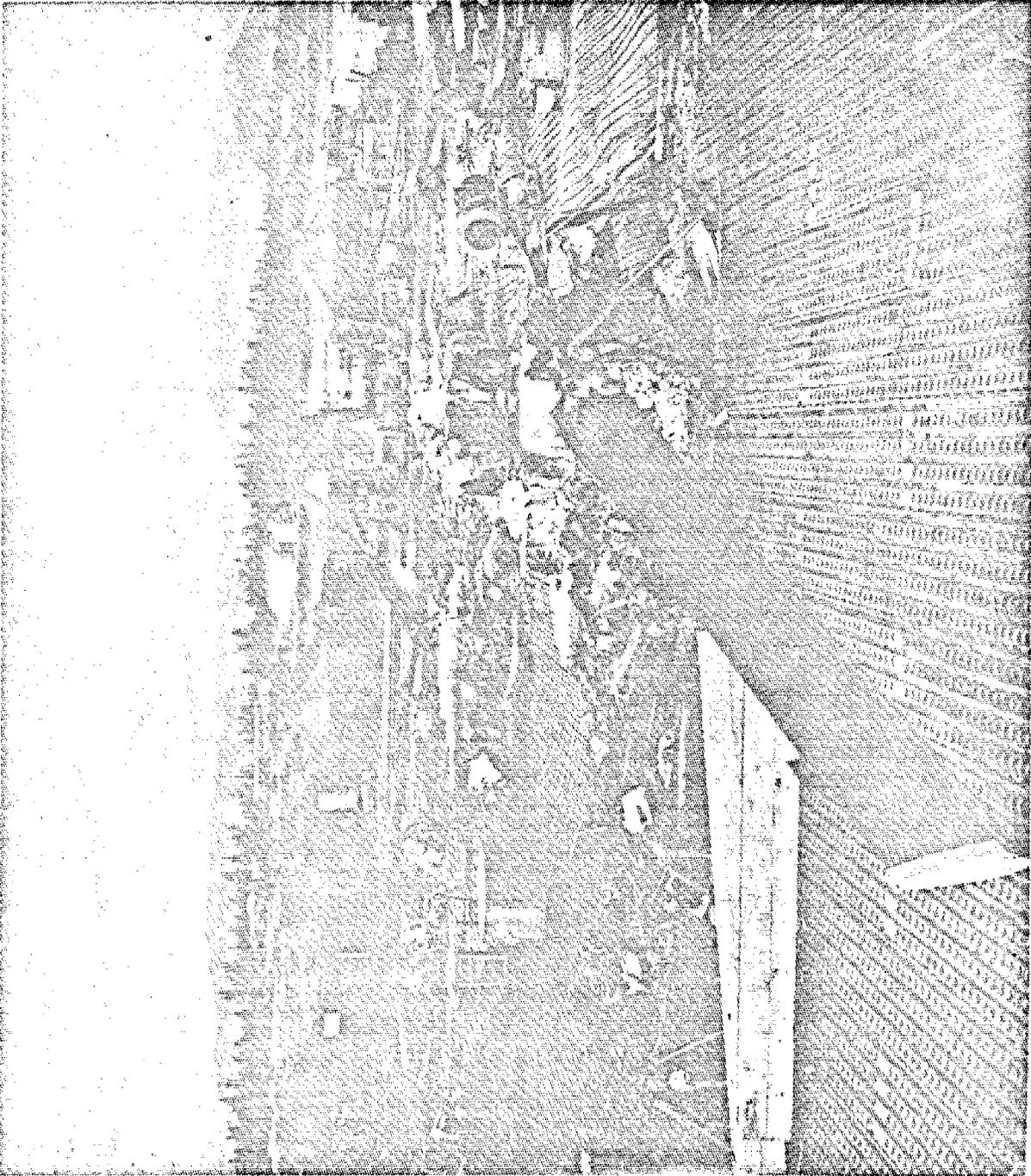
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DESTROYED UFL.E'S - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 4 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

