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REFERENCE OR OFFICE SYMBOL	SUBJECT
AVDB-T (MHD)	Cover to 1-4 Cav Report

TO: CofS FROM: CO, 17th Mil Hist Det DATE: 17 Oct 69 CMT: 1  
CPT Clarke/gwl/LK 4443

- 1. PROBLEM:** The submission of After-Action Interview Reports to higher headquarters by the 17th Military History Detachment.
- 2. BACKGROUND:** The inclosed report is an After-Action Interview Report submitted by the 17th Military History Detachment in accordance with USARV Reg 870-3, 6, c, (7). Four copies are made. One is sent to the USARV Command Historian, two are forwarded to the Office of the Chief of Military History and one is retained for the Division files. Additional copies will be produced and distributed within the Division.
- 3. DISCUSSION:** This report covers the operations of the 1-4 Cav and the 749th RF Company against the VC C65 Local Force Company. The careful planning and detailed coordination needed to insure the success of the effort are covered in depth. Commanders initiating similar operations will find useful guidelines outlined in inclosure 5.
- 4. RECOMMENDATION:** The enclosed report be approved for submission.

List of Tabs  
A - After-Action Interview Report:  
Combined US Armor/RF Infantry  
Operations Against Local VC  
Forces

  
JEFFREY J. CLARKE  
Captain, Infantry  
Commanding

5. **COORDINATION:** G2 Concur Ind 2003 Nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_  
G3 Concur Ind 2003 Nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_

6. **CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCE:** See Tab \_\_\_\_.

TO: CO, 17th MHD FROM DATE CMT: 2

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
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For The Commanding  
Signature Block  


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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division  
APO 96345  
30

AVDB-TMED

4 November 1969

SUBJECT: After Action Interview Report: Combined US Armor/RF Infantry  
Operations Against Local VC Forces (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. (U) Enclosed is After Action Interview Report: Combined US Armor/RF Infantry Operations Against Local VC Forces (U).
2. (U) This report covers the operations of the 1-4 Cav and the 749th RF Company against the VC C65 Local Force Company. The careful planning and detailed coordination needed to insure the success of the effort are covered in depth. Commanders initiating similar operations will find useful guidelines outlined in Inclosure 5 to basic report.
3. (U) Distribution will be made throughout II FFV. The importance of such operations is increasing and the valuable experiences gained by the 1st Infantry Division will hopefully assist others planning similar endeavors.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl  
as

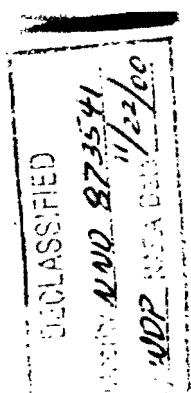
*C.T. Selby*  
C.T. SELBY  
LTC, AGC  
Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
 17th Military History Detachment  
 1st Infantry Division  
 APO 96345

AVDB-T-ND

26 October 1969

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview Report: Combined US Armor/RF  
 Infantry Operations Against Local VC Forces (U)

Commanding General  
 1st Infantry Division  
 APO 96345

1. (C) Background: a. Prior to September 1969, the Division Armored Cavalry Squadron, the 1-4 Cav, had been under the operational control of one or more of the Division's three Infantry Brigades. However, on 21 Sep 69, the 1-4 Cav was placed under the direct control of the Division Headquarters. The Squadron's D Troop, an air cavalry troop comprised of an Aero Rifle Platoon and helicopter gunships would continue to operate as a separate divisional unit from Phu Loi, base camp of the 1st Aviation Battalion. However, the 1-4 Cav HQ and the three cavalry troops would now operate as a unit from field CP locations. Their rear facilities would remain at Lai Khe base camp.

b. The presence of mechanized infantry companies operating northeast and northwest of Lai Khe, allowed the 1-4 Cav to direct its attention south. Utilizing the road network south of Lai Khe, it would act as a quick reaction force able to reinforce US or ARVN infantry contacts, or initiate rapidly executed operations against elusive VC units through its own mobility and firepower. Gradually it would expand its area of operations and increase its efforts to neutralize all VC elements in the Division's southern AO. Coordination with the 2d US Bde, the 8th ARVN Regt, the 5th ARVN Div, and Binh Duong Province would be continuous.

