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 By **AB** NARA Date **11/27/02**

3

Their fires appeared ineffective, however, as the enemy was too well-entrenched. The company was eventually forced to wait for nightfall to evacuate the pinned down squad. The company had lost nine killed and ten wounded by this time.

The battalion commander on receiving the reports from Charlie Company of a suspected company or possible battalion size enemy force moved his forces to block the enemy. He placed Delta Company in to the east of the contact area expecting them to sweep west. As they moved they encountered a large tunnel which caused the company commander to stop his company while the tunnel was searched. While the search was being conducted he instructed his first platoon to move southwest to link up with the first platoon of G Company which had air assaulted into the high ground to the south. The platoon moved out on line and ten minutes later they began to receive fire from the hill to their front. The first squad in the center in line formation attempted to move in an upright position across an open area between two hedgerows, to determine where the fire was coming from. As they approached a densely foliated hedgerow, they were fired on by several automatic weapons fire fast to their front cutting down the entire squad. The company commander then moved forward to make an estimate of the situation after which he ordered the fourth platoon to attempt to maneuver left. The company commander was killed as well as another member of the fourth platoon and one wounded before the attempt was abandoned. The third platoon then attempted to maneuver around behind the pinned down first and fourth to evacuate casualties with covering fires. They pulled up behind the first platoon where heavy fires stopped them. The acting company commander ordered all elements to hold their positions until darkness before attempting to extract any more wounded. Delta Company's battle had resulted in fourteen killed and twelve wounded. All of the wounded were pulled back after it became dark. (Map 5)

The enemy strength by the estimates of the company and battalion commander was at least a company and probably a battalion of NVA regulars. Subsequent intelligence indicated the presence of the 18th NVA Regimental Headquarters with its support companies (519th Guard Company, 12.7mm AA Company, etc.) and the 8th Battalion. The enemy was well-dug in and was well-disciplined. They seemed to be shooting for anyone giving evidence of being a leader and anyone carrying a radio. Even after ARA fire the enemy continued to wage effective resistance and broke contact with US Forces during the night. Heavy losses discovered in the search of the battlefield and subsequent light contact was thirty seven enemy killed by body count with an undetermined number of dead and wounded dragged from the battlefield under the cover of darkness.

3. The following are considered to be contributing factors to the large number of friendly casualties:

a. A failure to be alert to the fact that regular NVA units often utilize local VC as trail watchers and observers.

b. A failure to exploit the on-the-spot intelligence value of prisoners.

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c. A failure to consider the common NVA tactic of allowing friendly units to advance to point-blank range in order to inflict maximum casualties and cause loss of control and momentum with an overwhelming opening volley which also pins the advancing unit down, normally in the open and too close to allow the use of supporting fires.

d. Failure by all units, company through squad to employ a point team sufficient distance to the front to provide early warning and preventing larger elements from being pinned down at close range by the enemy.

e. Over-anxiousness on the part of platoon members to develop the situation due to long searches with lack of contact.

f. A premature concern with the welfare of casualties without first having disposed of the enemy threat by attacking with a superior force, through the enemy positions, pushing them back, allowing the use of indirect fires and then the evacuation of casualties. To attempt to extract casualties from where the enemy has dropped them without having eliminated the enemy, invites more casualties!

g. A failure to consider the use of smoke, both hand thrown and artillery delivered, to cover movement while extracting casualties.

