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HEADQUARTERS 1ST BATTALION 22D INFANTRY  
"REGULARS"

APO San Francisco 96262

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACV J3-32)

TO: Commanding General  
4th Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDDH-GC  
APO San Francisco 96262

1. BATTLE OF KONTUM / TET COUNTEROFFENSIVE
2. DATES: 301121 January 1968 - 121200 February 1968
3. LOCATION: KONTUM City, SVN
4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry
5. TASK FORCE COMMANDER: LTC William P. Junk Jr. 063358
6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

TM A	B/1-22 Inf (-)	B/1-12 Inf	TM C
A/1-22 Inf (-)			C/1-22 Inf
1/C/1-69 Armor			C/2-1 Cav

TM RUTHLESS	D/1-12 Inf	TM D	TM ARMOR
D/7-17 Air Cav(-)		D/1-22 Inf	C/1-69 Armor (-)
2/C/1-69 Armor		3/C/1-69 Armor	3/B/1-22 Inf
			1/D/7-17 Air Cav

## BN CONTROL

Recon Plt  
 1/A/1-22 Inf  
 C/4-42 Arty (DS)  
 C/5-16 Arty (DS)  
 2 twin 40 mm AA  
 3/B/4th Engr

## 7. BACKGROUND:

- a. The initial attack on KONTUM: At 292300 January 1968, the KONTUM Province Capital was attacked by an estimated battalion size VC force. The attack, a part of the enemy country-wide TET offensive, had as its objective

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the overthrow of the provincial government, destruction of local government forces, and seizure of the city of KONTUM. The enemy plan of attack was, first, to infiltrate the city of KONTUM during the hours of darkness dressed in Regional Force uniforms and occupy preselected defensive positions and public buildings south, southeast and west of the province chief's house. Secondly, the command element, consisting of the VC province chief, his personal physician, the VC political officer and two bodyguards, was to position itself east of the Province Headquarters. Concurrently, a VC company was to occupy an empty field to the west of the province chief's house to engage the Regional Force company deployed in foxholes and bunkers protecting the Provincial Headquarters area. The above was accomplished by 300230 January and the assault on the Provincial Headquarters commenced. LTC Doan, the province chief, had been alerted earlier to trouble when a small contact between VC forces and elements of an ARVN signal platoon occurred during the enemy movement to position. He immediately recognized that the individuals dressed in Regional Force uniforms east of his residence were the enemy and ordered them taken under fire. As a result, the VC command group was annihilated and the attack on the RF company protecting the province chief's house failed. By morning, the province chief's residence, Province Headquarters (adjacent to the province chief's house), and the US advisors' communications shack in the same area were under friendly control. The remaining offices and buildings were occupied by VC elements who commenced firing at targets of opportunity.

b. 4th Infantry Division initial reaction. At 301121 January 1968, ACoffs G3 alerted LTC William P. Junk, Jr, the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry that his battalion could possibly be deployed to the KONTUM area. LTC Junk organized a reconnaissance/liaison party consisting of the S3, S2, Reconnaissance platoon leader, Artillery Liaison Officer, and the Commanding Officer of Company B, and departed by helicopter for KONTUM where he made direct on the ground coordination with COL Cahill, Senior Advisor, 24th Special Tactical Zone, LTC Whalen, Sector Advisor, KONTUM Sector, and LTC Doan, KONTUM Province Chief. Following the visit, the CO, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry returned to Camp Enari, assembled his staff and issued instructions for deployment of the battalion to KONTUM.

#### 8. OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND DEPLOYMENT:

a. Predeployment. The initial planning for deployment of the battalion, or elements thereof, to the KONTUM area was hampered by the following factors:

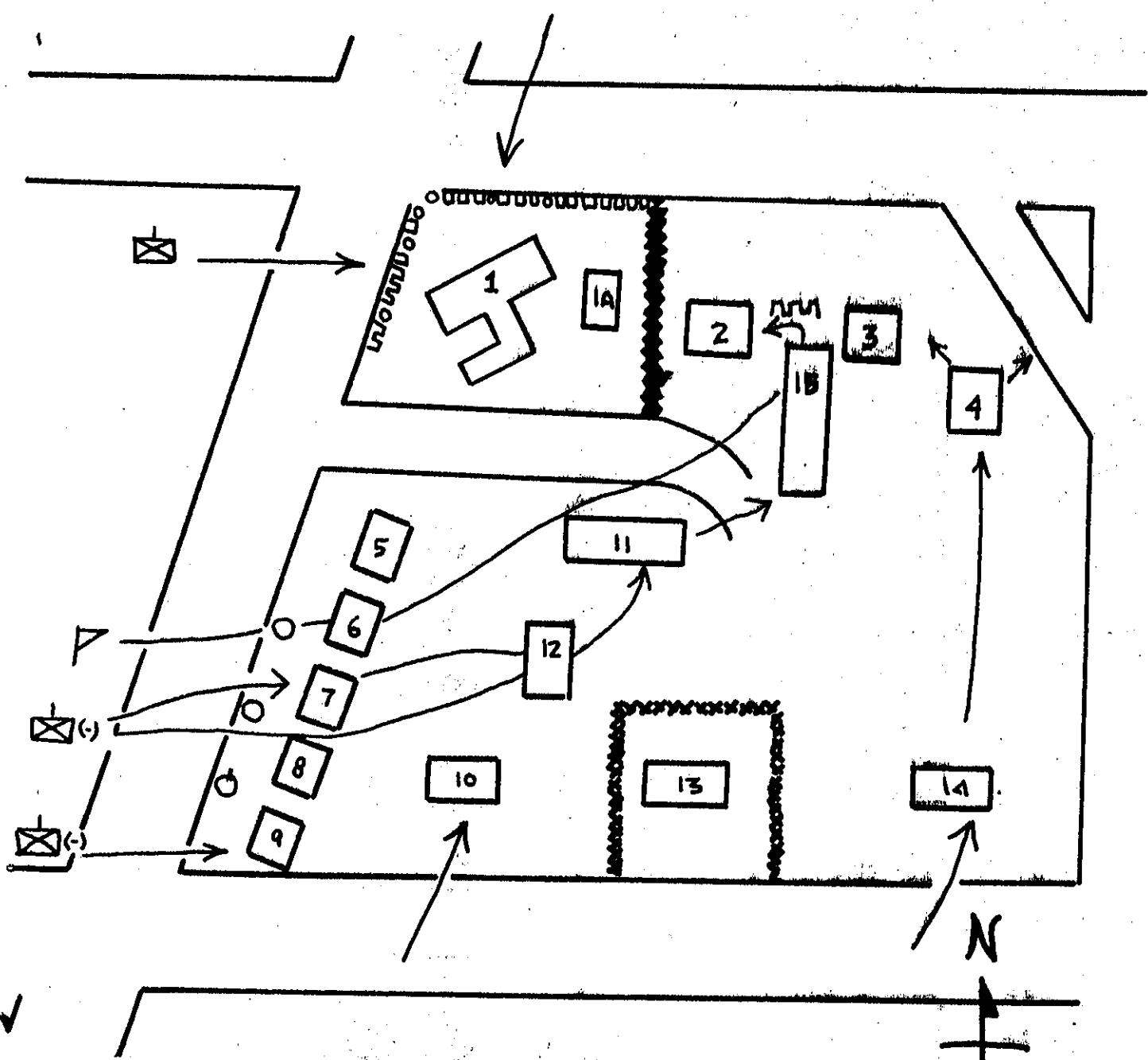
(1) The battalion had recently returned to Base Camp for a five day stand down and was engaged in refitting, preparation for training, and individual personnel actions.

