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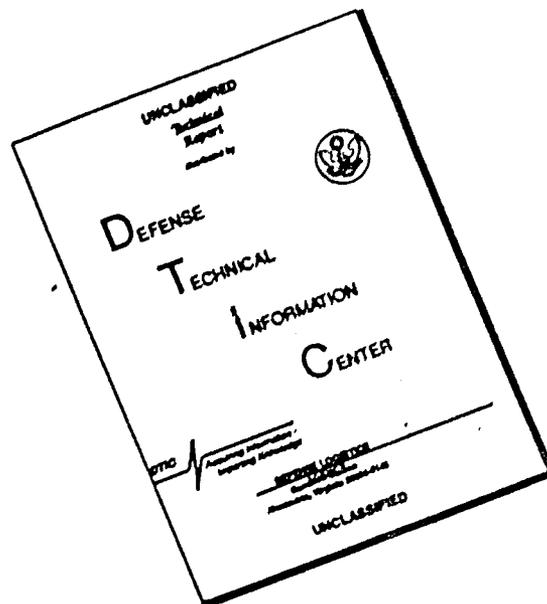
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18 OACSFOR

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (15 May 68) FOR <sup>19</sup>OT-RD-67X199 ✓

27 May 1968

20  
11 30 Dec 67

12 30 p.

SUBJECT: <sup>9</sup>Combat After Action Report - <sup>6</sup>Lessons Learned, Operation PERSHING: Battle of TAM QUAN 1st Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division, ~~11~~ 6 - 20 December 1967 (U) <sup>8</sup>

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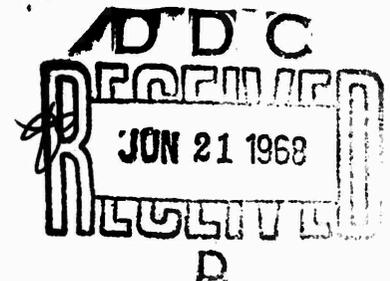
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HEADQUARTERS  
1ST BRIGADE  
1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION  
APO 96490

AVDABR-SC

30 December 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations after Action Report - Battle of TAM QUAN.

TO: See Distribution

1. (U) OPERATION. Operation PERSHING.
2. (U) PERIOD COVERED: 061630 December 1967 - 202400 December 1967.
3. (U) LOCATION: TAM QUAN, HOAI NHON District, BINH DINH Province, RVN.
4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: 1st Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division.
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICER. Colonel Donald V. Rattan, CO, 1st Bde, 1st ACD.
6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION.
  - a. 6-10 December  
1st Bde, 1st ACD  
ACav Flt, A 1-50 Mech (eff 081245 Dec)  
TF 1-8 Cav  
1-8 Cav  
2 ACav Plts, A 1-50 Mech (1 Flt eff 061700 Dec to 081245 Dec 67)  
D 1-50 Mech (eff 091230 Dec to 101530 Dec 67)  
A Troop 1-9 Cav (061750 - 062025 Dec 67)  
2 Sec, C 4-50 Arty (AW)  
A, 8th Engr (-) (with 6 D7 Dozers 19th Engr)
  - 2-8 Cav
  - TF 1-12 Cav (eff 090930 Dec 67)  
B 1-50 Mech (eff 100630 Dec 67)
  - 1-50 Mech (-) (TF DOLPHIN) (Received 080500 Dec 67)  
B 1-50 Mech (released 100630 Dec 67)  
B 1-3 Cav (091100 Dec to 100730 Dec 67)  
C 1-12 (091541 Dec to 101219 Dec 67)

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Declassified After 12 Years

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4

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b. 11 - 14 December

1st Bde, 1st ACD  
ACav Flt, A 1-50 Mech  
1-8 Cav

2-8 Cav

TF 1-12 Cav  
B 1-50 Mech (released 140800 Dec)

A, 8th Engr (-)

1-50 Mech (-) (released 140800 Dec)  
C 1-8 Cav (eff 111045 - 130730 Dec)

c. 15 - 18 December

1st Bde, 1st ACD  
ACav Flt, A 1-50 Mech

1-8 Cav

TF 2-8 Cav  
C 1-50 Mech (eff 161400 Dec)

TF 1-12 Cav

A (-) 1-50 Mech (eff 151455 Dec)

C 1-50 Mech (eff 160945 - 161400 Dec)

A, 8th Engr (-)

d. 19 - 20 Dec

1st Bde, 1st ACD  
ACav Flt, A 1-50 Mech

1-8 Cav (-D, 191707 - 201446 Dec)

TF 2-8 Cav  
D 1-8 Cav (eff 191707 - 201446 Dec)  
C 1-50 Mech

TF 1-12 Cav  
A (-) 1-50 Mech

e. 1st Bde, 1st ACD attached units 06 - 20 Dec 67.

- (1) ACav Flt, A 1-50 Mech (eff 061245 Dec)
- (2) 1st Plt, 545th MP Co
- (3) 1st Co, 222d NFFB Bn
- (4) 2 Sqds, 25th Inf Scout Dog Plt
- (5) Tm, 13th Ssg
- (6) Tm, 245th Psyops Co
- (7) Tm, IPW/CI, 191st MI Det

2

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5  
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7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

A, 8th Engr (DS)  
2-19 Arty (105) (DS)  
2-20 Arty (ARA) (GS)  
7-13 Arty (105) (-B Btry, CSR 2-19 Arty)  
B(-) 7-15 Arty (8") (CSR 2-19 Arty)  
C 1-30 Arty (155) (CSR 2-19 Arty)  
B & C Co, 228th AHB  
A Co, 228th AHB  
Pathfinder Tms, 11th Avn Gp  
Ln Sec, 11th Avn Gp  
TACP  
A Co, 15th Med Bn  
A Det, 27th Maint Bn  
2d FSE, 1st ACD Spt Cmd  
4 Sect, B 1-29 Arty (TAB) (CPCON)  
4 Sqds, B 41st Arty (AW)  
7th Air Force (TACAIR)  
19th Engr (Bulldozer Support)

8. (C) INTELLIGENCE.

a. During the last week of November and the first part of December there were many indications that significant combined VC/22d NVA Regiment operations were being planned for the BCNG SON Plains area. There were many agent reports concerning this, and other intelligence indicated that the 22d NVA Regimental Headquarters moved into the TAM QUAN (BS 893086) area on or about 2 December. By 5-6 December reports of major attacks being planned on TAM QUAN and ARVN installations and bridges along Hwy 1 between BONG SON and TAM QUAN were swelling in volume.

b. Probing attacks on the bridges and the ARVN installations along Hwy 1 increased in intensity during the period 1-4 December. The sub-district headquarters at TAM QUAN and the ARVN base at LZ TOM (BS 899087) both received ground attacks on the night of 4 December.

c. During the buildup period, aerial surveillance of the entire BCNG SON Plain was intensified by scouts of the 1st Brigade and the 1-9 Cavalry Squadron. Ground search operations by the 40th ARVN Regiment and the 1st Brigade were increased in tempo. However, no firm contact was made with NVA units nor could they be accurately located.

d. Late in the afternoon of 6 December, the 1st Brigade received an intelligence report indicating that the 22d NVA Regimental Headquarters was located in the 40th ARVN area approximately 1500 meters south of LZ TOM. Scout helicopters from A Troop, 1-9 Cavalry Squadron were sent to investigate and immediately spotted an antenna and received small arms fire. A Troop air assaulted an infantry platoon in the vicinity (BS 897071) at 1630 hours; however, it was immediately pinned

3

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6

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down by intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire and unable to move. At 1655 hours the 1-9 Cavalry Squadron inserted the weapons platoon of D Troop to reinforce the platoon of A Troop and it also was pinned down and unable to move. Elements of the 22d NVA Regiment were finally pinpointed and the Battle of TAM QUAN began.

9. (C) MISSION. Fix and destroy the 22d NVA Regiment.

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS. The 1st Bde utilizes mechanized forces, for armored protection and firepower; and organic maneuver units to overrun and destroy the enemy once he is fixed. All available air and artillery fires are utilized to drive the enemy from his prepared positions or to destroy him in his positions prior to all attacks. Use of riot control agent CS emphasized in the prep in conjunction with artillery and air fires. Other allied forces and organic and attached units used on the periphery of contact areas to inhibit the escape of the enemy. Detailed planning and execution of artillery blocking fires, fires in the objective area and illumination for night operations is necessary. Contact with the enemy must be maintained but if lost immediate pursuit must be executed by fire, aerial surveillance and by maneuver units. Thorough police of all contact areas is essential following the defeat and expulsion of the enemy. Priority of all fires to the attacking units.

