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AGO d/a ltr, 29 Apr 1980; AGO d/a ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (17 May 68) FOR OT RD 67X205

24 May 1968

**SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - ASSAULT ON LOC NINH, 5th Special Forces Group (Abn), 1st Special Forces, Period 29 October - 4 November 1967 (U)**

**AD390580**

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1. Subject report is forwarded as inclosure for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

**KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General**

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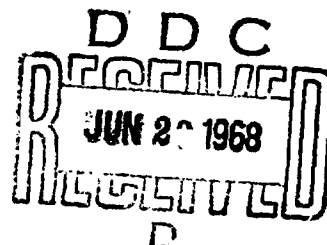
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AFTER ACTION REPORT OF ASSAULT ON LOC NINH - 29 OCT - 4 NOV 67 (U)

1. (C) General.

a. Camp Mission:

- (1) To aid, advise, support and assist the VNSF (LLDB).
- (2) To conduct border surveillance.
- (3) To organize equip and train CIDG Forces.
- (4) To establish bases to interdict VC routes of communication.
- (5) To conduct special operations as directed by higher Headquarters.
- (6) To conduct operations based on known intelligence.

b. Camp Location: XU 731823

c. Major Infiltration Routes: See inclosure # 5

d. Significant Terrain Features: See inclosure # 1

e. Weather: The weather was cool with the winds calm during the Loc Ninh attack. The moon was in its last quarter. There were no unusual visibility restrictions except for normal early morning haze.

f. Attitudes of local populace: A majority of the Loc Ninh population appear anti-NLF, though their degree of pro-GVN sympathy and support varies proportionally with the degree of FWMF force troops and influence in the area. Though many Montagnards were used as bearers, they are coerced and offer no resistance to preclude reprisals.

2. (C) Friendly Situation Prior to Attack.

a. Disposition of patrols and local security. There was a patrol consisting of one CIDG Company approximately eight kilometers Northwest of Loc Ninh and three companies, a recon element and a CA/PO squad located inside the camp.

b. Early warning devices: There are guard posts situated on each of the nine points of the camp and there are numerous trip flares in the first barrier, see incl. 1

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c. Status of Camp Defensive Positions: See Incl 1. Troops are billeted in the wall of the defensive perimeter with each CIDG Company having a responsibility of defense of its assigned portion of the defense perimeter. All basic TOE weapons are in defensive positions at all times.

d. Intelligence Reports of Impending Attack: Indications of a large VC initiated ground attack were observed in preparation in Loc Ninh District since mid September 1967. In early October 1967 the time of the suspected attack was determined to be between 22 and 30 November 1967. Most of the indications arrived from FWMF Agent Reports, VR's, SPARS and observations by Special Forces operations. The only surprise was the actual extent and duration of the attack. There were no indications that a prolonged and fanatical attempt would be made against targets in Loc Ninh. The 272d Regt, which participated in part in the Loc Ninh attack had been located in the Bu Dinh Secret Zone Area since early July, and with the exception of one southerly movement, remained continually in this general area. The 273d Regiment was noticed to have moved North from its previous position in War Zone "C" to a position near Dong Xoai in mid August. It was then noticed to have moved farther North and finally, one week prior to the Loc Ninh attack, it crossed the Song Be and moved to a position Northwest of Loc Ninh and became the initial and primary VC protagonist at Loc Ninh. The 165th Regiment had been in the fishhook area since 7 August 1967 attack at Tong Le Chon and was believed to have moved further northeast into Loc Ninh District in early November 1967. One, and possibly two, battalions from the 165th Regiment participated in attacks on Loc Ninh following the initial 29 October attack. The 81A Artillery Regiment was believed to have moved its participating elements into northwest Phuoc Long in mid October 1967 while the 111st Regiment is not believed to have moved any substantial units into the battle area, though personnel from the 111st Regiment may have been assigned to other attacking units (captured documents indicate a few KIA were from 111st Regiment). The headquarters supervising the attack appeared to be the 9th VC Division Headquarters that moved from a position in War Zone D when the 273d Regiment moved North and entered Loc Ninh in latter September 1967, when Intelligence identified extensive coordination between elements of the participating Regiments at CT 9's location. All the above intelligence was known prior to the attack.

e. Previous Requests for:

- (1) Airstrikes (no airstrikes were scheduled)
- (2) Artillery H&I (see Incl 4) 105mm Howitzer H&I is fired nightly by ARVN Artillery in camp. No record available.
- (3) ComLat Sky Spot - None were flown the night of the attack however two were flown on 27 and 28 October 1967 (See Incl 4).

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## (4) Red Haze.

In the past two (2) months 2 image interpretation requests were made of portions of Loc Ninh area. One request was a CICV readout which has not been received yet. On 11 October a Red Haze request was submitted and flown with some results, and a non-requested Red Haze mission flown in October, produced the following; 6 firesites in jungle and 3 late burning fires in villages.

## (5) Aerial reconnaissance missions.

At least one VR was flown daily over Loc Ninh's TAOR by 5th ARVN Division FAC's (USAF attachments). In addition to these normal VR's, Phuoc Vinh AO's flew 3-4 VR's weekly over Loc Ninh's TAOR during October 1967, as did 1st US division AO's who flew VR's periodically. CICV II readouts on Loc Ninh's TAOR were also forwarded to Loc Ninh during September and October 1967.

