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Box 3

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 11TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96257

AVIC WE

18 Dec 1970

SUBJECT: Combined operation - Operation report

Transmitted herewith is the combat operation report conducted by elements of 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment on 2-6 Dec 1970.

*Omer E. Pigeon Jr.*  
OMER E. PIGEON JR.  
Major, AGC  
Adjutant

1. REFERENCE:  
a. Map: RVN, 1:50,000, Ben Cat, Series L 7014
2. TYPE OF OPERATION:  
a. Combined Operation  
b. 9 Regional Forces and 5 US Armored Cavalry Platoons.
3. DATES OF OPERATION: 2-6 December 1970.
4. LOCATION: Binh Duong Province (Ben Cat, Chau Thanh and Phu Giao Districts).
5. CONTROL HEADQUARTERS:  
The operation was controlled by the Deputy Province Chief of Binh Duong Province, LTC Chau.
6. ORGANIZATION: See Incl. I.
7. INTELLIGENCE:  
Hoi Chanh's, PW's, and captured documents indicated that the enemy's K-4 Battalion of the Dong Nai Regiment was operating in the area of Ben Cat, Chau Thanh, and Phu Giao Districts. This initial intelligence was later supported by information obtained from three PW's who were captured during the operation. (See Incl. II for the Interrogation Report).
8. MISSION: Conducted a detailed search of the suspected area and destroy all enemy bases located. (See Incl. I for the Area of Operation).

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9. CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION: Elements of the 11th ACR and the 9 RF Companies involved in the operation were divided into five separate forces. Each force was assigned a search mission in one sector of the suspected area. These sectors were designated A through E, with only one sector, D, without an American Platoon. The control group organization is shown in Incl. I, page 2.

The operation was scheduled to begin 020800 Dec 70. On the evening of 1 December, the U.S. Platoons involved moved to night positions near their starting points for the operation. By 0830 the next morning these platoons had completed link up with their respective RF Companies and were ready to begin operations.

At approximately 0905 the 1st Platoon, I Troop and the 298 and 171 RF Companies were closing in on their first objective when a VC/NVA soldier was spotted at XT772302. When the troops fire, 2 more enemy appeared and immediately surrendered without returning fire. One of the enemy was slightly wounded.

LTC Varnjen, CO 3/11th ACR, was already en route to the area in his C and C helicopter. The C and C ship evacuated the prisoners, 2 AK-47 rifles, 1 RPG launcher with 2 rounds, and 30 lbs of captured rice back to the operation's Headquarters in Chau Thanh District. During the ensuing interrogation one of the prisoners revealed that he was an Assistant Platoon Leader in the K-4 Battalion. He stated that 26 NVA remained in the area where he had been captured. The other two prisoners indicated that they were infiltrated from North Vietnam in September, 1970. (The interrogation report is attached in Incl. II.)

While the PW's were being interrogated, the search of the area continued. The RF's investigating a tunnel were temporarily interrupted when an enemy soldier threw a grenade, wounding 5 RF and killing one. The wounded were evacuated by a C and C ship and the search was resumed. 3 VC/NVA were spotted in the tunnel but subsequently escaped into the area's thick vegetation. Although a large pool of blood was found, an attempt to follow this trail had negative results.

In this same area, RF's found a small cache containing 2 RPG-2 launchers with 4 rounds and 4 AK-47's. While sweeping sector E, the 3rd Platoon, I Troop and the 249/263 RF Companies found a bunker at XT802250 which contained 5 RPG-2 rounds, 4 Claymore electrical detonators and Claymore wire.

To exploit intelligence gained from interrogation of the 3 PW's, changes were made in the operation. More troops were concentrated in the sector where the prisoners had been captured to cordon it off. Those from sectors D and E continued with their original mission.

Acting quickly province officials coordinated all changes. Following approval of the changes by the Province Chief, LTC Chau, and his counterpart, Deputy Province Chief Maj Katsarsky, quickly put the new plan in

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effect. To implement the plan, LTC Chau and Maj Katsarsky accompanied by LTC Varjen, CO of 3/11 ACR, flew to each of the units involved to explain the changes.

