

ANNEX M TO COMMANDER'S DIARY OF HQ 1 ATF

FROM 1 Jul 68 TO 31 Jul 68

ACTION REPORTS

CONFIDENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE VIETNAM

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

TO: Commanding General
II Field Force Vietnam
ATTN: AC of S. G3.

COPIES TO: HQ AFV (7)
HQ NZ Force Vietnam (2)
HQ 1 ALSG
HQ 6 Task Force (3)
HQ 10 Task Force (3)
Internal (15)

MAPS: VIETNAM Series L7014, Sheet 6430 III and IV (1 : 50,000).
VIETNAM Series L607, Sheet 6331 (1 : 100,000).
VIETNAM Series L7014, Sheet 6331 II, 6331 III (1 : 50,000).

1. Name and Type of Operation. Operation TOAN THANG Phase I.
2. Dates of Operation. The operation was conducted over the period 21 Apr 68 to 7 Jun 68.
3. Command Headquarters. HQ 1 ATF.
4. Unit Commanders.
 - a. Comd 1 ATF Brigadier R.L. HUGHES, DSO
D Comd 1 ATF Colonel D.B. DUNSTAN, MBE
 - b. 1 RAR Lt Col P.H. BENNETT
2 RAR Lt Col N.R. CHARLESWORTH
3 RAR Lt Col J.J. SHELTON, MC
12 Fd Regt Lt Col. J.D. KELLY
C Sqn 1 Armd Regt Maj P. BAIMAN
A Sqn 3 Cav Regt Maj J.D. KELDIE
1 Fd Sqn RAE Maj J.H. KEMP
5. Location. North East PHUOC TUY Province centre of mass YS3080, LONG KHANH Province centre of mass YT3004, BIEN HOA/LONG KHANH Provinces centre of mass YT1715 and BIEN HOA/BINH DUONG Provinces centre of mass XT9129.
6. Task Organisation.

1 RAR	12 Fd Regt
2 RAR	A Bty 2/35 Arty (US)
3 RAR	1 Fd Sqn RAE
C Sqn 1 Armd Regt	161 (Indep) Recce Flt
A Sqn 3 Cav Regt	9 Sqn RAAF
7. Supporting Forces.
 - a. C Sqn 1 Armd Regt.
 - (1) Deployment.
 - (a) On the 22 May 68 C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed NUI DAT via Route 2 and Route 1. The Sqn staged the night 22/23 May at LONG BINH and arrived at FSPB CORAL 23 May.
 - (b) 1 Tp was placed under op con 3 RAR, 2 Tp was placed under op con 1 RAR and Sqn HQ was located at FSPB CORAL.

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ii. 1 Tp op con 1 RAR at FSPB CORAL.

iii. 2 Tp op con 3 RAR at FSPB COOGEE.

(j) 3 Tp arrived at FSPB CORAL on 17 May and was located with Sqn HQ.

(k) 2 Tp moved from FSPB CORAL to FSPB BALMORAL on 25 May remaining under op con 3 RAR.

(l) 3 Tp on 30 May escorted a road convoy from FSPB CORAL to NUI DAT and remained at 1 ATF Base NUI DAT.

(m) 3 Tp on 2 Jun escorted a convoy from NUI DAT to FSPB CORAL staging night 2/3 Jun at BEARCAT and returned with the convoy to 1 ATF Base NUI DAT on 3 Jun.

(n) 3 Tp on 5 Jun escorted a convoy from NUI DAT to FSPB CORAL staging night 5/6 Jun at BEARCAT.

(o) 2 Tp moved from FSPB BALMORAL to FSPB CORAL on 5 Jun.

(p) A Sqn escorted the final convoy from FSPB CORAL to NUI DAT on 6 Jun, staging the night 6/7 Jun at BEARCAT, except for 3 Tp who proceeded directly to NUI DAT on 6 Jun.

(2) Employment.

(a) Throughout the operation A Sqn were employed on the following tasks:

i. Protection of road convoys.

ii. Recce in force operations.

iii. Securing LZ's.

iv. Evacuation of casualties. During the second battle of FSPB CORAL the APCs collected casualties during darkness from various locations around the perimeter and brought them to a central collection point where they received medical treatment until the LZ for DUSTOFF could be declared secure.

v. Defence of FSPBs.

(b) From 13 May until the conclusion of the operation OC A Sqn 3 Cav Regt was made responsible for the layout, coordination and command of local defence at FSPB CORAL. With the reliable communications provided by the ACV and having the ability to reinforce sectors under attack with his APCs this proved a very successful task for the OC of the Cav Sqn.

c. Artillery.

(1) 12 Fd Regt.

(a) The affiliations throughout the operation were:

i. 102 Fd Bty in DS of 1 RAR.

ii. 108 Fd Bty in DS of 2 RAR.

iii. 161 Fd Bty in DS of 3 RAR.

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- (b) 102 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
 - i. FSPB WATTLE YS3591 3 May - 5 May.
 - ii. FSPB HARRISON YT1672 5 May - 12 May.
 - iii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 12 May - 5 Jun.
- (c) 108 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
 - i. FSPB HUNT YT2501 25 Apr - 3 May.
 - ii. FSPB WATTLE YS3591 3 May - 5 May.
 - iii. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2012 5 May - 10 May.
- (d) 161 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
 - i. FSPB THORNTON YS3571 21 Apr - 23 Apr.
 - ii. FSPB DYKE YS2780 23 Apr - 25 Apr.
 - iii. FSPB EVANS YT2206 25 Apr - 3 May.
 - iv. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2012 10 May - 12 May.
 - v. FSPB CORAL XT9329 12 May - 13 May.
 - vi. FSPB COOGEE XT8929 13 May - 24 May.
 - vii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 24 May - 6 Jun.

(2) A Bty 2/35 Arty (US).

(a) Throughout the operation A Bty was in general support of 12 Fd Regt.

(b) A Bty occupied the following FSPBs:

- i. FSPB LONG YS2575 23 Apr - 25 Apr.
- ii. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2010 5 May - 12 May.
- iii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 13 May - 6 Jun.

(3) A Bty 5/42 Arty (US) was in general support of 1 ATF at NUI DAT from 6 May to 19 May.

(4) Employment of Artillery. Operation TOAN THANG provided a wide variety of tactical situations in which artillery was used, these were as follows:

- (a) Preparation of LZs for air assault landings.
- (b) Preparatory bombardment of occupied enemy camps.
- (c) Covering fire plans for attacks.
- (d) Close defensive fire tasks during enemy attacks.
- (e) Having to defend gun positions from enemy who had infiltrated into the gun positions.
- (f) Having to fire defensive fire tasks whilst being engaged by enemy mortar and rocket fire.

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- (g) Cut off missions on enemy withdrawal routes.
- (h) Counter bombardment of enemy mortar and rocket locations.
- (i) Destruction missions against enemy in the open, and against enemy installations.
- (j) Harassing and interdiction tasks against enemy infiltration routes.
- (k) Illumination missions.

(5) Corps Artillery Net. A Corps Artillery net was established under the control of II Field Force Artillery. This proved successful and enabled additional fire to be employed especially during the NVA attacks on FSPBs CORAL and BALMORAL.

(6) AWCC. An "ad hoc" AWCC was deployed at FSPB CORAL. This was successful. However it had to be staffed by untrained personnel. In future operations where the Task Force has its own air space the AWCC at NUI DAT will have to split.

(7) Artillery support was effective throughout the operation and played an important part in the success of the operation.

d. Engineers.

(1) Deployment.

(a) 1 Fd Sqn deployed one engineer combat team to each battalion and one engineer mini team to each troop of C Sqn 1 Armd Regt and A Sqn 3 Cav Regt throughout the operation.

(b) 1 Fd Sqn (-) was deployed to FSPB CORAL from 13 May to 6 Jun.

(2) Employment.

(a) Prior to their deployment as a Sqn (minus engineer combat teams under operational control of the battalions) the following tasks were undertaken:

- i. Destruction of enemy installations.
- ii. Destruction of captured enemy ammunition and explosives.
- iii. Construction of gun positions in the FSPBs.
- iv. Construction of LZs and winch points.
- v. The mini teams were employed on clearing routes of mines for APCs of A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.
- vi. Establishment of a water point at FSPB ANDERSEN.

(b) On deployment to FSPB CORAL the Sqn undertook the following tasks:

- i. Land clearing around both FSPBs CORAL and BALMORAL.

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- ii. Construction of FSPB defences at FSPBs COOGEE, CORAL and BALMORAL.
- iii. Construction of command post, RAP and signal centre at FSPB CORAL.
- iv. Laying a booby trap field at FSPB BALMORAL.
- v. Assisting the infantry and artillery to prepare their defensive positions.
- vi. Occupying a section of the defensive perimeter at FSPB CORAL.

c. Aviation. During Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1), extensive use was made of the air resources available. This was particularly so with the deployment and redeployment of Task Force units and with logistic resupply.

(1) 161 (Indep) Recce Flt. The flight provided 1 H13 in DS of each battalion and HQ 1 ATF. In addition 1 CESSNA was provided for day and night VR in the operational areas and for liaison and radio rebroadcast tasks. The flight also continued to provide FW and RW aircraft for VR, liaison and psy ops tasks at the 1 ATF Base. The aircraft supporting the operation initially worked from NUI DAT. On 25 Apr a detachment deployed to BEARCAT YT1600 and redeployed to PHU LOI XT8414 on 13 May where it remained until the operation concluded. The H13's in DS of battalions were used for close VR, liaison and artillery observation.