(6) B-52 Strikes: No B-52 strikes were requested prior to the attack.

f. Status of Camp Logistics: There were no significant shortages of critical items (ammunition, weapons, rations, communications) at Camp Loc Ninh at the time of the attack. The below listed items were requested and resupplied to Camp Loc Ninh on an "as required basis" during the period of and following the attacks on the Camp.

(1) Food: A total of 9,800 indigenous rations were supplied to Loc Ninh and numerous air sorties were flown to supplement the US rations with fresh meats and vegetables from B-33 Hon Quan.

## (2) Ammunition

- (a) 105mm HE = 498 rnds
- (b) 81mm HE = 320 rnds
- (c) 81mm ILL = 710 rnds
- (d) 60mm HE = 1400 rnds
- (e) 60mm ILL = 1262 rnds
- (f) M-79 HE = 1080 rnds
- (g) 5.56 = 1300 rnds
- (h) 30 Cal Carb. = 6200
- (i) 30 Cal linked = 20,000
- (j) 30 Cal M-1 = 1,800

## (3) Miscellaneous

- (a) One (1) 2½ ton truck
- (b) One (1) 3/4 ton truck
- (c) One (1) 2½ ton dump truck
- (d) One (1) Water Pump
- (e) Twelve (12) 2½ ton truck tires

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g. Troop Morale and Discipline: Troop Morale was high especially after the victory over the VC. AWOL rate was a little higher than normal but there were no desertions after the first attack. AWOL rate is declining gradually.

h. Absenteeism among civilian employees was higher than normal however most came back after the third attack.

### 3. (C) Narrative description of attack:

a. At approx 290115 hrs Oct 1967 the Sub-Sector Compound North of Loc Ninh XU 734088 began receiving 82mm mortar and heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from the NorthWest. At 290125 Camp Loc Ninh (Det A-331) and Hon Quan began receiving mortar fire in and around the compound. Loc Ninh received continuous heavy mortar fire until approximately 290250 hrs Oct 67 at which time it became sporadic. Hon Quan did not have any rounds land inside the Special Forces compound. From the initial heavy mortar attack at 290105, Loc Ninh Special Forces Camp Det A-331 received approx 12 rounds inside the compound with 5 rounds landing in the vicinity of the gate to the camp. Between 200125 Hon Quan received approximately 60 rounds of 82mm mortars, and at 200220 the Province Chiefs house was the target for some 8-12 57RR rounds. Loc Ninh continued to receive sporadic mortar fire until 200535. At 290115 the VC attacked the Sub-Sector RF/PF compound XU 734088 with coordinated mortar and ground attack, and at 290220 it was reported that VC were in the compound but could not be confirmed by US until 10520 at which time it was confirmed that one US RF/PF Advisor and District Chief were in the Command Bunker within the compound.

b. During the period 290115-290530 an estimated Battalion of the 273d VC Regiment supported by the 84th VC Artillery Battalion attacked camp of Loc Ninh with mortar, rocket, heavy machine gun and small arms fire: See Incl 3 Overlay. It is estimated that the camp received one hundred eighty (180) 82mm and 120mm mortar rounds and fifteen (15) RPG-40 rounds. The Camp went on full alert at 290115 and Forward Air Controllers, Spooky, Light Fire teams and tactical air support were on station within fifteen minutes and were continually supporting Loc Ninh throughout the night and remained until the enemy broke contact at approximately 290520. At this time Det A-331 Loc Ninh launched a two company (CIDG) operation to relieve the RF/PF compound. By 291600 the RF/PF compound had been secured and all VC expelled.

c. Loc Ninh had an operation in the field during the attack and made significant contact resulting in 23 VC/NVA KIA.

d. After the attack ceased at 290530 the Special Forces Camp at Loc Ninh immediately began improving their defensive posture and at 310050 they were again attacked by an estimated two Battalions of the 273d VC Regiment supported by the 84th VC Artillery Battalion see Incl 3. It is estimated that the camp received 200 rounds of 82mm & 120mm mortar and 18 rounds of

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122mm Rocket. Additionally the camp received RPG-40 and RGP-7V and recoilless rifle fire of undetermined caliber. An estimated VC Battalion attempted to mass assault the camp but the attack was broken up and the VC routed by coordinated camp defensive fires and tactical air strikes, which pinned down the enemy and annihilated him. At first light the enemy withdrew to the North, North East and North West. At 010200 Nov 67 Camp Loc Ninh received approximately ten (10) 82mm mortar rounds which is believed to have been suppressive fires to allow him to recover his dead and wounded from the battlefield. Contact was light and sporadic until 020030 Nov 67 when the enemy again attempted to assault Loc Ninh by placing heavy 122mm Rocket fire on the camp and attempted to mass a Battalion for an obvious "last ditch" effort to overrun the camp. Again the attack was broken up and repelled by the camps withering defensive fires and exceptionally well placed Air strikes. After the final Air sortie the enemy was seen fleeing in a disorganized manner in all directions. Sporadic contact was maintained until dawn, presumably to allow the enemy to withdraw.

### e. Enemy Units

#### (1) Main Force

Approximately 9 NVA battallions were believed to have participated in the Loc Ninh attack from 29 October 67 - 04 November 67. These units were: 3 Battallions from 273d Regiment believed located to West of Loc Ninh. 1 Battallion of 84A Artillery Regiment deployed around Loc Ninh. 1-2 Battallions of 165th Regiment located Southwest of Loc Ninh. 2-3 Battallions of 272d Regiment located East of Loc Ninh. Battallion (-) of 141st Regiment co-located with other participating units. One heavy weapons Battallion, CT 9 (AA and mortars). Each battallion, except for heavy weapons battallion; is believed to have had approx 300-400 men and to have been slightly understrength. The heavy weapons battallion organically has less men than an Infantry Bn.

