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AGAM-P (M) (5 Jul 68)

FOR OT RD 68X028

9 July 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Op DOK SU RI, Hqs, ROK Inf Div,
Period 20-26 Apr 68, Sub. by Sr Ln Ofcr, I FFV (U)

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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1st Squadron, 18th Air Cavalry (Sep)
336th Ordnance Battalion (Ammo)
2d Battalion 138th Artillery
972d Signal Battalion
Comdt of the Marine Corps (A03H10), Hqs Marine Corps
Sr Liaison Officer, I FFV (Rok Capital Inf Div)

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COMBAT OPERATION - 전투 작전

AFTER ACTION REPORT - 상보



DOK SU RI - 독수리

MAENG HO 11 - 맹호 11호

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I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM SPECIAL LIAISON GROUP
REPUBLIC OF KOREA CAPITAL INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 96238

IFFV-ROKCAP

13 June 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS MACJ3-32)(R1)

THRU: Commanding General
I Field Force Vietnam
APO US Forces 96350

TO: Commander
United States Military Assistance Command
ATTN: MACJ343
APO US Forces 96222

1. Name of Operations: DOK SU RI, MAENG HO 11
2. Dates of Operations: 20 - 26 April 1968
3. Location:
Map Sheet 6836 IV (Qui Nhon)
1:50,000
Map Sheet 6831 I (Hai Dong)
1:50,000
4. Control or Command Headquarters:
 - a. Capital ROK Infantry (Tiger) Division.
 - b. US Armored/Mechanized elements under operational control of Senior Liaison Officer, CRID.
5. Reporting Officers:
 - a. COL James H. Short, US Senior Liaison Officer, CRID.
 - b. Report submitted by: LTC D. B. Carmichael, Asst LO, CRID to 13th Military History Detachment for editing and reproduction.
 - c. Participants in the report includes

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- (1) United States
 - (a) LTC Ralph Flynn, SN FR43899 Ch FAC Tm, CRID 7th TAC USAF
 - (b) LTC John McCoy, SN 084323, Asst, LO, CRID USA
 - (c) Lt Commander Richard Mabrey, SN 625744 USN
 - (d) CPT Timothy Grogan, SN 098735, CO, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor USA
 - (e) 1LT Dennis Duda, SN 05244677, Plat Ldr, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor USA
 - (f) 1LT Rick Hasty, SN 05241028, Plat Ldr, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor USA
 - (g) 1SG Francis Newhouse, RA 14288397, 1SG, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor USA
 - (h) SSG Paul Kneeskern, RA 17531599, Tk Cndr, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor USA
- (2) Republic of Korea
 - (a) LTC Chung Chang Ho, SN 211876, CO, 3d Bn, 26th Regt ROKA
 - (b) MAJ Chun Dong Rin, SN 215448, G3, Armor, CRID ROKA
 - (c) CPT Min Byung Sun, SN 145238, CO, 10th Co, 26th Regt ROKA
 - (d) CPT Kim Dong Sik, SN 12535, S3 Air, 26th Regt ROKA
 - (e) 1LT Lee Jai Won, SN 18869, LO, 26th Regt ROKA

6. Task Organizations:

- (a) Headquarters, Capital ROK Infantry (Tiger) Division
- (b) 1st Regiment, Capital ROK Infantry (Tiger) Division
- (c) 26th Regiment, Capital ROK Infantry (Tiger) Division
- (d) B Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor (US)

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(e) A Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry (Mech) (US)

(f) 3d Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor (US)

(g) One Armored Personnel Carrier Company (ROK)

7. Supporting Forces:

a. US Army

(1) Artillery

(a) 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery (155mm How)

General Support-Reinforcing

(b) C Battery, 2d Battalion, 17th Artillery (155mm How)

General Support-Reinforcing

(c) B Battery, 7th Battalion, 15th Artillery (8" How)

General Support-Reinforcing

(d) B Battery (SLT), 29th Artillery General Support-Reinforcing

(2) Army Aviation

(a) 129th Assault Helicopter Company 28 UH-1D's and 10 gunships

(b) 196th Assault Support Helicopter Company 8 CH 47's

(3) Army Engineers

(4) 5th Transportation Terminal Command

(5) 54th Medical Group

b. US Navy

(1) 10 PBR craft

(2) 3 skimmers

(3) 1 LST

(4) 1 PCF

c. USAF Several Wings of 7th USAF (TAC)

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d. Other blocking/screening forces outside the AO

- (1) 173d Airborne Brigade
- (2) Elements of 22d ARVN Div
- (3) Tuy Phuoc RF Companies and PF Platoons
- (4) National Police Field Force Company

8. Intelligence:

a. Estimate of enemy situation prior to operation: Terrain, Disposition and Location:

(1) Terrain:

(a) The area is located in Tuy Phuoc District (CR 022291), northwest of Qui Nhon. Evaluation revealed the operational area is soft, generally water-soaked and consists of cultivated rice fields sectioned off by dikes. The area is flat (approximately 2 to 4 meters in elevation) and bordered by Go Boi River on the north, Song Ha Thanh River on the south, Route 442 (only road) on the west and Qui Nhon Bay on the east.

(b) The landscape is dotted with hamlets, some connected to the village complex, while others are islands surrounded by water. The hamlets were covered with thick thorn bushes, coconut trees and fresh bamboo. Earth contours inland are formed in the main by mud and clay and by a salt silt on the coast.

(c) Coastal depth (on average) is 0.5 - 1.5 meters. At high tide, coastal depth is 1.5 meters whereas low tide depth is 0.3 meters. At low tide, it is possible to traverse the area between Vinh Quang to Qui Nhon Peninsula.

(d) The majority of the area has been fortified usually along the periphery of the hamlet complex where deep bunker positions with connecting tunnels were constructed. Firing apertures were positioned to favor the defender from sun and sited to permit enfilade fire along dikes and rice paddies. Some bunkers were constructed with railroad ties, concrete blocks and heavy logs, covered by earth and foliage. Source of much of this information was based on CIDG and RF operations in the area during February 1968.

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(e) Enemy employed local inhabitants to build bunkers and carry material. Underground and underwater spider holes were also dug.

(2) Enemy location, disposition and strength (estimated) before the operation is shown at TAB A.

b. Enemy strength and disposition actually found:

(1) The 1st, 2d, 3d and 4th Companies, 8th Battalion, 18th NVA Regiment were identified in this operation. A PW indicated his battalion, the 8th, had not received replacements this year. The 3d Company was destroyed on 21 April in the battle at Ky Son Hamlet. Vice-commander, 4th Company was captured at Loc Thuong (CR 075324) as was the political officer for Binh Dinh Province. During MAENG HO 11 the 8th Battalion lost 133 personnel either killed or captured.

(2) One rallier from D 300 Sapper Battalion stated that his battalion moved to the Phu Cat Mountains on 18 April, leaving 15 personnel with the 8th Battalion; all were killed but the rallier.

(3) Of the estimated 60 personnel in the E2B Battalion in the area, 34 were killed, and 1 captured. Local VC suffered the remainder of casualties: 20 KIA and 69 captured.

c. Significant intelligence gains:

(1) A second general offensive to be conducted in May 1968 called Operation T26 or T27.

(2) Cadre of 18th NVA Battalion went to secret meeting on Ba Mountain on 16 April, but had not returned as of 27 April.

(3) Enemy continues to recruit young men for laborers and soldiers.

d. Critical Terrain (COCOA): Hamlets were the critical terrain features in the area, as well as the avenues leading to them on land and water; obstacles were the soft and inundated paddies which hindered but did not eliminate employment of mechanized infantry and armor. Cover was almost non-existent, except behind the dikes; concealment was helpful to the enemy in the hamlet built-up areas, and available to friendly forces along stream banks and uninhabited hamlet areas. Observation was unlimited because of lowlands and relatively few terrain features (mounds and hills).

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e. Intelligence was extremely good and generally confirmed by PW's. Through the auspices of military intelligence leads, special agent reports, and information from US and VN channels, approximately 51 platoon, company and battalion sitings were logged prior to the operation.

f. Deception/secretcy: Division carefully arranged release of information relative to an impending operation in Tu Cong (north Go Boi Plain) and the Phu Cat Mountains. A mock operation employing aircraft and artillery was held in the Song Cau District, south of Qui Nhon. Coordination concerning the operation was accomplished by the Division (ROK) G3 and the Province Chief on D-2.

g. Civil affairs and psychological operations: After the operation commenced, aerial and ground operated loud speakers urged inhabitants to leave the area of operation and assemble along Route 442 (for screening). Leaflets were disseminated through air/ground means requesting the same. Consequences for shielding or assisting VC or NVA personnel were described during this psychological phase. Refugees streamed out of operational area (approximately 5000) and were detained at detainee/interrogation points by the division's military intelligence section, MP's and Vietnamese National Police Field Force. Old men, women and children were allowed back in the area as the friendly force moved east; younger men were detained for further questioning and security of operation. At the completion of the operation, plans specified an expeditious return by inhabitants to dwellings to curtail refugee problems and assist in rehabilitation both real and psychological. Local RF and PF units and RD teams moved back into the area while three ROK rifle companies remained as security after termination of the operation.

9. Missions: Capital ROK Infantry (Tiger) Division attacks 200700 April enemy strong points in the coastal area of Tuy Phuoc District. Capital ROK Div (-) continues present tactical and security mission within assigned TAOR.

10. Concept of operations: (Map 1 and overlay) - TAB B

a. Two regiments will be airlifted and landed (1st Regt in the north, 26th Regt in the south) commencing H Hr, D-Day in the area between Go Boi River (CR 0637) and Song Ha Thanh River (CR 0528) inclusive of river, tasked to seize Loc Trung (CR 076322) and Vinh Quang (CR 087329) in zone. Concurrently, 1st Regt (-), north and

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26th Regt (-) south will conduct combat assault on Qui Nhon Peninsula (CR 1332), clear assigned zones and establish blocking positions to the west along inland coast. Special Force teams (ROK) will search north/south mountain axis on the peninsula.

b. Operation will be conducted in two phases, one the cordon and search of encircled Tuy Phuoc area controlled by schedules and phase lines; and next a thorough sweep of the peninsula. The scheme of maneuver visualizes the main effort from the south employing one or two battalions, 26th Regt in the attack, while the 1st Regt clears zone, then screens/blocks the escape exits north from the final objective of Vinh Quang. The USAF will support the scheme of maneuver by bomb/strafe sorties on preplanned and on call targets. The US Army artillery (1 battalion of 155mm howitzers, 1 battery of 155mm howitzers, 1 battery of 8" howitzers) will reinforce ROK artillery in general support-reinforcing role. The US Armor and Mech Inf, under OPCON US Sr LO (CRID), will employ Co B (-) 1st Bn 69th Armor and Co A 1st Bn 50th Infantry (Mech) and 1st Plat Co C 1st Bn 69th Armor to support this maneuver. The ROK APC Co is attached to 26th Regt for duration of operation. The US Navy will provide sufficient PBR, Skimmers and 1 LST control ship to effectively screen, block and secure waterways between Vinh Quang coastal area and coastal areas along the west side of Qui Nhon Peninsula.