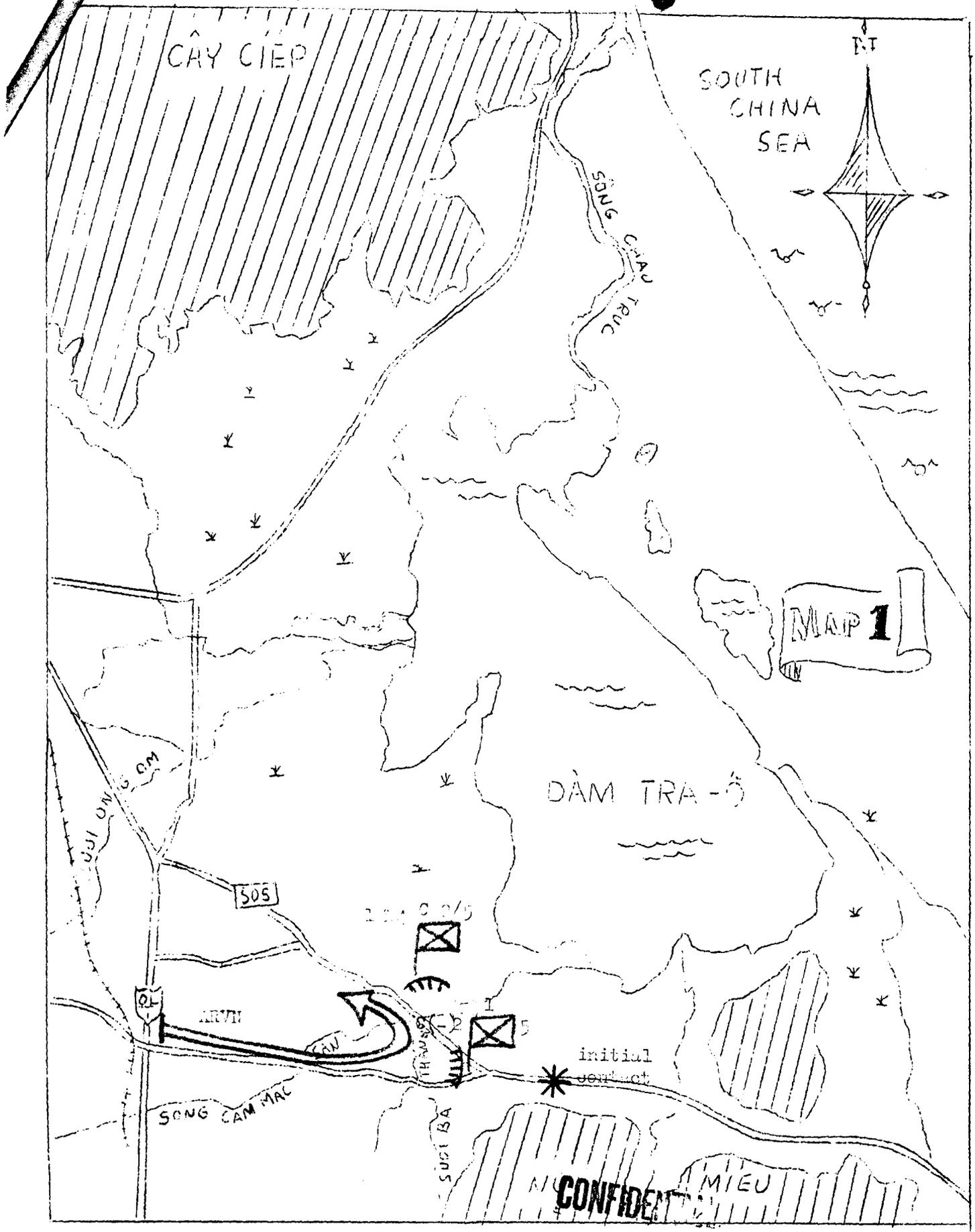
h. A failure of several friendly troops to move with one man covering another and to make maximum use of all available cover and concealment.

i. Excellent use of fire discipline and cover and concealment by the enemy.

