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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS, 377TH COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (PACAF)
APO San Francisco 96307

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: BSP

June 17 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Actions Report (RCS: MACV J3-32) (U)

TO: 7AF (IGS)

1. (U) Type Operation: Mortar, rocket, automatic/small arms and ground attacks against Tan Son Nhut Air Base and the Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area.
2. (U) Dates of Operation: 0616 hours, 6 May 1968 through 0700 hours 22 May 1968. Small arms/automatic weapons fire and probing action on the south perimeter continued to 22 May 1968.
3. (U) Location: Tan Son Nhut Air Base, RVN, adjacent to NGA TU BAY HIEN. The attempted ground penetration was on the south perimeter between Delta Bunker #7 and Delta Bunker #6.
4. (U) Command and Control Headquarters: Joint Defense Operations Center Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area.
5. (U) Unit Commanders Engaged in Operations:
 - a. Colonel Luu Kim Cuong Comdr, 33rd VNAF Wing (Comdr, TSN Sensitive Area)
 - b. Lt Col Phung Van Chieu Comdr, TSN Sensitive Point (Dep Comdr, TSN Sensitive Area)
 - c. Colonel Farley E. Peebles Comdr, 377th Combat Support Group
 - d. Colonel Luther J. Miller Senior Advisor AFAT #1, 33rd Wing
 - e. Lt Colonel Thomas A. McLoughlin Senior Advisor TSN Sensitive Area
 - f. Lt Colonel Billy J. Carter Comdr, 377th Security Police Sq
 - g. Lt Colonel Peter P. Borowski Comdr, MACV Annex

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- h. Major Ronald K. Kollhoff Comdr, Armed Helicopter Plt, 120 Aviation Company
- i. Major Felix Barbour 821st CSPS/B Flight

6. (U) Units Engaged:

- a. 2nd Services Battalion (ARVN)
- b. 7th Airborne Battalion (ARVN)
- c. 53rd Regional Force Battalion (ARVN)
- d. 377th Security Police Squadron
- e. Task Force 35
- f. 1 Platoon Armed Helicopter - 120th Aviation Company, LFT's from USARV
- g. 4 Counter Mortar Radar Sites
- h. 1 Composite Rifle Company, 33rd VNAF Wing Defense Group - JDOC
- i. 1 Tank Platoon, 33rd VNAF Wing Defense Group - JDOC
- j. VNAF and 7th AF TACC
- k. Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area Advisory Team
- l. B Flight, 821 CSPS

7. (C) Intelligence:

a. Pre-attack Intelligence:

(1) In early April a high ranking Viet Cong Officer rallied to the GVN, he stated that the VC planned a new offensive against Saigon/TSN area, sometime in late April or early May. This information started the buildup of intelligence indicating a new enemy offensive was eminent.

(2) On 2 May 1968, a HOI CHANH who rallied on 1 May stated he overheard plans on 30 April for an attack on Tan Son Nhut that was to take place in approximately three to four days. This, combined with a combination of intelligence analysis, indicated the possibility of an attack upon Saigon/TSN area as part of a political lever for use in the upcoming peace negotiations.

(3) On 3 May 1968, II Field Force. stated that VC-NVA movements in the past 24 hours indicated a strong possibility of a ground attack in the Bien Hoa/Saigon area.

(4) On 3 May 1968, MACV disseminated a report from the special branch of the National Police stating the VC would be in 5 columns, move north and northwest with primary objectives of utilities, Radio and TV stations in Saigon. One column would swing to the southwest and attack Cholon. An estimated two (2) VC divisions would be involved in this operation.

(5) On 4 May 1968 a POW, of 1st Plt 2nd Bt/208 NVA artillery, stated that he had received orders to attack TSN on 4 or 5 May but NLT 5 May 1968.

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(6) From this time to the morning of 6 May the intelligence gradually built to the possibility of a ground/indirect fire attack upon TSN and Saigon.

b. Post-attack Intelligence Information: The following information has been collected from numerous intelligence sources, including Seventh Air Force, CMD and USARV resources and agencies directly supporting the Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area.

(1) On 5 May the VC attacked numerous targets throughout South Vietnam, within III CTZ, with the focal point being Saigon. There were major approaches used during the assaults. The early attacks from the east were apparently diversionary in nature to permit forces in the west to position themselves for an assault on the 6th Precinct. However, the major forces were pinned down. The first attacks on Saigon took place in the area of the New-Port Dock facilities and bridge. Harassment continued on to the THU DUC power plants and then into Saigon. At this same time contact was made with the Dong Nai Regt at the Binh Loi bridge. Their mission appeared to be to provide cover for the infiltration of a #1F Bn and a sapper recon platoon into the THI NGE area of Saigon. The latter unit was to stay in the area, organize a local government and, with this as a base, press for a coalition between themselves and the GVN. The above mentioned forces failed in their mission due to the presence of allied forces.

