

Authority 785101
By RS NARA Date 5/14/10

COMMAND REPORT

5th Cavalry Regiment

February 1951

Marcel Grombez
MARCEL G. CROMBEZ
Colonel, 5th Cavalry
Commanding

Sept

Authority 785101
By 25 NARA Date 5/14/10

HEADQUARTERS 5TH CAVALRY REGIMENT
APO 801

SUBJECT: SUMMARY, FEBRUARY 1951

The 5th Cavalry Regiment reverted to 1st Cavalry Division Reserve on 1 February 1951, climaxing several days of successful combat operation. 2nd Battalion continued in action being attached to the 8th Cavalry. At the beginning of the new month, the Regiment was situated as follows: 1st Battalion - in an assembly area at Omaegok, CS442256; 2nd Battalion - as stated above; 3rd Battalion - guarding the mountain pass between Yonpung, DR1168, and Mungyong, DR2065; 21st Thailand Battalion (attached) - DR3151.

The bayonet had been proven an effective weapon against the CCF on 30-31 January by members of the 1st Battalion. Realizing the importance of the bayonet and the confidence instilled in the individual soldier, 5th Cavalry established the policy of maintaining all bayonets "razor sharp". Taking advantage of the lessons learned from the attack on hill 312, 1st Battalion vigorously trained with this weapon and conducted an on-the-spot critique of the action.

Chinese Communist Forces were reportedly building up in front of the 24th Division located on the 1st Cavalry Division right flank. To assist in repelling the enemy in this sector, Task Force Crombez was organized on 4 February. 3rd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, was released the following day and rejoined the Regiment. However, the proposed mission was canceled during the night of 4 February. At this time, 5th Cavalry began preparations to relieve the 8th Cavalry.

On 8 February, 5th Cavalry resumed the attack north through 8th Cavalry positions. Initially, troopers moved forward rapidly. As the attack continued north, enemy resistance stiffened, particularly north of Pabalmak. Phase line D was occupied and the Cavalrymen moved on toward Phase line E. While on this drive, the 1st Cavalry Division boundary was changed and the 29th British Brigade relieved the Regiment in position on 12 February. During the night, orders were received for movement to Yoju, CS8220.

5th Cavalry moved on 13 February to an assembly area in vicinity of Yoju. Orders were received from IX Corps to displace across the Han River to protect the Corps right flank. The following day while enroute, the orders were changed. Instead, the Regiment would drive north and contact the 23rd Infantry RCT, then surrounded by the CCF in Chipyeong-ni, CS798478. The advance continued to the town of Hupo-ri, CS767346, and a special task force was organized.

The 15th day of February 1951 proved to be an eventful period for the "Flying Column" Regiment. As the battalions moved forward rapidly from Hupo-ri, "Task Force Crombez", composed of Company "L", 5th Cavalry, Company "D", 6th Tk Battalion, and two platoons, Company A, 70th Hv Tk Bn., departed from (1545 hours) Regimental positions to crash its way through an estimated 2000 CCF deployed along the route to Chipyeong-ni. Enduring a continuous assault by an enemy utilizing small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, 2.36 RL and 3.5 RL fire, pole and satchel charges, the task force reached the beleaguered 23rd Infantry RCT concurrently with a strong Chinese attack on their positions. Bitter fighting was in progress. Task Force Crombez charged the CCF who rapidly abandoned their positions to flee across the mountains. Four days of heavy fighting by foot troops would have been required to accomplish the deed. Task Force Crombez completed in only one hour and fifteen minutes.

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During the next few days, 5th Cavalry advanced just short of Chip-yong-ni and the 23rd Inf RCT was successfully withdrawn to the rear.