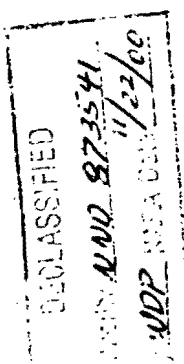
2. (C) Situation: a. The basic mission of the Squadron was to conduct ground reconnaissance, night patrols and convoy security operations from the Ben Cat area (XT7433) to the Song Be Bridge (XT920430). However, its area of interest encompassed Lai Khe Base Camp to the north and extended 23 km south to Phu Cuong, the capital of Binh Duong Province. Despite the monsoon rains, most of the roads which interlace the area are passable to the Squadron's tanks and ACAVs (Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles or Armored Personnel Carriers); the lighter ACAVs can negotiate most of the local terrain even in the monsoon season.

b. Within this area are elements of the Dong Nai Regiment and the C62, C63, and C65 Local Force Companies. During the past two months, the 749th Regional Force (RF) Company, the crack reaction and reconnaissance company of Binh Duong Province, had conducted successful ambush operations in the

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26 October 1969

SUBJECT: After Action Interview Report: Combined US Armor/RF Infantry Operations Against Local VC Forces (U)

area north of Dinh Hoa Village (XT8120). The RF company commander, LT Tran Van An, had identified the ambushed enemy as members of the C65 Local Force Company apparently out on local resupply missions. LT An also estimated that a C65 base camp was located two km northeast of the village in a densely overgrown Rome Plow cut area. The area was known to be heavily boobytrapped with dud 105 and 155 shells and similar devices.

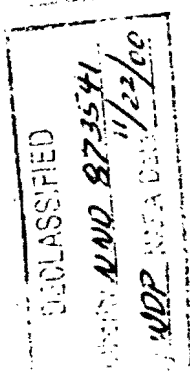
3. (C) Planning: a. On 30 Sep 69, the commander of the 1-4 Cav, LTC John T. Murchison Jr., and elements of his staff visited Binh Duong Province officials at Phu Cuong and coordinated with LT An, the Province Senior Advisor, LTC Fleigh, and his deputy, Mr. Gardiner Brown. Once US assistance was offered, the Province Chief was eager to launch an operation against the suspected base camp with LT An's RF Company in support. On 3 Oct 69, a final coordination meeting was held at Phu Cuong, and the 1-4 Cav commander presented his plan of action. The plan was approved and the final details were completed. The operation would take place the following day.

b. The Squadron Commander had conducted several aerial reconnaissance flights over the concerned area. The flights were spaced over a three-day period so that the enemy would not be warned by increased air activity. In addition, these VRs consisted of high altitude sweeps, 12-15 km long, to avoid the tell-tale orbit over an area of an impending operation. One quick low-level reconnaissance one kilometer from the base camp was necessary to ascertain exactly what areas were passable to the 50-ton tanks and to measure the height of the surrounding scrub vegetation. If the scrub growth was above the height of the ACAVs, the danger from boobytraps would be substantially increased. Fortunately, the reconnaissance indicated that the ground would hold tanks, and that the growth was just equal to the height of the ACAVs.

4. (C) Concept of Operation: a. On the morning of 4 Sep 69, HQ elements of the 1-4 Cav and Troops A and C would move out from AP sites north of Chanh Luu (XT8232), and travel 14 km south along highway TL24. Troop C would pick up the 794th RF Company at Bung Dia (XT809218). All elements would then simultaneously swing southeast off the highway and assault the suspected enemy base camp. A stream and gully line, relatively free of brush, paralleled the highway behind the base camp area. The enemy would be squeezed against this terrain feature. A hunter-killer team would act as the initial blocking force east of the base camp. The 3d platoon of B Troop, positioned 4 km to the south on the Phu Cuong By-Pass (XT8216) would be ready to move up the highways on either side of the target area. In addition, a forward supply point was established at an ARVN outpost located south of Hoa Loi 2 at XT815224 (see map, Incl 3).