(2) 9 Sqn RAAF. The squadron provided IROQUOIS helicopter support for resupply, troop positioning, DUSTOFF and command liaison tasks. Initially operating daily out of VUNG TAU, a detachment deployed to PHU LOI on 13 May to support operations in AO SURFERS. From PHU LOI the aircraft positioned daily at FSPB CORAL.

(3) 35 Sqn RAAF. The squadron provided logistic support CARIBOU aircraft that operated between VUNG TAU, NUI DAT and BEARCAT whilst HQ 1 ATF and the logistic elements of the force were located at BEARCAT.

(4) US Army Aviation.

(a) Offensive Support. Throughout the operation a LFT was positioned daily at NUI DAT. As the Task Force deployed further away from the 1 ATF Base it became necessary to leave the LFT at NUI DAT to support operations in PHUOC TUY and to rely on "on call" LFT's requested through MAE HQ II FFV. Response to requests was good and no difficulties were experienced with the systems. During the attacks on FSPBs CORAL and BALMORAL LFT's provided excellent close support in the face of heavy and accurate enemy AA HMG fire.

(b) DUSTOFF Support. Casualty evacuation requirements were met by DUSTOFF helicopters based at LONG BINH. Response to requests was completely satisfactory although when numerous casualties were sustained, assistance from 9 Sqn RAAF enabled the wounded to be delivered to hospital without undue delay.

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(c) Transport Support. The force was almost completely maintained by air during the operation and deployment and redeployment was by air. Details of transport support provided by US Army Aviation are listed below. 9 Sqn RAAF supplemented US AHCs in troop moves and assisted US transport support in daily resupply.

<u>Deployments and Redeployments</u>	<u>Troops</u>	<u>Cargo</u>
AHCs	5215	Nil
CH47	932	367.5 tons
CH54	Nil	31 tons

Logistic Resupply

CH47	1242	1471 tons
CH54	Nil	18 tons

(5) USAF. The 1 ATF TACP provided continuous daylight VR throughout the operation as well as controlling preplanned and immediate airstrikes and SPOOKY and MOONSHINE aircraft. A significant "first" during this period was the employment of close tactical air by night during the attack on FSPB CORAL 16 May 68. A forward TACP was deployed with HQ 1 ATF and the FAC's and aircraft operated from VUNG TAU and NUI DAT until 13 May 68 when a detachment deployed to PHU LOI. This detachment subsequently redeployed to BIEN HOA AB on 31 May 68 in order to take advantage of the better maintenance facilities available.

(6) During the operation there were 184 missions flown by USAF aircraft. Of these, 134 were preplanned airstrikes, 7 were immediate airstrikes in support of troops in contact, 37 were combat skyspots, 3 were SPOOKY and MOONSHINE missions and 3 were B52 strikes.

8. Intelligence.

a. From the intelligence point of view, the overall area of 1 ATF operations during Operation TOAN THANG I consisted of three main areas of interest:

- (1) NUI THI VAIs, North to include the HAT DICH area.
- (2) Northern HAT DICH and AO COLUMBUS III.
- (3) AO SURFERS I and II.

b. Prior to operations in each of the three areas, the following indications of enemy activity were noted:

(1) NUI THI VAI, HAT DICH Area. Indications were that there was possibly up to one VC main force battalion in the HAT DICH area. This derived from a 9 US Div LRRP sighting of 250 well armed men in the vicinity of YS3194 on 25 Mar, heading South. The CHAU DUC District Coy, C41, was thought to be in the general area of the NUI DINH/NUI THI VAIs. The last known contact with C41 was on the 5 Apr 68 when a patrol from 2 RAR contacted 15-20 VC near HOA LONG killing six, at least four of whom were members of C41. Numerous base camps were known throughout the area.

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(2) Northern HAT DICH, AO COLUMBUS III. II FFV intelligence indicated that the enemy would conduct coordinated attacks on SAIGON and BIEN HOA/LONG BINH in the time frame 24 Apr - 1 May and probably would use the same avenues of approach used during TET. It was expected that these attacks would be preceded by attacks by fire. The area of AO COLUMBUS III had been used as an approach avenue during TET and also as an area for rocket sites for fire attacks on BIEN HOA/LONG BINH. The area of the Northern HAT DICH showed signs of increasing activity. During the period 9 - 16 Apr 68, 9 US Div LRRPs had had four contacts resulting in 21 VC KIA (BC) and 10 KIA possible. Red Haze emission reports had noticeably increased, and there were also reports of the existence of a K34 Arty Battalion in the general area of YS2990. One enemy KIA in a contact on the 16 Apr had been identified as being from 52 VC Arty Bn, 69 Arty Command. It was possible that D445 LF Battalion, or elements of it, were co-located with these Arty units.

(3) AO SURFERS I and II. Since the start of the second enemy offensive on 4 May 68, it had become apparent that substantial mainforce and local force units had passed through the AO SURFERS area and would probably continue to do so. Further, in the event of the second offensive being called off it was anticipated that the AO SURFERS area would be in a position to interdict exfiltration routes from SAIGON.

(a) Up to 10 May 68, contact had been made by US units with the following enemy regiments in the AO SURFERS area:

- i. 141 NVA Regt, 7 NVA Div.
- ii. 165 NVA Regt, 7 NVA Div.
- iii. 274 VC Regt, 5 VC Div.
- iv. 275 VC Regt, 5 VC Div.
- v. DONG NAI Regt.

(b) In addition, the following local force or district elements had been operating in or near AO SURFERS:

- i. 3 VC LF Bn.
- ii. C300 DONG NAI Coy.
- iii. C303 Coy.
- iv. C302 TAN UYEN Pl.
- v. DI AN Pl.
- vi. 83 Rear Services Group.

(c) The village of BINH MY (XT9036 - XT9132) had been noted as an important staging area and resupply point for enemy troops moving either North or South.

c. Area 1 Operations (Period 21 - 24 Apr). Operations in the NUI THI VAI/HAT DICH area were curtailed before entering the HAT DICH area proper. At the end of operations in this area there had been one contact with two enemy with unknown results.

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d. Area 2 Operations (Period 24 Apr - 11 May). Operations continued in the Northern HAT DICH area to Highway 1 until 5 May when the deployment to AO COLUMBUS III was effected. Up to 5 May no major contact had been made and there were seven minor contacts with the following results:

- 5 VC KIA (BC)
- 1 VC WIA
- 6 Individual weapons captured
- 1 Crew served weapon captured

e. One enemy unit was identified from documents following a contact on 28 Apr 68. The documents identified the Political Officer of J600, a rear services element subordinate to 274 VC Regt.

f. Operations in AO COLUMBUS III continued until 11 May with the following results:

(1) Three minor contacts yielding six enemy KIA, seven individual weapons and one crew served weapon captured. Two unit identifications from bodies were made during this period, firstly from Coy C22 of D67 Engineer Battalion and secondly BIEN HOA Province tax collection elements.

(2) 1 RAR had located a 122mm rocket site which had last been used during TET against BIEN HOA/LONG BINH.

(3) 3 RAR had two rockets of an unknown type, probably RFG, fired near their location.

g. Area 3 Operations (Period 12 May - 6 Jun 68). During operations in AO SURFERS I and II, there were a total of 69 contacts, including two regimental sized attacks against FSPBs, with the overall result as follows:

NVA KIA (BC)	237
Enemy KIA Poss	56
FW	11 (1 VC, 10 NVA)
Detainee	1
Hoi Chanh	1
Crew served weapons	35
Individual weapons	94

Enemy units and infiltration groups identified were:

- 141 NVA Regt
- 165 NVA Regt
- 85 Regt
- 32 Infiltration Group
- 269 Infiltration Group
- 275 Infiltration Group
- 745 Infiltration Group
- NAM HA Infiltration Group
- 233 Infiltration Group
- D280 Infiltration Group
- 165 Infiltration Group

h. Trends Noted in Area 3 Operations.

(1) Detailed recce done by the enemy. He conducted close, detailed recce by day and by night and also recce in force up to Company strength. An example of the detailed recce being carried out was the finding of saplings bent to point to ME

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(c) 1 Tp departed FSPB BALMORAL on 4 Jun and rejoined Sqn HQ at FSPB CORAL.

(d) On 5 Jun C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed FSPB CORAL and returned to NUI DAT via Route 15. The Sqn staged the night 5/6 Jun at BEARCAT.

(2) Employment.

(a) Sqn HQ operated from FSPB CORAL and in addition to its normal command and administrative functions was coordinated into the defences of FSPB CORAL.

(b) 1 Tp was placed under op con 3 RAR and located at FSPB BALMORAL.

(c) 2 Tp was placed under op con 1 RAR and was located at FSPB CORAL.

(d) Both troops were used extensively on recce in force operations and when deployed proved a very decisive factor in contacts with the enemy. They also added considerable strength and fire power to the defences of FSPBs BALMORAL and CORAL during their attacks by the NVA.

b. A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

(1) Deployment.

(a) 3 Tp was placed under op con C Coy 1 RAR and deployed from NUI DAT to FSPB LONG YS2575 from 23 Apr to 25 Apr.

(b) 1 Tp moved to AO MURRAY BRIDGE on 29 Apr and was placed under op con 2 RAR.