(2) The major attack and most significant threat came from the west, it was conducted by elements of the 271 and 272 VC Regiment, 9th VC Div, and the newly formed Dong Thap II Regiment. Their mission was to enter and hold the 6th precinct along with the Phu Tho Hoa area. Elements of the 272 Regiment attempted to attack TSN by infiltrating from the French Cemetery with an alternate mission to attack CMD Hq's. The total enemy KIA in the area of the Phu Tho Race Track to the French Cemetery adjacent to TSN was 588.

8. (C) Security Police Status:

a. The total Security Police assigned at the time of the hostilities was 854 personnel. Of this total 71 personnel, or 8 per cent of the assigned strength, were TDY, R&R, hospital, or emergency leave status or awaiting completion of in-country training. (The TDY personnel included approximately 48 men assigned to two detachments at remote sites.) The present for duty (PFD) strength was 783 personnel, 52 per cent (412) of which were physically on post at the time of the attack. Four (4) 13 man Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) were formed, equipped, dispersed and readied for immediate response in the event of attack. This totaled 52 men or 6 per cent of the PFD strength. An additional eight (8) 13 man QRTs were **in place** at the Squadron Barracks total 104 or 12 percent of the PFD strength. **The 215 remaining** Security Police personnel, or 30 per cent of the PFD strength, were armed and billeted in the squadron barracks for immediate recall.

b. Upon implementation of Condition RED (Option I), three platoons of U.S. Army personnel (Task Force 35) were alerted and placed on five-minute standby

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status as augmentation reserve forces for the 377th Security Police Squadron. These platoons, composed of 30 men each, were immediately placed under the operational control of the Commander, 377th Security Police Squadron, in accordance with published and approved base defense plans.

c. In accordance with existing procedures, the squadron was divided into two flights. The night flight, which was on duty at the time of the attack, consisted of two officers and 281 airmen for a total of 283. Manning was as follows:

(1) Security Flight

(a) Supervision

<u>1.</u>	Flight Commander (1st Lt)	1
<u>2.</u>	Assistant Flight Commander	1
<u>3.</u>	Joint Defense Operations Center (Liaison and Alternate CSC)	3
<u>4.</u>	Communicator/Plotter and Clerks	5
<u>5.</u>	CSC Standard SATs	9
<u>6.</u>	Duty Officer	1
		<u>20</u>

(b) Alpha Sector

<u>1.</u>	Sector NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	Defensive Bunkers	26
<u>3.</u>	Tower Guards	10
<u>4.</u>	Special Posts (Entry Controllers)	9
<u>5.</u>	SATs (2)	12
		<u>58</u>

(c) Bravo Sector

<u>1.</u>	Sector NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	Defensive Bunkers	21
<u>3.</u>	Tower Guards	8
<u>4.</u>	Area Guards and Entry Controllers	8
<u>5.</u>	SATs (2)	6
		<u>44</u>

(d) Charlie Sector

<u>1.</u>	Sector NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	Special Posts and Entry Controllers	18
<u>3.</u>	SATs (3)	9
<u>4.</u>	M-60 Bunker	23
<u>5.</u>	Tower Guards	3
		<u>54</u>

(e) Delta Sector

<u>1.</u>	Sector NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	Special Posts	7

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<u>3.</u>	M-60 Bunkers	17
<u>4.</u>	SATs (2)	5
<u>5.</u>	Towers	<u>4</u>
		34
 (f) Echo Sector		
<u>1.</u>	Sector NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	M-60 Bunkers	20
<u>3.</u>	Tower Guards	6
<u>4.</u>	Revetments, Entry Control, and Special Posts	6
<u>5.</u>	SATs (2)	<u>6</u>
		39
 (g) Big Gun Units		
<u>1.</u>	NCOIC	1
<u>2.</u>	BG 1	3
<u>3.</u>	BG 2	3
<u>4.</u>	BG 3	3
<u>5.</u>	BG 4	3
<u>6.</u>	BG 5	3
<u>7.</u>	B9-1	12
<u>8.</u>	B9-2	3
<u>9.</u>	B9-3	<u>3</u>
		34
 (h) Quick Reaction Teams (4)		
		52
TOTAL SECURITY FLIGHT		282

(2) K-9 Section

(a)	NCOIC	1
(b)	Supervisors	2
(c)	Armed Patrols (SAT) 3	7
(d)	Kennel Support	4
(e)	Sentry Dog Teams	<u>37</u>
TOTAL K-9 SECTION		51

(3) Law Enforcement Flight

(a)	Flight Commander and Assistant	2
(b)	Desk Sergeant, Desk Clerk, and Communicator	2
(c)	Patrols (4) and Joint Patrols (2)	11
(d)	Entry Controllers (Gates)	11
(e)	Entry Controllers, Cantonment Areas and Special Posts	22

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(f) Seventh Air Force Compound Security Guards	12
(g) Customs and Terminal Security	<u>8</u>
TOTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT	68
(4) Others	
(a) Weapons Systems Security Operations Officer	1
(b) Armory	4
(c) Scout	<u>5</u>
TOTAL OTHERS	10
TOTAL ON DUTY	412
(5) Eight 13 men Quick Reaction Teams	104
(6) Reserve Security Policemen	267
(7) Three platoons U.S. Army, Reserve (Task Force 35), 30 men each	<u>90</u>
TOTAL SECURITY FORCES	873