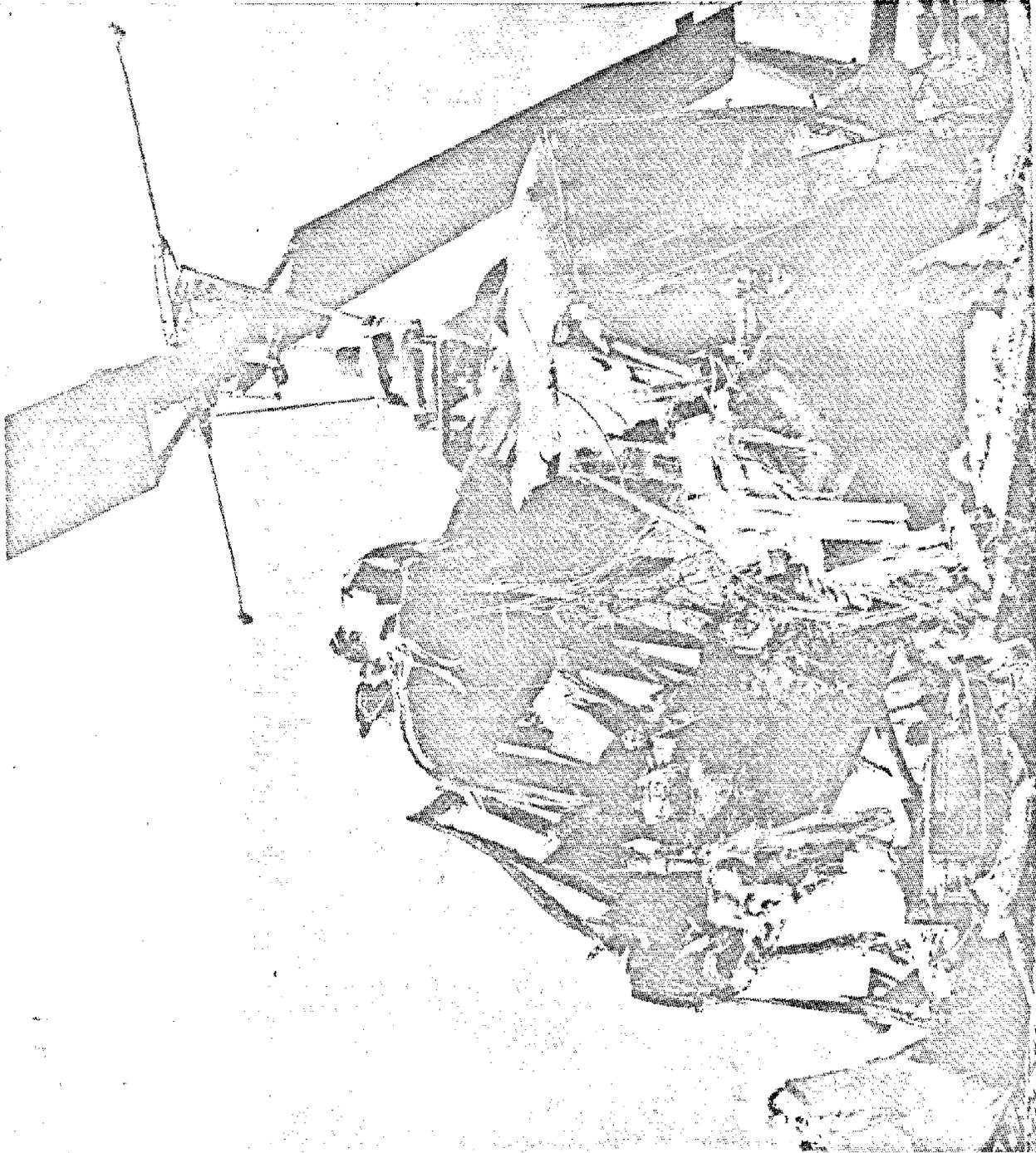
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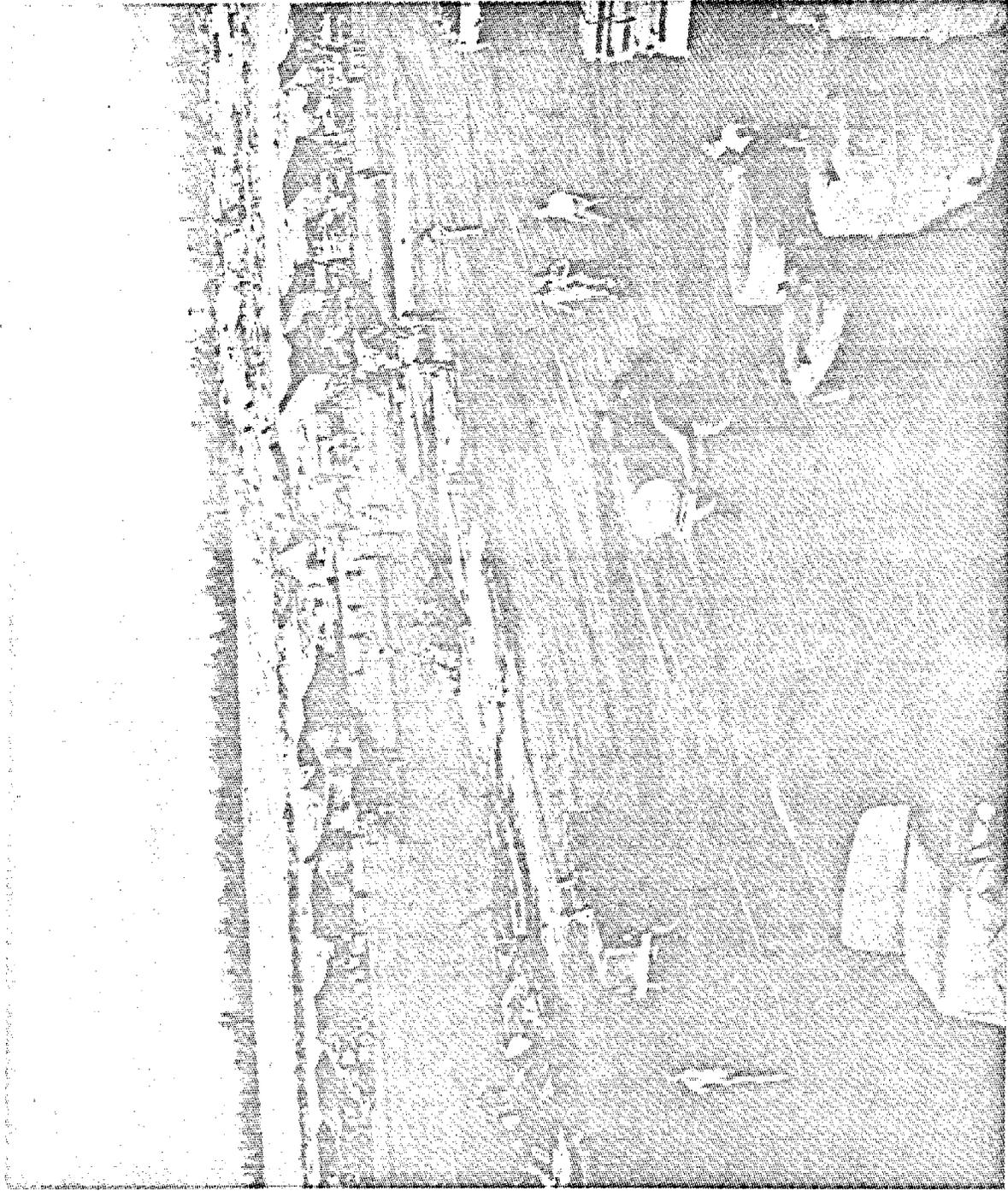
DESTROYED UHLE'S - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURES 5 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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DESTROYED UHLE - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 6 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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DESTROYED UHLE'S - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 7 