LTC Varjen also committed another platoon from I Troop. The Troop Commander moved into the operational area with this additional platoon so that he could control his units. A Rone Plow was also committed to move into the area on the next day and begin making tactical cuts to expose enemy base areas.

Coordination between RF and US units continued during the afternoon of 2 Dec. and the cordon was completed by 1930 hours. Night positions of the units are shown in Incl. I, page 2.

As a postplanned deception, artillery harassment was provided by the 5th ARVN division at Lai Khe. The first fire mission occurred at 2000 hours as fire was directed into a triangle in grid 7830, as shown in Incl. I.

The night passed without additional contact and the operation was resumed the next morning. Because the Rone Plow was not scheduled to arrive before mid-afternoon, the operation was extended an extra day to effect a thorough search of the area. To keep fresh troops working the operation, the RF Companies were continually rotated in the search area.

On 030935 the 171 RR Company uncovered a booby trap. While reconning, US units observed 3 VC/NVA who escaped into the thick vegetation. During the night, an AA set by the 171 RF Company at XT795315 was activated resulting in 2 enemy KIA and 1 AK-47 CIA. One of the enemy KIA's was later identified as an NVA Assistant Platoon Leader for the Chau Thanh District.

Secured by I Troop the Rone Plow began making its cut on the morning of 4 December. The platoon from L Troop was returned to its Troop's control, and I Troop was assigned to continue the operation with the RF Companies. Later the operation was extended once more to build a new RF compound in the area.

Throughout the operation, the Regional Forces proved their ability to accomplish their mission and control a large force effectively. This operation was one of the largest undertaken to date in the Binh Duong District. With the knowledge and confidence gained from this operation, RF can be expected to increase large scale operations.

The results from the operation was 9 VC/NVA PW's, 2 VC KIA's, 3x RPG-2 launchers, 5x RPG-2 rounds, 7xAK-47's and 30 lbs of rice CIA.

Valuable experience which can only be measured by future results was also gained.

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10. OBSERVATIONS:

1. Regional Forces Commanders coordinated the entire operation, in a sound tactical manner, showing marked improvement over previous operations.
2. Throughout the operation, the Vietnamese showed unusual ability to change their operational plans to exploit a situation. The RF Commanders initiated all changes and coordinated their activities smoothly and professionally.
3. Helicopters contributed significantly to maintaining the momentum of the operation. Change in operation orders were carried directly to the field by the commanders and wounded were evacuated immediately preventing a loss of morale and subsequently a loss of momentum. It is doubtful if the RF could react as rapidly were they not supported by U.S. air assets.

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## (C) BIOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Source One: NAME: DOUNG VAN BUI (ZOUNNG VEAN BUIL)  
 DPOB: 1950, Vinh Trach (V), Quang Xuong (D), Thanh Hoa (P)  
 UNIT: C3, K4, SR-5  
 Psn: Soldier  
 DISP: Binh Duong Sector

Source Two: NAME: LE VAN MAI (LEE VEAN MAIR)  
 DPOB: 1951, Vinh Trach (V), Quang Xuong (D), Thanh Hoa (P)  
 UNIT: C3, K4, SR-5  
 Psn: Soldier  
 DISP: Binh Duong Sector

## (C) INFORMATION OBTAINED

Both sources were members of the C3 AKA C43 Company, K4 Bn (Dong Nai). They stated that the mission of their unit was to spread VC Propaganda and to set up VC infrastructure in hamlets, villages, and districts. Sources stated they started infiltration from the North after finishing 2 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  months of basic training. Sources' infiltration group number was 2188D. During the time of infiltration, both sources belonged to the 2nd Plt, 3rd Co, 7th Bn. Sources stated that at the start of infiltration there were approx. 300 men in the infiltration group, during infiltration approximately two-thirds of the group was left behind due to sickness or wounds received while infiltrating. These men were left either in Cambodia or Laos. Sources could give no further information on the location of the above personnel. Approximately 100 men arrived, along with sources, at SR-5 in Sep 70. Of the 100 personnel who arrived at SR-5, 30 were assigned to the K4 Bn. Sources did not know the assignment instructions of the other 70 men. After arriving at K4 sources were reassigned to C3.