11. Executions:

a. At 0700 hours on 20 April the Capital ROK Infantry Division conducted an airmobile combat assault into the Tuy Phuoc District and adjacent peninsula area (CR 1140320). Attacking towards Vinh Quang and environs was the 26th Regt (six companies) on the south; and the 1st Regt (eight companies) on the north. Landing in blocking roles on the peninsula oriented east were the 2d Bn, 26th Regt in the south and the 2d Bn, 1st Regt in the north. Naval Support ships (PBR craft, Skimmers, Junks and 1 LST) blocked and patrolled the waterways between the Vinh Quang area and Qui Nhon Peninsula. US artillery reinforced ROK artillery and USAF strikes were selected. In addition, Co B (-), 1st Bn, 69th Armor and Co A, 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech) under operational control of Sr LO, CRID were placed in support of the operation. (See overlay and map, TAB B).

b. By the end of the first day, Phase Line 1 was occupied and secured by the two regiments in zone. US Armor and Mechanized Infantry employment was as follows: One plat, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor.

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division reserve; one plat, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor, support of 1st Bn, 26th Regt; Co A, 1st Bn, 50th Mech with one plat Co C, 1st Bn, 69th Armor attached, support of 1st Regt CRID. Combat results on the first day were: three enemy KIA, 2 PW's and one small arm captured.

c. On 21 April, after 14 preliminary air strikes and artillery strikes, the two regiments attacked and by 1500 hours the 1st Regt had secured all objectives to Phase Line 2. Co A, 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech) and attached tank platoon were employed as a task force under the control of LTC McCoy, LO CRID, in support of the 1st ROK Regt. Light contact was made by 1st Regt (-) on the peninsula. ROK Special Forces also on the peninsula killed 2 and captured 1 small arm. Friendly losses were 2 WIA. The 1st Bn, 26th Infantry, supported by one plat of tanks (Co B), attacked Loc Ha (1) Hamlet (CR 065310) and secured Phase Line 2 in zone by 0900 hours. The 3d Bn, 26th Inf (two companies) with one APC platoon (ROK) in support, attacked and made contact at Ky Son Hamlet (CR 063322) at 0830 hours. Immediately upon contact the forward rifle platoons were pinned down and the APC's were moved forward to provide close fire support. Upon reaching the near edge of the hamlet, one APC was hit by a B40 rocket, wounding the driver. As the heavy enemy small arms and rocket fire grew in intensity, the 10th Co, with the APC platoon attached, was forced to break contact and withdrew to an area 500 meters west of the enemy's position. Air strikes and artillery were called in, while the CO, 3d Bn, 26th Regt (ROK), LTC Chung, notified CO, 26th Regt of the situation and requested US Armor support. By 1000 hours, the tank platoon (Co B) in division reserve was released to US LO control (LTC Carmichael) vic 1st Bn, 26th Infantry Phase Line 2. Based on the situation in 3d Bn area and the impending 1st Bn attack, one platoon (3 tanks) was sent to the 3d Bn area. MAJ Chun, G3 Armor, ROK LO, accompanied this tank platoon as US-ROK coordinator.

d. The second attack on Ky Son Village jumped off at 1130 hours. (Disposition of units and planned scheme of maneuver is at Sketch 1, TAB C). As the attacking force reached the near edge of the village with tanks and infantry moving abreast, they began to receive intense small arms fire. Tank 77 (on the right) was hit with rocket fire and deluged with grenades, one of which went into the turret, wounding most of the crew and setting the tank afire. LT Hasty, the platoon leader maneuvered Tank 26 around to the right rear of the disabled tank and laid down point blank HE and machine gun fire attempting to obscure enemy return fire and protect the wounded crew trying to evacuate the burning vehicle. At this time, MAJ Chun was

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on the ground directing the infantry to hold their ground and obtaining assistance for the wounded tankers. MAJ Chun then returned to Tank 26. As LT Hasty's tank continued to fire, a B40 rocket penetrated the front slope of his tank killing SPl Mairholts, the driver. After Hasty determined that his driver was dead, he assisted in evacuating his remaining personnel to a safer area, later returning to his tank where he began firing the main gun at suspected bunker positions. Firing the weapon until it jammed, he then switched to the coaxial machinegun and later the cupula-mounted 50 caliber. When all the small arms ammunition was expended, LT Hasty fired parachute flares at the enemy positions as he directed Tank 22 to move to his position in order to transfer the remaining 90 mm ammunition to the one operational tank. At this time, SSG Paul Kneeskern, the tank commander, Tank 22 observed the enemy firing at both LT Hasty and his tank. Under intense fire, SSG Kneeskern silenced the position with a grenade, killing five NVA soldiers.

e. In the meantime, MAJ Chun with the 10th Co Commander, CPT Min, had provided personnel to evacuate the US wounded as well as ROK casualties in the area. Their erect presence and leadership was the catalyst that held the infantry in position, forming a protective cordon around the tanks and firing at suspected enemy positions. While the tank-infantry force was heavily engaged at the edge of Ky Son Village, LT Hasty had kept his company commander, CPT Grogan, informed. CPT Grogan, with the remainder of Co B (-), was still with the 1st Bn, 26th Regt. When LT Hasty requested additional armor, CPT Grogan asked permission to move to his assistance. LO, 26th Regt, recommended to CO, 26th Regt a reaction force be sent immediately; the request was approved and the tank force moved out. Moving quickly into the Ky Son area, the reaction force moved forward and laid down a covering fire which aided the withdrawal of the disabled tanks and the infantry. All wounded were treated and the seriously wounded were evacuated by air and APC's. (See sketch 2, TAB C, 2d attack of Ky Son).

f. Plans were then formulated for subsequent attacks against the fortified strong point. Among those in the planning conference were: LTC Chung, CO, 3d Bn; CPT Min, CO, 10th Co, 3d Bn; MAJ Chun and LT Lee, Jai Won, ROK IO; CPT Tim Grogan, CO, Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor; CPT Kim, Dong Sik, S3 Air, 26th Regt; and LTC D. B. Carmichael, US IO 26th Regt. The plan visualized a two rifle platoon attack supported by an accompanying tank platoon while Tank Co (-) supported by fire from nearby locations to the rear of the line of departure. Plans called for tactical air to pound the objective area

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with 750 bombs and 20 mm strafing followed by the tanks firing into the village for 10 minutes. After the air strike, and tank fire preparation, the attack commenced at 1530 hours. (TAB C sketch #3). As the tanks and infantry reached the near edge of Ky Son they received heavy small arms and rocket fire. The deployed infantry, forward of the tanks, directed point blank HE fire into bunker positions, often adjusting the fire several meters up and to the right/left of their position. Systematically the near edge (bunkers-trenches) was cleared by ROK infantry, employing fire teams, flame throwers and grenades, supported by the tanks. As the force moved 30 meters into the devastated village Tank 32 (SSG Henry Kennedy) began moving backward as the loader, while firing the 50 caliber machine gun, had been wounded. While the tank moved rearward, LTC Carmichael asked CPT Kim, S3 Air, 26th Regt who was accompanying him in the attack to arrange medical evacuation. The evacuation helicopter landed as the tank arrived in a relatively safe area, and evacuated the badly wounded SP4 John Alford. Moving to the right of the objective, LTC Carmichael and CPT Kim observed LTC Chung leading the attacking riflemen into other suspected bunker positions. The ROK infantry was deployed laterally, in holes, or searching/digging in the debris. Approximately 25 enemy bodies were found in the vicinity of two bunker systems on the near edge of the hamlet area. As the tank-infantry team moved forward employing fire and maneuver, sniper fire continued; however, by 1900 hours the objective was cleared, except for occasional sniping from the right portion of the south edge. While COL Chung directed a squad into the sniper location, a Korean fell wounded at his side. the soldier was brought to LT Dennis Duda's tank (1st Plat, Co B) (Tank 36) and placed on the rear deck.

g. For some time, LTC Carmichael had recommended the force withdraw unless they were planning to secure the objective by nightfall. As it was still not cleared by 1900 hours, and visibility was poor COL Chung agreed to set up night "laager positions" in the attack position, 500 meters to the rear. The wounded Korean signaled the general withdrawal and the infantry withdrew rearward with the tanks continuing to fire on the enemy positions. At the request of CPT Kim, the Regimental Command and Control helicopter arrived to evacuate the wounded man as the tank reached the rear area. Night defensive positions were prepared to include moving a platoon of tanks with each forward infantry platoon to provide searchlight illumination as well as to provide front line infantry with fire support and a psychological boost. At this time plans were formulated to attack Ky Son again in the morning. Results for the day were: Enemy - 70 KIA, 12 small arms and 6 crew served weapons captured; US - 1 KIA, 6 WIA; ROK - 1 KIA, 1 WIA.

