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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 35TH ENGINEER GROUP (CONSTRUCTION)
APO 96238

EGA-CO

11 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (~~REG. GSPOR 665~~), for Quarterly
Period Ending 30 April 1968.

THRU: Commanding General
18th Engineer Brigade
ATTN: AVBC-C
APO 96377

THRU: Commanding General
U.S. Army, Vietnam
ATTN: AVHGC-DST
APO 96307

THRU: Commander In Chief
U.S. Army, Pacific
ATTN: GPOP-DT
APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army (ACSFOR-DA)
Washington, D.C. 20310

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Period Ending 30 April 1968. 11 May 1968

1. Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities.

a. Operations:

The past quarter witnessed some major events for the 35th Group that will make that time frame a special period in the history of the 35th Engineer Group. While command emphasis was being placed on LOC upgrading, the enemy conducted his TET offensive, the 35th Group deployed the 14th Engineer Battalion to the I CTZ, assumed control of the 45th Engineer Group AOR while retaining control of the 35th Group's previous AOR, increased its span of control to six engineer battalions with attached separate engineer companies, moved its headquarters from Can Ranh Bay to Qui Nhon, deployed B/589th Engineer Battalion to Pleiku to support the 937th Engineer Group and formulated and published OPLAN 1-68 (an LOC upgrading plan which outlines the projected developments within the Group through the current Vietnamese coastal dry season). During the ninety day report period HHC, 35th Engineer Group (Const) was engaged in the following types of activities:

- (1) Operations - 80 days
- (2) Training - 7 days
- (3) Movement - 3 days

The enemy's country-wide TET offensive struck major cities throughout the Group's AOR and affected construction operations for three weeks. Approximately 25% of the Group construction effort was devoted to providing security for the many base camps, field cantonments and isolated work sites occupied by elements of the Group during this critical period. Vietnamese Civilian hires were not available for two to three weeks which served to slow down prefabrication shops, to put more EM on detail (KP, sandbag filling, etc.) and slowed some quarry/crusher operations. Two quarries, Dalat and Chap Chai were closed for security reasons. Elements of the Group assisted in the clearance of evidence of the battle and assisted in rebuilding damaged facilities at Phan Thiet, Dalat, Nha Trang and Tuy Hoa. This was the most intense period of enemy activity during the quarter.

During the second week in February the Group received a warning order to deploy the 14th Engineer Battalion to the I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). Planning and coordination for the move began immediately. All of the construction and operational support projects assigned to the 14th Engr Bn (Cbt) were re-assigned to the 87th or 864th Engr Bns. Coordination for the movement to the I CTZ was affected with the 18th Engr Bde and the 45th Engr Gp. During February and early March several proposals were considered and plans devised concerning the detailed deployment of the 14th Engr Bn and its future missions.

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The 14th Engr Bn had been deployed in the southern portion of the 35th Group's AOR - Dong Ba Thin, Phan Rang, Phan Thiet, Song Pha, Dalat and, at times, Bao Loc. The detachment of the 14th brought with it the challenge of extending current assets in order to complete assigned missions. Coordination was affected with the 20th Engr Bde, the 159th Engr Gp and the 34th Engr Gp concerning the possible extension of 20th Engr Bde support northward. In late February D/27th Engr Bn (Cbt) was deployed to Phan Thiet to support Operation McClain (3rd Bn, 506th Inf, 101st Abn Div) and attached to the 35th Engr Gp. The 87th Engr Bn assumed responsibility for the southern portion of the 35th Engr Gp AOR and had OPCON of D/27th Engr Bn. In early March the CO of the 159th Engr Gp agreed to perform emergency maintenance of QL-20 on a mission basis and relieved pressure from the 35th Group in this area. The 864th Engr Bn assumed responsibility for the Dong Ba Thin base camp from the 14th Engr Bn. The 14th Engr Bn was deployed by ship from Cam Ranh Bay on 18 March 1968.

