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Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Headquarters units

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Item: Headquarters, 1 Australian
Task Force

Commanding Officers After
Action Report

[COAAR]

Operation Ingham

[1-28 Feb 1967]



1st AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE

VIETNAM



COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT

OPERATION INGHAM

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AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE

NUI DAT

31 Jan 67

R723-1-5

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report.

TO: See Distribution.

1. Reference is made to: Maps: VIETNAM: 1:50,000 sheets 6430 III SE; 6430 II SW; 6430 II SE Series L701.
2. Name and type of Operation: Operation INGHAM - a search and destroy Operation.
3. Dates of Operation: 18 Nov 66 to 3 Dec 66.
4. Location: SE area of 1 ATF TAOR. See Annex P Area of Operation.
5. Control Headquarters: 1st ATF.
6. Reporting Officer: Brigadier S.C. GRAHAM, MC, OBE.
7. Task Organization:

6RAR

Two coys 5RAR

1 APC Squadron

101 Fd Bty RAA

161 Fd Bty RNZA

One Pl Bty A 2/35 Arty (US)

8. Supporting Forces:

a. US Army Aviation.

(i)
(1)

Planned Support

- (a) Two airmobile companies
- (b) One Light Fire Team
- (c) Normal DUSTOFF facility

(2) Extent of Employment and Effectiveness.

(a) One airmobile company was used for the extraction of B/6RAR less one platoon at 021600H December from an LZ at YS599638.

(b) A second airmobile company was to extract D/6RAR from LZ at YS598639 at 030845H December.

(c) Both extractions were carried out quickly and efficiently.

(d) The Light Fire team, held on standby at LZ KANGAROO was requested four times but engaged a target only once. The fire was directed into target area YS585665, however some rounds fell into D/6RAR location at YS594674. This may have been due to difficulty in identifying the target area in thick scrub or insufficient marking of our own positions by friendly troops. However this emphasises the requirement for adequate briefing and target identification by aircraft when engaging targets near own troops.

(e) The Dustoff UH1B was used on the following occasions:

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i. 251115H November YS592688 1 WIA.
 ii. 261339H November YS586667 1 WIA
 iii. 021217H December YS634654 1 KIA, 11 WIA.

b. USAF.

(1) Planned Support: Aircraft were available for airstrikes from USA 7th Air Force.

(2) Extent of employment and effectiveness: One Immediate and two preplanned airstrikes were requested.

(a) 211630H November (approximately). Immediate strike on occupied enemy camp at YS558705. Strike was carried out by F100s using 500lb bombs, napalm, CBU and cannon fire. Reaction time to strike request was 1 hour 5 minutes. An assessment of the damage to the camp the following morning showed the strike was on target and destroyed two underground rooms, collapsed 60 yds of tunnel and blew in several weapon pits. No personnel casualties were found and it is considered they withdrew from the camp.

(b) 230700H November. Preplanned airstrike to destroy enemy camp complex at YS558705 - YS560708. Strike was carried out by light bombers using 500 lb bombs. Assessment of damage was carried out on 30 November but revealed that all bombs fell 150 - 200 meters NORTH of the target area.

(c) 241700H November. Preplanned airstrike to destroy enemy camp at YS573707. No bomb damage assessment was possible as the camp was not revisited.

(3) USAF FAC was used for surveillance of the AO and provided information on movement of civilians and VCS and assisted in directing light fire teams to their correct location.

9. Intelligence:

a. The objective area vicinity YS5768 included portions of three GVN districts of Phu c Tuy Province. These were Duc Thanh, Xuyen Moc, and Dat Do. It was remote from the headquarters of these three districts but control of the objective area gave the Viet Cong easy Access to large numbers of peasant farmers living outside the sphere of government control and influence. The area overlooked the main rice producing region of the province and was one of the main points of entry into the VC controlled area of Phuoc Tuy. It was astride the Sung Rai waterway and close to the VC controlled Route 328; both of these routes were extensively used by the VC.

b. Substantial rice caches were found in this area close to streams and rivers during Operation Abilene 30 Mar 66 - 15 Apr 66 and Operation Toledo in Sep 66.

c. There was considerable VC activity in the area between 27 October and 19 November. The activity indicated that the VC were moving large quantities of stores, probably rice, to their main force units further NORTH; probably even to War Zone D. Most of this movement was conducted by night using both oxcarts and human labour.

d. Enemy forces known to operate in the area were D445 Bn, C300 (Transportation Unit of Group 84), C23 (Xuyen Moc District

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Pl) and squads of local guerilla forces.

e. During September 1966 one battalion of 274 Regt was employed for approximately ten days on a rice transportation task in this area and there were indications that another main force unit was similarly employed during late October 1966 and early November 1966.

f. 274 Regt was believed to have moved from vicinity YS3880 to the EAST of Inter Provincial Route 2, and to be located to the NORTH EAST of Binh Gia YS4977. Being only 15,000 meters from the objective area, there was a possibility of interference by this regiment but such action was considered unlikely.

g. 275 Regt had moved back into Phuoc Tuy from the May Tao Secret Zone and was located approximately 10,000 meters NORTH of Xuyen Moc YS6668 and approximately 15,000 meters from the objective area. Its intentions were unknown but it was thought that they could include tasks in support of VC plans to secure The Phuoc Tuy rice harvest in December. Contact with elements of 275 Regt was thought possible but it was unlikely that the regiment would launch a major operation against 1st ATF.

h. Annex R shows previous sightings, and contacts with VC in the objective area which was considered most likely to contain VC hard installations.

i. VC contacted, with the exception of the APC contact on 29 November were in small groups not exceeding squad size and were thought to be either protection, courier or porter parties. None of the located camps showed signs of hasty evacuation and it appeared that D445 Bn were operating out of the area during Operation INGHAM. VC trails and installations discovered during the operation are shown in Annex R.

j. Terrain and Vegetation:

(1) The area generally consisted of three large parallel ridges running NW/SE with the Suoi Lo O Nho, Suoi Biau and Suoi Ta Lung forming natural boundaries.

(2) The terrain on the higher ground was covered with scrubby primary jungle, patches of secondary growth and thick scrub which limited visibility to thirty to fifty metres. Tactical movement was restricted to no more than 500 meters per hour and often more slowly, and movement was difficult and noisy. In the SE sector of the area open paddy and some swamps were encountered.