From Chip-yong-ni, the Regiment continued the attack north, securing objectives D, E and F. All except objective D were taken with light or no enemy opposition, however, hill 469 was of such size that normally a regiment would be assigned a like task. Additionally, a heavy rainfall had made operations difficult. By 23 February, arrangements were made for priority on air strikes and Company B was attached to the 2nd Battalion attacking the hill. The combined efforts of 57 aircraft and three companies of troopers supported by artillery, secured the enemy stronghold in one of the most closely coordinated attacks of the war. Cavalrymen advanced so closely following each air strike that troops were required to keep behind the ridges to avoid the bomb fragments. The hill was secured at 1625 hours, 23 February.

Having obtained these objectives, the original plan for 8th Cavalry to pass through 5th Cavalry and continue the attack north was changed. Vigorous and aggressive patrolling was initiated instead. While in this area, the enemy emplaced a number of mines damaging several tanks which daily patrolled the area. There were indications that the enemy was building up strength to the northeast. However, only delaying and harassing enemy forces occupied the rugged ground to the north. Patrols encountered small enemy forces in the sector daily but units received no attacks in strength.

Patrolling continued until 28 February when the fourth drive north was initiated. In the meantime, the right boundary line was altered. As the month closed, the advance began to a newly assigned MLR. On the last day of the month, artillery volleys were encountered. Although not received in large amounts, it appeared that enemy opposition would include some artillery in the future.

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Secret

HEADQUARTERS 5TH CAVALRY REGIMENT
APO 201

COMMAND REPORT - 1 THROUGH 28 FEBRUARY 1951

1 February 1951 -

A previously arranged bombing mission composed of one illumination plane and two B-26 bombers struck check points 50 and 51 at 0325 hours. These points received a total of 8 napalm, sixteen 250-lb fragmentation bombs in addition to strafing by .50-cal. machine guns. Civilians interrogated from the area reported between 300 to 400 killed or wounded as a result of the bombardment.

The 2nd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry passed through positions of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, at 0830 hours to resume the attack in accordance with prearranged plans. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 61st Field Artillery Battalion, and Co "A" of the 70th Hvy Tank Battalion became attached to the 8th Cavalry Regiment. The 3rd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry also returned to its own organization.

Being in First Cavalry Division Reserve, the 5th Cavalry began preparation for possible commitment in either the 7th or 8th Cavalry sectors. The 1st Battalion moved during the morning to an assembly area in vicinity of Omaegok (CS 442256). The Battalion utilized the remainder of the day for rehabilitation and maintenance of weapons and equipment. The 3rd Battalion continued its mission of guarding the mountain pass along the MSR between Yonpung (DR 1168) and Mungyong (DR2065). The 21st Thailand Infantry Battalion continued to patrol its assigned sector in vicinity of DR 3151 and providing security for VEF installations of the 581st Signal Radio Relay Company on hills 877 and CR 8759.

Comments by the Commander; B-26 night bombing is highly desirable. Request more of them.

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14 February 1951 -

The 5th Cavalry, in IX Corps Reserve, was ordered by this headquarters to occupy blocking positions North, Northeast and East of Yeju (CS 795280) to secure the Corps right flank. The Regiment moved into the following positions: 5th Cavalry CP - CS 783271; 1st Battalion (-) - CS 849269; one company - CS 864250, one platoon - CS 833268; 2nd Battalion (-) - via CS 781269, one company - CS 782321, one platoon - CS 783307; 3rd Battalion - just south of Yeju (on the move when the Regiment was ordered to execute the alert cited below).

An alert order was received at 1430 hours for a possible move along the Keksu-ri-Chipyong-ni axis to contact the 23rd Infantry RCT and relieve pressure on this unit from the south. The RCT, in X Corps sector, was reported to be surrounded in the vicinity of Chipyong-ni (CS 798478) by a CCF. In the late afternoon, the alert was ordered executed.