9. (C) Execution: See battle description Attachment #1

10. (C) Results:

a. Enemy Losses: The enemy forces sustained 70 KIA (body count) outside the base perimeter, and 30 POW's were taken by the friendly forces within the same area.

b. Friendly Casualties:

U.S. Forces

KIA

USAF - 0

US Army - 0

WIA

USAF - 3

US Army - 17

Vietnamese Forces

KIA

VNAF - 2

ARVN/RF - Unk

WIA

VNAF - Unk

ARVN/RF - Unk

* There is no record of Vietnamese Casualties

c. Figures for the off-base collection of weapons are not available.

d. Tan Son Nhut Air Base came under hostile 122mm rocket fire on the below listed dates. The intent of the attacks were generally believed to be harassment; however, analysis of possible targets may be found in paragraphs Atch #. 7, 8 and 8 of this report. Events were as follows.

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ROUNDS</u>	<u>USAF CASUALTIES</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
6 May 68	0616	5	0	Minor Damage to Helicopter pavement
7 May 68	0343/0406	11	0	One C-130 minor damage and runway 25L minor damage
8 May 68	0300	14	0	One building damaged One generator minor damage
10 May 68	0325	7	0	No damage

* Aircraft was parked in a 3 sided revetment, the exposed tail section received minor shrapnel damage.

g. Runway Damage: Runway 25L received damage 7 May 1968, but after a short period of time was fully operational. The PSP ramp also received damage 7 May 1968, however, the damage in no way effected the operational capabilities of Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

11. Follow-up Action: Periodic small arms fire, harassment fire, and enemy movement around the installation continued through the series of rocket attacks on Tan Son Nhut Air Base on through 22 May 1968. On 4 separate occasions in the 6 days following the attempted perimeter penetration, Security Alert Teams (SATs) of this organization made direct contact with enemy positions firing small arms and automatic weapons onto the installation. Friendly forces operating outside the installation made frequent contacts with the enemy near the base. These contacts varied in size, but were all part of the total enemy offensive on Tan Son Nhut and the Saigon area. Sweeping, clearing and re-securing operations by friendly forces were still in effect. The actions of the enemy clearly substantiate the contention that they have no intention of withdrawing from the area and allowing the installation to revert to its previously secure status.

12. (C) Lessons Learned:

a. A major re-evaluation of our base defense procedures following the TET Offensive was primarily centered on total perimeter manning as the current analysis of the enemy threat centered towards the probability of large force assaults upon the base. The major factor in the enemy's inability to breach the perimeter was the defensive positions and employment of M-60 MG bunkers, which were primarily responsible for stopping the attempted penetration. The rapid deployment of large quick reaction forces was instrumental in the securing of the south perimeter.

b. As during the TET Offensive the need for a free fire zone was realized. Had a free fire zone been established adjacent to the south perimeter, the enemy would have been identified earlier plus the continuous small arms fire received the subsequent time period after 6 May would have been eliminated.

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c. A more stringent control of weapons issue to non-defensive forces personnel is immediately required. Many of these personnel hampered the Security Police effort. These personnel on several occasions fired their weapons from the rear of security force personnel, and into areas where allied troops were sweeping.

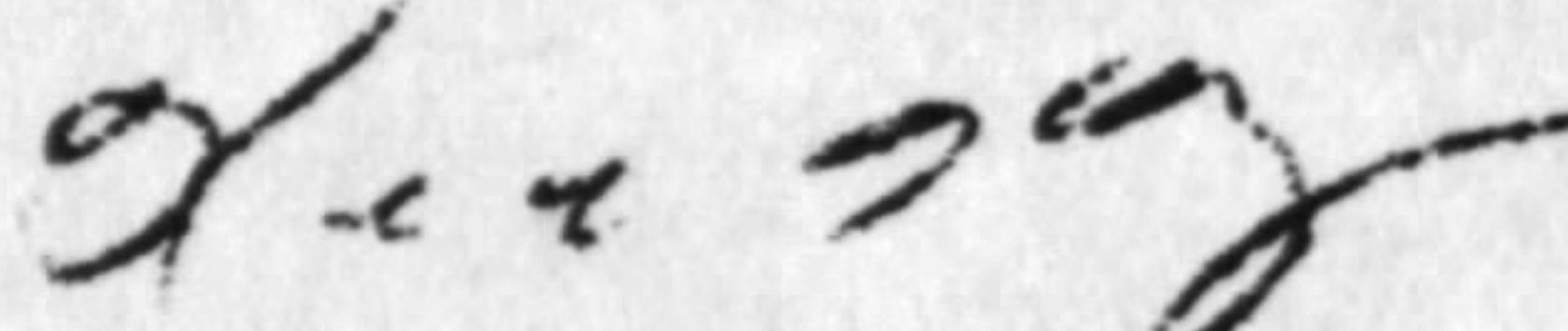
d. Once again as during the TET Offensive local intelligence data available to enemy plans and movements in the immediate area was vague. However the intelligence buildup prior to 6 May was fairly accurate.