11. (C) EXECUTION.

a. Maneuver.

(1) 5 Dec: (Tab A) At 1725 hours the 1st Brigade assumed control of the action and the 1st Bn, 8th Cav was directed to land forces and destroy the enemy forces in the area. By 1800 hours B 1-8 Cav had air assaulted into the contact area at BS 897071 and was joined by one ACAV Platoon of A 1-90 Mech that had been moved from LZ ENGLISH. After landing, B 1-3 attacked to the east, supported by the APC's of the ACAV Platoon but was unable to penetrate the enemy positions which were well prepared and completely hidden in the dense undergrowth. Using the APC's and in a coordinated effort with A 1-9, 1-8 Cav, was able to extract the two cavalry squadron platoons, that had made the initial contact, by 2100 hours. After the extraction of the two cavalry squadron platoons, B 1-8 established their night perimeter with the ACAV Platoon. Continuous illumination was provided by flareships, Moonshine and Spooky and by 2200 hours the small arms and automatic weapons fire had ceased. Continuous artillery support pounded the area of contact throughout the night and blocking fires interdicted the enemy routes of egress.

(2) 7 Dec: (Tab B) At 0725 hours, a CS prep by ARA hit the contact area, followed by an artillery TOT. By 0815 hours, all elements of A 1-8 Cav had completed their air assault to a secure LZ vicinity BS 895073 to join in the attack. Another ACAV Platoon and the 2 Duster Sections from LZ LONEY joined the forces in contact at 0853 hours.

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1

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By 0915 hours, Companies B and C, 2-8 Cav had completed their air assault to BS 935065 and BS 930075, respectively, to inhibit the enemy's escape to the east. Meanwhile, an ARVN force consisting of one company of the 1st Bn, 40th Regt, one Regional Force Company and one APC Troop was conducting operations north of the area of contact above the 03 E-W grid line between highway 1 and the South China Sea to inhibit enemy movement to the north. Another ARVN force, consisting of the 4th Bn (-), 40th Regt and one company of the 3d Bn, 40th Regt, was conducting operations to the south below the 06 E-W grid line. At 0915 hours the attack to the east by 1-8 Cav began. Stiff resistance from the well prepared enemy positions halted the advance and the forces were pulled back to allow more artillery, CS, ARA and Tac Air Strikes to hit the area. D 1-50 Mech was released from 2d Brigade OPCON to 1-8 Cav at 1230 hours. At 1406 hours, A and B Companies 1-8 Cav with flame thrower APC's again attacked the enemy positions and successfully penetrated the initial bunker and trench network. The flamethrower's were especially useful in neutralizing the bunkers and trenches. Two D-7 bulldozers were brought into the contact area to begin destruction of the bunkers and trenches and to construct a causeway across the marshy rice paddy areas for use by the APC's. To the east the two companies of 2-8 Cav had only sporadic contact throughout the day as they pushed to the west. At 1645 hours, the CP of C Company was pinned down by intense automatic weapons fire while crossing a rice paddy vicinity BS 922072. The CP was finally extracted at 1900 hours and joined the rest of the company at their night location. The ARVN force conducting screening operations to the north of the area of contact was engaged in heavy contact throughout the day with enemy forces trying to escape to the north. The ARVN force conducting the screening operation to the south had no contact. At last light all units were established in their night positions.

(3) 8 Dec: (Tab C) At 0745 hours, C 1-8 Cav air assaulted to BS 895072 to relieve B 1-8 Cav in the contact area. At 0815 hours, an artillery TOT hit the enemy positions vicinity BS 899072. The TOT was followed by an air strike and another artillery TOT. A highly effective CS attack was then used driving the enemy from their bunkers and trenches into an artillery TOT and twenty three enemy were killed as verified by aerial scouts. At 0845 hours D 1-50 Mech began a reconnaissance in force to the east edge of the village encountering light resistance. They pushed east and north to vicinity BS 904073 and then returned to the starting point. After an intensive CS and artillery preparation, D 1-50 Mech and A and C 1-8 Cav conducted a coordinated attack east and north, finding many destroyed bunkers and enemy killed by artillery and air strikes. The companies swept back through the same area, policing the battlefield, and returned to their night perimeter at 1530 hours. At 1130 hours the Hq 1-50 Mech and B, 1-50 Mech became OPCON to the 1st Brigade and were sent to LZ ENGLISH North, a secure area, to prepare for employment. At 1245 hours the two ACAV platoons of A, 1-50 Mech were released from the area of contact and returned to LZ LOBOY and LZ ENGLISH respectively to assume their defensive postures. The two companies of the 2-8 Cav had only light resistance

5

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8

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from snipers throughout the day and at 1520 hours, were air assaulted to vicinity BS 876114 in response to an intelligence report indicating the 9th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment was located in that area. The companies established numerous ambushes and sent out Killer Teams but had no contact. The ARVN 40th Regiment continued their screening operations north and south of the DAI DONG battlefield. The northern screening force, composed of two companies of the 4th Bn, one Regional Forces Company and one APC Troop, had no contact with enemy forces during the day. The southern screening force, composed of one company of the 3d Bn engaged the 8th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment vicinity BS 905052. This engagement ended at 1500 hours. Two companies of the 4th Bn were airlifted to the contact at 1650 hours to reinforce the company in contact and an ARVN APC Troop moved into the area.

(4) 9 Dec: (Tab C) A & C 1-8 Cav and D 1-50 Mech began the final sweep through DAI DONG at 0845 hours after heavy artillery and CS strikes. There was little enemy resistance during the sweep and the southern edge of the village was reached at 1530 hours. The force returned to the northwestern edge of the village and established their night positions vicinity BS 898073. A 1-8 was airlifted from that location at 1630 hours and returned to LZ ENGLISH. B 1-50 moved out of LZ ENGLISH North at 0700 hours under control of Task Force "Dolphin" (1-50 Mech (-)) and headed toward the beach vicinity BS 926079 where it would link up with B 1-8 Cav, which air assaulted 1500M north of that location at 1102 hours. C 1-12 Cav, which had arrived from DAK TO at 1240 hours, air assaulted to vicinity BS 927122 at 1541 hours and became OPCON to Task Force Dolphin at that time. C 1-12 Cav established a blocking position to prevent the enemy from using the beach as an escape route to the north. D 1-12 Cav, which had arrived from DAK TO at 1050 hours, air assaulted to vicinity BS 926079 and became OPCON to Task Force Dolphin. The 2-8 Cav continued to search for the 9th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment in the BONG SON Plain west of highway 1 but failed to make contact. The southern screening force of the ARVN 40th Regiment, composed of the 3d Bn (-), 4th Bn (-) and one APC Troop came under attack by elements of the 8th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment at 0520 hours. The attack was repulsed but sporadic to heavy contact continued throughout the day vicinity BS 905050.

(5) 10 Dec: (Tab C) At approximately 0900 hours the Commanding Officer of the 40th ARVN Regiment reported that civilians were seen running from the village of TRUONG LAM (2) (BS 925055). TF 1-12 relieved TF DOLPHIN of command of the Task Force and its AO. B 1-12 Cav air assaulted to vicinity BS 926079 at 0852 hours and joined D 1-12 Cav and B 1-50 Mech. TF 1-12 Cav was directed to turn B 1-50 Mech south and search TRUONG LAM (1). At 0925 hours B 1-50 Mech moved southwest toward TRUONG LAM (1). B 1-12 began a search to the west. D 1-12 Cav continued to search and destroy vicinity BS 923079, seeking elements of the 7th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment that were suspected to have withdrawn in that direction. At 1055 hours, while approaching TRUONG LAM (1), B 1-50 Mech came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire. B 1-12 Cav

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maneuvered to the right (west) flank and C 1-12 Cav air assaulted at 1220 hours to BS 932055 to close the left flank. Three coordinated attacks by the three companies were made on the enemy positions during the course of the afternoon, each being made after intensive artillery preparation. At 1850 hours the companies broke contact and established their night positions while artillery continued to hit the enemy positions throughout the night under illumination by flare ships. A & D 2-8 Cav were air assaulted to ER 963984 and ER 925996, respectively, at 1136 hours and 1106 hours to block enemy escape routes into the CAY GIEP Mountains. At 0500 hours a combined force of the 3d Bn (-), 4th Bn (-), 40th ARVN Regiment and one APC Troop located at BS 911048 were attacked from the north by elements of the 8th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment. The attack was repulsed with ARA, US Artillery and SPOCKY providing supporting fires. The ARVN force attacked north four times beginning at first light and inflicted heavy casualties on the 8th Bn. At 1545 hours D 1-50 Mech joined the ARVN forces and participated in the fifth and final assault of the day at 1600 hours. D 1-50 Mech remained OPCON to TF DOLPHIN; however, close coordination between the commanders of the ARVN 40th Regiment and TF Dolphin in a command and control helicopter above the battlefield controlled and coordinated the combined attack. The 1-8 Cav moved to and conducted search and destroy operations in the BONG SON Plain west of Highway 1 attempting to make contact with the 9th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment; however, no significant sightings or contacts were made.