(c) 1 Tp moved to FSPB WATTLE YS3591 on 3 May and came under op con Comd FSPB WATTLE.

(d) 3 Tp escorted a convoy from NUI DAT to BEARCAT YT1600 and returned on 3 May 68.

(e) 1 Tp was placed under op con 1 RAR on 5 May and moved with A Coy 1 RAR to BLACKHORSE en route to FSPB HARRISON YT1716.

(f) Sqn HQ and 2 Tp provided escort for A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) from NUI DAT to FSPB ANDERSEN YT2012 on 5 May and was placed under op con 2 RAR.

(g) Sqn HQ and 2 Tp were placed under op con 3 RAR on 10 May as a result of 3 RAR relieving 2 RAR.

(h) On 12 May A Sqn less 3 Tp escorted the road convoy from AO COLUMBUS III to AO SURFERS staging as follows:

i. A Sqn (-) BEARCAT.

ii. 2 Tp BIEN HOA in sp of A Bty 2/35 Arty (US).

(i) On 13 May A Sqn (-) arrived in AO SURFERS and deployed as follows:

i. Sqn HQ FSPB CORAL.

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(2) Before his large attacks the enemy moved close to his objective several hours before attacking. A PW from 275 Infiltration Group captured after a Regimental attack on FSPB CORAL said that his unit had force marched for six hours, then laid up for three hours 250 metres from our FEBA before attacking.

(3) The extremely heavy fire support employed by the enemy during his recce in force and attacks. He employed 60mm and 82mm mortars, 75mm RCL and RFG2 and 7 with considerable accuracy, and effectiveness.

(4) The enemy was very aggressive and willing to prolong contact after first light to enable him to clear the battlefield.

(5) The enemy's employment of anti aircraft heavy machine guns. These were sited around his HQ areas to prevent detailed air recce, and also employed in the attack, sited close to friendly locations to minimise fire from LFTs.

(6) Following attacks, the enemy dispersed rapidly, even after first light. After an NVA Regimental sized attack against FSPB CORAL on 16 May 68 contact broke at 0630 hrs and immediately all trace of the enemy vanished. It is now suspected that he hid in prepared bunkers and foxholes in a stream bed about 700 metres North of CORAL, most likely remaining there throughout the day and moving off the following night.

(7) The large number of Infiltration Groups identified in the area showed the importance of AO SURFERS as a movement route. Considerable flare activity accompanied by the sounds of shots every night indicated that the enemy was by-passing our locations.

(8) The number and size of the attacks against our positions showed the importance that the enemy attached to the BINH MY area.

(9) The whole of 7 NVA Div was concentrated in the area of AO SURFERS, with 141 NVA Regt to the East of FSPB CORAL and 165 NVA Regt to the North of FSPB BALMORAL.

9. Concept of Operations.

a. General Outline Phase 1.

(1) 1 ATF was to destroy VC/NVA elements in the following AOs:

- (a) AO GILES.
- (b) AO STURT.
- (c) AO HUME.
- (d) AO KENNEDY.
- (e) AO LAWSON.

(2) 3 RAR commenced the operation on 21 Apr 68 by securing FSPB THORNTON YS3571 with C Coy and Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt. The remainder of 3 RAR with 16 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt moved by air to FSPB THORNTON.

(3) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

- (a) Recce in force in AOs GILES and HUME.

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(b) Secure FSPB BEAVIS, vicinity YS2878, on 27 Apr for the fly-in of 2 RAR commencing at first light on 28 Apr.

(c) Destroy all enemy installations within their AO.

(4) On 22 Apr 68 on orders from II FFV the concept of the operation was changed.

b. General Outline Phase 2.

(1) 2 RAR and 3 RAR were to conduct recce in force in AOs LAWSON and KENNEDY in the period 24-26 Apr 68.

(2) 2 RAR and 3 RAR were then to attack North astride the general line of the LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA boundary to the North of AO MURRAY BRIDGE in the period 27-30 Apr 68.

(3) Finally 2 RAR and 3 RAR were to occupy ambush positions and patrol in the North of AO MURRAY BRIDGE to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(4) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish FSPB CAPE in vicinity YS3081 on 24 Apr.

(b) Recce in force in AO LAWSON.

(c) Attack North to the East of the inter battalion boundary, within AO MURRAY BRIDGE, to destroy NVA/VC forces' bases and staging areas.

(d) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO NEPEAN to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(e) Be prepared, on order, for airmobile insertion into AO NEPEAN to interdict VC/NVA approaches to LONG BINH from the East, should this be required by higher authority.

(5) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish FSPB DYKE in vicinity YS2780 on 23 Apr.

(b) Secure FSPB CAPE on 23 Apr for the fly-in of 2 RAR on 24 Apr.

(c) Recce in force in AO KENNEDY.

(d) Attack North to the West of the inter battalion boundary, within AO MURRAY BRIDGE, to destroy NVA/VC forces' bases and staging areas.

(e) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO HUNTER to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(f) Be prepared, on order, for airmobile insertion into AO HUNTER to interdict VC/NVA approaches to LONG BINH from the East, should this be required by higher authority.

(6) On the 23 Apr 68 1 ATF received orders from II FFV to insert by air 2 RAR and 3 RAR into AOs NEPEAN and HUNTER. As a result of this order 2 RAR was not deployed. 3 RAR was ordered to secure FSPBs DYKE and CAPE and conduct RIF operations in the vicinity of these areas.

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c. General Outline Phase 3.

- (1) 3 RAR was to continue recce in force in the vicinity of FSPB DYKE and secure FSPB CAPE.
- (2) 2 RAR and 3 RAR fly into AOs NEPEAN and HUNTER and occupy ambush positions and patrol to cover East/West tracks which could be used as avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.
- (3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:
 - (a) Conduct airmobile insertion into AO NEPEAN, on conclusion of 3 RAR insertion, on 25 Apr.
 - (b) Establish FSPB HUNT in vicinity YT2602.
 - (c) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO NEPEAN to cover East/West tracks which could be used as enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.
- (4) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:
 - (a) Continue present operations in AOs KENNEDY and LAWSON.
 - (b) Conduct airmobile insertion into AO HUNTER commencing 250830H Apr.
 - (c) Establish FSPB EVANS in vicinity YT2206.
 - (d) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO HUNTER to cover tracks from the North and the East which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

d. General Outline Phase 4.

- (1) 2 RAR commencing on 29 Apr extended their operations into AO SWAN.
- (2) 3 RAR took over the responsibility of AO NEPEAN and screened the area from FSPB HUNT to the AO Boundary in the vicinity of TRANG BOM YT1910.

e. General Outline Phase 5.

- (1) Commencing 3 May 1 ATF was to extend recce in force operations into AOs BELIZE, KENNEDY, LAWSON and TAUPO.
- (2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:
 - (a) To be inserted into FSPB WATTLE on 3 May.
 - (b) To provide one coy for the security of FSPB WATTLE and subsequently for FSPB ASH and FSPB WILLOW.
 - (c) To conduct recce in force operations in AOs BELIZE, LAWSON and TAUPO.
- (3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:
 - (a) To extend recce in force operations into AOs BELIZE and KENNEDY.

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(b) To secure and provide protection for FSPB CEDAR.

(c) On completion of recce in force operations in AO KENNEDY to be extracted by AHC to NUI DAT.

(d) Be prepared on order to deploy one coy under operational control of 1 RAR to ambush tracks in vicinity of YS3269.

(4) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be extracted by AHC to NUI DAT on 3 May.

(b) To be inserted into FSPB PINE on extraction of 2 RAR and conduct recce in force operations in AO TAUPU.

(c) Provide one coy for the security of FSPB PINE.

(5) On the 5 May 68 1 ATF was ordered by II FFV to deploy into AO COLUMBUS III. At this stage operations in this phase concluded in AO BELIZE.

f. General Outline Phase 6.

(1) 1 ATF was required to relieve 199 Bde in AO COLUMBUS III by 051500H May and establish counter rocket ambush positions along the general line YT100210 - YT150170 and YT190120.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be inserted by AHC into FSPB HARRISON YT167172 and LZ's YT137192 and YT120172.

(b) Establish counter rocket ambush positions in AO AYRE in the vicinity of YT109197, YT137192 and YT133170.

(c) Establish FSPB HARRISON YT167172 and provide one coy for its protection.

(3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be inserted by CH47s into FSPB ANDERSEN YT209127.

(b) Establish counter ambush positions in AO SIMPSON in the vicinity of YT168155, YT220148 and YT170130.

(c) Establish FSPB ANDERSEN and provide one coy for its protection.

(4) On 10 May 68 3 RAR relieved 2 RAR in AO SIMPSON. 2 RAR returned to NUI DAT and 3 RAR continued to patrol and occupy counter rocket ambush.

g. General Outline Phase 7.

(1) During this phase which commenced on 12 May 68 1 ATF was ordered by II FFV to occupy blocking positions within AO SURFERS to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt, in FSPB CORAL.

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(b) To clear Route 16 from FSPB CORAL to TAN UYEN, vicinity XT959243 and secure it for the convoy movement on 13 May.

(c) Establish blocking positions and patrol in AO BONDI to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(3) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Conduct air assault landing into FSPB CORAL and secure LZ for fly-in of 3 RAR and 1 RAR.

(b) Establish 161 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt, in FSPB CORAL.

(c) Provide one coy and one sect mors for the protection of FSPB CORAL.