While the 14th Engr Bn prepared for deployment, the other units of the Group continued to shift engineer effort from base construction projects to LOC upgrading. The 87th Engr Bn moved its B Company from Ba Ngoi to Phan Rang and started widening and raising QL-1 from Du Long north. The 864th Engr Bn moved elements of its third construction line company out on QL-1 from Dong Ba Thin to Dien Khanh. The 577th Engr Bn moved one construction company out of the Phu Hiep air base complex to a position astride QL-1. The engineer company collocated itself with a Korean infantry unit thereby considerably reducing its security problems.

Two Vietnamese trucking firms starting hauling rock in support of the Group's LOC program during the second week of March. One contractor currently has about 50 dump trucks at Tuy Hoa hauling both blast rock and base course rock for the 577th Engr Bn's project of upgrading QL-1 from Tuy Hoa to Vung Ro Bay. The second contractor has approximately 30 dump trucks at Ba Ngoi hauling base course rock out of the Ba Ngoi Quarry to QL-1 north of Dong Ba Thin in support of the 864th Engr Bn.

On 15 March 1968 the 35th Engr Gp's AOR was expanded to include the area previously controlled by the 45th Engr Gp. The 35th Group's advance party composed of Col Hughes and key staff officers and non-commissioned officers arrived in Qui Nhon on 14 March and established command and control over the three new battalions assigned to the Group. On the 18th of March the decision was made to move the entire Group headquarters to Qui Nhon. Qui Nhon is closer to the center of mass of assigned engineer troops and permits fairly reliable communications with each of the Group's six battalions. The Group headquarters was immediately organized for movement, and packaging and outloading was initiated. A 30 truck convoy carrying the TO&E and station property of the headquarters departed Cam Ranh Bay on the morning of the 21st of March. (The 35th Gp had been located on Cam Ranh Bay since May 1965). The convoy travelled to

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Tuy Hoa, spent one day at Tuy Hoa and departed for Qui Nhon on the morning of the 23rd of March. The convoy closed Qui Nhon at 1600 hours 23 March 1968. Two incidents occurred during the movement; approximately 6 miles south of Phu Hiep at 1920 hours 21 March, an MP escort jeep hit a command detonated mine resulting in one MP KIA and 2 other men seriously burned; approximately 20 miles south of Qui Nhon at 1300 hours 23 March, a 5 ton bridge truck was hit by a command detonated mine resulting in no casualties but destruction of the rear dual wheels of the truck. Within the next few days the headquarters was completely moved into its new home. An overlay showing the current area of responsibility of the Group is attached as Annex A to inclosure 1. A listing of troop units before and after the change in Group Area of Operations is attached as inclosure 2. The new troop listing comprises 6 battalions, 9 separate companies and 7 engineer detachments with an assigned strength totalling 274 officers, 6158 EM and over 400 attached personnel.

In late March two earthmoving platoons from the Group (one from the 589th Engr Bn and one from the 84th Engr Bn) were placed OPCON to the 45th Engr Gp in the I CTZ.

With regard to the LOC program, March and April saw: The 577th Engr Bn place its asphalt plant in operation and pave 1.5 km of QL-1 south from Phu Hiep; the 589th Engr Bn place its asphalt plant in operation and pave 15.2 km of single lane roadway on QL-19 west from An Khe; the 19th Engr Bn continue widening and raising the road from Bong Son to Mo Duc; the 84th Engr Bn continue the final base preparations for contract paving for 26 km of QL-1 toward Bong Son; the 864th Engr Bn continue upgrading QL-1 from Dong Ba Thin to Dien Khanh and pave 6 km of their section of highway; the 87th Engr Bn continue widening and raising QL-1 from Du Long to Ba Ngoi.