(6) 11 Dec: (Tab D) TF 1-12 Cav initiated an attack against TRUCNG LAM (2) from the north at 0715 hours after an intense artillery TOT and CS strike. Resistance was sporadic throughout the day and the contact was broken by noon. Further to the north in the vicinity of BS 920078, D 1-12 was in light contact throughout the day. 2-8 Cav continued to be positioned to inhibit enemy escape to the CAY GIEP Mountains. Ambush elements of D 2-8 Cav located at BS 926048 had contact with an unknown sized enemy force at 2215 hours and 2245 hours. The enemy was moving from north to south attempting to escape when contact was made with the ambush elements. 1-8 Cav continued to search for the 9th Bn, 22d NVA Regiment in the area west of Highway 1. The Bn had no significant sightings or contacts throughout the day. TF DOLPHIN had no enemy contact throughout the day, remaining in the vicinity of BS 911058 and conducting a police of the battlefield. The 3d and 4th Bns of the ARVN 40th Regiment were relieved in place by the 3d and 4th Vietnamese Marine Bns of Marine Task Force Alpha (MTFA) and had no contact during the day.

(7) 12 Dec: (Tab D) MTFA and TF DOLPHIN as a combined force and TF 1-12 Cav began pursuit of the 22nd NVA Regiment north with Marine Task Force Alpha/TF DOLPHIN on the left, and TF 1-12 Cav on the right. D 1-50 and D 1-12 who were linked up at the boundary separating TF 1-12 and Marine Task Force Alpha, became engaged with an unknown sized enemy force vicinity BS 917072 at 1855 hours. Artillery, ARA, and a successful flanking movement from the east eliminated this last pocket of resistance. The pursuit carried to

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the 08 E-W grid line with no further contact. 1-8 Cav and 2-8 Cav continued to operate in their assigned area of operations but had no significant sightings or contacts.

(8) 13 Dec: (Tab D) TF 1-12 Cav continued the pursuit north during the day and had only one contact. B 1-12 ambushed an estimated squad of NVA at BS 917088 at 0630 hours and contact was broken shortly thereafter. The Task Force continued to work on "Sniper's Island" (BS 915037), destroying bunkers and fighting positions there, and had no further contact with the enemy. The 1-8 Cav and 2-8 Cav continued to conduct search and destroy operations in their assigned area of operations, the 1-8 Cav searching west of Highway 1 and 2-8 Cav searching from their blocking positions to the south. Neither of these units had any significant sightings or contact throughout the day. TF DOLPHIN continued to conduct search and destroy operations vicinity BS 919096 but had no significant contact throughout the day. Marine Task Force Alpha concluded their operation and returned south to their normally assigned AO at 0830 hours.

(9) 14 Dec: (Tab D) All elements of the Brigade and 40th ARVN Regiment continued search and destroy operations in their assigned AO's but had no significant sightings or contact. The 1-50 Mech Hq, B and D Companies were returned to the 2d Bde at 0800 hours.

(10) 15 Dec: (Tab E) In response to an intelligence report indicating that an NVA force was located in the vicinity of BR 928050, the 1st Bde moved the 1-12 Cav to that general vicinity and made heavy contact with elements of the 22d NVA Regiment. At the time of receipt of the intelligence report, B 1-12 was located vicinity BS 930050 and C 1-12 was located vicinity BS 936047. D 1-12 air assaulted vicinity BS 922052 from LZ ENGLISH at 0719 hours and all companies began the search for the enemy. At 0810 hours contact was initiated by C 1-12. All companies began to close into the area of contact. A request was forwarded to the 1st ACD for an additional Mech Company from 1-50 Mech and approval was granted. C 1-12 moved to vicinity BS 916053 and was heavily engaged. B 1-12 moved west to vicinity BS 921055 and was in moderate contact. D 1-12 moved southwest and then to the north executing a flanking movement and was in light to heavy contact throughout the movement. The company succeeded in penetrating the enemy positions to vicinity BS 913054. A (-) 1-50 Mech became OPCON to 1-12 Cav at 1455 hours and moved into position with C 1-12 for another attack. Intensive tactical air strikes and an artillery preparation were used in an attempt to neutralize enemy positions and at 1530 hours A (-) 1-50 Mech and C 1-12 Cav attacked to the north. This attack was repulsed by savage enemy resistance and all elements pulled back to break contact and allow heavy artillery fires to soften the enemy positions. By 1745 hours contact was broken and all elements were in their night defensive positions. During the period of contact elements of 1-8 Cav, 2-8 Cav, and the 40th ARVN Regiment were being moved into blocking positions north, west and south of the point of contact. B 1-8 air assaulted

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to vicinity BS 910063 at 1515 hours and established blocking positions to the north. A 2-8 Cav air assaulted from BS 764034 to vicinity BS 936042 at 1325 hours and established blocking positions south of the point of contact. D 2-8 moved to vicinity BS 920044 at 1330 hours and blocked possible enemy routes of egress to the southwest. A Co and D Co, 2-8 Cav established seven (7) platoon-size blocking positions from the 91 N-S grid line east to the ocean along the 04 E-W grid line and completely cut off the routes of egress to the south and southwest. The 40th ARVN Regiment closed the massive Cordon of contact area by moving the 3d Bn (-) and one APC troop to blocking positions vicinity BS 900050 and the 4th Bn to BS 903043, positioned on escape routes to the west. By nightfall, seven US Companies and two ARVN Battalions were in the contact area (B, C, D 1-12 Cav, E 1-8 Cav, A, D 2-8 Cav, A (-) 1-50 Mech, and 3d Bn (-), 4th Bn, 40th ARVN). Continuous battlefield illumination was provided during the hours of darkness by UH-1H flashlights, Moonshine and Spooky. Heavy artillery fires were used constantly during the night to neutralized the enemy positions and interdict routes of egress.

(11) 16 Dec: (Tab E) The attack on TRUONG LAM (1) began at 1030 hours after six (6) tactical air strikes, a CS strike and a ten (10) minute artillery preparation by four batteries. The coordinated attack was made from south to north by C 1-50 Mech, who became OPSCON TF 1-12 Cav at 0945 hours, on the left, A (-) 1-50 Mech on the right with C 1-12 following the two mech companies. The attack through the village was completed at 1200 hours with the attacking force meeting only light resistance. At 1300 hours a vigorous pursuit of the enemy was initiated with A and D 2-8 Cav and C 1-50 Mech (OPSCON 2-8 Cav at 1400 hours) pursuing to the north to vicinity BS 932062. TF 1-12 Cav continued to police the battlefield during the afternoon of 16 Dec. The 1-8 Cav continued to search for elements of the 22d NVA Regiment on the BONG SON Plain west of Highway 1 but had no significant sightings or contact throughout the day. The 2d Bn replaced the 4th Bn, 40th ARVN Regiment and with the 3d Bn (-) remained in their blocking positions to the west but had no contact with the enemy.

(12) 17 Dec: TF 1-12 Cav with a platoon of A Co, 8th Engineers continued to police the battlefield and destroy enemy fortifications in TRUONG LAM (1) TF 2-8 Cav continued the pursuit north to vicinity BS 922076 but did not reestablish contact with the 22d NVA Regiment. The 1-8 Cav continued to search for elements of the 22d NVA Regiment on the BONG SON Plain west of Highway 1 but had no significant sightings during the day. The 2d Bn and 3d Bn (-), 40th ARVN Regt conducted pursuit of the enemy to the northeast from their blocking positions but had no significant contact.

(13) 18 Dec: All elements of the 1st Bde and 40th ARVN Regiment continued to search for the 22d NVA Regiment on the BONG SON Plain but had no significant contact throughout the day.