(3) The Song Rai was an obstacle to infantry movement being an average of thirty to fifty meters wide, four to five feet in depth and flowing at a speed of three to five knots. Crossings were carried out by all companies even when log bridges were available the crossing (tactically) usually took twenty to forty minutes. After heavy rain the Song Rai would constitute a major obstacle to infantry and would require Assault Pioneer or Engineer assistance to construct a bridge or assault pontoon.

k. Weather:

(1) The weather, with the exception of two days, was hot and humid throughout the operation and this caused a water problem for some companies and the APCs. Fortunately this problem did not occur in Phases 1 and 2 of the operation when security of movement of 6 RAR was essential.

(2) Full moon occurred on 28 November and provided sufficient light throughout the operation for reasonable night observation. When operating under the jungle canopy visibility was reduced but adequate for night movement.

10. Mission:

1st ATF was to conduct offensive operations in the TAOR extension, centre of mass YS5770, to locate and destroy D445 Bn. (Annex P Area of Operation).

11. Concept of Operation: Movement to the AO was to be initially in APCs and then on foot. The approach to the suspected areas was to be made from the NORTH, across a broad front, moving on foot, and carrying four days rations. All helicopter movement was to be kept to a minimum until major contact was made with the enemy. Until that time re-supply by helicopter was to be taken at maximum distance from the main area of operation and supplies were to be carried by fighting porters. Every effort was to be made to surprise D445 Bn and associated local troops in their base areas.

12. Execution:

a. Written orders were issued by 1 ATF on 13 Nov 66 and the operation began on 18 Nov 66 and terminated on 3 Dec 66.

b. Contacts or incidents were of short duration and at short ranges. Communications capability was generally adequate, however on 26 Nov 66 an H13 from 161 (Indep) Recce Flt was called in to act as relay from D/6 RAR patrol to Coy HQ.

13. Operations were conducted as follows:

a. Infantry - 6 RAR.

(1) D Day (18 November):

(a) 0730 hrs - D Coy moved by APC to secure dismounting point YS470706.

(b) 0800 hrs - C Coy moved to APC dismounting point and together with harbour party moved on foot to secure intermediate concentration area at YS513700.

(c) Remainder of battalion moved to dismounting point by APC and moved on foot to intermediate concentration area. APC move completed by 1015 hrs.

(d) 1620 hrs - 6 RAR concentrated at night harbour YS513700.

(2) D + 1 (19 November):

(a) A Coy plus harbour party moved to concentration area YS542713 to start the search on D + 2.

(b) B Coy moved in rear of Bn HQ to concentration area YS543716.

(c) C Coy moved to night harbour YS553718. At 1100 hrs a well used NORTH-SOUTH track was crossed at YS541713. At 1245 hrs a well used NORTH-SOUTH track was located at YS549715. The company followed astride this track which swung EAST crossing the SUOI TA LUNG at YS556717. At 1445 hrs - contact with estimated 6 VC (local force). Nil casualties to either side.

4 packs recovered, containing food. Track swung NORTH from river crossing and followed to YS558720. Coy harbour at YS556717.

(d) D Coy moved to night harbour at YS528705. Old NW/SE cart track found in this locality.

(3) D + 2 (20 November):

(a) A Coy began the search astride centre axis, moving to a night harbour in vicinity YS550698.

(b) B Coy patrol located unoccupied company size camp at YS542716. At 0755 hrs contact with 3 VC at YS543716. 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA (blood trail). Own casualties nil. Company moved to a night harbour in vicinity YS550698.

(c) C Coy patrolled in area of previous night harbour. At 0915 hours contact with 2 VC at YS550717. 1 VC WIA (blood trail). Own casualties nil. Company commenced search to SE moving astride track. At 1000 hours a chicom claymore mine was detected covering the track at YS549715. This mine was initiated by VC causing one WIA, but member remained on duty. Track junction at YS551702 one branch to SW, main track running SE. Further junction at YS553702, with tracks running to SOUTH and EAST. 1620 hours at YS555702 contact with 2 VC. 1 VC KIA (BC), own casualties nil. Company night harbour at YS553702.

(d) D Coy moved SE then SW to night harbour at YS526684. An old NORTH/SOUTH foot track was found at YS530700.

(4) D + 3 (21 November):

(a) A Coy moved to the WEST to a LZ at YS5168 to receive and porter 2 days resupply for the battalion back to the HQ location at YS550698. This task was completed at 1730 hours.

(b) B Coy remained at YS550698 for protection of HQ. Local patrolling only.

(c) C Coy resumed search astride track running to EAST. 0815 hours at YS553702 contact with 2 VC. 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA (blood trail). Own casualties nil. 1030 hours at YS555704 three chicom claymore mines detonated against leading platoons; own casualties 1 WIA but remained on duty. Recently occupied enemy camp located in contact area running generally NORTH/SOUTH. Area searched and partially destroyed, documents and ammunition found. Search continued astride exit tracks from camp running NORTH, SOUTH and EAST. Another larger camp located at YS557705 running WEST/EAST. 1505 hours at YS558705 contact with unknown number of VC. Nil casualties to either side. C Coy withdrew to the WEST and an immediate airstrike was called in on the camp. Company night harbour YS553701.

(d) D Coy moved to proposed night harbour YS532680 and patrolled from that location. Small, recently vacated camp located at YS546678. Equipment and grenades found and destroyed. Old company size camp at YS554685, battalion size camp at YS548683. Well used track running NE/SW crosses SUOI LO O NHO at YS534679.

(e) 1 APC Sqn moved from 1 ATF Base Camp to AO route HOA LONG YS4163, LONG DIEN YS4259, DAT DO YS4860 then EAST along Provincial Highway 23. 1105 hours at YS547612 contact with 2 VC. Nil casualties to either side. At YS582661 small camp found and destroyed. Squadron night harbour at YS478660.

(5) D + 4 (22 November):

(a) A Coy with Bn HQ moved to YS553701 and searched in YS5570. Returned to overnight harbour at YS553701.

(b) B Coy moved with COs Tac party to support C Coy and assist in security and search of camps found on 21 November. 1056 hours at YS558707 contact with 3 VC, nil casualties to either side. Camp located at YS559700. Company night harbour at YS555702.

(c) C Coy moved at 0730 hours to occupy and search camp complex. Prior to re-entry into area, artillery fire and air strike were placed on camps. Documents equipment and ammunition found and the camp demolished by Engineers and Assault Pioneer Platoon. Company night harbour at YS553701.

(d) D Coy moved to YS547678 then to night harbour at YS548674. Foot track complex found in this area.

(e) 1 APC Sqn continued patrolling area SW of SUOI LO O NH0. At YS557670 platoon size camp located. 0910 hours contact at YS595646 with 6 VC, nil casualties to either side. Small camp found and destroyed. At YS593648 food, documents and medical stores found and evacuated. Squadron night harbour at YS569660.