(2) Two companies, two separate platoons, and the battalion TAC CP were deployed north of PLEIKU as a blocking force for the PLEIKU area.

(3) The mission of the battalion and the extent the battalion would be deployed were not clearly defined in the warning order. (G3 NOTE: The situation in KONTUM had not developed sufficiently to permit the issuance of definitive orders.)

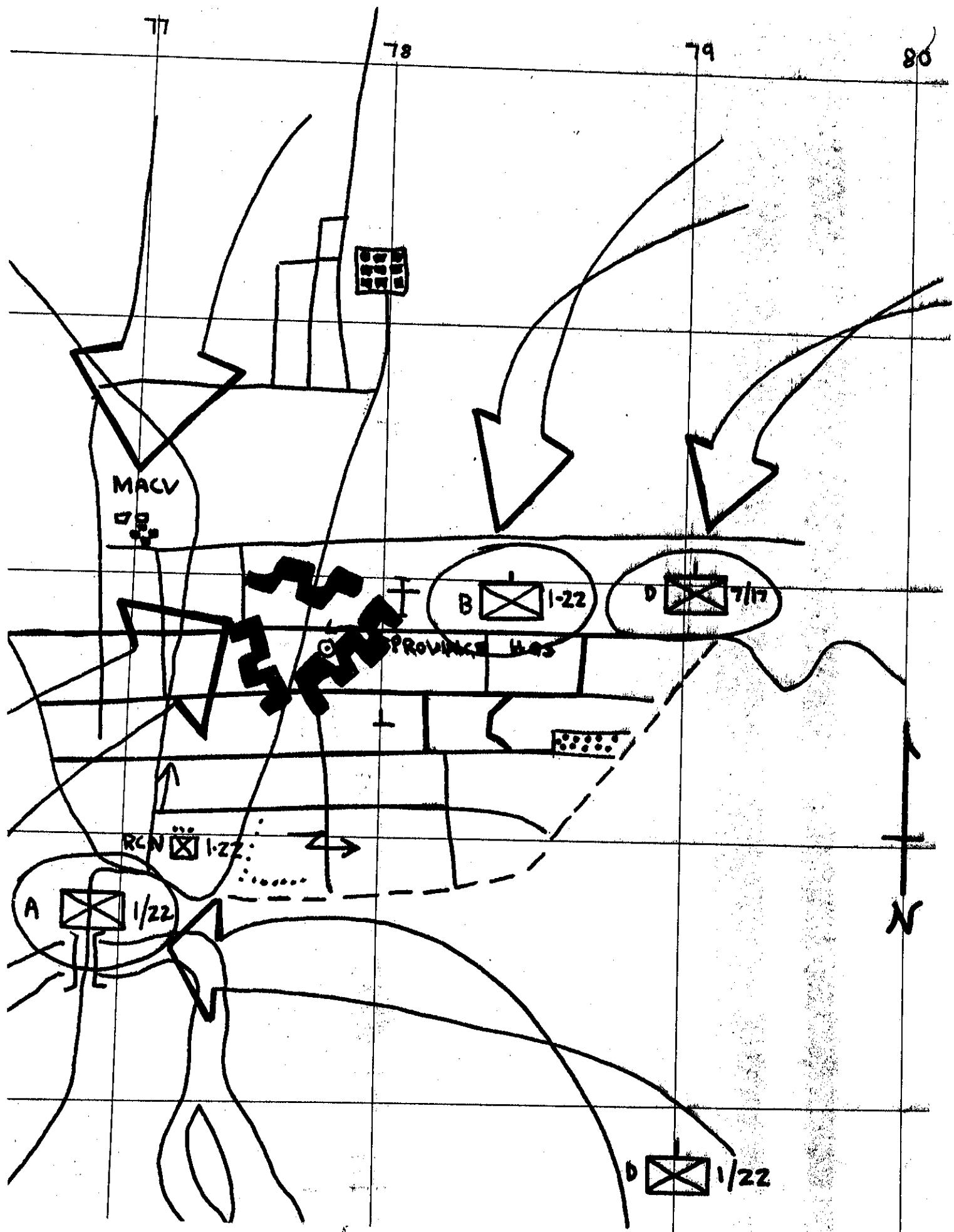
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1. Province HQ Bldg	8. Information Service
1A. Advisory Commo Shack	9. Treasury
2. Province Chief's House	10. Ag and Husbandry Co-op
3. Guest House	11. New Guest House
4. RD Staff Bldg	12. Signal Platoon
5. MAC-CORDS Advisory Admin Bldg	13. Police Station and Compound
6. Post Office	14. Admin, Log and Supply Co
7. Education Service	15. Garage and Official Employee's House

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(4) There was a lack of complete intelligence on the existing and potential threat to KONTUM.

