

15 NOVEMBER

1. OPERATIONS SUMMARY:

Unlike other days in the campaign, this one began and ended with violence. At first light the companies in the perimeter sent recon parties to screen a distance of about 200 meters in front of their positions. At 0650 hours, the two left platoons of C company (one the south and southeast) began receiving heavy fire. A N-V-A force of more than two companies were thrusting at that portion of the perimeter. Despite intensive air strikes, tube and aerial rocket artillery missions, the enemy elements closed to hand-to-hand combat range of C company. While this violent combat was ensuing, the east portion of the L-Z also came under heavy attack. This was at about 0715 hours. D company had the task of stopping the N-V-A attack and did so with the aid of the air strikes and artillery. At about 0800, the A company sector to the south and west came under attack and grazing fire criss-crossed the perimeter and landing zone. Although A 2/7 Cav was poised to come in by chopper, the L-Z was too hot at the time. (attacks and positions depicted in Inclosure 19)

The portion of B company 2/7 Cav that had been held in reserve was committed to the C 1/7 sector to throw back the enemy assault. The front lines were marked by colored smoke and air strikes and tube artillery strikes were brought to within 50 meters of the trace. The curtain of steel finally broke the back of the attack, leaving the field strewn with N-V-A bodies. By 0900 the fire into the landing zone itself had slackened to the extent that it was possible to air land A 2/7 Cav and throw the reinforcements into key defensive positions. (Inclosure 20)

Help was on the way in the form of the 2/5 Cav, moving by foot from L-Z VICTOR across the ridgeline to the southeast of X-RAY and into the perimeter, scooping up two prisoners along the way. (Inclosure 21)

The battalion closed at 1245 hours and immediately was given the mission of sweeping to the northwest to spring loose the isolated platoon of B 1/7 Cav. The attacking echelon included A and C companies of 2/5 Cav and B 1/7 Cav. The surrounded platoon was reached without undue opposition and all forces returned to the perimeter by 1600 hours. (Inclosure 22)

The forces in X-RAY all under operational control of the Commanding Officer, 1/7 Cav then formed a tight perimeter for the night. (Inclosure 23) The remainder of the night was marked by repeated small unit probes of the perimeter that were of little or no consequence in context with the major enemy effort of the day. The N-V-A had thrown his best into a major effort that morning and had failed.

The 3d Brigade continued to reinforce and support the battle at X-RAY. The 2/7 Cav (-) was moved first to L-Z MACON (YA935052) to provide an artillery base, but found the soil unsuitable. The artillery position, manned by B 1/21 Arty and the 2/7 Cav (-) moved to L-Z COLUMBUS (YA974036).

Meanwhile, the 1/5 Cav (-) closed at STADIUM and A 1/5 Cav was air-lifted to COLUMBUS to reinforce 2/7 Cav, which already had provided two companies to the cauldron at X-RAY. B and C companies 1/5 Cav went to FALCON to provide security for artillery units there.

C Troop, 1/9 Cav Sqdn continued screening and reconnaissance missions in the IA DRANG valley and D Troop secured the brigade base at STADIUM.

The Air Force, during the first crucial 40 hours at X-RAY had tactical air constantly on station with a fighter-bomber on a target run on an average of one every 15 minutes throughout the period.

Tube artillery fired more than 6,000 rounds of high explosive into the defense perimeter area and aerial artillery contributed nearly 2,000 rockets to the fire barrier.

CH-47 (Chinooks) of the 228th ASHB flew continuous re-supply missions into FALCON and COLUMBUS to keep the artillery in shells, and the lift ships of the 229th AHB flew medical evacuation and re-supply in and out of the besieged landing zone throughout the period, in most cases at grave risk to pilots and crew.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION:

3D BRIGADE

No Change except:

Add 1/5 Cav

Add D 1/9 Cav Sqdn

DIVISION

No Change

3. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY:

Despite the heavy losses sustained on the 14th, the N-V-A division headquarters ordered continuation of the attacks on the little position at the foot of the mountain. The 7th and 9th Battalions of the 66th had been bearing the brunt of the assaults along with what was left of the 33d. The 8th Battalion of the 66th was moved south from its position north of the IA DRANG to bring pressure against the eastern fringe of the L-Z. And FIELD FRONT summoned the H-15 Main Force VIET CONG Battalion from an assembly area well south of the battle area.