(d) Establish blocking positions and patrol AO MANLY to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(4) On the 13 May 3 RAR were ordered to establish FSPB COOGEE in the vicinity of XT9329.

(5) On the 23 May C Sqn 1 Armd Regt arrived at FSPB CORAL from NUI DAT.

h. General Outline Phase 8.

(1) On the 24 May 1 ATF redeployed 3 RAR from AO MANLY to AO NEWPORT. On completion of the redeployment 1 ATF continued recce in force operations in AO SURFERS II.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Continue the defence of FSPB CORAL.

(b) Conduct recce in force operations to the North of FSPB CORAL prior to the move of 3 RAR from AO MANLY to AO NEWPORT.

(c) Secure the right flank for 3 RAR move to AO NEWPORT.

(d) Provide one coy to escort one tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt to FSPB BALMORAL.

(e) Commencing 25 May conduct recce in force operations into AO BONDI.

(3) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Commencing 24 May move to and secure a battalion defensive position (FSPB BALMORAL) in the vicinity YT9333. To be concentrated in new location by 1600 hrs 24 May.

(b) Develop the battalion defensive position on 25 May, allowing space for the possible deployment of a Fd Bty.

(c) Be prepared to conduct recce in force operations in AO NEWPORT commencing 26 May, to locate enemy base camps with a view to initially destroying them with air attack and artillery.

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(d) Until otherwise directed by HQ 1 ATF sub units conducting recce in force operations were to return to the battalion base at night.

(e) Priority of recce in force operations were to be into the Northern sector of AO NEWPORT against the suspected base camp of 165 NVA Regt followed by the Eastern sector against the suspected base camp of 141 NVA Regt.

(4) On the 5 Jun 68 3 RAR returned to NUI DAT and FSPB BALMORAL was abandoned.

(5) On the 5 Jun 68 C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed FSPB CORAL for NUI DAT.

(6) On the 6 Jun 68 the remainder of 1 ATF departed FSPB CORAL and AO SURFERS II was handed over to 1 (US) Div.

10. Execution.

a. Phase 1. 3 RAR operations 21-23 Apr 68.

(1) 21 Apr 68. 3 RAR deployed into AO GILES. D Coy carried out an air assault into area YS3571 and secured the area by 1115H. A and B Coys and 161 Fd Bty then flew in and FSPB THORNTON was established. C Coy moved by APC, arriving at FSPB THORNTON at 1145H, and taking over the task of defence of the FSPB. Coys then deployed as follows:

A Coy area YS3473.

B Coy area YS3470.

D Coy area YS3372.

Bn HQ was established on NUI NGHE YS3972. There was no contact with the enemy.

(2) 22 Apr 68. Coys continued RIF in allotted areas. At 1230H at YS345703 B Coy engaged 2 enemy without result.

(3) 23 Apr 68. 3 RAR concluded operations in AO GILES and, with the exception of C Coy, deployed by air to AOs KENNEDY and LAWSON. FSPB DYKE was established in area YS2780 and D Coy was given the task of its defence. Bn HQ moved to FSPB DYKE with A Coy in area YS2680 and B Coy in area YS3081. C Coy remained overnight 23/24 Apr at FSPB THORNTON. There was no enemy contact.

b. Phase 2. 3 RAR operations 24 Apr 68. C Coy moved by air to FSPB DYKE. At 1700H at YS265834 the Aslt Pnr Pl engaged 1 VC with unknown results.

c. Phase 3. Operations in AO MURRAY BRIDGE 25-28 Apr 68.

(1) 25 Apr 68. HQ 1 ATF (Main) moved to BEARCAT YT1600. 2 RAR (-) deployed by air to AO NEPEAN with V Coy securing an LZ at YT275007 and W Coy securing the area for FSPB HUNT in YT2602. B and C Coys and 108 Fd Bty flew into FSPB HUNT and the coys deployed to areas YT2701 and YT2702 respectively. A Coy remained at HORSESHOE HILL YS4962. 3 RAR concluded operations in AOs KENNEDY and LAWSON and deployed by air to AO HUNTER. C Coy secured the area for FSPB EVANS YT2206 for the fly-in of Bn HQ, B Coy and 161 Fd Bty. A Coy carried out an air assault into YT208062 and D Coy into YT223094. There was no contact during the day.

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(2) 26 Apr 68. Both 2 RAR and 3 RAR carried out reconnaissance in force operations (RIF) within their respective AOs without contact.

(3) 27 Apr 68.

(a) 2 RAR continued operations with minor contact. At 0630H at their night location YT286023, B Coy engaged 2 enemy with small arms with the result 2 enemy KIA (BC) and 2 small arms weapons captured. At the same location at 0824H 6 enemy were engaged with the result 2 enemy KIA (BC) and 1 small arms weapon captured. At 1415H at YT279040 9 Pl found an enemy camp consisting of 10-15 bunkers. 1 enemy was sighted in the area and fired on, but although wounded he escaped. 1 small arms weapon was captured.

(b) 3 RAR continued patrolling without contact.

(4) 28 Apr 68. Both 2 RAR and 3 RAR continued RIF. 2 RAR had one contact at 0720H at YT289009 when V Coy contact 2 enemy moving along a track. 1 enemy was killed and 2 small arms captured.

d. Phase 4. Operations in AO MURRAY BRIDGE 29 Apr - 2 May 68.

(1) 29 Apr 68. 2 RAR commenced to move SOUTH into AO SWAN. 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt came under operational control of 2 RAR and moved from NUI DAT to BEARCAT. 2 Pl W Coy moved by air to BEARCAT and then deployed with 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt and commenced operations in the area of the rubber estate, YT2400. Neither 2 RAR nor 3 RAR made contact with the enemy. At YT326036 4 Pl 2 RAR found 3x82mm Chicom mortar bombs and at YT282043 7 Pl found 12x82mm Chicom mortar bombs, 1500 lbs of rice and a quantity of small arms ammunition. Both the rice and the ammunition were destroyed.

(2) 30 Apr 68.

(a) 2 RAR continued its deployment into AO SWAN. W Coy moved to area YT2400 to join 2 Pl and 1 Tp A Sqn. At YT286036 9 Pl found a partly destroyed camp containing a RPG2 complete with 1 round, 1 Chicom burp gun, 40x60mm mortar rounds and 25 Chicom grenades. At YT298990 V Coy found a camp which was still being built.

(b) 3 RAR deployed to occupy both AO HUNTER and AO NEPEAN with A Coy moving by air to YT232033 and D Coy moving by air to FSPB HUNT. C Coy remained at FSPB EVANS and B Coy in area YT2408. At 1326H at YT244068 B Coy detained an unarmed person wearing greens and without an identity card. There was no other contact.

(3) 1 and 2 May 68. There was no contact on either of these days. Locations on night 2/3 May 68 were as follows:

2 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB HUNT
B Coy YS3394
C Coy YS3092
V Coy YS3093
W Coy YT2793
A Coy HORSESHOE HILL
108 Fd Bty FSPB HUNT

3 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB EVANS
A Coy YT2303
B Coy YT2207
C Coy FSPB EVANS
D Coy FSPB HUNT
161 Fd Bty FSPB EVANS

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e. Phase 5. Operations in AO BELIZE 3-4 May 68.

(1) 3 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR deployed by air to AO BELIZE. A Coy secured the LZ at YS3591 for the remainder of the battalion and 102 Fd Bty. FSPB WATTLE was established at this point with Bn HQ, A Coy and 102 Fd Bty. Coys moved to the following areas: B Coy YS3391; C Coy YS3490; D Coy YS3488. At 2045H 1 enemy engaged on the perimeter of FSPB WATTLE with no result.

(b) 2 RAR commenced operations in AO BELIZE without contact. At YS285919 W Coy found a battalion sized camp with about 250 bunkers that had not been used for about one month. Bn HQ moved by air and joined V Coy at YS301933, and 108 Fd Bty moved by air to FSPB WATTLE.

(c) 3 RAR was extracted by air to NUI DAT.

(2) 4 May 68. Both 1 RAR and 2 RAR continued RIF. D Coy 1 RAR contacted small groups of enemy twice without result.

f. Phase 6. Operations in AO COLUMBUS III 5-11 May 68.

(1) 5 May 68. Both 1 RAR and 2 RAR deployed by air to AO COLUMBUS III with 1 RAR occupying FSPB HARRISON (YT1617) and AO AYRE and 2 RAR FSPB ANDERSEN (YT2012) and AO SIMPSON. 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt passed to operational control of 1 RAR and two Pls of A Coy provided the escort for the move by road to FSPB HARRISON, staging overnight at BLACKHORSE. 2 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt provided escort for A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) from NUI DAT to FSPB ANDERSEN and then came under operational control of 2 RAR.

(2) 6 May 68. Both battalions continued deployment. At 1600H at YT225153 8 Pl 2 RAR sighted 6 enemy moving along a track and engaged them. The enemy proved to be the scout group for a party of approx 20 who returned fire before breaking contact and withdrawing at 1715H. This contact resulted in 2 enemy KIA (BC), 1 enemy WIA, and 1 AK47, 1 RPG2 with 6 rounds, and quantities of grenades, medical supplies and documents captured. Locations for night 6/7 May were:

1 RAR

Bn HQ YT152171
A Coy YT1120
B Coy YT1318
C Coy YT1419
D Coy FSPB HARRISON
102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON

2 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB ANDERSEN
B Coy YT1814
C Coy YT2214
V Coy FSPB ANDERSEN
W Coy YT1612
108 Fd Bty FSPB ANDERSEN
A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) FSPB ANDERSEN

(3) 7-9 May 68. During this period 1 RAR and 2 RAR continued patrolling and ambushing within their AOs. On 7 May at YT135155 B Coy 1 RAR found a 122mm rocket site that had been last used during the TET offensive in Jan 68. At 0615H on 8 May at YT125214 2 Pl 1 RAR engaged a party of 4 or 5 enemy killing 3 and capturing 5 small arms.