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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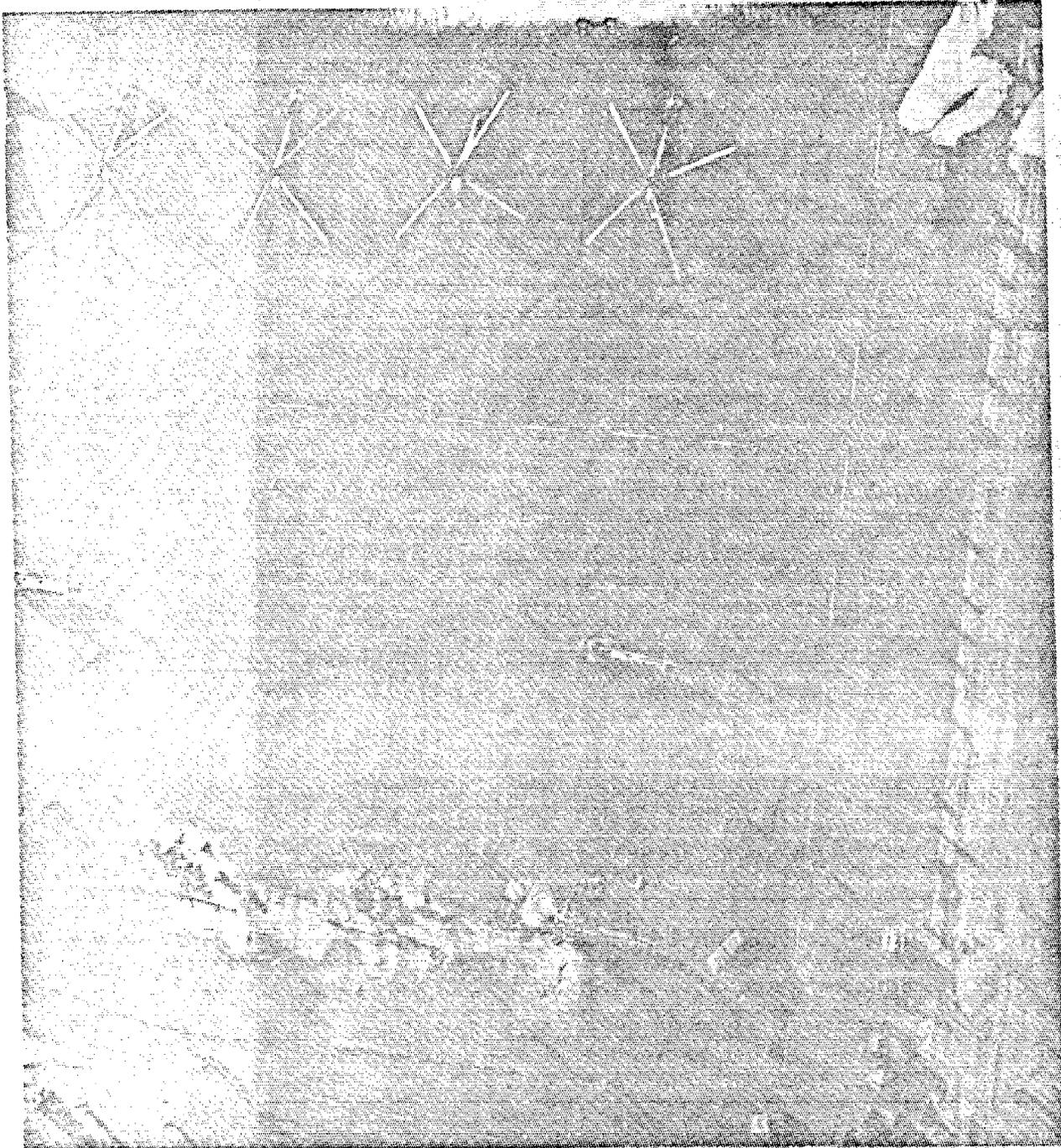
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DESTROYED UHIE - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURES 8 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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DESTROYED UHLE'S - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 9 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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CONFIDENTIAL



