

HEADQUARTERS, 3D BRIGADE TASK FORCE
25th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96355

AVDC-C-OP

25 February 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report for THAYER II

TO: Commanding General
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
APO 96190

1. (U) IDENTIFICATION OF OPERATION: THAYER II
2. (U) DATES OF OPERATION: Operation THAYER II commenced 030730 January 1967 and terminated 120659 February 1967.
3. (C) LOCATION OF OPERATION: Operation THAYER II was conducted in the Sudi Ca Valley with center of mass at BR8065. The area of operation encompassed approximately 220 square miles.
4. (U) CONTROL OR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco 96355.
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICER: Colonel James G. Shanahan.
6. (U) TASK ORGANIZATION:
 - a. Commanders:
 - Headquarters, 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division
Colonel James G. Shanahan
 - 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel William H. Miller
 - 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Kingston, 3 Jan - 8 Feb 67
Major James E. Moore, Junior, 8 Feb - 12 Feb 67
 - 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery
Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Holbrook
 - C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry
First Lieutenant Joseph Key Garner, 3 Jan - 10 Jan 67
Captain John P. Irving, III, 10 Jan - 12 Feb 67.

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3d Support Battalion (Provisional)
Major Andrew H. Housand

Company D, 65th Engineer Battalion
Major John R. Hill, 3 Jan - 22 Jan 67
Captain Arthur J. Pansze, Junior, 22 Jan - 12 Feb 67

40th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog)
Second Lieutenant Robert W. Thackeray

b. Principal staff:

S1
Major Ben G. Crosby, Junior, 3 Jan - 5 Jan 67
Captain Brian J. McCarthy, 5 Jan - 25 Jan 67
Major John D. Weil, 25 Jan - 12 Feb 67

S2
Major Edgar Egeland

S3
Major James E. Moore, Junior, 1 Nov 66 - 8 Feb 67
Major E. P. Houben, 8 Feb 67

S4
Major John A. Joyce

S5
Captain John Schmidt, III

7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

a. (C) Tactical air support was provided by 7th USAF and utilized by the 3d Brigade Task Force as indicated:

Inclusive dates of operations	FAC Missions		Combat Proofs	
	<u>Request</u>	<u>Run</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Run</u>
(1) 3-31 Jan	48	19	78	30
(2) 1-12 Feb	18	9	17	5
(3) TOTAL	66	28	95	35
(4) % Run	42(+)%		36(+)%	

b. (C) Aviation support: The 52d Combat Aviation Battalion supported the 3d Brigade Task Force with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company. Troop lifts, landing zone preparations, command and control capability, and resupply missions were provided.

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c. The total number of aircraft hours and missions for the 3d Brigade Task Force are as follows:

- (1) Fixed wing: Unknown
- (2) Rotary wing:
 - (a) 327 hours.
 - (b) 387 missions on 1,032 sorties.

d. (C) Artillery support: During Operation THAYER II, the mission of the 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery was direct support of the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. During the operation, Battery A was in direct support of 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry; Battery B was in direct support of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry; and Battery D (Provisional) was in direct support of base camp, 3d Brigade TF, 25th Infantry Division.

(1) During the entire operation several artillery units were attached to, or under operational control of the 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery. These units with periods are as follows:

(a) Battery B, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery attached to 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery 6 January to 12 February with the mission of general support.

(b) Battery A, 2d Battalion, 19th Artillery attached to 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery 11 January to 19 January and 27 January to 1 February with the mission of direct support of 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry.

(c) Battery A, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery OPCON 26 January to 9 February with the mission of direct support of 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry.

(2) During Operation THAYER II, Battery C, 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery was in direct support of 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry on Operation SAM HOUSTON.

(3) During THAYER II these units fired in support of infantry in contact, fired blocking fires, and fired immediate fires on SPAR and SPIDER reports. The extensive H & I program of the 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery was enhanced greatly by the additional fire support provided by these units.

(h) Statistical information:

(a) Total rounds fired:

- 1. 105mm: 21,954.
- 2. 155mm: 9,534.

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(b) Results:

1. 106 KIA.
2. 1 mortar silenced.
3. 17 structures destroyed.

(c) Four CH 47 moves were made during the operation. Four ground moves were also made.

8. (C) INTELLIGENCE:

a. Enemy situation prior to entry of 3d Brigade TF into Operation THAYER II: Two battalions and the headquarters of the 18th NVA Regiment as well as joint VC-NVA logistic bases were believed to be located in this area. Despite the pressure exerted by the 1st Cav Division Airmobile (this same pressure drove the 22d NVA and the 2d VC Regiments North at the beginning of THAYER II. The 18th NVA apparently attempted to remain in the vicinity of the Suoi Ca for two reasons.

(1) To refit and regroup the regiment, taking advantage of the substantial Long Dinh market area and the established VC infrastructure in the area for food and security.

(2) To maintain the presence of the regular forces NVA in Phu Cat and Phu My Districts in order to influence the VC in the area to remain "HARD CORE".

b. General:

(1)

(1) The weather early in January was influenced by the end of the North-East Monsoon season with resulting rain, fog, and decrease of visibility especially in the mountains and mountain valleys. This weather aided enemy movement and hindered friendly operations. With the waning of the NE Monsoon, the weather conditions improved and the enemy was placed in a completely defensive posture with a limited capability to withdraw.

(2) The terrain is dominated by a large mountain range characterized by steep slopes, deep ravines, granite boulder out-croppings, and dense vegetation occasionally broken by grass areas. The population in the fertile Suoi Ca Valley and in the mountains were enemy, enemy sympathizers, or enemy dominated. It was known and later confirmed by frequent contacts that the enemy had well established trails and logistic bases, many of them in the ravines and canyons, and a few in the Suoi Ca itself.

c. Significant activity in AO of 3/25:

(1) 4-9 Jan - immediately upon the introduction of the combat forces of the 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division, into the Suoi Ca Valley-Vinh Thanh Mountain range AO, several small contacts

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occurred. Friendly forces repeatedly engaged small numbers of enemy in sharp, short contacts. Numerous discoveries of large bunkers/complexes, most of them estimated to be 3 - 4 months old and scattered over a wide area, confirmed previous indications that a very large enemy force had occupied that area. The small contacts near the "OREGON TRAIL" (BR640595 to BR780670) and near the major trails to the N-NW together with documents and PWs captured in the area indicated that elements of the 7th Bn, 18th NVA Regiment were enroute during this time toward the North-Northwest to join the rest of the Regiment believed to be in the Ngia Dien Valley. The expected development of the enemy situation in the mountains to the East of the Soui Ca Valley never materialized despite PW and HOI CHANH reports of enemy presence in this area. However, the enemy, principally VC, began a terror and harrassing campaign against the civilian populace along Highway One and against the main routes of communications.

On 7 January, in the vicinity of BR745634, A Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry contacted a squad size unit with a great deal of equipment, maps and propaganda literature.

On 9 January, C 1/35 at BR753654 found several caves with telephones, wire, and miscellaneous equipment. These discoveries together with the separate small contacts made in the surrounding areas and the aerial observations made of recently heavily used trails were the first indications that the logistic base areas were being used extensively at that time by an undetermined sized force.

(2) 10-18 Jan - enemy activities in the 3d Brigade TF AO continued with several small contacts, some with startling results.

On 10 Jan in the vicinity of BR739645, 3d plat, A 1/35 made contact with five VC wearing US steel helmets, OD shirts, VC caps, and ponchos, attempting to exfiltrate the area. At BR755655, C 1/35 found several ladders in trees which were probably used as early warning observation posts. In the vicinity of BR743657, A 1/35 made contact with one NVA and found a large medical bag in a hut. Later an individual dressed in khakis ran into another hut and from there into a cave. At this time the large numbers of contacts with both NVA and VC in the same area confirmed the belief that the VC infrastructure and the NVA military forces (believed to be the 18th NVA Regt) were very closely related. In addition, the pressure exerted by the 3d Brigade TF forces caused the enemy to start exfiltrating in small groups. Two hundred sixty-five of these enemy were killed and seventy three were captured attempting to exfiltrate out of the area during the operation.

On 11 Jan, B 1/35 killed two enemy in the vicinity of BR807589. The individuals were traveling Southeast down a slope toward Long Dinh Village and had with them 100,000 piastres in 500 piaster notes. This

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unusual find and the large number of pistols and submachine guns captured in the following days indicated that the 3d Brigade TF forces had struck close to a major headquarters. At this time it is believed that the 7th Bn, 18th NVA Regt had successfully exfiltrated NW to the Nghia Dien Valley.

(3) On 19 Jan, a series of caves, formed by granite boulders piled upon one another, were discovered in a ravine leading SE out of the OREGON TRAIL (BR740648). This rock complex was found to provide shelter for the financial section, psychological operations section, ammunition warehouse, hospital, and some documents from the intelligence section of the Binh Dinh Province Headquarters. In addition, part of the medical and the signal support of the 18th NVA Regiment is believed to have been in the rock formation. Interrogation reports indicate that in early December, the 18th NVA Regiment had established headquarters in the vicinity of hill 975 (BR693614) together with the 9th NVA Battalion. It is believed that the 18th NVA Headquarters and elements of the 9th Battalion exfiltrated from the OREGON TRAIL to the Northwest to Nghia Dien Valley and from there to the Western Binh Son Valley between 5-10 January as a direct reaction to the insertion of the 3d Brigade TF into THAYER II AO. The 7th Battalion of the 18th NVA Regiment was stationed in the vicinity of Hill 829 (vic BR763649) at the Northeastern approach to the OREGON TRAIL, and exfiltrated between 8-15 Jan along the same approximate route. It is believed that the 7th Battalion became separated in search of food in the Kim Son Valley. The Binh Dinh Province Headquarters was situated near the OREGON TRAIL in the above mentioned rock complex. IPW reports indicate that engineer, signal, and transportation elements of the 18th NVA Headquarters were attached to the Binh Dinh Province Headquarters for security. Certainly the rapid deployment of friendly elements into the vicinity of the Provincial Headquarters prevented the enemy from exfiltrating with much of the equipment, material, and personnel from the administrative staff of the Headquarters. The total assessment of damage to the enemy is reflected in the figures in Paragraph P.

On the 21st of January 1/14th Infantry in the vicinity of BR739632 captured a large amount of personnel, and operations and intelligence documents belonging to the VC Military Provincial Headquarters of Binh Dinh.

d. Documents in the G-1 Category:

(1) Organizational charts of the Binh Dinh Provincial Headquarters and some district headquarters. Charts show a breakdown by job description of each position in these headquarters.

(2) Order of battle charts on all Viet Cong units in Binh

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Dinh Province to include personnel rosters, weapons, actual TO & E's and status of ammunition.