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(14) 19 Dec: (Ref F) During the morning hours all elements of the 1st Bde continued to search for the 22d NVA Regiment. At 1110 hours a reliable intelligence report pinpointed elements of the 22d NVA Regiment vicinity BS 945010. Aerial reconnaissance of the area by A Troop, 1-9 Cav revealed an antenna wire leading to a large bunker complex. At 1408 hours, D 2-8 was air assaulted to vicinity BS 955010 to exploit this intelligence and was engaged by an unknown size enemy force vicinity BS 953010. D Co immediately broke contact to allow tactical air strikes and artillery to neutralize the area and three more companies were air assaulted to the west and south of the contact area to block routes of egress. As D 2-8 was pulling back to break contact, an Airborne Psychological Warfare Team orbited the area telling the civilians to leave the village and encouraging the NVA to surrender. A few of the civilians obeyed the message and departed to the south to get out of the target area but the NVA refused to surrender. A total of six air strikes were used and by 1700 hours the pinpoint accuracy of the Air Force had completely destroyed the bunker complex. By 1800 hours all areas around the contact were occupied by blocking forces with D 2-3 on the east, B 2-8 on the southern periphery, C 2-8 to the west, D 1-8 (OPCON 2-8 Cav) to the southeast and the BONG SON River blocking escape routes to the north. The four companies established platoon size blocking positions while Lightning Bug and ARA patrolled the river. Continuous battlefield illumination was provided by UH-1H flareships, Moonshine and Spooky while heavy artillery fires hit the target area throughout the night. The 1-8 Cav and 1-12 Cav had no significant contact during the day. Several times during the night the enemy was sighted crossing the river to the north and engaged by artillery and ARA. A true assessment was impossible but many casualties were undoubtedly inflicted.

(15) 20 Dec: (Ref F) Four air strikes and intensive artillery fires were used to neutralize the contact area prior to the attack to the west by D 2-8 at 1000 hours. A coordinated attack with D 2-8 Cav and C 1-50 Mech on line had been planned but swift tidal currents and steep muddy banks in the BONG SON River prevented C 1-50 Mech from crossing to join the attack. The accuracy and devastation of the air and artillery fires had completely eliminated the enemy resistance and D 2-8 completed the attack through AN NGHIEP with no contact.

(16) Although the Battle of TAM QUAN officially ended at 202400 hours December, 1967, the 2-8 Cav remained in AN NGHIEP for three (3) days digging through the demolished bunkers and fortified positions recovering enemy bodies and weapons. These figures are reflected in the totals for the Battle of TAM QUAN.

b. Support.

(1) Aviation: The organic and supporting aviation elements provided the following support to the 1st Brigade during the Battle of TAM QUAN.

(a) 1st Bde Avn Flt.

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## 1. CH-13:

a.	Total hours flown	276.5
b.	Average hours flown per A/C	60
c.	Average hours flown per day per A/C	40
d.	Total number of missions	156
e.	Total number of sorties	485
f.	Average number of missions flown per A/C per day	7.2
g.	Average number of sorties flown per A/C per day	31

## 2. UH-1H (CC)

a.	Total hours flown	237.7
b.	Average hours flown per A/C	53
c.	Average hours flown per day per A/C	4.3
d.	Total number of missions	163
e.	Total number of sorties	649
f.	Average number of missions flown per A/C per day	3.7
g.	Average number of sorties flown per A/C per day	13.2

## (b) 229th Avn Bn

1.	Total hours flown	432
2.	Total log sorties	1829
3.	Total tons of cargo logged	2973
4.	Total combat sorties	1727
5.	Total combat troops carried	4603
6.	Total hours flown by gunships	125
7.	Total escort sorties flown by gunships	315
8.	UH-1H aircraft utilized as CC's flew a total of 120 hours.	

## (c) 228th Avn Bn

1.	Total hours flown	913
2.	Total PAX transported	12064
3.	Total tons cargo carried	1529

(2) Artillery: 2-19th Artillery and ARA provided close and continuous fire support during the entire period. Expenditures for the period were:

(a) Missions:	<u>Observed</u>	<u>Known or suspected targets</u>
	598	498
	<u>Unobserved</u>	<u>Total</u>
	2401	2497

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(b) Ammo:	WT	WR	TR	SMK	Other	Total
By type:	40266	2410	1094	566	1070	45406
					(Navy)	

(c) Ammo:	Observed	Known or suspected targets
By mission:	29469	9042
	Unobserved	Total
	6095	45406

(3) Air Fires: Air fires were responsive and accurate. The volume, flexibility and adaptability of the air effort in support of the Battle of TAM QUAN was outstanding. Support for the Battle of TAM QUAN was:

(a) Total Missions:

1. 59 FAC
2. 13 Skyspots
3. 2 Night Owls

(b) Total sorties

1. F100 - 146
2. B 57 - 2
3. F4C - 11

(c) Ordnance Expended

1. 302 M 82 High Drag Bombs (79.5 tons)
2. 225 M 117 GP Bombs (87.6 tons)
3. 116 NAP (44.5 tons)
4. 29400 rds 20MM

(d) Bomb Damage Assessment

1. 118 Military structures destroyed
2. 43 Military structures damaged
3. 45 Bunkers destroyed
4. 18 Bunkers damaged
5. 3 Bunkers uncovered
6. 905 Meters of trench uncovered
7. 1 50 Cal MG position destroyed

(4) Engineer: A Company. 8th Engineers provided

battle was:

(a) 9 Engineer platoon days (demolitions, minesweepers and police of the battlefield).

(b) 24 Bulldozers hours

(c) 24 Hours with S424 (Backhoe)

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12. (C) ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS. Administrative and logistical support during the Battle of TAM QUAN continued to operate in an outstanding manner and presented no major problems.

13. (C) RESULTS.

a. Friendly Losses:           US           ARVN

(1) KIA                       58           30  
(2) WIA                       250          71

b. Enemy Losses:

(1) KIA (EC)               650 (US & ARVN combined figures)  
(2) POW                    3 NVA, 29 VC (US only)  
(3) Weapons Losses: (US only)

- (a) 27 AK 47's
- (b) 58 rifles (SKS's, M1 Carbines, MAS 36, & Mauser)
- (c) 3 B 40 RL
- (d) 2 75 RR
- (e) 6 RPD LMG
- (f) 3 7.62 CHICOM Type 53 HMG
- (g) 3 pistols

(4) Equipment Losses:

- (a) 31 Mortar rounds
- (b) 5 Bangalore Torpedoes
- (c) 4 RR rounds
- (d) 7240 rounds small arms ammo
- (e) 2 B 40 RL rounds
- (f) 52 grenades
- (g) 26 gas masks
- (h) 1000 ft WD 1
- (i) 4 mines
- (j) 1 Field telephone
- (k) 2 pair binoculars

14. (C) COMMANDERS ANALYSIS. The Battle of TAM QUAN was the largest and most successful battle conducted by the 1st Bde thus far during Operation PEPHING. The tremendous success realized in this battle cannot be credited to the Bde alone. The victory is equally shared in the outstanding and courageous participation by allies, other services and other units not normally found operating with the 1st Bde. The force that was molded on the field of battle during the period 6-20 December 1967 was an unbeatable combination of air, land and sea elements fully supported by outstanding combat support and combat service support units of all types and missions. It was a distinct pleasure to command and associate with the gallant, quick

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reacting, flexible and tireless team of professionals who participated in the several engagements of the Battle of TAM QUAN. Their one burning goal, to find and defeat the enemy, became a realization in gaining this important victory.

*Donald V. Rattan*  
DONALD V. RATTAN  
Colonel, Infantry  
Commanding

Inclosures 1 - Lessons Learned  
2 - Sketch Maps

DISTRIBUTION

12 1st ACD  
1 1-3 Cav  
1 2-8 Cav  
1 1-12 Cav  
1 2-19 Arty  
1 2-20 Arty  
2 8th Engr  
1 11th Avn Gp  
1 228th ASH Bn  
1 229th AH Bn  
1 ALO (USAF)  
1 13th Sig  
1 Spt Cnd  
10 Bde HHC  
1 2d Bde  
1 3d Ede  
8 S3  
1 L-50 Mech  
2 1-9 Cav  
1 Mil. Hist

24

CONFIDENTIAL

17

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## LESSONS LEARNED

1. (C) LESSON LEARNED: The most efficient way to eliminate enemy bunkers and fortified positions is by TAC AIR.

a. Discussion: During the Battle of TAM QUAN the 22d NVA fought from well prepared bunkers and trenches. While heavy artillery is effective against the smaller bunkers, the time involved in adjusting and completing a precision destruction mission on each target precludes its use as the sole means of eliminating bunkers and fortified positions. Medium and light artillery has no effect what-so-ever on the bunkers and trenches typically used by the NVA unless one receives a direct hit.

b. Observation: TAC AIR must be included in the commander's plans for the destruction of bunker and trench networks used by the NVA. A combination of M117 750 lbs and 500 lb High Drag bombs to destroy the bunkers and collapse the trenches and napalm to destroy enemy personnel proved very effective during the Battle of TAM QUAN.

