

OPERATION JUST CAUSE
3rd Platoon, A Co, "JAGUARS", 5-87 INF
CPT STACY M. ELLIOTT
IOAC 5-92

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Enclosures

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Works Cited

ORAL INTERVIEWS:

CPT Tracy G. Winton, Company Executive Officer; Jaguar 5
CPT Reginald Bostick, 1st Platoon Leader; Red 21 SFC
Randy Jeffers, 1st Platoon Sergeant
PFC Shane Fitch, 3rd Platoon RTO

VIDEO AARS:

CPT William C. Flynt III, Company Commander; Jaguar 6
LTC William H. Huff III, Battalion Commander; Wildcat 6

ARTICLES/BOOKS:

McConnell, Malcolm. Just Cause: The Real Story of America's High Tech Invasion of Panama. New York: St Martin Press, 1991.

During the last minutes of the 19th of December, 1989, Alpha Company, 5-87th Infantry, known commonly as the "JAGUARS," attacked the Panamanian Combat Engineer Battalion Compound. As the 3rd Rifle Platoon Leader of the JAGUARS, I participated in the seizing of the objective from a company-sized combat engineer unit, reinforced with at least a platoon of UESAT soldiers, an Anti-Terrorist unit.

In June of 1987, COL Diaz Herrea was forcibly retired as the head of the Panamanian military. In the same month, he traveled to the United States and accused Manuel Noriega of several crimes, to include assisting the Colombian Cartels with moving drugs through Panama to the U.S. As word of the United States' interest in General Noriega grew, so did the demonstrations against the U.S. forces in Panama. Due to continuing violence against U.S. citizens and service members, the Personal Movement Limitations (PML) started to get more restrictive. In January of 1988, relations with the Panamanian Defence Forces (PDF) continued to deteriorate to the point that no joint operations were being conducted. In May of 1989, the elections were annulled by the Electoral Committee of Panama. In July of 1989, the first of many Freedom of Movement exercises, commonly known as "Sand Fleas," were conducted to test the reaction times of the PDF and to ensure the rights covered under the Treaty of Torrijos-Carter of 1977 were honored. After the Coup attempt on the 3rd of October, by Major Gerlaldi, the 193rd Infantry Brigade entered into a period of long and often dangerous live fires. (HUFF)

In June of 1989, the JAGUARS were selected to be the first company to execute the first of many Operational Convoys designed to test the will of the PDF and to exercise our Freedom Of Movement rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Torrijos-Carter of 1977. The 3rd Platoon was given the mission to provide one squad to ride along with the convoy as a security force, while the rest of the platoon and I remained at Fort Clayton,

Panama, sitting on two UH60 Blackhawks. The Company mission was to move a convoy from Fort Clayton, on the south side of the Isthmus, to Fort Sherman, on the north side. At the same time, a unit from the 7th ID was doing the same thing but in reverse order. My platoon mission was to reinforce the squad in the convoy by air once PDF refused the convoy's rights of free movement. During one of the rehearsals for this mission, BG Loeffke, U.S. Army South commander, stopped by and pulled me off to the side and stated that it was his opinion that the PDF would restrict our movements and that my reaction platoon would end up being sent in to clear the roadblocks by force. He told me that I should start thinking about what I would do as I took casualties and how I would feel to go down in history as the man that started the fighting in Panama. At the time I believed that his words were a little dramatic, but as the rehearsals progressed I became convinced that this could quickly turn into a bloodbath. After six days of waiting on the Blackhawks with little to no resistance from the PDF, it was clear that they were not going to restrict our movement.

Beginning in September of 1989, the U.S. soldiers in Panama started a series of operations known to the soldiers as "Sand Fleas". These short operations, most lasting no more than a single day, were carefully designed to test the Panamanian responses to various U.S. troop movements. Most of the operations dealt with moving fully loaded combat troops into areas that U.S. forces normally did not go. Other combat units were on standby if something had gone wrong. Most missions ended in nothing more than words and gestures being directed toward the U.S. forces. Rarely were they returned in kind from our better disciplined soldiers, but the information gained by the U.S. about the command and control the PDF displayed was crucial.

On the morning of October 3rd, 1989, during the ill-fated coup by Major Geraldí and the 4th Infantry Company, the "Urraca," Alpha Company, 5-87 Infantry, was deployed to protect the U.S. and Panama Canal Commission (PCC), Curundu housing area, (see Map 1.) My platoon secured the Curundu Junior High School, which was on the edge of the housing area, and the PDF Combat Engineer Battalion Compound. From one of my squad positions, we could see the engineers preparing their vehicles to move. These men eventually deployed to reinforce the PDF 7th Infantry Company in assaulting the Commandancia. Because not many commanders had made a move to come to the aid the 7th Company and General Noriega, the engineers were determined to be a greater threat than previously perceived.

On the 15th of December, the Panamanian National Assembly proclaimed GEN Noriega "Head of State." He then publicly proclaimed that a state of war existed between the U.S. and Panama. This was no surprise to the U.S. forces in Panama because about every six months, he had declared war against the U.S.

Since the indictment of GEN Noriega, the U.S. forces had been constantly harassed and mistreated by the PDF. There are countless examples of beatings, rapes, and acts of humiliation being carried out against Americans either by the uniformed PDF, off duty PDF, or totally out of control street thugs, the mis-named "Dignity Battalions." Several times, all of the U.S. forces in Panama were put on alert as a reaction to crimes committed against Americans. Since violence against us was common, it was no surprise when a Marine Lieutenant, LT Paz, was killed, on the fifteenth of December, in downtown Panama. Ironically the word "paz" means "peace" in the Spanish language.

As LT Paz was being shot, an American Navy Lieutenant and his wife had stopped at another roadblock to ask for directions. Instantly, the couple was abducted by the PDF and taken to an unknown building where a barbaric interrogation took place. After beating the sailor and threatening his wife with sexual mistreatment, the couple was released into the custody of U.S. MPs. It was after these two incidents that President George Bush decided to issue the order to execute Operation Blue Spoon.(McConnell)

At the time of the alert, on the 15th of December, my Company Commander, CPT William C. Flynt III, was in the U.S. for the holidays. The acting commander, 1LT Tracy G. Winton, and I were at the Fort Clayton movie theater when his beeper was activated. After calling the Battalion, he informed the manager to make the announcement that all soldiers were to report to their companies. When I heard this, I knew something big must have happened to alert everyone at 2100 hours on a Friday. As I rose to get out of the theatre the house lights came on. Time seemed to stop as I looked at the crowd. The mixture of military and civilians stared at me in disbelief. As I bellowed for them to move, the entire crowd came to life.

