Part I

COMMANDER, JCS JOINT
CONTINGENCY TASK GROUP

REPORT ON

THE SON TAY
PRISONER OF WAR
RESCUE OPERATION

PART I

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

1. This is a report of the salient facts concerning the planning, training, and conduct of the Son Tay Search and Rescue Operation. The operation was extremely complex, and it is believed important to view specific facets in the context of the overall operation; hence, it was necessary to limit the Part I narrative of the facts and comments to consumable proportions. It should be noted, however, that the exceptionally capable staff and forces involved in this operation produced an infinite number of concepts and ideas which were the real fabric of this, for the most part, pioneering endeavor. Some of these ideas emerge in Parts I and II; others are evidenced in the raw data in Part III. However, only those who lived with the operation on a daily basis can fully appreciate the ingenuity, imagination, judgments, and decisions which were fundamental to the success of the operation.

2. I can unequivocally state that, other than the absence of prisoners at the objective, there were no major surprises in the operation. Service and national intelligence agencies' assessments of enemy capabilities and reaction were the basis for the concept of operations and, considering the lack of precedent for this type of operation, were highly accurate. The initial judgment that we could get to the objective safely and probably undetected proved valid. The air and ground diversions worked as expected. Each element of the force had vital tasks to perform, and each performed admirably.

3. The ground force's mission was the important one of conducting the 30-minute mission on the ground at Son Tay. This required extensive training with every facet of the operation exercised more than 170 times. Every conceivable contingency was provided for and exercised. Each man knew precisely what his task was under each contingency and was an expert

in his area - from the demolition specialist to the radio operator. The rapid and smooth transition to an alternate plan at the objective testifies to ability of the force to adapt to varying conditions. Innovations were made in equipment, procedures, and tactics. The capability was developed to enter cell blocks regardless of degree of security or hardness of construction. Night viewing devices were obtained to provide maximum visibility for the road block elements. A night firing optic was obtained from commercial sources which was adapted to the weapons and increased night firing effectiveness threefold. The communications gear and procedures were specially adapted to provide dependable command and control on the ground. Redundancy in communications was considered essential and provided. The extensive joint training with the helicopter and A-1 elements assured a closely knit team which was essential to survival and extremely effective.

4. The task of the air element was infinitely complex. The overall success of the entire operation was dependent on the capability of this element of the force to perform its assigned task. Basically, the task was to transport the assault force to the objective area undetected, protect it while there, then return it - and hopefully a large number of POWs - to a planned recovery base. The total mission time from launch to recovery was approximately five and one-half hours with 30 minutes of holding while the troops were on the ground in North Vietnam. Over one hundred primary mission and support aircraft, operating from seven bases and three aircraft carriers, participated in the operation. While in retrospect it might appear that excessive forces and resources were committed to the operation, it should be noted that we were successful not only in what was done but what could have been done if necessary. Under the conditions that were generated in North Vietnam during the operation, it would have been possible to respond successfully to most

conceivable emergencies. Our training emphasized many alternative courses of action. Indeed, as much effort went into planning and training for emergencies and unforeseen circumstances as was expended in the planned concept. The flying training began on 20 August 1970 and terminated on 8 November 1970. The training involved unorthodox formations of HH-53s, an HH-3, UH-1H, C-130, and A-1s. Innovative tactics and procedures were developed, tested, refined, and employed. New concepts were developed and proved feasible. New methods of ordnance delivery were devised and tested. "Short-cut" procedures were undertaken at my discretion because time did not permit following accepted regulatory procedures. Extremely close supervision was exercised and a completely safe program resulted. The over 1,000 hours of incident-free flying training conducted primarily at night under near combat conditions attests to the highly professional and safety conscious approach of the operations staff and aircrews. The foregoing was made possible only by resting broad latitude and decision authority with the Commander of the JCTG. Such a procedure is considered sound and operationally feasible when the luxury of using select aircrews, troops, and supervisory personnel is provided.

5. The diversionary actions performed by Carrier Task Force 77 were vital to the overall success of the mission. The results of this effort were exactly as foreseen during the planning phase. It caused the enemy defense authorities to split their attention and concern thereby contributing greatly to the confusion and chaos which resulted. In short, it served to deny the enemy the option of concentrating his attention to our true and primary mission. The timing of the Navy diversion was precisely according to plan. The US Navy planning and mission execution was superb in every respect. I am deeply grateful for the wholehearted and enthusiastic support received from the Commander of Carrier Task Force 77.