DESTROYED H-34 - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 10 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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VC KIA - MARBLE MOUNTAIN
FIGURE 11 TO TAB J TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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VC ATTACK ON CHU LAI AIRFIELD

1. Prior Intelligence Indications. During the past month there were numerous low level reports of units up to battalion size moving toward Chu Lai. Although there were no specific or reliable reports concerning an attack of the type conducted, this has always been a recognized VC capability. No reports received provided information on the approximate time of a movement against Chu Lai.

2. VC Attack at Chu Lai Airfield.

a. General. At approximately 0001 28 October, a VC force estimated at 15-20, penetrated the Chu Lai airfield and launched a well-coordinated and well-planned attack. In view of the timing involved, it is believed that this attack was coordinated with the attack on Marble Mountain Air Facility. At the time of the attack, the field was in the process of recovering aircraft.

b. VC infiltration. Although not confirmed, it is believed that the VC unit infiltrated the defense perimeter from the northwest.

c. Conduct of the attack. (See TAB A)

(1) After arrival on the northwest end of runway 32/14, the unit apparently split into two groups. One group attacked the VMA-224 flight line, setting satchel charges as they proceeded south along the revetted aircraft. Prior to the first explosion, a member of the MAC-12 guard, located near the north end of the parked aircraft line, challenged a VC, who reacted by throwing a grenade at the sentry. The grenade did not explode and the Marine then tried to fire his riot gun, but had a misfire. The VC then threw a satchel charge which did not explode. Grenades and automatic weapons fire were then heard along the flight line. One VC was wounded in this area and was seen to withdraw and escape across the runway to the northwest. Continuing south along the flight line, the VC blew up an A4 aircraft in the VMA-214 sector. A sentry in the next revetment saw, shot, and killed the VC crouched under the tail of the struck plane. Another guard saw two more VC run east between the tents towards the runway, joining with the wounded VC who had retreated earlier. All three VC were later KIA.

d. The second group apparently went south along the west side of of the runway end, as the first explosion took place on the flight line, they threw a grenade against the back of the HURST tent. As the HURST crew took cover, they observed the VC cross the runway eastward toward the crash crew area. When the crash crew heard the small arms fire and charges exploding, they set up a hasty defense around their tent and vehicles. An estimated three or four VC were then seen at a distance of only 10 to 12 feet away coming east across the runway. Upon opening

SECRET
Enclosure (2)

SECRET

fire, the VC threw a grenade or explosive charge over the Marines. It hit the crash truck, exploded and wounded one of the crew and injured another. The VC then broke and headed south, pursued by fire; one VC was killed, another one was seen to fall. He was helped by a third VC and they continued to withdraw across the runway to the southwest, passing a parked LVT and then over a hill. Two dead VC were later found beyond this point, and a wounded VC, who later died, was captured beside the runway.

3. Actions Involving the 4th Marines

- a. At 0013 the Operations Watch Officer heard explosions and sporadic small arms fire. Upon investigation it was learned from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, that a fire fight was in progress on the airfield.
- b. At 0015 Battery "C" of the Battalion Artillery Group reported receiving small arms and rocket fire. At this time a flare plane was requested from 3d Marine Division, and the Regiment went on 100% alert.
- c. At 0016 a call to MAG-12 indicated that two A4D's were burning.
- d. At 0020 Company K reported receiving small arms fire.
- e. At 0040 illumination was provided by 81mm and 4.2-inch mortars.
- f. At 0105 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, reported additional small arms fire was being received.
- g. At 0106 MAG-12 reported they had received 1 WIA and had accounted for 2 VC KIA and 1 VC WIA.
- h. At 0110 Company C reported that they had accounted for 1 VC KIA at 0055, and had captured one B-40 rocket launcher.
- i. At 0130 a flare ship reported on station and 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, accounted for 2 VC KIA and 1 VC WIA.
- j. At 0150 Company K took five VC under fire at the north end of the airfield.
- k. At 0245 Battery C accounted for 1 VC KIA.
- l. At 0450 Company K patrol accounted for 1 VC KIA.
- m. At 0625 3d Battalion, 3d Marines started a sweep operation to National Route #1, with no contact.