Because alerts were covered in detail in our company Tactical SOP, by the time I arrived at the barracks, the CQ already had the company up and drawing weapons. My first job as the XO was to get the company deployable as fast as possible. The entire company, minus anyone who was on leave, was present for duty within one hour; at two hours, the entire company had its basic load and was ready for movement. CPT Flynt had left special orders with LT Winton that in the event of an alert, he was to be called. LT Winton asked me for my opinion about when he should risk violating OPSEC rules and call CPT Flynt in the states. I told him I thought that if by morning USARSO was still on alert that we should call because being alerted was not uncommon for the men of the 193rd Infantry Brigade. However, LT Winton made the

better decision and called him right away. When he called, he just informed CPT Flynt of the shooting and made some small talk about the company as to cover the true nature of the call. CPT Flynt then made a series of calls to the Battalion Commander, the last of which, LTC Huff asked CPT Flynt if he was going to return for the fishing trip. Of course, both men knew that there was no fishing trip, so it was a good way to tell CPT Flynt to return to Panama to lead his Company into combat. (FLYNT)

At approximately 1800 hours on the 19th, CPT Flynt called all of the platoon leaders into his office and calmly told us that, tonight, the U.S. Forces were going to initiate combat operations against the PDF. As he told us, he scanned our faces for our reactions. All of us had been through countless Sand Fleas, alerts, and various operations, and therefore, we were prepared, mentally and professionally, for what was to take place. A feeling of relief came over us, as we realized we were finally going to do what we had all thought about countless of times. (Flynt)

At about 1830 hours, the battalion commander briefed all the officers and selected NCOs about the mission and of special Rules of Engagement. In particular, he stressed that the U.S. was not at war with the people of Panama and that we were to make every effort to ensure we would give the enemy every chance to surrender. We were to make extra efforts to treat their dead and wounded with the same respect that we do ours.

The mission of Alpha Company was to fix and, on order, seize the Panamanian Engineer Battalion Compound to prevent the reinforcement of the Joint Task Forces's main objective, the Comandancia. The Company objective, which was at least 1000 meters long by 500 meters wide, was comprised of 14 major buildings and various one room buildings. At the center of the objective were two extremely large aircraft

hangers, one of which had approximately 100 offices built inside it. We were to accomplish this with one platoon in a support by fire position on the east side, assaulting with the other two platoons from the north and northwest. The company reserve consisted of the Commander, his RTOs, a two-man sniper team, and one 90mm recoilless rifle team. (see Map 2.)

The mission for the soldiers of 3rd Platoon was to fix the north part of the Company objective. We were to do this by infiltrating into our assault positions, and then from these positions, we were to prevent anything or anyone from leaving the objective except to surrender. On order, I was to assault buildings two, three, five, ten, and thirteen in series, allowing the other platoons of the company to pass through, or by.

My platoon had been guarding the Curundu housing area which had been a normal mission for the battalion since the coup attempt in October. I pulled my three squad leaders, SSG Vergil Collier, SGT Vernon Kimbrough, and SSG Daniel Jewell, and the Platoon Sergeant, SFC Harry Namauu, into the converted guard house for the operations order. I had already prepared the battle book for this operation, I briefed them from the book and added in the notes I had taken from the Battalion Commander's brief and the Company Commander's FRAGO. Up to then, I had not been allowed to tell the men of the battle book because it had been classified TopSecret after I had made it. I made the added effort of telling them that I expected them to put themselves at a greater risk than normal to foster a sense of confidence in the rest of their men because I felt that we would be chasing the PDF around the jungles for weeks maybe months to come. After the order, the squad leaders set out to brief their men in the static guard posts. I took this time to talk with the platoon sergeant who was veteran with several tours in Vietnam. I asked him what I should do between now and the assault time. He calmly told me that I should get "real angry"

with the men now so that I could make better decisions when we got into contact. He didn't say it, but I knew he meant that I had become too close to the men. I took a few minutes to myself to think once again through the actions I would have to take upon making contact.

Around 1100 hours, the company was mostly infiltrated into the assembly area, quarters 1989A. When CPT Flynt arrived, he told me that H-Hour had been pushed back to 0200 hours because of the 82nd was having problems with ice on their aircraft. Ironically, it was just about that time when we started to hear shooting in the vicinity of the Balboa Docks. Later, I learned that the MPs had thought that "push back" meant H-Hour was now 1200. A few minutes passed as we listened to the firing, fully knowing that our surprise had been lost. A few minutes later, the Battalion Commander called and told Jaguar 6, the Company Commander, to fix the compound. Turning to the officers, he told us to "Execute." I asked him if my losing the element of surprise had changed my mission any; I had been hoping that somehow I would not have to cross that illuminated area before my support by fire position. He replied that it had not.

Moving along route WOLVERINE toward our support by fire position, we boosted PVT Yoell, the lightest man in the platoon, over the fence to cut the lock as planned, (see Map 3.) As we crossed the football field, SGT Judd, the attached Sapper Squad Leader from the 59th Engineer company, came up to me and told me that the Jaguar 6 had just attached him to my platoon. Looking back at his nine-man squad, I knew that Jaguar 6 had come though and given me something for losing the surprise. I told him he was now my 4th squad leader, and I expected him to use his men as infantrymen until I needed sappers.

I stopped the platoon, using the school buildings as cover, just short of the first open area before the objective. Jaguar 6 called Red 21 and told him to block all movement into or out of the objective, by fire. After setting up an overwatch squad with the M60 machinegun and first squad, I told the First Squad Leader, SSG Collier, to have someone run forward and cut the lock off of the gate. Without hesitation, he jumped up and bolted across the open area and cut the lock. As he crossed the open area, Red 21 engaged and killed the occupant in a car that was trying to leave the compound. To my utter amazement, SSG Collier was not fired on. Quickly, we move the platoon through the fence and started to get the platoon into our initial position.