The N-V-A effort unquestionably was hampered by the unexplained delay in getting the heavy mortar and heavy anti-aircraft battalions off the infiltration trail and into the battle zone. Neither has there been an explanation for the failure to commit the 32d Regiment which apparently held its positions 12-14 kilometers to the northwest on the north bank of the IA DRANG.

The 15th also marked the introduction of a new weapon by the American forces and one which struck terror in the hearts of even the most hardened enemy soldier. Shortly after noon a large area in the vicinity of YA8702 suddenly erupted with hundreds of thunderous explosions that moved across the ground like a giant carpet being unrolled. The B-52 bombers had struck. For the next five days the big bombers systematically worked over large areas of the CHU PONG Massif. The N-V-A soldiers lived in fear of these attacks because they believed each raid covered a 20 kilometer area and they were told that ordinary trenches and foxholes were of no protection.

4. ACTIVITIES STATISTICS:

FRIENDLY LOSSES

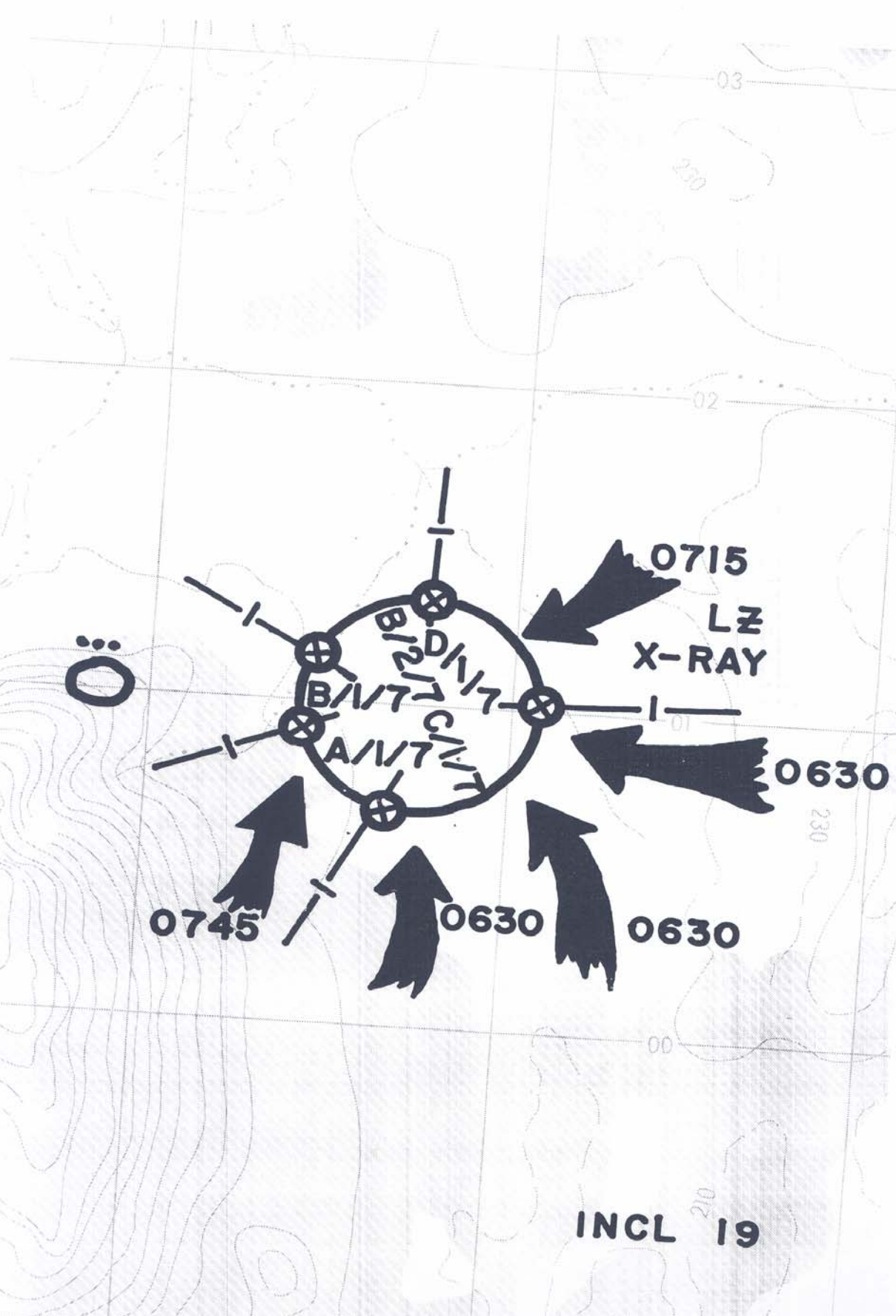
KIA 67

WIA 68

MIA 0

ENEMY LOSSES

Summary of all losses on the recapitulation of the 16th.