(4) 10 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR. At 1206H at YT124216 1 Pl contacted and killed 1 enemy capturing a Chicom pistol.

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(b) 2 RAR extracted by air to NUI DAT, being relieved by 3 RAR.

(c) 3 RAR deployed by air to AO SIMPSON and occupied areas as follows: Bn HQ and D Coy FSPB ANDERSEN; A Coy YT2214; B Coy and C Coy YT1714.

(5) 11 May 68. Patrolling continued without contact.

g. Phase 7. Operations in AO SURFERS 12-23 May.

(1) 12 May 68. Operations in AO COLUMBUS III concluded and 1 RAR and 3 RAR with their supporting Fd Btys, and advance parties from TF HQ and supporting units, deployed by air to AO SURFERS.

(a) FSPB CORAL was established at XT9329 with 1 RAR group and TF HQ and TFMA elements. At 1815H at XT939309 11 Pl 1 RAR sighted and engaged an enemy 10 man party, killing one and capturing 1 AK47. 1 member of 11 Pl was wounded and later evacuated. At 1935H 4 Pl 1 RAR fired on 10 enemy seen at XT964280 with unknown results.

(b) 3 RAR conducted the assault landing into the area of FSPB CORAL to secure the area for the fly-in of the remainder of the battalion, 1 RAR, and the Field Batteries. 3 RAR then deployed WEST into AO MANLY. On two occasions during the afternoon enemy in small groups were seen and engaged without result.

(2) Night 12/13 May 68. Several times during the night enemy were seen or heard in the vicinity of FSPB CORAL. At 0145H the enemy commenced firing RPG and mortars into the FSPB. This was followed by a ground attack by an estimated battalion, directed mainly at 102 Fd Bty and 1 RAR mortar position, both of which were held by the enemy for a short period; SPOOKY and LEFTS were called to assist in the defence. The attack was repulsed, and the enemy broke contact and withdrew at 0800H. Sweeps of the area revealed the following enemy casualties. 52 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 NVA PW, 23 small arms and 7 crew served weapons captured. Our own casualties were 9 KIA, 28 WIA, 1 105mm HOW and 2x81mm mortars damaged.

(3) 13 May 68. The occupation and development of FSPB CORAL continued with the arrival of HQ 1 ATF (Main) and two road convoys with TFMA pers and stocks. 3 RAR established FSPB COOGEE at XT8929 and 161 Fd Bty moved to there from FSPB CORAL. At 0934H at XT941309 D Coy 1 RAR contacted 5 enemy, killing 3 and capturing 3 AK47s. At 1600H at XT898308 D Coy 3 RAR engaged 5 enemy, with the result 1 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 M16 rifle and a quantity of mortar ammunition, rice and documents captured. At 1925H B Coy 3 RAR engaged 3 enemy at XT901261 with no result, and at 2233H at XT897275 A Coy 3 RAR fired on 5 enemy, killing one and possibly wounding another.

(4) 14 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR carried out patrols in the vicinity of FSPB CORAL and engaged small groups of the enemy on six occasions. At 1200H at XT924307 12 Pl were ambushed by approx 3 enemy with the result 1 AUST KIA and 3 AUST WIA. The enemy opened the contact by firing RPG and then withdrew. Their position was engaged by small arms fire, and their withdrawal route with artillery, with unknown result.

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At 1253H at XT942282 5 Pl engaged 10 enemy with small arms fire and possibly wounded two. At approx 1630H at XT945293 2 Pl fired on a group of approx 13 enemy. The enemy immediately broke into two groups and withdrew. At 1700H at XT942300 7 Pl contacted 9 enemy presumed to be from the earlier 2 Pl contact, and killed 7 and captured 2. They also captured 9 weapons, including 1 M16. 7 Pl suffered 1 KIA and 1 WIA as a result of this contact. At 1730H at XT942282 a section of 5 Pl was ambushed by approx 6 enemy. In the initial contact the leading scout was killed and his M16 rifle was captured before the enemy were forced to withdraw. 1 other soldier was wounded and 4 NVA were killed. At 1800H an RPG round was fired into A Coy's position at XT940293 with the result 2 AUST WIA.

(b) 3 RAR had three contacts during the day. At 0730H at XT897273, whilst sweeping the area of the previous night's contact, A Coy contacted 2 enemy and killed one of them. In the same area at 0900H A Coy contacted an unknown number of enemy. The enemy withdrew with unknown result. At 1255H at XT898260 5 Pl fired on 1 enemy without result.

(5) 15 May 68. At 0340H at XT939292 2 Pl 1 RAR observed 2 enemy outside their perimeter and engaged them without result. At 1028H at XT901289 7 Pl 3 RAR contacted 3 enemy with no result, and at 1440H at XT901282 A Coy 3 RAR contacted and killed 1 enemy. 10 Pl 1 RAR found a company sized camp at XT923297 which had been recently used.

(6) Night 15/16 May 68. FSPB CORAL received an attack from an estimated regiment during this night. At 0230H the enemy commenced a heavy mortar and RPG attack directed mainly against A Coy 1 RAR and the TF HQ area. At 0240H, under cover of this fire, the enemy attacked A and B Coys 1 RAR in battalion strength. The attack was held on the perimeter. At approx 0340H the enemy broke contact. Whilst the attack was in progress other contacts had occurred around the perimeter, and these continued sporadically. At 0515H the enemy attempted to thrust between A and C Coys but was prevented by mortar fire. An attack was then mounted against A, B and C Coys' positions but this was repulsed. An attack was also mounted against D Coy at 0610H, again of about battalion strength supported by mortars and RPGs. The enemy finally broke contact and withdrew at approx 0645H. SPOOKY, LFT and ground attack aircraft supported the action. APCs were used for ammunition resupply and for collection of wounded and their transport to a central medical/evacuation point. Total own casualties were 5 KIA, 19 AUST WIA, and 2 US WIA. Sweeps conducted after last light revealed 34 NVA bodies and indicated more had been carried away. One PW was taken, and 16 small arms and 11 crew served weapons captured. Two enemy HMGs were silenced by ground attack aircraft but the weapons were not captured.

(7) 16 May 68. At 0905H at XT942293 B Coy 1 RAR contacted and killed one enemy and captured an AK47. There were no other contacts during the day.

(8) 17 May 68.

(a) At 1700H 5 Pl 3 RAR sighted approx 35 enemy moving NE along a treeline at XT892264. They were out of range of small arms fire but were engaged with artillery and LFT with the result 6 NVA KIA (BC) and a further 5 KIA (Poss).

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At 1812H at XT902280 A Coy 3 RAR contacted 6 enemy, killing one, taking two PW, and capturing three small arms. At 1718H at XT938288 5 Pl 1 RAR engaged and killed one enemy. At 2140H at XT900279 A Coy 3 RAR fired on 4 enemy and a sweep at first light on 18 May 68 revealed 1 NVA KIA (BC). 1 RAR patrols during the day located mortar positions used during the attacks on night 15/16 May and captured quantities of ammunition.

(b) Locations of the battalions on the night 17/18 May were as follows:

1 RAR

In close perimeter defence
of FSPB CORAL

3 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB COOGEE
A Coy XT9028
B Coy XT8925
C Coy FSPB COOGEE
D Coy XT8930

(9) 13-21 May 68. During this period RIF operations carried out throughout the AO resulted in a series of minor contacts:

(a) At 180630H at XT898258 4 Pl 3 RAR contacted and killed one enemy.

(b) At 190745H at XT899278 1 Pl 3 RAR engaged 4 enemy with unknown result.

(c) At 201250H an OH-13 (SIOUX) aircraft of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt received ground fire from an HMG at XT953322. A camp in the area was subjected to airstrike and artillery.

(d) At 210825H at XT888308 an APC of 2 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt detonated a mine, wounding one soldier and severely damaging the APC.

(10) 22 May 68. Between 0205H and 0240H FSPB CORAL received mortar and RPG fire. There were no casualties and no damage to equipment. C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed NUI DAT for FSPB CORAL, staging overnight at LONG BINH. On Route 2 in the vicinity of YS4498 one Centurion detonated a mine and sustained minor track and suspension damage. There were no other contacts with the enemy.

(11) 23 May 68. At 1600H a CESSNA-01 (BIRDDOG) aircraft of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt crashed after receiving ground fire in the area of XT944194 and killed the pilot. At 0940H at XT929304 D Coy 1 RAR fired upon 1 enemy without result. C Sqn 1 Armd Regt completed its move to FSPB CORAL.

g. Phase 8. Operations in AO SURFERS II 24 May-6 Jun 68.