(5) Command relationship and control of other friendly elements in the area were not fully clarified. These problems were eventually resolved by direct coordination with US and VIETNAMESE Headquarters in the KONTUM area, liaison visits to Division Headquarters, and queries for information from division by the battalion staff.

b. Deployment. At 301121 January 1968, the battalion was alerted to prepare one company for deployment to KONTUM, under the operational control of the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry. At 301425 January 1968, Company B made a combat assault from Base Camp to the vicinity of AR8191 and initiated search and destroy operations in that area. At 301658 January 1968 the battalion was directed to deploy a company size force to secure the bridge across the DAK BLA River at AR769876. The directive further stated that the Commanding officer 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry would assume command of all 4th Infantry Division forces in the KONTUM area, once two of his companies had been deployed. Company A was selected for the bridge security mission and completed its combat assault at the bridge site at 301910 hours, followed by the Battalion TAC CP, the Reconnaissance Platoon, and the heavy mortar platoon minus. The bridge across the DAK BLA River (AR7687) was secured immediately and at 302400 hours the TAC CP was operational and in communication with all 4th Infantry Division elements in the area as well as with Division Headquarters. The chain of command for the operation was established earlier in the day at a meeting between LTC Junk and COL Cahill. It was agreed that COL Cahill was to be overall coordinator of military operations in the area and LTC Junk working in close coordination with LTC Whalen and LTC Doan was to be the ground force commander. The sensitivity of the civilian populace to the conduct of military operations in cities and the political impact that could result were taken into consideration. Consequently, the approval of the province chief was solicited and received prior to the undertaking of any operation.

#### 9. OPERATIONS.

a. GENERAL. Combat operations in the defense of KONTUM and the surrounding area covered a 14 day period (30 Jan - 12 Feb 68). The operation was unusual in that the environment required the conduct of unconventional, conventional, and special combat operations. For example, initial operations within the city required the application of special methods and techniques to defeat the enemy. Following the clearing of the city, operations moved to the suburban areas, where units were forced to assume unconventional or count-erguerrilla postures. When he realized that the areas immediately adjacent to the city had become untenable, the enemy moved into the hills north of KONTUM and occupied previously prepared defensive positions, thus establishing a situation suitable for conventional operations. The positions were mutually supporting bunkers with overhead cover, foxholes, and trench systems. Avenues of approach into the area were covered by mortars, automatic weapons, and B-40 rockets. For reasons yet undetermined, the enemy elected to defend these areas at all costs. To neutralize the positions, the battalion was forced to conduct a series of coordinated ground attacks utilizing all available

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firepower, including tanks in a direct fire support role.

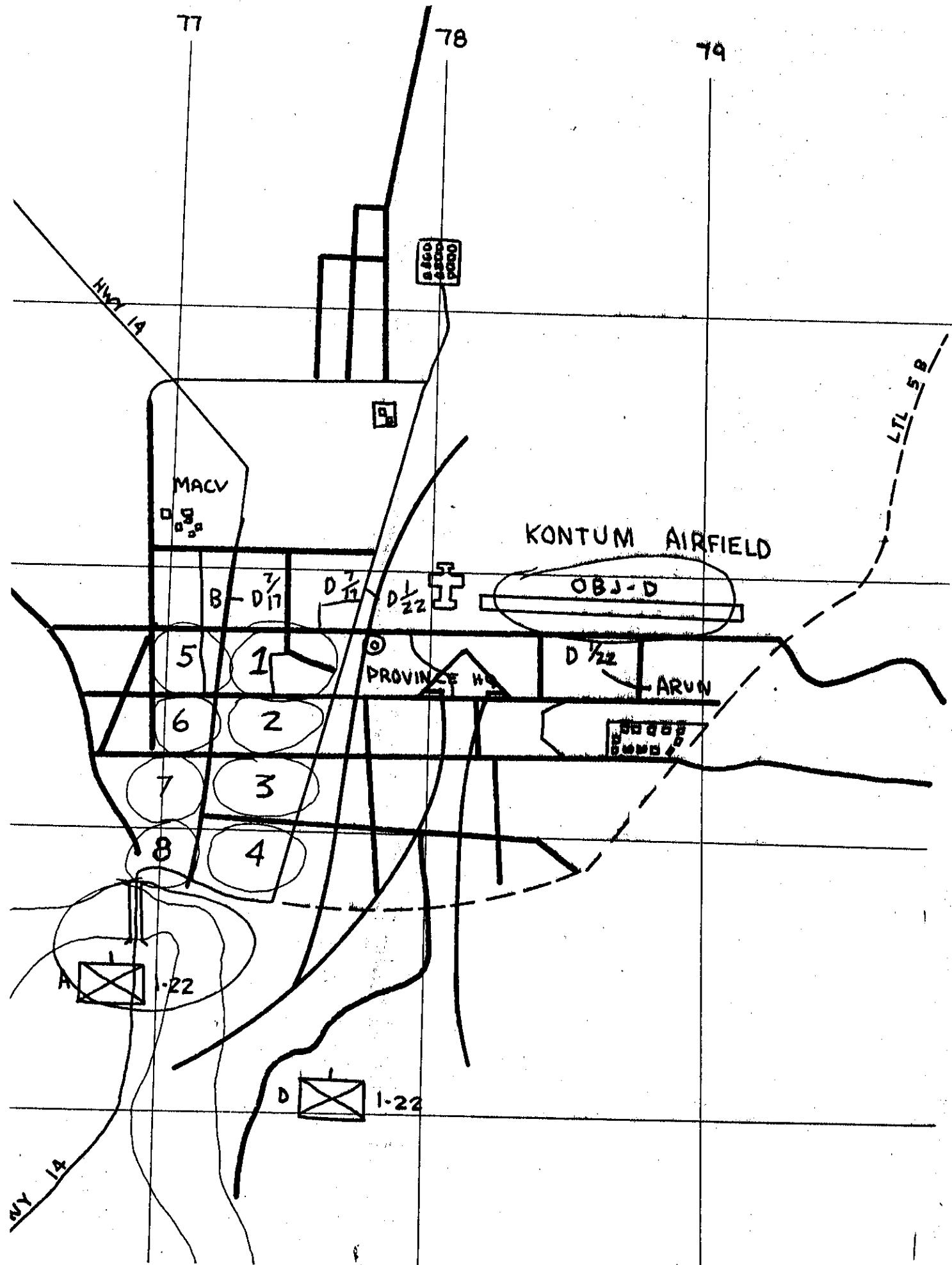
b. EXECUTION. The course of events allowed the operation to be divided into three phases: Phase I - The deployment of a reaction force to prevent the provincial government from capitulation to enemy control. Phase II - The initiation of offensive operations to destroy enemy forces within the city of KONTUM, and Phase III - Exploitation and pursuit.