On 8 April 1968 B/589th Engr Bn was deployed to Pleiku to assist the 937th Engr Gp in the completion of priority projects in the Pleiku-Kontum area prior to the highland monsoon season. During this period of time, planning was accomplished to enable the remainder of the 589th Engr Bn to deploy to Pleiku. This plan was not executed. The loss of B/589th has resulted in a work stoppage of most of the base construction projects in the An Khe area except for a 75' x 202' prefabricated hangar and the An Khe power distribution system.

In the latter half of April the Group completed its LOC Upgrading Plan (Inclosure 1) which outlines the direction the Group will take through the present coastal dry season.

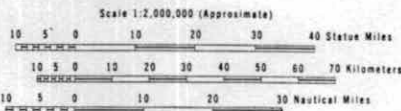
Through the reporting period approximately 10 to 15 % of the Group's effort was devoted to support of the following combat operations: Operation McClain, Operation Bolling, Operation Walker and Operation Cochise.

II CTZ MAJOR ROAD NET & AIRFIELDS

5 MARCH 1968

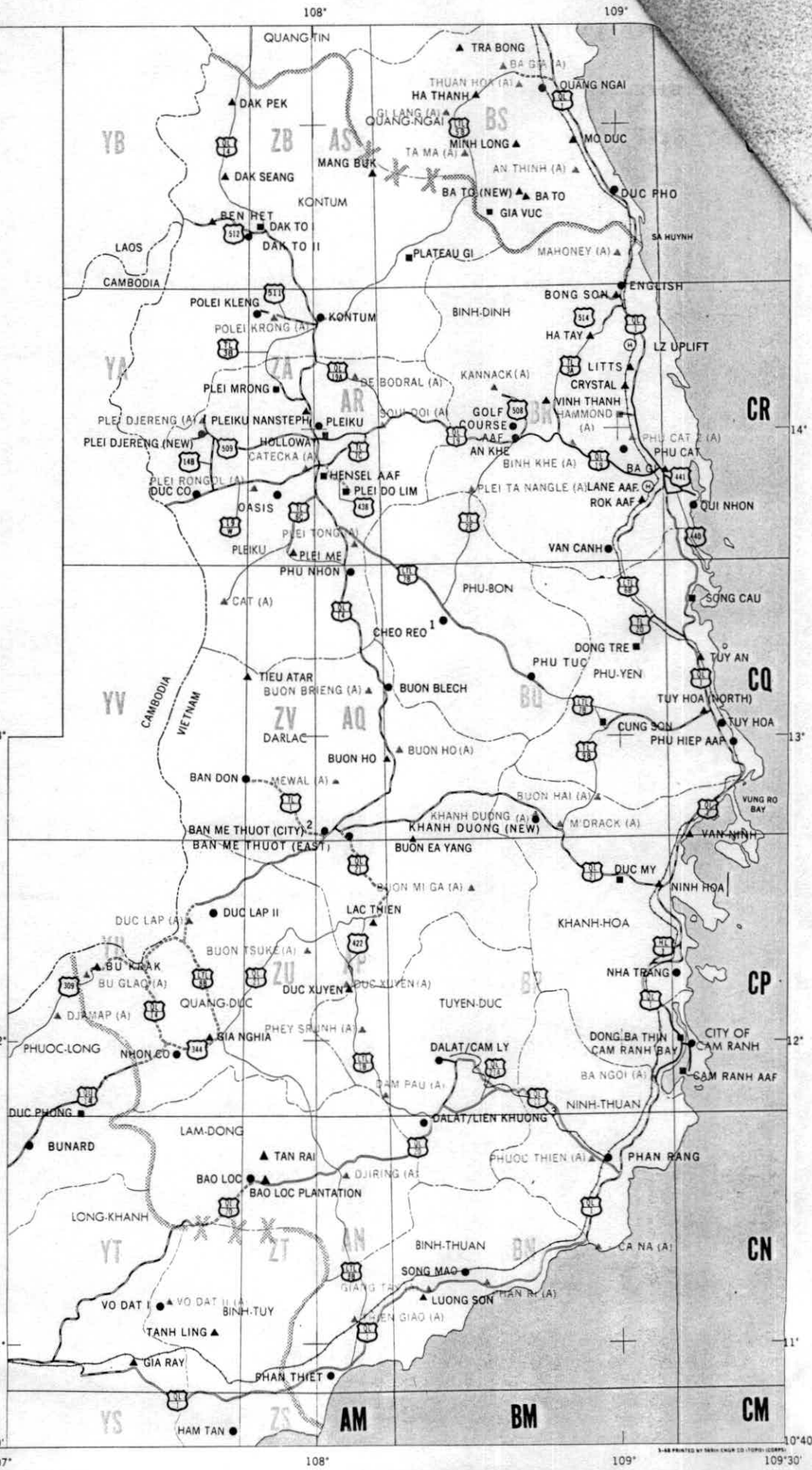
LEGEND

- C-130 MINIMUM TYPE II ●
- C-123 MINIMUM TYPE II ■
- C-7A MINIMUM TYPE I ▲
- ABANDONED AIRFIELD - MEWAL (A) △
- MAJOR HELIPORT ⊙
- MACY STANDARD ROAD —