#### (2) Weapons.

Each Infantry Battallion was TO&E equipped with the usual Chicom/Soviet small arms and crew served weapons. In addition, the 84A Artillery Regiment provided 120mm mortars and 122mm Rockets. One surface to air missile was sighted by 2 US FAC's being fired and exploding in the air. Missile was fired from an area approximately 8 Km West of Loc Ninh.

#### (3) Tactics

No new tactics were employed by the enemy. The usual heavy mortar attack followed by ground attacks, some from more than one direction was usually preceded by squad size sapper units. A large attack had several waves and at least 3 full scale attacks were launched during the heaviest fighting. Usually the last offensive effort, prior to breaking contact, was a ruse for a body recovery operation. Most attacks began

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about 0030 and was concluded at dawn, with scattered sniping in the early morning while most of the attacking force withdrew. Attackers began moving to their attack positions after dusk and arrived in position at about 2100 hours. Ground attacks would follow quickly after initial mortaring and mortaring would continue between ground attacks. Pilots noticed heavier than usual AA fire surrounding the target. Some of this fire came from 50 Cal type MG's, some mounted as quads. The AA fire was not effective, but it did require extensive suppressing fire that was diverted from other targets. RR and AA weapons were employed from civilian homes, especially multi-story structures. The only penetration made was of the RF Compound on 29 October 1967.

(4) Locations of indirect fire weapons

(See Inclosure 1)

(5) Withdrawal routes.

(See Inclosure 5)

b. Camp Response:

(1) Discipline of CIDG and USSF troops in contact was outstanding. As a result of periodic practice alerts every one knew exactly where to go and what was to be done.

(2) USSF, CIDG, LLDB and Commanders were with their assigned units throughout the attack and shifted positions to assist wherever and whenever needed. The USSF Det CO was initially in the Commo bunker. After submitting required reports to higher headquarters he moved to the perimeter to Control and direct the defense of the camp. The executive Officer was positioned where he was needed and assisted in continually resupplying the perimeter with ammunition and aiding in the treating and evacuation of the dead and wounded. The team Sgt was everywhere and continuously moved from position to position on the perimeter, offering encouragement and reassurance to the troops and rendered necessary reports to the detachment commander. The team Medic was on the defensive perimeter treating the wounded and in the medical bunker. Weapons men were with the mortar crews and on the perimeter wherever they were needed. Team members were all heroically active and were exceptionally effective in keeping the defense of the camp organized. Individual acts of heroism are too numerous to mention in this report however every US Team member has been recommended for a valorous award.

(3) Contingency plans in effect included the Camp Defense Plan & Camp Alert Plan.

(4) Effectiveness of Communications

(a) Internal: Internal communications within the camp

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was excellent.

(b) External: Communications to higher Hqs was excellent even though outside antennae had been destroyed. Upon discovery of outside antennae being destroyed commo was immediately regained by switching to the underground emergency antennae.

(5) Requests for support and response by higher headquarters:

(a) Fleaships and Spooky were on station within 25 minutes and remained on station as required.

(b) FAC, Air and Arty support was outstanding and immediately responsive.

(c) No requests were made for reactionary forces, however 1st US Infantry Division units started air lifting into Loc Ninh on the 30th of October 67 to reinforce.

(d) Logistical support: Logistical support was outstanding in all respects. Requests to higher Hqs for supplies and equipment were honored immediately.

(e) Medical Evacuation: Aside from having to wait until first light due to the combat situation, medical evacuation was outstanding.

(6) Reporting Procedures: All reports rendered as per SOP and as required or dictated by the situation. No problems were encountered.

(7) All deserving personnel have been recommended for awards of valor. Individual acts of heroism were too numerous to mention in this report.

## 4. Enemy Withdrawal

a. Pursuit of enemy except for the initial relief of the RF/PF compound by CIDG troops from the Special Forces Camp at Loc Ninh was accomplished by the 1st US Infantry Division in multiple directions around Loc Ninh. Reports were received that the enemy was fleeing in many directions and in a disorganized manner. Initially the enemy withdrew west however heavy contact with US & CIDG units caused them to divert and withdraw North, NorthEast and East in Bn size elements. A survey of trail networks indicate the enemy withdrew in Bn or larger size units primarily Northeast toward the Cambodian Border and East to the BU DENH Secret Zone.

b. Enemy covering forces did not appear to be organized or well planned, possibly because they expected a victory rather than a defeat.

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c. Effects of friendly reactionary forces tactical Air and Artillery on enemy withdrawal: Tactical Air Support, Artillery Support and reactionary forces were highly effective in disorganizing and destroying the enemys capability to mass. The most noteworthy examples of effective air support were the four (4) attacks against the Special Forces Camp that were broken up primarily with the aid of extremely accurate and continual Tactical Air Support using 20mm & CBU.

d. Firm routes of withdrawal

(See Inclosure 5)

e. Disposition of enemy dead and wounded: At least 1,000 enemy dead were left on the battlefield with the remainder of the dead and wounded being evacuated. Refugees from Loc Ninh District reported being forced to bury "many" VC dead. It is believed that most of the dead were buried in rear assembly areas. Evacuated wounded were believed taken to various aid stations, possible using Montagnard conscripted litter bearers, who were in turn taken to hospitals in the Bu Dinh Secret Zone, Southwest to Tay Ninh Province or across the border to Cambodia.