Strength: K-4: Sources stated that C-1 has approx. 21 people; C-2 had approx. 23; C-3 had 26 people, but within the last months C-3 has suffered the following losses; 3xKIA, 1 died of malaria, 2xCIA (Names: THUNG((THUNGL)), Plt Ldr and THUAN (THUANV), 8 sent to K-4 for redistribution. This leaves the C-3 strength at 12, taking into consideration the 3 present PW's, the present strength is 9.

Mission: C-3, K-4, SR-5 had the mission of spreading propaganda and setting up infrastructures in hamlets and villages. Sources heard that both C-2 and C-3 were infantry units, but they did not know their areas of operations. Sources stated that their base camp was located in the vicinity XT 772302. Sources heard that SR-5 HQ was North of the Song Be River, that the K-4 HQ was in the vicinity of C-3 base camp, that C-1 was a five day walk East of C-3, and C-2 was a one to two hour walk South of C-3. (The previous information was based on the opinion of the PW)

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 Incl. II.

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Source 2 stated that the food was adequate. Both sources stated that ammunition was low. Source 2 stated there 7 rounds of B-40 and enough AK rounds for one weapon. Sources stated that the medic acquired medical supplies from SR-5 at least twice each month, and if necessary, three or four each month. Both sources claimed that medical supplies were low and that there was a high incidence of malaria.

Source 1 claims that C-3 has twice made contact with ARVN units, but had not made contact with American units. One time, however about 2 months ago, American artillery fired 2 dud rounds into their base camp.

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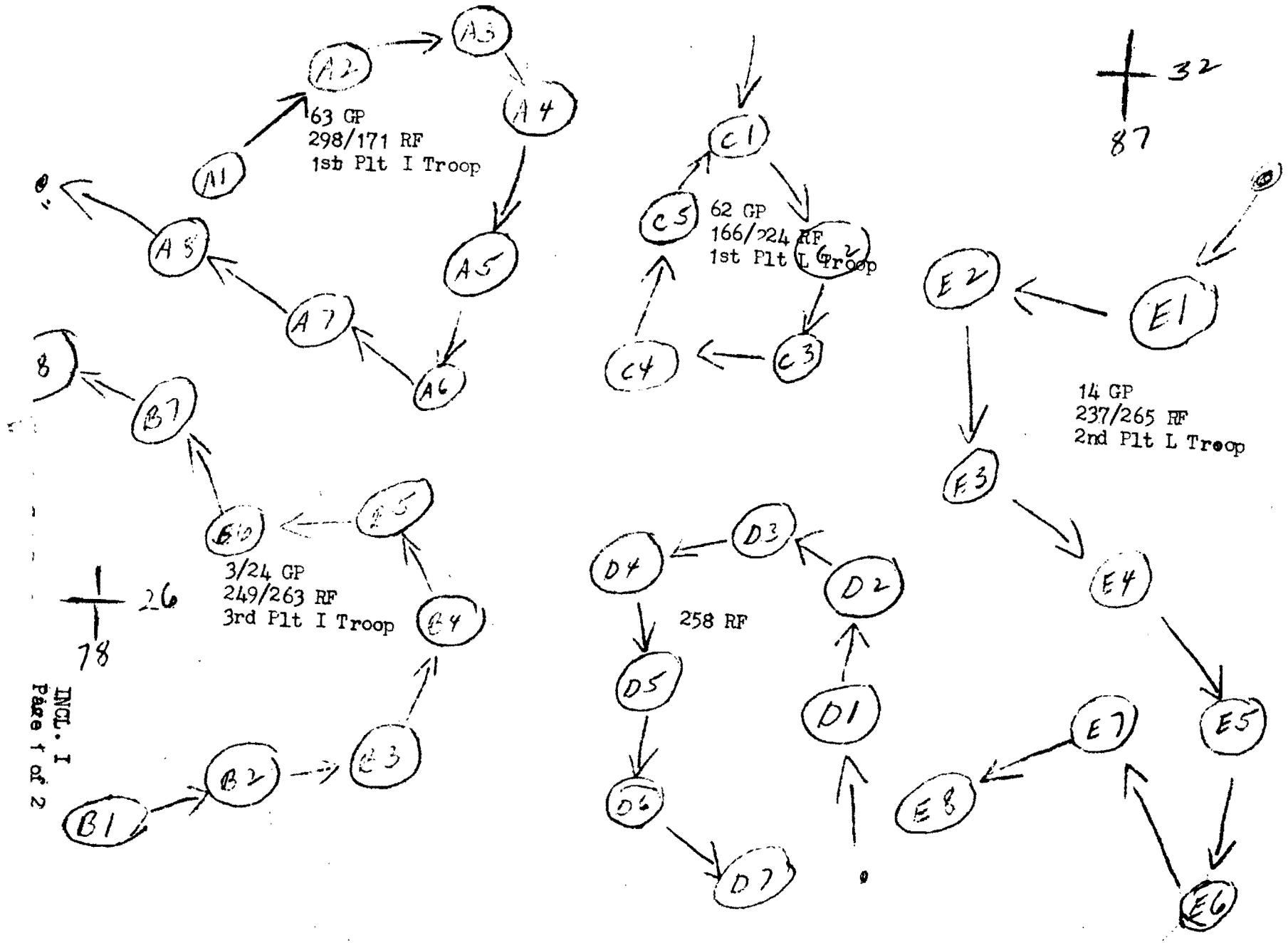
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AREA OF OPERATION. MORNING OF 2 DEC.