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h. On 22 April, employing generally the same scheme of maneuver as on the 21st, the tank-infantry force attacked at 0800 hours after the tanks fired into the enemy bunkers prior to the attack. Despite occasional sniping, the objective was cleared and secured by 1000 hours. While the armor secured the general objective area, ROK infantry searched and cleared the bunker positions, discovering many positions and more bodies. (Sketch 4, TAB C - 4th attack). The 1st Regt in concurrent action on 22 April attacked toward Phase Line 3 and secured the area (eastern side) of Durong Thien (1) by 1500 hours with relatively light contact. Combined night/day operations resulted in: 12 enemy KIA and 8 small arms captured. The 1st Bn, 26th Regt attacked Nhan An (1) and Binh Thai (1) vic 075301 and secured their objectives by 1200 hours. Their combined night/day operations resulted in 15 enemy KIA, 12 small arms captured and 1 ROK WIA.

i. On 23 April in preparation for coordinated attacks by 1st Regt against Loc Thuong in the north (080341) and 26th Regiment against Loc Trung in the south (077323), air strikes and artillery fire were placed on these objectives. The 1st Regt moved from PL 3 to blocking position north of Vinh Quang after clearing Loc Thuong. This maneuver was to support the main effort by the 26th in the south tasked to seize Loc Trung and Vinh Quang in zone. 1st Regiment had sporadic contact during the move and their combined night/day operations resulted in 22 enemy KIA, 8 PW's, 13 small arms and 1 crew served weapon captured, and 1 ROK WIA. While the 3d Bn, 26th Regt continued to secure and search Ky Son and eastern environs, the 1st Bn was tasked to seize Loc Ha (2). The 3d Company, 1st Bn supported by Co B (-), 1st Bn, 69th Armor from vic LD, and an APC platoon attacked. The attack was unopposed and the objective was secured by 1500 hours. Combined night/day operations resulted in 10 enemy KIA, 5 PW's, 4 small arms and 2 crew served weapons captured. Later, Co B (-), 1st Bn, 69th Armor moved back to the 1st Bn, 26th Regt (rear CP) pending subsequent attacks in another sector. Concurrently, LTC Carmichael, MAJ Chun, and CPT Grogan reconnoitered areas leading to Ky Son (3d Bn, 26th Regt occupied forward Ky Son positions at this time along PL 3). The routes used to Ky Son during the 21-22 April battle were now untrafficable as were areas just adjacent. Much of the area had been rendered unusable by previous armored traffic as well as indiscriminate flooding of rice paddies by the local inhabitants. Despite this, the recon party located some usable dried-out paddies near the main dirt road (Route 442) just west off Ky Son Village. Movement forward required the use of the M72 AVLB vehicle to ford a small 12 foot irrigation stream. It was decided to proceed to this area, then cautiously recon forward by APC, until positions could be reached to support the 3d Bn's pending attack.

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j. On 24 April, with the securing of PL 3 on 23 April (and forward extensions of this line), CRID prepared to continue the attack towards Loc Trung and Vinh Quang. Air strike sorties and artillery fires were placed on the objective areas during the early morning hours. Commanders felt the tanks had gone as far forward as they could so plans assumed only the use of APC's. Tank Commanders (LT Estes, Co C (-) in the north and CPT Grogan, Co B (-) in the south) said they thought they could get farther and would try. The 1st Regt, employing the 3d Bn (north) and 1st Bn (south), established a strong blocking force north of Vinh Quang. Escape routes were cut off as the US Navy covered the Bay of Qui Nhon and inland waterways. Supporting the 1st Bn (ROK), the 1st Plat, Co C, 69th Armor, by thorough ground and APC reconnaissance, moved to vic 078332 approximately 750 meters east of Vinh Quang, providing an excellent means of fire support for the 26th Regiment troops attacking from the south and west. Light contact was made and the combined night/day operations resulted in 19 enemy KIA, 16 PW's, 7 small arms and 1 crew served weapon captured. The 10th Co, 3d Bn, 26th Regt prepared to attack Loc Trung (077324) at 1000 hours. The 1st Bn, 26th Regt deployed forces to block enemy escape in the south. Co B (-), 1st Bn, 69th Armor had moved to previously selected positions south of Ky Son by 0730 hours. CPT Grogan went forward with an APC to recon the route out to Ky Son and returned to indicate that the area was inundated with much water and that he doubted that tanks could get forward. LTC Carmichael told him to recon positions back on Ky Son Mountain and be prepared to support the attack by long range fire. While Grogan moved to Ky Son Mountain, MAJ Chun, LTC Carmichael and LT Hasty moved forward of the tank positions and conducted a thorough ground reconnaissance. This resulted in their conclusion that the tanks could be brought forward, but with care and by selective choosing of the route, or in some cases by the use of all tanks using parallel routes simultaneously. Informing CPT Grogan of this, Carmichael and Chun moved one platoon forward on foot and reached the Ky Son battle site with all vehicles. Time was 0950 hours, and Carmichael requested 3d Bn hold up the attack until tanks were in position to help support the attack. The CO of the 26th Regiment decided to attack without tank support, but requested that they join later if they could. By 1030 hours, Co B (-), 1st Bn, 69th Armor was on the Ky Son position. LTC Riggs, CO, 1st Bn, 69th Armor arrived and offered to assist in selecting routes by helicopter. A relatively hard area was located and all tanks moved up to the outskirts of Loc Trung (actually the near hamlet complex of many complexes known as

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Loc Trung Village). First objectives had been secured, and coordination with CO, 10th Co determined requirements to fire on next objectives, thus the fire was shifted to areas near Vinh Quang. Encountering no resistance in these hamlet areas, the 10th Co and 3d Bn (-) on the right continued to move towards Vinh Quang and entered the main hamlet areas by 1630 hours. Relatively light contact was made. With the securing of Vinh Quang (1st Regt had seized Loc Trung and blocked Vinh Quang escape exits to the north), the tanks moved into "night-laager positions". Combat results for the day were: Enemy - 16 KIA, two PW's and four small arms captured.

k. On 25 April, the ROK's continued to search the flatlands, rice paddies, hamlet areas and the peninsula waterways and the US Armor and Mech Infantry returned to the rear. The combat results during a day of cordon and search was: Enemy - 17 KIA, 33 PW's, 25 small arms and two crew served weapons captured.

l. On 26 April, the ROK forces continued to cordon and search throughout the day. Bodies of enemy killed in earlier action were located as well as large amounts of weapons. As the cordon was closed Operation MAENG HO 11 was terminated on 26 April 1968.

12. Results:

a. Ground operations:

| | ENEMY | | | | US | | ROK | |
|-----------|-------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | KIA | PW | SA | C/S | KIA | WIA | KIA | WIA |
| 1st Regt | 74 | 58 | 47 | 5 | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| 26th Regt | 127 | 21 | 47 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 201 | 79 | 94 | 14 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 4 |

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13. Administrative matters:

- a. A US Special Liaison Team assisted ROK's administratively for the operation by arranging meetings between US Tuy Phuoc District personnel, US Special Force advisors (for CIDG units) whose experience in the operational area (during Jan - Apr) was invaluable. Aerial photos were provided showing the terrain, bunker and trench systems through the auspices of the Hawkeye air reconnaissance platoon (Qui Nhon), B 22 SF HQ, Qui Nhon. Visual aerial reconnaissance was conducted by LTC Carmichael, US LO, and the information of these trips was passed to G2/G3.
- b. Resupply was essentially by Chinook and based on normal SOP, 2 CH 47 per regiment per day. UH-1D helicopters were employed for water/ration runs according to normal resupply (afternoons and early evening). US armor/mechanized infantry elements were resupplied both by CH 47 and APC.
- c. Assault troops (infantry) carried M16 rifles, basic load (plus) ammunition; squad members had M72 LAW's in sufficient quantity, each carried 6 grenades, entrenching tools and complete harness with accessories. Flame thrower/demolition teams were formed in each rifle platoon. Because of the heat, the frequent excursions in the paddy fields, often waist deep, back-packs were left at battalion supply points and brought up by rear elements at night, then left at company CP's in subsequent moves forward.
- d. Maintenance for armored vehicles was provided by organic battalion maintenance unit; recovery was made by VTR, and engine repair, suspension system repair was accomplished at organizational rear (Camp Townes), near the division CP (Rear).
- e. Treatment of casualties was timely and initially by aid men on scene; evacuation was accomplished by both APC and helicopter. The response of the latter was outstanding. The air ambulance company of the 54th Medical Group supported these requirements.
- f. Transportation of personnel during the Combat Assault phase was accomplished in an outstanding manner. Twenty two rifle companies were lifted into the operational area within 2 1/2 hours by employing 28 Hueys and 10 Chinooks, supported by 10 gunships.

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g. Communication and Coordinations: Based on experience in the Dap Da battle (23 - 25 Jan 68) when US/ROK elements first worked together, English-speaking Korean officers were requested and were decisive links during the trying moments of the fierce Ky Son battle (21 April). In this action, MAJ Chun, G3 Armor was sent with the first tank task force to assist 3d Bn, 26th Regt. He was instrumental in coordinating the tank-infantry attack and when two tanks were disabled, he made certain that the infantry remained in a protective cordon around the tanks. LT Lee, LO, 26th Regt, always with the company commander of B Company, maintained good liaison and communication with the rifle company working with the tanks. These Korean officers plus LTC Carmichael US ROK LO who accompanied all infantry/tank team operations in 26th Regt area insured responsive coordination and cooperation between the two Free World Forces, and contributed to the successful accomplishment of the mission. Although ROK LO's were requested for similar use in the 1st Regt area, they were not assigned which led to some confusion until a practical solution (US LO, LTC McCoy worked closely with assaulting company commanders of the US and ROK units) was developed. Heavy contact in this area (as in Ky Son) would have dictated the use of Korean LO's and should be SOP in future operations. For an appreciation of US liaison activities in this operation, see TAB E.

14. US Army Special Equipment.

a. An AVLB tank was employed on 20 April in the village of Durong Thien (1) (CR 064354) to bypass a destroyed bridge. The third tank platoon, Co C, 1st Bn, 69th Armor moved across the bridged obstacle and reached the operational area in time to support LZ clearance and offer security to the infantry. On 24 April, AVLB was employed over a 12 foot irrigation stream west of Ky Son Village to support B Company tanks in operations with the 3d Bn, 26th Regt (ROK).

b. Portable flamethrower and demolition teams were assigned to assaulting rifle companies. These were used in conjunction with infantry/tank teams in the battle for Ky Son to seal and/or destroy bunker-trench systems.

15. US Navy.

a. The Patrol Boats, River (PBR) were provided by Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam, from assets normally employed in the Mekong Delta Area. One Landing Ship, Tank (LST) was also provided to transport and provide support for the PBR's and their crews.