- (24 FT WIDE, CL 50 ONE WAY, CL 35 TWO WAY)
- MINIMUM CLASS 31 ROAD —
- MINIMUM CLASS 18 ROAD —
- MINIMUM CLASS 12 ROAD - - - -
- STATUS OF ROAD NOT KNOWN OR CLOSED —
- INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY - - - -
- PROVINCE BOUNDARY - - - -



- Notes:
1. Road class shown may be for two way traffic and road may be of a greater one way capability. For detailed information see 1818 Engr. Bde. Bridge and Route Data II CTZ; 64th Engr. Det.(T) Route Classification and Bridge Number Maps; Engr. Sect. IFFV or local engr. unit.
 2. Limited by local authorities to C-123 aircraft and smaller.
 3. Closed by local authorities to multiengine aircraft.
 4. Prior permission required for use by C-123 or C-130 aircraft.

COMPILED BY I FFORCEV ENGINEER SECTION
 DRAFTED BY 56TH ENGR CO (TOPG) (CORPS)



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List of Units Assigned To Group before March 1968

14th Engr Bn (Combat)
87th Engr Bn (Const)
577th Engr Bn (Const)
864th Engr Bn (Const)
* 497th Engr Co (PC)
553rd Engr Co (FB)
569th Engr Co (TOPO) (Admin control only)
572nd Engr Co (LE)
610th Engr Co (CS)
3rd Plt, 643rd Engr Co (PL)
547th Engr Plt (Asphalt)
39th Engr Det (HO)
40th Engr Det (GB)
171st Engr Det (GB)
588th Engr Det (GB)