2. (C) LESSON LEARNED: CS is valuable in forcing the enemy from their positions.

a. Discussion: During the Battle of TAM QUAN tremendous success was realized in employing a combination of riot control agent CS followed by artillery TOP's. A problem occurred when the E 158 modules were dropped from below minimum altitude. The modules did not have enough time to properly activate and the desired target coverage was not achieved.

b. Observation: The use of CS in a battle area requires detailed prior planning. Provisions must be made for packaging and delivering gas masks at the proper time to prevent unnecessary delays in the execution of the battle plan. Pilots flying the helicopters dispensing the E 158 modules must be educated in proper methods of employment, altitude, direction of flight, troop dispositions and wind-drift factors.

3. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Flame thrower APC's can be effectively used to neutralize enemy fortifications.

a. Discussion: The importance of employing flame thrower APC's with mech infantry was brought out in the early stages of the Battle of TAM QUAN. There were several occasions where the flame tracks were able to maneuver to a position to eliminate pockets of resistance in bunkers and trenches. Had the flame throwers not been available, friendly casualties would have been considerably higher.

b. Observation: ~~Flamethrower tracks can be employed well forward with attacking mech and infantry units with great success. With inherent mobility and armored protection, the flame tracks are~~

Incl 1

1-1

CONFIDENTIAL

15

# CONFIDENTIAL

invaluable in the close-quarter fighting that is peculiar to the type terrain encountered in this battle.

4. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Combat Engineers should be used to follow the infantry and destroy bunkers and trenches, improve crossing sites for tracks and heavy equipment, and establish LZ's for resupply and Medevac.

a. Discussion: A need for Engineer support developed quickly during the Battle of TAM QUAN when it became apparent that the APC's were having difficulty getting into the area of contact. This occurred during the first evening of the battle and plans were immediately formulated to send engineer support into the area. The engineers were used to construct a causeway for the APC's, clear an LZ for resupply and Medevac and to destroy the bunker and trench networks in the battle areas.

b. Observation: Commanders should quickly recognize a need for engineer support if the need does exist. It is impractical for the infantry to carry the demolitions required to destroy all bunkers and trenches found in a battle area when the engineers can bring in heavy equipment to do the job. The timely clearing of an LZ is extremely important for resupply and Medevac and there are times when crossing sites must be made to permit access by tracked vehicles and heavy equipment into the battle area.

5. (C) LESSON LEARNED: The battlefield must be policed after all contact has ceased.

a. Discussion: The majority of weapons, documents and other valuable intelligence items were found by units remaining in the battle area to conduct a police of the battlefield. This time was also used to have engineers destroy the bunkers and trenches. Each of the battle areas were thoroughly policed after each contact and the results justified the use of company size units to accomplish this.

b. Observation: Time must be allowed for units to remain in areas of significant contact to conduct a thorough police of the battlefield and destroy all fortifications.

6. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Routes of enemy egress from a major contact area must be interdicted.

a. Discussion: The Battle of TAM QUAN once again proved the importance of surrounding the battle area with forces to inhibit and interdict enemy movement out of the area of contact. The normal pattern of the NVA is to fight until dark and then evade from the battle area. Although it is impossible to block all enemy escape, many casualties are inflicted, a psychological advantage is obtained and the enemy is further disorganized and confused by sufficient blocking forces and an adequate plan of blocking fires. A system was habitually used

19

# CONFIDENTIAL

throughout the Battle of TAM QUAN to accomplish this inhibiting maneuver while still allowing free room for fires in the contact area without endangering friendly troops.

b. Observation: Plans to contain the battle area should be made early incorporating a system of platoon sized blocking positions, blocking fires and sufficient illumination to inhibit enemy escape from a contact area during darkness.

7. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Constant illumination is required on the battlefield during the hours of darkness.

a. Discussion: Early planning was necessary to insure that after night defensive positions were established by elements in contact, illumination was provided by a combination of UH-1H flareships, Moonshine and Spooky. The constant illumination hindered the enemy's attempt to move out of contact areas and permitted accurate artillery fires to hit his positions. Problems did occur because of the long reaction time required to get Moonshine or Spooky on station. Gaps in the periods of illumination by Moonshine and Spooky were filled by organic flareships or artillery illumination.

b. Observation: The decision to use or not use Air Force illumination should be made as early as possible after initial contact is made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be forwarded through channels and have the aircraft on station at the required time. The Air Force aircraft have a longer station time and are much better than organic flareships for long periods of illumination. Refueling time for these aircraft can be covered by other Air Force aircraft, organic flareships or tube illumination.

8. (C) LESSON LEARNED: APC's should use colored number panels to permit easy identification from the air.

a. Discussion: There were periods when the movement and maneuver of the APC's had to be controlled from the air. It was extremely difficult to identify a specific track or tracks from the air and relay the identification to the commander on the ground. Valuable time was wasted by not being able to clearly identify elements of the mech companies from the air.

b. Observation: Colored number panels should be displayed on each APC. This will allow quick identification and permit the commander in the air to relay specific information to the commander on the ground.

9. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Units must not cordon contact areas in a manner that will deny the use of artillery and air fires.

a. Discussion: On no occasion during the Battle of TAM QUAN were units allowed to close so tightly around a contact area that the use of artillery and air fires would be severely restricted.

1-3

CONFIDENTIAL 17

CONFIDENTIAL

This would have denied the commander one of his most valuable advantages and means of neutralizing the enemy positions.

b. Observation: Commanders must insure that their units are not deployed in such a manner that it restricts the use of his most powerful punch. Casualties will be greatly reduced if units are positioned to allow maximum delivery of artillery and air fires.

10. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Clearance for air strikes in an ARVN AO must be initiated immediately.

a. Discussion: The procedure for clearing an air strike in the ARVN AO is detailed and time consuming. Requests for clearance must go through channels to the 22d ARVN Division Hq and on one occasion it took one and a quarter hours for an immediate air strike to be delivered.

b. Observation: A procedure to expedite clearance requests in the ARVN AO was adopted. A grid is assumed in the expected area of contact and the request initiated for clearance prior to the request for air support. When the need for air fires became apparent, clearance had already been granted. This saved valuable time and allowed timely delivery of ordnance.

11. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Tanks are necessary in battles on the BONG SON Plain.

a. Discussion: It is apparent that armor would have been invaluable during the Batt of TAM QUAN. Sufficient access routes into all areas of contact were available and the use of tanks to attack the enemy fortified positions would have greatly reduced friendly casualties. The M 113 proved valuable but lack the heavy fires and armored protection of an M 42 or M 60.

b. Observation: A tank company should be attached to the 1st Bde for use in the BONG SON Plain. The availability of tanks would greatly enhance the brigade's operations and increase its flexibility and firepower while greatly decreasing vulnerability and casualties in large scale contacts.

12 (C) LESSON LEARNED: OH-13's helicopters can be effectively used to exploit a CS attack.

a. During the afternoon of 8 December the 1st Brigade Scouts, flying two (2) OH-13's observation helicopters, were employed to exploit the effects of an aerial delivered CS attack. Immediately after the CS attack, the Scout Team, with aviator and gunner/observer wearing protective masks, flew into the gassed area to observe enemy movements and to deliver effective automatic weapons fire on enemy personnel attempting to flee the area. The Scouts were able to engage several enemy troops attempting to escape the effects of the CS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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b. Observation: Scout helicopters can be effectively used to exploit a CS attack. Although visibility is restricted by the protective mask and CS cloud, a close working team of observation helicopters can exploit a gas attack.

13. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Track shrouds must be used by M 113's in crossing a fast moving body of water.

a. Discussion: On 19 and 20 December 67 a mech company moving to contact was unable to swim the BONG SON River because of the loss of maneuverability in the midstream current. The tracks did not have track shrouds mounted.

b. Observation: Had track shrouds been mounted, the M 113's might have negotiated the river and would then have been available for the attack of AN GHIEP on 20 Dec.

14. (C) LESSON LEARNED: Sequence of attack on a fortified position in the BONG SON Plain.

a. Discussion: The terrain of the BONG SON Plain has been described as a combination of GUADALCANAL and the hedgerows of NORMANDY. An attack against a flank is impossible because the enemy defends in a small perimeter (Outline of a fortified village). To change directions in the attack of the enemy and to engage him in two or more directions in the limited area that the enemy occupies is difficult and has several disadvantages. Attacks from several directions must be closely controlled and even then there is a good chance that casualties will be taken by friendly units from friendly small arms fire. The chief disadvantage is that this method will restrict the one big advantage of fire power in the form of artillery and war air.

b. Observation: The solution to the sequence of attack of a fortified enemy position adopted by this unit in the Battle of TAN QUAN is:

(1) Contact fully developed by infantry and aerial scouts to develop size and shape of enemy position.