(3) Order of battle on a new Provincial Sapper Battalion of unknown designation but with companies designated D-10, D-20, D-30, and D-40. Document also shows that 555 infiltration group was used to fill up the D-30 Co.

(4) Recruitment Plan for 1966 shows that in the 1st Phase (25/4/66) 650 were to be recruited; 2d Phase (10/5/66, 500 were to be recruited; 3d Phase (31/8/66), 850 were to be recruited. The distribution of recruited labor and military strength of these recruits was to be 87% for the Sao Vang Division with the remaining 13% for provincial forces. Requirement above includes 250 women.

e. Documents in the G-2 Category

(1) Viet Cong plan to enlarge the "Popular Intelligence Structure" (Local Agents).

(2) Viet Cong order of battle studies of friendly positions in Binh Dinh Province, to include designation of friendly unit, strength, disposition, and detailed sketch maps showing fortifications and weapons emplacements.

(3) Various ARVN documents, most classified, to include one TS SOI for all PF, RF forces in Binh Dinh for the month of October 66. One document signed "Westacoreland" that is apparently a strategic study (Lengthy), not enough translated yet to evaluate.

f. Documents in the G-3 Category

(1) Viet Cong plans for increasing Sapper training.

(2) Standing operations procedure for the preparation and execution of a campaign.

Mine. (3) Training documents on the use of the U.S. Claymore

point. (4) Viet Cong tactical explanation of attack on a strong

(5) Reports on Viet Cong field experience with ROX units.

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g. Documents in the G-4 Category:

Complete status report on Viet Cong equipment in Binh Dinh.

h. The following document complete translation is believed to be of special importance:

Document is from Cau Qua (AKA Sapper Bn)

THRU: THON 510 (AKA HQS MR V)

TO: ANH TINH (AKA BINH DINH HQS)

Plans prepared by Sapper units during the months of October - November 1966.

(1) Qui Nhon

(a) Hill 208 South of Qui Nhon has sixty (60) vacationing Americans.

(b) Message Center (Radio) for entire staff in Qui Nhon (Area 2).

(c) Dancing area South of Area 2 in Qui Nhon, has approximately 150 American Officers concentrated there every Saturday night.

(d) Ammunition warehouse located in Area 1 near dock loaded by barge contain 100 tons of ammo, mostly Artillery.

(2) Fucc Hau (AKA TUY PHUOC District)

One psy war platoon in Luong Hong Village four Km W of Fucc Hau.

(3) Fucc Hau (AKA PHUOC HAU Village TUY PHUOC District)

(a) One company of Naval Officers

(b) Twelve (12) gasoline storage tanks with approximately ten (10) million liters located in a valley near the water surface about 1,200 meters N of Hill 193.

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(4) Phu Cat (Aka Phu Cat District):

(a) Go Tram Training Center.

(b) One Korean company stationed in the forest north-east of the foot of Hill Tra Lan Son (160).

(c) American Area north of Go Quanh (39) with about 400 people.

(5) Fu Tai (Aka Phu Tai Village, Tuy Phuoc District).

(a) One Korean company with cannons in the Thanh Long Hamlet less than 3 kilometers south of Hill 202.

(b) One American platoon with artillery and mortars at Xom Market.

(c) One Korean platoon at Khan Bridge East.

1. A large amount of financial documents that appear to be the records of the Binh Dinh Province Finance Committee (VC). In addition, there are approximately 10,500,000 piasters worth of National Liberation Front (Lao Dong) Bonds.

2. Documents by type are as follows:

(1) Personnel record books.

(2) Supply record books with hand receipts.

(3) Tax receipts for payment to the VC.

(4) Finance record books with the name of Mr. Hai. Hai appears to be in charge of the Binh Dinh Province Finance Committee, code number F114. Probably the number for the finance committee.

(5) List of people in the districts of Binh Dinh Province who have given money and rice to the VC. The districts are An Nhon, Phu My, Binh Khe, Hoai An, Phu Cat, and Tuy Phuoc.

(6) Line and block chart of the organization of the Province Finance Committee.

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k. Further significant occurrences during the period included a contact with an estimated platoon in prepared positions with overhead cover in the vicinity of BR729607. The enemy apparently established a perimeter defense overnight. They did not take the risk to police the battlefield during the night. It was then believed that a Viet Cong unit was operating in the area. Judging from prisoners captured subsequently, the unit was identified as the E-2B Viet Cong Battalion which was low on food, medicine, personnel and ammunition. After several engagements with ROK and US forces the E-2B was fighting to survive.

(1) 1-12 February: During this period friendly forces continued to exploit the intelligence gained from the captured documents and prisoners. Several bunker complexes, arms caches, a large surgery and pharmacy, and many more significant documents were found. In particular, the enemy was denied several thousands of dollars worth of vital antibiotic and anti-malaria drugs, two 81mm mortars, a 57mm recoilless rifle, a 60mm mortar, a light 7.62mm anti-aircraft machinegun and automatic and semi-automatic and small arms.

(2) During this period friendly forces captured a map in the vicinity of the Nghia Dien Valley. The map had marks of enemy base areas and each mark when checked was found to be an accurate plot of an enemy base area or tactical position. The fact that this map was captured by friendly forces, is one more indication of the desperate situation of the enemy, in particular, the 18th NVA Regiment and the VC headquarters of Binh Dinh Province.

1. Interrogation of the Chief of Radio Operations of the Communications Platoon of the Rear Services Section for Binh Dinh Province, (Individual was North Vietnamese apprehended 30 January in the vicinity of BR689724) revealed the extent of the blow to the enemy. He gave the following information concerning the composition and strength of the Rear Service Section found and destroyed in the rock complex 19 January to 5 February:

- (1) Food supply sub-section: Strength - 30.
- (2) Finance sub-section: Strength: 6-7.
- (3) Weapons and ammunition sub-section, strength: 27-38.
 - (a) Blacksmith shop.
 - (b) Ammunition procurement.

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- (4) Transportation company, strength: 70-80.
- (5) Political section, strength: 14.
- (6) Military staff section:
 - (a) Engineer platoon, strength: Approximately 50.
 - (b) Reconnaissance platoon, strength: 50.
 - (c) Crypto section, strength: 50.
 - (d) Communications platoon, strength: 50.
- (7) Total strength: 300-325.

m. The mission of the food supply sub-section was to procure and distribute food, mainly rice and salt, to units within the Binh Dinh Province Headquarters area of operations. Since the 3d Brigade Task Force entered THAYER II, the brigade has captured 19.7 tons of rice and destroyed 2.5 tons of rice and 21.7 tons of salt. The main market for the enemy's purchase of food supplies, Long Dinh Market, has been denied him by the resettlement operation now under way in the Sowi Ca Valley Area as well as by aggressive patrolling and ambushes along the routes of movement to the market area.

n. The mission of the finance sub-section was to handle monetary transactions for the purpose of procuring food and supplies. The capture of 10,500,000 VN piasters worth of paid and unpaid NLF payment certificates (Bonds) along with numerous records and other documents by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry on 21 January as well as the capture of 100,000 piasters by Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry during an ambush on 11 January is believed to have rendered this section inoperable for an extended period of time.

o. The weapons and ammunition sub-section was composed of a Blacksmith Shop and an Ammunition Procurement Section. The Blacksmith Shop made iron casings for grenades and booby traps as well as manufacturing simple tools. A limited weapons repair capability was also maintained. This shop was destroyed by Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry on 12 January 1967. The ammunition procurement section had the mission of procuring, storing, and distributing ammunition for the units. The large secondary explosions which occurred during demolition of the rock complex are believed to have destroyed an extremely great amount of ammunition and gunpowder being stored by this section for future distribution. This, coupled with the large ammunition cache located by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry on 26 January 1967, seriously hampered the operation of this section.

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p. The Communications Platoon was equipped with 2 AN/GRC-9 radios, 1 Chicom model 71B radio, 2 AN/PRC-10 radios, 1 AN/PRC-25 radio, and 12 TA-312 telephones. The capture of 1 AN/GRC-9 and 1 Chicom model 71B on 2 February 1967, by Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry; 2 AN/PRC-10's on 22 January 1967, by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry; and 7 TA-312's on 9 January 1967, by Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry rendered this section almost completely inoperable.

q. Although not mentioned by the prisoner, the complex included a complete and well equipped dispensary which was destroyed by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry on 21 January 1967. Another dispensary was located and destroyed and vast amounts of medical supplies captured by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry on 5 February 1967. It is believed that there were a total of five such dispensaries within the operational area of the Binh Dinh Province Headquarters.

r. Personnel losses to the province headquarters have been equally as great. On 28 January 1967, Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry contacted an element of the headquarters resulting in the death of the assistant communications officer and the headquarters manager while the headquarters surgeon was wounded. Since discovery of the rock complex on 19 January 1967, the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry killed 53 enemy and captured 4 enemy in the immediate vicinity of the complex. These, as well as numerous other losses in the area, reduced the strength of the headquarters to an estimated 200 personnel.

s. The above losses coupled with the incalculable psychological damage to the enemy should have a significant crippling long-term impact on the communist infrastructure of Binh Dinh Province.

t. Statistical summary of enemy personnel and equipment losses:

(1) Personnel:	<u>NVA</u>	<u>VC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
(a) KIA (BC)	169	96	265
(b) CIA	10	63	73
(c) RETURNEES	2	12	14
(d) Civil Defendants	—	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
TOTALS	181	180	361

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(2) Weapons:

- (a) Small arms: 64
- (b) Automatics: 27
- (c) Crew served: 5
- (d) Totals: 96

(3) Other equipments:

(a) Ammunition:

- 1° Small arms: 4,889
- 2° TNT: 15½ lbs
- 3° 81/82mm mortars: 8
- 4° 60mm: 20
- 5° Grenades: 296
- 6° Anti-Tank Rockets: 5
- 7° Chicom mines: 6
- 8° Detonator cord: 15 ft
- 9° Blasting caps: 90
- 10° Bobby traps: 12
- 11° Claymore mines: 1
- 12° 57mm rifles (recoilless): 3

(b) Personal equipment:

- 1° Packs: 125
- 2° Clothing sets: 121
- 3° Canteens: 10
- 4° Gas Masks: 14
- 5° Flashlights: 5

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<u>6.</u>	Shovels	5
<u>7.</u>	Web gear	16
<u>8.</u>	Hammocks	14
<u>9.</u>	Mesquito nets	10
<u>10.</u>	Ponchos	66
<u>11.</u>	Machetes	2
<u>12.</u>	Bayonets	1
<u>13.</u>	Camera	1

(c) Miscellaneous:

1. Signal:

<u>a.</u>	Telephones	10
<u>b.</u>	Military radios	10
<u>c.</u>	Civ radios	3
<u>d.</u>	Commo wire	13 miles
<u>e.</u>	Lights	15

2. Medical: Surgical equipment and antibiotic
and anti-malaria drugs, 1,250 lbs.

3. Food:

<u>a.</u>	Cow	1
<u>b.</u>	Hogs	40
<u>c.</u>	Rice	20.7 tons
<u>d.</u>	Salt	21.7 tons
<u>e.</u>	"C" Rations	100 accessory items
<u>f.</u>	Sugar	2 lbs

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4. Other:

- a. Vast amount of documents
- b. 10,500,000 VN Piasters in NLF payment certificates.
- c. 100,000 VN Piasters
- d. 3,400 lbs typing paper
- e. 6 cubic feet of typing paper
- f. 5 lbs tobacco
- g. 300 ft of electrical cord
- h. 4 typewriters
- i. 2 clocks
- j. 2 sewing machines
- k. 2 Communist International Flags
- l. 2 VC Flags
- m. 1 NVA Flag
- n. 300 lbs cotton
- o. 4 NVA fountain pens
- p. 25 cooking pots
- q. 75 ft of cloth

5. Fortifications and structures destroyed

<u>a.</u> Huts	156
<u>b.</u> Foxholes	74
<u>c.</u> Tunnels	10
<u>d.</u> Bunkers	487

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9. (C) Missions:

a. General:

(1) Reference change 1 to FRAGO 38-66 THAYER II, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, dated 010435Z January 1967.