While moving into the position, Specialist Steven Santypal, a SAW gunner, turned to me and asked why the enemy had not shot at us. I told him to be quiet, that they didn't know we were there yet. As I said this to him, the Platoon came under an extreme amount of automatic weapons fire from the southwest. Diving for cover, the Platoon returned fire, and I reported to Jaguar 6 that I was receiving heavy automatic fire but that it was not effective. As I turned to maneuver the left squad to the buildings to the front, out of the line of fire, I saw my Platoon Sergeant standing in the middle of the fire, pushing and pulling men to their feet and toward the buildings. After about a minute, the firing stopped.

I left the 2nd and 3rd squads on the right side to watch the front and right side, while I took my RTO to the buildings to our front to make contact with the PSG and the other two squads. (see Map 3.) The sappers, while clearing the buildings, had heard someone inside one of the blacked out rooms. Upon clearing the building, they found a lone, unarmed man cowering in the restroom. SGT Judd came up to me and told me that his men had a prisoner in the first set of buildings. After a brief talk to the man, I concluded that he was not a PDF soldier but simply a night watchman since this was a

maintenance area for school busses and not part of the compound itself. He was moved to the small, fenced in, tennis court that the 3rd Squad Leader, SSG Daniel Jewell, was using as a POW collection point. A few weeks later, I returned and talked with the man. He told me that he had convinced himself that we had not believed him and that we would surely kill him rather than take him prisoner. It was very fortunate for him that CPT Flynt had required all normal attachments to the company attend our livefire room clearing ranges; otherwise they would have thrown a grenade into the room and sprayed it with burst fire as doctrine would have dictated.

Once we were set in positions around the buildings, the company-attached loudspeaker team started with the requests for surrender. The PDF inside the compound answered with automatic fire. The 1st Platoon then conducted a firepower demonstration, consisting of 100 rounds from each of their three M60s and one round from each of the two 90mm recoilless rifles. The company mortars, "Thumper," would add in three or four 60mm HE rounds from a direct lay position on Crystal Hill. (see Map 2.) After each of these demonstrations, we would again call for the PDF to surrender. After the first or second demonstration, SSG Collier reported that he could see movement within the compound. Moving to his position, I saw two men in crouching positions, moving as fast as their legs would carry them moving toward our position. Every few seconds, someone within the compound would shoot at either us or the men running, but we could never pinpoint from where the fire was coming. About twenty meters away, the men stopped and refused to cross the open area between us and the compound. A fleeting moment of compassion for these men came over me, and I stepped out into the open and waved for them to cross the open area. Seeing me standing in the open must have given them the confidence needed to cross the last stretch of open area because they got to me within seconds. Shielding them, I moved back to the buildings, so I could talk to them under cover. After talking to them, I was

able to determine that one was a 1st Sergeant. He told me that most of the men in the compound wanted to give up, but the few officers that were in there were not letting the men surrender.

At about 0100, three cars tried to enter the objective at the front gate. The 1st Platoon engaged the vehicles with M60 machine guns, SAWs, and M16s. At around 0130, my left squad reported seeing an MP HMMWV stop at the destroyed vehicles. Through the darkness, little could be seen, but all of Panama could hear the men of the 1st Platoon telling the MPs to get out of their line of fire. Seconds later, the PDF engaged the MP vehicle with small arms. The 1st Platoon returned fire on the PDF which allowed the MPs to escape, taking with them a few injured PDF soldiers. Among the wounded was a PDF Captain who claimed to be one of the company commanders. When questioned by CPT Flynt about the number of men in the compound, the man replied that there was over 100 engineers and approximately 30 UESAT soldiers. CPT Flynt told the PDF Captain to call his men and tell them to surrender. The PDF Captain said that his men were going to fight and that he would not call them. CPT Flynt replied by calmly stating that they would all be killed. Seeing the conviction in CPT Flynt's comment must of shook the young engineer to reality because he then made an unsuccessful attempt to call his unit to tell them it was hopeless. (Flynt)

For the next few hours, the platoon sat in this position, fixing the compound and occasionally taking in whatever prisoners managed to escape. Every time that the 1st Platoon gave a firepower demonstration, it would receive a heavy volume of fire in return. Each time this happened, I expected Red 21 to inform Jaguar 6 of casualties, but to our surprise, the 1st Platoon did not receive any casualties while in its initial position.

At approximately 0545, Jaguar 6 gave the order to 2LT Alfredo Quiros, Green 21, to seize building 1. As 2nd Platoon assaulted, I used the distraction to move the 2nd Squad up to the buildings and on the left side with the PSG who had some of the engineers and the M60 crew in a support by fire position. After an exchange of fire with PDF in building 4, Green 21 reported building 1 secure. Jaguar 6 then called me and ordered me to seize building 2. The PSG and his people fired small arms for about one minute and then for good measure he shot one AT4 and a LAW into the building. I looked at SPC McMillian and gave him a nod as I shot a star cluster into the air. As the PSG lifted the fires, we started to assault building 2. From somewhere near building 5, a small amount of automatic fire tried to stop our movement, but we managed to make it to building 2 without anyone hit. The door on the foothold had been blown off by a LAW from the PSGs people. Outside the doorway, SPC McMillian threw a few grenades into the room. As the grenades exploded, SPC McMillian, another soldier, SSG Collier, and then I entered the room as the smoke was pouring out of the building. After I believed that we had secured the first room, I exited the building and waved a orange cloth to the PSG to bring up the rest of the platoon. While SGT Kimbrough and his men cleared the rest of the building, I had the soldiers in 1st Squad exit the building and catch their breath. After fifteen minutes, I called Jaguar 6 and told him building 2 was secure. Calling back immediately, he ordered me to take building 3, the Battalion HQs. (see Figure 1,A.)

Building 3 was the enemy battalion headquarters. Our battalion S2, 1LT Kevin Huggins, had a floor plan, that was 80% completed, of the building. The floor plan showed a large room with two doors leading out on the north side. I ordered the M60 machinegun crew, Specialists McNaughton and Grubbs, into an overwatch position, looking down the street. (see figure 1.) As SGT Kimbrough and his squad crossed the street, they came under fire from down the street, but no one in the platoon had seen

from where. I then told the machinegun crew to fire at the guard shack as my RTO, PFC Shane Fitch, and I crossed the road. As we stepped out to cross the road, a burst of automatic fire from a single AK47 crossed just in front of us. The MG crew answered with a few bursts and silenced the AK47. (see figure 1,B.) Later in the day, as we swept back through the objective, we found the body of a PDF soldier wearing blue jeans, a T-shirt, jungle boots, and a 1st Lieutenant's Kevlar helmet, about 30 meters away from the guard post. The young Panamanian officer had been hit multiple times with small arms, but no one wound was the obvious mortal wound. We used my RTOs poncho to carry him back to the company enemy KIA collection point. Later in the day, I confirmed the man's identity with the photos kept in the S1s office in building 3 and found that he actually was a 1st Lieutenant.