The 5th Cavalry RCT, composed of the three organic battalions, Medical Company (-); Company "A", 8th Engineer (C) Battalion; Company "A", 70th Hv Tk Battalion; (-); Company "D", 6th Tk Battalion; 61st FA Battalion; 92nd Armored Artillery Battalion, was organized. A Regimental forward CP and all units except the two Artillery Battalions moved during the night across the Han River to the vicinity of Hupe-ri (CS 767346). The latter elements closed into positions in vicinity of Yeju.

Comments by the Commander: The regiment moved throughout the night without incident and was halted by a by-pass and bridge which required about two hours work.

Start

15 February 1951 -

The Regiment began its mission to contact the 23rd Infantry Regiment at 0700 hours. From the assembly area in vicinity of Hupo-ri, units moved north.

The 1st Battalion led the drive and established contact with the enemy at 1005 hours in the vicinity of Keksu-ri (CS 7740). An estimated enemy force of 300 to 600 employing small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire opposed the advance. The Battalion deployed and through the dense firepower gradually moved forward. At 1640 hours, the Battalion closed in for the night on hill mass 152 (CS 777382). The enemy harassed 1st Battalion positions between 1800 and 1900 hours with small arms and automatic weapons fire. After 1900 hours, the Regimental sector remained quiet.

The 2nd Battalion was committed west of Keksu-ri-Chipyong-ni Road at 1300 hours. In conjunction with the 1st Battalion, the unit moved on to hill mass 143 (CS 763394) where they dug in for the night (1600 hours).

The 3rd Battalion moved from the assembly area to outpost the ridge-line in grid square 7637 at 1650 hours.

Task Force Crombez, commanded by Colonel Marcel G. Crombez, departed 5th Cavalry positions at 1545 hours enroute to contact the 23rd Infantry Regiment in Chipyong-ni. The force was composed of Company D, 6th Tank Battalion; two platoons, Company A, 70th Heavy Tank Battalion, and Company L, 5th Cavalry. The following is an account of its activity - -

TASK FORCE CROMBEZ

Task Force Crombez, led by Colonel Marcel G. Crombez, Commanding Officer of the 5th Cavalry Regiment, drove a five mile wedge through an estimated 2,000 Chinese troops to relieve the besieged 23rd Infantry Regiment on 15 February, 1951.

The task force was composed of "L" Company of the Fifth Cavalry Regiment, famous as the "Flying Column" Regiment, and twenty-three tanks, many of them painted to look like huge tigers, from "D" Company of the 6th Tank Battalion, and two platoons from "A" Company of the 70th Heavy Tank Battalion. Colonel Crombez commanded from one of the lead tanks.

Shortly after getting under way at 1545 hours, Task Force Crombez ran into heavy machine gun fire from strongly dug-in enemy positions. As the Force continued, the fire intensified to include mortars, 2.36 and 3.5 inch rocket launchers, pole and satchel charges. This continuous hail of fire forced Task Force Crombez to halt and slug it out on several occasions. Colonel Crombez estimated that this task force killed between 500 and 700 Chinese.

Contact with the cut-off Regiment was made at 1700 hours. This was psychologically the right moment as the Chinese were launching a strong attack against the encircled 23rd Infantry Regiment. Bitter fighting was in progress, and the enemy had penetrated the beleaguered 23rd Inf Regiment beyond their 155 mm howitzer positions.

Colonel Crombez had radioed the contained friendly force of his

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fact

15 February 1951 - Cont'd -

expected time of arrival. To coincide with the appearance of the task force, the 23rd Inf Regt began a counterattack to regain the lost ground. This coordination of effort caused the Chinese to abandon their positions and flee across the mountains.

Task Force Crombez remained in the perimeter over night. The plan was to return at 0900 hours the following morning with air cover and artillery support. A snow storm and general poor visibility precluded this, delaying the movement until 1150 hours. No Chinese were encountered on the return route, proving the enemy had been decisively beaten and had abandoned their well-prepared positions.

It is the opinion of Colonel Crombez that, considering the size of the enemy force and their many strong dug-in positions, it would have taken four days of heavy fighting by foot troops to accomplish what Task Force Crombez managed in just over an hour.