(1) 24 May 68. 3 RAR abandoned FSPB COOGEE and moved by foot and air to AO NEWPORT and established FSPB BALMORAL at XT9333. 161 Fd Bty moved by air to FSPB CORAL. At 0550H at XT920327 D Coy 3 RAR contacted and killed 1 enemy soldier. At 0610H at the same location 4 VC fired upon D Coy wounding 1 Australian soldier. A sweep of the area revealed 10 bunkers that had been occupied the previous night. The leading elements of D Coy were again fired upon by a small group of enemy at 0927H and one soldier wounded. Neither of the two D Coy soldiers were evacuated. At FSPB COOGEE at 0744H 1 enemy soldier bearing a CHIEU HOI pass surrendered.

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(2) 25 May 68. B Coy 1 RAR escorted 2 Tp C Sqn from FSPB CORAL to FSPB BALMORAL. At 1058H at XT932312 the leading platoon, 6 Pl, of B Coy sighted 2 enemy and engaged them with no result. At 1132H at XT931311 2 enemy were again fired upon. B Coy then came under MG and RPG fire from an estimated enemy platoon in bunkers. 2 Tp engaged the enemy positions with cannister and enabled the group to withdraw. The area was subjected to airstrike during the afternoon, uncovering a number of bunkers. 2 NVA were killed and 1 AK47 captured during the contact and one member of B Coy was evacuated wounded.

(3) 26 May 68.

(a) FSPB CORAL received mortar, 75mm RR and RPG fire from 0415H to 0430H with result 1 AUST KIA and 1 AUST WIA. This coincided with a ground attack against FSPB BALMORAL.

(b) 1 RAR. D Coy, accompanied by 1 Tp C Sqn, carried out RIF to the area of B Coy's contact on 25 May. At 1227H at XT931310 10 Pl contacted an unknown number of enemy. Fire support was given by 1 Tp C Sqn and the enemy broke contact at 1315H. 3 NVA were killed during this contact. At 1420H at XT930313 10 Pl came under MG and SA fire, and RPGs were directed at the tanks. The enemy were discovered to be in a well constructed bunker complex of approx company size. Before contact was broken at approx 1520H 14 bunkers were destroyed. Some of these were occupied but were not searched due to lack of time. The action resulted in 3 NVA KIA (BC) and a number of small arms captured. At 0025H at the FSPB a sentry of 10 Pl engaged movement and was wounded when the enemy returned the fire with a grenade. At XT951291 2 Pl found 16 newly dug weapon pits. 15 x 75mm RR spent cases and approx 33 x 60mm mortar nose caps were found in the area.

(c) 3 RAR. At 0345H FSPB BALMORAL received a heavy mortar attack from the NORTH and NE, followed by a ground attack supported by RPG and LMG from the NE. The attack was defeated and the enemy broke contact and withdrew at 0500H, although movement was heard outside the perimeter for some time after that. It is estimated that a battalion group was present, with the actual attack being carried out by a company. A subsequent sweep revealed 6 NVA KIA (BC), 3 crew served weapons and quantities of mortar and RPG ammunition. A base plate position was found at XT936344 with approx 100x82mm nose caps in the vicinity. Own casualties were 3 KIA and 14 WIA, all of whom were evacuated. During the day A, C and D Coys carried out RIF in the area NORTH of FSPB BALMORAL without contact.

(4) 27 May 68. Both 1 RAR and 3 RAR continued patrolling in their respective AOs with minor contact. At 1200H at XT965299 C Coy 1 RAR engaged 12 enemy with no result. While sweeping the area of this contact 5 enemy were engaged with the result 3 AUST WIA, 1 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 RPG2 captured. At 1010H at XT949338 B Coy 3 RAR engaged 3 enemy killing one and possibly wounding another. At 1325H at the same location B Coy again contacted 3 enemy and killed one. At approx 1350H at XT988372 an OH-13 (SIOUX) helicopter of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt received heavy fire from automatic weapons although few hits were sustained. The area was subject to airstrike which uncovered several bunkers and then engaged with 155mm and 175mm artillery. Air observation showed the area to be the site of an enemy HQ with a number of large buildings and bunkers, many of which were destroyed or severely damaged.

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(5) 28 May 68.

(a) FSPB CORAL received a mortar and rocket attack between 0245H and 0300H with the result 3 US WIA.

(b) 1 RAR continued RIF operations. At 1530H at XT969312 3 Pl A Coy was engaged with automatic weapons. The enemy withdrew with unknown casualties when fire was returned by 1 Tp C Sqn.

(c) At 0230H FSPB BALMORAL received a mortar and RPG attack followed by a ground attack from the SOUTH. This attack ceased at approx 0310H and was followed by movement and attempts to cut the wire with Bangalore Torpedoes on the NE. At 0340H a small probe was made from the EAST. All movement had ceased by 0500H. SPOOKY and LFTs engaged the enemy during the action, and A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) provided, from FSPB CORAL, continuous illumination from 0500H until first light in an attempt to prevent the enemy recovering his dead and wounded. It is estimated two battalions participated in the attack. Own casualties were 1 KIA and 8 WIA. Enemy casualties were 43 NVA KIA (BC), 12 KIA (Poss) and 6 PW. 20 small arms, 12 crew served weapons and quantities of ammunition, and personal equipment were captured.

(6) 29 May 68. Patrolling continued without contact.

(7) 30 May 68. C Coy 1 RAR carried out RIF to the EAST of FSPB CORAL and at 0830H at XT963301 they contacted an estimated enemy company. The leading elements of the company originally sighted and engaged 3 enemy and then came under heavy fire from a bunker complex. The area of the remainder of the company was also mortared. 7 Pl then became pinned down by small arms and RPG fire whilst attempting to move to a flank. At 1000H C Coy was reinforced by 1 Tp C Sqn and 1 Tp A Sqn, and an assault was made on the enemy's position enabling 7 Pl to withdraw. At 1155H C Coy broke contact and withdrew to allow the area to be engaged by airstrike. C Coy suffered 1 KIA and 7 WIA and had 1 M60 captured. Enemy casualties were 24 NVA KIA (BC) and 8 KIA (Poss). At XT967297 a group of enemy were observed moving in an open clearing and they were engaged with artillery with the result 13 enemy KIA (poss). There was no other contact with the enemy during the day.

(8) 31 May - 6 Jun 68.

(a) There was only minor contact with the enemy during this period. On 5 Jun FSPB BALMORAL was abandoned and 3 RAR and 104 Fd Bty returned to NUI DAT by air. On 6 Jun FSPB CORAL was also abandoned and units and equipment moved to NUI DAT by road and air.

(b) Contacts during this period were:

i. At 311410H at XT974271 3 Pl 1 RAR engaged and killed 1 enemy.

ii. At 310210H a number of RR and RPG rounds fell outside the perimeter of FSPB CORAL. When checking this area at 0900H 2 Pl 3 RAR were engaged by 3 enemy with automatic weapons. Fire was returned and the enemy withdrew without casualties.

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iii. At 310911H at XT942342 B Coy 3 RAR were engaged by 4 enemy with RPG and automatic weapons with the result 4 AUST WIA.

iv. At 311758H at XT942354 11 Pl 3 RAR engaged 5 enemy killing one.

v. At 011825H whilst conducting a clearing patrol, 3 Pl 3 RAR were engaged with small arms. The area of the fire was engaged with artillery and mortars without result.

vi. At 021200H at XT945345 B Coy 3 RAR engaged one enemy without result.

vii. At XT944350 on 2 Jun D Coy 3 RAR detained one wounded PW.

11. Administration.

a. General.

(1) Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) saw the deployment of the TFMA for the second time to support the combat elements of the Task Force. The lessons learnt from Operation COBURG were applied to enable a generally smooth functioning logistic system to operate.

(2) As in COBURG, 1 ALSG deployed an element to LONG BINH and the TFMA split to provide a detachment forward.

(3) The Task Force logistic elements deployed as follows:

(a) Period 25 Apr - 13 May - BEARCAT (YT1600).

(b) Period 13 May - 6 Jun - FSPB CORAL (XT9329).

(4) As in Operation COBURG there was no change to the system of maintenance employed during the complete operation. Only the delivery means changed to meet the tactical requirement.

b. The System Used.

(1) From our COBURG experience the Fwd TFMA deployed with a basic load of stocks as an immediate emergency reserve. Units carried three days requirements on deployment.

(2) During the first three days stocks were built up to allow greater flexibility as well as the first issues to units.

(3) Whilst based at BEARCAT planning provided for daily resupply to the Fwd TFMA from Fwd ALSG using road transport. Gun ammunition and large quantities of defence stores were, of course, delivered direct to Fire Support Bases.

(4) After deployment to FSPB CORAL the delivery means switched to air resupply because of the tactical and technical problems associated with keeping open a road L of C through previously enemy dominated territory.

(5) Fwd TFMA received in bulk and issued in detail to units their daily maintenance requirements. In addition it held the Task Force reserve of materiel.

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(6) Movement of stores from unit echelons to users was generally achieved using RAAF helicopters although, at times, mortar ammunition was delivered direct from Fwd ALSG whenever an economical CH47 sortie was requested.

c. Material and Services.

(1) Rations.

(a) During this operation both combat and fresh rations were issued by the Fwd TFMA. Generally the logistic plan was for units in the field to receive one fresh meal a day whilst, as far as possible, those units in the base area received three fresh meals a day.

(b) The above plan worked well until the Task Force deployed from BEARCAT to FSPB CORAL when, for operational reasons, it was considered impracticable for the FSPB troops to consume three meals a day. The pattern of feeding was quickly changed to two combat and one fresh meal a day.