(6) D + 5 (23 November):

(a) A Coy moved to search area YS5670. At 0930 hours at YS562703 a recently used company size camp located and destroyed. Ammunition and documents found in camp. 1030 hours at YS563704 contact with 4 VC. 1 VC WIA, (blood trail), own casualties nil. At 1200 hours at YS562706 contact with unknown force of VC. Own casualties 1 WIA, evacuated by RAAF helicopter. Company size camp found at YS573707. At YS573702 a hut containing rice, documents and ammunition was located. Company night harbour at YS554687.

(b) B Coy searched on axis to creek at YS572695 then to night harbour at YS554691. Company size camp located at YS561699; 2 tons polished rice found and destroyed. Well used NORTH/SOUTH tracks located at YS562698 and YS563697. These tracks join at YS562691.

(c) C Coy together with Bn HQ moved SOUTH to night harbour location at YS554687. Well used tracks were located on SOUTH bank of SUOI GIAU. Patrol found company sized camp at YS552694, containing documents and 5 x 75mm RCL rounds; area was booby trapped using CBU.

(d) D Coy patrols at 0730 hours located a battalion size staging area covering 500 yards. Centre of area YS553675. 150 empty rice bags were found and burnt at YS545670. 1200 hours rendezvous with APCs to porter 3 days rations to battalion harbour at YS553687. Task

completed at 1600 hours and company came under command 1 APC Sqn in blocking role, centered at YS570660.

(e) 1 APC Sqn continued to patrol area SW of SUOI LO O NHO. At YS566646 found and destroyed 9 oxcarts. 1130 hours at YS576653 contact with unknown number of VC. Nil casualties to either side. At YS569654, 36400 pounds of rice and other food located in two caches. This was evacuated by UHIB to Nui Dat. Squadron and D Coy linked up and adopted night harbour at YS565665.

(7) D + 6 (24 November):

(a) A Coy moved to YS562685, patrols to SE and EAST; nil results.

(b) B Coy moved to YS569691 then to YS572687. Heavily used NORTH-SOUTH track at YS562691. Company night harbour at YS572687.

(c) C Coy moved at 0730 hours to complete search and destruction of camp previously located at YS552694. At 1200 hours company moved to YS556683 to check feature for previously reported enemy movement nil result. Company night harbour YS558682.

(d) D Coy operating in conjunction with APC Sqn in blocking role located a small camp at YS572676. Fresh tracks from the camp ran NORTH EAST to the river. Harboured with 1 APC Sqn at YS570660.

(e) 1 APC Sqn continued to patrol in its blocking task to the SOUTH of the SUOI LO O NHO. 1200 hours at YS599652, 5 civilians were seen running into the bush. A search recovered clothing and documents and equipment. This was evacuated by UHIB. Squadron and D Coy night harbour at YS570660.

(8) D + 7 (25 November):

(a) A Coy plus Bn HQ moved to and crossed the SONG TAI at YS569684. Patrols searching the feature at YS573682 located a rice cache consisting of 8 tons of US AID polished rice. A two company position was located in the same area. A recently used vehicle track runs EAST-NORTH-EAST from the cache. Night harbour in camp location.

(b) B Coy moved to and crossed the SONG RAI by VC bridge at YS573691. The bridge was destroyed after the company had crossed. A search was conducted of the area YS5768 locating a well used track running SOUTH from the bridge and a camp for 5-6 people at YS577684. The camp was destroyed. A main EAST-WEST track at YS587683 showed signs of recent vehicle traffic. Rice storage platforms were found alongside the track. Company night harbour at YS570682.

(c) C Coy moved to search feature at YS363679 at 0730 hours. 1015 hours contact at YS565678 with 1 VC setting up a claymore mine. Nil casualties to either side however a Chicom bolt action rifle was recovered. At the same location a cache of 56.16 (short) tons of US AID polished rice was found.

Evacuation of the rice by CH-47 commenced at 1430 hours after two $\frac{1}{4}$ ton vehicles and trailers were lifted into the site. At YS567680 a jetty and bridge were located across the SONG RAI. Company harbour at YS564679.

(d) D Coy moved by APC to YS589662 then by foot NE into a new blocking position centered at YS594673. 1030 hours contact with 6-10 VC in a small camp at YS589667. Result, own troops 1 WIA evacuated by DUSTOFF. At 1115 hours in the same area contact with 2 VC resulted in 1 VC KIA (BC), own casualties nil. Company size camp located at YS594674, used recently. Company harbour at YS593683.

(e) 1 APC Sqn moved at 0800 hours to cross SONG RAI at YS598639. At 0930 hours a CD mine was detonated against the exit point of the crossing. 5 VC contacted. Result 2 KIA (BC), own casualties nil. At YS608543-YS615646 Provincial Highway 23 was found to be keyholed and M113s experienced some difficulty in crossing road. At 1640 hours at YS619671 a mortar APC received minor damage from a CD mine. Own casualties 3 WIA who were evacuated later by UHIB. Squadron harbour at YS605689.

(9) D + 8 (26 November):

(a) A Coy began a search of tracks towards YS590680 but was recalled to previous night harbour at YS570682 after D Coy contact at 1345 hours. Company remained in blocking position at that location overnight 26/27 November.

(b) B Coy plus Bn HQ moved at 0800 hours searching astride main EAST-WEST track to YS578683 where a well used track ran SOUTH to an old VC harbour area at YS578679. Company moved back to a blocking position astride track at 1500 hours at YS567681. Company harbour overnight at that location, on the EAST bank of the SONG RAI.

(c) C Coy continued backloading of rice by CH-47 completing this task at approx 1300 hours. Company then moved to a blocking position at YS567681 on the WEST bank of the SONG RAI and remained this location overnight. Huts and food storage area were destroyed in this area.

(d) D Coy patrols moving to the WEST of their blocking position located a series of company and battalion size camps in the area YS590676 - YS585678. Some documents were found. At 0940 hours contact with 8-10 VC in a camp at YS579674. 3 VC WIA (blood trail). Own casualties nil. Documents and equipment recovered. At 1340 hours at YS585667 contact with 2 VC. 1 VC WIA (blood trail). Own casualties 1 WIA, evacuated by Dustoff. Following this contact three bugle blasts were heard from the area YS585660. At 1410 hours a helicopter received ground fire at YS589665. Light fire team was called in and fired on this area however some overs from this fire were received in D Coy location at YS594674 and firing was stopped. At 1800 hours the company joined 1 APC Sqn harbour at YS605680. At approx 2130 hours one round of Naval Gunfire landed 400 meters to the NE of the company location.