TAB A: Sketch of Attack
 TAB B: Viet Cong Losses
 TAB C: U. S. Losses
 TAB D: Defense Posture
 TAB E: Photos

SECRET
 Enclosure (2)

SECRET

VIET CONG LOSSES

CHU LAI AIRFIELD

1. Casualties

KIA: 15 (9 MAG-12, 6 3d MarDiv)

WIA(VOC): 2

2. Weapons, ordnance and equipment

1 U. S. Cal. 45 pistol

4 Thompson sub-machine guns

1 French SMG

8 TNT satchel charges (2 blocks - 200 grams)

5 TNT satchel charges (3 blocks - 200 grams)

6 concussion grenades

6 fragmentation grenades

1 B-40 rocket launcher with one round

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TAB B TO ENCLOSURE (2)

B-1

SECRET

U. S. LOSSES

CHU LAI AIRFIELD

1. Casualties

KIA: 0

WIA: 1

2. U. S. AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT LOSSES

<u>a. Aircraft</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Major Damage</u>	<u>Minor Damage</u>
A41	2	3	3

b. Miscellaneous

1 Crash truck damaged.

1 Aerology van damaged.

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TAB C TO ENCLOSURE (2)

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CHU LAI BASE

DEFENSE POSTURE

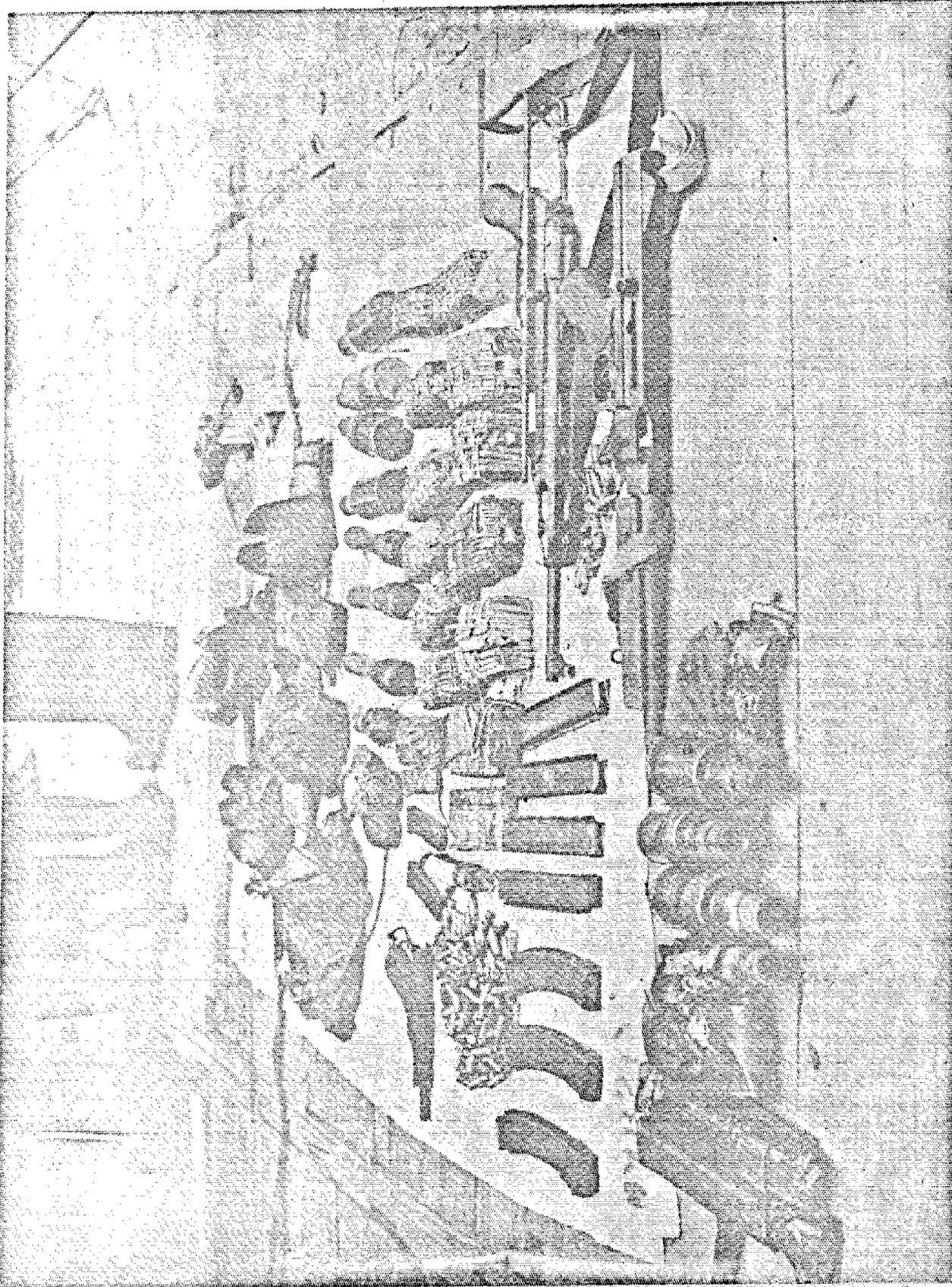
The defense of the Chu Lai airfield entails two distinct perimeters. One, the outer perimeter, is occupied by a minimum of one infantry battalion headquarters and two rifle companies. The second perimeter is manned by provisional companies organized from within Marine Air Group 12, 2d MAW Bn and F-10. Twelve provisional companies occupy positions depicted on TAB D. This perimeter is manned in varying degrees depending on the hour of the day and the condition of readiness required. Condition four, set during daylight hours, involves one provisional rifle platoon from each provisional company on an alert status to take position on the inner perimeter on 30 minute notice. The conditions graduate to condition one, where provisional companies man all positions on the inner perimeter.