5. (C) Narrative: a. At approximately 0845, the Task Force moved off

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SUBJECT: After Action Interview Report: Combined US Armor/RF Infantry Operations Against Local VC Forces (U)

the road on two axis, C Troop, carrying the 794th RF Co, on the south and A Troop on the north. The suspected base camp location was approximately two km from the road. At the final coordination line, about one km from the road, the Task Force was deployed on line. The tanks from each troop were placed in the center, the ACAVs on the flanks, and the 794th RF Company mounted on ACAVs behind the tanks. The armored vehicles were approximately 10-15 meters apart. As the line advanced through the thick, 7-8 foot high bamboo, brush, and grass to the suspected base camp location, the tanks began a steady volume of 90mm cannister fire to clear the area of boobytraps. Grenadiers fired a steady stream of M79 rounds further in advance, to detonate boobytraps, and fix the enemy in place.

b. At 0855, A Troop's left flank began to detonate boobytraps, and take small arms fire, indicating the enemy base camp (vic XT829213) had been found (see Sketch Map #1, Incl 4). Immediately the northern ACAVs and the tanks directed heavy cannister, M-79, and machine gun fire on the enemy positions while the RF troops moved behind the contact elements. As the units assaulted, the enemy attempted to escape to the north. This development was noted immediately by the squadron commander, who was located in the center of the assault line. On his instructions, C Troop moved quickly behind the engaged A Troop, positioned itself northeast of the contact area and effectively blocked the enemy escape route (see sketch map #2), Incl 4). The task force, now positioned around the bulk of the enemy forces in a semicircle, closed in, swept forward and destroyed the enemy base camp.

c. From 1030 to 1130, the armored vehicles pursued the fleeing enemy soldiers aided by hunter-killer teams, and the 3d Platoon of B Troop, which had been moved up from the south. While C Troop and the RF Company pursued north, A Troop moved through the base camp and continued south. The hunter-killer team and the B Troop platoon blocked all possible withdrawal routes (see Sketch Map #3, Incl 4). In the afternoon, the battle area was swept and reswept, uncovering more holes, tunnels, boobytraps and miscellaneous supplies.

d. Initially only the Squadron S3, M/J William R. Wilson, was providing aerial support in a light observation helicopter (LOH). However, as soon as the contact began, the LOH was reinforced by the Division's "Lighthorse" helicopter group. At the request of the Squadron Commander, the Lighthorse commander directed hunter-killer teams to block withdrawal routes and supervise "Dustoff" helicopters to evacuate the wounded. He also provided the 1-4 Cav with a PSYOPS helicopter and aerial transport for an IPW Team. As a result, the PW were immediately exploited for tactical intelligence and the captured C65 Assistant Platoon Leader was quickly placed on the PSYOPS ship to broadcast personal Chieu Hoi messages to his comrades in arms.

e. This successful operation took a heavy toll of the C65 Local Force

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Company. The final results were six enemy dead, nine enemy PWs, and five AK-47s, one 60mm mortar, 15x82mm rounds, four RPG-2s, and four RPG-2 rounds captured. There were three US wounded slightly by RPG and boobytrap fragments. No casualties were suffered by the RF troops and no vehicles were damaged in the action.

6. (C) Conclusion: a. The 1st Inf Div G2, OB Section held the strength of the C65 Local Force Company at approximately 32 men. The estimated company engaged by the 1-4 Cav Task Force was completely decimated with 15 members of the C65 accounted for. Equally significant, three PW were identified as NVA cadre, some of the first to be found in "Local Force" units within this specific area. Confirmation and further evaluation is now being undertaken.

b. Based on hard intelligence, the well-planned, quickly executed operation was a complete success. The action against the C65 is only the beginning of a series of 1-4 Cav operations planned in conjunction with RF/PF Forces and designed to clear the southern portion of the Division's AO of all enemy elements.

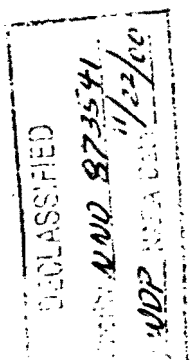
7. (C) Recommendation: The successful operation underlined some proven techniques and pointed out new ones; a complete summary of recommendations is given in Incl 5.