In a message from the Commanding General, EUSAK, Colonel Crombez was commended for his efficient leadership:

No. 14

(stamped)
 1230
 Feb 15 1951

CG IX CORPS

152200 I FEB 51 SECRET
 EMERGENCY

CG 1ST CAV

CG FIFTH CAV REGIMENT

CITE IXCCG EIGHT

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ARMY COMMANDER FOR YOUR INFORMATION CLN QUOTE
 CITE GEORGE PAREN TAC PAREN ONE SEVEN KCG GRQM PAREN TO ADV FIRST CAV DIV
 THRU CG ITEM XRAY CORPS PAREN LOW LEVEL FLIGHT THIS NOON GMA ITEM OBSERVED
 FIFTH CAV DEPLOYING AND MOVING OUT TO THE ATTACK PD WHAT ITEM SAW HAD ALL
 THE BAR DASH MARKS OF ABLE/WELL TRAINED COMMAND PD RIDGWAY UNQUOTE.

MOORE

SECRET

GEORGE B PEPLÖE BRIG GEN GSC C/S

R C BROWNING LT COL
 AGC

IXCCG

605

ASST ADJ GEN

Comments by the Commander:

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15 February 1951

Lt Col Edgar Treacy, who had been designated to bring up the supply train and ambulances for the 23 Inf RCT disobeyed the instructions and joined L Co riding the tanks, he was later reported missing in action.

A Regimental forward CP was established at CS 781345 but a heavy concentration of enemy mortar fire forced its displacement about 1900 hours to CS 763366. Headquarters Company and the Medical Company joined the Regiment in this assembly area for the night.

Comments by the Commander: I organized and personally took the Task Force to Chipyong-ni. Immediately prior to my departure I had radioed the CO (Lt Col Childs) of the 23rd RCT that we were about to take off. Lt Col Childs requested we come up immediately with or without the supply train. I decided to break through with the Task Force, tanks only, and have the supply train brought up later. I had made plans with Colonel Treacy for him to bring up the supply train for the 23d Infantry with an escort of two tank platoons and two rifle platoons when the supply road was cleared of the enemy and safe to proceed thereon, and had instructed Colonel Treacy to await my instructions by radio when I deemed the road safe as to travel, he nevertheless, unknown to me, joined L Company with the tanks.

Near the small village of Koksuri, the Task Force came under intense enemy small arms fire, the tanks stopped, and some of the Infantry were forced to dismount from the tanks. Colonel Treacy, who had been operating a machine gun on his tank, was one of these.

A wounded soldier, Corporal Carroll G. Everist, ER 57505846 of Company "L" states that when the tanks moved on, that he, some other members of his company and Colonel Treacy were captured by the Chinese; that Colonel Treacy was very slightly wounded, and that Colonel Treacy carried him (Corporal Everist) on his back to a near-by village where they were questioned by their captors. The Chinese recognized Colonel Treacy's rank and treated him with the respect due him.

While we were approaching the pass I radioed to my operations officer to hold the supply train until further orders from me personally. I further stated that the going was too rough, we were having tough slugging and that the supply train would not get through.

The last $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Chipyong-ni we encountered constant enemy fire, small arms, automatic weapons fire, mortar, bazooka 2.36 and some 3.5; fanatical Chinese attempted with pole and satchel charges to stop the tanks. The bow gunner in my tank killed off two 2.36 bazooka crews.

We hit them at the most psychological moment while another enemy force was launching an attack on the 23rd Inf RCT attempting to drive the 23rd RCT from the south to the north. The enemy group on the ridges along both sides of the mountain row from Koksuri to Chipyong-ni had been carefully emplaced with the forethought of preventing any troops coming to the rescue of the 23rd RCT. Judging by the bazooka crews the enemy had carefully planned a firm defense of the road. However, the Chinese were decisively defeated and crushed. This fact is borne out by the fact as proven later that all enemy forces withdrew during the night.