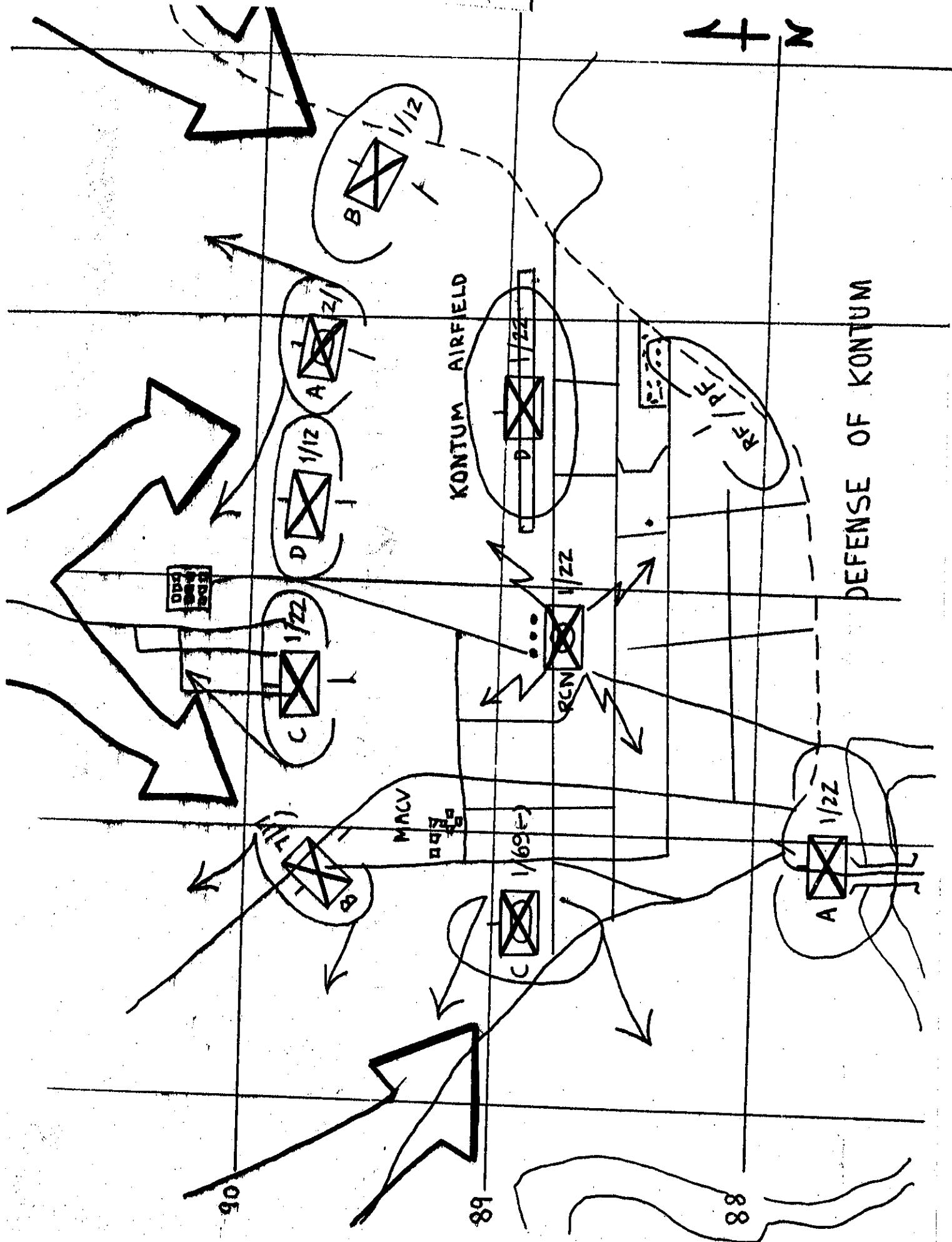
(1) Phase I 30-31 Jan. A second meeting on the morning of 31 January 1968 between the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion 22d Infantry and the Senior Advisor 24 STZ, clearly delineated the task at hand. The enemy was directing his effort against the Provincial Headquarters complex and the MACV Compound. These were the only areas within the city still completely in friendly hands and their fall would have completed the seizure of KONTUM. A contact made by Company B at 310752 January 1968 resulting in two NVA KIA, one AK-47 and one NVA pack with protective mask CIA indicated the presence of NVA forces on the outskirts of the city, confirming and compounding the seriousness of the threat to KONTUM. Instructions were immediately issued for the deployment of a reaction force of sufficient size to prevent the takeover of the city. To accomplish this, Company B 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry and Troop D, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry were combat assaulted from north of the city to the KONTUM Airfield and company D was airlifted from a blocking position north of PLEIKU to the bridge site being secured by Company A. These moves were accomplished by 1341 hours. Concurrently with these moves, the Reconnaissance Platoon and a platoon of Company A were ordered to move north of the DAK BLA bridge and develop the situation in the southwestern part of the city. The battalion was now in a position to react to the enemy threat.

(2) Phase II 1-4 Feb. During this phase, action was initiated to destroy VC and NVA forces within the city. All ARVN and RF/PF forces in the area were committed, providing security for outlying hamlets, the airfield, the Provincial Headquarters, and ARVN Military Headquarters installations. With this situation in mind, the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry made a detailed estimate of the situation and concluded that additional forces were required. A request was dispatched to Division and after some discussion, permission was granted to bring Company C, the only uncommitted company of the battalion, into the area. Continued contact and additional intelligence concerning the enemy strength in the area revealed that the enemy threat was greater than previously estimated and additional troops were dispatched. By the end of the third day of Phase II, the battalion task organization reflected six rifle companies, one tank company, one 105mm howitzer battery, one 155mm howitzer battery and reconnaissance platoon. This phase lasted a total of four days and was characterized by house-to-house street fighting which was beyond a doubt the bloodiest and most violent of the entire operation. The enemy had established themselves in basements, lofts of buildings, roof tops and tunnels. The areas of enemy concentration were divided into search areas and the basic principles of combat operations in built-up areas were applied. Objectives, phase lines, and boundaries were used for control. The problems normally associated with combat in cities were compounded by the fact the city was still partially occupied by civilians. It was necessary to issue special instructions to troops on such matters as rules of engagement, search and seizure, destruction of municipal and private

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property, handling of refugees and enemy suspects. Discipline was of the utmost importance and positive control had to be exercised at every level of command. With the exception of the limited instruction received in basic training, the troops were not trained for combat in cities and were accustomed to fighting the enemy in the jungle. Nevertheless they rapidly adjusted to the new environment and performed superbly. At the close of Phase II, 26 VC and 608 NVA had been killed (BC). 608  
26  
634