6. The timely, rapid, dependable, and completely responsive airlift provided to deploy the Task Group from Eglin AFB, Florida, to Southeast

Asia and return under exacting conditions designed to satisfy security requirements contributed greatly to overall success. The support and cooperation from the CONUS major Air Force and Army commands were completely responsive to JCTG requirements. The resources, support, and guidance provided by CINCPAC, both personally and through his subordinate commanders, were indispensable. Reliance was especially heavy on Seventh Air Force resources. Not only were the numerous basic resources provided, but also placed at my disposal were an extensive reserve capability and alert force should they be required.

7. As Commander of the JCTG, I emphasized the importance of a completely joint and unified approach to every facet of this complex operation. In fact, this was viewed as essential and was insisted upon throughout the planning, training, employment, and report preparation, culminating in a unique joint ceremony believed to be without precedent during which the Secretary of Defense presented decorations to members of the JCTG at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on 9 December 1970.

8. Specific lessons learned were many but also, to a major extent, perishable. It is unlikely that the environment experienced in North Vietnam on 21 November 1970 will ever be duplicated. Further, it would be unwise to project concepts or tactics precisely tailored to that specific situation into a different environment. In general terms, however, it is believed that the key aspects of the operation were the accurate assessment of enemy capabilities and the imaginative amalgamation of numerous state of the art capabilities into the unique concept employed. Fundamental to this were the command arrangements that allowed the Task Group the freedom to develop optimized concepts for the situation at hand and, once approved by the National Command Authority, vested in COMJCTG go-no-go authority and operational control over all forces with authority

to make all tactical decisions from launch to recovery of the force. This degree of command prerogative is considered essential for operations of this type.

LEROY J. MANOR, Brigadier General, USAF
Commander, Joint Contingency Task Group, JCS

FOREWORD

This report is structured in three parts. Part I is a condensed narrative report on the operation from inception to completion. Part II includes expanded reports on various facets of the operation which are considered to be of major significance. Part II is designed to provide more extensive information to those individuals or agencies having intelligence or operational requirements for this detailed information. Part III is a compilation of extensive raw data such as verbatim text of communications recorded during the operation, debriefings, flight plans, charts, and other similar information. Part III exists in only one copy and the voluminous data must be carefully researched and interpreted to be of value. The TABLE OF CONTENTS for Parts II and III is included as Attachment 1.

Part I of this report is organized chronologically insofar as possible. However, there were many instances when numerous actions occurred simultaneously and, because of the large number of elements involved, it was not possible to report all activities concurrently. Therefore, it is suggested that the reader examine and rely on the TABLE OF CONTENTS as a guide in placing portions of this report in the proper context.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

PART I

PART I

CONDENSED NARRATIVE REPORT

A. SUMMARY. A Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved feasibility study conducted during June and July 1970 concluded that it was possible and proposed a concept to forcibly rescue an estimated 50-60 US prisoners of war (POW) being held in a camp on the outskirts of Son Tay, 23 miles northwest of Hanoi. On 08 August 1970, a Joint Contingency Task Group (JCTG) was formed reporting to the JCS to prepare a plan, train the force, and conduct the operation. Planning was completed during the last two weeks of August, and training began on 20 August 1970 at Eglin AFB, Florida. The Army element was billeted at Eglin Auxiliary Field 3 and was composed of 56 primary mission troops with an additional 47 alternate and support personnel. The Air Force element included two C-130E, five HH-53, one HH-3, and five A-1 aircrews drawn from CONUS and overseas units. In addition, two Army UH-1H crews were attached to the air element. Aircraft and maintenance support during the training phase was provided by MAC, TAC, and Army CONUS units. Advance elements of the JCTG deployed to Southeast Asia (SEA) in early November to coordinate theater forces required for the operation. The Task Group closed at Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, on 17 November. On 20 November, after three days of detailed briefings, aircrews and the ground force deployed to other bases in Thailand where theater aircraft had been prepared for the mission. The mission was conducted almost exactly as planned, and no losses of aircraft or personnel were sustained in the objective area. The POWs had been moved from the Son Tay Prison prior to the operation. No POWs were rescued.