0715

LZ
X-RAY

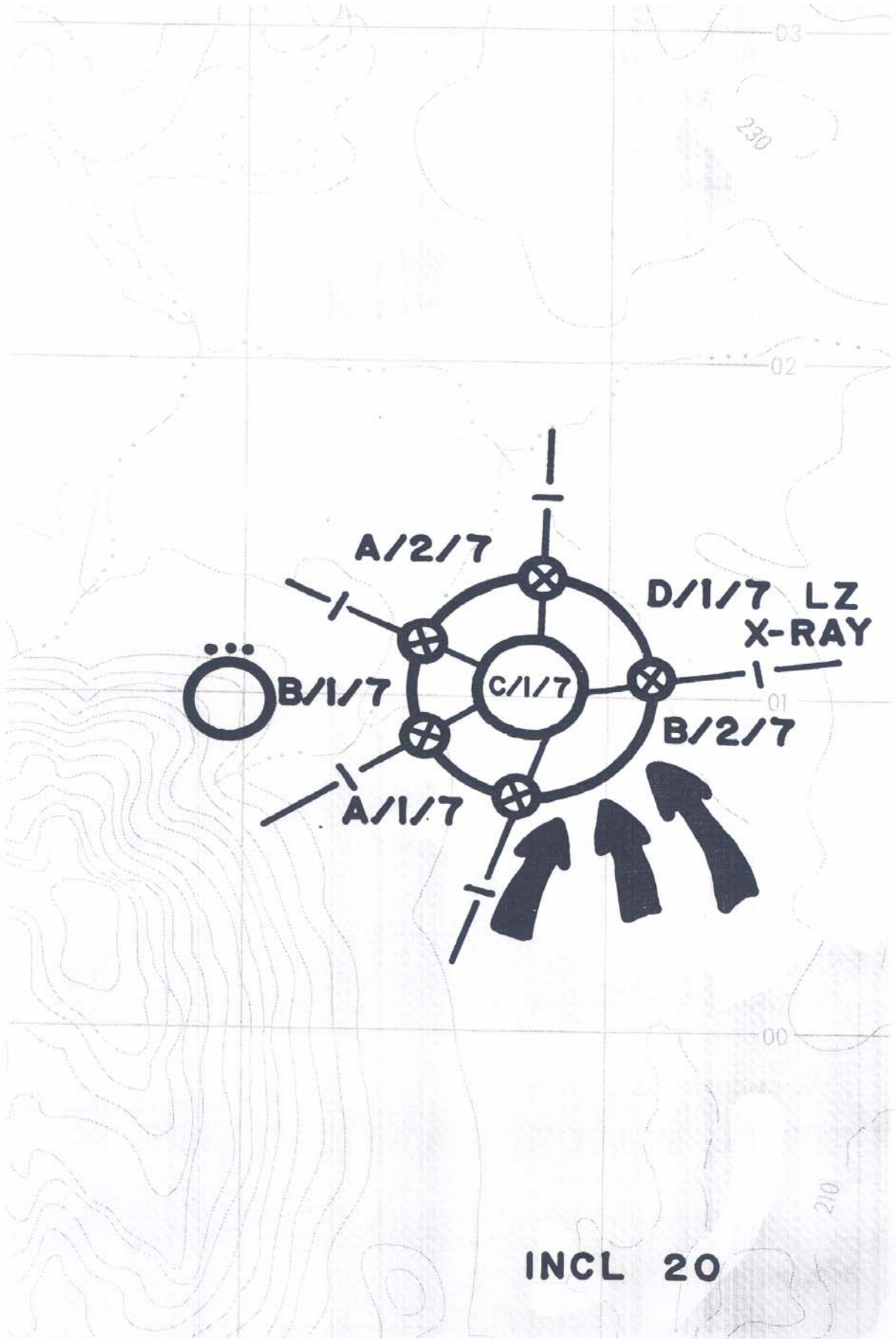
0630

0745

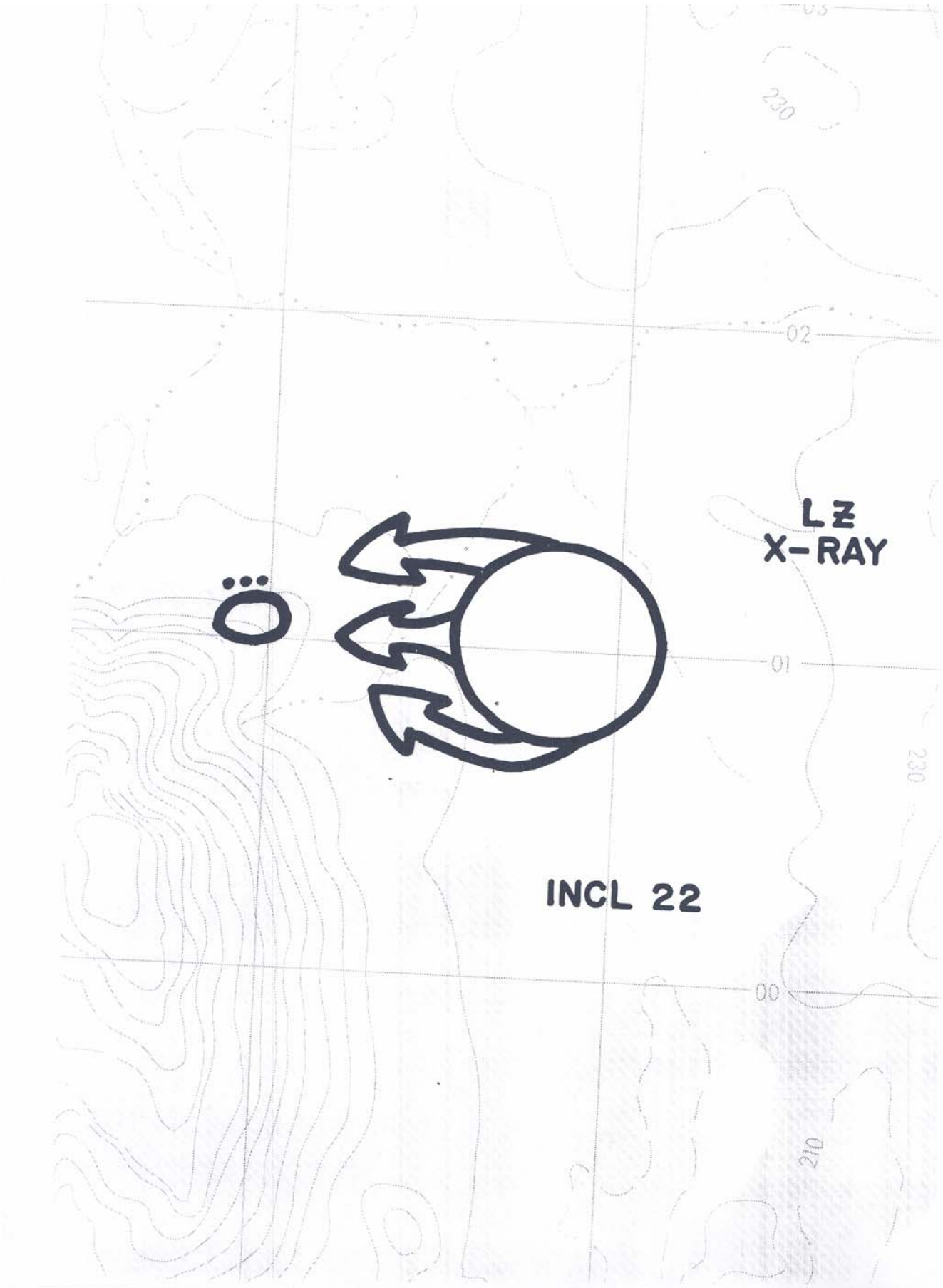
0630

0630

INCL 19