e. Since the TET Offensive this unit has acquired limited heavy weapons. They were effectively employed in support of counter attacking ARVN units during this action. They were effective, to the point that they regained the initiative for the counter attacking ARVN forces who were stymied by enemy heavy weapons (MG) and RPG-2 positions.

f. In conjunction with the utilization of heavy weapons, the safe transportation and evacuation of personnel utilizing these heavy weapons became an obvious need. The enemy positions were within 20 yards of the only route through the south perimeter. They took up positions in the many houses in the village which was adjacent to the affected area and held these positions for approximately 12 hours.

g. As a result of the lessons learned from the TET Offensive this unit obtained maximum assistance possible from the various comm agencies within the immediate area. Co-utilization of radios on the maintenance frequency was in effect on our primary sector SATs and towers. Installment of field phones in all the bunkers in Delta Sector (the affected area) had been recently completed. As a result of these areas of improvement CSC was receiving more fluid information from all units involved with the situation. In the affected area, the Sector NCOIC and Duty Officer were receiving information rapidly from the bunkers, plus supervision over the immediate area was greatly enhanced by the field phones. These local innovations in comm, cut radio transmission to the absolute minimum over the primary radio net allowing for better radio control and discipline by the CSC communicator.

A TRUE COPY


KEVIN E. KENNEDY
Captain, AGC
Adjutant

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BATTLE DESCRIPTION

1. At approximately 0616 hours, 6 May 1968, Tango I (142' tower) reported incoming rockets. Two minutes later Tango I reported heavy movement behind the Catholic School, adjacent to the south perimeter. At this time all reserve QRT's were dispatched to their pre-designated deployment locations.
2. At 0620 hours, two units of Task Force 35 (Army II and III) were notified and deployed within Delta Sector, which at that time was receiving sporadic small arms and automatic weapons fire. Tango I reported razorbacks making heavy contact with an unknown size enemy unit behind the Catholic School.
3. At 0722 hours, Delta Bunker 7 and 8 reported approximately 40 individuals in black clothing moving outside the south perimeter heading in an easterly direction.
4. At 0726 hours, Delta Bunker 6 reported it had made heavy contact with approximately 40 Viet Cong in the French Cemetary adjacent his post. At this point a tank accompanied by a platoon of ground troops from the 33rd VNAF Wing, Defense Group arrived at the French Cemetary and engaged the enemy.
5. At 0739 hours, two companies of RVN Airborne instituted a sweep of the southwest perimeter of the base. They encountered heavy fire from various Viet Cong positions within the buildings in that area. The Viet Cong heavily employed RPG-2 rockets and automatic weapons on the assaulting airborne company.
6. At 0900 hours, the commanding officer of the RVN Airborne companies in the southwest perimeter area, requested the assistance of the heavy weapons utilized by the Security Police. At 0913 hours BG-5 (50 Cal Machine Gun) and B-9-3 (90mm RR) engaged the Viet Cong in the village adjacent to the south perimeter. B-9-3 fired 3 rounds of 90mm destroying enemy RPG-2 rocket firing positions which were blocking the Vietnamese Airborne companies sweep of the area. BG-5, destroyed an enemy machine gun position which was protecting the afore mentioned RPG-2 site. At this time BG-5 and B-9-3 disengaged the enemy and returned to Delta Sector. The ARVN Airborne had taken the full impact and were routing the enemy. At 1205 hours, our liaison WCO deployed with Army II of Task Force 35 and reported that 60mm mortars were hitting his defensive positions adjacent to Tango 21 along our southern perimeter. 20 friendly personnel were WIA as a result of this mortar barrage. Delta Sector supervisor reported observing an individual on a roof top adjacent to Delta Sector holding an aiming stick. Permission to fire was granted and the individual was eliminated. Subsequent to this action, the mortar barrage ceased. From this point continuous sniper fire was directed towards the south perimeter, while the RVN Airborne were clearing the area.