In addition to the perimeter defenses, 146 men are assigned to the flight line area on internal guard duties. In the aircraft parking area, three men are posted for every six aircraft. During condition four, one man is awake, the other two asleep.

D-1

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TAB D TO ENCLOSURE (2)

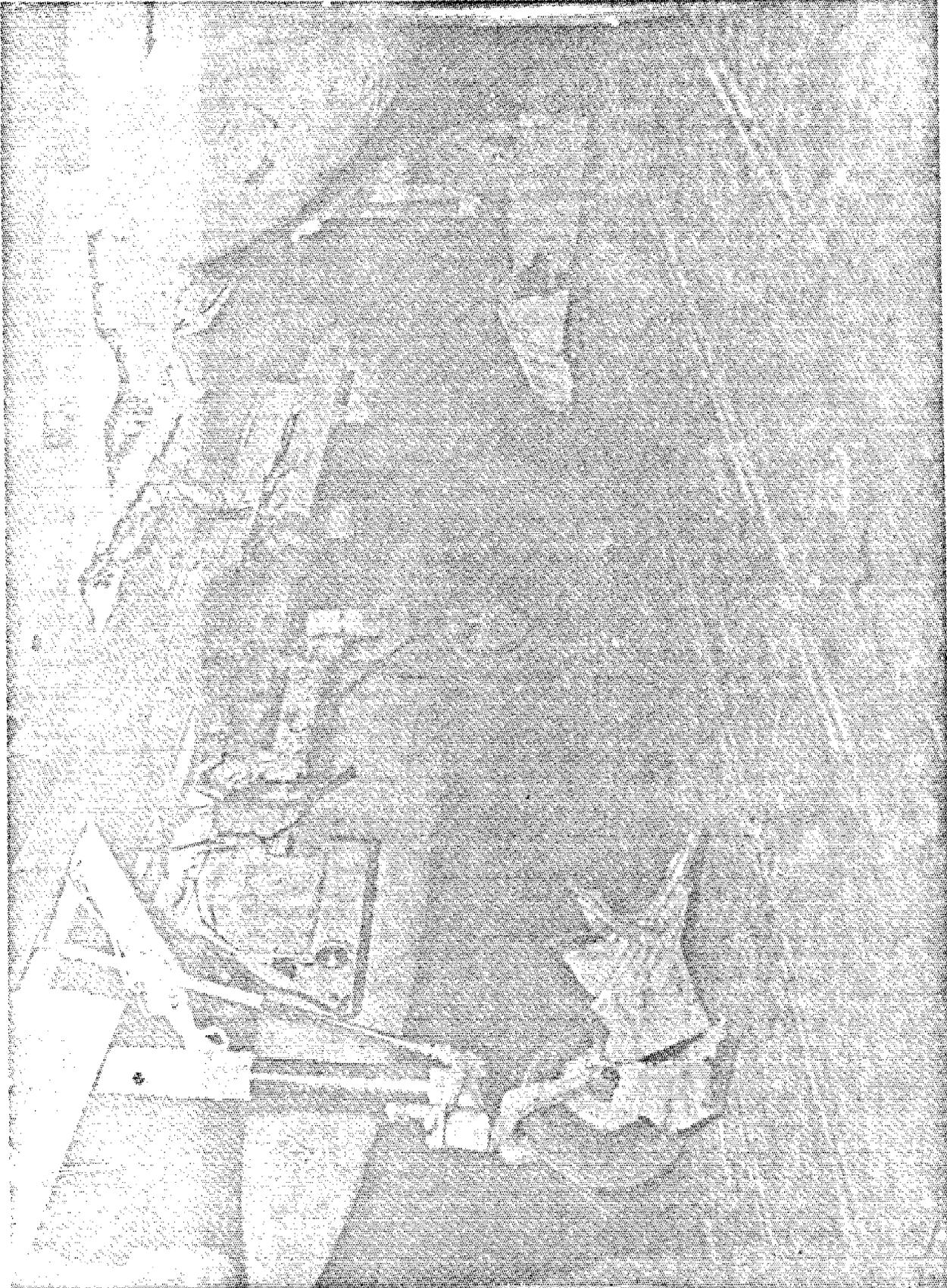
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CAPTURED ARMS AND EQUIPMENT - CHU LAI
FIGURE 1 TO TAB E TO ENCLOSURE (2)