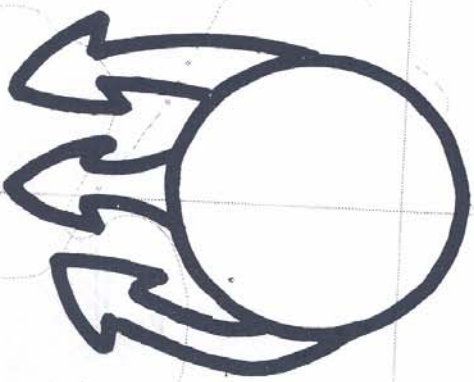
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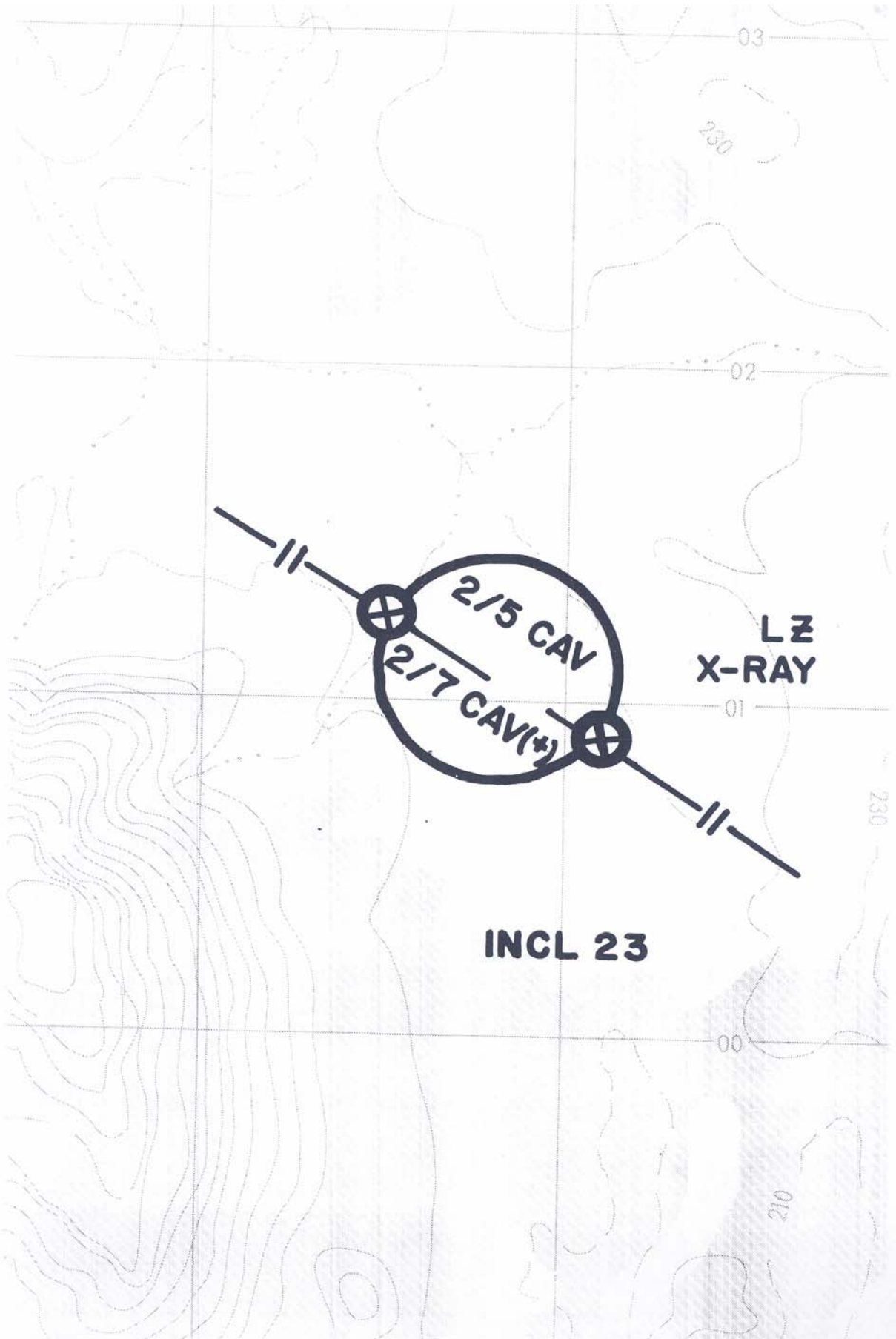


**LZ
X-RAY**

INCL 22

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LZ
X-RAY

2/5 CAV

2/7 CAV (*)

INCL 23