(a) 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile): Employ 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division in offensive operations in the Suoi Ca Valley (center of mass, BR8065).

(b) 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division:

1. Assume attachment of one battery medium artillery from 4th Infantry Division.

2. Deploy to THAYER II area of operation by road with 2 infantry battalions, 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery and attached medium artillery battery on 3 January 1967.

3. Become OPCON Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) upon departure main body from Camp Holloway.

b. (C) Specific missions, less those of minor importance, were as follows:

(1) Reference: FRAGO 7006-2, Headquarters, 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 061510Z January 1967:

(a) First priority mission is to search for and destroy the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment.

(b) Second priority mission is to search the eastern portion of the Suoi Ca.

(c) Establish LRRPs on passes leading into and from 1st Brigade area of operation.

(d) Relieved of security responsibilities for Landing Zone MEADE by 1st Brigade at a time mutually agreed upon by Commanding Officer, 1st Brigade and Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade TF, 25th Infantry Division.

(2) Reference: FRAGO 7017-3, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 171035Z January 1967.

(a) Contact cordon and search operations in the Long Binh Market Area on 18 January 1967.

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(b) Release 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry (-) (Headquarters Company, Company C, and Company B) to division control effective 19 January 1967.

(c) Release Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry and Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry to 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry effective 21 January 1967.

(d) Effective 19 January 1967, conduct search and destroy operations in the area south of the Oregon Trail to the division boundary to kill or capture units of the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment.

(e) Continue to conduct search and destroy operations in the hill mass east of the Suoi Ca Valley.

(3) Reference: FRAGO 7021-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 201100Z January 1967.

Assume responsibility for security of Landing Zone MEADE 211200 January 1967.

(4) Reference: FRAGO 7025-3, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 250300Z January 1967.

(a) Assume OPCON 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry upon closure Vinh Thanh Valley, 26 January 1967.

(b) Retain one company, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry as reserve/reactionary force in Vinh Thanh Valley to be committed on approval of this Headquarters.

(5) Reference: FRAGO 7026-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 261100Z January 1967.

Relieved of responsibility for security of Landing Zone MEADE by the 2d Brigade effective 27 January 1967.

(6) Reference: FRAGO 7028-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 281015H January 1967.

Continue to provide one company as division reserve/reaction force to be committed only on approval of this headquarters.

(7) Reference: FRAGO 7029-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 291300H January 1967.

Assume responsibility for security of the artillery battery in the Vinh Thanh Valley from 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division effective 29 January 1967.

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(8) Reference: FRAGO 7030-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 301100H January 1967.

(a) Deploy 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry to 1st Brigade's area of operation beginning first light 1 February; OPCON 1st Brigade upon closure.

(b) Provide one battalion (2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry) as division reserve/reactionary force; one company prepared to move in 30 minutes after notification, battalion (-) in 3 hours.

(9) Reference: FRAGO 7033-3, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division, dated 021300 February 1967.

(a) Release OPCON Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry to 1st Brigade on 3 February 1967.

(b) Deploy one company (2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry) to HAMMOND on 4 February, OPCON to Support Command upon closure for security of HAMMOND.

(10) Reference FRAGO 7040-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 090045H February 1967.

(a) Release OPCON 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry (-) to 2d Brigade effective 9 February 1967.

(b) Continue security of Battery C, 3d Battalion, 18th Artillery in the Vinh Thanh Valley.

(c) Release OPCON of one company to Support Command for security of HAMMOND on 9 February 1967. Company will be relieved by one company of 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry on 11 February.

(11) Reference: FRAGO 7041-1, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), dated 102330H February 1967.

(a) Deploy one company to the Nui Mieu Mountain to conduct operations in support of revolutionary development.

(b) Continue to provide one company OPCON to Support Command for security of HAMMOND.

(c) Relieved of security of Battery C, 3d Battalion, 18th Artillery when subject battery is moved from that area on 11 February.

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10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

a. General: Operation THAYER II commenced 030730 January 1967 with the 3d Brigade TF reverting from the operational control authority of the 4th Infantry Division to the operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The operation terminated 120659 February with the disposition of tactical units of the task force as shown in inclosure 2.

b. Period 3-6 January: During this period the Brigade TF with two infantry battalions and supporting artillery deployed by road to the THAYER II area of operation and prepared to conduct offensive operations in the Suoi Ca Valley (center of mass: BR8065) for a period of approximately 3 weeks as shown in inclosure 1.

c. Period 7-17 January: On 7 January in response to FRAGO 1-67, search and destroy operations in the Brigade TF became concentrated in the northwestern part of the area of operation as well as in the Suoi Ca Valley as efforts intensified toward capturing and destroying the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment. Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols and ambushes were used extensively during this period. Provisions were also made during this period for the tactical security of Landing Zone HAMMOND.

d. Period 18-31 January: 18-19 January was devoted primarily to the setting up of rallying points and conducting of Psychological operations to rally survivors of the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment while participating in the national CHIEU HOI Holiday on 19 January. During the remainder of the period, elements of the 3d Brigade TF concentrated their efforts towards: (1) Exploitation of massive underground complexes discovered in the vicinity of BR739649 and BR868614; (2) Search and clear operations in the Suoi Ca Valley area; and (3) Continuance of search and destroy operations directed at the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment.

e. Period 1-12 February: 1-5 February was devoted to conducting extensive, aggressive search and destroy operations in the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails and continuing to destroy the cave complexes with light contact during this time frame. During 6-7 February, components of the brigade continued to conduct search and destroy operations in the Santa Fe Trail, Oregon Trail, evacuated civilian personnel from the Suoi Ca Valley Area and screened the southern mouth of the Suoi Ca Valley to block infiltration of enemy forces. During the remainder of the period, elements of the 3d Brigade TF conducted surveillance operations vicinity the Oregon Trail and the Suoi Ca Valley Area employing day and night defensive ambushes and reconnaissance patrols to prevent the enemy from initiating any offensive actions in consonance with the TET Holiday truce which was violated by sporadic offensive contact by the enemy. The schemes of maneuver for Operation THAYER II by the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry are shown as inclosures 3 and 4 respectively.

f. The operation ended with the 3d Brigade TF, 25th Infantry

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under the operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The kill ratio of friendly to enemy was 1:12 or 22 friendly KIA versus 265 enemy KIA.

11. (C) EXECUTION:

a. Period 3-6 January:

(1) 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry: The Battalion conducted a tactical motor march from the Brigade task force base camp area to the forward assembly area vicinity of Phu Cat Rifle Range (BR06515), closing at 031735 January 1967. Accompanying the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry were RHC, 3d Brigade Task Force; 1st Platoon, C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and Battery B, 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery. Shortly after closing, security was established and the Brigade TF and Battalion's command posts became operational. On 4 January the Battalion conducted an air assault into its assigned area of operations and initiated offensive operations. The Battalion command post and fire base was established at Landing Zone SANTA (BR845716) with Company C (-) providing local security. Company A helilifted into Landing Zone MEADE, closing at 1715 hours and assumed the mission of providing security of the radio relay location. 2d Platoon, Company A remained at the Phu Cat Rifle Range to assist in the security of the Brigade TF command post. Company B (-) conducted a helilift into Landing Zone GAVIN (BR812636), closing at 1405 hours and assumed the mission of providing security for Battery A, 2d Battalion, 19th Artillery and began search and destroy operations in the immediate vicinity of Landing Zone GAVIN. Company C (-) helilifted into Landing Zone SANTA, closed with the Battalion command post and fire base, and began conducting local patrols. The Battalion assumed OMA of Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry at 051000 January 1967 and that company immediately began search and destroy operations north from Landing Zone GAVIN. At 061525 January, Task Force Irving (2d Platoon, Company A and 1st Platoon, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry) conducted a village search operation in the vicinity of BR865558. The operation was completed at 1625 hours with negative findings. The Reconnaissance Platoon began conducting search and destroy operations southwest of Landing Zone SANTA in the vicinity of BR812692.

(2) 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: On 4 January 1967 the Battalion made a tactical road march from Pleikha base camp to the forward assembly area at the Phu Cat Rifle Range, closing at 1715 hours, secured the area, and prepared to air assault into their assigned area of operation on the following day. On 5 January the Battalion CP, fire base, Reconnaissance Platoon and Company C (-) were helilifted into Landing Zone GAVIN, closing at 1600 hours. The Battalion command post was operational at 1000 hours. Company A and B air assaulted into the vicinity of BR811626 closing at 1330 hours where they branched out into

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search and destroy operations. At 1000 hours the Battalion assumed OGA of Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry who immediately initiated search and destroy operations in the vicinity of BR815646. On 6 January the Battalion command post and fire base was helilifted to Landing Zone TIP (BR791625) where they closed at 1620 hours.

(3) 1st Platoon, C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry: Upon their arrival at the Phu Cat Rifle Range with 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry the platoon set up security around the Battalion command post area and conducted local patrolling action. On 6 January the platoon participated as a part of Task Force Irving in search and destroy operations in the vicinity of BR865558, returning to battalion base at night. During the remainder of the reporting period the platoon continued to provide security for the Brigade TF forward base of operations. Additionally, each day they provided security for the Republic of Vietnam National Police Civilian Check Point (BR861552) from 0700 to 1730 hours.