We were not receiving any fire at this time; we cut the fence on the north side of building 3 using our M9 bayonets. SGT Kimbrough ran forward to the first door and attempted to kick it open. He made several attempts, but at no time did the door show any signs of giving. Placing a grenade at the base of the door, he pulled the pin and ran back to my position. After the explosion, I could see that we had only succeeded in blackening the bottom of the door. Next, I ordered SGT Beal to shoot the door with his M203. After three rounds penetrated the door and exploded inside the building, I decided to give up on that door and try the other. SGT Kimbrough succeeded in knocking the door off of its hinges at the top of the door. After pushing the door open enough, we boosted a soldier into the building followed immediately by more soldiers. After the entire squad had entered in this fashion, I ran forward and jumped on the door as it hung, still locked and by one hinge, knocking the hasp and the last hinge free. Upon entering the room, which had only one other entrance, I saw that the problem with the door we could not get open. It had been blocked by a stack of railroad ties waist high in front of the door. Seeing no other doors to the rest of the building, I told

SGT Judd, the Sapper Squad Leader, to blow a mouse hole through the wall. When I reported to Jaguar 6 of my foothold in the building and my intentions for the mousehole, he replied that he was concerned about using explosive breaches because we had not found the explosives storage room yet. Having no other choice, I decided to enter the building from the front.

We used three grenades to clear a foothold for the 3rd Squad to enter. As I directed them, the men would enter the room, firing or using grenades, but only when they needed to. As the men cleared the rooms, I quickly learned that clearing this building with all its rooms was going to take some time. As one clearing team would enter a room, the PSG or I would control the others in the hallway. As the clearing teams shouted out the descriptions of the rooms, I tried to visualize where they were in relation to the other teams. I narrowly avoided two teams clearing the same room from different doors by telling one team to open the door before they busted into the room. As I had visualized, they had cleared rooms until they had ended up just on the other side of the door, leading back into the main hallway. After securing the rest of the building, I radioed to Jaguar 6 that building 3 was secured.

As 2nd Platoon began clearing building 4, a gigantic aircraft hanger, approximately thirty to forty men surrendered and were quickly escorted to the POW collection point. After Green 21 reported that building 4 was secured, Jaguar 6 ordered me to clear building 5, also a huge aircraft hanger. The hanger itself was approximately 400 meters long by 200 meters wide and thirty meters high. As we entered, the sun had risen enough that in places there was streams of light beaming their way down into the hanger. The 3rd Squad and I entered the building and started to clear the left side of the hanger. The 2nd Squad started to clear the right side. As we moved forward, I saw a man with an AK47 dart from one end of a caged tool room to the other. I yelled

to the squad to find cover and shot my rifle about five times as I jumped behind a vehicle. (see figure 1,C.)

Because the man had not fired back, I ordered SSG Quiroz to broadcast on his portable speaker system to the man to give up. After the announcement, I gave him fifteen seconds to surrender. After the time limit, SSG Jewell threw a grenade on top of the cage to send the blast down into the cage. As the fuse burned on top of the cage, 3rd Squad fired until the grenade exploded. SGT Beal and his team quickly entered the room and found the injured man hiding under a pile of scrapwood. Upon questioning, the man reported that he had been struck by mortar fragments in the night and had managed to get away from the rest of the men in the confusion. He also told me freely that there was about twenty men still in the building and that an officer had shot and killed a fellow PDF soldier when that soldier had wanted to surrender. We treated his wounds and moved him to the POW collection point.

The rest of the hanger comprised of at least a hundred separate office spaces built inside the hanger. Taking our time, we systematically searched each one. In the area that 2nd Squad was searching, I heard a few shots, followed by a lot of arguing in Spanish. My RTO and I ran over to the area and found SGT Kimbrough and two of his squad members searching four PDF soldiers. After a brief discussion, I found out that PFCs Santypal and Hunter saw the men run into a room. Knowing a little Spanish, PFC Santypal tried to talk them into coming out peacefully. The docile men would say they wanted to come out, but the hostile man would shout that he would kill them and anyone coming in the room. Because the rooms inside the hanger were made of thin particle board facades, the pair of U.S. soldiers decided to rush the unlit room and try to subdue the hostile enemy soldier. As a result, the PDF soldiers were captured without any firing and without serious injury to the hostile soldier. Because of their

initiative, concern for the safety of the docile men, and that of soldiers in adjacent rooms, the pair of PFCs were each awarded Bronze Stars for Valor.

After searching the hostile man myself, I noticed that he was wearing a "Commando" T-shirt inside out. I did not know if this was by choice or if it was because we had awoken him when the lights were already put out, but this answered why he had resisted and confirmed to me that there was indeed men still in the objective area that were well trained and willing to keep up the fight. I escorted the men back part of the way through the building until I found SGT Judd and gave them to his sappers to return them to the rear. I held one of the docile men back to try to learn where the other PDF soldiers were and how many. After he told me that he knew nothing, I handed him over to SGT Judd. When he saw SGT Judd, wearing the rubber combat glasses and face paint he fell the floor, shaking and crying. Another Sapper, SGT Pidilla, understood Spanish and told me the man was babbling that SGT Judd looked so evil that he was convinced he was going to be killed for not talking. Because of the man's fears, I told SGT Judd to have SGT Pidilla escort him to the rear so he could be reassured that he was not going to be harmed. Clearing the rest of the building was uneventful and took over an hour.