16 February 1951 -

Task Force Crombez departed from the 23rd Infantry positions in Chipyong-ni at 1150 hours, arriving in 5th Cavalry forward positions by 1230 hours. There were no enemy sighted on the return trip.

RCT
Patrols from the 1st Battalion moved out (0730 hours) to search Oktae (CS 788399) and hill 183 (CS 783385). Company B personnel occupied the ridgeline, CS 778396, as Company C secured B Company's right flank by moving to the high ground southeast of Oktae, CS 786399 (1045 hours). Company A secured the ridgeline at CS 780400 (1235 hours) and continued to hill 206 (1325 hours). Patrols were then sent approximately 1500 yards north and northeast of 206. Next, came Company C to sweep through Oktae and vicinity (1405 hours). By 1555 hours, patrols from Company A returned. The Red Battalion then closed into a perimeter (1700 hours) southwest of hill 206 at CS 782413.

2nd Battalion patrols were dispatched to Keksu-ri (CS 778414), CS768-412, and high ground in vicinity of CS 759406. These areas were found to be unoccupied by the enemy. Units of White Battalion moved as follows: Company F - secured CS 768412 (1235 hours) and continued toward CS 772425; Company G - moved into Keksu-ri (1340 hours), then to high ground north of the town, CS 771419 (1400 hours); Company E - moved to CS 760413 and patrolled north to CS 761420. The 2nd Battalion CP moved to a new area in the vicinity of Keksu-ri where the Battalion closed for the night.

The 3rd Battalion moved from CS 765365 (1100 hours) to an assembly area at CS 765393. Upon arrival, a patrol was sent 1,000 yards northeast of their positions (1300 hours) but submitted a negative report. The Blue Battalion closed in for the night in the vicinity of CS 765376 (at 1700 hours).

During the entire day's operation, no enemy were contacted. The bold, rapid dash of Task Force Crombez had crushed and decisively beaten a large CCF who hastily abandoned their well-prepared positions.

Under 5th Cavalry control, a Supply Train, including 26 2½-ton trucks, 19 ambulances, and escorted by tanks and troopers, departed from Regimental positions for the 23rd Infantry RCT. The convey arrived uneventfully at its destination (1620 hours). On its return, wounded personnel were evacuated to the rear.

Effective 0800 hours, the 5th Cavalry reverted to control of 1st Cavalry Division.

Comments by the Commander: In view of the tough going the previous day I had decided to return with all tanks bare. I assembled the group when the weather appeared to clear up and stated that I would not take any soldiers back riding the tanks unless they volunteered, including the engineer mine detecting crews. No one volunteered. Snow had fallen during the course of the morning to a depth of about three inches making tank mine detection, if mines had been placed during the night, most difficult. Air cover was requested. An artillery liaison plane hovered upstairs. The artillery had been instructed to use V.T. fuse on our return trip since there would be no riders on the tanks. On the return trip, which was made after the snowstorm cleared, no enemy were seen, not a single shot was fired. This conclusively proved that the enemy was decisively beaten and withdrew.

signed

17 February 1951 -

The Regiment's mission for the day was to continue the attack to the next phase line (Ref: Annex D, overlay of objectives; Annex E overlay of check points; Annex F, maps of the area).

The 1st Battalion began its move at 0800 hours (A and B Companies), taking objective A, CS793426, in two hours. Patrols branched out to the north and northeast. Within a short while, friendly forces were sighted on objective E, CS804456. Company C climbed astride objective C, CS813-429 (1045 hours) and proceeded on the high ground to the northwest. Patrols from Companies A and C entered Kwangyang, CS793449, passing through to contact elements of the 23d Infantry RCT on objective E at 1200 hours. Companies A and B closed in Kwangyang at 1430 hours. The 1st Battalion formed a perimeter for the night in vicinity of Kwangyang.