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(e) 1 APC Sqn resumed its blocking role sweeping areas YS6168, YS6070, YS6071. The squadron harboured for the night at YS605680 with D Coy.

(10) D + 9 (27 November):

(a) A Coy and Bn HQ moved EAST towards YS590680 then NORTH to YS585723 to collect resupply. At 1245 hours at YS590697 contact with 4 VC. Results 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA (blood trail). At 1305 hours contact in same location with 3 VC. Results 1 VCC (WIA), own casualties nil. Company then moved to night harbour at YS588701 to take resupply.

(b) B Coy moved to YS587678 locating a well used track running SE from YS586678. Company then moved to YS598698 and then NW to night harbour at YS588701.

(c) C Coy moved at 0730 hours to search rice cache area YS565678 to detect signs of enemy movement from the previous day. On completion of search, company cross SONG RAI at YS567681 using a VC footbridge which was then destroyed. Following the line of SONG RAI to NE the company moved to the battalion harbour area at YS588701 to take resupply.

(d) D Coy moved NORTH to battalion harbour area at YS588701 to take resupply.

(e) 1 APC Sqn moved to and secured LZ at YS590704 for 6 RAR resupply. Squadron harbour at 592708.

(11) D + 10 (28 November):

(a) A Coy moved across SONG RAI at YS582703 using VC footbridge, to carry out search and destruction tasks in YS5570, YS5670, YS5770. A search was made of the camp complex previously located by C Coy at YS558707, more documents were found and evacuated. Company harbour at YS562705.

(b) B Coy moved via bridge at YS582703 to SUOI TA LUNG at YS573700, then NW along EAST bank to YS568708. Company harbour in this area.

(c) C Coy and Bn HQ moved via bridge at YS582703 to a new HQ location at YS570717. A well used NE/SW foot track was located and followed to the SW from YS574718 to the HQ harbour area.

(d) D Coy followed the SONG RAI to YS582725 then moved to the WEST locating a well used NORTH-SOUTH track at YS574725. Company then moved to a blocking position to harbour at YS555725.

(e) At 0830 hours 1 APC Sqn secured a new fire support base for 101 Fd Bty RAA at YS601706. At 1400 hours the Squadron conducted a cordon and search of a ruined village at YS590730, with negative result. Squadron night harbour at YS606695.

(12) D + 11 (29 November):

(a) A Coy continued search of YS5570 with nil result.

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(b) B Coy continued search along EAST bank of SUOI TA LUNG to previously reported camp at YS559708. Then NORTH astride well used track running NORTH-SOUTH to YS558713. Company harbour at YS557724.

(c) C Coy patrolled area around YS570717 to investigate and report on tracks. Company remained this location as protective group for Bn HQ. 2215 hours contact at YS570717 between Aslt Pnr Pl and estimated 2 - 3 VC. Own casualties 3 WIA, 2 of these casualties were winched out by RAAF UHIB at 0015 hours.

(d) D Coy remained in blocking position and continued local patrolling with negative results.

(e) 1 APC Sqn continued search operations in squares YS6072, YS6073, YS6172, YS6173. At 1045 hours at YS 604732, contact with 30 plus VC. Results 1 VC WIA (blood trail). Squadron harbour at YS606708.

(13) D + 12 (30 November):

(a) A Coy moved SOUTH along WEST bank of SUOI TA LUNG to resupply area YS538703. At 1558 hours at YS582782 contact with 2 VC resulted in 2 VC KIA (BC), own casualties nil.

(b) B Coy moved EAST to YS562764 then SOUTH and SW to SONG RAI crossing at YS582703. Company harbour at YS588703.

(c) C Coy and Bn HQ moved to rendezvous with B Coy at YS569707 then moved to harbour area at YS588704.

(d) D Coy moved SOUTH behind A Coy to harbour area at YS588703.

(e) 1 APC Sqn continued to sweep areas EAST of Route 328 with negative result. The squadron secured the Battalion LZ at YS688703 until A Coy took over this responsibility. Night harbour at YS603712.

(14) D + 13 (1 December):

(a) A Coy remained in concentration area.

(b) B Coy remained in concentration area until 1630 hours. Then redeployed to new area at YS611677. In preparation for clearing operations on 2 Dec.

(c) C Coy destroyed the bridge at YS582703 and remained in concentration area.

(d) D Coy remained in concentration area until 1600 hours. Then redeployed to new area at YS616680 in preparation for clearing operations on 2 Dec 66.

(e) 1 APC Sqn moved D Coy at 1600 hours and B Coy at 1630 hours to new harbour positions. Squadron harbour at YS591708.

(15) D + 14 (2 December):

(a) A Coy moved at 0730 hours by APC to YS617680 and began sweeping the Eastern side of Route 328 moving SOUTH to junction of Route 328 with Route 23. The

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company then moved to the SW on the Southern side of Route 23 clearing and securing the feature at YS610630 and the Southern part of the SONG RAI crossing at YS599637. Nil contacts. This responsibility was taken over by D Coy and the company then moved to secure the new Battalion harbour area at YS583639.

(b) B Coy and the Aslt Pnr Pl moved at 0630 hours to carry outroute clearance in depth, WEST of Route 328 on the axis YS611677-YS615665-YS622659. At 0915 hours contact with 3 Vietnamese who did not stop when challenged. 1 was killed and the other 2 apprehended. All were evacuated by helicopter. At 1200 hours at YS624651 an anti-tank mine was located and destroyed by the Aslt Pnrs. At 1230 hours one platoon was airlifted by RAAF UHIB to XUYEN MOC YS6568 to defend the fire support base. B Coy less this platoon then moved SE on the Northern side of Route 23 to clear and secure the bridge at YS599637 and the PAC crossing point at YS599638. This responsibility was handed over to D Coy and the company was airlifted from YS603636 by US Airmobile company at 1715 hours to NUI DAT.

(c) C Coy moved at 0730 hours by APC to YS610682 and began sweeping the Western side of Route 328 moving SOUTH to the junction with Route 23. At 1100 hours at YS627657 a CD mine was exploded resulting in 1 WIA, not serious, who was evacuated later. The company mounted on APCs then moved to clear the wooded feature at YS619641. Negative result. The company then moved on foot across the SONG RAI to its night location at YS584637.

(d) D Coy moved at 0630 hours clearing in depth to the EAST of Route 328 on the axis YS616680 - YS 625670 - YS630660. At 1120 hours at YS634654 VC exploded a Chicom DH 10 mine against the leading platoon. This exploded a claymore carried by a section commander. Our casualties 1 KIA, 10 WIA, 1 interpreter WIA and 3 civilians wounded. Civilians were evacuated by RAAF UHIB, own casualties by Dustoff. At 1400 hours the company moved to the SONG RAI and took over security of the crossing at YS599638 from A Coy and B Coy. The company harboured at YS598639 to protect Bn HQ and the APC Squadron.