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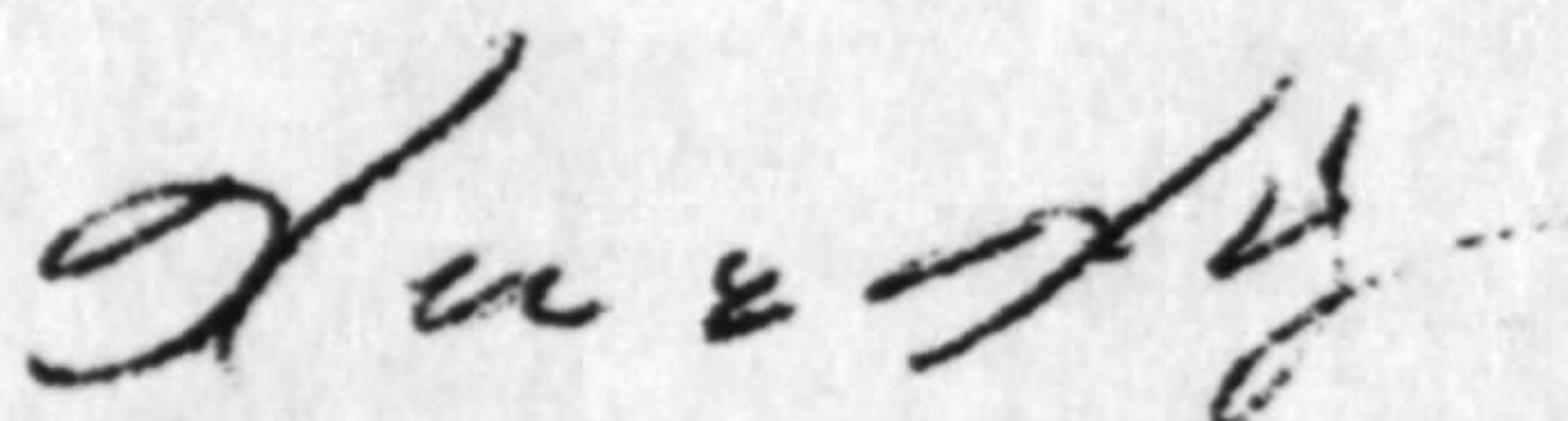
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7. At 0303/0406 hours, 7 May 1968 Tango 4 reported rockets were impacting on base. A total of 11 rounds were verified as having impacted on base, causing minor damage to one (1) C-130, runway 25L and PSP ramp. The impact patterns indicated that the flight line was the probable target during this attack.
8. At 0300 hours, 8 May 1968, a total of 14 122mm rockets impacted on the base inflicting moderate damage to a recently completed building, minor damage to a generator in the MARS complex and minor damage to the pavement in the heliport. The general pattern indicated that the housing and general work areas were the primary targets of this attack.
9. At 0325 hours, 10 May 1968, 7 rounds of 122mm rockets impacted on the base resulting in negative damages. The pattern of the attack appeared to be harassment. No particular target could be noticed. Artillery fire was directed on each known position detected following these rocket attacks on TSN with secondary explosions observed at the launch sites.
10. During the ground probe on 6 May 1968, 71 personnel from the 821st CSPS were engaged in operations. "B" Flight was split into 5 QRT's and was deployed from the main gate to Gate 2.
11. On 8 May 1968, an additional 98 men from the 821st CSPS were deployed to Tan Son Nhut, as intelligence of enemy movement indicated a possible ground attack upon Tan Son Nhut. These personnel were incorporated into 3 sectors of the base defense during the hours 1900 thru 0700 daily for a period of 6 days and were returned to their home base when the threat diminished.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