COPY: CG 2/5

WILLIAM E. KAIL
LIE, Infantry
Historical Team Bravo

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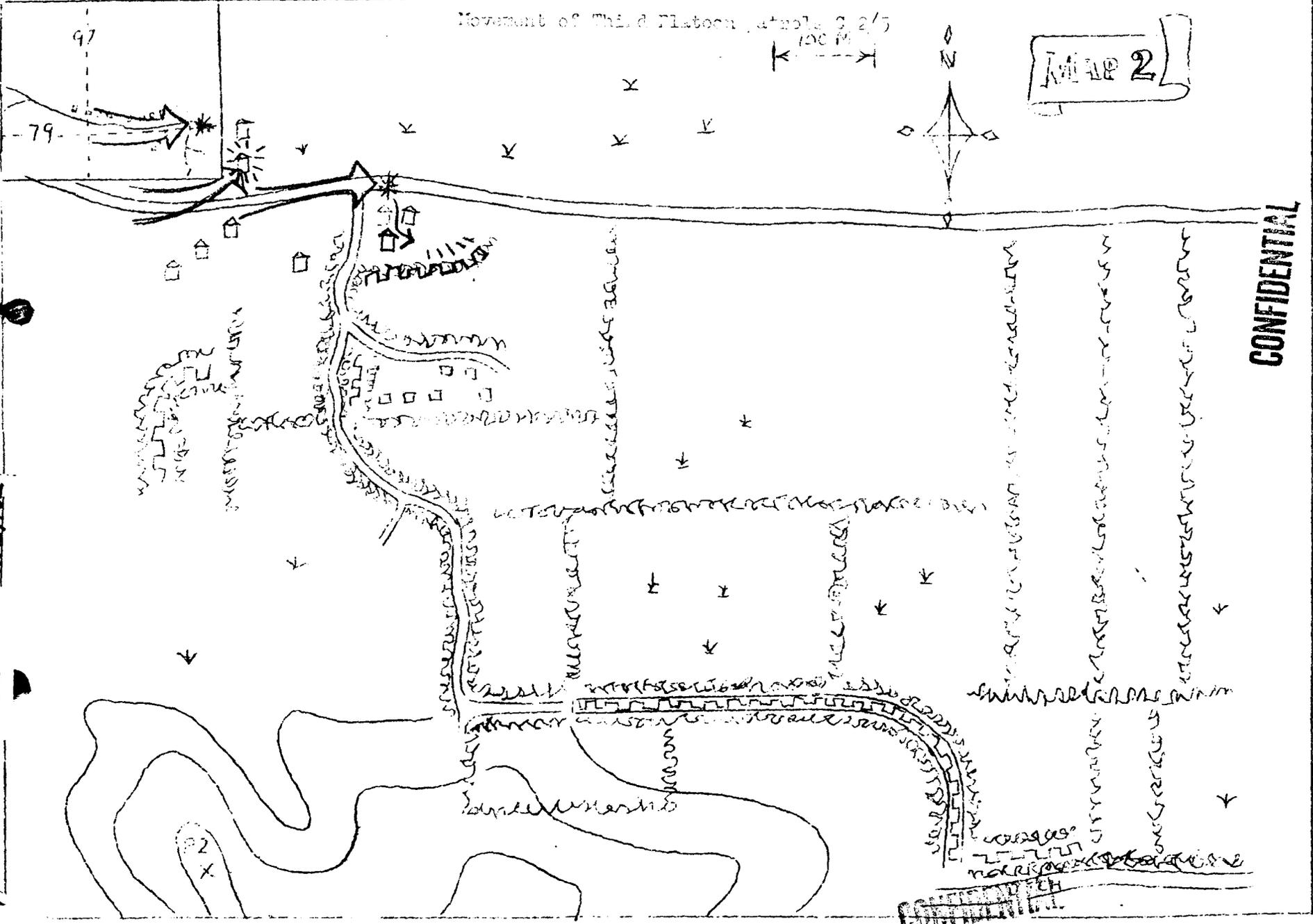
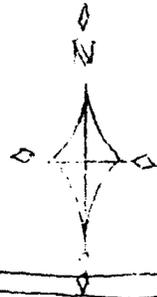
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Movement of Third Platoon, Patrol 3 2/5

MAP 2

100 M



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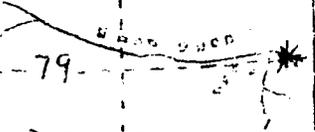
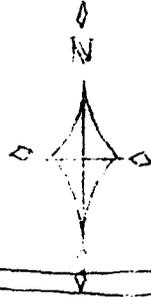
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Movements 2nd & 3rd (-) CO 2/7

MAP 3

97

100 M



CO & 3rd
plt (-)