(4) C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry: On 3 January C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry was placed in general support of the 3d Brigade TF and remained on call to the Brigade TF Commander throughout the remainder of the reporting period. They were deployed as screening forces and quick-strike search and destroy forces in areas where the commander deemed critical at the appropriate time.

b. Period 7-17 January:

(1) 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry: During this period the Battalion oriented the search and destroy operations in a westerly direction within its area of operations with two companies combing the area of operation daily while one company provided security for the fire base at night. The three rifle companies rotated security and local patrolling duty at Landing Zone SANTA. The Reconnaissance Platoon conducted search and destroy operations in different areas throughout the entire area of operation during this period. On 7 January Company A was relieved of its security mission at Landing Zone MEADE. The Reconnaissance Platoon assumed this mission during the period 11-12 January. Company B was relieved in place by Company C who came under the operational control authority of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry effective 121015 January at BR747669. Company B thereupon returned to Landing Zone SANTA. From 14 to 17 January the Battalion acted as a blocking force to prevent enemy exfiltration to the east and northeast.

(2) 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: During this period the Battalion worked aggressively through their area of operation in a north-westerly direction making extensive use of IRRPs and ambushes. Frequent contact was made and after three days it appeared that small elements of enemy forces were attempting to exfiltrate the area. On 10 January Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry was placed under the operational

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control authority of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry and started moving on a multiple axis toward the vicinity of BR746766. Much of the Battalion's efforts were concentrated on the Oregon Trail area (see enclosure 3) which the enemy was using as an exfiltration route. In conjunction with the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry's flushing out operation along the Oregon Trail, on 10 January the 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry became under the operational control authority of the 3d Brigade TF to be employed as a blocking force at the western exit of the Oregon Trail. Company B, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry was replaced on 12 January by Company C, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry who assumed blocking positions and conducted search and destroy patrols in the vicinity of the eastern end of the Oregon Trail.

(3) 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry: On 10 January the Brigade TF assumed operational control authority of the 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry who was emplaced in the western portion of the Brigade TF of operation. Their four companies were positioned at strategic exit sites where they conducted local patrolling action by day and set up ambushes by night. Throughout the period the Squadron continued to conduct local search and destroy operations and to block enemy exfiltration to the west.

c. Period 18-31 January:

(1) 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry: On 19 January the Battalion conducted search operations in the Suoi Ca Valley in consonance with the CHIEU HOI Holiday program. On the same day the Security Platoon discovered an underground complex in the vicinity of BR868614. On 20 January, Company C returned to the operational control authority of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry whereupon the company was air lifted into the vicinity of the rock complexes at BR739649. There they provided security and assistance to the engineers for the ensuing destruction of the complexes along with Company B. On 25 January Company B discovered another underground complex in the vicinity of BR744656 which was exploited for intelligence purposes and destroyed during the remainder of the reporting period (see paragraph 8, INTELLIGENCE). During this period platoon size elements provided security for Landing Zone HAMMOND and Battery B, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery (BR845553). On 21 January the Battalion command post and fire base was moved to Landing Zone ILLINI (BR789669) closing at 1620 hours.

(2) 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: During this period the Battalion continued to conduct search and destroy operations in the hill mass in its assigned area of operation. Numerous minor contacts were made as the battalion continued to flush out remnants of the 18th North Vietnamese Army Regiment. Ambush sites and blocking positions continued to be used in an attempt to pick off the exiting enemy, particularly in the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails areas. During the period 20-26 January, the Battalion assumed operational control authority of Companies

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A and D, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry who were replaced by Companies B and C during that period. On 27 January the two companies from 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry CHOP 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry and returned to parent unit; whereupon the 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry came under the operational control authority of the 3d Brigade TF.

(3) 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry: On 19 January the Squadron (-) was released from under the operational control authority of the 3d Brigade TF. Companies A and D were placed under the operational control authority of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, whereupon they assisted with blocking and search and destroy operations in the western portion of the Santa Fe Trail area. On 24 January Company C replaced Company A under the operational control authority of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry. At 251135 January Company D engaged contact near a rock complex. C/S gas was used with no effect. Flame throwers were brought in and used resulting in heavy enemy casualties. That evening Company B replaced Company D under the operational control authority of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry. On 27 January Companies A and C reverted to the operational control authority of the 3d Brigade TF. During the remainder of the reporting period the squadron operated in the southern portion of the area of operation along the Santa Fe Trail.

(4) 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry: On 26 January the 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry was placed under the OCA of the 3d Brigade TF with their command post and fire base located at the Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp (HR611604). During the remainder of the period they were deployed as a blocking force at the western exits of the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails.

d. 1 February - 12 February 1967:

(1) 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry: During the time frame 1-5 February 1967, the battalion continued search and destroy operations in the Oregon Trail Area and continued to provide security for the engineer work party. On 1 February two platoons from Company A provided cover for the insertion of a Long Range Reconnaissance Platoon at HR723675. 2d Platoon, Company B was guided to a new cave complex vicinity HR746654 by a Chieu Hoi. At the cave complex, enemy radio equipment consisting of one AN/URC-9 Radio, one cable radio, two hand sets, two copper keys, one US type speaker and one battery for the AN/RC-9 radio. On 2 February at 1435 hours, 1st Platoon, Company A located vicinity HR728631 located a Chicom radio and one AN/URC-9. On 3 February 1st Platoon, Company B at HR735680 killed two Viet Cong and captured two more. A cache was found containing various small arm and weapon parts. On 6 and 7 February the battalion continued search and destroy operations in the Oregon Trail Area in the northern portion of the mountains east of the Suoi Ca Valley and also cleared civilians from northern Suoi Ca Valley. The remainder of the period was spent by the battalion conducting surveillance in northern Suoi Ca Valley and eastern portion of the Oregon Trail Area in accordance with the TET truce. At 101840 February 1967,

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2d Platoon, Company C made contact with an estimated force of 15 North Vietnamese Army soldiers at BR715645 which resulted in 1 US wounded in action, 6 enemy killed in action; captured two grenades and a pistol belt.

(2) 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: From 1 to 5 February the battalion continued search and destroy operations in the area between the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. The battalion assumed OPCON of Company B, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry on 011000 February 1967. Company B, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry made contact at BR749608 at 021544 February. Three enemy were killed in a cave and friendly forces suffered two wounded in action. One machinegun of French make, one US Carbine, two BAR magazines, 300 pounds of rice, black material and several packs were captured. At 050810 February 1967, Company C (-), 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry became OPCON to 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry. Company C (-) was inserted vicinity BR811586 and conducted search and destroy operations to the southeast. Results of the operation were: 3,550 pounds of rice confiscated and 358 civilians extracted to new locations. Company C (-) CHOP 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry 051725 February. On 6 and 7 February 1967, the battalion continued to conduct search and destroy operations in the southern portion of the mountains to the east of the Suoi Ca Valley and in Area KIL0 in an effort to clear civilians from southern Suoi Ca Valley Area. In addition, the battalion screened the southern mouth of the Suoi Ca Valley to block exfiltration of enemy forces. Company A was replaced by Company B who assumed mission of security force of the battalion fire support base at 061141 February 1967. Upon being relieved by Company B, Company A was lifted into BR804579. For the remainder of the period, the battalion conducted surveillance in the southern portion of the Suoi Ca Valley and eastern Santa Fe Trail Area in accordance with the TET truce. At 100030 February 1967 six men came down a trail which ran north to south and ran into the ambush established vicinity BR817573 by Company A. Commanding Officer, Company A, was wounded in the offensive action initiated by the enemy during the truce period. At 110825 the battalion was alerted to be prepared to move sometime during the day. Later that day at 1330 hours, the first elements of Company B departed for Landing Zone PIN (CR022716) closing at 1505 hours. At 1614, the first elements of Company A arrived at the battalion command post to assume security. Poor weather and limited aircraft prevented the battalion from moving and the remaining lifts were postponed until the following day. A tactical command post was sent to vicinity of Landing Zone PIN at 1630 hours.

(3) 1st Platoon, C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry: 1st Platoon continued to provide security for the brigade forward base of operations. The platoon also provided security for National Police Civilian checkpoint northwest of Landing Zone HAMMOND, 1-6 February. For the remainder of the period the platoon (-) was OGA to the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry during daylight hours for screening mission in the southern portion of the Suoi Ca Valley.

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(4) 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry: Battalion (minus one company) CHOP 3d Brigade TF effective 011000 February 1967. Last element lifted off at 1615 hours. Company B, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry remained OPCON to 3d Brigade TF and OCA to 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry effective 011000 February 1967, CHOP 031330 February 1967.

(5) 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry: From 1-4 February the squadron continued search and destroy operations along the western end of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. 5-8 February 1967, the squadron assumed a posture for employment as a reaction force for the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) with the squadron command post at Landing Zone SNAKE (BR635605). At 090834 February 1967, 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry CHOP 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division.

12. Cave destruction operations employed by Company D, 65th Engineer Battalion 19 January to 4 February 1967:

a. Mission: On 19 January 1967, Company D, 65th Engineer Battalion was assigned the mission of destroying a complex of underground living and working areas discovered by Companies B and C, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry in the vicinity of BR736650. Lieutenant Donald R. Nance, Platoon Leader, 3d Platoon was designated officer in charge for the project.

b. General: All of the underground complexes in the area were of the same general type. They consisted of large biotite granite boulders in various stages of weathering and decomposition. The boulders, as a result of stream erosion, had tumbled into steep valleys and rested against each other like marbles in a jar. The boulders varied greatly in size with an estimated average diameter of eight meters although some ranged as large as thirty meters. The enemy utilized the void spaces between the boulders as both living and working areas. In some instances the natural openings had been improved or enlarged by removing the soil between or under the boulders. The soil was probably disposed of in the stream which runs through most of the complexes. The majority of the complexes were covered by a canopy of jungle vegetation and, therefore, provided both cover and camouflage. The regional terrain was steep and rugged.

c. Concept:

(1) Due to the size of the boulders forming the complexes, large quantities of conventional explosives were necessary to destroy the rooms and passages. The explosive was placed in fractures and crevices within the boulders in order to destroy the boulders acting as supports. This, in turn, obstructed or destroyed the rooms and passage ways and denied future use of the area to the enemy.

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(2) Types of explosives used were TNT, military dynamite, tetrytol, C-4, ammonium nitrate cratering charges, and composition R shaped charges.

(3) The amount of explosive used at any given location was dependent upon the size and placement of the boulders and the size of the room or passageway. Areas destroyed ranged from squad to company size rooms. These areas were used as headquarters, billets, finance centers, medical facilities, communications centers, and weapons storage and repair facilities.

d. Execution:

(1) CHILDERS Complex (BR648739): Work began and was completed on 20 January 1967. Five main entrances were permanently sealed. One secondary explosion occurred equal to an estimated 2,000 pounds of TNT. Total explosives used: 17,000 pounds.