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b. One PCF and three skimmer craft were provided from assets available in Qui Nhon.

c. Naval liaison officers were provided to each regimental CP and to the division CP as follows:

| | | | | |
|-------|------------------|------|------|--------|
| Lcdr | R. L. Mabrey | USN | SNLO | Div CP |
| Lt | F. L. Boswell | USN | NLO | 26R CP |
| Ltjg | J. E. Lyons | USN | NLO | 1R CP |
| *Ltjg | J. C. Gilbertson | USNR | NLO | 26R CP |

*Relieved Lt Boswell on 24 April.

d. Commencing on 20 April at 0700 hours, two PBR's provided a river blockade force in the upper harbor at the mouth of the Go Boi River. Boats relieved on station at 12 hour intervals and 24 hour coverage was maintained. Two PBR's provided a patrol and blockade force in the lower harbor in the vicinity of the Song Ha Thanh River using the same patrol and relieving procedures. Three skimmer craft continually patrolled in the area of the Song Ha Thanh River and its tributaries. One PCF was stationed in this same area to provide radar control of the skimmer craft during the hours of darkness.

e. A total of 27 sampans were destroyed by Naval patrol units during the operation, with three possible VC KIA. Three sampans successfully evaded into the Song Ha Thanh River on the night of 22-23 April as patrol units were unable to take these craft under fire due to the proximity of friendly troops.

f. An amphibious landing was planned and successfully executed to cordon Duong Thien (3) hamlet on the morning of 25 April. Planning and coordination was effected by Ltjg Lyons and the Commander, 2d Battalion, 1st Regiment. Five PBR's were utilized to lift and land troops on the swampy island areas in the upper harbor. The PBR's then provided cover fire in support of the advancing troops.

16. US Air Force.

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a. During the week prior to Operation MAENG HO 11 the Air Force conducted operations in areas surrounding the MAENG HO area of operations as a diversion and in an effort to force the VC/NVA to concentrate their forces in the desired area. For the first three days of the operations 14 preplanned air strikes were flown per day. Normally the airstrikes were scheduled prior to 1000 hours each morning. The first days preplanned airstrikes were used to soften up fortified positions however the locations for the airstrikes were limited primarily to the coastal region. Many of the inland target areas had not been evacuated by the civilian population. After the first day airstrikes were used in close coordination with the troop movements and the targets were normally selected by the regiments.

b. Air strikes were scheduled every 20 minutes the first three days with good coverage of the target area by the two FAC's. Each regimental Air Liaison Officer worked with a FAC who would be hitting targets in the respective regimental areas. In this manner briefings were given simultaneous with another air strike and at times simultaneous airstrikes were employed in the operational area. Ground controllers gave briefings to FAC's on UHF enabling the fighter aircraft to monitor air to ground transmissions. Coordination between the two regiments was excellent. Friendly positions of both regiments were known and, when required marked prior to any airstrikes. This was an improvement over MAENG HO 10, in which it was very difficult to get friendly positions unless they belonged to the regiment who was controlling the airstrike. However on one occasion a near incident occurred. Recoiless rifle fire was being put into the operations area at the same time a FAC was trying to run an airstrike. When the FAC marked the target either the ground commander mistook the impact of the recoiless as the FAC mark or the fighters dropped on the recoiless mark, resulting in a 1 km error. During airstrikes all firepower larger than automatic weapons should be eliminated to prevent a recurrence of this incident. The division had a forward position which was useless from an ALO position as communications were poor with forward positions and necessary lines to other locations were lacking. All coordinating and communications from the division level were handled at the permanent location. Interrogation of prisoners indicated that the majority of those killed resulted from the airstrikes.

c. To insure better and more timely Air Force support emphasis should be placed on the following items:

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- (1) Artillery and all heavy firepower should be terminated prior to any airstrikes.
- (2) More reliance should be placed on immediate airstrikes after the initial preparatory strikes.
- (3) Too many preplans are being submitted without actual consideration of targets in conjunction with ground movements.
- (4) Of the 52 preplanned strikes only 1 hit the preplanned coordinates as many of the preplanned strikes were scheduled merely to have fighters available.

d. USAF operations:

| | SCHEDULED | FLOWN |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|
| Planned Ftr Strikes | 98 | 82 |
| VR | 76 | 86 |
| Planned Sky Spot | 48 | 25 |
| Photo Reconnaissance | 41 | 14 |
| Red Haze | 22 | 7 |

17. US Engineers: The 35th Engineer Group in Qui Nhon provided excellent support to the operation. The group arranged to have 44 rubber boats and life jackets brought up from Tuy Hoa in the south and loaned to the division. The division's Special Force teams used the boats during their initial landing on the peninsula, and later in the waterways during the search and clear operations. Upon request from the Sr LO, CRID, the 35th Engr Gp also tasked the 84th Engr Bn (Const) to improve the secondary road into the AO to allow trafficability to the armor elements. The group Executive Officer, LTC W. K. Ricard, personally organized this project. With only 4 days to get the job done, the 84th Engr Bn repaired 14 weak bridges and constructed numerous by-passes.

18. Qui Nhon Support Command: COL William O'Connel, CO of the support command, followed the planning for the operation closely and was always ready with suggestions and assistance on logistical support matters. Support for US units was excellent during the operation. The 5th Terminal Command in Qui Nhon, on one hours notice, was prepared to furnish ten LCM's for any amphibious moves against the peninsula. The LCM's were not required, as phase II of Operation MAENG HO 11 was not implemented.

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19. Analysis: (and Teaching Points)

a. The ROK estimate of the enemy intelligence situation to include evaluation and analysis of enemy status (personnel/equipment), disposition/size, and intention was correct and well-integrated into operational planning. The Koreans are very meticulous about the confirming and verification of intelligence, tending to double and triple check sources through the use of their own agents. The final result is developed only after the G3 (armed with his courses of action) and the G2 (armed with enemy dispositions, strength and capabilities) review the impending battle by a cross-interrogation. Additional material was gathered and catalogued as to speed and depth of the waterways between the Vinh Quang coastal areas and Qui Nhon Peninsula. These figures were investigated with respect to high tide and low tide. Enemy experience along the rivers, lagoons and coastal waters was studied. Pictures of the hamlet and village complexes were studied; these included aerial photos taken by O1 VR aircraft and ground photos of the intricacy and efficiency of the bunker system as discovered by RF and CIDG units.

b. Enemy information to include photo maps were disseminated to Battalion Commander level; sometimes to company. These clearly delineated the objectives and the locations of bunkers. Commanders were cautioned that the bunker systems were built almost even with the ground level, favoring the enemy as to sunlight and shadows, oriented to provide grazing and enfilade fire along the causeways and paddies.

c. Korean experience with the encirclement and successes therefrom dictated no change in this tactic, except to insure that the waterways were blocked and secured when the ground attack moved forward. US Navy craft were well employed here.

d. The Koreans have made a science out of the cordon and search. Both in the Go Boi (where they put 21 rifle companies in an area 3 by 4 km in MAENG HO 10 Operation) and Tuy Phuoc (where two regiments were airlanded in MAENG HO 11 Operation), they had calculated mathematically for each man, by rifle company so that the area was either covered by personnel, or fire; even the streams were blocked by fire, concertina, or in the case of the Song Ha Thanh River, occupied by an APC platoon. Inherent to this tactic is the principle of mass and concentration of power at the critical point. By the use of maximum force and fire power, they overwhelm the enemy both tactically and psychologically. Few, if any, enemy escaped Go Boi, and if the ROK's intelligence estimate of enemy strength was correct for Tuy Phuoc, very few escaped there.

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e. Prior to the operation, rehearsals between US Armor-ROK infantry were conducted to include consideration of US-ROK LO's to bridge the language gap and insure proper employment and security for each element. Boat drills and landing exercises were held, assuming the invasion of the peninsula as a part of the second phase, later cancelled. Classes were given to the ROK's to explain the capabilities of the navy craft, PBR's, as employed in the Mekong Delta, Skimmers and LST's. Small unit training was emphasized to include the formation of flame thrower-demolition teams for employment with infantry fire teams. Units were trained to hit the enemy from the flank or rear rather than the front as had been the experience of the RF and CIDG units.

f. Once the encirclement had been established, LZ's occupied and secured, and night defense procedures prepared, the ROK's prepared for subsequent attacks. Regiments moved forward relentlessly according to time phasing controlled by phase lines. Critical bunker areas were attacked by concentration of power in a narrow zone of action. Each enemy-held village or hamlet area was isolated and attacked as a strongpoint after saturation bombing and artillery preparation. Tanks were employed in direct fire roles prior to the attack, during the attack and where possible, terrain permitting, accompanied the infantry in the attack/assault.

g. In the decisive battle of Ky Son, air strikes, before each of the four attacks on the strong points, were extremely accurate and no doubt a demoralizing factor to the enemy. The close complement of tank-infantry was classic especially in the 3d and 4th attacks. Crucial to this close cooperation was the on the scene presence of US and ROK LO's who provided assistance, insured correct employment and untangled language problems and emotional tensions caused by the fierceness of the battle.

h. Infrequently the ROK's wait too long after the use of artillery/air strikes to attack, and accordingly became more vulnerable to a reacting enemy when entering the complex. Tank fires filling the vacuum between the last air/artillery fires and the attack, were instrumental in keeping enemy occupied and fixed while infantry and tanks began their maneuver towards the objective. Fires must be constant in this phase. When infantry and tanks close on the objective, one element supports and then secures the other. For example, selecting targets for tankers, by infantry, was crucial. They directed point blank fire at 15 meters range. Adjustments of "up 5 meters, right 10 meters" were common in the fight for Ky Son, revealing the decisive nature and need of this type infantry-tank integration.

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i. As the employment of the US Armor at Ky Son was decisive, it points up their tactical and psychological value to combat in Vietnam. Aggressive and imaginative planning/execution of these plans by commanders is tantamount to success. Throughout the operation, there was a tendency to "believe we have gone as far as we can with the tanks". However a positive and aggressive "we don't know until we try" attitude prevailed with US and ROK LO's and US commanders throughout and often through meticulous and time-consuming reconnaissance by APC, foot and when fortunate, by air, revealed that tank operations are only limited by a lack of imagination and perseverance of commanders. Despite the restrictive terrain, US Armor supported all attacks either in close complement with infantry or from firing positions along the line of departure.

j. Lessons Relearned.

(1) Communication/coordination procedures must be clearly resolved before an operation begins. (US LO's assigned to each attacking regiment; ROK English-speaking LO's accompanied tank-infantry attacks and maintained close liaison between the two different speaking units).

(2) Small unit tank-infantry training and operational rehearsals led to the success of the operation, especially in the decisive battle of Ky Son.

(3) Tank-infantry cooperation and employment was outstanding because of leadership and proficiency of US and ROK commanders as well as close liaison of US-ROK LO's.

(4) Tanks and dismounted infantry complemented each other in the attack of the fortified positions through the use of short, alternating bounds, which suppressed effective enemy fire and reaction.

(5) ROK small unit fire/movement by fire team was classic because of their patient, methodical means of attacking, clearing and searching of the bunker-trench complexes.

(6) US Armor provided a significant psychological boost to dismounted infantry thereby enhancing their aggressiveness and confidence.