1st contact

3rd & 4th contact

3rd plt (-)

2nd plt (-)

CO

2nd contact

2
X

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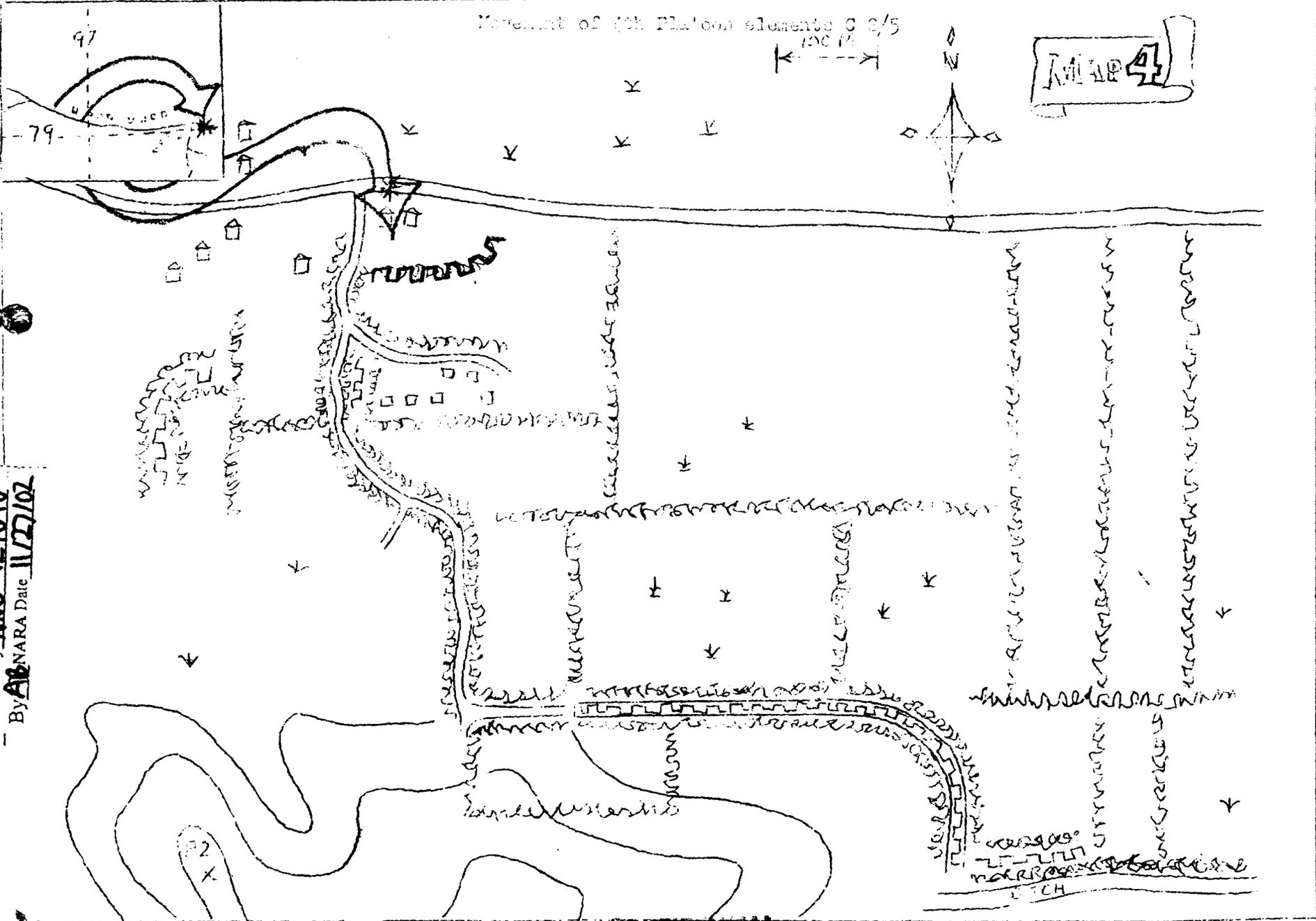
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Movement of 4th Platoon elements 0 2/5