(3) Phase III 5-12 Feb. By 4 February, activities indicated that the enemy had been defeated in his attempt to seize the Provincial Capital and was withdrawing in all directions. Since he had suffered heavy losses and was badly in need of supplies, it was suspected that the enemy would withdraw to pre-selected defensive areas and hamlets within close proximity of the city. In order not to lose contact, the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry, with approval and guidance from the Division Commander, initiated search operations outside the city to locate and destroy the withdrawing enemy forces. The concept was similar to the method used during the city fighting. Suspected areas of enemy withdrawal were designated and given to the maneuver elements as areas of operation. Almost without exception, contact was made, enemy bodies were found and weapons, food supplies, and documents were captured in each AO. At 051331 February 1968, at AR767917, Company C made contact with a company size force supported by automatic weapons and mortars. The contact lasted until 1930 hours. It was reported that the enemy withdrew north to Hill 684 (AR801935). An assessment of this major contact, integrated with visual reconnaissance reports, infrared readings and agent reports confirmed that an enemy force of significant size was located on Hill 684 and its associated terrain features. Having positively fixed the enemy, LTC Junk directed the staff to draw up plans for a coordinated attack at first light on 6 February to seize Hill 684. The concept of the operation called for Companies A and B to attack abreast with Company A seizing Hill 684 and on order continue the attack to seize the high ground at AR802942. Company B was to seize the high ground at AR815938 and then continue the attack to seize Hill 721, AR8194. Company C was given the mission of support, and initially occupied a position at AR797917. At 06075 hours, following an artillery preparation and airstrike, Companies A and B crossed the line of departure. Company B moved toward its objective unopposed, but Company A was stopped short of Hill 684 by intense automatic weapons and mortar fire. Company B was directed to discontinue its previously assigned mission and to assist Company A in the seizure of Hill 684. A second attempt made by both Companies again was stopped. Company A sustained heavy casualties during the second assault, and the company commander was wounded. At this stage of the fight, these facts became abundantly clear.

- (a) The enemy position was well fortified.
- (b) The enemy defense was supported by automatic weapons, mortars and B-40 rockets.
- (c) The enemy had elected for unknown reasons to defend the hill at all cost.
- (d) A frontal attack would be costly.

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In view of the above, the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion 22d Infantry developed a scheme of maneuver which envisioned Companies A and B continuing the attack to the north and Company D, supported by tanks, conducting an envelopment to the west to seize the high ground to the enemy rear at AR802942, making Hill 684 untenable for the enemy. Plans were also made to seize Hill 721 (AR812942), Hill 701 (AR8096), Hill 828 (AR519976) and the ridge line running southsast from Hill 828. On the morning of 7 February, artillery and aircraft utilizing CBU, CS, and napalm were employed and Hill 684 was seized. During the five days which followed, a series of successful coordinated attacks were conducted against the other objectives. Throughout this, all support weapons were employed to the maximum extent possible (see Annex A, Fire Support).

## 10. RESULTS.

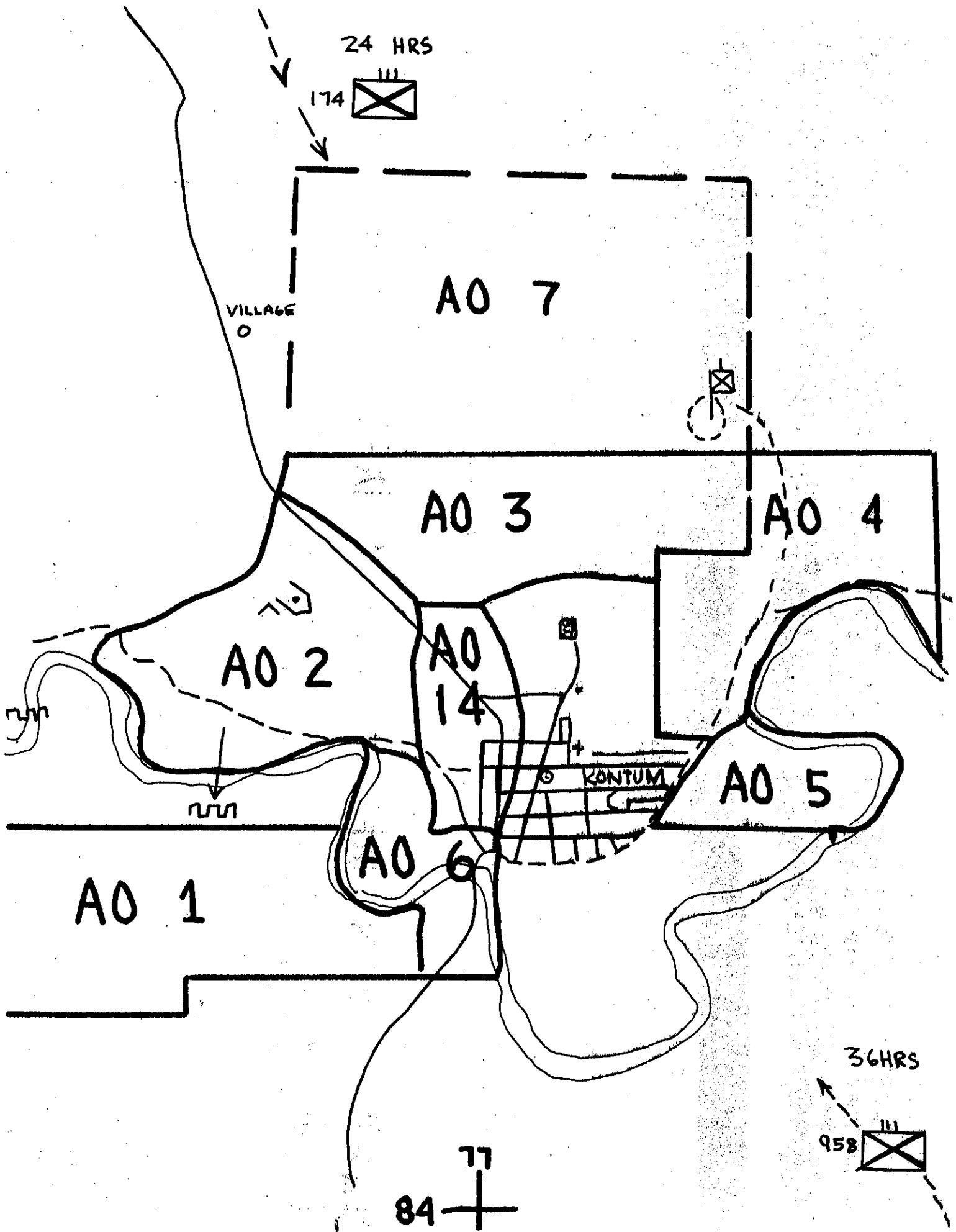
	KIA	WIA
1st Bn 22d Inf	16	71
TF 1-22		ARVN
<u>Enemy KIA</u>	<u>844</u>	<u>205</u>