B. BACKGROUND. In mid-May 1970, Colonel George J. Iles and Colonel Rudolph C. Keller, both assigned to the 1127th USAF Special Activity Squadron (Headquarters Command), obtained intelligence indicating that US POWs were being held in a camp on the outskirts of the city of Son Tay, 23 miles

northwest of Hanoi. This information was provided to Brigadier General James R. Allen, Director of Plans and Policy, DCS P&O, Headquarters USAF, who commissioned a cursory conceptual study of rescue possibilities and presented the findings to Brigadier General Donald D. Blackburn, Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities (SACSA), JCS. On 5 June 1970, Brigadier General Blackburn briefed the Joint Chiefs of Staff and recommended that an in-depth feasibility study be conducted. The JCS approved the study and, on 10 June 1970, SACSA convened a 12-man study group with representation from the Services and DIA. (See Part II, Section A, for listing of personnel participating in the feasibility study.) Colonel Norman H. Frisbie, USAF, chaired the group and, on 10 July 1970, briefed the JCS that a rescue effort was considered feasible and presented an expanded concept of operations. The JCS approved the concept and directed commencement of detailed planning and training. On 8 August, a Joint Contingency Task Group (JCTG) was formed under the JCS with SACSA as the Office of Primary Responsibility. Brigadier General LeRoy J. Manor, Commander, USAF Special Operations Force (SOF), Eglin AFB, Florida, was designated Commander and Colonel Arthur D. Simons, USA, J-4, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was assigned as Deputy Commander of the Task Group.

C. INTELLIGENCE:

1. Planning Phase:

provided additional background information primarily obtained from enemy POW interrogations.

c. Both SR-71 and drone (low altitude) resources were programmed to obtain aerial photography of the objective, the surrounding area, and the tentative route. Primary emphasis was initially placed on drone coverage as large scale photography was desired for POW verification and positive identification of enemy order of battle.

The drones obtained coverage of the surrounding area and provided a basis for and verification of high altitude photography. The drone effort was terminated on 28 October 1970.

d. Photo interpretation of SR-71 and drone missions during the planning stages revealed no major changes to the military installations throughout the objective area. An Early Warning/Ground Control Intercept (EW/GCI) training site was identified approximately 3.3NM south southeast of the objective and an increase in truck/vehicle activity was noted in the area south and west of the objective. This increase was attributed to an apparent increase in driver training activity and an increase in watershed control construction and harvesting operations. No increase or significant redeployment of surface-to-air missiles (SAM), antiaircraft artillery (AAA), or ground or air forces which would adversely affect the operation was identified.

e. Changes in the activity level at the objective area were detected on photographic coverage during this period; however, other intelligence satisfactorily explained these changes. The activity level appeared to decrease as noted through photography of 3 October 1970, and then apparently began to increase on 2 November with the camp appearing

active on 20 November 1970. No indication of automatic weapons (AW), AAA deployment, or increased ground force activity in and around the camp was detected.

f. Extensive photo derived target materials were provided to the planners, ground force units, and aircrews. These consisted of route check/turning point photos, annotated photo mosaics of the target area, objective and bridge models, initial point (IP) to objective mosaics for use by the C-130 forward looking infrared (FLIR) operators, detailed route and objective charts, and detailed briefings. The value of this program was verified during the operation.

2. Theater Coordination:

All

coordination accomplished insured immediate flow of data to Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector (TACC-NS) and PACOM Air Defense Analysis Facility for operations and operations recap.

b. Collateral in-country coordination consisted of working with and assisting the intelligence officers and crews of the F-105 WILD WEASEL and F-4 MIG CAP units with mission planning, threat analysis, and evasion and escape which would be used on the mission.

c. A Task Group Photo Interpreter deployed to Yokota AB, Japan, (67th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron) seven days prior to the operation to coordinate and accomplish photo interpretation of SR-71 photo reconnaissance missions flown in support of the operation.

d. Interpretation results, film, and briefing materials from missions flown on 6 and 13 November 1970 were handcarried to Takhli RTAFB on 17 November where aircrews and intelligence personnel were briefed. Current electronic order of battle, air order of battle, and missile order of battle were obtained from Seventh Air Force and transmitted to Takhli RTAFB on 19 November.