(c) The combat ration issue was generally based on 50% Australian to 50% American C rations. This policy provided a degree of variety and was in line with stocking policy for the theatre. Towards the end of the operation there was a surplus holding of Australian combat rations and an increase in the 50% issue rate was made in an attempt to reduce the backloading problem.

(d) A central kitchen was used to prepare fresh meals. This was unfortunately an unsatisfactory arrangement and as far as possible in future operations unit echelons will operate their own kitchens.

(e) One lesson learnt from this operation was that, if possible, meals should be prepared further to the rear and hot boxed forward as required.

(2) POL. The requirements for POL varied greatly during the operation depending on the location of the Fwd TFMA:

(a) At BEARCAT. A small amount of POL products was supplied from the Fwd TFMA but bulk MOGAS and DIESO was supplied direct to using units by Fwd ALSG. The main POL products supplied by the Fwd TFMA were KERO and some oils and greases.

(b) At FSPB CORAL.

i. Bulk stocks were required in the Fwd TFMA which became responsible for all issues other than MOGAS and DIESO to FSPB BALMORAL. This latter was supplied in bulk direct by Fwd ALSG.

ii. Some problems occurred as a shortage of pumps developed. There are insufficient reserve POL pumps readily available in the theatre.

(3) Ammunition.

(a) Small Arms.

i. In the initial stages, expenditure was light and no problems occurred.

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ii. At CORAL stocks ran dangerously low on one occasion. This occurred because the experience gained on previous operations indicated that the reserve stocks carried by the TFMA would be approximately 30% of a battalion's first line. We have now amended this figure to a complete first line.

(b) Gun and Mortar.

i. As far as possible a usage rate was forecast and amounts were delivered direct to gun or mortar lines.

ii. The unexpected scale of contact meant increased use of the OPDEM demand principle and it is to the credit of 1 ALSG that all demands were rapidly met and that at no time were the infantry restricted in the amount of fire support on which they could call.

(4) Water.

(a) At BEARCAT there was no problem as requirements were drawn from existing American water points and distributed in either jerry cans or water bottles by unit echelons to users.

(b) CORAL presented a difficult problem as no permanent water point was available. Delivery by air was the only means. Initially jerry cans were used but there was insufficient stock available to meet the Task Force needs. New rubber fuel bladders were successfully used to transport water from LONG BINH. The rate of supply was approximately 3000 gallons per day.

(c) The maximum use of rain water was made, most soldiers collecting enough to at least have a wash. The supply of water by air required five CH47 sorties daily.

(5) Engineer Stores.

(a) From a staff point of view this was the most difficult problem in the logistic system. The Task Force had never experienced attacks of the size delivered by the enemy and initial forecasts of requirements after deploying to CORAL were, as a result, underestimated.

(b) It was necessary to have a stringent control system for defence stores. Unit demands were approved by the DAQMG within the priorities laid down by the GS02.

(c) Problems of handling defence stores delivered by CH47 aircraft became obvious as ground conditions deteriorated. There is a need for at least one size 7 forklift and a separate staff submission has been made. Two size 5 forklifts were deployed on this operation.

(6) Canteens. A detachment was established at FSPB CORAL. Dry goods came from NUI DAT and beer and soda were arranged from American depots at LONG BINH. This amenity is recommended for future operations.

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(7) Postal. A postal NCO was attached to the Fwd TFMA for the whole operation and the quantity of mail handled was such as to make this attachment necessary.

(8) Ordnance.

(a) Operation COBURG pointed out the need for an ordnance detachment to be deployed with the forward TFMA. On this first deployment of Det 1 OFF, too much stock was carried and the system of replenishment via 2 AOD was too ponderous.

(b) A smaller sized detachment with an improved and faster replenishment system is required. Such a system is being tried on current operations and is working satisfactorily.

(c) Stocks held included clothing and equipment, weapon and vehicle spares and some items of unit equipment. There is a requirement for spare weapons to be held this far forward and these will be included in Det 1 OFF scalings when weapons are released to 1 OFF.

(9) Courier Services.

(a) The requirement for an air courier service was established during COBURG and was instituted during this operation.

(b) Whilst the TFMA was based at BEARCAT the service was provided by RAAF courier. This worked well primarily because it was guaranteed and ran to a set schedule.

(c) At CORAL an airstrip did not exist and reliance had to be placed on a daily CH47 sortie. No set schedule could operate and backloading in particular was rather haphazard. This could not be avoided as the Task Force cannot guarantee the availability of a suitable rotary wing aircraft with the required passenger/freight capability.

(d) There is still a case for a better air movements control system.

d. Delivery Means.

(1) Whilst deployed in AOs SURFERS and SURFERS II the Task Force was completely reliant on air resupply from Fwd ALSG at LONG BINH. One road convoy did run during the period.

(2) The greatest number of CH47 sorties in any day was 32 with a daily average of approximately 20 sorties. This represents maintenance tonnages of a high of approximately 130 tons daily with an average of about 80 tons. The greatest number of sorties were taken up with ammunition of all natures.

e. Summary.

(1) The present maintenance system is sound but relies on accurate forecasting by both units and the staff.

(2) The various handling agencies are competent and extremely flexible when changing situations demand different methods.

(3) This operation has confirmed the stock holding figures of the Fwd TFMA.

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(4) TFMA capacity is reduced when it must itself develop its own defences. By day additional labour was provided by Fwd ALSG to compensate for this loss of capacity.

12. Commander's Analysis.

- a. Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) proved to be relatively quiet during the phases prior to 1 ATF deployment into AOs SURFERS and SURFERS II. However it proved the Task Force could be quickly deployed at short notice from one operational area to another. This was particularly notable in the movement of FSPBs. In all, the Task Force occupied eleven FSPBs, during Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1).
- b. Operations in AOs SURFERS and SURFERS II introduced the Task Force into operations where for the first time the enemy was met in regimental strength and where he launched determined ground attacks against our FSPBs. These attacks were preceded by heavy and accurate mortar, RCL and RPG fire.
- c. Some of the more significant points to be noted as a result of Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) are:
- (1) While the enemy possessed the capability of launching up to regimental size attacks it was necessary to plan operations so that battalions were concentrated in a defensive position at night to ensure the security of the force. At the time of the extraction of 1 ATF to NUI DAT Base the situation had been reached, due to the withdrawal of the major portion of the enemy, where company size forces could have been secure at night.
 - (2) The effectiveness of the tanks and APCs in RIF operations with infantry. On many occasions when contact was made, against enemy in well prepared positions, the armour played a decisive role.
 - (3) The need for a local defence commander of field rank with a small headquarters to layout, coordinate and command the local defence of a large FSPB such as FSPB CORAL. It is recommended that the OC of the Cavalry Squadron be employed in this role, as he was at FSPB CORAL. This proved successful because of his experience, good communications provided by the ACV and APCs and the ability of his unit, due to their mobility and fire power, to quickly conduct counter penetration and counter attack roles.
- d. Overall Operation TOAN THANG proved a most successful operation in that the Task Force:
- (1) Interrupted one of the main enemy infiltration routes into SAIGON and inflicted heavy enemy casualties.
 - (2) Identified seven infiltration groups, four of which we were the first to identify. These four had been in SVN for periods ranging from two to fifteen days.

Annex: A. Enemy Losses.

Enclosures: 1. Map showing Phases 1 - 4.
2. Map showing Phase 5

Jan H. Marlean
/ (R.L. HUGHES) Maj.
Brig
Comd

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ANNEX A TO
1 ATF COMBAT OPERATIONS
AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPERATION TOAN THANG PHASE 1
DATED JUL 68

TOTAL ENEMY PERSONNEL AND MATERIEL LOSSES

1. Personnel.

38 VC KIA (BC)
238 NVA KIA (BC)
60 Enemy KIA (Poss)
9 Enemy WIA
1 VC PW
10 NVA PW
3 Detainees
1 NVA HOI CHANH
1 HOI CHANH (Draft Dodger)

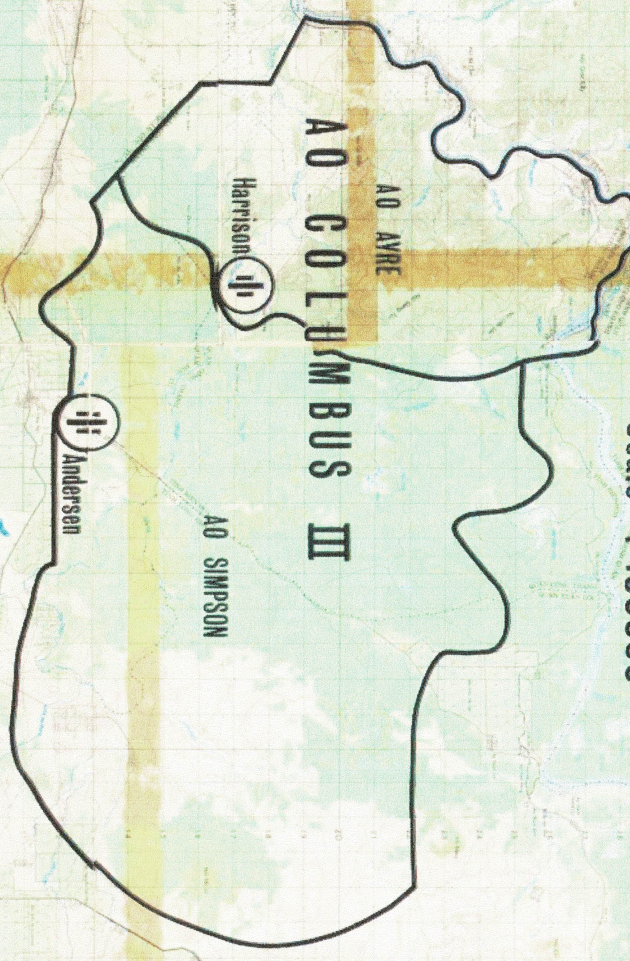
2. Materiel.