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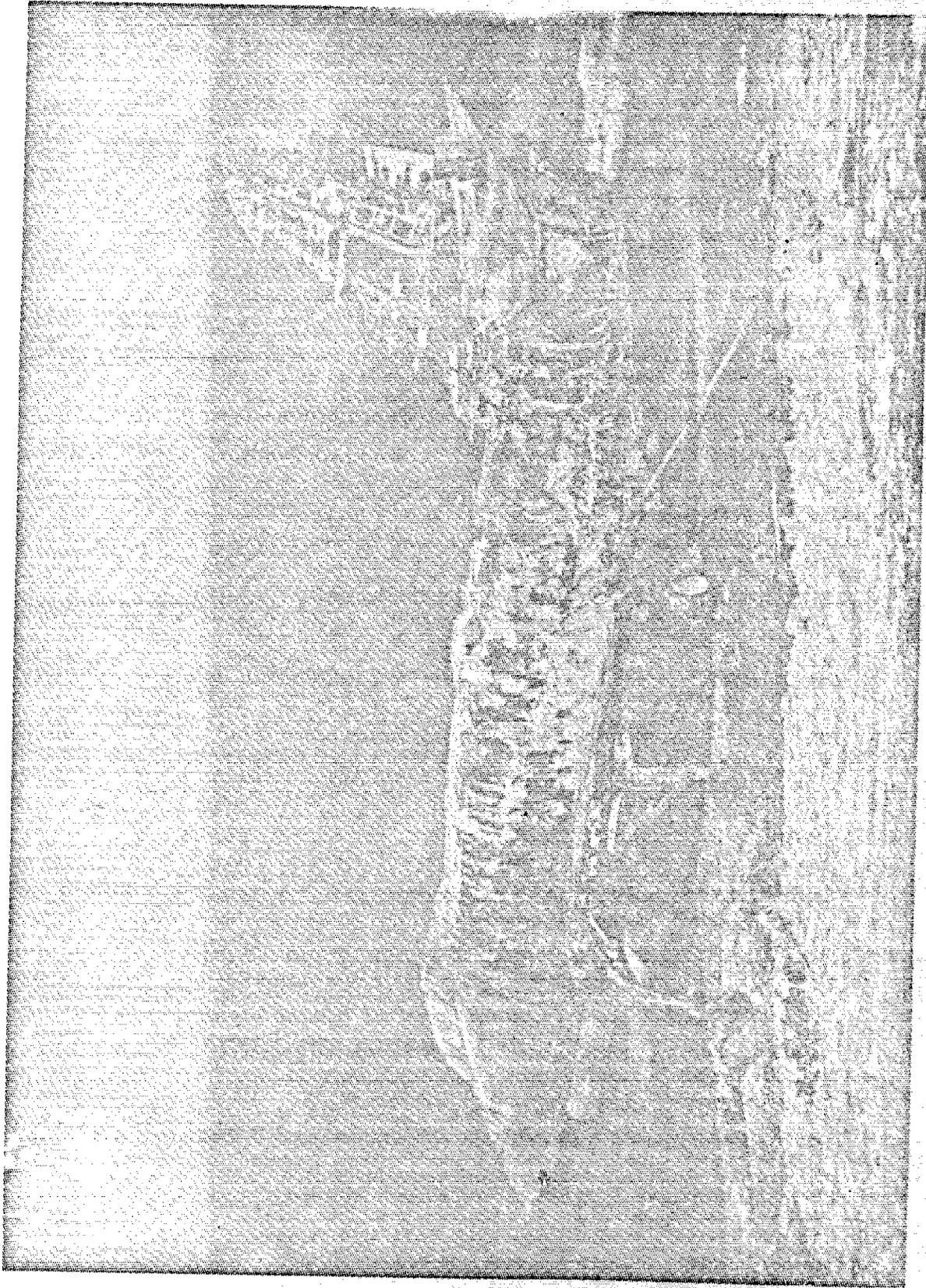
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A4 AIRCRAFT DAMAGE - CHU LAI
FIGURE 2 TO TAB E TO ENCLOSURE (2)

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A4 AIRCRAFT DAMAGE - CHU LAI
FIGURE 3 TO TABLE TO ENCLOSURE (2)

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VC KIA - CHU LAI
FIGURE 4 TO TAB E TO ENCLOSURE (2)

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K I N

APO 4109, 30 October 1965

I CORPS
STAFF - G2

Nr 614/QDI/TM2/TV/K

REPORT

TO: CG, ICPZ.

SUBJECT: Initial report of 4 VC captured during the enemy raid at the Marble Mountain airfield in the night of 27 Oct 65.