(e) At 0730 hours 1 APC Squadron moved A Coy and C Coy to their start positions for the final phase of the operation. At 0800 hours Bn HQ and Sqn moved to the start position. The Squadron then moved behind the rifle companies closing up to the SONG RAI crossing YS599638 at 1600 hours. Considerable difficulty was experienced in crossing the SONG RAI however the Squadron was complete on the Western bank by 2035 hours. Squadron HQ and 2 Troop harboured at YS598638, 3 Troop and 4 Troop at YS584637.

(16) D + 15 (3 December):

(a) A Coy moved at 1030 hours by APC to 1 ATF Base area.

(b) Platoon B Coy moved by helicopter at 1330 hours from XUYEN MOC to 1 ATF Base area.

(c) C Coy moved at 1030 hours by APC to 1 ATF Base Area.

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- (d) D Coy extracted at 0845 hours by US Airmobile company to 1 ATF Base Camp from Landing Zone at YS598639. Extraction complete at 0915 hours.
 - (e) At 0830 hours two troops of 1 APC Squadron secured the Landing Zone at YS598639 for the extraction of D Coy. At 0930 hours the Squadron reconcentrated at YS580634 for the lifting of 6 RAR less two companies back to 1 ATF Base Area. This move commenced at 1030 hours.
 - (f) At 1300 hours 6 RAR was complete in its base location.
- (d) 3 SAS Sqn Operations:
- (1) 3 SAS Sqn were positioned to the NORTH, NE, EAST and SOUTH of the AO to give early warning to 1st ATF of enemy movements into and out of the area. To ensure that 6 RAR would receive early warning of enemy movement an LO moved with 6 RAR HQ. The difficulty encountered here was that the LO could only receive messages on a fixed time schedule once per day and then only by CW. This meant that some hours after reports were received information on locstats of patrols was out of date.
 - (2) The occasion arose on 29 November when 1 APC Squadron requested artillery fire on withdrawal routes of 30 VC and was refused clearance due to the presence of S.S patrols in the general area.
- (e)
- (1) 1 APC Squadron was used initially to move 6 RAR from its base at NUI DAT YS4467 to the release point YS470706 for the approach march to the area of operations. The Squadron then reverted to under command 1st ATF.
 - (2) While 6 RAR moved into the operational area and began the initial sweep from 18 November to 22 November, 1 APC Sqn conducted a search and destroy operation in the area to the SW and WEST of the AO, centre of mass being YS5564, from D + 3 (21 November).
 - (3) At last light 22 November the squadron came under command 6 RAR and assumed a blocking position along the SUOI LO 0 NHO from YS547675 - YS589662. D Coy 6 RAR, 6 RAR Motor Pl (less one section) and 1 Fd Tp 1 Fd Sqn RAE (-) also formed part of the squadron group. Command of this blocking force was exercised by the Squadron Commander within the orders issued to him by CO 6 RAR.
 - (4) On 23 November the squadron, while patrolling the blocking role located two large caches of food. These were at YS569654.
 - (5) On 25 November the squadron less D Coy 6 RAR moved across the SON RAI at YS598639 to take up a new blocking position to the NE and EAST of the AO. During this move two command detonated mines were set off by VC causing minor casualties to personnel and equipment.
 - (6) From 26 November to 1 December the squadron operated in a blocking role, centre of area YS6070, with several minor contacts occurring.
 - (7) On 2 December the squadron with infantry protection moved back across the SONG RAI at YS598639, and on 3 December moved 6 RAR less two companies back to the NUI DAT base camp.
 - (8) The squadron performed most creditably in its blocking role both with and without infantry protection and demonstrated the ability of the M113 to negotiate difficult

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terrain and river obstacles, providing careful reconnaissance and selection of routes is carried out.

f. Artillery:

(1) Artillery provided support during the operation. In order to provide the necessary close support, batteries were deployed as follows:

(a) On 18 November 161 Fd Bty RNZA redeployed by vehicle to a temporary fire support base at YS463657, to cover the preliminary movement of 6 RAR into its AO.

(b) On 19 November, 101 Fd Bty RAA, 161 Fd Bty RNZA and Pl A Bty 2/35 US Arty moved to the main fire support base at YS504655. The redeployment of 101 Fd Bty and 161 Fd Bty was carried out by APC. This deployment was designed to cover Phases 1-3 of Operation Ingham.

(c) On 25 November 161 Fd Bty RNZA was redeployed by CH-47 Chinook to a fire position at Xuyen Moc YS657684. This move was necessitated by an alteration to the operational plan and was designed to cover the movement of D Coy 6 RAR and 1 APC Squadron across the SONG RAI into the SOUTH EAST and EASTERN sectors of the AO, to occupy new blocking positions.

(d) On 28 November 101 Fd Bty RAA and 161 Fd Bty RNZA moved by CH-47 to a new main fire base at YS605705. This redeployment was designed to cover the movement of 6 RAR into Area D. Pl Bty A 2/35 Arty returned to its base at NUI DAT, moving by its own vehicles.

(e) On 1 December as a preliminary move prior to the extraction of 6 RAR and 1 APC Sqn from the AO, 161 Fd Bty RNZA was airlifted by CH-47 back to Xuyen Moc YS657684.

(f) 2 December, 101 Fd Bty RAA was airlifted by CH-47 to its base location at NUI DAT.

(g) 3 December. On completion of the extraction of 6 RAR and 1 APC Sqn from the AO, 161 Fd Bty RNZA was airlifted by CH-47 to its base location at NUI DAT.