## 11. ANNEXES.

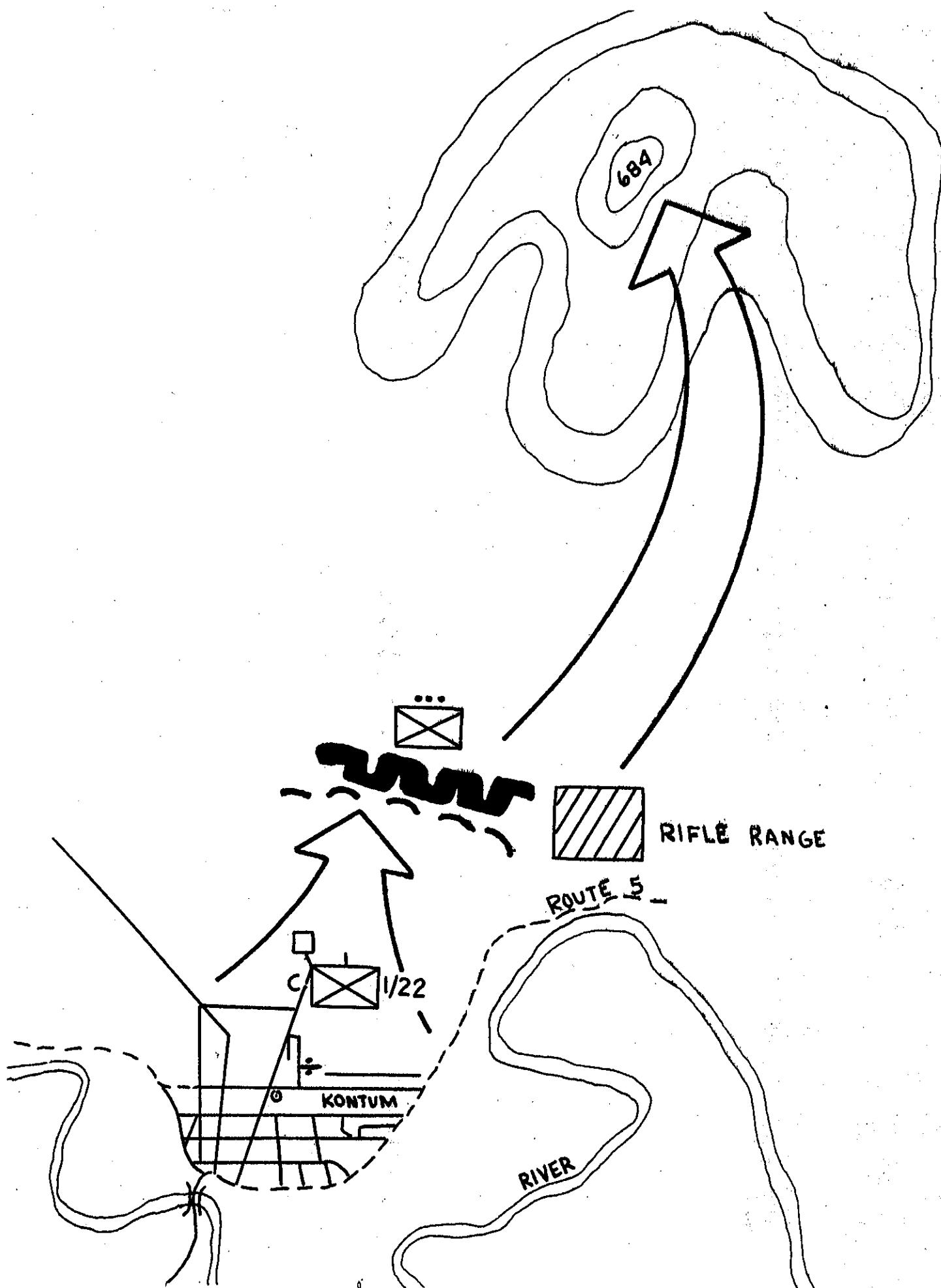
- A. Fire Support
- B. Intelligence
- C. Psychological Warfare/Civil Affairs
- D. Logistics
- E. Communications