(2) Medical Complex (BR734654): On 21 January 1967, this area was closed by cratering and collapsing the entrance. Total explosives used: 14,000 pounds.

(3) Communications Complex (BR735654): Work on this complex was done in two periods: 21-22 January 1967 and 29-30 January 1967. On 22 January 1967, a secondary explosion (TNT equivalent of approximately 2,500 pounds) occurred and caused a landslide measuring 40 by 75 meters. On 29 January 1967, another secondary explosion occurred (TNT equivalent of approximately 600 pounds) which exposed another entrance and room containing miscellaneous items. Total explosives used: 9,000 pounds.

(4) Troop Billets Complex (BR731656): Work began on 21 January 1967 by using an 80 pound charge to clear the entrance. Total explosives used: 6,000 pounds.

(5) Headquarters Complex (BR736640): Work began on this area on 24 January 1967. A CH-47, Chinook, helicopter was utilized on 26 January 1967 to hook explosives directly to the demolition site. Prior to this, all explosives were carried by hand from the nearest landing zone to the site. The headquarters complex was 60 feet long and was destroyed by placing two 5,000 pounds charges within the complex and detonating them simultaneously. Total explosive used: 42,000 pounds.

(6) Escape and entry area (BR737640): This area was near the headquarters complex and was probably a primary means of ventilation and escape. The area was demolished on 31 January 1967. Total explosives used: 6,000 pounds.

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(7) Morse Code Complex (BR665714): Area was destroyed on 31 January 1967 by collapsing entrance. Total explosives used: 12,000 pounds.

(8) Trail Complex (BR736650): This complex consisted of a series of interconnecting voids between boulders stretching approximately 350 meters along a trail which contoured the hill. Area was destroyed on 3-4 February 1967. Total explosives used: 32,000 pounds.

e. Results:

(1) Eight major complexes were closed or destroyed. While the destruction was effective in closing or destroying the areas being utilized, it will probably not deny future use of the area to the enemy. The nature of the rock complexes prevents complete destruction of the interstitial spaces and even large amounts of explosives merely cause rearrangement of the solid and void spaces within the complex.

(2) A total of 138,000 pounds of explosives were expended on the rock complex in the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry area.

13. (C) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a. Logistics:

(1) (U) Supply:

(a) No major supply problem existed during THAYER II. The Brigade TF was supported with all classes of supplies by the Forward Support Area, Task Force Wright/Wartell of the 1st Logistical Command. Supply points to distribute Class I, II, III, and IV supplies were operated in the Brigade TF Trains area by forward support elements of the 3d Support Battalion, 3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division.

(2) (U) Transportation:

(a) The truck squads continued to be utilized for line haul between the base of operation and the forward support area.

(b) An Air Force C7A was utilized daily to transport replacements, R & R, emergency leave and mail from Pleiku to the area of operations. C7A statistics are:

1. Sorties: 166.
2. Passengers: 2,222.
3. Cargo: 166,970 lbs.

(3) (C) New equipment:

(a) During January, the XM 146mm grenade launchers

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were issued to units of the Brigade TF. Technical representatives from the Combat Development Command gave two days of instruction on the care, cleaning and operation of the XM 142mm weapon.

(b) The 3 gallon capacity rubber water containers (air droppable) were issued to units in a limited quantity and have proven outstanding for water resupply in the jungle terrain of Vietnam where no landing zones are available.

(c) The Alarm Set, Anti-Intrusion, An/GSS-9, was received in limited quantity and was issued to units of the Brigade TF.

(h) (C) Medical:

(a) Number of patients treated by 3d Brigade TF Clearing Station: 1319.

(b) Number of disease cases treated: 1051.

(c) Number of battle injuries treated: 27.

(d) Number of non-battle injuries treated: 241.

(5) Statistics:

(a) Class I:

1. A Rations: 192,000

2. C Rations: 85,000

(b) Class III:

1. Moras: 40,000 gallons.

2. Diesel: 24,000 gallons.

3. JP 4: 560,000 gallons.

(c) Class V:

1. 40mm: 14,330 rds.

2. 81 HE: 5,347 rds.

3. 4.2" HE: 5,288 rds.

4. 105 HE: 21,340 rds.

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b. Personnel:

(1) (C) Total number of casualties suffered by elements of the 3d Brigade TF during Operation THAYER II were as follows:

(a) Unit:	IHC	1/14	1/35	2/9	C/3/4	D/65	SPT
1. ETHER (KIA)	0	3	18	0	0	0	0
2. HINGE (Died after treated at hosp)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. SMITE (Seriously wounded)	1	1	5	0	0	0	0
4. PRIAR (Slightly wounded)	0	5	46	0	0	0	0
(b) Sub total:	2	9	69	0	0	0	0

(c) Total:

1. ETHER: 21
 2. HINGE: 1
 3. SMITE: 7
 4. PRIAR: 51

(d) Grand total: 80.

13. (C) CIVIL AFFAIRS:

a. Civil Affairs/PSYOPS activities during the reporting period (3 Jan 67 - 12 Feb 67) continued throughout the base camp area as well as in the area of operations. Major emphasis was placed on village medcap operations in the base camp area and refugee control and assistance in the area of operation. Brigade TF CA/PSYOPS personnel worked with military intelligence personnel, MACV sub-sector, district and RF/PF personnel, National Police, USAID representatives, missionary personnel and ROK, ARVN, and US tactical units. PSYWAR U-10, C-47, and UH-1B aircraft were utilized very extensively.

b. Summary:

(1) Civilian checkpoint: A National Police civilian check point was emplaced daily in the mouth of the Suoi Ca Valley on the road to Phu Cat for a period of 31 days. During this time the following results were obtained:

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- (a) Innocent civilians: 1366.
- (b) Detainees (no ID cards): 179.
- (c) VCS: 21.
- (d) VCC: 13.
- (e) Refugees: 706.
- (f) Total personnel processed: 2285.

(2) Health and sanitation

- (a) Operations: 72.
- (b) Medical treatment: 824 personnel
- (c) Dental hygiene: 79 personnel treated.
- (d) Evacuated for further treatment: 7 personnel.
- (e) A doctor accompanied the Civil Affairs Team on 5 operations and a dentist on 7 operations.
- (f) Baths for refugee children: 3 (total of 850 children bathed). Operations were conducted with assistance of a USAID representative and revolutionary development cadre personnel. All children received candy.

(3) Commerce: During the reporting period, the Brigade TF hired a total of 248 laborers at 50\$VN per day. Personnel were utilized to fill sandbags.

(4) Government and civil information: One Vietnamese flag was presented during the period. The hamlet chief of Hoa Hoi accepted the flag and it is being flown in front of the village dispensary. Several thousand JUSPAO newspapers were also distributed during the period. Personal contact proved valuable in insuring the newspapers were received by the villagers. All villagers receiving the papers appeared to be very appreciative.

(5) Public welfare:

(a) 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry began a project to construct a basketball and volleyball court, soccer field, and softball backstop at the Plei Chuot School near the brigade base camp at Pleiku.

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(b) The 3d Brigade TF contributed 2 boxes of children's clothes, 10 boxes of candy, and paper Vietnamese flags to the Phu Cat District Chief. These items were distributed at a Vietnamese New Year's party for the children of deceased ARVN soldiers.

(6) Public works: The Civil Affairs Team Engineer Officer, at the request of the Phu Cat USAID representative, surveyed the wells at the CO-Hist Refugee Village. The wells had not been dug deep enough and many were dry or only contained 1 foot of water. A recommendation was made that the wells must be at least 2 meters deeper. The contractor who had constructed the wells for the District Chief of Phu Cat was contracted to return and correct the well construction.

(7) Commodities distributed:

- (a) Tobacco: 15 cartons.
- (b) Soap: 2,226 bars.
- (c) Candy: 364 one lb bags.
- (d) Bulwer wheat: 20 lbs.
- (e) Shovels: 1 each.
- (f) Clothes: 331 lbs.
- (g) Cooking oil: 12 gallons.
- (h) Chewing gum: 6 boxes.
- (i) Rice: 10,000 5 lb bags (captured)
- (j) Salt: 10 kilos.
- (k) Canned foods: 69 cases.
- (l) Yarn: 53 bundles (captured material).
- (m) Miscellaneous clothes, tools, etc (captured material).

NOTE: The majority of the items distributed went for refugee relief in Phu Cat District.

(8) Transportation: Transportation was provided for 1,254 refugees and displaced persons from the Suoi Ca Valley to the Phu Cat Refugee Village and Phu Cat District. This included: Trucks, OH-17, UH-1D, and armored personnel carriers.

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(9) Miscellaneous information: Throughout the period, the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry contributed hot meals for the refugees of 7th Cat District. Meals for 3,450 personnel were distributed with assistance from the Brigade 85, Battalion 95, district officials and the USAID representative.

1). PSYOPS activities:

a. PSYOPS appeals were directed at specific hamlets, villages, groups, and individuals. Utilizing the current intelligence situation, the PSYOPS program supported the tactical situation.

b. Ground teams and aircraft were coordinated during the tactical operations. Leaflets were dropped to support the loudspeaker broadcasts.

c. Personal contact with the population was utilized in distributing JSPAO newspapers, CVI flags, and PSYWAR posters.

d. Leaflet drops and loudspeaker tape appeals were accomplished utilizing F-10, F-4D and F-23 aircraft.

e. Tape appeals were made by village chiefs urging the people of their villages not to support the Viet Cong and to evacuate areas which were under Viet Cong control.

f. Summary of PSYWAR activities:

(1) Sneaker/leaflet missions: 100.

(2) Leaflets dropped: 2,007,870.

(3) Ralliers: 2 RVN and 12 VC.

(4) Rallier exploitation: Statements were obtained from RVN and VC ralliers. Pictures were made and leaflets developed. Ralliers also made tape appeals and were used as ground guides for tactical units in operations.

(5) Extensive use was made of "bullhorn" broadcasts in the cave areas to "talk out" prospective ralliers.

(6) A "how to rally" leaflet was developed for use based on interviews with Noi Chanhs who mentioned that many of their fellow soldiers would like to rally but did not know how to do so.

(7) All ralliers came to the troop units with "safe conduct" passes and leaflets which were dropped during PSYOPS missions in the area. Many stated that they had heard the speaker broadcasts, especially on "how to rally". As soon as they were told how, they came to units of the 3/25.

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15. (C) COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS:

a. Lessons learned:

(1) Item: H-138 handset for the AN/PRC-25.