I. In a raid over the USMC helicopter airfield in the Marble Mountain area of Danang in the night of 28 Oct 65, 4 seriously wounded VC were captured and are being attended in General Duy Tan hospital. They are:

1. Lam Ba: native of Ky Tra village, Tam Ky district, Quang Tin province; the newly enlisted man was an ammunition carrier at 278th VC Co.

2. Tran Danh: native of Pho Nam hamlet, Hoa Lieu Village, Quang Nam province, Asst Ldr of 2nd Sqd, 278th Co.

3. Nguyen Thoi: native of Thanh Trung village, Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province, private, 3rd Plt/278th Co.

4. Pham Thach: native of Thanh Trung village, Dien Ban district, Quang Nam, private, Mortar Plt/278th Co.

All the VCCs were from 278th "Sapper" Co of Quang Nam & Danang.

II. Here is the result of their initial interrogation.

1. Attack on the Marble Mountain Airfield

a. Attacking force - Movement to the objective area.

- 278th Sapper (Special Op) Co of Quang Nam & Danang, with a strength of 140 men most of them native of Quang Nam, was recently activated and had been trained since these 5 months.

- It consisted of 3 Sapper Plts and 1 Hvy Wpns Plt (60mm Mortars and MGs) and a reinforcement of 20 recruits still in breaking training period and employed as ammunition carriers.

- The unit was equipped with
2 mortars, 60mm
2 MG, cal. 30
the remainder in ARs and individual weapons.

- The Co was stationed in Thanh Son area (vic AT 960 630) in Dien Ban district.

-1-

ENCLOSURE (3)

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On 24 Oct 65, the Co moved to Nam Yen (area West of Iden Chieu). It was from there that the unit skirted the sea line to attack the Marble Mountain airfield.

At 2719:00, the VC unit left Nam Yen for Thong Tu, crossed Highway #1 and the railroad between Nam O and Iden Chieu.

At 2720:30, the Co reached the beach where 2 motorized boats and a number of row junks were kept ready to carry the unit.

At 2723:30, the craft reached a point at 300m North of the Marble Mountain and gained selected positions.

b. Development of the attack

The Co was broken into 3 teams for the attack.

- Team 1.
1st Plt/278th Co (45 men) broke into the Western side of the USMC Bn to hold down the unit.
- Team 2.
2nd and 3rd Plts/278th (60 men) broke into the helicopter parking area and destroy aircraft with bangalores and grenades.
- Team 3.
Mortar Plt set the 2 tubes of 60mm cal with 50 rounds of ammunition on the My Thi hill (vic BT.053.740) covered with pine trees to engage the USMC Bn.

This Plt also sent 2 Sgds to lay mines at the 2 ends of the asphalted road section included into the objective area, a point close to the Marble Mountain, and the other one close to the Trinh Minh The Street bridge, to check the advance of SVN reinforcements that could be sent.

- Fire opening time:

Readiness at position at 2724:00 the attack order was given by means of the second round of mortar.

- Withdrawal direction.

The entire Co withdrew to Nam Yen by the same way it came to the objective area.

K I N

III. COMMENT BY G2/ICIZ.

1. According to VCCs statements, 275th Sapper Co was activated 5 months ago and that was the first time it was committed in Operation. Most of the unit personnel consisted of local people. It is true that all VCCs were seriously wounded and that were were still hindered in forcing the truth out of them.

It is suspected that the VC attacking Co might be the Sapper Co Nguyen Van Troi that already raided our Danang airfield and the Lien Chieu POL depot. The VC captured in the raid over Danang airfield stated he belonged to Co Nguyen Van Troi alias 275th Co that was based at Nam Yen too. The same information was released by VCCs after the attack on Lien Chieu POL depot. This time, 275th Co also departed from Nam Yen base and went through Nam O Lien Chieu in a usual manner.

2. The fact that 1 VC Co moved from Nam Yen through Nam O and Lien Chau to take motorized boats and rowing junks kept ready at the beach at only 20:30 revealed that:

- There are many VC organizations among the people in the area they went through (which made the past VC attack over Lien Chieu POL depot feasible).

- The local security check (by RF, PF, Junk Flotilla, Police, village and hamlet administrations) was too loose or that VC Fifth Columnists have been available in their organizations.

- The VC planned withdrawal on the same route of approach once more confirmed the strong belief by the enemy on its organizations among local people. The fact that a number of junks and motorized boats were kept ready to carry them is one more proof of VC strong organizations among local people.

3. Our control on the sea is still loose as 1 VC Co was carried on boats and junks on a long round voyage from Nam O to the Marble Mountain without being disclosed.

4. The quick execution of the raid and the success in damaging a great number of aircraft showed the accurate information that the VC can obtain on the disposition of the USMC unit in the Marble Mountain up to the last minute before the attack.

It is possible that VC organizations are available in the Marble Mountain area and they are clutching to USMC units for information. If they are existent, that must be among the individuals who have had access to USMC camps for trade purpose or are domiciliated close to the US military reservations.