2. Despite the many changes in artillery gun positions, close fire support was always available to 6 RAR and attached units. This capacity to redeploy quickly and come into action again with minimum delay reflected a high standard of efficiency. Artillery was used on DF, H and I tasks, opportunity targets and in one instance to enable a rifle coy to accurately pinpoint its location. The problem of crest clearance of 105mm guns at near maximum ranges occurred early in the operation but was overcome by re-deploying batteries to new locations. 6 RAR was able to assess the effectiveness of artillery fire on one target only, the enemy camp located by C Coy at YS558705. Fire was accurate and would have caused casualties to enemy above the ground. Enemy below ground would have been unhurt.

g. Engineers: One tp 1 Fd Sqn RAE supported the operation with combat engineer demolition teams attached to all 6 RAR rifle companies and an Engineer Officer attached to 6 RAR

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Bn HQ. The remainder of the troop moved with the APC Sqn as part of the blocking force. The task for this element was to move to assist 6 RAR with engineer tasks, by foot, without having to be brought in by helicopter, thus helping to preserve security. The combat engineer teams assisted rifle companies in the delousing and destruction of booby traps, chicom claymore mines, and the destruction of base installations. Their advice and assistance was most effective.

h. 161 (Indep) Recce Flt: One H13 from 161 (Indep) Recce Flt was placed in direct support of 6 RAR for the duration of the operation and was held on standby at Nui Dat. The aircraft was used for liaison, reconnaissance, artillery OP, battlefield surveillance, casevac/medevac, movement of stores and light equipment by landing and lowering, backloading of captured documents, weapons and equipment, and for communications. As in previous operations the H13 was invaluable to the battalion.

i. RAAF: Two UH1Bs from 9 Sqn RAAF were placed in direct support of 6 RAR for the duration of the operation and were held on standby at Nui Dat. These aircraft were used for resupply from 21 November onwards, movement forward of personnel and stores, backloading of captured equipment, detainees, wounded civilians, and VCC, winching out own wounded, and the redeployment of one B/6 RAR platoon on 2 December. One of the most valuable characteristics of the UH1B is its capacity to winch casualties out of the jungle when LZs are not available. This happened twice on operation Ingham, once by day and once by night. The winch out by night was made on 30 November at 0013 hours under extremely hazardous conditions of wind, rain, a jungle canopy of varying height and the possibility of enemy fire. The fact that the winch out of two wounded was completed successfully was due entirely to the skill and devotion of the RAAF crew and reflects the greatest credit on them. The vegetation in the AO made the selection of LZs in phases 1 and 2 extremely difficult and for future operations where similar terrain is expected a winch out aircraft should be held on standby at HQ 1st ATF throughout the duration of the operation.

13 Results:

a. Total Viet Cong casualties were ten KIA (BC), ten WIA (Blood trails), one VCC WIA, and nineteen detainees. Viet Cong equipment and material losses were as follows:

Weapons

Rifles	5
Carbines	4
SA ammunition	Not counted
75mm RCL rounds	5

Documents	Large quantity
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Radio Equipment

AN PRC - 10 set	1
HT - 1 radio	2

Rice

Backloaded	147,720 lbs (Polished)
Destroyed	21,800 lbs (Polished)

.../ Food..

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Food.

Backloaded 100lbs Beef concentrate
30 tins condensed milk
113 one gallon tins lard
18 fourty pouhd tins of sugar.

Clothing

Medical supplies and drugs

Mines and grenades

Mines found destroyed were Chicom DH10 and 12s. Shaped charge mines, CBU's and UXB rigged as boobytraps or CD mines: M26 grenades, Chicom and old French grenades. All were destroyed.

Ox carts 15 (destroyed)

1 ten man boat destroyed

1 four man boat destroyed

300 empty rice bags destroyed

b. Own casualties were one KIA, one DOW, and twenty-one WIA. One M113 was slightly damaged but remained operational.

14. Administrative Matters

6 a. To avoid jeopardizing security in the early phases of the operation, all troops initially carried four days rations. The first resupply of two days rations was airlifted by helicopter to a displaced LZ. One rifle company was used to porter the resupply a distance of 4000 metres back to the battalion concentration area thus ensuring no loss of security.

b. The second resupply was again effected by using a rifle company to porter three days rations forward. These rations had been carried into the AO by 1 APC Sqn and were collected from a pre-arranged rendezvous when the squadron was in its blocking position. As a result helicopter resupply into the AO was not utilized until D + 9 (27 November) when contacts helicopter evacuation of casualties and rice, would have already revealed 6 RAR's presence in the area.

c. The tasking of in direct support helicopters was delegated to 6RAR A Echelon and this system worked successfully.

d. Winching out of casualties was carried out on three occasions and had become normal practice where suitable LZs were not available. An Army H13 was also used to rope haul documents from rifle companies and deliver them by the same method to 6 RAR Bn HQ.

15. Commander's Analysis.

a. This operation did not achieve completely the mission set for it although partial success was ensured by the destruction of the camp complexes, capture of documents and maps and discovery and evacuation/destruction of a large quantity of polished rice. The main aim - to destroy the D445 Provincial Mobile Battalion was not attained, mainly because D445 was not, apparently, in the area when the operation was being conducted. The absence of any major contact with D445 Bn was therefore disappointing.

/ b. The concept

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b. The concept of operations which envisaged no major air movement until D + 9 worked very successfully and there was little doubt that the enemy was completely unaware of the existence of a battalion in what was undoubtedly a major base area.