## 5. (C) RESULTS:

a. Friendly

(1) Casualties from 29 Oct - 05 November 1967.

USASF: 4 WIA (Slight)

CIDG: 6 KIA, 39 WIA.

(2) Weapons and equipment lost, damaged, destroyed or captured by item and quantity:

- 5 ea 45 Cal Pistols Destroyed
- 12 ea M-1 Rifles destroyed
- 11 ea M-1 Carbines destroyed
- 15 ea M-2 Carbines destroyed
- 2 ea 30 Cal M1919A-6 MGBs destroyed
- 1 ea M-151 1/4 ton destroyed
- 3 ea M-37 3/4 ton trucks destroyed
- 3 ea M-35A-12 1/2 ton trucks destroyed
- 2 ea GP Medical Tent destroyed
- 1 ea GP (small) destroyed
- 2 ea Refrigeraters damaged
- 2 ea Generaters damaged
- 1 ea RC-29Z Antennae damaged
- 3 ea CW antennae damaged
- 3 ea Buildings damaged

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(3) Installation and defense positions damaged or destroyed

See Inclosure 2

(4) SOI's no SOI's were compromised or captured.

a Casualties: Special Forces Camp A-331 accounted for 184 VC KIA (USBC), negative CIA. ARVN's accounted for 245 VC KIA and 2 CIA. US Conventional Units accounted for 550 VC KIA (USBC) 14 CIA. The dead were mostly Vietnamese with some Montagnard, Chinese (Nungs) and Cambodians. The ethnic representation of the dead is indicative of the ethnic make-up of the participating units.

b. Weapons and equipment captured: Following are weapons and ordnance captured by only CIDG during Loc Ninh contacts 29 October - 5 November 1967:

1. 1 - 30 Cal MG
2. 3 - RPG 40 launchers
3. 1 - VPC 7 launcher
4. 6 - AK 47's
5. 20 - BPC 40 launchers
6. 50 - Hand Grenade
7. 500- 50 Cal Machine Gun rounds

c Captured documents: Captured documents included infiltration passes, not books wallets and personal letters which identified the participating units (to include support units such as Loan 42 "Rear Services Group 82"). The personal letters told of usual VC hardships. There was little of intelligence value, other than unit identification, recovered from the captured documents.

d Other:

1. One refugee mentioned he was forced to bury a VC Officer (exact rank unknown) who had a paper from Loc Ninh District (VC) Committee in his body which stated that if the VC weren't successful at Loc Ninh, they would all die.

2. The only unusual weapons employed was the one FAC sighted surface to air missile. The battle did use an extensive amount of 122mm rockets and 120mm mortars as well as RPC-7's. This was the first use of 122mm rockets in Binh Long and the most extensive use of the 120mm mortar in Minh Long Province. This was also the most extensive use of the RPC-7, first use in this province on 10 July 1967 in Loc Ninh.

3. Organized and very heavy use of 50 Cal .type MG AA weapons were evidenced.

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6. (C) Every effort was made by higher headquarters to assist the Detachment after the initial attack with personnel augmentation and increased logistical support. Due to the extremely adequate camp defense very little was required in either case with the exception of equipment that was destroyed as a result of a direct hit by indirect fire. Visitors and curiosity seekers continue to be a problem after a camp is attacked and their presence makes command and control extremely difficult for the detachment commander in reorganizing and rebuilding his camp defense posture. Higher headquarters in the Special Forces or IFFV Chain of Command should assume responsibility of receiving and briefing VIP's visitors and dignitaries in this situation.

5 Incl:

1. Diagram of Camp.
2. ~~Camp Diagram Showing Location of Destroyed Equipment.~~
3. ~~Diagram Denoting Points of attack.~~
4. ~~Overlay Depicting Combat Sky Spots and W&I Fire.~~
5. ~~Routes of Advance and Withdrawal.~~