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- (7) Reconnaissance by fire (by US Armor) provided infantry the opportunity to maneuver forward to the final coordination line (assault position), and restricted the enemy's ability to return accurate fire.
 - (8) Tanks and infantry must protect each other through positioning and fires. While one element is moving (maneuvering), the other must fire, even though enemy positions are not exactly known, to hinder enemy close-in counter fire.
 - (9) Plans to attack fortified positions should include, when possible, pictures and information on bunker construction, firing ports, connecting trenches and general terrain environment.
 - (10) Because a fortified position overlooking flat terrain decidedly favors the defender, friendly forces should attempt to isolate each position and apply a concentration of fire power and infantry to overwhelm each position before attacking another.
 - (11) Once captured (or secured) bunker complexes should be systematically destroyed by demolition, flame throwers and grenades to prohibit future use by enemy.
 - (12) Before employing mechanized infantry and armor in a predominantly soft terrain area (rice paddies), a thorough ground (by APC/foot) and air (helicopter) reconnaissance should be made.
 - (13) Encirclement tactic by CRID employing combat units and US Navy prevented mass escape and increased effectiveness of concentration of power (fires and troops).
 - (14) Effective night defense measures, especially ambush patrols, complemented daytime attacks by air and ground forces.
 - (15) Close-in USAF air strikes prior to ground attack was a decisive contributor to the subsequent attack because of the accuracy of the strikes and psychological impact of the ordnance on the enemy.
 - (16) Employment of US Navy craft astride the waterways between the operational area and the peninsula was a significant link in the encirclement ring.

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(17) Due to a lack of familiarity with the waterways in the AO, PBR's frequently grounded out on mud flats and sand bars. This placed the boats in a hazardous position vulnerable to enemy ground attack. In an effort by the artillery to provide protective fires one boat received minor shrapnel damage. The SNLO was unable to get the artillery fire stopped or shifted until the PBR's could find safe water and clear the impact area.

(18) The availability of a Navy LO for each regiment proved invaluable in operations of this size as it provided for close and continuous coordination at regiment level and for faster reaction time by the naval elements.

(19) Thorough evaluation, analysis and development of intelligence estimate and close integration of this into the operational plan were key factors prior to the initiation of the operation.

James H. Short
JAMES H. SHORT
COL, GS (Inf)
Sr LNO, CRID

1. TAB A Enemy positions
2. TAB B Map & Friendly Forces Disposition
3. TAB C Sketch 1-4 Btl of Ky Son
4. TAB D Picture Index
5. TAB E US Ln Org & Problem Areas

Copies furnished:

- 1 - ACSFOR, DA
- 1 - CINCUSARPAC
- 1 - CG, USARV
- 2 - MACJ 343
- 1 - Inf Sch Ft Benning
- 1 - Armor Sch Ft Knox
- 1 - Arty Sch Ft Sill
- 1 - C&GSC Ft Leavenworth
- 1 - Army War Col Carlisle Brks
- 1 - ROK LO CRID
- 1 - ROK LO 9th Div
- 1 - Sr LO ROKFCV
- 1 - COMNAVFORV
- 1 - CCMH, DA
- 2 - 13th MHD

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•LVC

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•LVC

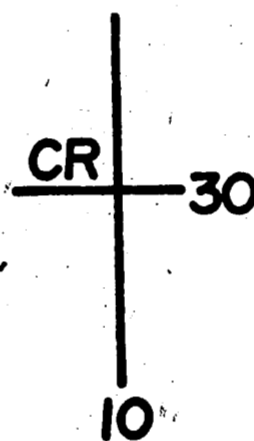
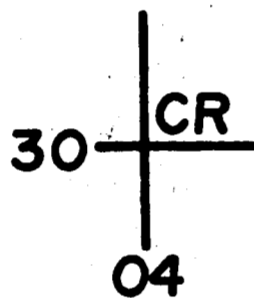
8  18 NVA

 300 NVA

 E2B VC

•LVC

•LVC •LVC



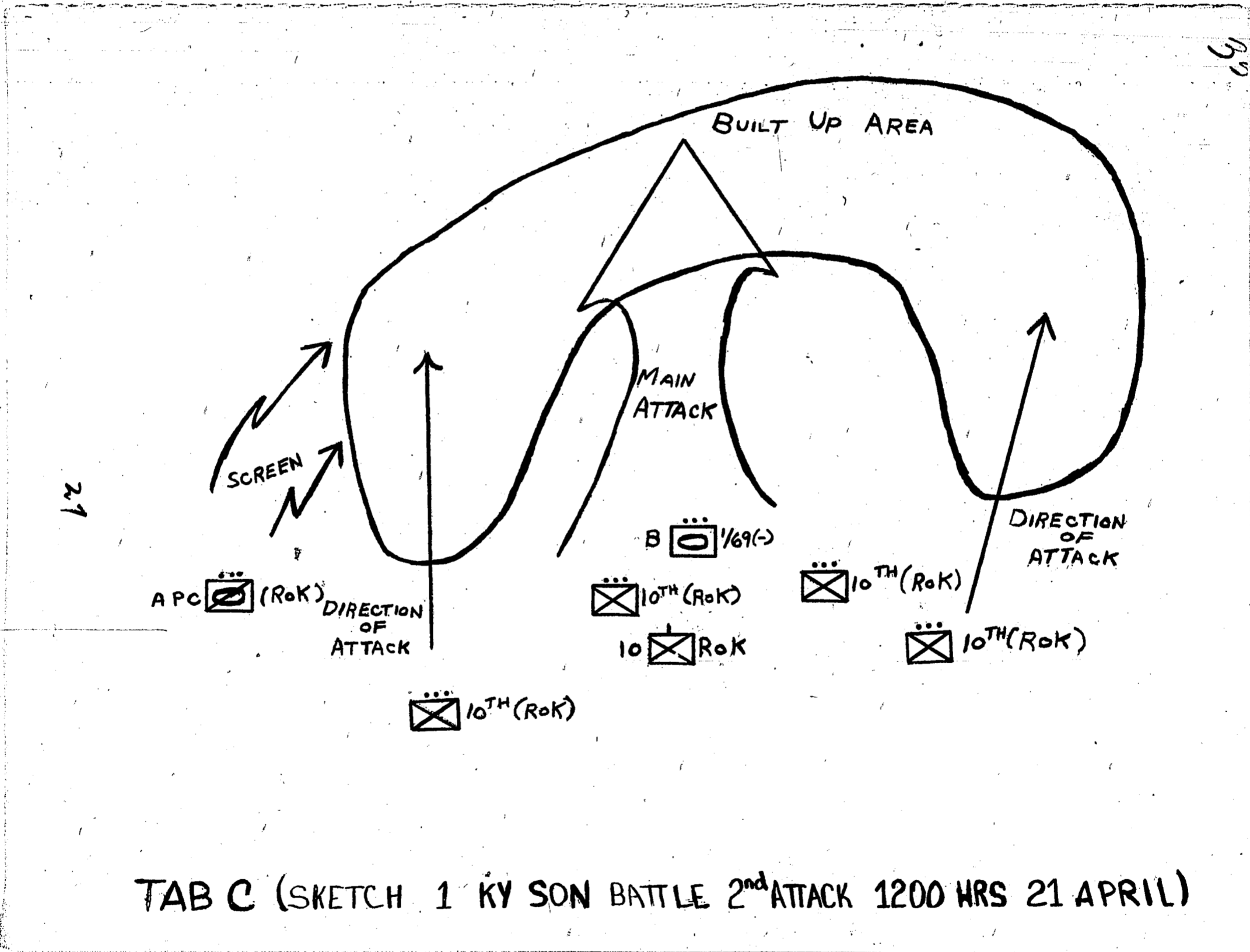
| ENEMY STRENGTH PRIOR TO OPERATIONS | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| 8TH BN | 18TH | NVA REGT | 170 |
| D 300 | SAPPER | BN | 36 |
| E 2 B | BN | | 60 |
| LOCAL | VC | | <u>34</u> |
| TOTAL | | | 300 |

TAB A (ENEMY STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION PRIOR TO OPERATION)

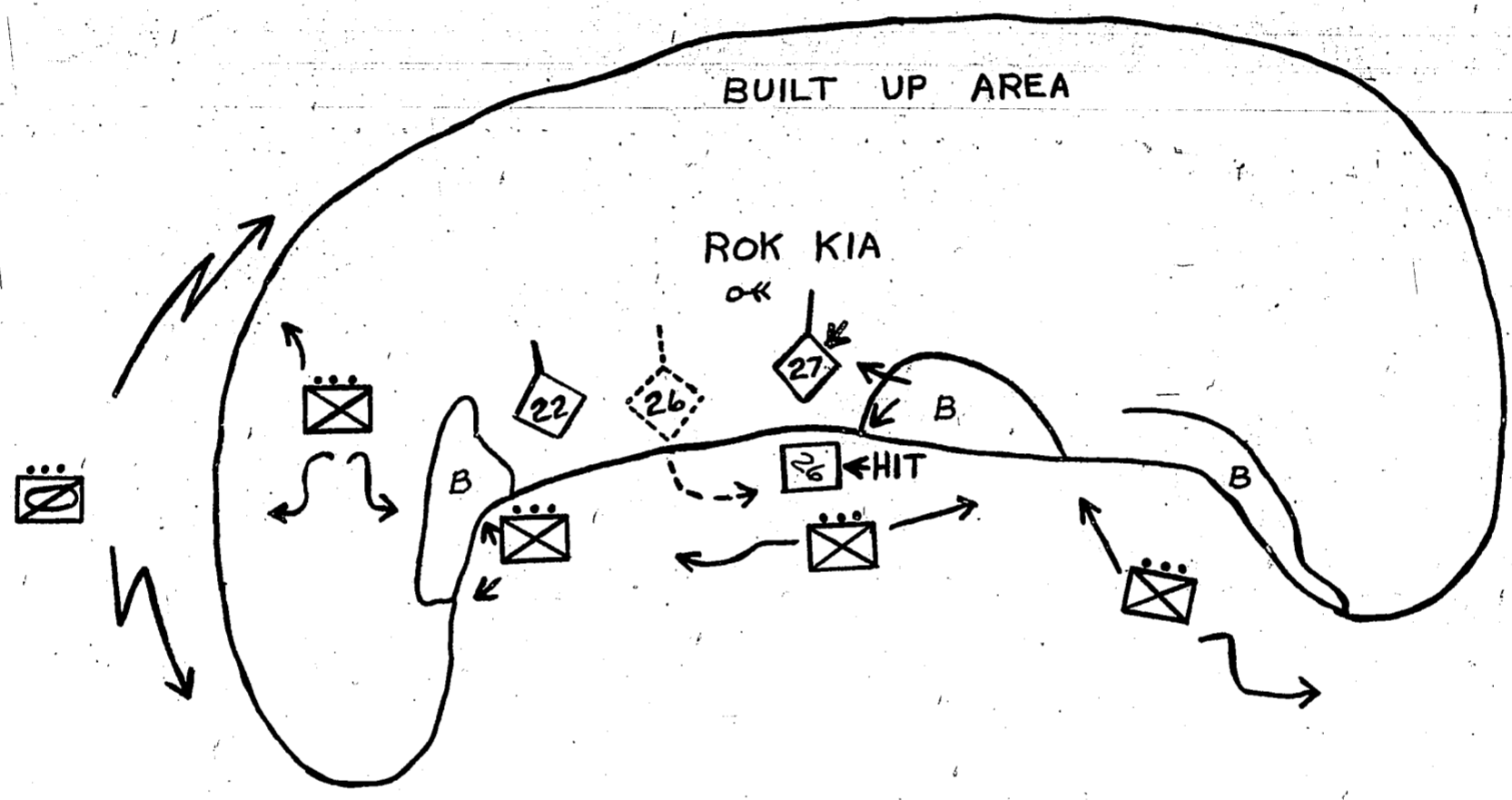
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TAB C (SKETCH 1 KY SON BATTLE 2nd ATTACK 1200 HRS 21 APRIL)