(2) Air fires are massed to the point of complete devastation of the area by 750 lb and 500 lb High Drag (low ceiling) bombs mixed with Napalm.

(3) Artillery fires are used constantly on the enemy positions and to block enemy escape.

(4) Contact area is ringed by units in platoon sized blocking positions to inhibit enemy escape.

(5) Illumination is planned to light entire contact area for the duration of all periods of darkness.

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(6) Air and artillery fires are increased in tempo prior to any attack. Riot control agent CS is used to drive the enemy out of prepared positions into a following artillery TOT and exploitation by aerial scouts and gunships.

(7) Attacking elements are preceded by armored vehicles with flamethrower tracks and portable flamethrowers used well forward.

(8) Each attacking unit is echeloned in depth to provide follow-up units to mop up by passed pockets of enemy resistance and to secure medevac operations and lost or damaged equipment.

(9) Engineers with heavy equipment and other maneuver units follow to conduct thorough battlefield police.

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23

# CONFIDENTIAL

## SKETCH MAPS

Sketch maps of contact areas are indicated in the following tabs:

- Tab A 6 Dec 67
- Tab B 7 Dec 67
- Tab C 8 to 10 Dec 67
- Tab D 11 to 14 Dec 67
- Tab E 15 to 16 Dec 67
- Tab F 19 to 20 Dec 67

21

CONFIDENTIAL

Incl 2

SOUTH CHINA SEA

TAM QUAN

LZ TOM

1-8 CAV

DAI DONG (1)

1-9 CAV

06  
LZ ENGLISH NORTH 38

BINH PHU (2)

TRUONG LAM (2)

40TH ARVN

LZ ENGLISH

BONG SON RIVER

6 DEC 67

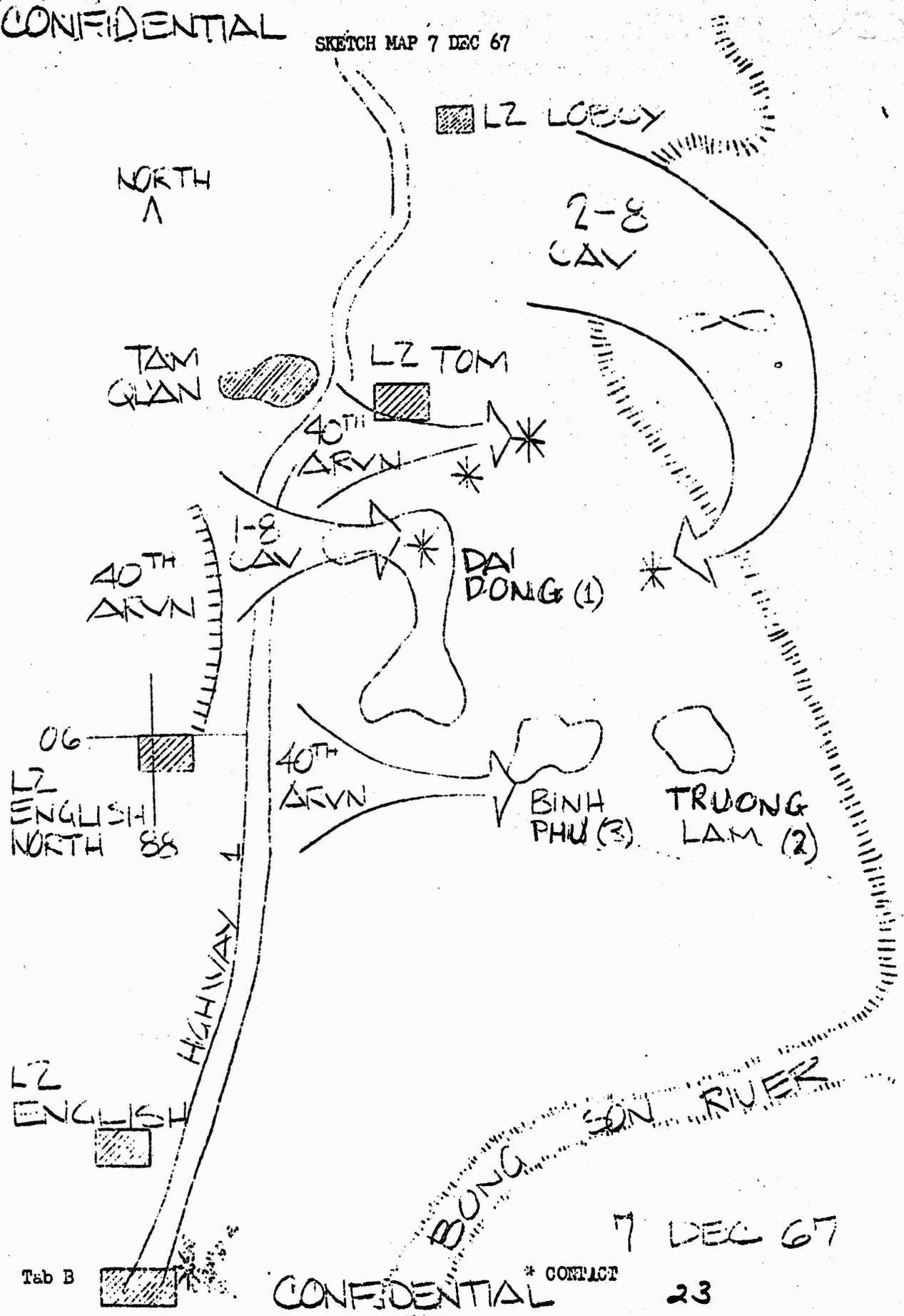
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\* CONTACT