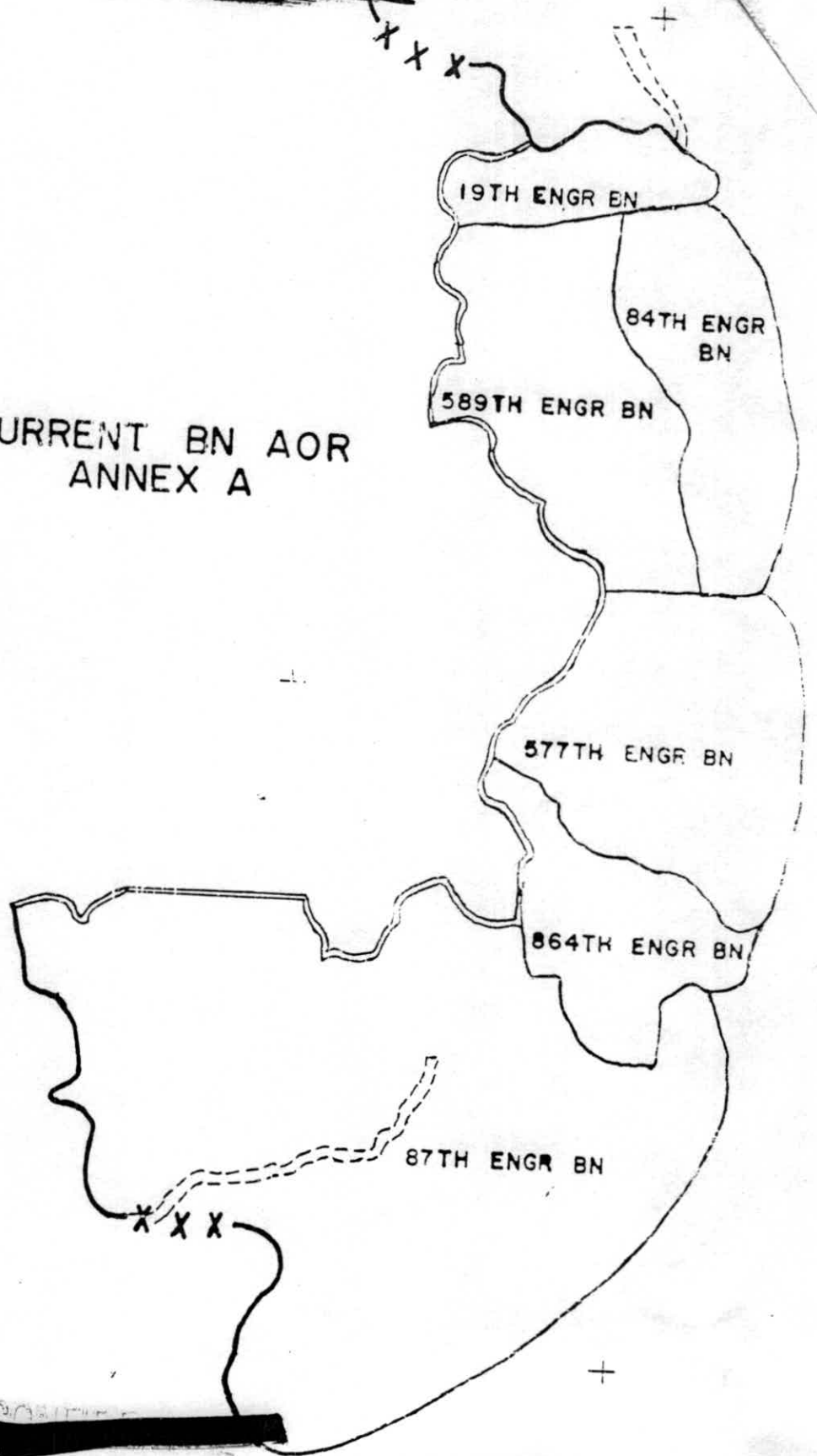
List of Currently Assigned Units

19th Engr Bn (Combat) ✓
84th Engr Bn (Const) ✓
87th Engr Bn (Const)
577th Engr Bn (Const)
589th Engr Bn (Const) ✓
864th Engr Bn (Const) ✓
D/27th Engr Bn (Combat)
73rd Engr Co (CS)
137th Engr Co (LE)
497th Engr Co (PC)
513th Engr Co (DT) (Admin control only)
523rd Engr Co (PC)
553rd Engr Co (FB)
569th Engr Co (TOPO) (Admin control only)
572nd Engr Co (LE)
610th Engr Co (CS)
3rd Plt, 643rd Engr Co (PL)
51st Asphalt Plt
547th Asphalt Plt
23rd Engr Det (GR)
39th Engr Det (HO)
40th Engr Det (GB)
444th Engr Det (HO)
588th Engr Det (GB)