Discussion: The handset for the AN/PRC-25 has proven to be unsatisfactory during this operation mainly due to the damp weather. The rubber collar surrounding the push-to-talk button is the most frequent point of failure and once the handset becomes damp inside it will fail to either receive or transmit. As a possible preventive measure, the plastic bag in which the battery (M-386) for the radio is packed can be taped around the handset preventing some of the moisture seepage. This solution is, at most, temporary in nature and causes the radio operator great consternation when he is deep within the jungle and his commanding officer cannot talk to the battalion commander.

Observations: Recommend development of a waterproof handset for the AN/PRC-25 radio. Additionally, as an interim measure authorize the issue of two of the present handsets for each AN/PRC-25 radio assigned to an infantry battalion.

(2) Item: Ambush positions should not be occupied until after dark.

Discussion: Night ambushes during the early part of THAYER II frequently came up with negative results. A Viet Cong prisoner stated that there were several 3 to 4 man groups in the Sam Ca Valley that had the mission of watching 3/25 TF units and where they went into their night positions. Toward the later stages of the operation we began having the units move after darkness into their ambushes. The results were noticeably better.

Observations: In an area that is conducive to night movement, units should move into ambush positions after dark.

(3) Item: Sorting the circumstances of capture of POWs and suspects

Discussion: There have been many instances when POWs and suspects arrived at the battalion command post area and the circumstances of capture have been sketchy. The brigade has inaugurated a policy whereby platoon leaders carry captured document tags. They merely need to cross out the word "document" and write in the word "prisoner", then fill out the card and attach it to the individual. When the POW arrives at the battalion command post area, the circumstances of his capture are readily available to the S2.

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Observations: Small unit leaders should carry tags and attach them to the POWs and suspects after filling out the circumstances of capture.

(4) Item: Helicopter recovery.

Discussions: One of the OH-23's had to force land in an insecure area due to mechanical difficulties. The aircraft could not be flown out and was recovered by OH 47. One of the main rotor blades was bent down breaking the bubble and damaging the power train. The rotor-wash from the OH 47 is over 70 miles per hour in velocity. The rotor blades are very vulnerable to damage when the helicopter is lifted by OH 47.

Observations: Damage to the rotor blades during recoveries often cause extensive secondary damage to the power train. When the situation permits, removal of the main rotor and tail rotor blades of the OH-23 prior to recovery will reduce the chances of further damage in transit.

(5) Item: Use of AN/PNC-74 radios by LERP.

Discussions: The radio set AN/PNC-74 and HF/SSB radio with power output of 17 watts was tested by the LERP assigned to this brigade. The functional use of this equipment proved unsatisfactory to meet the requirements of the LERP. Five AN/PNC radios were declined because of inoperative antenna tune and load test meters. Without this meter it is impossible to calibrate the antenna for proper transmission operation. Reception is not affected, however, the mission of the LERP is to pass intelligence information to higher headquarters. Thus the transmission capability requirements exceed those of reception.

Observations: It is felt that the AN/PNC-25 with a field expedient quarter-wave antenna can provide the reliable communications essential for the LERP over the ranges that the patrols are deployed.

(6) Item: Use of the AN/URC-106 radio.

Discussions: The radio set AN/URC-106 was extensively utilized by this brigade. A HF/SSB radio net has been in continuous operations since 17 January 1967, linking the brigade forward command post, brigade base camp, and one of the organic infantry battalions. Operators have gained valuable experience in tuning, operating, and maintaining this equipment.

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Observations: The use of a doublet antenna provided excellent reception between Landing Zone HAMMOND and brigade base camp at Fleiku. Operations off a whip antenna were successful, however, the doublet increased the quality of the radio reception at both station locations.

(7) Items: Operations within rock formations.

Discussion: Combating the enemy within a cave is extremely difficult. Since the enemy inhabits the cave he knows where the passages lead and has the advantage of interior lines of communication in his reinforcing capability. Additionally, he has a defense plan based on a detailed reconnaissance, knowing well in advance what avenues of approach must be used by his opponents. The attacker has no way to make a recon except by fire. As it appears, the advantage is on defense; however, there are several advantages that accrue to the attacker. The attacker being on the offensive has the initiative and freedom to choose where and when to attack. Secondly, the attacker has a significant psychological advantage in that the defender harbors a great fear of being entombed alive. The final result will depend mostly on the quality of the individuals fighting the engagement.

Observations: Maximum exploitation of the psychological effect on the enemy was employed by using a small portable loud-speaker encouraging the enemy to come out or be buried alive. In spite of the total lack of reconnaissance, which was extremely difficult to the extent of the rock complexes and total darkness inside, the unit attacked the rock complex from many openings by using small elements (less than fire team size) under four men operating independently but with a common mission. Little use can be made of demolition or fragmentary grenades once a team is within the cave as the explosives have an equal effect on both friendly and enemy. The demolitions and fragmentary grenades effect the eardrums. Therefore, the battle within the cave rock complex returns to the most primitive of fights: man against man using pistols at ranges of two and three feet. Here control and leadership is difficult and the will of the individual becomes the dominant factor. Training and discipline are the only factors that can influence the action within a rock complex.

(8) Items: Organization of rock complex fighting teams.

Discussion: The technique of rock complex fighting requires detailed planning and violent execution similar to the technique developed by the US Army for destruction of a fortified area. The main difference in the attack of a cave complex and the attack of a fortified area lies in the intelligence field for in a cave complex a reconnaissance is impossible.

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Observations: Rock complex fighting teams of three or four men were organized and normally led by an experienced NCO. One man was the point and responsible for leading the way as well as security to the front. The second man in line, normally the leader, provided observation and security to the flanks. The rear man secured the rear and was the guide in case a rapid withdrawal became necessary. The lead man carried a large flashlight used to investigate cracks and crevices that exist drew immediate fire from the enemy. Training and practice in the attack of a rock complex are absolute necessities for successful accomplishment of the mission.

(9) Item: Use of non-toxic agent (CS) within an underground complex.

Discussion: CS agent is extremely effective in dislodging the enemy from the numerous hiding places within an underground complex. If the enemy is there, the CS will cause him to reveal his position if not cause him to come completely out of hiding. The employment of the "Mighty Mite" proved unsuccessful in this cave complex due to its vast size and numerous egresses. There was no way to seal the cave effectively to insure penetration of the agent when using the "Mighty Mite". Drafts and air currents were unpredictable and frequently hindered rather than helped the "Mighty Mite" pump the agent into the lower portion of the rock cavities. Also, the agent, CS, is lighter than air and this physical property caused it to drift to the upper portions of the rock complexes.

Observations: Recommend the development of a non-toxic agent heavier than air which would settle into the lower cavities of a multi-level rock complex.

(10) Item: Use of hand grenades within rock formations.

Discussion: All hand grenades can be effectively used at rock formations entrances but once the team is under ground the hand grenade is not practicable. The hand grenade cannot be thrown within the restricted area of the rock complex. If thrown, the effect on friend and foe alike is chaotic.

Observations: Hand grenades can be employed while the soldiers are outside the caves but once inside only non-fragmentation grenades can be used such as white phosphorous and CS, and these must be used with extreme caution. The best technique is to employ them around corners or down in crevices.

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(11) Item: Use of demolition within the underground rock complex.

Discussion: The most effective method of underground rock complex destruction is through the utilization of demolitions. Great quantities of explosives, nearly 75 tons were required to destroy the underground rock complexes which were found in the 3d Brigade TF AQ. Transportation of the explosives proved to be a most difficult logistical problem. Maximum use was made of small satchel charges by tossing them into the cave entrance then exploding the charge.

Observation: When underground rock complex destruction is required a great quantity of explosives will be necessary to break the vast amount of rocks that support the cave and the entrance. The transportation problem was solved by using a CH 47 helicopter with a 100 foot sling which transported the explosives directly to the rock complex entrance where the demolition was to take place. The explosives were placed and exploded. The technique used was to throw the small satchel charge device into the rock complex while a soldier stood by with a claymore firing device. No sooner did the charge fall to the ground than it was exploded with the firing device preventing the enemy from tampering with it.

(12) Item: Use of individual weapons within an underground complex.

Discussion: Due to the size of the M60 machine gun and noise it created, it was impossible to use the weapon in the caves. The identical problem exists with the M14 rifle. The XM16E1 proved to be somewhat better than either of the other two weapons due to its light weight and compact size; however, in the case of all weapons with a high muzzle velocity the ricochet were so frequent and so dangerous that our soldiers were reluctant to use them. The best weapon by far proved to be the caliber .45 automatic pistol. Since the ranges at which most kills were made were in the neighborhood of a few feet, there was little need for accuracy. The tremendous stopping power of the caliber .45 pistol at close ranges more than once literally blew the enemy down as well as killing him.

Observation: Since the caliber .45 pistol has an extremely low muzzle velocity and a very heavy slug there was little chance of a ricochet hitting the firer. The big disadvantage was the report from the pistol often stunned the firer, momentarily preventing a good second shot. For future operations of this nature silencers should be developed for personnel working in such close quarters.

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(13) Item: M56 load bearing equipment.

Discussion: The M56 load bearing equipment with the pack attached has proved entirely unsatisfactory in this operation. The pack rides in the saddle of one's back, a most uncomfortable position. The pack will not carry the necessary comforts that a field soldier requires in order to get the little rest he is allowed. The pack, the gear and its numerous straps and buckles frequently become entangled in the vines of the jungle causing the wearer great frustration and anxiety, in addition to the noise he makes untangling it.

Observation: In this type of operation, we could do well to take a lesson from the enemy, who are living in the field and transport their equipment on their backs. The pack used by the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army soldier is well made of durable material, light weight, unencumbered by unnecessary straps and buckles and most of all, it will carry the necessary items a soldier requires in the field. It is by far the favorite field pack and used by many of our soldiers. Another advantage of this type pack is the capability of the soldiers to drop it with only a shrug of his shoulders whereas the US pack cannot be dropped without also dropping his pistol belt and ammunition.

(14) Item: The need exists for an issued M79 ammunition carrying vest.

Discussion: The M79 grenadiers normally an amount in excess of 50, 40mm rounds. The basic load of 18 rounds is insufficient. The grenadiers devised all sorts of methods of carrying the extra rounds. One unit adopted a vest made from jungle fatigues with sewn M79 grenade bandoliers. This vest has enough pouches for 24 to 30 rounds; with additional rounds being carried in a claymore bag. By using the grenade bandoliers as pouches, it facilitates the rapid reloading of the rounds.

Observation: A standard M79 ammunition vest, light-weight should be devised and issued to M79 grenadiers.

(15) Item: There is a need for an improved smoke grenade.