2nd Battalion patrols started out at 0800 hours, moving forward without opposition. Company E moved to CS761442 at 1030 hours, still going north; Company G at CS7744 with patrols to the north; and Company F was at CS7844 (1050 hours) advancing along the ridgeline north and northeast. An F Company patrol established contact with elements of the 23d Infantry RCT in Chipyeong-ni, CS800478, at 1130 hours. As E Company patrols climbed hill 583, CS741441 (within 200 yards of the crest), small arms, automatic weapons and grenades rained down on the troopers. The patrol withdrew and artillery fire was directed on the hill mass. Results could not be observed. The 2nd Battalion assembled for the night in the vicinity of CS7642.

A patrol from the 3rd Battalion visited hill 482 (CS801399), but found the area unoccupied. Company I was used to provide security for nearby 61st FA Battalion units.

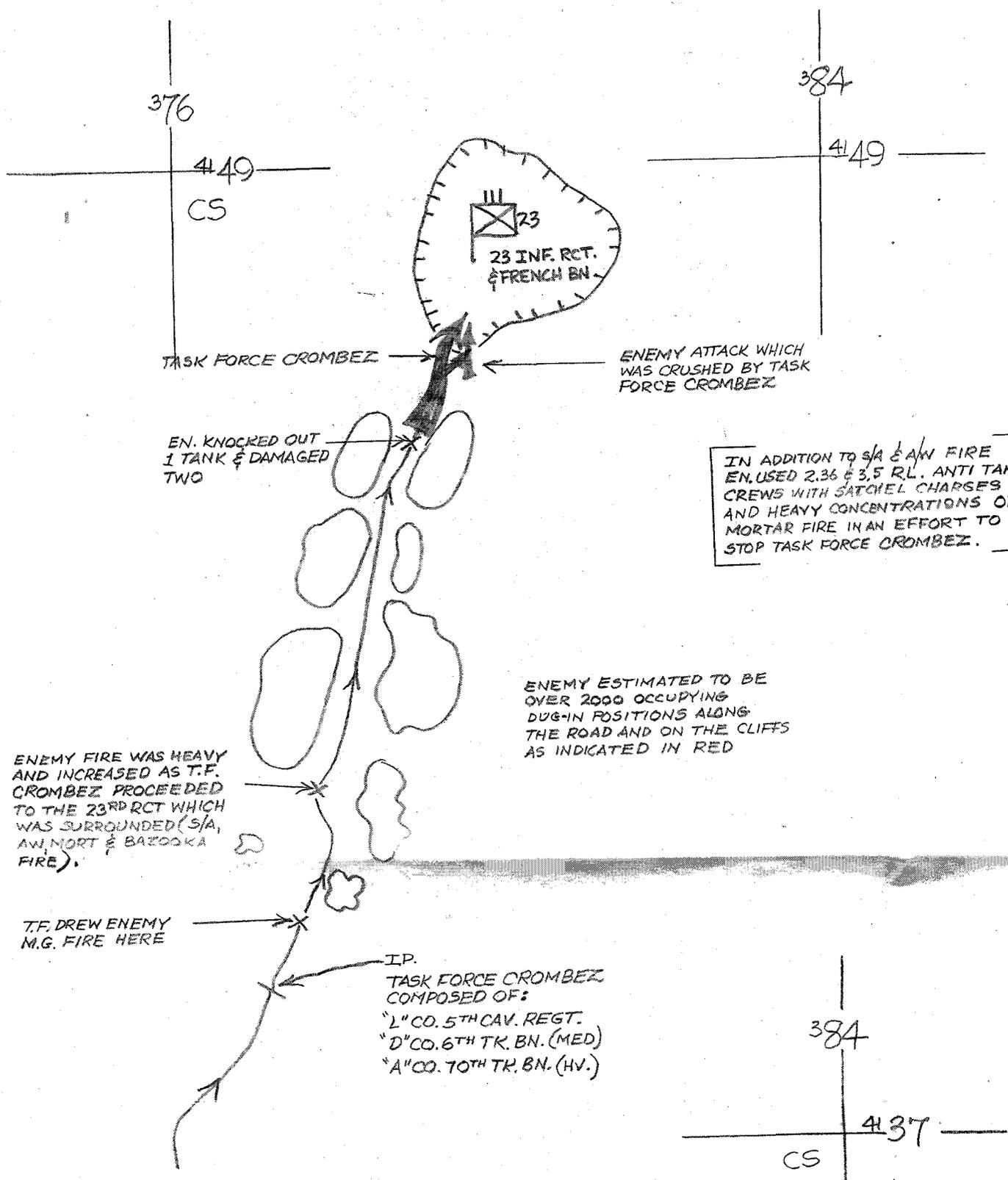
A tank patrol, composed of 1 platoon of tanks, 70th H_v Tk Battalion, and the 5th Cavalry I & R Platoon, was dispatched (1100 hours) to contact elements of the 21st Infantry on the left flank. The patrol hit a mine field on a lateral road leading southwest of Koksu-ri (CS760409). Company A, 8th Engineer (C) Battalion, making the investigation of this area, reported a total of four mines, type M-7, laid in a straight line across the road, two of which were blown by an I & R jeep. Up to this time, of all mines found in the area, none were found on the MSR. (See Annex G for mines found and placed in the area.)