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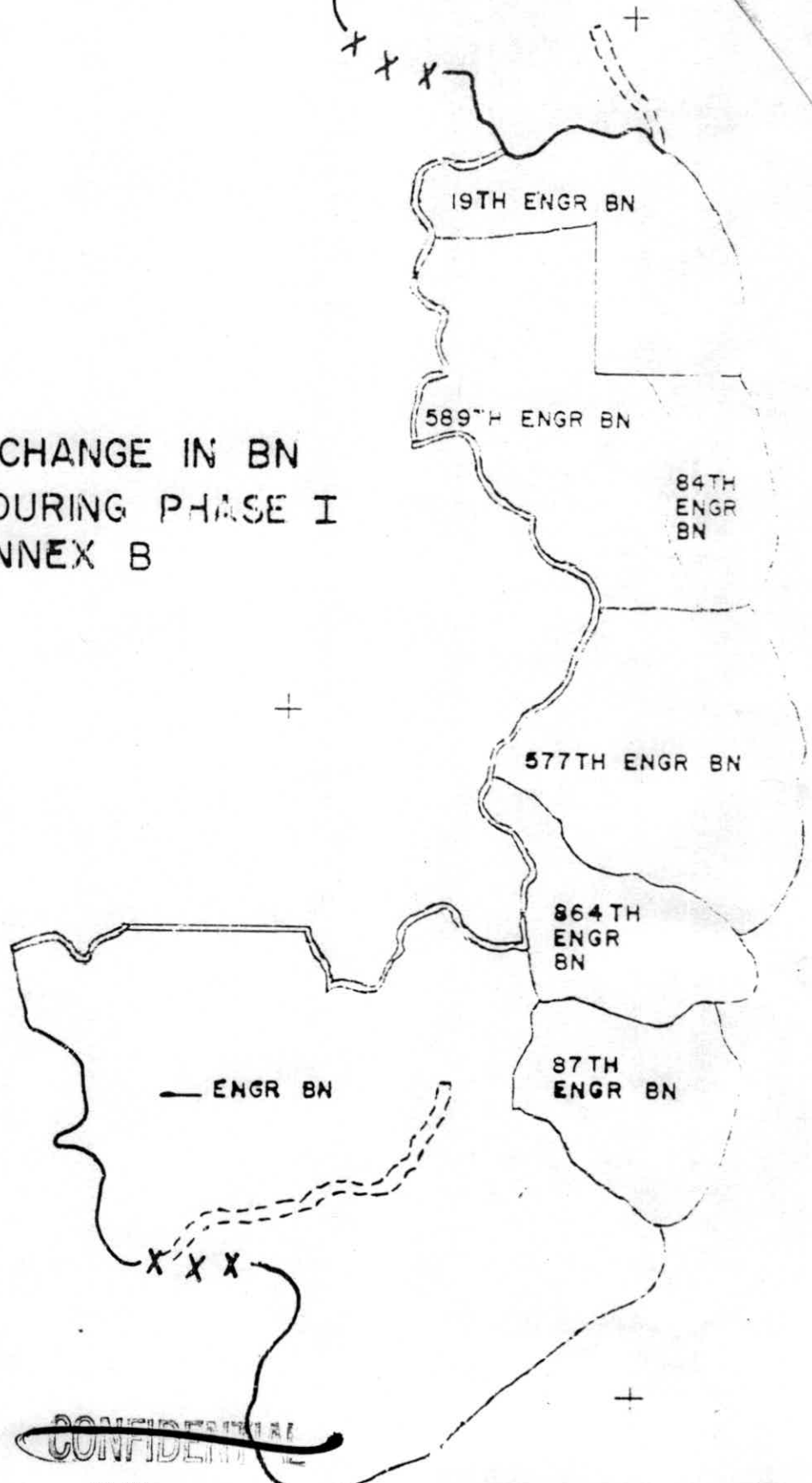
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CURRENT BN AOR
ANNEX A