3. Deployment/Employment:

a. It was originally planned to have both SR-71 and drone coverage on the day prior to the operation. However, an SR-71 "package" was developed for periodic photo coverage between 10 November and 21 November to be interpreted in-theater. This package consisted of three special tracks designed to cover the objective, surrounding area, and the JCTG penetration and egress routes. The first three missions were to be flown on or about specific dates and the last two missions were mandatory regardless of weather, unless changed by COMJCTG. The missions of 20 and 21 November were flown, processed, and interpreted as scheduled, and the processed film was handcarried to Washington, D. C., arriving on 22 November 1970.

b. All photo reconnaissance flown after 5 November 1970 in support of the operation was interpreted in-theater and the results given to the JCTG. The interpretation of the last photo mission was transmitted to COMJCTG (telecon) six hours and the National Military Command Center (NMCC) three hours prior to H-hour.

4. Objective Area Operations:

a. Enemy Ground Reaction:

(1) The level of enemy reaction at the Son Tay POW Camp was as expected. NVN personnel within the POW complex experienced complete tactical surprise and were unable to effectively resist US forces. NVN

personnel outside the walled compound experienced initial surprise then actively engaged the ground force with small arms fire throughout the operation.

(2) The primary external ground threat to the operation appeared to originate from what was previously considered as the Son Tay Secondary School located approximately 400 meters to the south of the objective area. This installation should be reclassified as a "military installation" as numerous armed personnel were encountered at this location. The ground forces noted that these personnel were oriental, larger (5'10"-6') than other NVN personnel in the area, and were not wearing the normal NVA dress but instead, wore T-shirts and fitted dark undershorts. Their nationality was not determined. Personnel, possibly from this installation, subsequently engaged "blocking" elements of the US Ground Force south of the POW Camp.

(3) Another possible reaction was the sighting of four or five small vehicles, possibly jeeps, which were proceeding west toward the POW Camp from the "light industry" complex located approximately 600 meters from the objective area. These vehicles stopped when taken under fire by US personnel. No threat materialized from the military installations located two to four nautical miles south and southwest of the POW Camp or from Son Tay City.

(4) The A-1Es reported no vehicular movement or other indications of reaction from Son Tay City.

b. Enemy Air Defense Reaction:

(1) The initial NVN Air Defense System reaction against the task force was first noted approximately 20 minutes after the first helicopter landed at the landing zone (LZ). Two SAM missiles were launched at the F-105 WILD WEASEL aircraft with the first missile damaging Firebird

03. Approximately 16 SAMs were launched against the USAF aircraft in the western area. None of the missiles detonated further west than the "Finger Lake" nor below 4,000 to 5,000 feet in the target area. However, two were seen to detonate at an estimated 30,000-40,000 feet.

(2) No antiaircraft or significant ground-to-air automatic weapons fire was noted in the objective area.

(3) Crew members reported two suspected MIG aircraft sightings in the objective area and one during egress. Time correlation with friendly aircraft disposition indicates these were probably Task Group aircraft.

5. Post Operations Analysis:

a. Objective:

(1) Assault Group personnel identified two of the five major buildings within the prison compound as cell blocks. One of the other buildings was an open bay, possible group confinement area, and the other two buildings (built in late 1969) had probably never been used, and their function was unknown.

(2) The two cell blocks contained a total of 10 cells, each secured by a steel door with a peephole. Two of the cells were for either solitary confinement or two people, while the remainder appeared capable of holding a greater number of prisoners. Some were being utilized as living quarters and others for storage. No shackles, posts, or anchors for restraining devices were noted in any of the cells or buildings.

(3) Garden plots had been started in the main courtyard and north addition. This could account for the apparent increase in activity noted on 2 November photography. The overall appearance of the prison compound - as evidenced by hanging shutters, unused latrines, litter,

stench, livestock, and deteriorating buildings - gave the appearance of having limited use for a considerable period of time. It is apparent that the facility had been a prison; however, at the time of assault, it was either being repaired for reoccupancy or was merely in caretaker status.

b. Enemy Ground Reaction. Post operation analysis did not reveal additional enemy ground force reactions. The lack of resistance within the walled compound is attributed to the shock caused by the initial assault. The personnel engaged in the support area of the camp complex were definitely NVA military personnel as evidenced by clothing and weapons. Ground force personnel were unable to determine the nationality of the hostile troops encountered at the military installation located south of the Son Tay POW Camp. (See Part II, Section C, Special Intelligence, for additional details.)

c. Enemy Air Defense Reaction:

(1) It appears that, due to the tactics and maneuvers of the F-105 WILD WEASEL aircraft and the possible limited detection of the Strike Force (A-1E or C-130E aircraft) by missile radars after reaching the objective, there was considerable confusion within the NVN Air Defense System. This could have contributed to the slow reaction of the system, indiscriminate firing of SAMs, ineffective AAA fire, and lack of airborne MIG aircraft. The Navy diversionary tactics achieved the degree of confusion desired. (See Part II, Section C, Special Intelligence, for additional details.)