22

B-BUNKERS LOCATED

REACTION FORCE COVERED
WITHDRAWAL OF ATTACKING
TASK FORCE TO THIS LINE BY 1430 HRS.

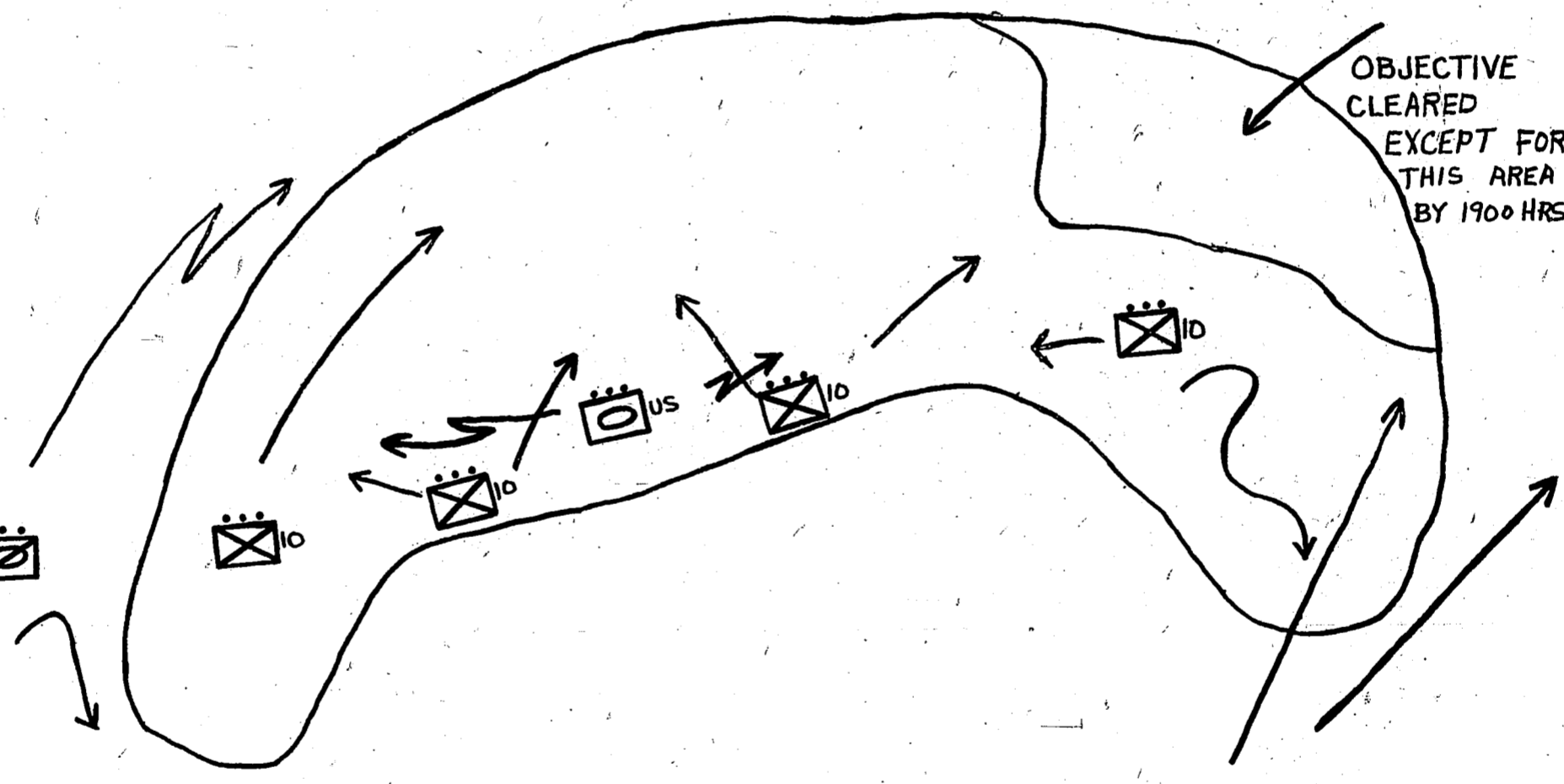
B [] (-)
REACTION
FORCE
1245 HRS.

TAB C (SKETCH 2 SITE OF 2ND KY SON BATTLE 1230 HRS 21 APR)

36

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AFC

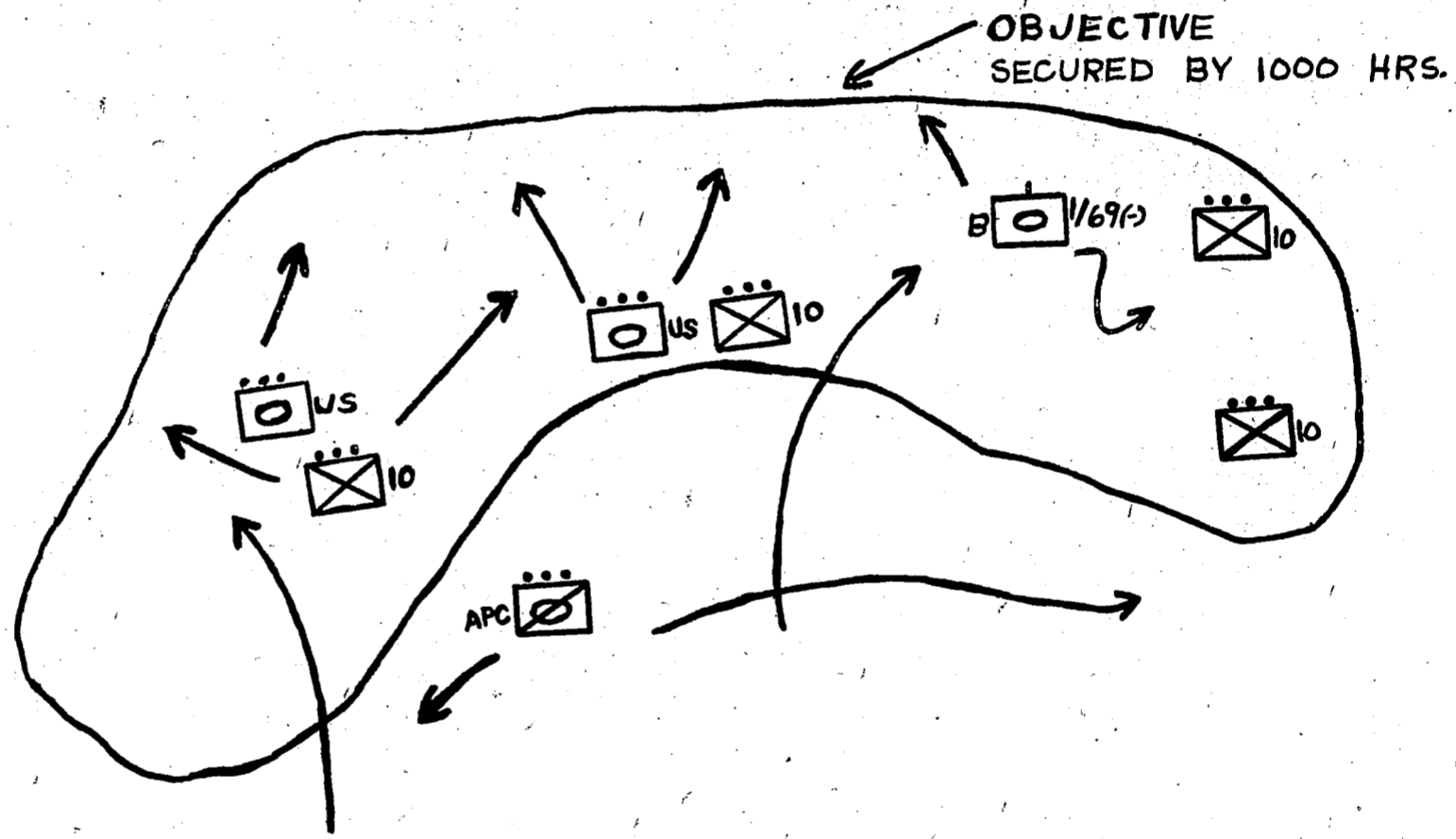


OBJECTIVE CLEARED EXCEPT FOR THIS AREA BY 1900 HRS.