Unit changes for the day were: 92d Artillery Battalion - relieved from attached to 5th Cavalry (0800 hours); 70th H_v Tk Battalion less B and C Companies - attached to the Regiment (0800 hours). The unit then moved to CS747367; 23d Infantry RCT - placed under operational control of 5th Cavalry (1200 hours). Plans were formulated to coordinate the withdrawal of the 23rd Infantry RCT during the afternoon.

Comments by the Commander: The enemy had definitely withdrawn along our entire front.

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TASK FORCE CROMBEZ



IN ADDITION TO S/A & AW FIRE EN. USED 2.36 & 3.5 RL. ANTI TANK CREWS WITH SATCHEL CHARGES AND HEAVY CONCENTRATIONS OF MORTAR FIRE IN AN EFFORT TO STOP TASK FORCE CROMBEZ.

ENEMY FIRE WAS HEAVY AND INCREASED AS T.F. CROMBEZ PROCEEDED TO THE 23RD RCT WHICH WAS SURROUNDED (S/A, AW, MORT & BAZOOKA FIRE).

ENEMY ESTIMATED TO BE OVER 2000 OCCUPYING DUG-IN POSITIONS ALONG THE ROAD AND ON THE CLIFFS AS INDICATED IN RED

T.F. DREW ENEMY M.G. FIRE HERE

IP.
TASK FORCE CROMBEZ COMPOSED OF:
L CO. 5TH CAV. REGT.
D CO. 6TH TK. BN. (MED)
A CO. 70TH TK. BN. (HV.)

REF:

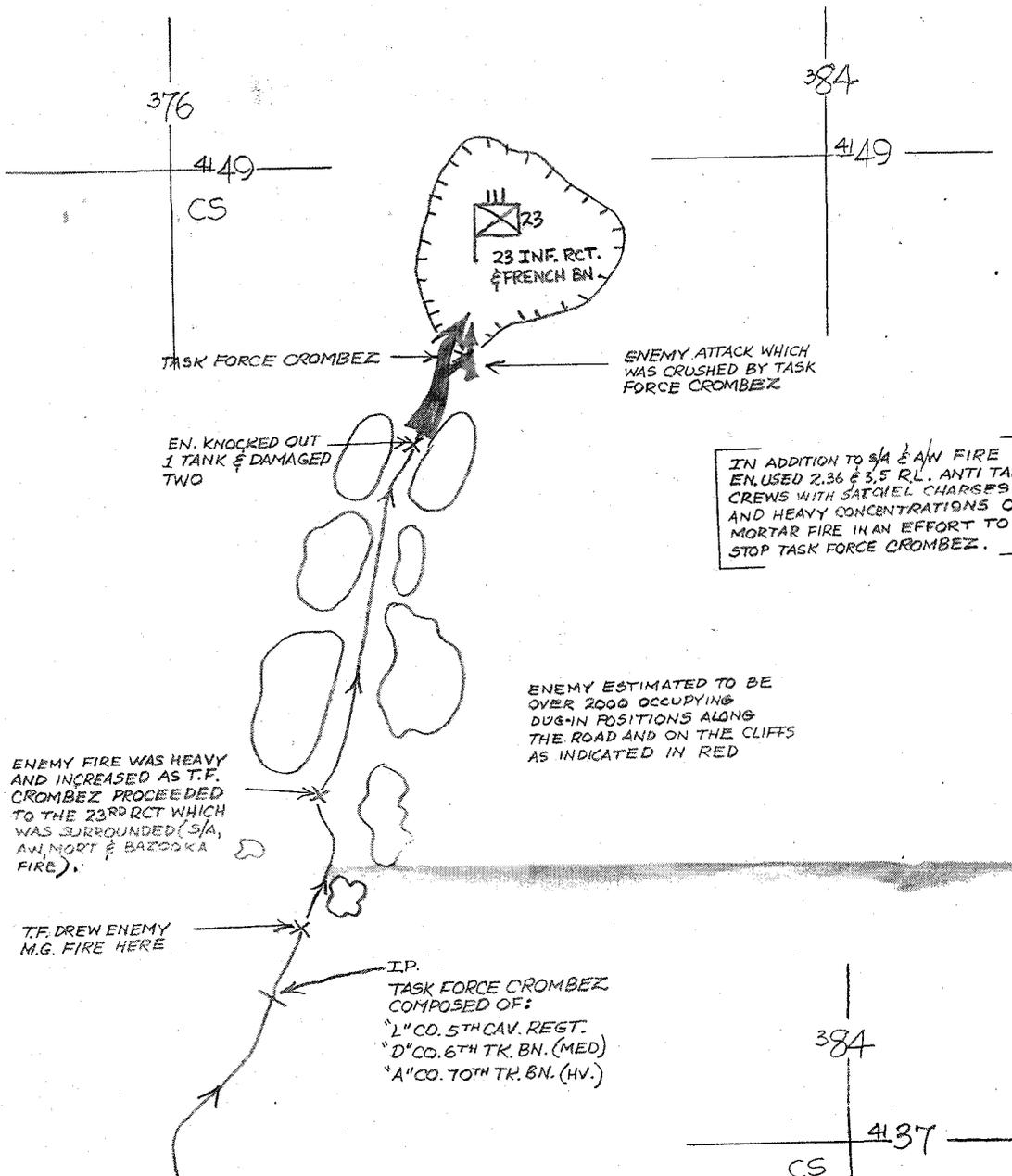
5TH CAV REGT.
SCALE: 1:50,000
SHEET: 6726-III

OFFICIAL
CROMBEZ
COL.

TASK FORCE CROMBEZ	ENEMY FORCE
TOTAL STRENGTH - 353	TOTAL STRENGTH - OVER 2000
TOTAL LOSSES - 10 KIA	TOTAL LOSSES - 500 TO 800 KIA

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By: 895 NARA Date: 5/14/10

~~SECRET~~
TASK FORCE CROMBEZ



REF:
5TH CAV REGT.
SCALE: 1:50,000
SHEET: 6726-III

~~OFFICIAL~~
CROMBEZ
COL.

TASK FORCE CROMBEZ	ENEMY FORCE
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<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p style="text-align: center;">DECLASSIFIED Authority 78510 By 895 NARA Date 5/14/10</p> </div>	