/s/Billy J. Carter
/t/BILLY J. CARTER, Lt Col, USAF
Chief, Security Police

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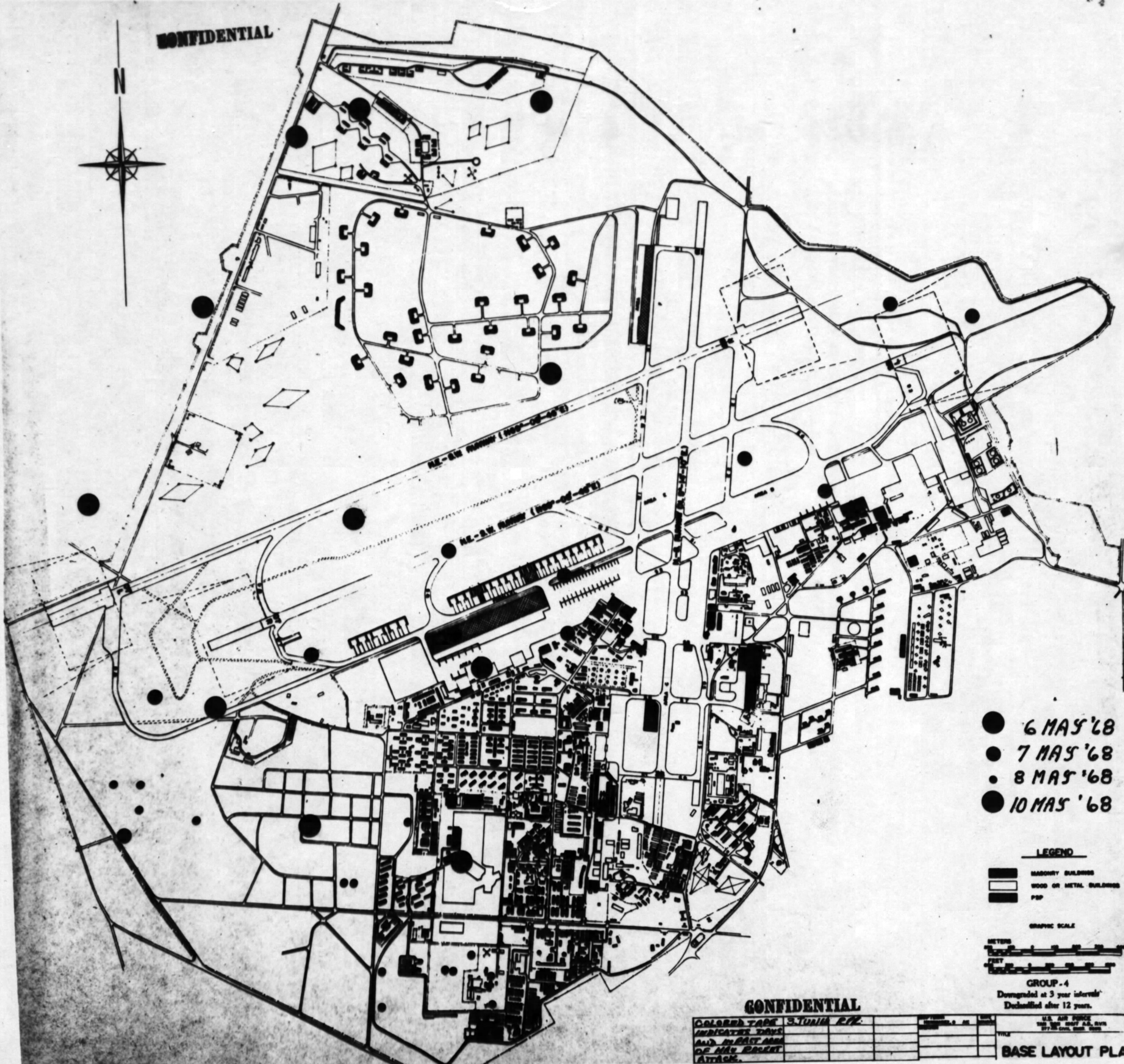
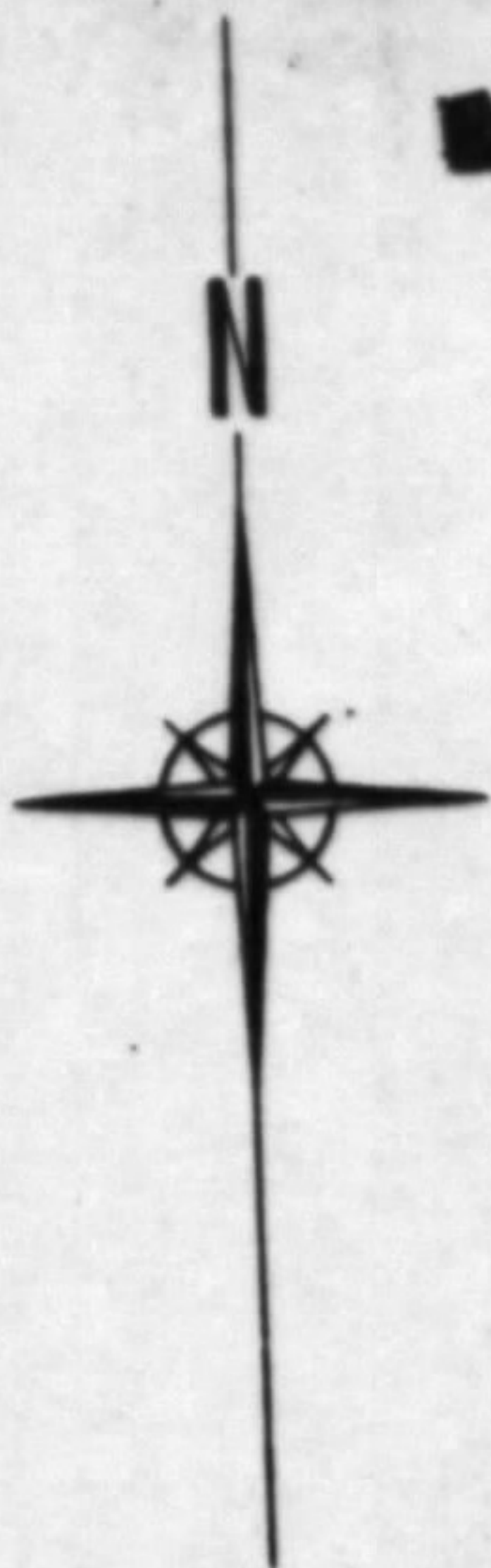
KEVIN E. KENNEDY
Captain, AGC
Adjutant

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1. Map, (C) Rocket Impact Area
2. Map, (C) Attempted Breach Points
3. Damage Photos (U) (Nine Prints)
4. Photos (C) Effected Area

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- 6 MAY '68
- 7 MAY '68
- 8 MAY '68
- 10 MAY '68

LEGEND

- MASONRY BUILDINGS
- WOOD OR METAL BUILDINGS
- PDP

GRAPHIC SCALE



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Declassified after 12 years.