/s/Clifton D. Jordan

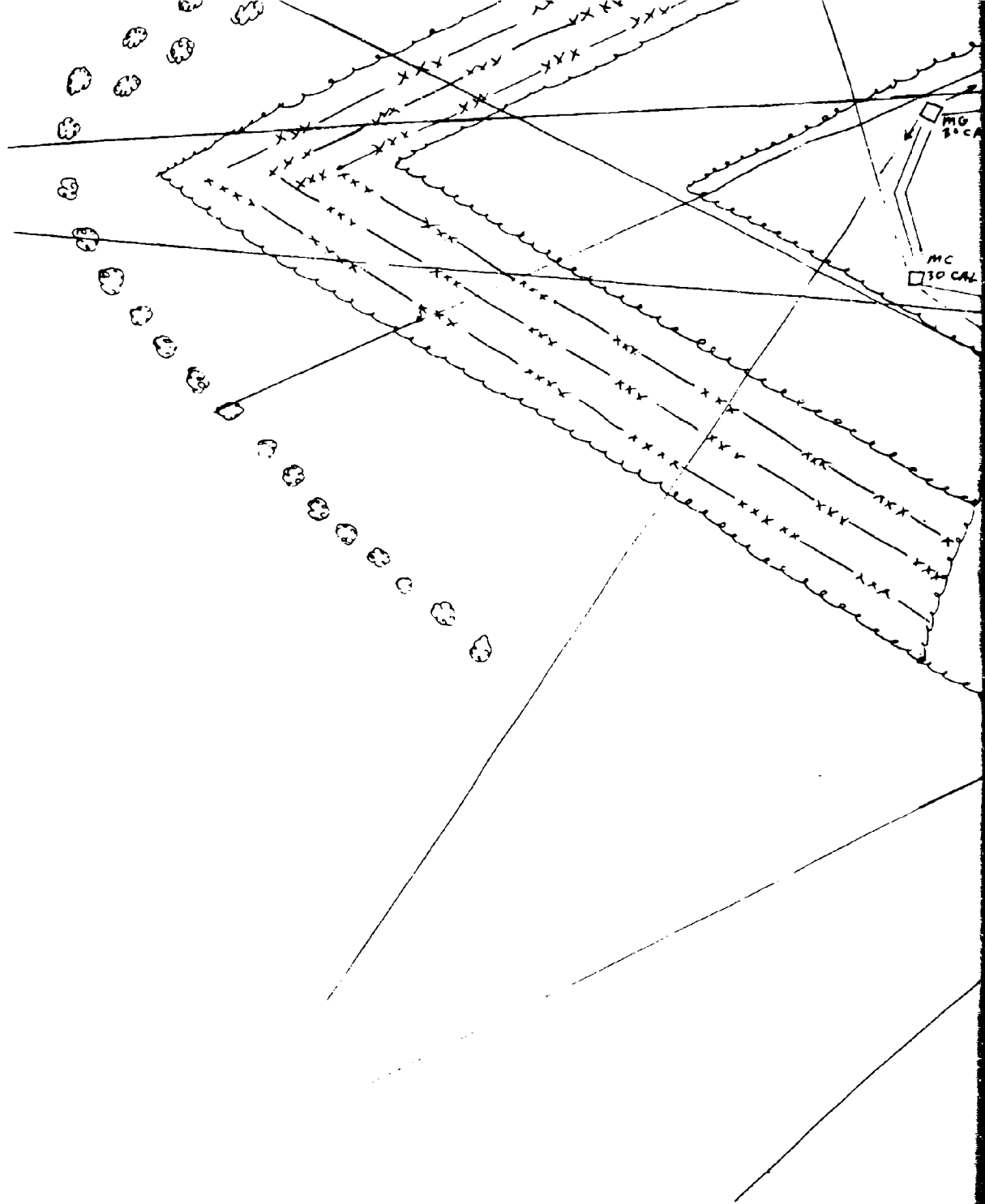
CLIFTON D. JORDAN

Major, Infantry

Commanding

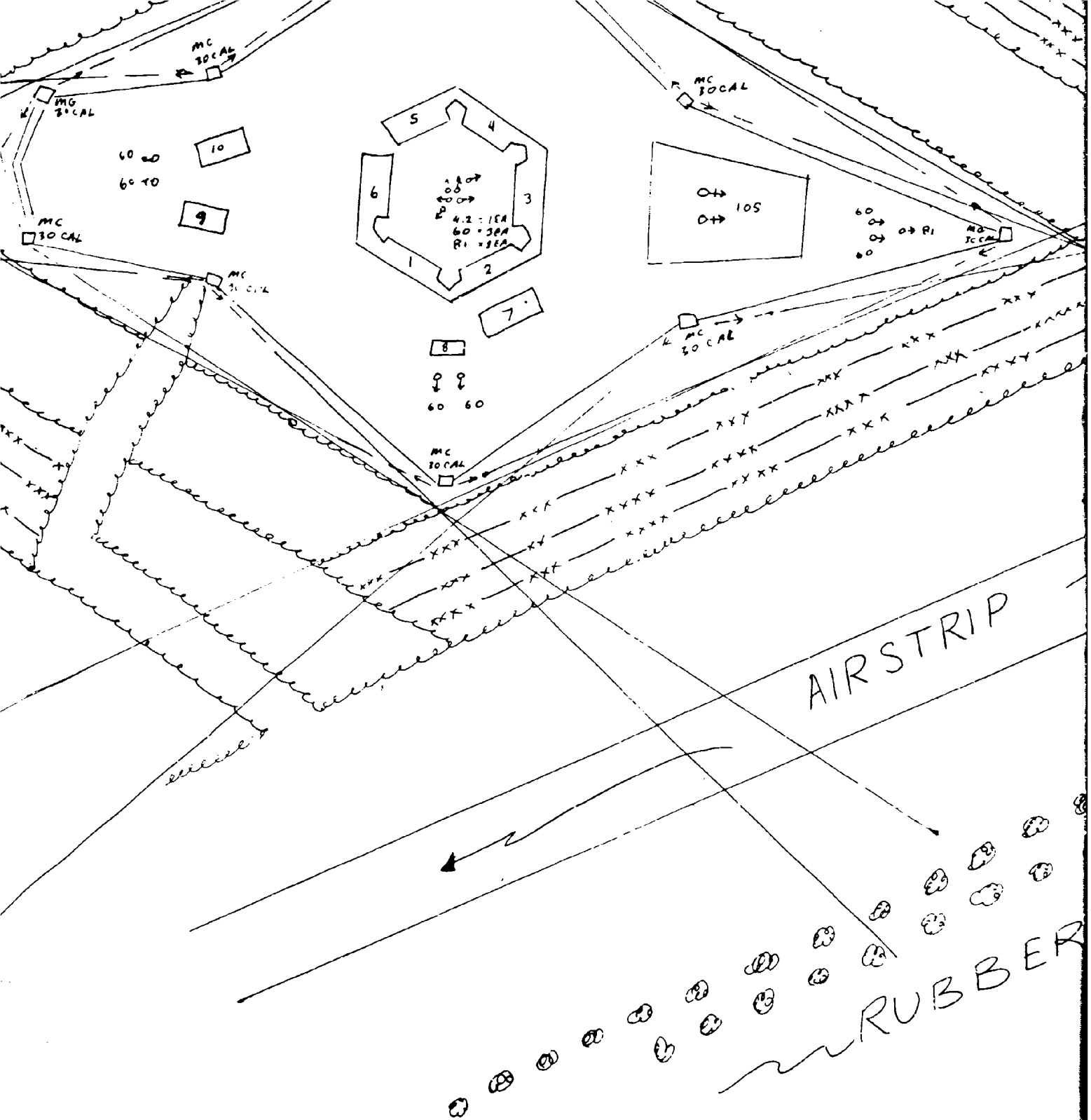