FOR THE COMMANDER

[Signature]
S.J. MAIZEY
Major, RA Inf
GSO 2 Ops

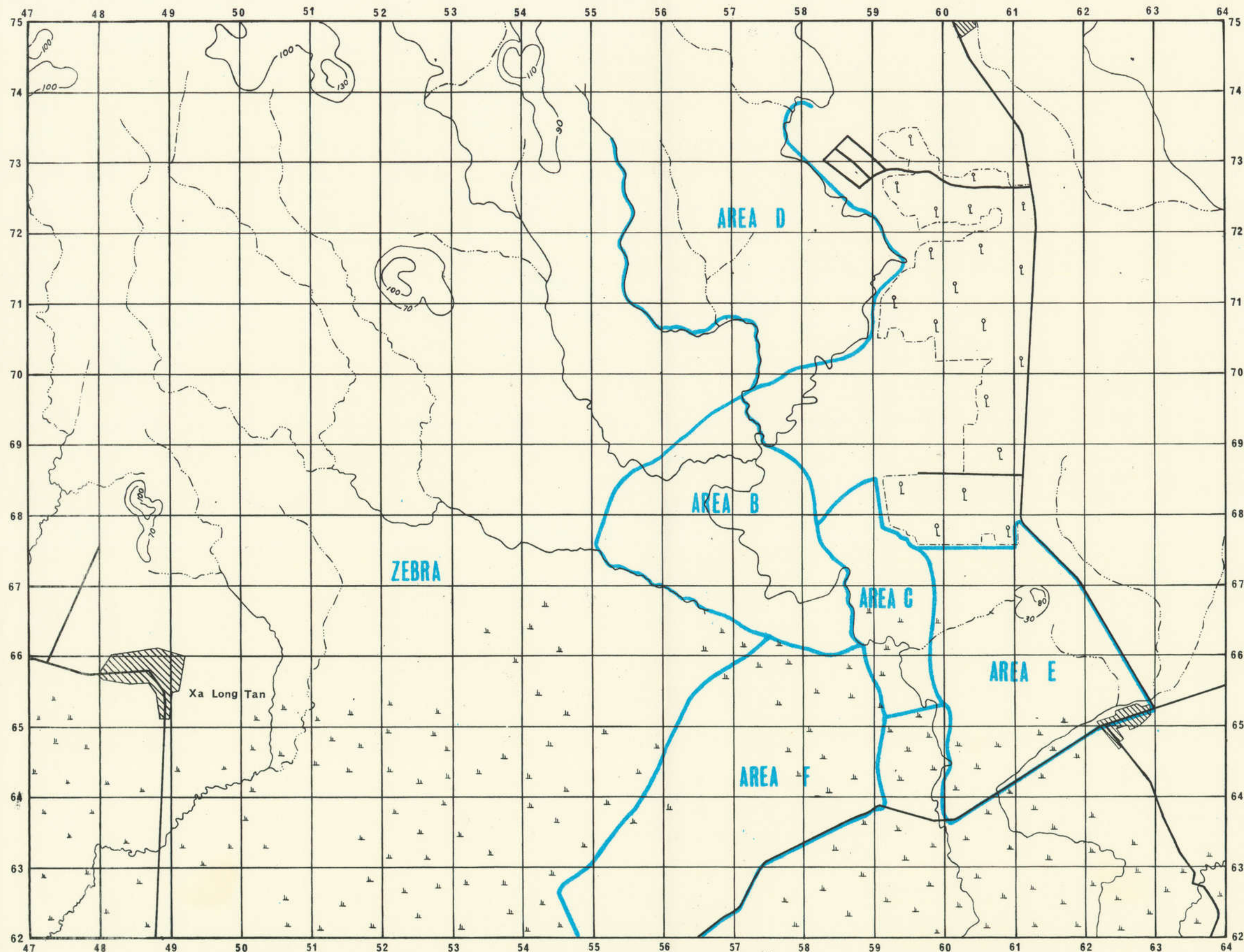
Annex: A. Area of Operation.
Q. Intelligence.
R. Installations, contacts, caches.

Enclosures: Contact or Incident After Action Reports

Distribution:

5 - 5 RAR
5 - 6 RAR
5 - CG, II FFORCE V, attn: AC of S, G3
5 - HQ AFV
2 - HQ NZ Force, V
2 - Comd's Diary
1 - File
4 - Spare

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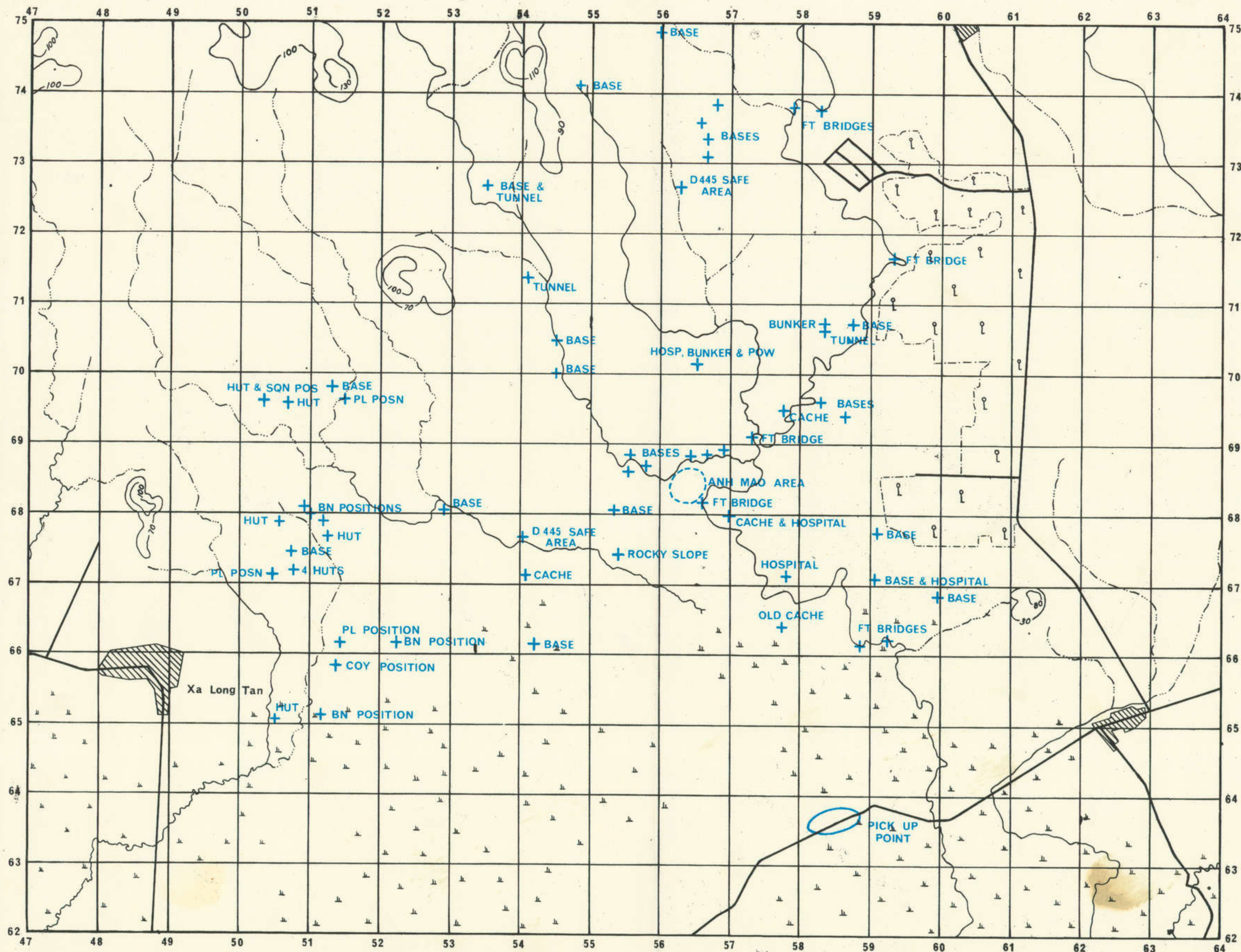


ANNEX P (AREA OF OPERATION) TO COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT (OP INGHAM)