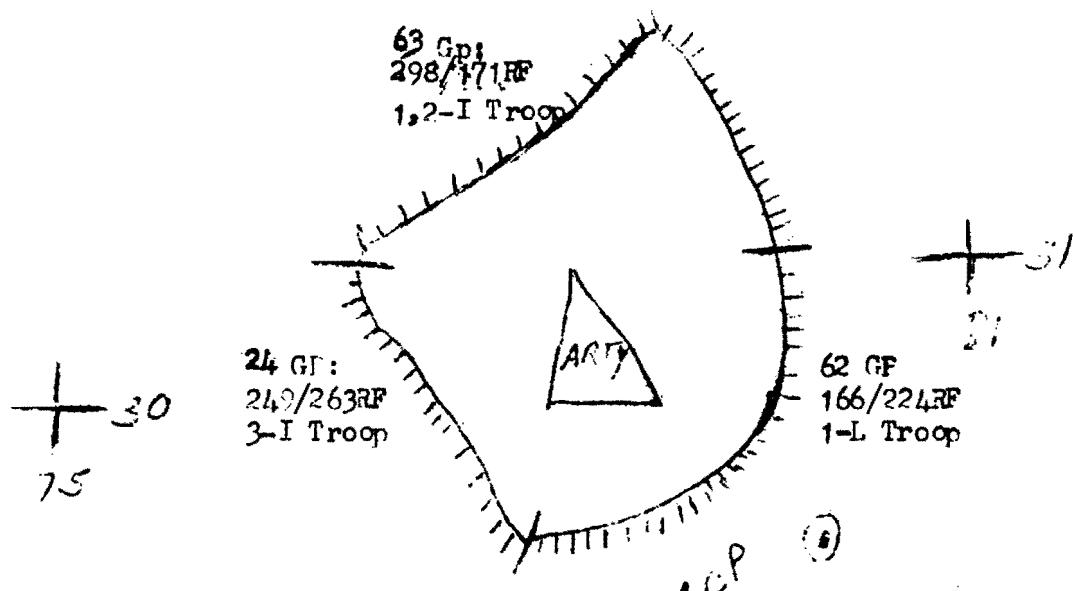
INCL. 1  
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CORDON - Night of 2 Dec.