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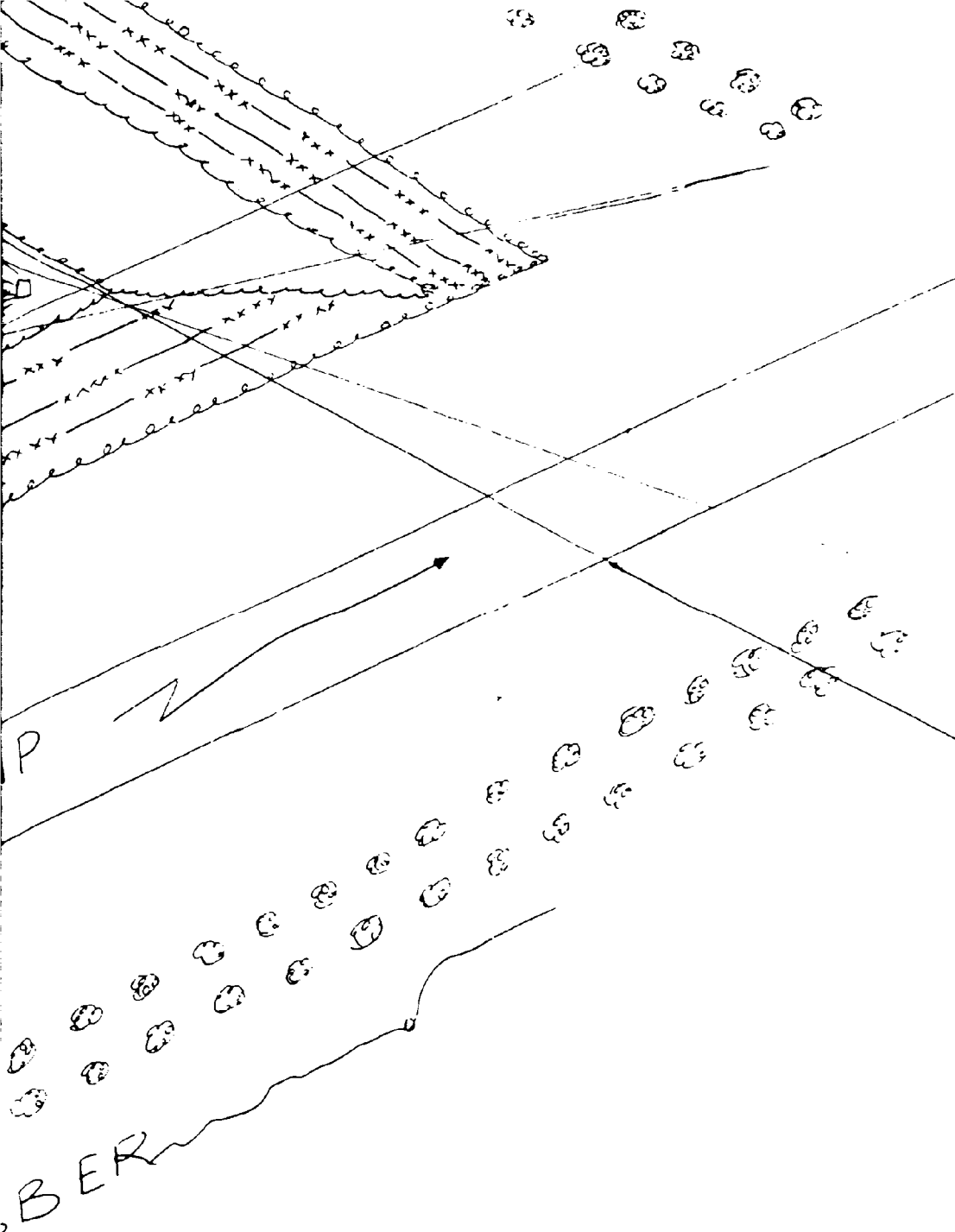
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