Because Red 21 had to clear building 10 to get to his other buildings, I was ordered to building 13, my last building. Outside the door they intended to use as a foothold, SGT Kimbrough told me he could hear movement inside the room. I told him to frag the room, then enter without shooting because it appeared to be a boiler room and not a door that would lead to the rest of the building. After the grenades exploded, we entered and searched the room. Because of the darkness and the hot water spraying out of the damaged pipes, we were unable to search the entire room, but I felt confident that the noises SGT Kimbrough had heard were not that of humans. The rest

of the entrances were made of at least two inches of steel. All of the doors were locked from the outside. After reporting to Jaguar 6 of the situation, he ordered Green 21 to take down building 14. At 1300, after all the buildings were secure, Jaguar 6 called the Battalion Commander and informed him that the compound was secure and that we were setting up our 360 degree defense as planned. (see Map 4.) During the same transmission, the Battalion Commander tasked Jaguar 6 with providing one platoon to guard the Joint Task Force Panama HQ, on nearby Quarry Heights. The 1st Platoon departed immediately for the mission to guard JTF Panama. (Jeffers)

During the entire fourteen hours of combat, the company suffered only six WIA, none of which was life threatening. The PDF had suffered five dead and approximately 25 wounded, and over eighty prisoners. A few weeks after the assault, an MP element found over thirty-five dead PDF in a field between Alpha Company's objective and Charlie Company's. Because we chose to leave the south side of the objective uncovered, we allowed the enemy to abandon his defenses, thus ultimately leading to the capture of the objectives.

In retrospect, if I were the commander of his operation, I would change very little. The method that the CPT Flynt chose to attack this particular site was the best option available. It is key to mention that the company had rehearsed, working side-by-side on multiple live fires involving complex sets of plywood building on livefire ranges. This realistic training fostered a confidence in not only our own platoon but in the abilities of the other platoons.

Lessons Learned

1. **Issue:** The M72 LAW is a far better weapon for producing casualties on the inside of buildings than the AT4.

Discussion: Because the LAW isn't designed to cut through as much armor, the hole it creates is much larger than the AT4, and it creates a much larger amount of spalding on the inside of the room. The weight of the LAW is 1/3rd that of the AT4; therefore a soldier had three LAWs to every AT4.

2. **Issue:** Use of bodybags for carrying WIA and KIAs.

Discussion: Because the Army bodybag is made out of lightweight nylon and can be folded and carried easily, it is well suited for use as a litter. Additionally, by adding of a poncho liner, it can double as a sleeping bag.

3. **Issue:** MOUT Doctrine

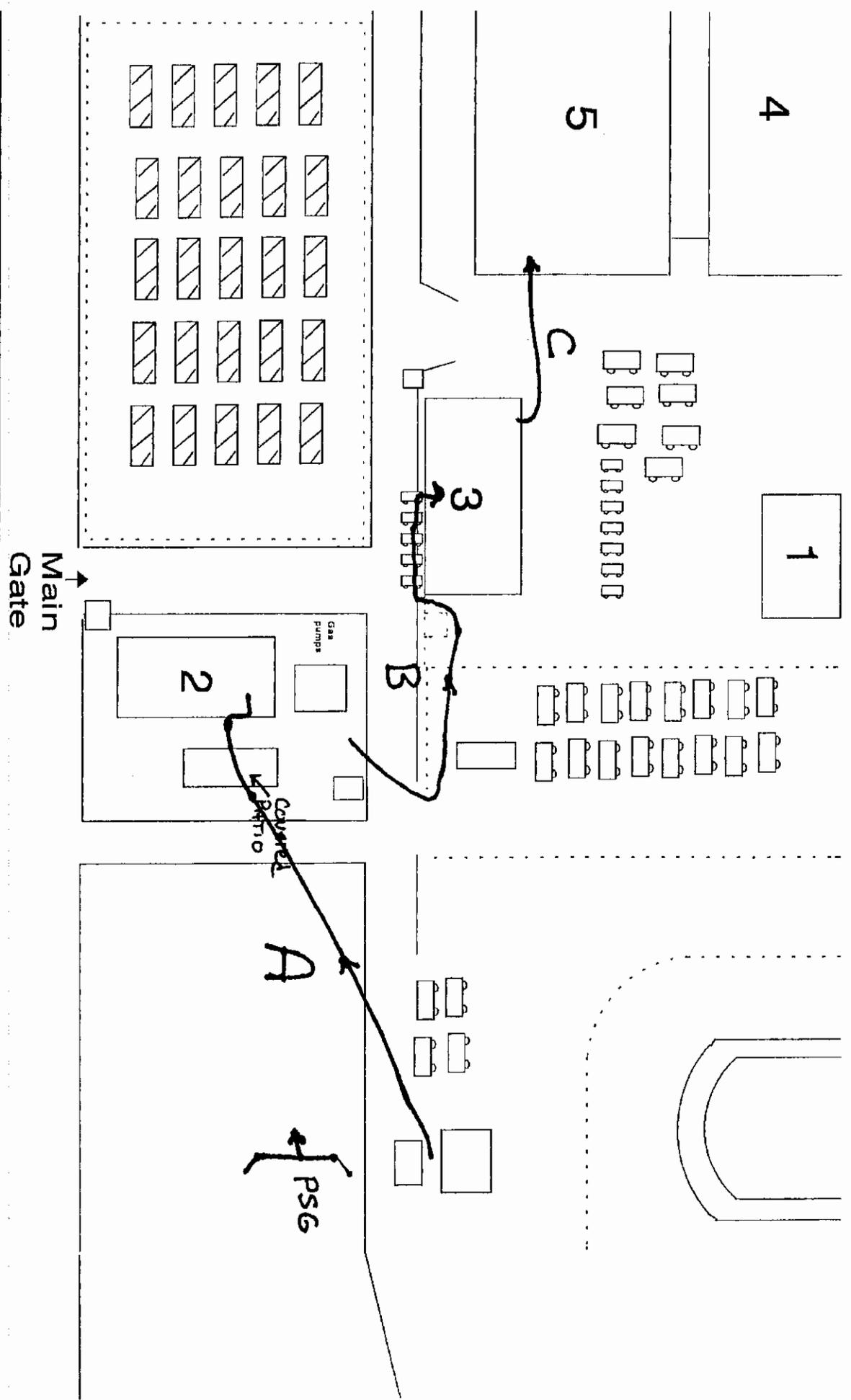
Discussion: For too long, the Army doctrine has been that all MOUT environments would be considered void of all civilian occupation. As we learned from Operations URGENT FURY and JUST CAUSE, that belief is as valid as believing the Soviet forces would always fight by their doctrine. It is critical that we incorporate hostile and docile civilians on the objective areas. Passive room clearing and quick-fire techniques of room clearing should be taught along side the explosive entry techniques. This would greatly reduce the demand for Class V and friendly casualties due to the over use of grenades and the spraying of rooms regardless of construction materials.