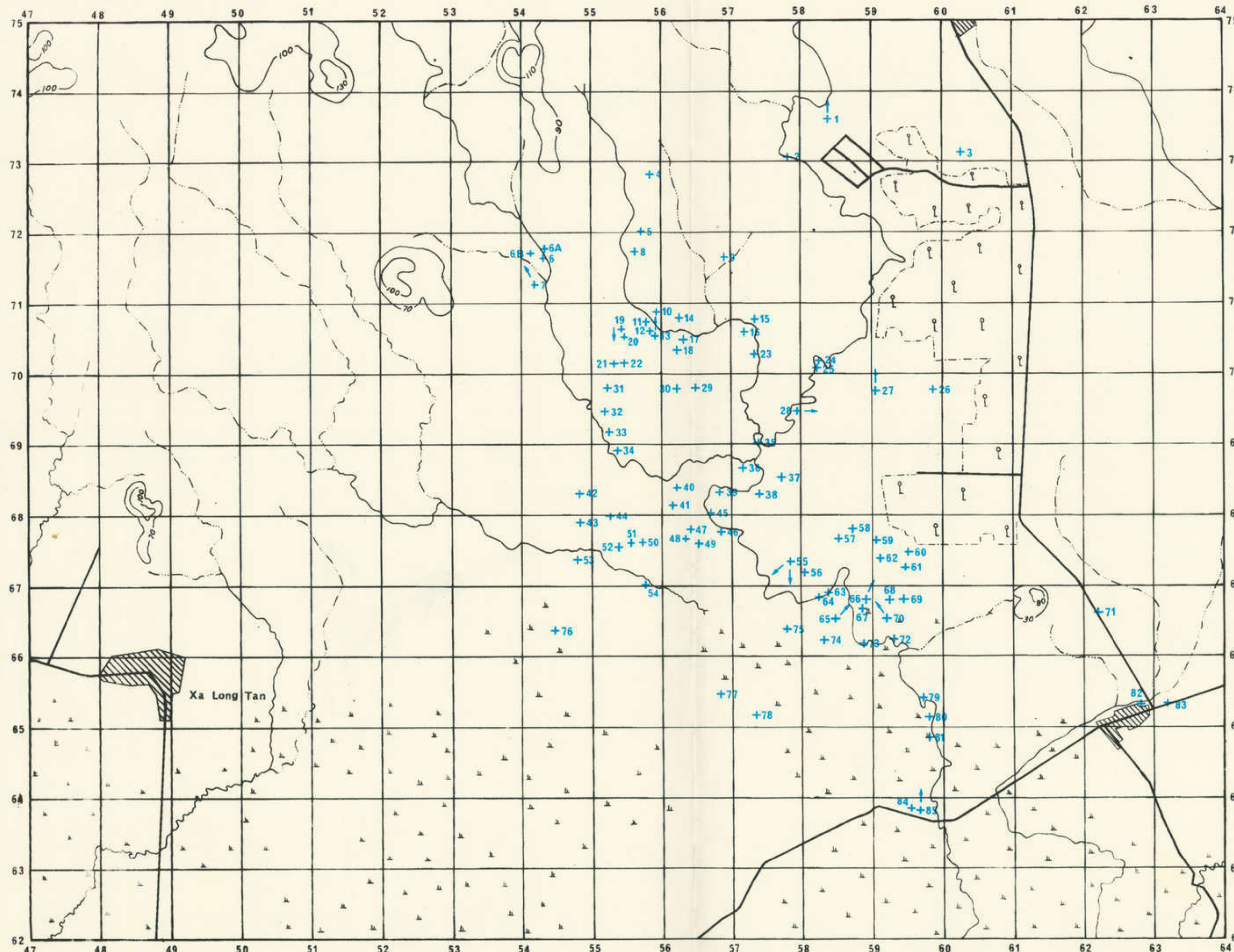
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ANNEX R (CONTACTS, INSTALLATIONS, CACHES) TO COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT (OP INGHAM)

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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Contact 2 VC withdrew North | 49 Contact 1 VC |
| 2 Bridge | 50 Platoon camp |
| 3 Contact Platoon VC withdrew South | 51 Bn sized camp |
| 4 Base camp - Docs. | 52 Coy sized camp |
| 5 Arms found | 53 Squad camp |
| 6 Coy. Base camp - Radio - CBU | 54 Squad (-) - Rice cache, grenade |
| 6A Contact Squad (-) | 55 Contact Squad (-) withdrew, South & SW |
| 6B Squad (-) Base camp | 56 Squad camp |
| 7 Contact 5 VC withdrew NW | 57 Coy base camp - Docs |
| 8 Contact 6 VC | 58 |
| 9 Contact 3 VC | 59 - Sugar, oil, kero |
| 10 Training camp | 60 Squad (-) camp |
| 11 B H Q - Docs. | 61 Squad camp - Docs |
| 12 Base camp - Tunnel | 62 Coy base camp |
| 13 Contact 2 VC withdrew North | 63 Bridge |
| 14 Squad (-) camp | 64 .. |
| 15 Base camp - Docs, booby trap | 65 Contact 2 VC withdrew NE |
| 16 Contact | 66 Contact Squad withdrew North |
| 17 Contact 4 VC | 67 Squad (-) camp |
| 18 Squad (-) camp | 68 Contact 1 VC |
| 19 Contact 2 VC withdrew South | 69 Squad camp |
| 20 Base camp - Hospital, tunnel, rice cache, booby trap | 70 Contact 3 VC withdrew NW |
| 21 Claymore | 71 Claymore |
| 22 Contact 2 VC | 72 Bridge |
| 23 Hut - Docs, rice cache | 73 .. |
| 24 Contact 2 VC | 74 Rice cache |
| 25 Bridge | 75 Hut |
| 26 Squad (-) camp | 76 Coy base camp |
| 27 Contact Platoon VC withdrew North | 77 Contact - Sugar, rice cache |
| 28 Contact 3 VC withdrew East | 78 Rice cache |
| 29 Base camp | 79 Hut |
| 30 Hut - Base camp | 80 Contact 5 VC - Docs |
| 31 Base camp | 81 Squad (-) camp - Arms, docs |
| 32 Hut - Base camp; docs, arms, CBU | 82 Claymore |
| 33 Squad (-) camp | 83 .. |
| 34 Squad (-) camp - Rice cache | 84 .. |
| 35 Bridge | 85 Contact 3 VC withdrew North |
| 36 Squad (-) camp - Docs | |
| 37 Base camp | |
| 38 Squad (-) camp - Docs | |
| 39 Base camp | |
| 40 .. | |
| 41 .. | |
| 42 .. | |
| 43 Base camp - Rice cache, grenade | |
| 44 Platoon camp | |
| 45 Bridge - Grenade, salt, sugar | |
| 46 Arms | |
| 47 Claymore | |
| 48 Contact Squad (-) withdrew NW - rice cache | |