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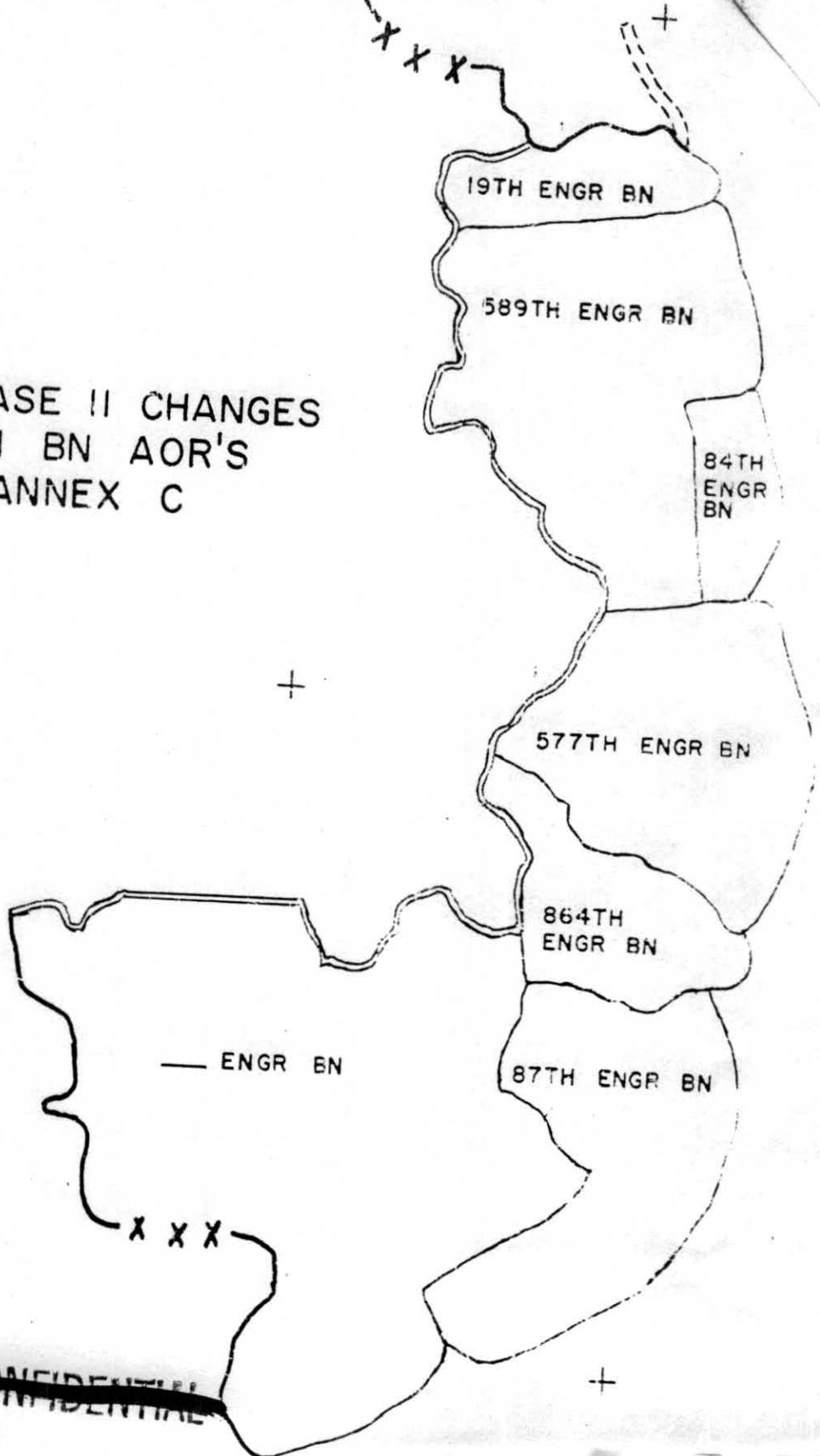
INITIAL CHANGE IN BN
AOR'S DURING PHASE I
ANNEX B



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PHASE II CHANGES
IN BN AOR'S
ANNEX C



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