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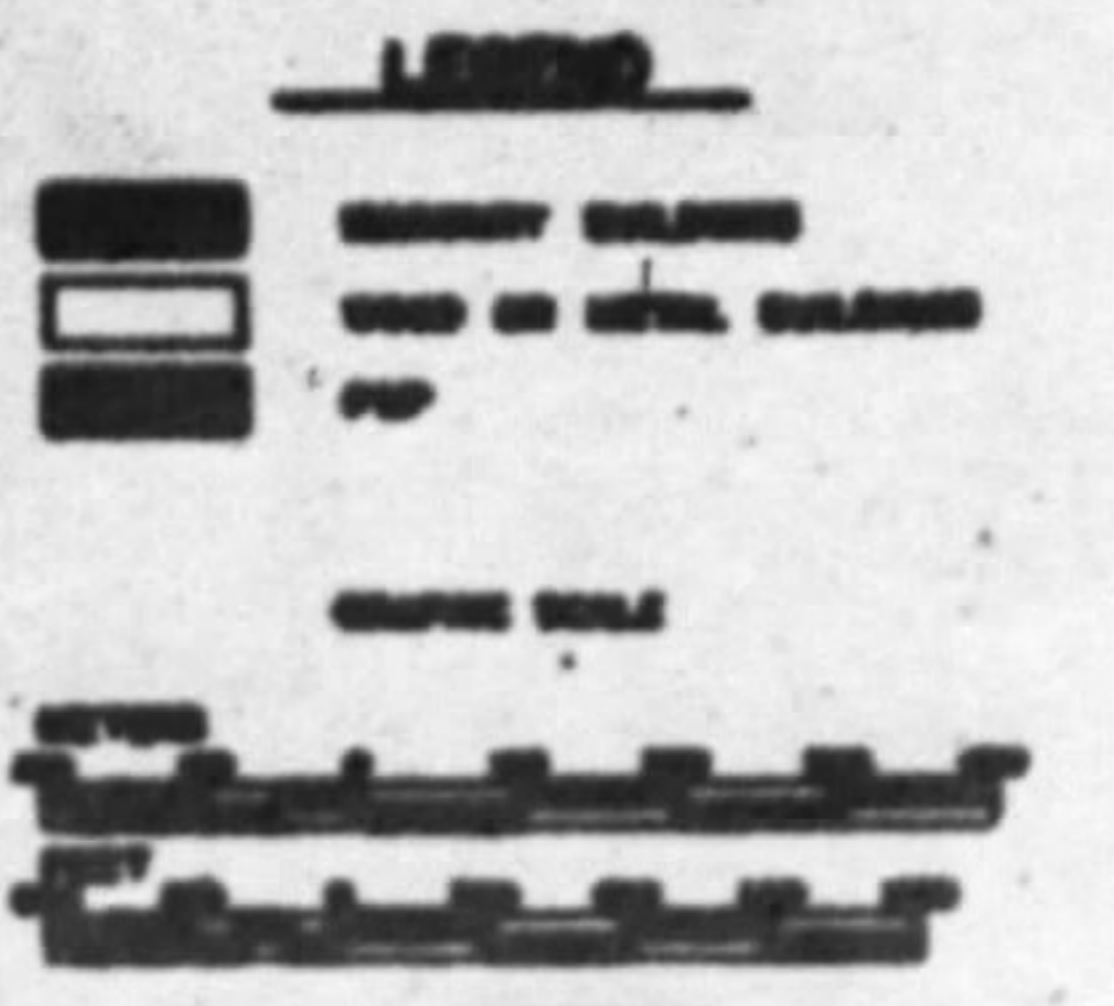
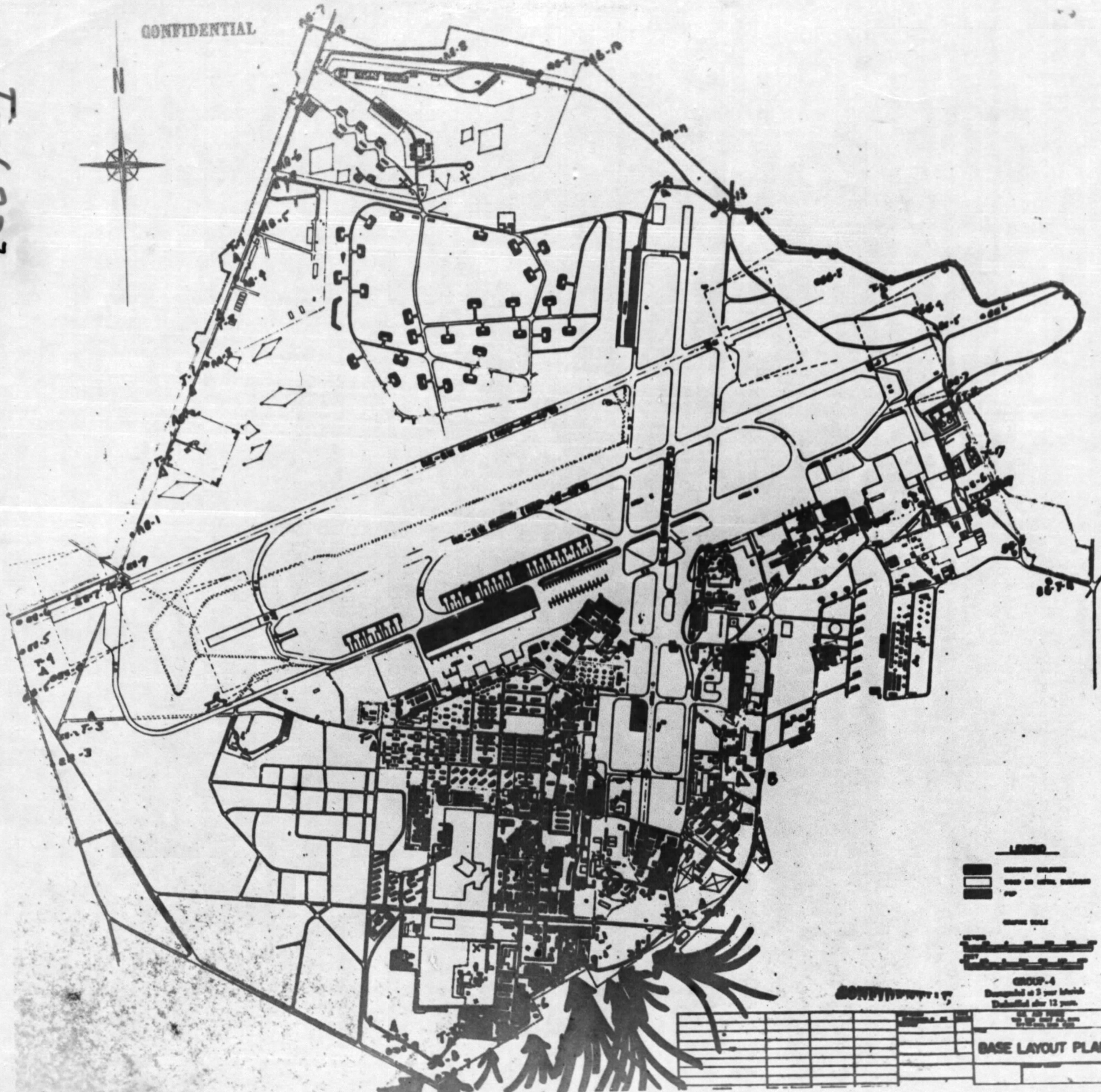