5 Incls  
1-Task Force Organization (u)  
2-Sequence of Events (u)  
3-Area Map (u)  
4-Tactical Sketch Maps (u)  
5-Recommendations (u)

*Jeffrey J. Clarke*  
JEFFREY J. CLARKE  
Captain Infantry  
Commanding

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## Inclosure 1

### TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

#### 1. General:

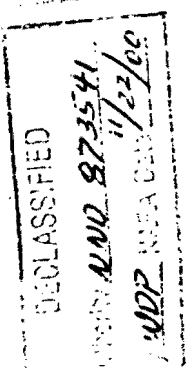
- a. HQ, 1-4 Cav
- b. A Troop, 1-4 Cav
- c. C Troop, 1-4 Cav
- d. 794 RF Co (note: the 794 RF Co was not "attached" but operated in close coordination with HQ, 1-4 Cav)

#### 2. Squadron Control:

- a. 3/B/1-4 Cav
- b. H&C Platoon (HQ ACAVs/Flame Platoon [-])
- c. Lighthorse elements:
  - (1) C and C ship
  - (2) Hunter-Killer Team
  - (3) PSYWAR helicopter
  - (4) Two troop carrier helicopters
- d. Forward Supply Point (Flame Thrower Unit, ammunition resupply for 90mm cannister, 50 caliber, 7.62 and M-79)
- e. Darkhorse elements (D Troop, 1-4 Cav): one Hunter-Killer Team

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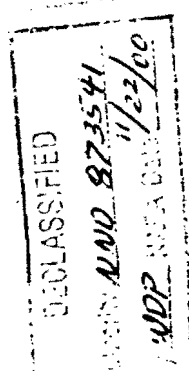
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Inclosure 2

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

0706 Sqn departed NDP for pick-up of 794 RF Company  
 0735 Picked up 794 RF Company  
 0800 Units crossed LD with 794 mounted on C Troop vehicles  
 0815 Deployed at phase line into assault sweep formation  
 0845 A Troop made contact with AP boobytraps and VC; 794 RF Co dismounts  
 0850 Lighthorse elements arrived on station; screened along gully  
 0905 C Troop moved from the southern to the northern flank to block  
 0915 Dustoff of A Troop WIA completed  
 0915 Initial contact broken  
 1015 A total of 4 VC were KIA; 6 VC, 1 RPG, 1x60mm mortar, and several AK-47 rifles were captured  
 1040 Dustoff for one US WIA (slightly wounded by booby traps)  
 1050 A Troop kills another VC and captures the assistant platoon leader  
 1110 Assistant platoon leader used in PSYOPS helicopter to deliver direct plea to his comrades  
 1207 C Troop captured 2 VC (one wounded by fire), and one AK-47 rifle  
 1215-1515 Swept and reswept battle area  
 1410 Lighthorse obtained 1 VC KBA (BC) on southern flank  
 1700 Terminated operation; displaced forward NAFs; and requested night ambushes in the area