Discussion: In the dense jungle the standard issue smoke grenade will not penetrate jungle canopy. On those occasions when the smoke grenade does penetrate it has drifted so badly that it is not reliable to mark friendly positions. The white phosphorous hand grenade generates sufficient smoke so that it is visible almost immediately.

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Observation: While numerous improved methods of marking positions are available; the standard issue smoke grenade should be improved to make it a more reliable device for marking positions.

(16) Item: Shortage of interpreters within the units.

Discussion: The rifle companies often operate independently. There has been numerous times when an interpreter was needed immediately to exploit tactical information, and to call NVA and VC to surrender. However, there exists a critical shortage of available interpreters.

Observation: A determined effort should be made to produce enough qualified interpreters so that one could be assigned to each rifle company, two to battalion headquarters, and one to the strike platoons.

(17) Item: Employment of CS Agent.

Discussion: During Operation THAYER II, many different means of dispersing CS Agent have been used. The "baseball", M25A2, CS1, riot hand grenade, has been used in rock complexes as well as the M7A1 CS tear gas grenade. Also CS powder has been utilized after engineer demolition teams have closed rock complexes entrances.

Observation: It is recommended that the M7A1 CS tear hand grenade be used, instead of M25A CS1 riot hand grenade (baseball type), to be effective even though it is more convenient to carry and throw. The M7A2, CS, tear, hand grenade gives off more agent and creates a high concentration of agent in desired areas.

(18) Item: Coordination with supported units in contact.

Discussion: To facilitate processing calls for fire from the supported infantry companies, the DS artillery battery should operate a radio on the supported infantry battalion command net. This procedure gives the battery FDC prior warning, a general direction in which to lay the battery, the approximate coordinates of the target, and facilitates quicker reaction to fire support requirements. The battery alerted by this means may also enter the company net to receive fire missions from the platoon leaders when an artillery forward observer is not immediately available.

Observation: Utilization of additional radios on the supported infantry nets has enabled this unit to provide quicker reaction to calls for fire from infantry units.

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(19) Item: Artillery adjustment in precipitous terrain.

Discussion: Certain precautions should be taken when firing artillery fire in precipitous terrain. When switching from shell smoke to shell HE there should be no correction made. Once a shell HE is located on the ground the adjustment of artillery fires may continue.

Observation: Each individual concerned with the adjustment of artillery fire must be aware of the range difference between shell smoke and shell HE. Shell HE will travel further than shell smoke when fired with the same data.

(20) Item: Aerial Observation.

Discussion: It is mandatory that an aerial observer establish and maintain contact with the ground element requesting fire to locate the position of all friendly troops in the vicinity of the desired target area.

Observation: It is imperative that friendly units clearly mark their positions on the ground by a readily identifiable visual means. When more than one friendly troop unit is located in the proximity of the target area a distinctly different identifying object for each group must be used.

(21) Item: Employment of the Counter-Mortar Radar to protect friendly positions.

Discussion: The counter-mortar radar is able to scan only a 445 mile sector at any one time. If it is set up inside the friendly perimeter it can only cover 1/15 of the surrounding area at one time. However, if the radar is set up at a range of 6000 meters from the range of the friendly position, it can cover the friendly position and will be able to pick up any mortar rounds that fall on or near the position.

Observation: The Counter-Mortar radar can protect a friendly position best when it can observe the friendly position from a range of approximately 6000 meters.

(22) Item: Employment of AFO's during turbulent weather.

Discussion: Normally, AFO's observe artillery fires from an O-1 aircraft. However, during turbulent weather, O-1's have great difficulty positioning the observer so that he can accomplish his mission. On the other hand, turbulence effects on OH-23 are much less.

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Observation: OH-23's have been used for aerial observation during extremely turbulent weather in order to provide maximum artillery support.

b. Commander's comments:

(1) Recommend the observations noted in paragraph 15, above be considered appropriate.

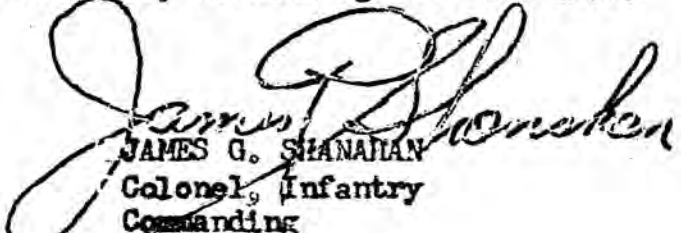
(2) Recommend the following items be considered noteworthy of immediate command attention:

(a) Item (7), (8), (10), and (12): Operations within rock formations.

(b) Item (9): Use of non-toxic agent within an underground rock complex.

(c) Item (11): Use of demolitions within an underground rock complex.

(3) During Operation THAYER II, the 3d Brigade Task Force proved that it could conduct sustained combat operations in mountainous terrain containing many enemy command post areas in underground rock complexes with greater flexibility and responsiveness than the enemy expected. Many rock complexes were discovered, explored and destroyed. Destruction equipment designed for use in true tunnels and caves such as the acetylene generator are ineffective due to the large number of ventilation openings. In the future, similar structures should be termed "rock complexes" to differentiate them from conventional tunnels and caves. All explosives should be electrically detonated to ensure positive control of the time of detonation. If tactically feasible, such rock complexes should be defoliated and marked to facilitate employment of future FAC, napalm, or artillery strikes against the area.


JAMES G. SHANAHAN
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Scheme of Maneuver of the 1st Infantry during Operation THALES II

LEGEND:

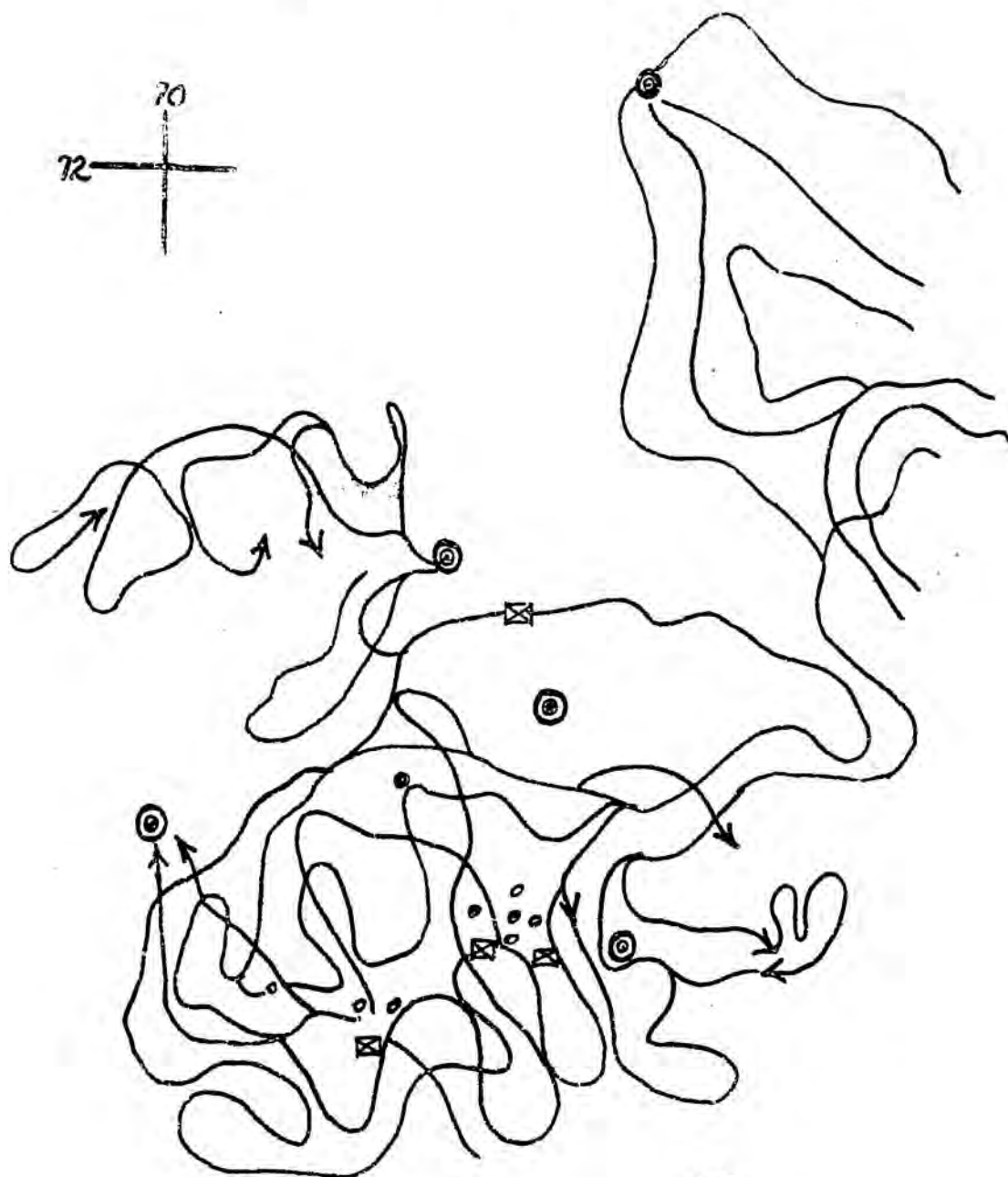
-  Flat or larger movement
-  LZ during op
-  En KIA (1 or more)
-  En CIA (1 or more)
-  Ambush loc
-  Airmobile assaults





CONFIDENTIAL

Patrol Activity of the 1st Bn, 14th Inf on MAY 69 II



Legend:

