

22 MAY

1. General situation:

A. The major interest in MR 2 today focused on the clearing operation in KTM PASS. In PHU PROV. enemy activity flared up in the vic of FSB 41 and FSB 42. Additionally, there were also several ABF's. In KTM prov. there were sporadic ABF's against KTM city. Also, limited patrolling beyond the northern FEBA uncovered many enemy KBA. There was very little enemy activity in Binh Binh Prov.

B. Phase II of the QL 14 operation went pretty much according to plan. This morning five arc lights went in on the Rock Pile. Twenty VNAF ships air assaulted 640 troops into ZA 219763 and ZA 212749. The only reported enemy fire during the operation wounded a crew chief. A VNAF UH-1H struck a tree in the LZ and sustained moderate damage. Obj 5 was secured at 1045 and obj 1 at 1700. Bridge number 6 has been destroyed and the By - Pass will require work before it is useable. AR fire and heavy automatic weapons fire were received in the vic of obj 4. The plan calls for elements of the 3rd Cav. to move up QL 14 tomorrow (23 May) and sweep both sides of the road. It is more likely that several days of hard fighting are

ahead before the pass will be open. It has been reported that the rock pile is honeycombed with caves. Although the ARV lights provided a good prep for the CA a difficult fight is anticipated. Early this evening both BNS were reporting that small arms and automatic weapons fire had panned them down in the vicinity of the LZ's.

C. Early this morning (22 May) FSB 41 and FSB 42 were attacked by enemy forces. At 0330 FSB 41 had an ABF until 0400 and then was hit by a ground probe. The RF CO withdrew from the FSB and the VC entered and raised an NVA flag. The RF unit returned to the FSB unopposed at 0600. Results of the action were: Friendly 1 KIA and 8 WIA: enemy 8 KIA. FSB 42 had an ABF at 0725 consisting of 10 82mm rounds with negative casualties or damage.

D. KTM airfield started the day (220010) with an ABF of five 122mm rockets.

Prior to this the C130 sorties had proceeded without incident. However, at 0115 A C130 blew a tire on landing. The USAF closed the field to C130 operations, because their policy forbids more than one C130 on the field at one time. An ABF consisting of six unknown type rounds hit the airfield at 0820. Two of these

impacted within 15 meters of the parked C130; the shrapnel caused a fuel leak which burst into flames. Also, two craters were blown in the runway. A VNAF A1E, which had made a precautionary landing due to combat damage on 20 May, was parked near the C130. The A1E was towed out of danger by a jeep. Another 122 mm rocket came in at 1015 wounding one USAF crewman. For some unknown reason no attempt was made to extinguish the small fire burning on the left wing tip of the C130. Col Todd personally supervised putting the fire out. The A.F. has declared the A1C a combat loss even though only the left wing tip up to the outboard engine was destroyed.

E. There is considerable speculation that our ARC light strikes have had a significant impact on the combat effectiveness of the 320th NVA Div. Indicative of this are the results of several sweep operations. For example, the 4/53 inf found 70 KBA just 2 km NW of KTR city today. In addition, they recovered small arms and crew served weapons to include an 82 mm mortar and a 12.7 mm AA gun. Later in the morning the 2/53 inf found 28 KBA + 1/2 km North of the city.

They also made contact with an unknown size enemy force resulting in one friendly KIA and 2 WIA. Twelve enemy were KIA. Recently there have been several unconfirmed agent reports citing 150-200 USA in AAC light strikes. Since 1 Jan. there have been 820 AAC light strikes in the Kora area. Last week alone there were 84 strikes. If the targeting has been half way reliable, the strikes have undoubtedly had a deleterious effect on the enemy.

F. Two days ago a ranger unit working several km south of Tien ATAR captured 8 enemy uniforms. These uniforms had patches depicting tanks sewn on them. Today Gen Hill conducted a VR of the area without finding any evidence of tanks. He does not believe that an attack on Ban Me Thout is likely in the near future. The NVA may move units across the border to be used against Ban Me Thout if

KTM + PKA are taken. The SA in Ban Lac Prov. reported today that a high ranking mountguard, who works for the U.S. at Ban Lac, said he rode in a T54 vic YV 7445, and that several tanks were in the area. There is no other confirmation of this report.

2. Synopsis of ops: 42/16/7

west 15/8/4	<u>Sorthis</u>	<u>Pax</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>hours:</u>
CH 44	60	656	49	15

3. AIR CAV operations:

A. B/7/17: The Troop conducted VR operations N and NE of KTM city. Initially, the Troop operated east of the city where they spotted bunkers and fighting positions but no people. NE of the city (Vic AR 810931) the scouts spotted 35-40 new fighting positions 105 mm shell casings, and a triangular shaped pod possibly containing rockets. The tubes measured 6-8' in length 6-8 inches in diameter. TAC AIA was employed with unknown results. On the vic. of hill 645 (2A 220976) N of KTM city the scouts observed many personnel lounging around in a bunker complex. There was an unusual conglomeration of uniforms with many attired in bright colored clothes. Some were even in camouflaged uniforms. Conjecture is that the NVA may be infiltrating reinforcements among refugee groups during their exodus from the North. TAC AIA was requested. At 2A 211972 the scouts sighted 6-7 90 mm RR and an unknown quantity

of laws. These weapons may have been captured at Tan Canh or from one of the unrecovered air drop bundles at Ben Het. The Cobras engaged these weapons. The Troop lead complained today that an inadequate number of TAC air sorties was available as a consequence many targets were not hit by air strikes.

B C/7/17: Throughout the day the Troop supported the ARVN operation VIC KTIM pass to reopen QL14. They made a significant sighting at 2A 220700 consisting of 75 to 80 bunkers and troops in the open. TAC AIR WAS employed with unknown results. The Troop will continue to support the QL14 operation on 23 May.

C. Evaluation of CAV operations: continued sightings of groups of personnel moving into the area point toward a rapid rate of reinforcement and probable high turnover in the NVA units. Most groups fired on the ARC; This has not been characteristic of small units, possibly indicating new undisciplined replacements. This tends to confirm the speculation that ARC lights are taking a heavy toll. There are still no clear signs of an immediate attack. The general feeling is that the

enemy is attempting to get organized and recover from the pounding he has taken.

4 Misc.

a. General Weyand and four ARVN Generals are scheduled to visit SRAG / II Corps on 23 May from 0900 to 1200.

B. Col Todd played a major role in the C130 incident at Korm airfield this morning. When he arrived on the scene everyone was watching the A/C burn making no attempt to extinguish the blaze. His crew quickly put out the fire and apparently saved the A/C. He later flew the USAF crew to Phu. The A.F. plans to bring in a maintenance crew tonight to strip the C130. They hope to get the engines as well as other items of equipment.

c. Similarly, Col. Todd personally supervised getting the POC back in operation. The point had received shrapnel damage causing SP-4 to spray the area and forcing all A/C to return to Pleiku to refuel. He determined that by merely shutting off several lines

POC could be reopened minus a couple of points. The Air Force is scheduled to bring in some bladder birds tonight.