4. **Issue:** 90mm RCLR

Discussion: The 90mm proved to be the MOUT weapon of choice in a LIC environment. Its penetration at ranges of over 900 meters, with the HE round, cannot be beat by any other weapon in the light infantry. The flechet round, with its high lethality rate, furthers the argument that this is the most versatile weapon in the system.

5. **Issue:** Training of Slice Elements

Discussion: Because all of the slice elements in my platoon had trained with us, I saw no problems with them taking the initiative and completing any task. Every training opportunity we had, the sappers, medics, and the FOs were all included. Because the slice elements knew the particular way my company and platoon did business, they were trusted and treated as though they were one of us.

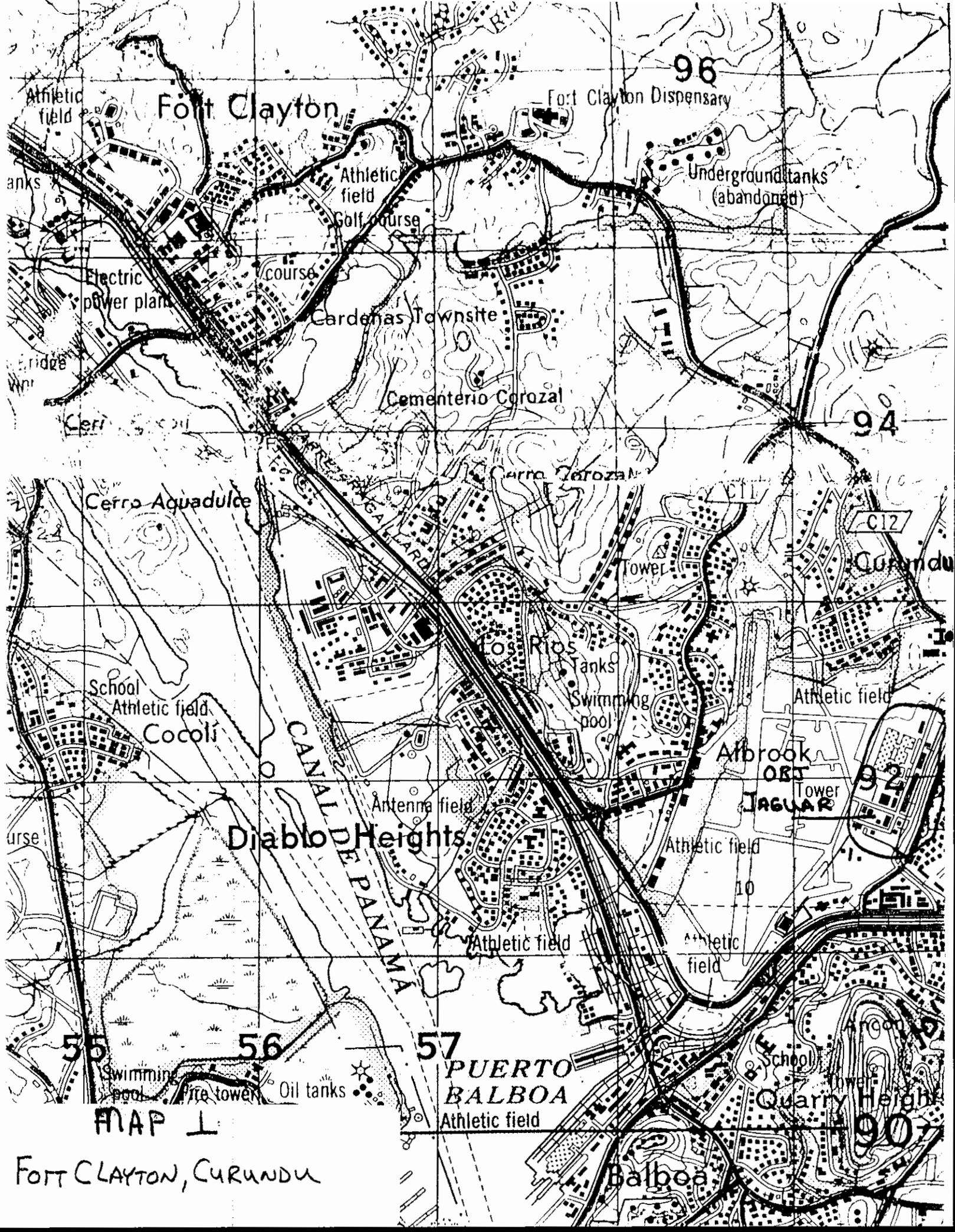


"Red21", 1st PLT

Figure 1

Legend

-  POV
-  Truck/Bus
-  Fence
-  Conax
-  N



Fort Clayton

Fort Clayton Dispensary

96

Underground tanks (abandoned)