⊙ LZ's

⊠ one or more CIA

• one or more KIA

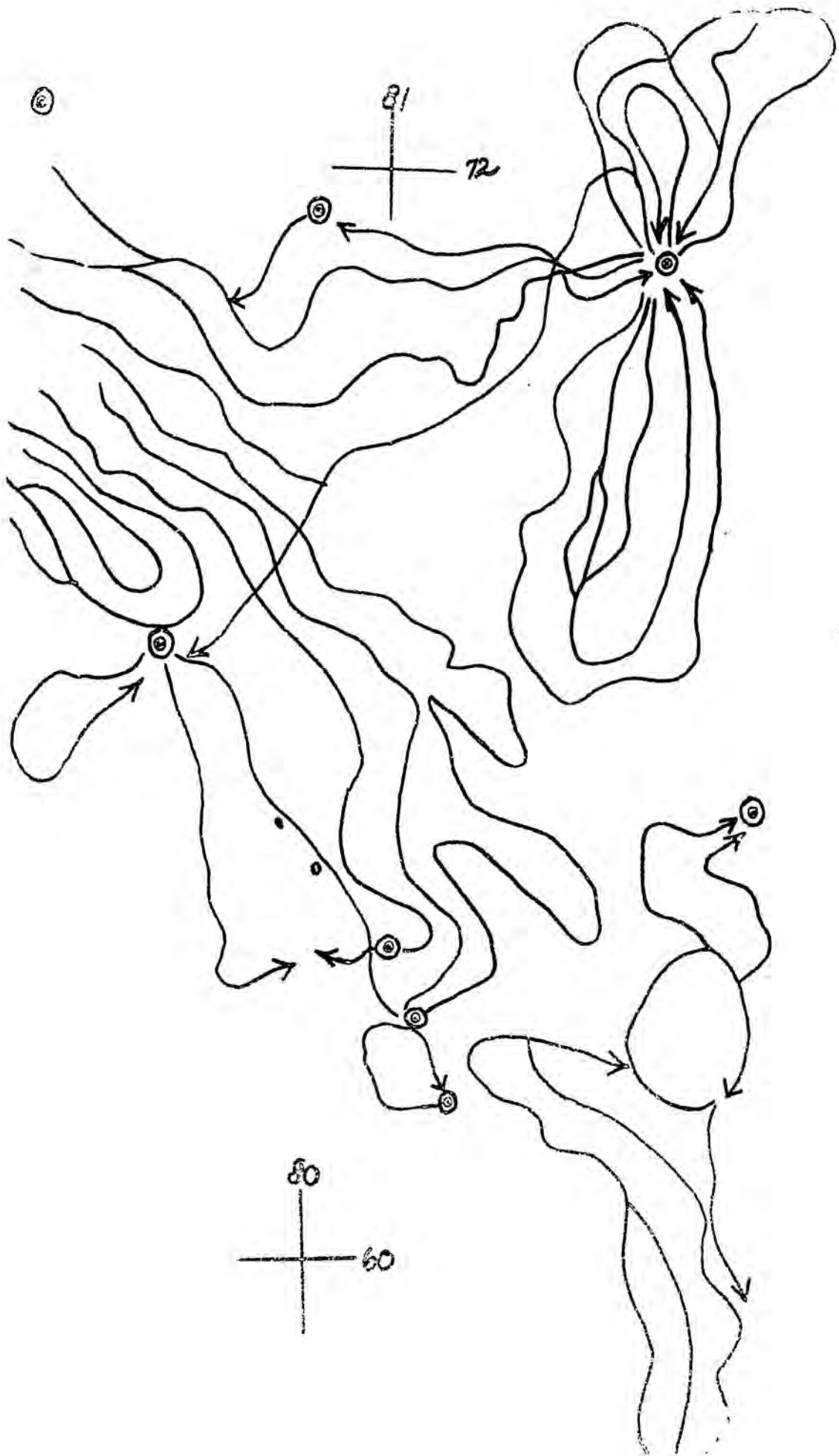
→ platoon or larger movement

Enclosure 3

Sheet 1 of 2

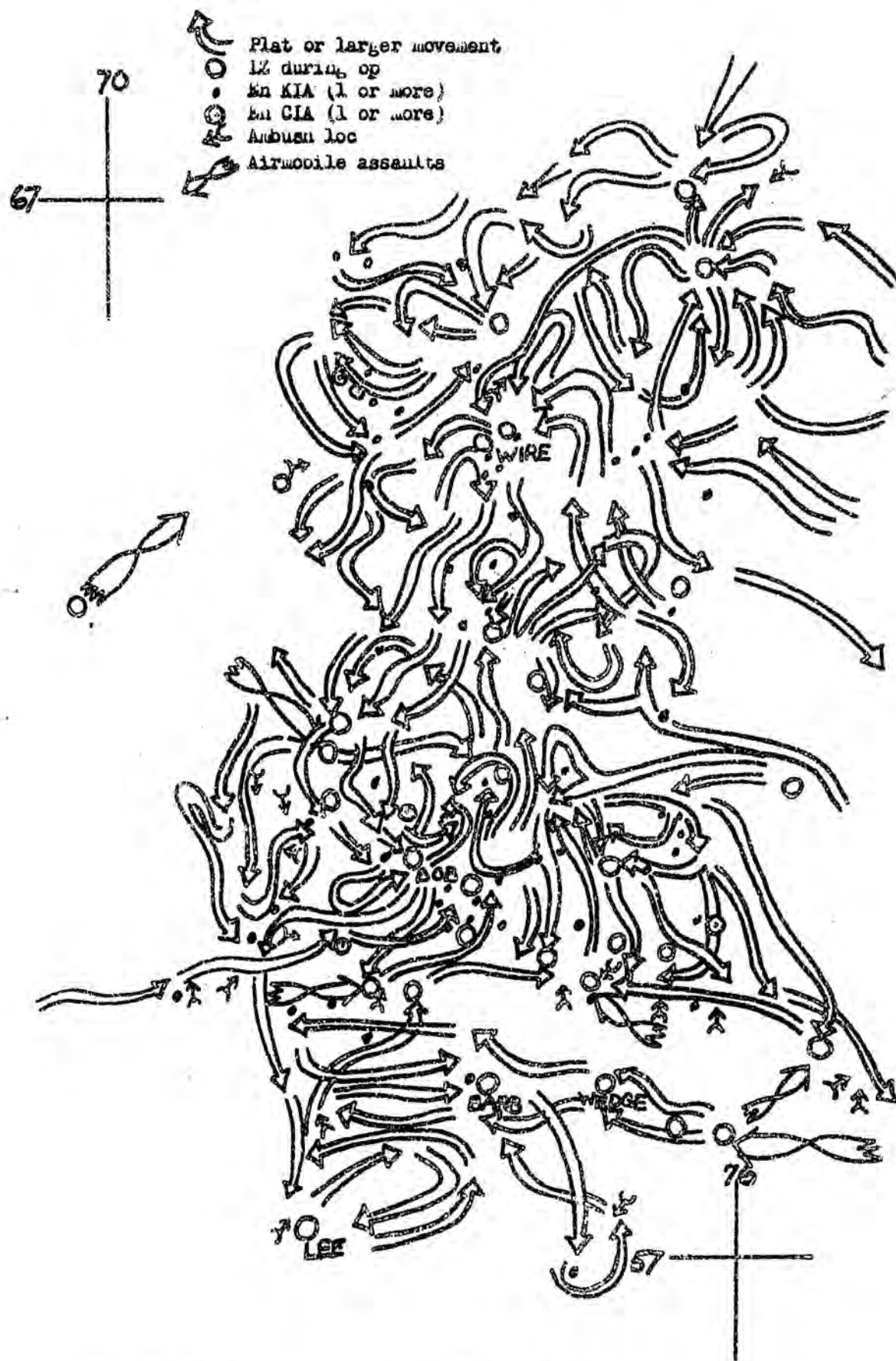
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Scheme of Maneuver of the 1/35 Infantry during Operation THAXAM II

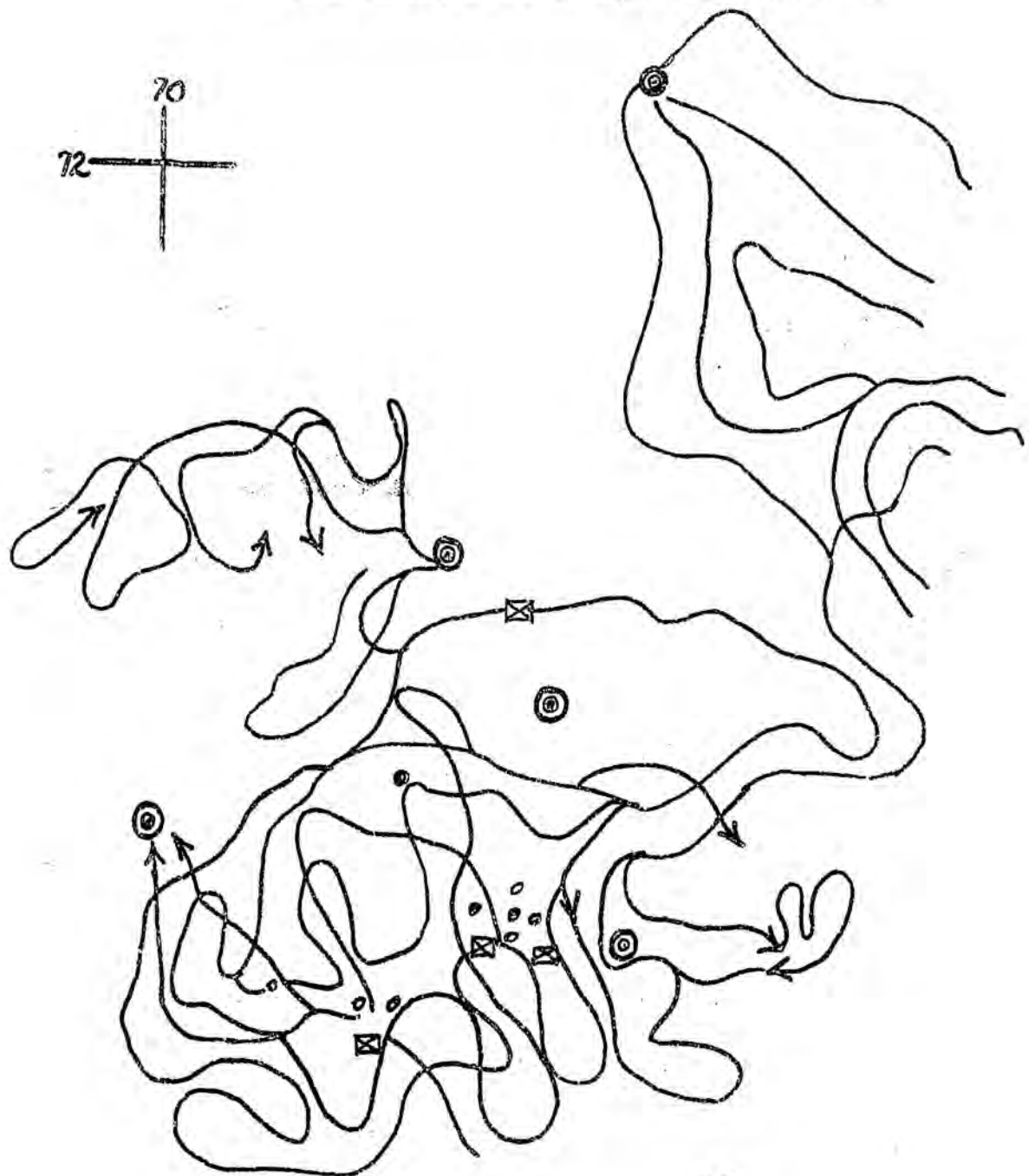
LEGEND:



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[illegible]

Patrol Activity of the 1st Bn, 14th Inf on THAYK9 II



LEGEND:

- ⊙ LZ's
- ⊠ one or more CIA
- ⊡ one or more KIA
- platoon or larger movement