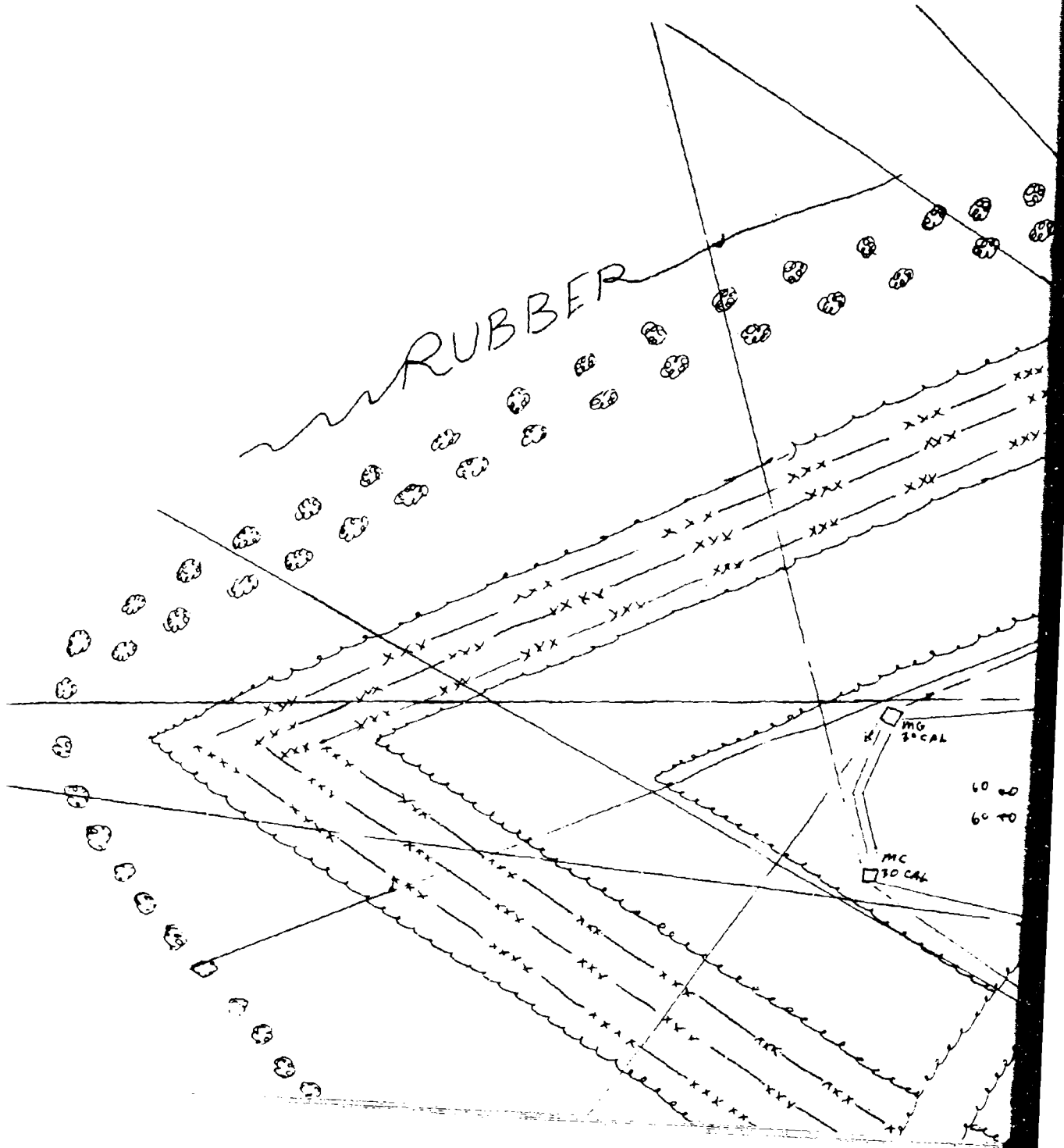
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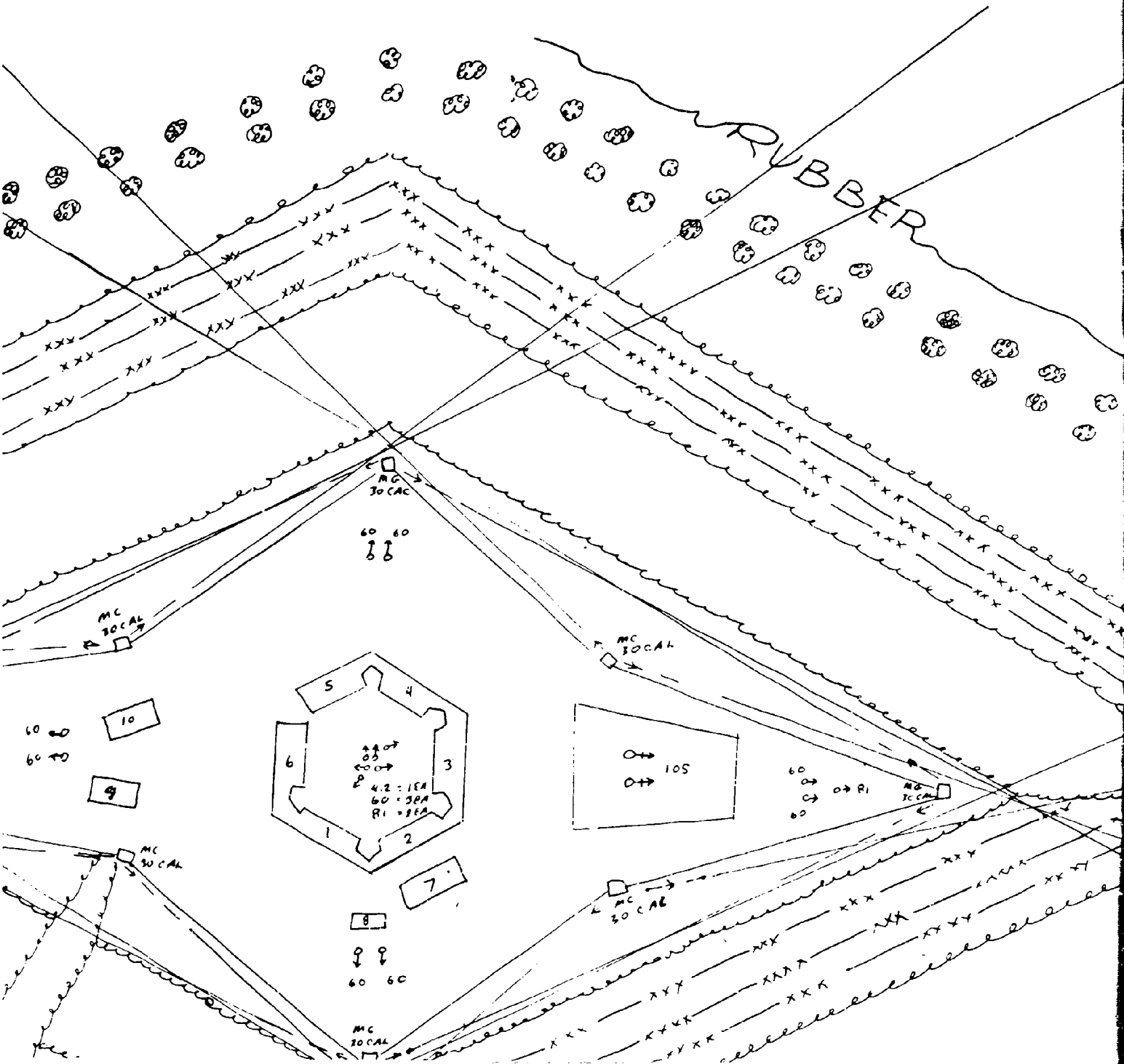