TAB A

25 CONFIDENTIAL

SKETCH MAP 7 DEC 67



7 DEC 67

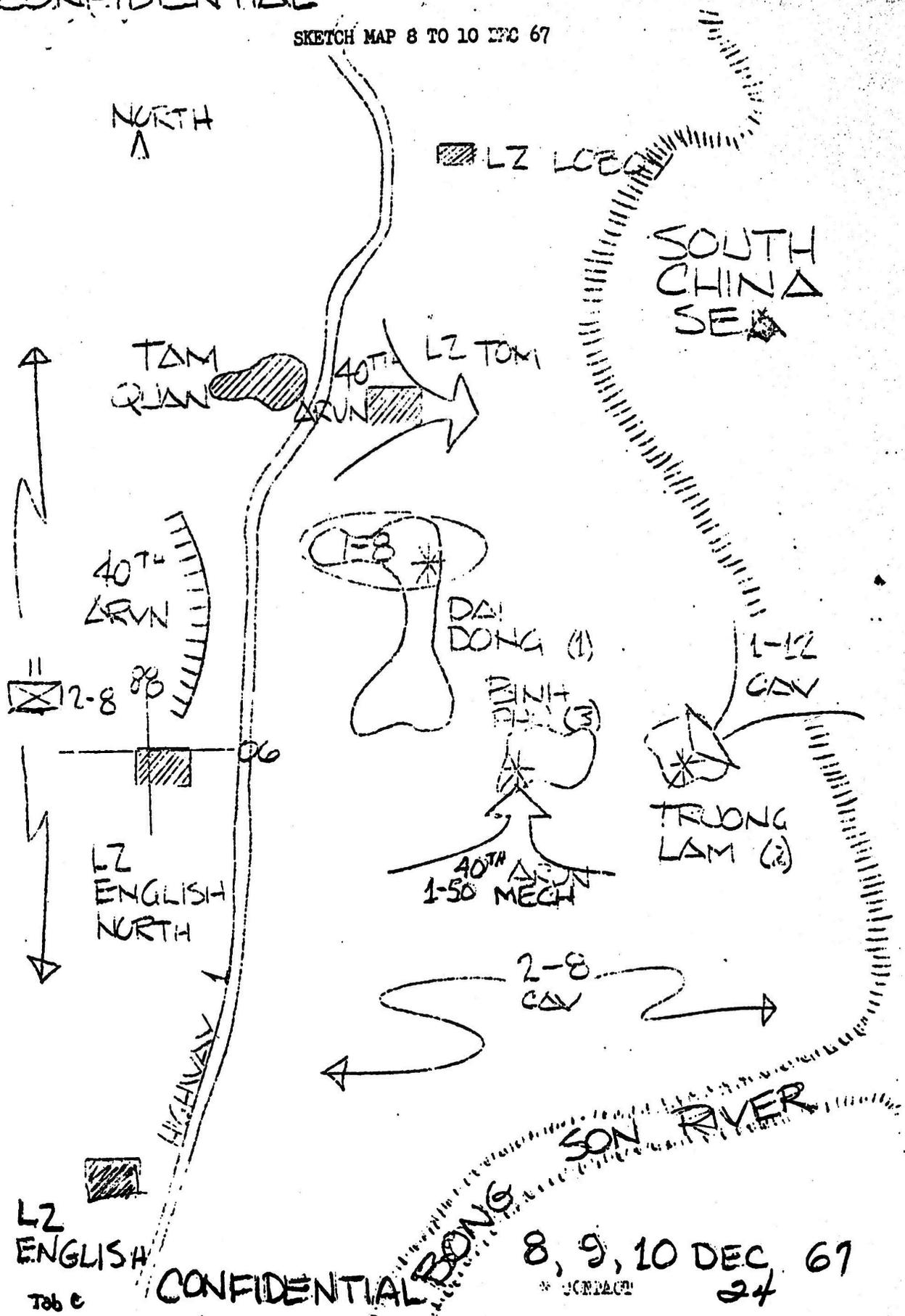
CONFIDENTIAL \* CONTACT

23

CONFIDENTIAL

26

SKETCH MAP 8 TO 10 DEC 67



CONFIDENTIAL 8, 9, 10 DEC 67

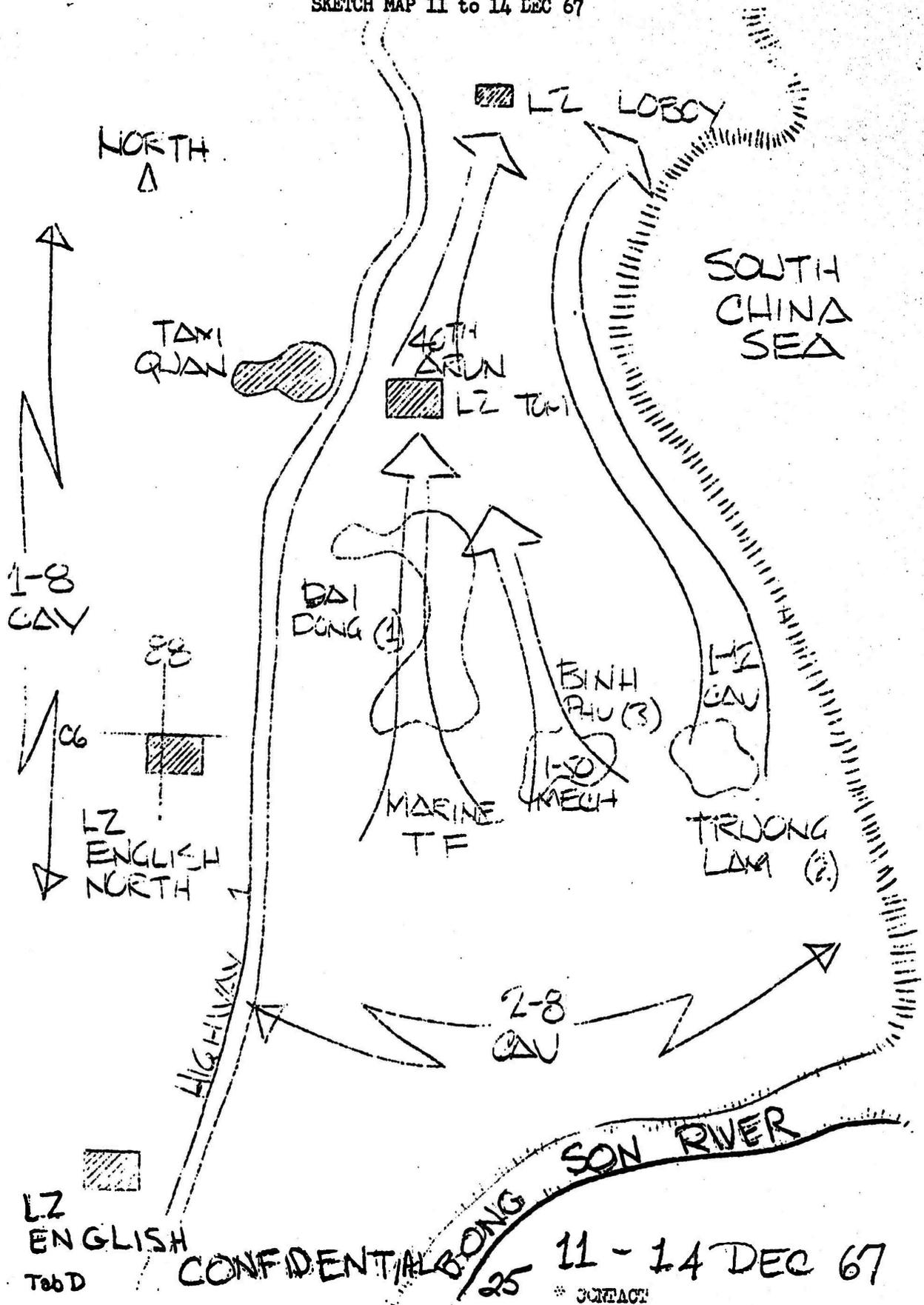
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24

21 CONFIDENTIAL

SKETCH MAP 11 to 14 DEC 67



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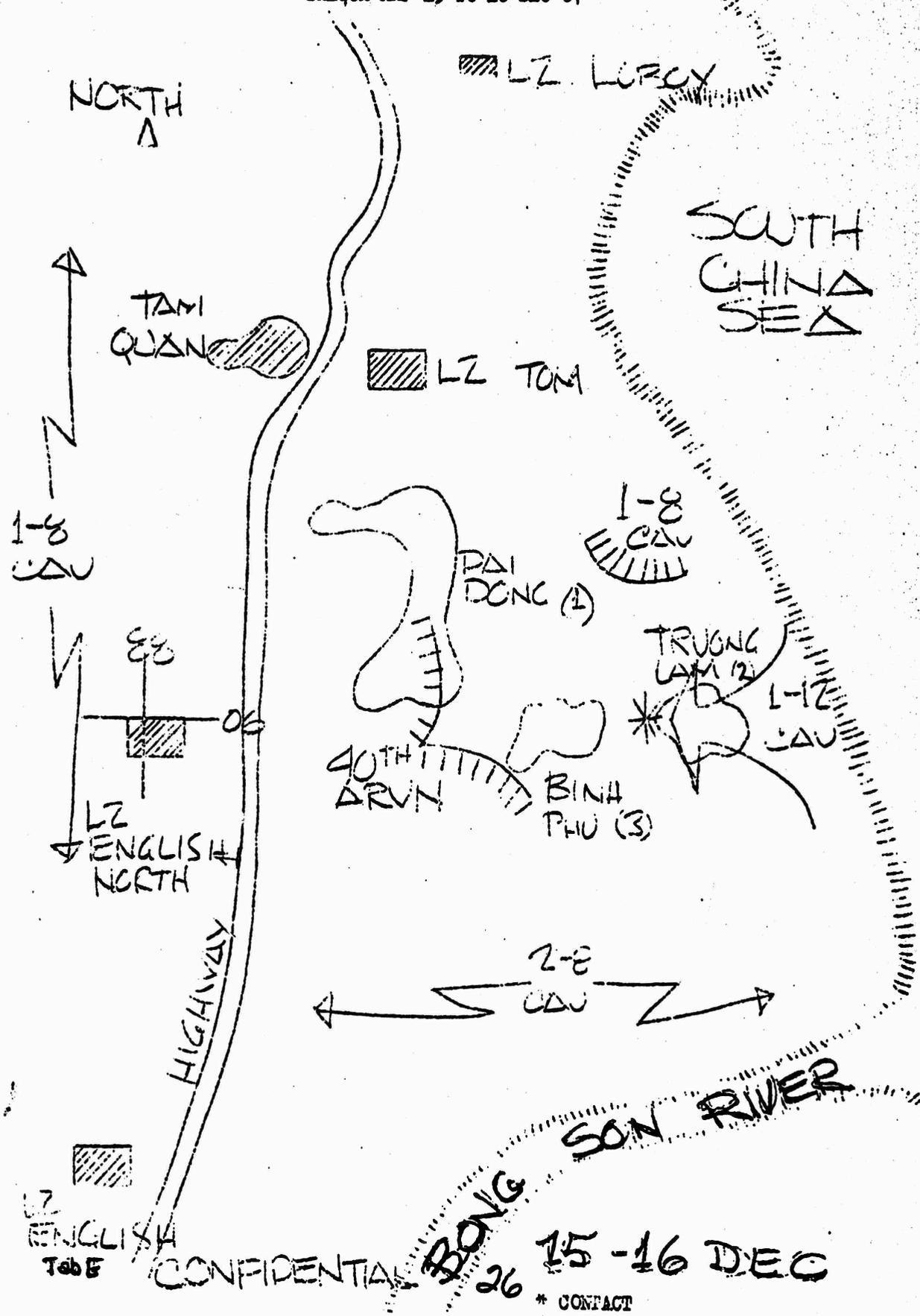
11 - 14 DEC 67