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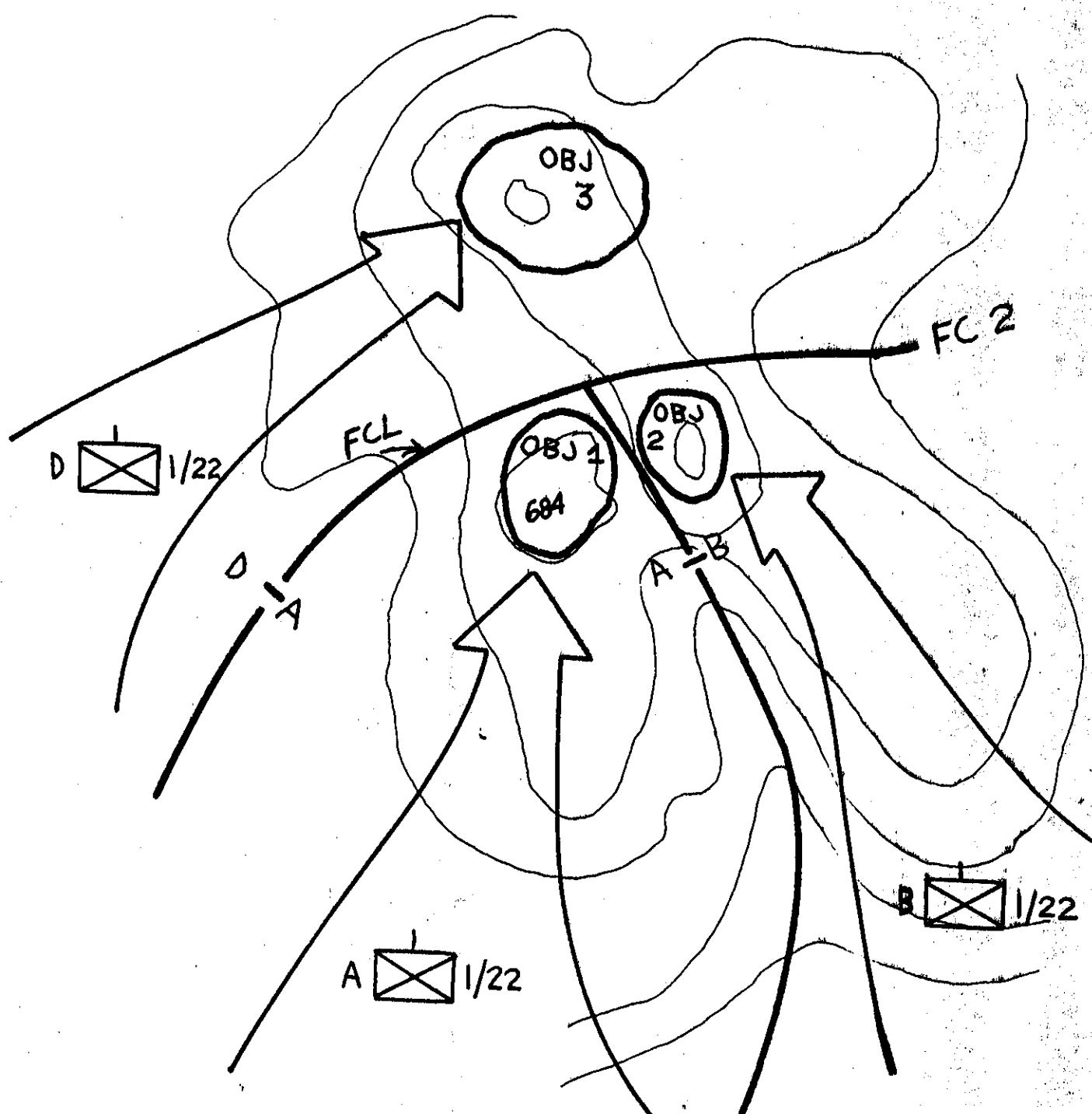
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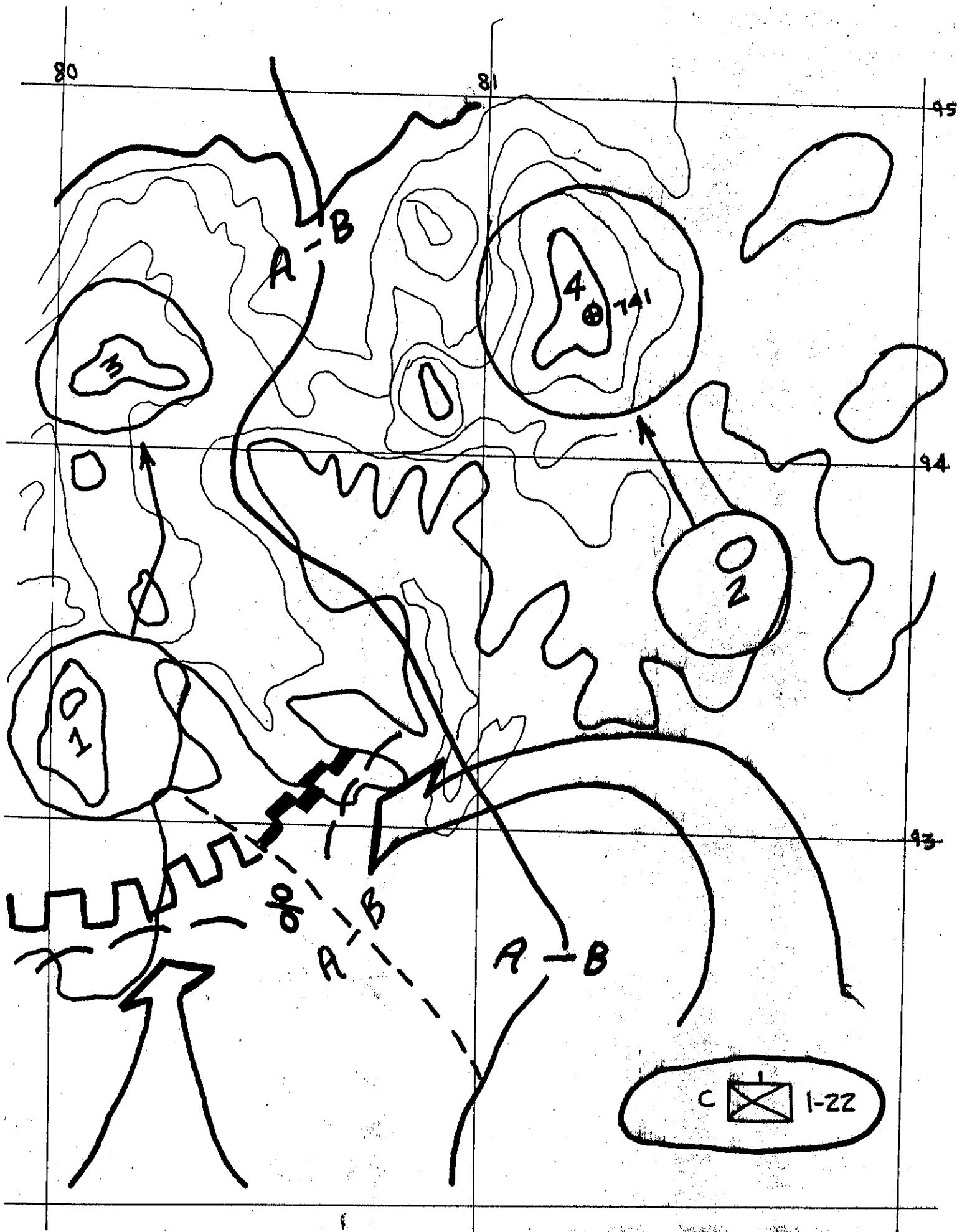
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Annex A (Fire Support) to After - Action Report, Battle of KONTUM.

## 1. Artillery

## a. Phase I (30-31 Jan 68)

## (1) 81mm Mortars.

(a) Initially four mortars brought in at bridge on the night of 30 Jan 68 in support of the company securing the fire base.

(b) On 31 Jan 68 two were deployed at the province chief's house in support of the Recon element and RVN forces. Weapons were set up in the immediate grounds and used as follows:

(1) Against snipers in city - 69 rounds (HE) were expended on houses in the city and were credited with nine enemy KIA.

(c) The mortars located at the bridge were necessary for close-in support of the fire base and protection of the bridge. The fires throughout the operation were solely H&I's and defensive.

## (2) 4.2" Mortars.

(a) Arrived at fire base about 2000 hours on 30 Jan 68 and prepared their positions all that night. (One 4.2" mortar reinforced the 81mm mortars).

(b) 31 Jan 68: Little firing during the day, but in excess of 50 rounds were expended that night against a target reported by Company D. Later report indicated that approximately 87 KIA were discovered on 1 Feb 68 in the target area.

(3) 105mm and air support: (Not employed during this phase)

(4) Gunships: Used on landing zones to effectively prepare the area at AR806913.