B [square with 10] /69(-)
SUPPORT BY FIRE

TAB C (SKETCH 3 KY SON BATTLE 3rd ATTACK 1530 HRS 21 APR)

30



TAB C (SKETCH 4 KY SON BATTLE 4TH ATTACK 0800 HRS 22 APR)

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PICTURE INDEX

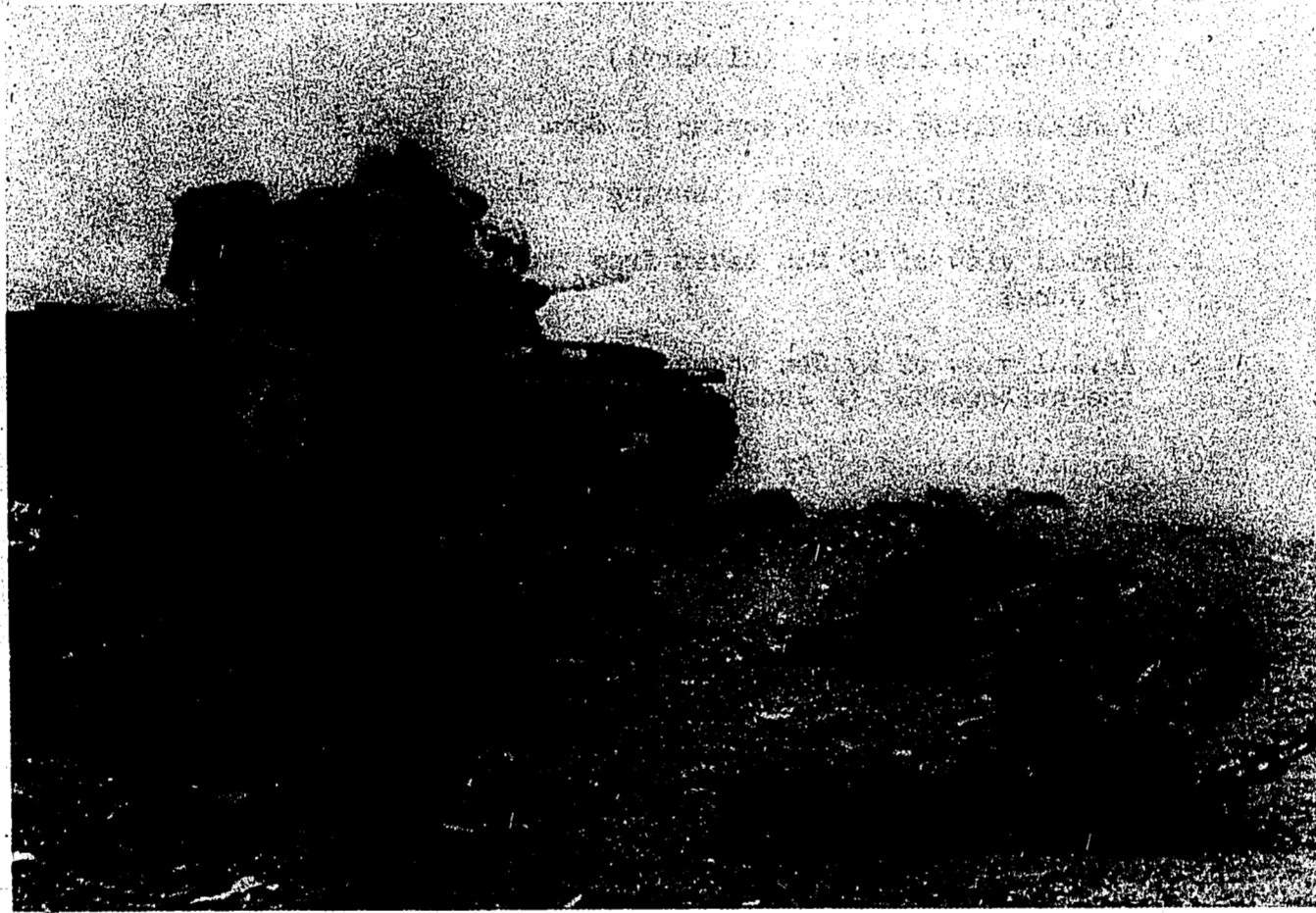
1. Tank/Infantry team firing in preparation for the assault on Ky Son. (21 April)
2. ROK Infantry attacking Ky Son. (21 April)
3. US Tanks uncover bunker/trench complex. (21 April)
4. ROK Infantry uncover bunker/trench complex. (21 April)
5. Close-up of bunker. (21 April)
6. Tank/Infantry team clearing Ky Son. (21 April)
7. Tank/APC/Infantry team clearing Ky Son. (21 April)
8. Aerial view of Ky Son taken from the west towards the east. (2 June)
9. Aerial view of Ky Son taken from the southeast looking toward the northwest. (2 June)
10. Aerial close-up of Ky Son from the southeast toward the northwest. (2 June)
11. Aerial view of Ky Son from the northwest looking toward the southeast. (2 June)
12. Ground view of northwest edge of Ky Son. (2 June)
13. One of the island hamlets of Ky Son toward the east. (2 June)
14. Ground view to the southeast from Ky Son Hamlet. (2 June)
15. Ground view to the northeast from Ky Son. (2 June)
16. Ground view to the west from Ky Son. (2 June)

TAB D Picture Index

Incl 4

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1. Tank/Infantry team firing in preparation for the assault on Ky Son. (21 April)

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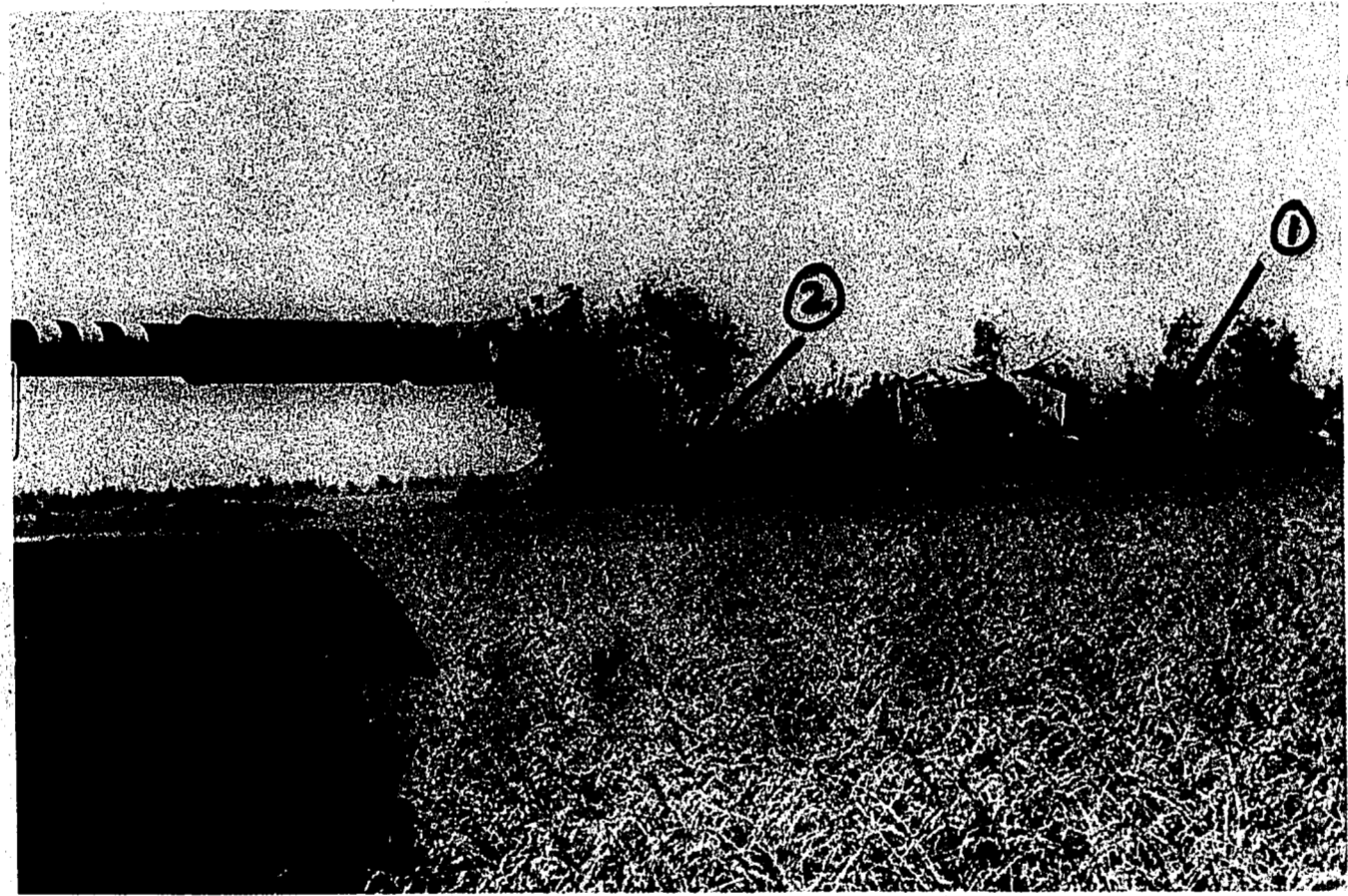
41