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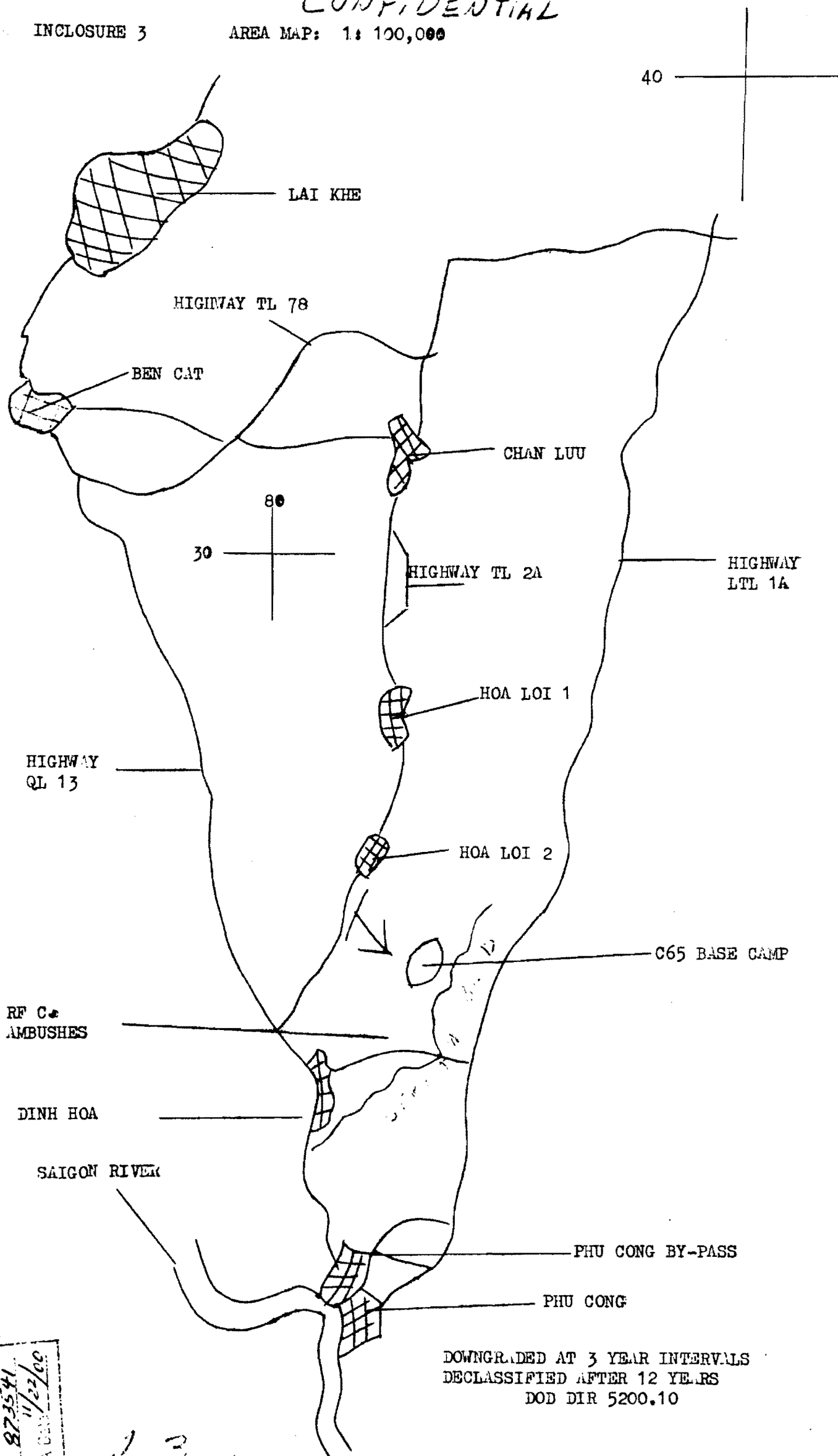
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INCLOSURE 3