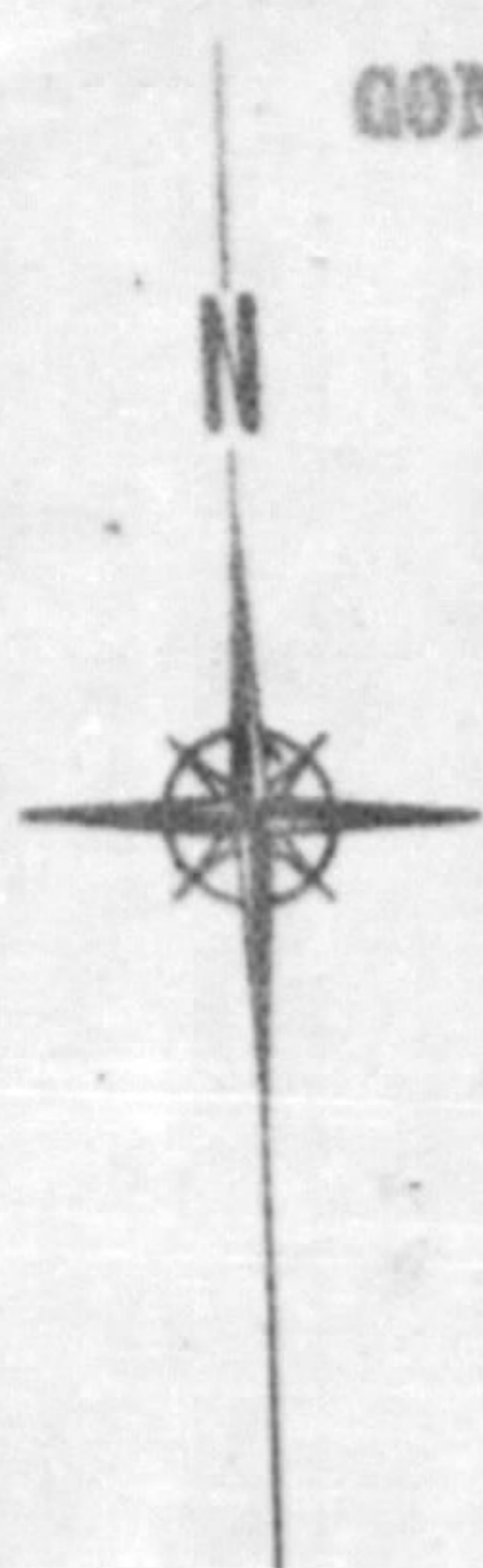
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BASE LAYOUT PLAN

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