2. ROK Infantry attacking Ky Son. (21 April)

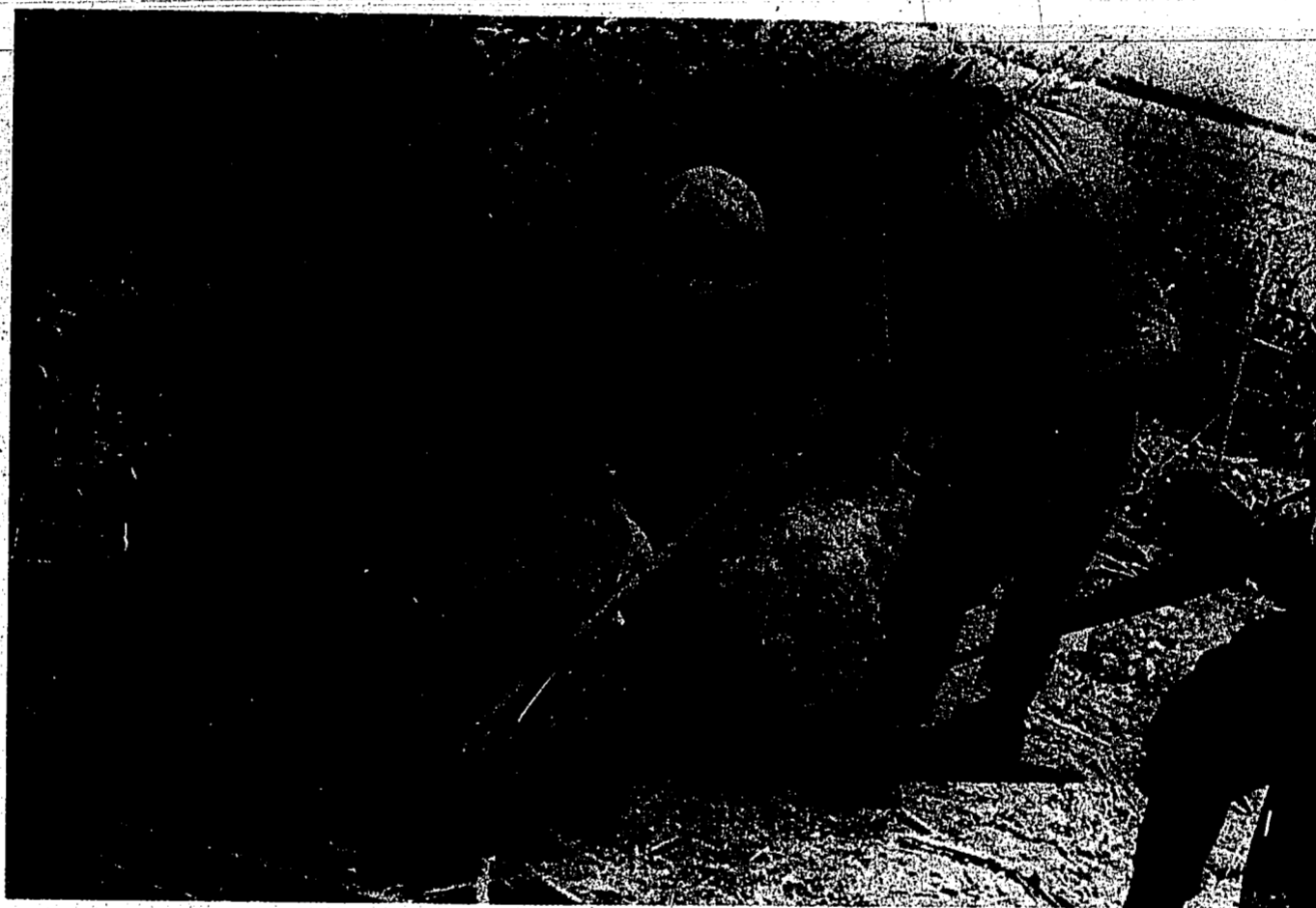
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3. ROK Infantry on the outskirts of Ky Son. (21 April)
1 Bunker 2 ROK Infantry

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4. ROK Infantry uncover bunker/trench complex. (21 April)

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5. Close-up of bunker. (21 April)

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6. Tank/Infantry team clearing Ky Son. (21 April)

46



7. Tank/APC/Infantry team clearing Ky Son. (21 April)

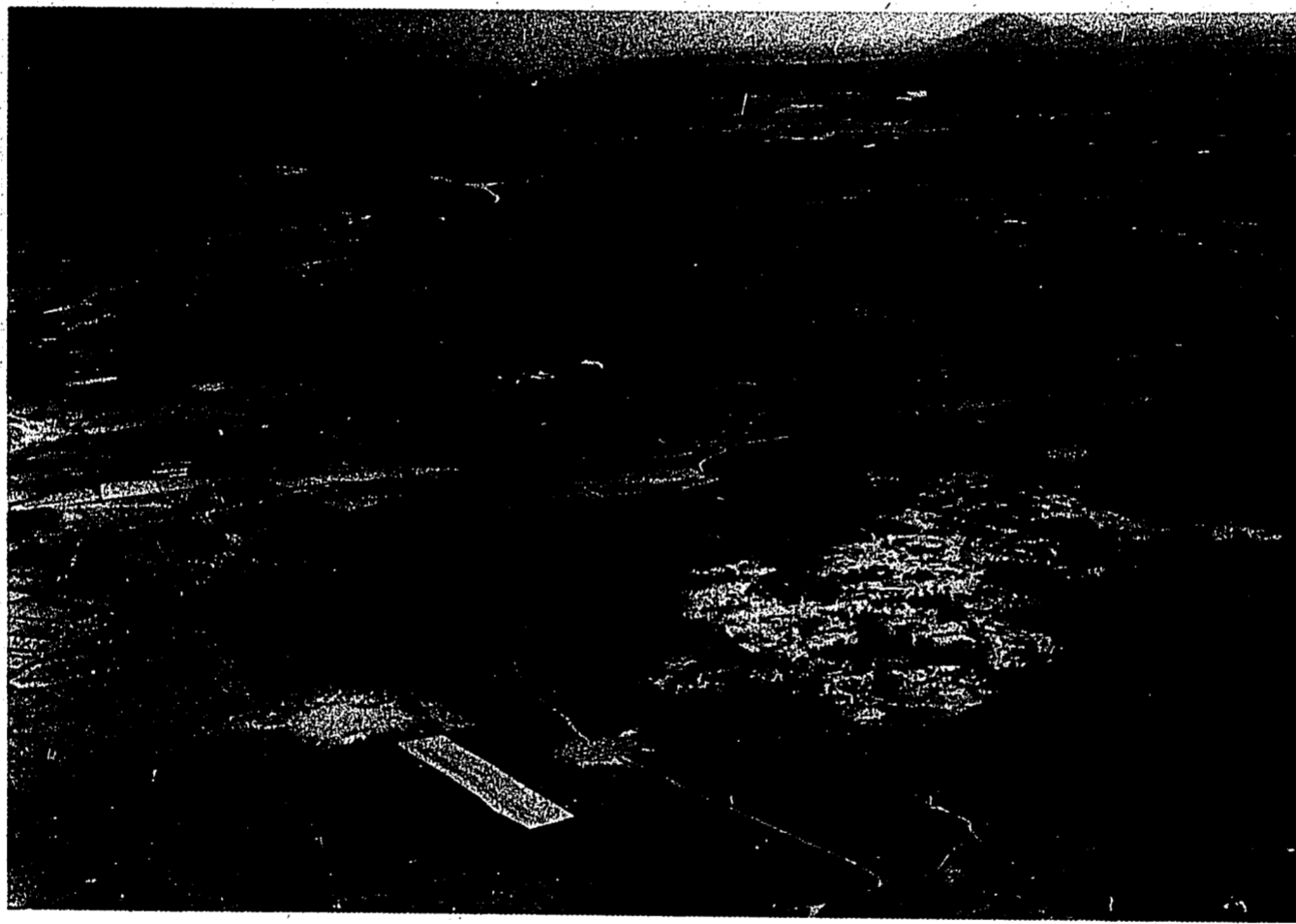
38

47



8. Aerial view of Ky Son taken from the west towards the east.
(2 June)

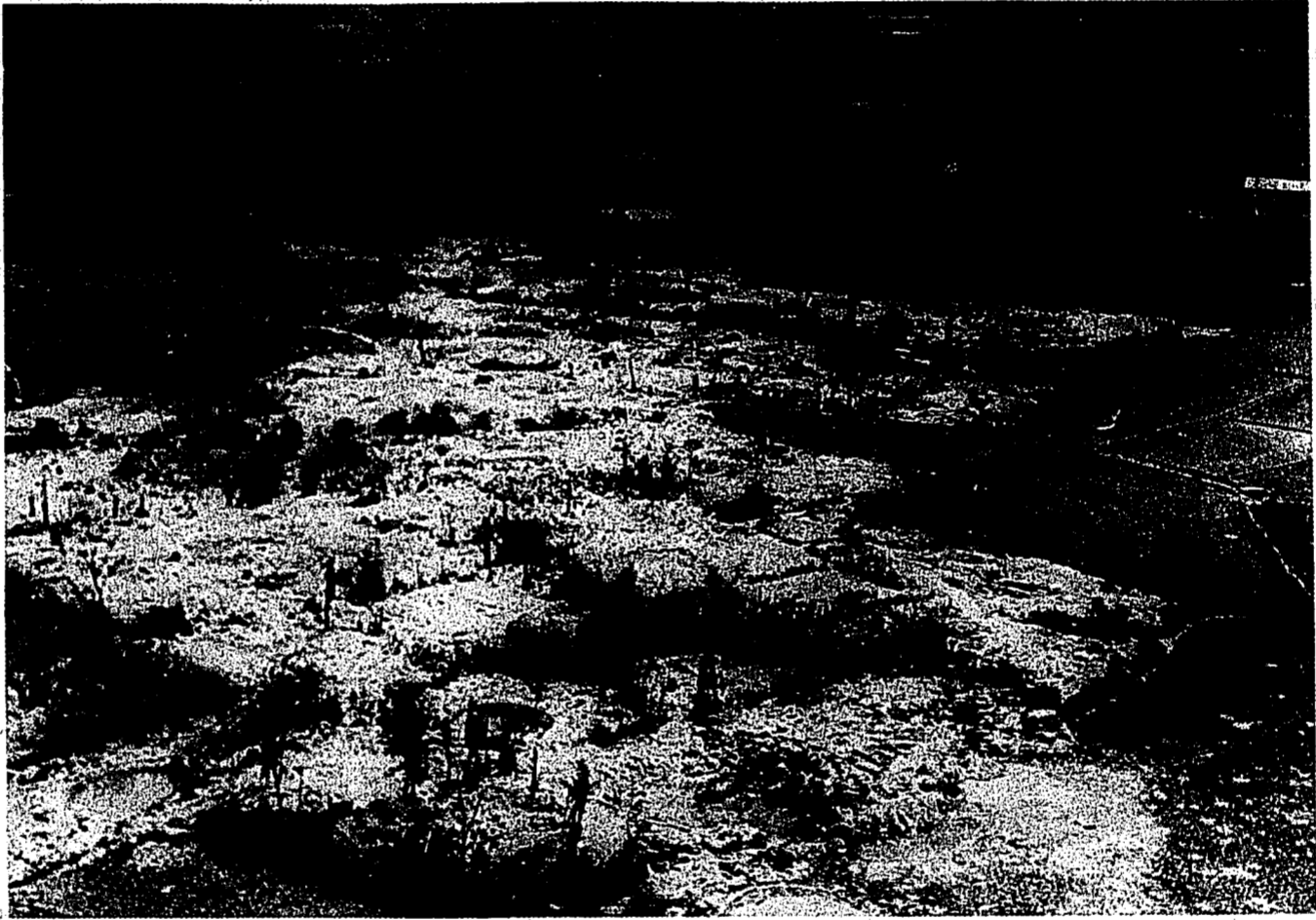
48



9. Aerial view of Ky Son taken from the southeast looking toward the northwest. (2 June)

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10. Aerial close-up of Ky Son from the southeast toward the northwest. (2 June)

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50



11. Aerial view of Ky Son from the northwest looking toward the southeast. (2 June)

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12. Ground view of northwest edge of Ky Son. (2 June)

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