AREA MAP: 1: 100,000



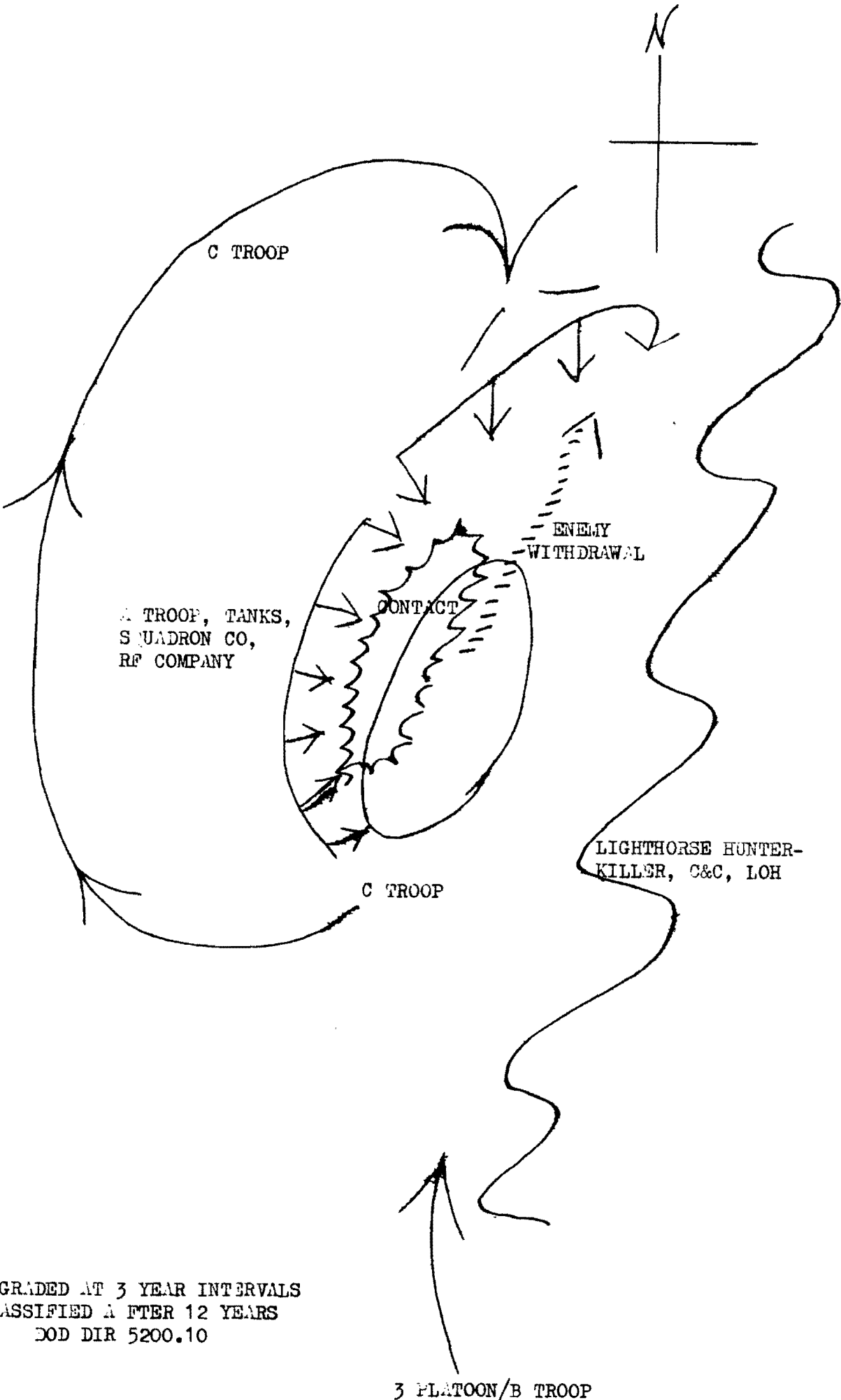
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INCLOSURE 4 Sketch Map #2  
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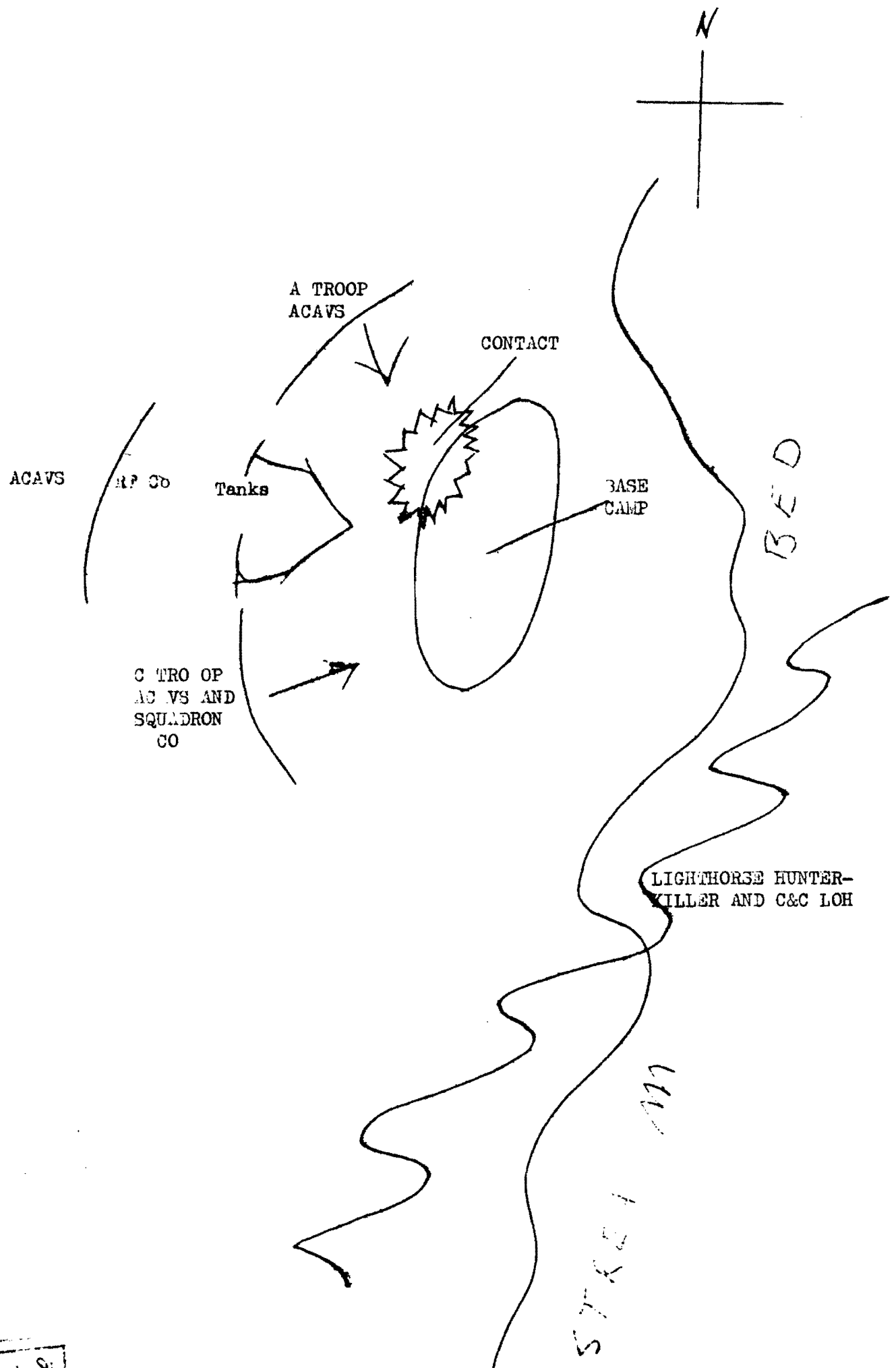