Athletic field

Athletic field

Golf course

Electric power plant

course

Cardenas Townsite

Cementerio Corozal

94

Cerro Aguadulce

Cerro Corozal

Tower

Curundu

School

Athletic field

Cocoli

Osa Rios

Tanks

Swimming pool

Athletic field

Albrook

ORBIT

Tower

92

Diablo Heights

Antenna field

Athletic field

10

Athletic field

Athletic field

55

56

57

PUERTO BALBOA

Athletic field

School

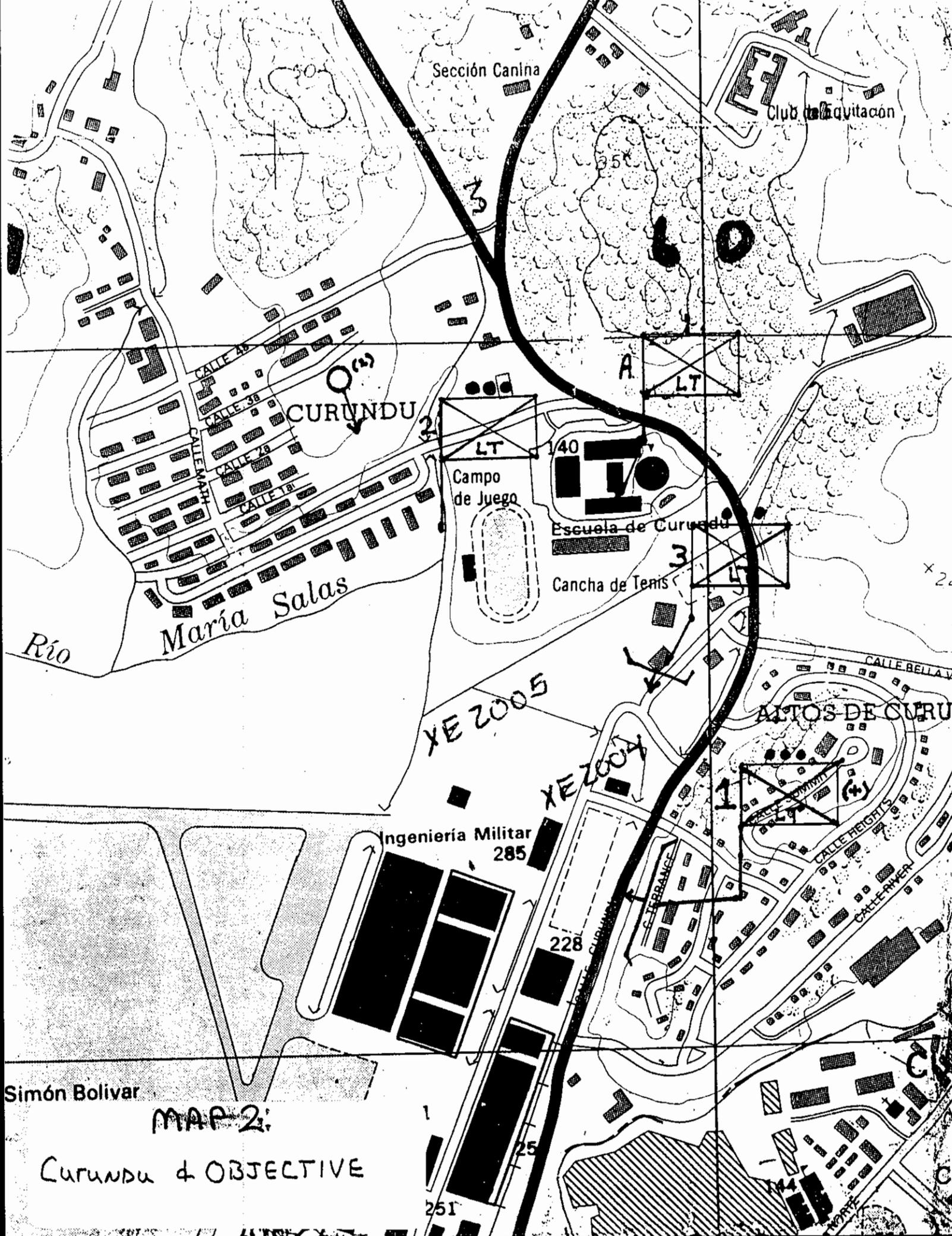
Quarry Heights

90

MAP 1

FORT CLAYTON, CURUNDU

Balboa



Sección Canina

Club de Equitación

CURUNDU

Río María Salas

Campo de Juego

Escuela de Curundu

Cancha de Tenis

YE 2005

ALTOS DE CURU

Ingeniería Militar 285

Simón Bolívar

MAP 2

Curundu & OBJECTIVE

A

LT

LT

140

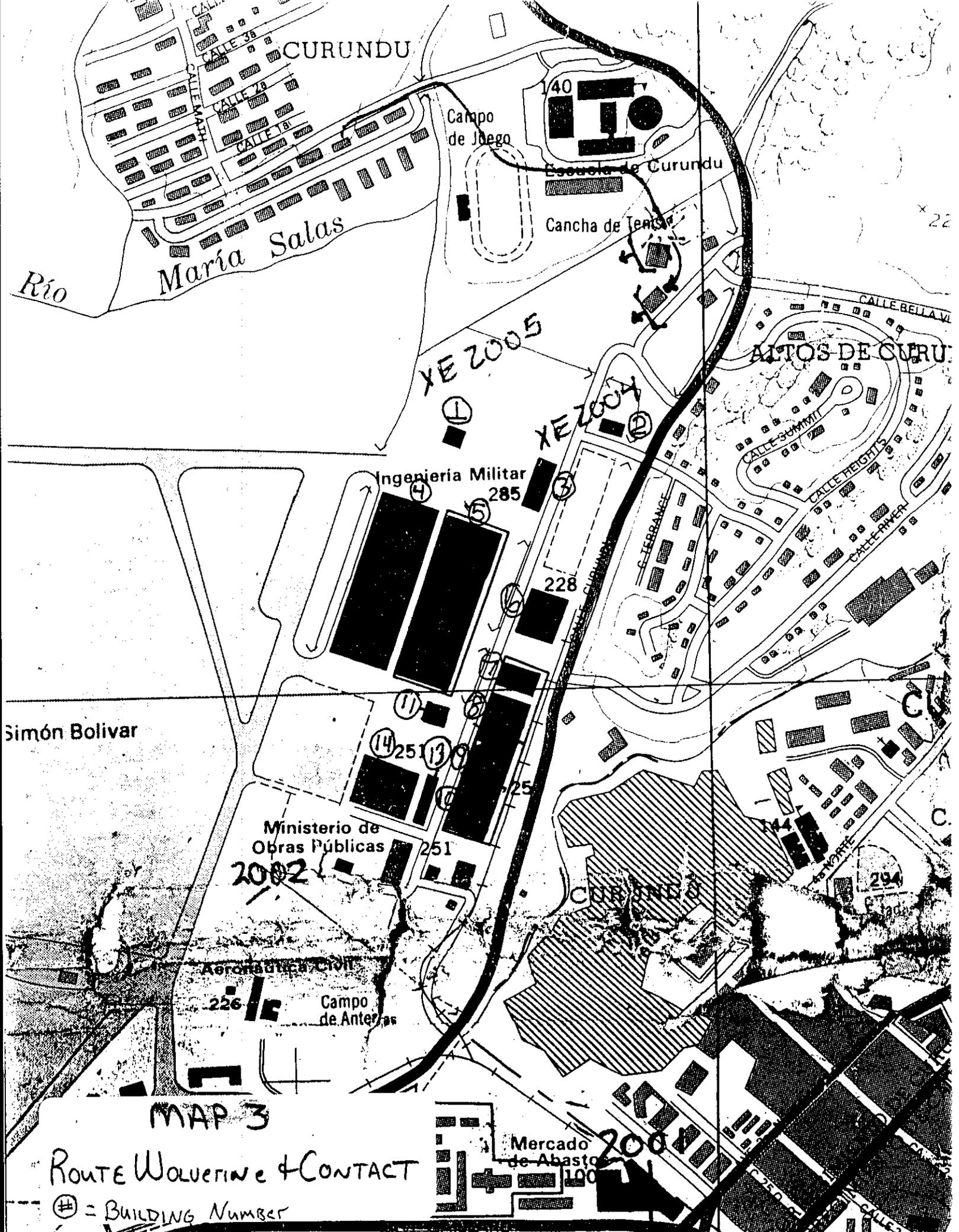
3

1

228

251

x 20



CURUNDU

Río

María Salas

Campo de Juego

140

Escola de Curundu

Cancha de Tenis

YE 2005

YE 2004

ALTOS DE CURUNDU

Ingenieria Militar 285

228

Simón Bolívar