100 M

MAP 4



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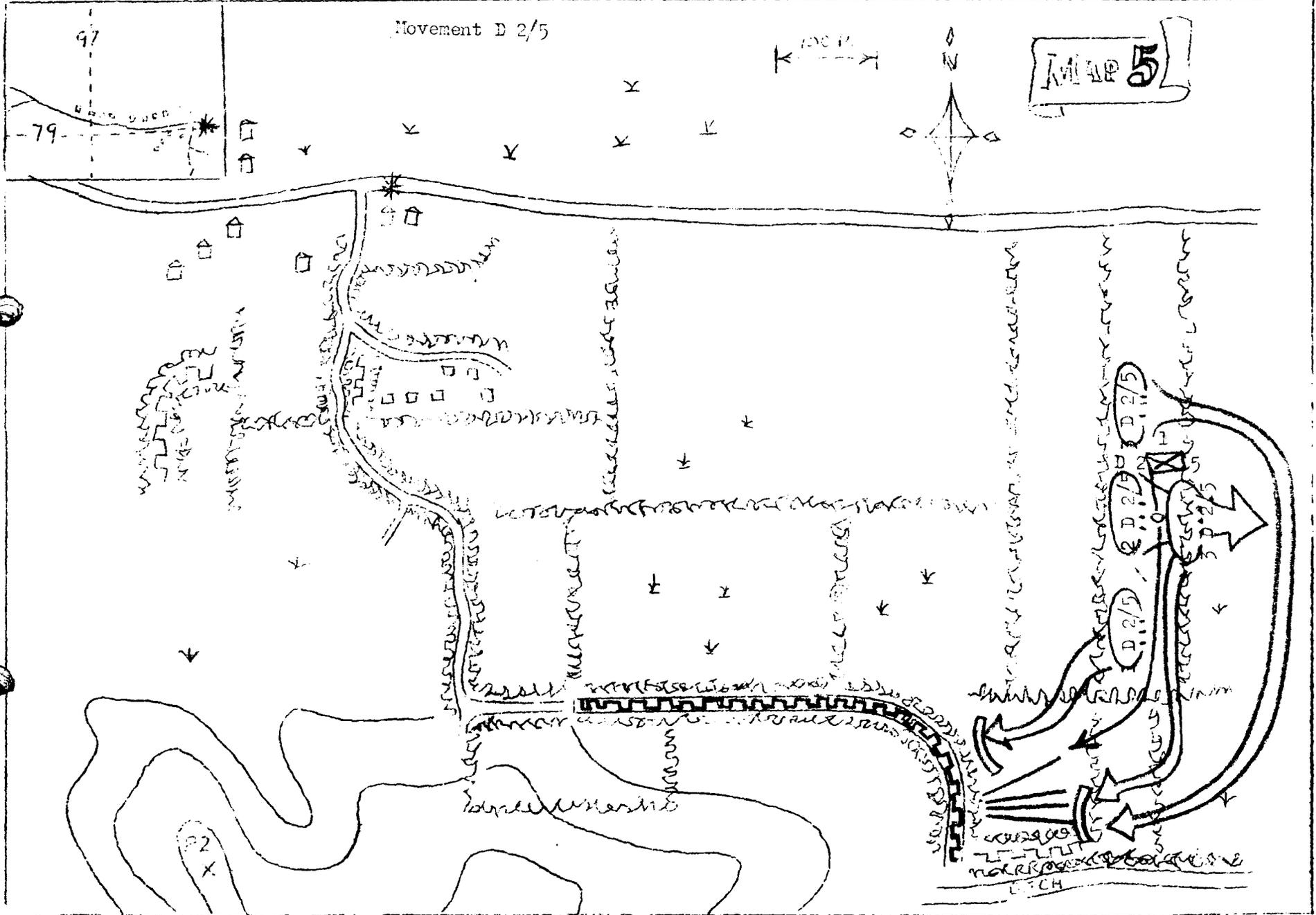
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Movement D 2/5

MAP 5



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