## b. Phase II (1 Feb - 4 Feb 68)

## (1) 81mm Mortars.

(a) On 3 Feb the two mortars at the province chief's house were returned to the fire base. At this time there were six mortars at that location.

(b) On 3 Feb two mortars were sent to the airstrip.

1. Supported elements securing airstrip, specifically Company C, which was operating in the area northeast of KONTUM which later became the site of the mini fire base.

2. This configuration continued until 8 Feb 68 (i.e., six at bridge and two at airstrip.)

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## (2) 4.2" Mortars.

(a) Two mortars were brought into the airstrip on 1 Feb 68 and used as follows:

1. For the support of all elements in KONTUM City area.

2. To support operations to the north of the city which would increase as the battle continued.

3. To support Companies C and D during contact on 2 Feb 68 in area of grid AR7790. About 200 HE fired and a good casualty report resulted.

(b) 1-2 Feb 68. Mortar at fire base by bridge fired H&I's and illumination for city fighting during 2-5 Feb.

## (3) 105mm Howitzer.

(a) Battery C, 4th Battalion, 42d Artillery arrived by air at the fire base by the bridge on 31 Jan 68 to provide direct support.

(b) Artillery was used extensively and effectively in the city of KONTUM against enemy hiding in buildings.

(c) Artillery was concentrated on HE targets and targets beyond mortar range to free mortars for firing illumination and close-in support.

(d) On 2 Feb 68, fired in support of Companies C and D which were in a major conflict in area of AR7790 W/900 meter radius. Time of mission: 1315 to 1715 hours. Estimated results: one 82mm mortar destroyed and 150 enemy casualties. 267 HE rounds were expended against a VC force occupying dug in positions in an open field.

(e) An extensive H&I program was fired each night.

(4) Tanks. Employed very effectively in the city for direct fire into buildings. They were invaluable in the areas where there was a very heavy amount of enemy fire. Their ability to attack where dismounted infantry would have taken heavy losses was exploited.

## c. Phase III (5-12 Feb 68)

## (1) 81mm Mortars.

(a) 8 Feb 68 - Two tubes moved from the fire base at bridge to the mini fire base.

(b) 9 Feb 68 - One tube from the fire base at bridge went with Company C to support its operation.

(c) Total rounds expended: 500 rounds HE and 200 rounds illumination.

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## (2) 4.2" Mortars.

(a) Mortar tube at fire base 1 fired on 5 Feb 68 on sniper position close to province chief's house. Adjusted by platoon FO located at province chief's house. Result: sniper silenced.

(b) Fired H&I's 5-8 Feb.

(c) Moved on 9 Feb to support C/1st Battalion, 12th Infantry operations northeast of KONTUM.

(d) Two mortars at airstrip were in general support of all elements within range.

## (3) 105mm Howitzer.

(a) By 6 Feb the infantry had driven the enemy into the hills outside the city, requiring more extensive use of the artillery at this greater range.

(b) Artillery was employed (105 and 155) on confirmed rocket positions and mortar positions and as blocking fire. A battery firing one round every three minutes was found to be very effective.

(c) Artillery was of primary importance in the securing of Hills 721 and 684. By employing rolling fires just ahead of the infantry, fire superiority was effectively retained, reducing friendly casualties.

(d) Time-on-target method was used on almost every objective, followed by preparatory fires. Preplanned data was used to allow immediate shifts to blocking fires when preparatory fires were lifted.

(e) Artillery fire was given precedence, but there was equally effective use of gunships and airstrikes. In order to provide continuous fire support check fires were held to the last minute when gunships or airstrikes were employed. Then the artillery resumed, usually shifting to blocking fires.

(f) Blocking fires. For most effective use of blocking fires for long periods or indefinite periods of time, firing was concentrated along back sides of ridge lines. One round every one minute worked effectively, but care was taken not to establish a pattern. Continuous H&I fires placed on suspected enemy locations near friendly troops were employed in the same manner as above, but at longer intervals.

(g) Of the total of 8,476 rounds expended, 50% were expended from 061200 Feb to 091300 Feb 68.

## (4) 155mm Howitzer.

(a) On 5 Feb 68, Battery D, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery joined Battery C,

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4th Battalion, 42d Artillery in a reinforcing role.

(b) The larger projectiles were necessary in order to penetrate the well fortified bunkers encountered in operations in the hills northeast of the city.

(c) Secondary explosions resulted from the combined artillery fires (105 and 155) brought upon Hill 721 and also from firing on a rocket site in the general location of AR8396.

(d) Eleven objectives were given the artillery on 9 Feb and preparatory fires were used very effectively on each prior to the infantry moving in. A combination of white phosphorous and high explosive was used for increased effectiveness.

(5) Tanks were utilized very effectively on 11 Feb 68 at AR837960 to reinforce the preparatory fires. The armor was in a good position to act as blocking fires on this objective if needed. Tank searchlights were used at night to designate targets for Air Force C-47 gunships (Spooky).

d. The attack of the final objective (AR827960) on 11 Feb typifies the integration of fires employed throughout the operation.

(a) Check-fire given and 10 minute prep with 105 and 155 began at 0640 hours.

(b) Eight airstrikes were employed.

(c) Infantry attacked the objective.

(d) Artillery shifted to blocking fires (grid AR8396).

(e) Infantry controlled employment of gunships against identified enemy locations.

## 2. Air Support Summary.

The following missions were flown between 6 Feb and 12 Feb 68 in support of ground operations in and around KONTUM:

### a. Airstrikes

#### (1) IMMEDIATE

##### (a) Hill 684 (AR802934)

6 February - 5 strikes

7 February - 7 strikes

TOTAL 12 strikes

##### (b) Hill 721 (AR812942)

7 February - 1 strike

8 February - 5 strikes

TOTAL 6 strikes

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- (c) Hill 828 (AR817976)  
9 February - 1 strike
- (d) Hill 729 (AR827976)  
10 February - 3 strikes  
11 February - 3 strikes  
12 February - 2 strikes  
TOTAL 8 strikes

(2) Preplanned. Six missions were flown as preplanned targets. Often preplanned targets were changed to take advantage of more recent intelligence data provided by headhunters and gunships.

- (3) Total Airstrikes

- (a) Immediate ~ 30 strikes
- (b) Preplanned - 6 strikes  
TOTAL 36 strikes

- (4) Spooky Mission flown

- (a) 7 February - 1 mission
- (b) 8 February - 1 mission
- (c) 10 February - 2 missions
- (d) 11 February - 1 mission  
TOTAL 5 missions

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