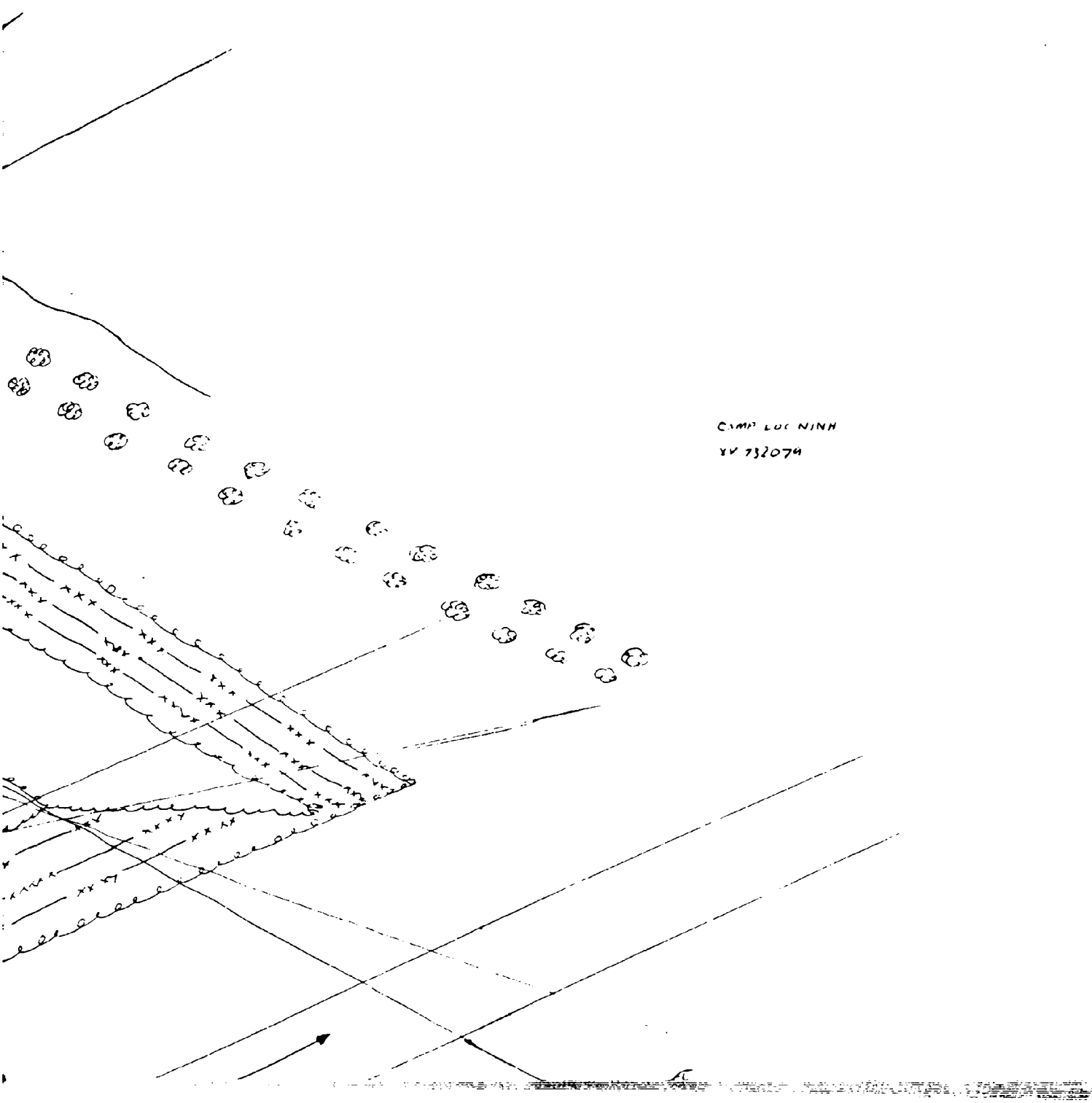
1. TEAM ROOM
2. TOC, COMMO, MEDICAL BUNKER
3. TEAM QUARTERS
4. ARMS, SUPPLY ROOM
5. LEDB QUARTERS
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7. CAPS BUILDING
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