## CONTROL GROUPS INVOLVED IN OPERATION

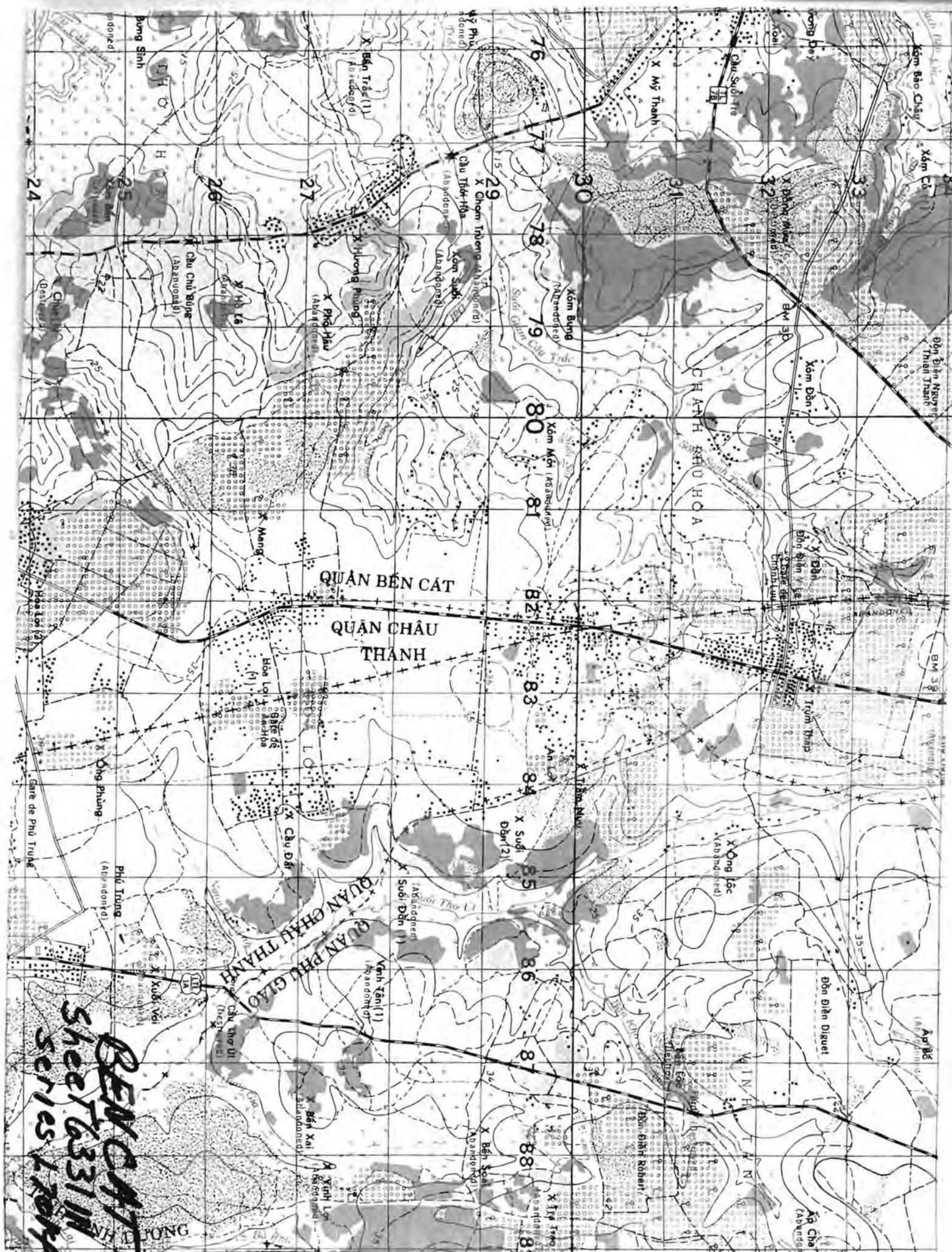
- A: 63 Gp - 298/171RF, 1st Platoon I Troop
- B: 3/24 Gp - 249/263RF, 3rd Platoon I Troop
- C: 62 Gp - 166/224RF, 1st Platoon L Troop
- D: 258 RF Company
- E: 14 Gp - 237/265RF, 2nd Platoon L Troop