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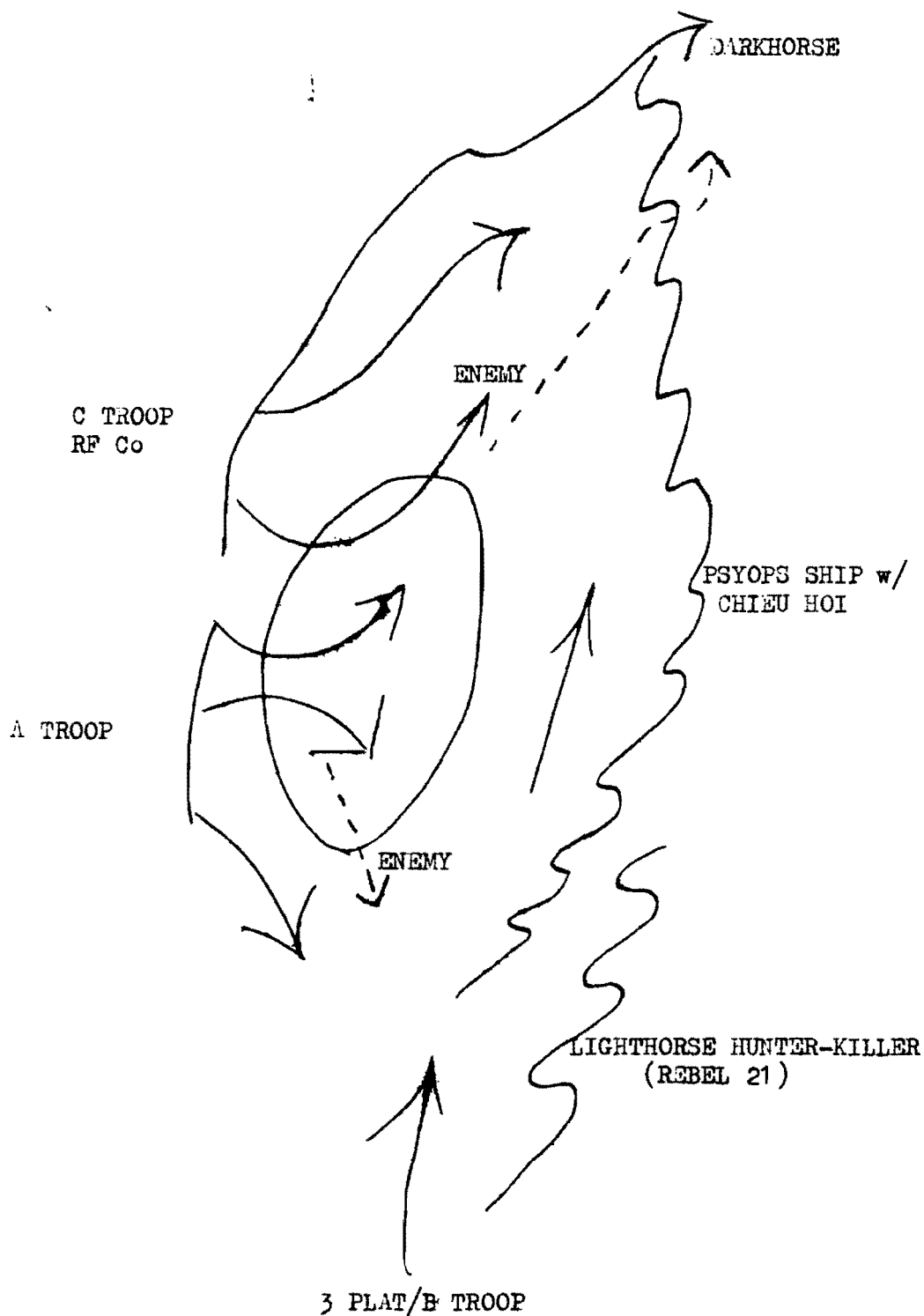
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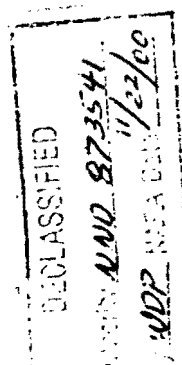
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INCLOSURE 4 Sketch Map #3  
1030 - 1130 Pursuit