Ministerio de Obras Públicas 251

251

2002

Aeronautica Civil

226

Campo de Aterrizaje

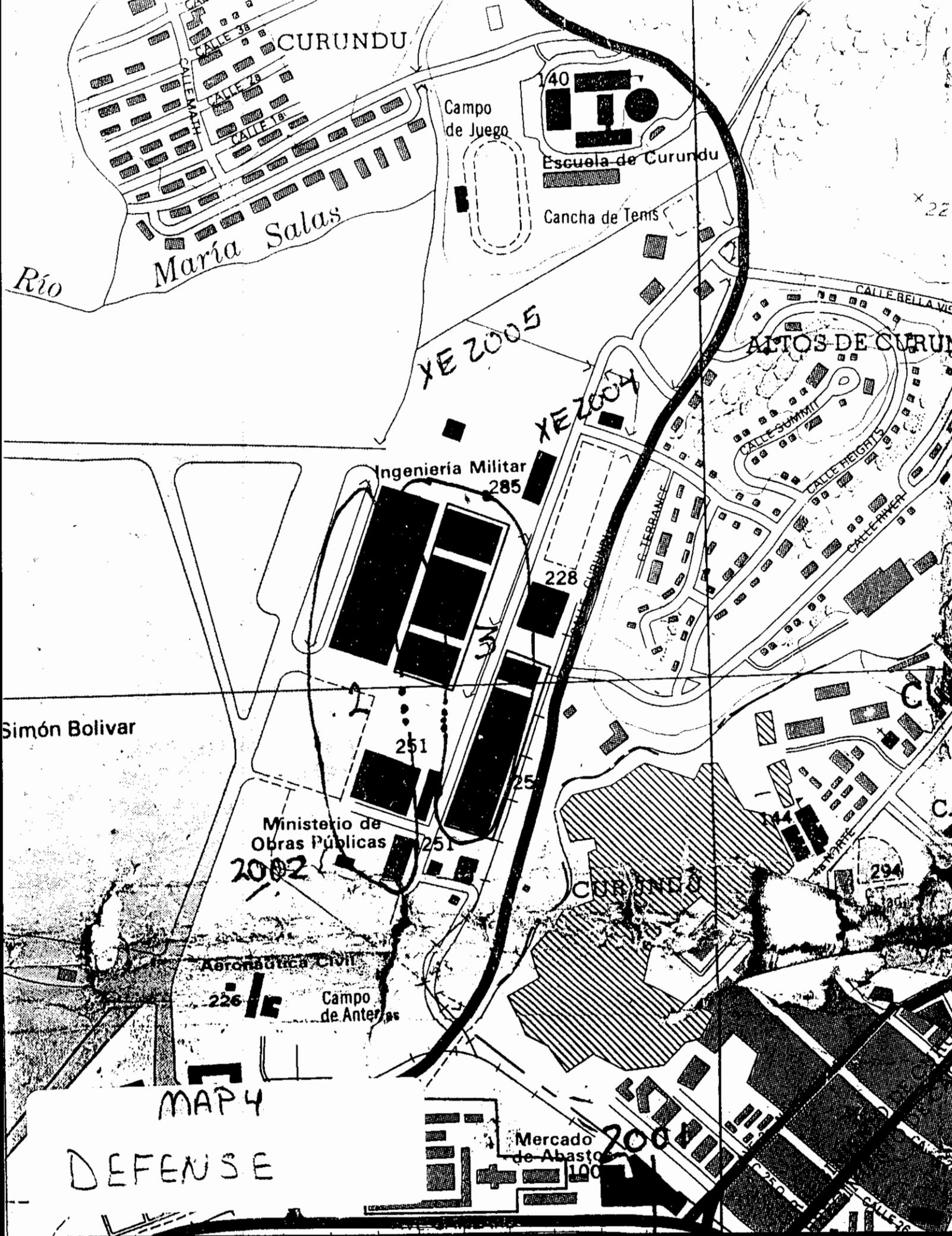
Mercado de Abasto 100

100

MAP 3

ROUTE Wolverine & CONTACT

⊕ = BUILDING NUMBER



CURUNDU

140
Escuela de Curundu

Campo de Juego

Cancha de Tennis

Río María Salas

XE 2005

XE 2004

ALTOS DE CURUNDU

Ingenieria Militar 285

Simón Bolívar

Ministerio de Obras Públicas 251

2002

Aeronautica Civil

226
Campo de Antillas

Mercado de Abastos 100

MAP 4
DEFENSE

2001

x 22

CURUNDU

CALLE 35
CALLE 30
CALLE 25
CALLE 20
CALLE 15
CALLE 10
CALLE 5
CALLE MATH
ría Salas

Campo de Juego

Escuela de Curundu

Cancha de Tenis

Escuela de Curundu

Cancha de Tenis

XE 2005

XE 2004

ALTOS DE CURUNDU

XE 2004

Ingeniería Militar 285

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228

228

Ministerio de Obras Públicas 2002

Campo de Anter

e CONTACT

Mercado de Abasto 2001

Mercado de Abasto 2001

1857

100

100