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Tab D

\* CONTACT

CONFIDENTIAL

SKETCH MAP 15 TO 16 DEC 67



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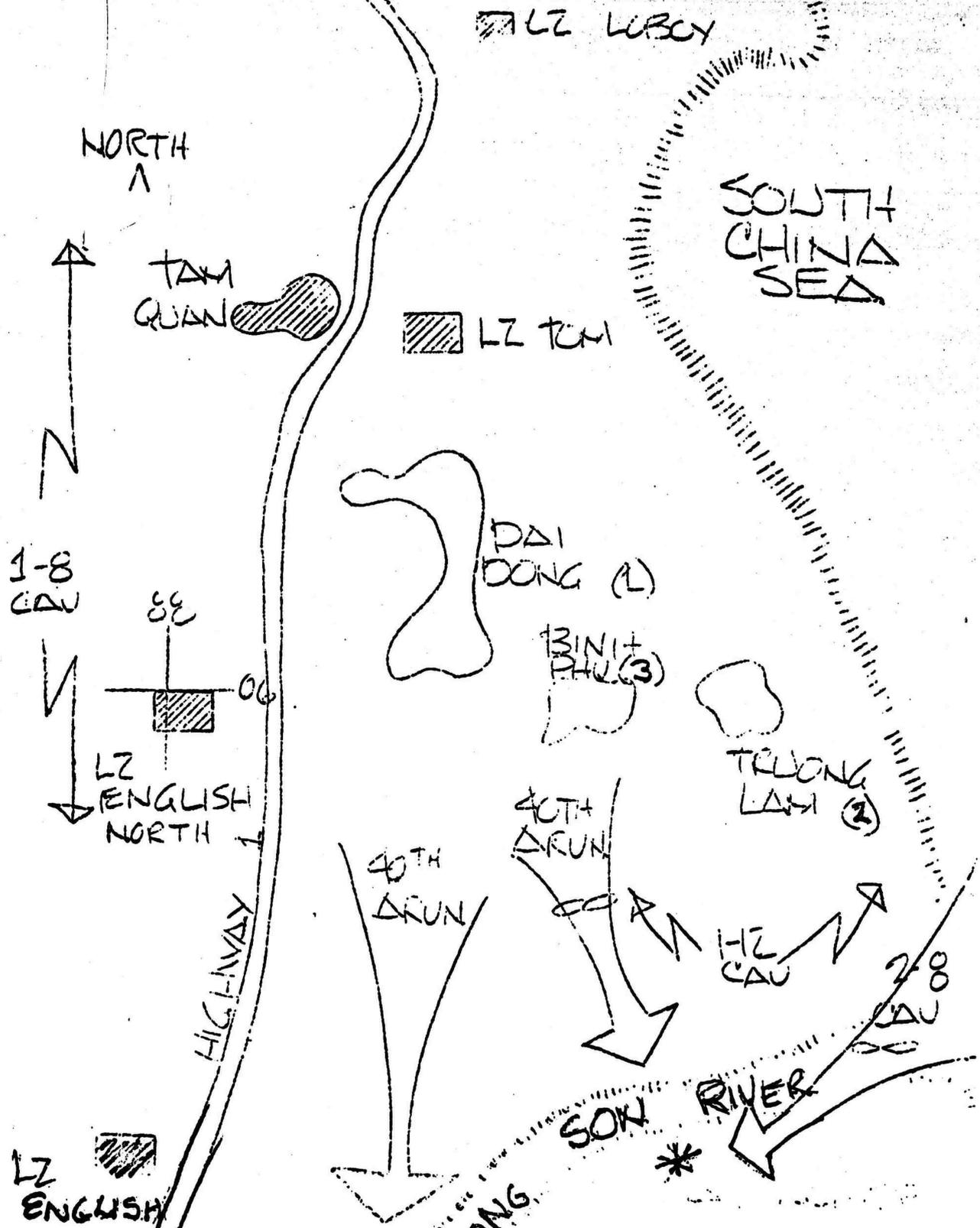
26 15-16 DEC

\* CONTACT

CONFIDENTIAL

29

SKETCH MAP 19 TO 20 DEC 67



CONFIDENTIAL

19-20 DEC 67

\* CONTACT

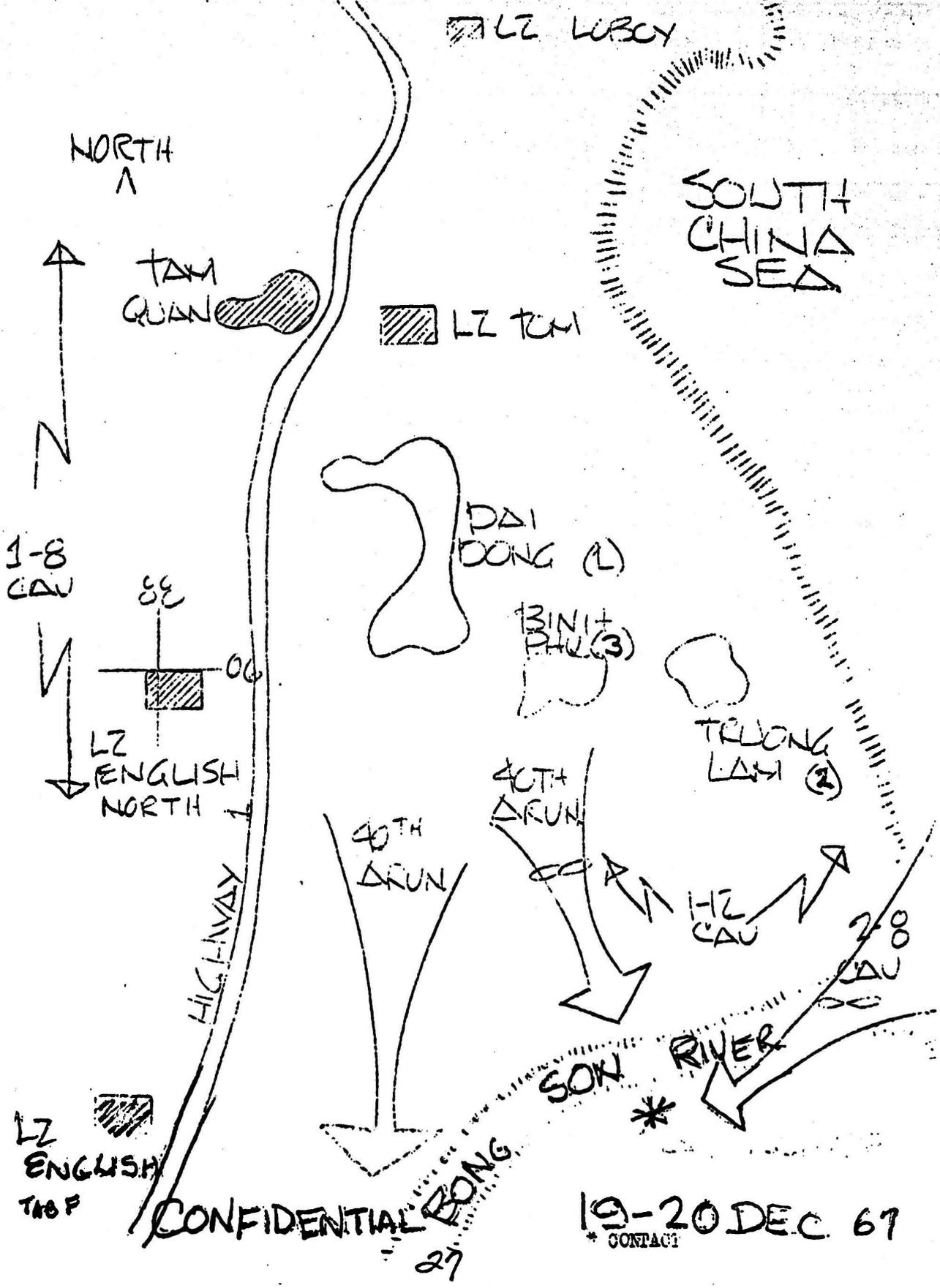
29



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29

SKETCH MAP 19 TO 20 DEC 67



CONFIDENTIAL

19-20 DEC 67  
\* CONTACT

27

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28