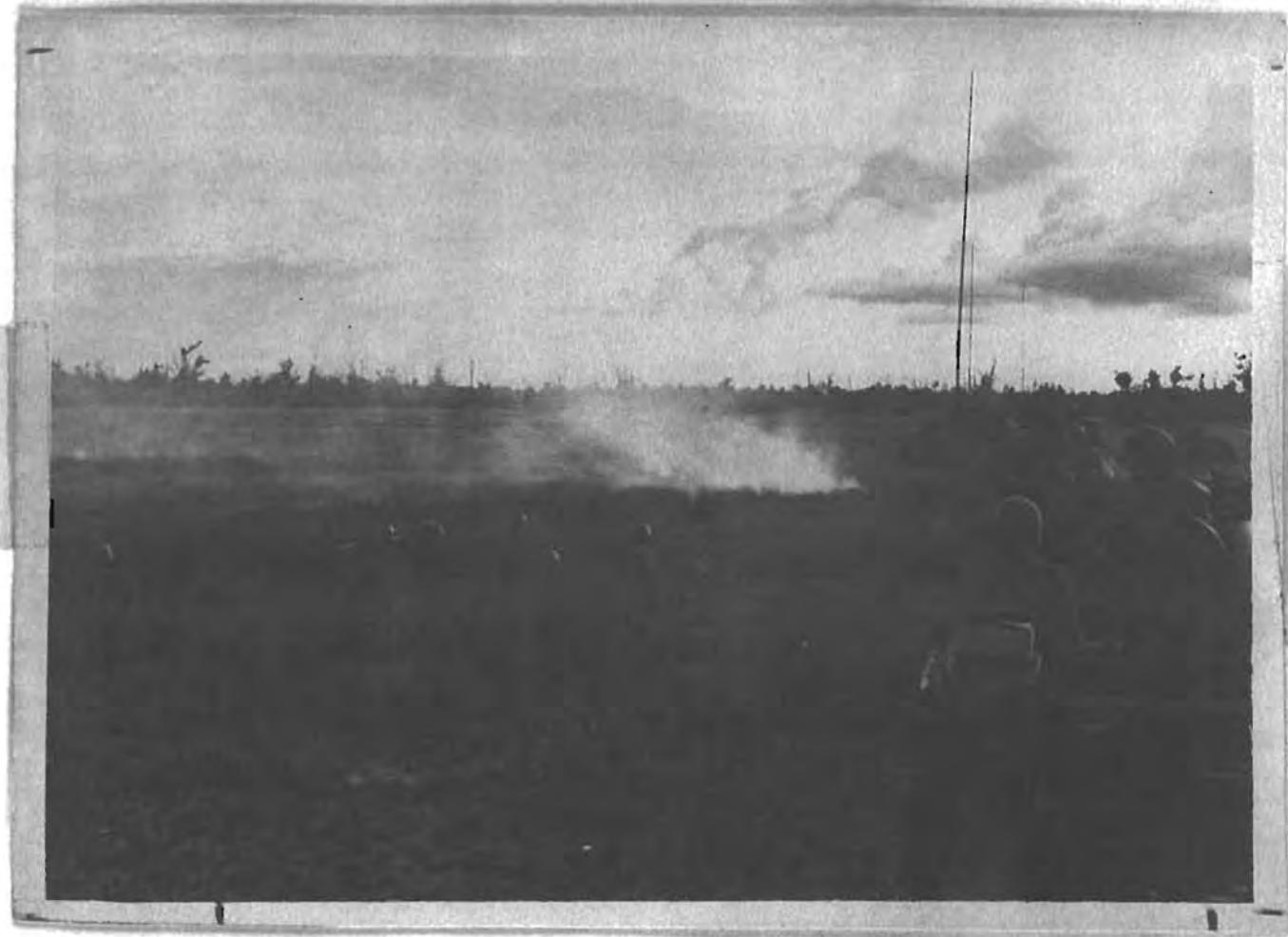
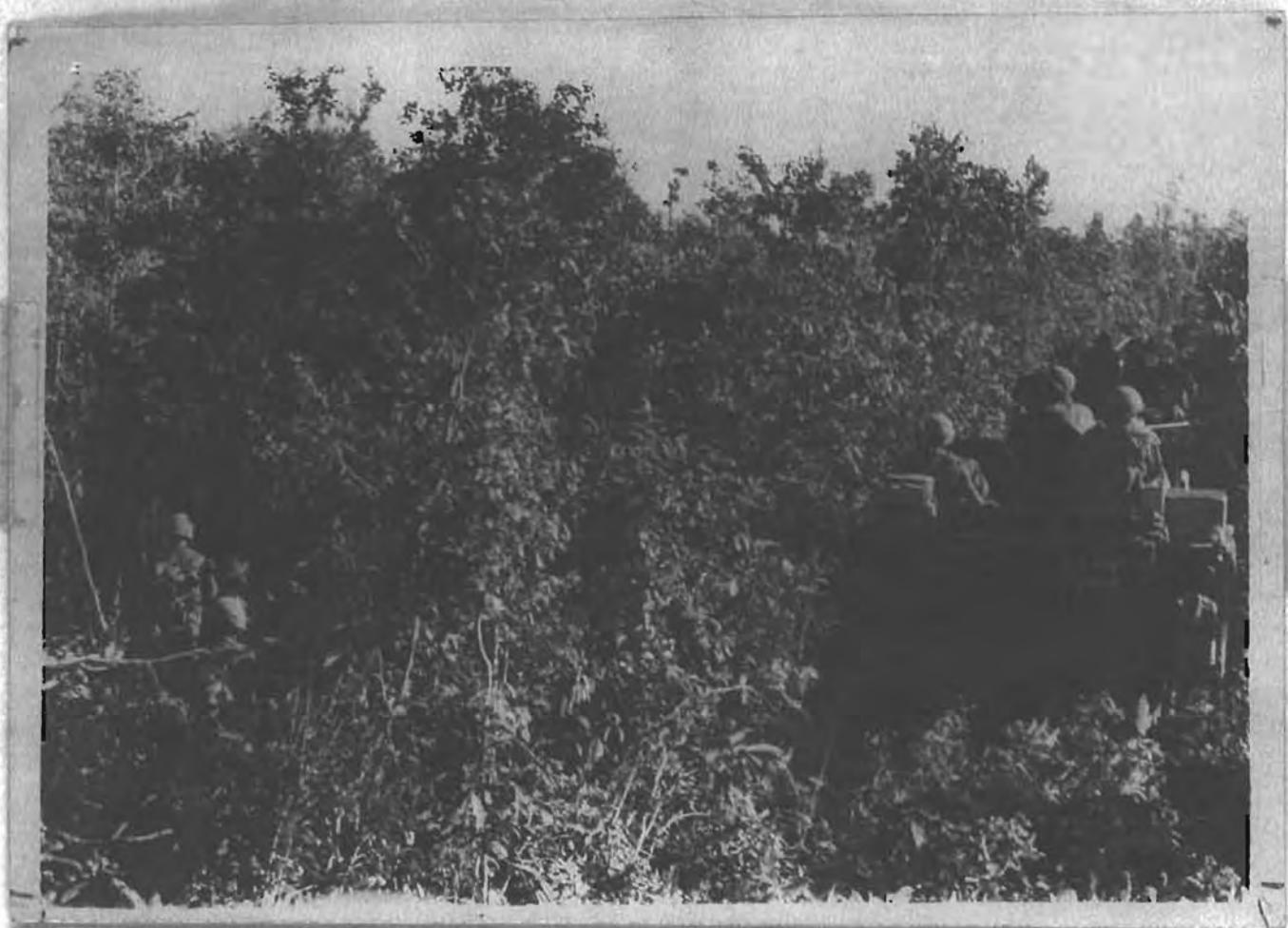
## GROUPS INVOLVED IN CORDON NIGHT OF 2 DEC.

- A: 63 Gp - 298/171RF, 1st, 2nd Platoon I Troop
- B: 3/24 Gp - 249/263RF, 3rd Platoon I Troop
- C: 62 Gp - 166/224RF, 1st Platoon L Troop

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