36 Crew Served Weapons
124 Small Arms
144 Grenades
25 Mines
194 Rounds HE Ammo
4.5 Tons of Rice

SHEET 4 OF 4
ATV/77-12/2018 D

SHEET 3 OF 4
ATV/77-12/2018 C

**OPERATION TOAN THANG
PHASE 6**
Scale 1:100000



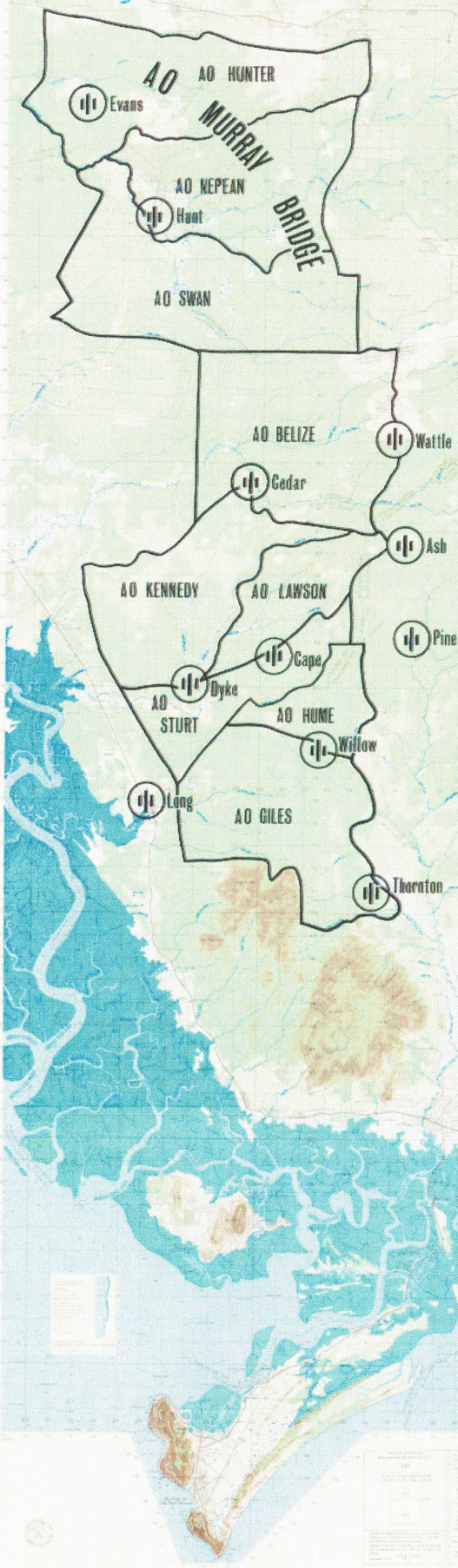
SHEET 1 OF 4
ATV/77-12/2018 A

SHEET 2 OF 4
ATV/77-12/2018 B

 FSPB

OPERATION TOAN THANG PHASES 1-2-3-4 Scale 1:100000

REV. 02-11/1976



LEGEND

- AO's Hunter, Nepean, Swan, together formed AO Murray Bridge
- (Symbol) FSPB

SPECIAL USE S.E. ASIA 1:100,000 SHEET 6430

EDITION 2 JANUARY 1976
QUY-DANG-LAN THU-2 - AMS (28 ETD)

Scale 1:100,000



CONTOUR INTERVALS OF 20 AND 10 METERS
VERTICAL INTERVALS OF 10 METERS

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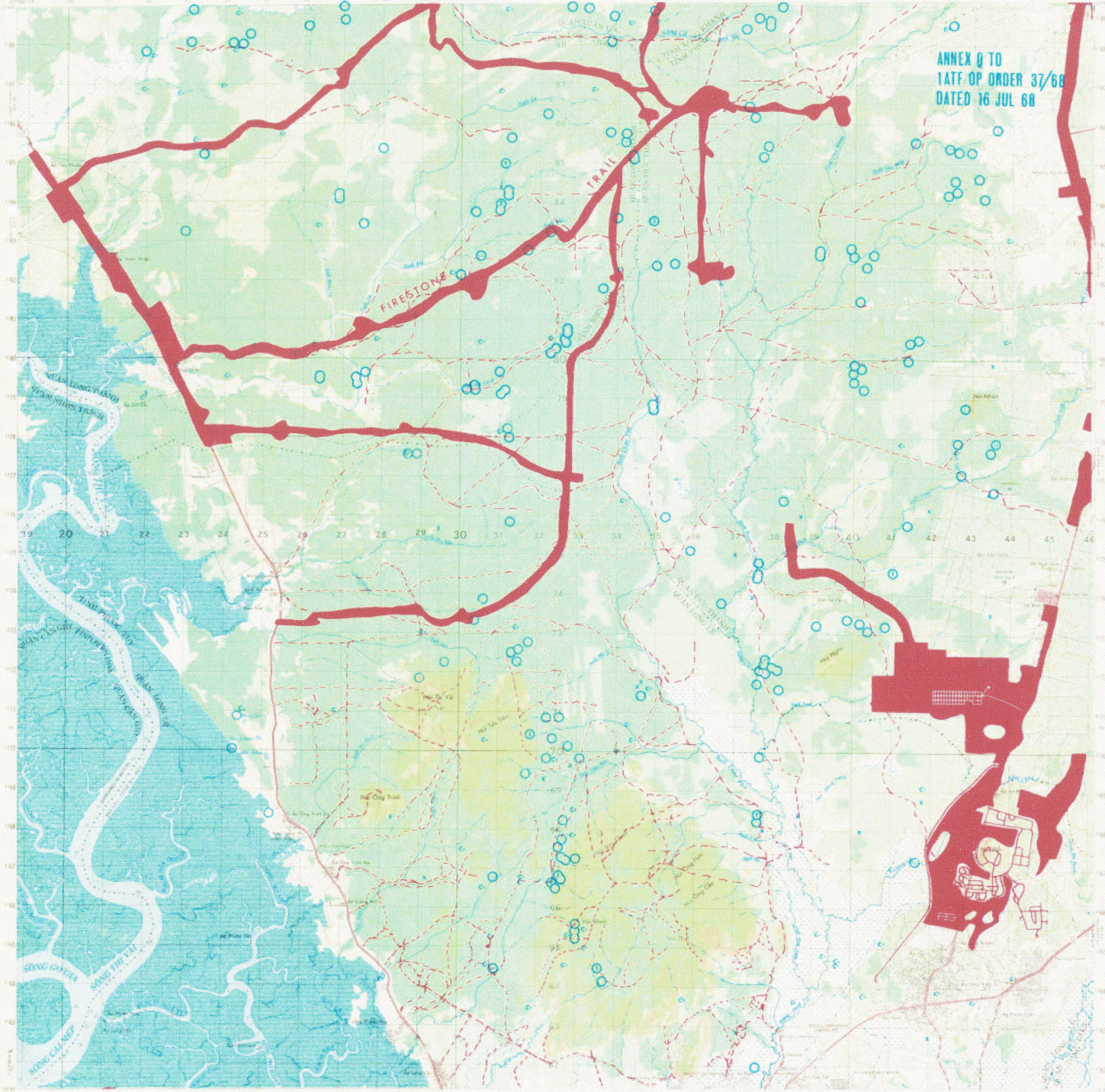
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ANNEX Q TO
IATF OP ORDER 37/68
DATED 16 JUL 68



AFV/F7-12/2081

CAUTION: LOCATIONS OF ALL TRACKS MARKED----- ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY.

Scale 1:50,000

LEGEND

1. Symbols for trails and tracks

2. Symbols for enemy installations (Base Camps, Sighting, Contacts)

3. Symbols for cleared areas and other features

4. Symbols for roads and rivers

5. Symbols for elevation and terrain features

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SYMBOLS

○ BASE CAMPS (UNKNOWN SIZE)

○ BASE CAMPS (SQUAD SIZE)

○ BASE CAMPS (TPL SIZE)

○ BASE CAMPS (COY SIZE)

○ BASE CAMPS (BN SIZE)

X SIGHTINGS

C CONTACTS

■ AREA CLEARED OF VEGETATION

----- TRACKS



NOTES

1. This map is based on data received from the field...

2. The symbols for enemy installations are approximate...

3. The tracks shown are approximate and may change...

**OPERATION TOAN THANG
PHASES 7 & 8
Scale 1:50000**

Sheet 2 of 2
AFV/ET-11/5077A

Sheet 1 of 2
AFV/ET-11/5077A

LEGEND
AO MANLY & AO BONDI TOGETHER
FORMED AO SURFERS
AO NEWPORT & AO BONDI TOGETHER
FORMED AO SURFERS II

 FSPB Mortars Only

 FSPB

AO NEWPORT

 Balmoral

AO SURFERS II

 Coogee

 Coral

AO BONDI

AO MANLY

AO SURFERS

QUAN CONG THANH

AFV/ET-11/5077A