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6 #4

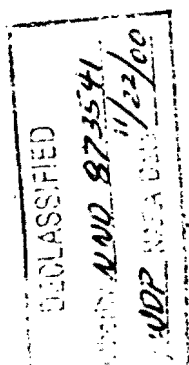
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## Inclosure 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. When operating in populated areas, commanders must be able to obtain, evaluate and use all intelligence from local GVN/ARVN sources. Good intelligence was the key to this operation.
2. Joint operations with ARVN or RF/PF troops should always be considered. These operations increase the force density available and give RVN military units valuable training. In addition careful joint coordination and planning will assist the commanders in gathering intelligence without making their intentions known to the enemy.
3. The mobility of armored units is often limited by terrain and weather. In the rainy season, a careful reconnaissance must be made to determine exactly what ground can be used; weighing these limitations, commanders should augment such units with enough ground troops to insure the accomplishment of the mission.
4. Whenever possible, blocking forces should be positioned near terrain features, such as streams or open fields, which naturally hinder hidden or rapid enemy withdrawals. The initial blocking element should consist of a Hunter-Killer Team. The team should be backed up by an equally mobile, strong force such as the 1st Division's Lighthorse Team or the 1-4 Cav Aero Rifle Platoon.
5. Massed cavalry troops assisted by aerial gunships can produce a tremendous shock effect. Such an effect is desirable, but can only be achieved if the operation is based on hard intelligence, is carefully planned, and is rapidly executed. In this operation, the psychological shock of the assault accounts for the unusual percentage of enemy who surrendered.
6. The use of 90mm cannister assault fires to clear boobytrapped areas is highly successful. Boobytrap wires were found blown away and smaller boobytraps were crushed under the tracks without any damage. Cannister also clears tunnel and bunker entrances, brush, bamboo, and keeps enemy heads down.
7. The immediate availability of IPW teams and special PSYOPS helicopters make it possible to gain and exploit tactical intelligence from enemy prisoners. Such information furnishes direction for further sweeps while prisoners broadcast Chieu Hoi messages over the immediate area.
8. Mobile armored units make the best use of mobile support units. In this operation, the 1-4 Cav effectively used Division air assets for reconnaissance, as blocking forces, and for control. The supporting forces responded quickly to the rapidly developing situation and prevented the enemy's escape. The Lighthorse Team with one command and control helicopter, one PSYOPS ship, and two lift ships, was an invaluable part of this operation.
9. In joint operations, a colocated US/RVN CP is usually necessary for smooth control. The need is also apparent in armored operations where quick reactions are necessary to exploit any given situation. In this operation the Squadron Commander was able to communicate directly with the RF company commander who was mounted on the Squadron Commander's track.

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