(2) Based on SAM sightings, it appeared that most of the missiles were launched against the F-105 and F-4D aircraft. After-action reports indicate two F-105 aircraft were damaged by SAMs, with one landing safely at Udorn RTAFB and the crew of the other aircraft ejecting over northeast Laos. C-130E Electronic Warfare Officers (EWOs) reported they

received periodic emissions from EW/GCI and SAM missile radars. There is no confirmation that the Task Group was tracked during ingress and objective area operations.

(3) Post operation analysis reports do not confirm suspected MIG "sightings." (See Part II, Section C, Special Intelligence, for further details.)

d. Photo Intelligence:

(1) The objective and objective area were covered on large scale and small scale SR-71 photography from two flights on 21 November 1970. The coverage taken during late morning showed considerable activity at both the Son Tay POW Camp and the military installation located approximately 400 meters to the south.

(2) The aft section, two main rotor blades, and burned out wreckage of the HH-3 were visible within the POW compound. Several of the buildings showed roof damage and one guard building was burned out. Numerous personnel and several 3/4 ton vehicles were noted on the north/south road east of the objective on both flights. Several personnel and a 3/4 ton vehicle were at the transformer station which had been damaged by the US ground force. Many personnel were noted in and around the military installation south of the camp, with a group of about 15-20 at the initial landing site of HH-53 #1.

(3) Outside of the immediate objective area, activity appeared normal. No evidence of high interest levels could be detected at the HH-53 helicopter holding areas. A class was being conducted by one of the SAM launchers (missile loaded) at the SAM training facility 2.7NM south of the objective. Confirmation or negation of Shrike damage to the struck SAM sites could not be determined.

D. PLANNING. The feasibility study group formed the cadre for the expanded planning staff. Additional personnel were provided by the Services and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and National Security Agency (NSA) participation was also obtained. The planning staff, numbering 25, with part-time augmentation personnel, convened in the Pentagon during the week of 10-14 August 1970 and was organized along traditional Joint Staff lines. With the expanded concept of operations developed in the feasibility study as a basis, outlines for both Training and Operations Plans were developed, and schedules for planning and training were established. It was intended that the staff complete the Training Plan before the Operations Plan so that arrangements could be made and facilities readied to begin training on 1 September. However, a draft of the Operations Plan was requested by 28 August 1970, and both Training and Operations Plans were produced simultaneously. The Training Plan was completed on 20 August 1970, and the Operations Plan was reviewed by the Services and published on 28 August 1970.

1. Personnel. Concurrent with planning, the Army and Air Force elements identified sources of personnel and initiated recruitment/selection programs. The Army screened more than 300 volunteers from the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in selecting their 103-man operations and support force. Two key Army officers were name requested from the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Air Force aircrew personnel were selected from numerous sources, with the final determination on all individuals being made by the Commander JCTG. Four helicopter aircraft commanders were obtained from the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Training Center (ARRTC), Eglin AFB, Florida, one from TAC's Shaw AFB, and one from SEA. Helicopter copilots were drawn from SEA units and ARRTC. The SEA personnel provided the needed current in-theater expertise. Likewise, five A-1 aircraft commanders were drawn from 1st Special Operations Wing, Eglin AF Auxiliary Field 9, Florida, and five

pilots were obtained from the 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. One C-130E aircrew was obtained from Detachment 2, 1st Special Operations Wing, Pope AFB, North Carolina. The second C-130E aircrew was drawn from the 7th Special Operations Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany. One HC-130P (tanker) aircraft commander from ARRTC trained with the force and provided night refueling expertise to the theater HC-130P aircrews. Two UH-1H Army aircrews were provided by the JFK Center.

2. Aircraft. The aircraft used and their sources can best be discussed in terms of training and operational phases. The HH-3 and HH-53 helicopters and the HC-130P tankers used in training were provided by the ARRTC at Eglin AFB. Helicopter and tanker resources used during employment were provided by SEA rescue units. The 1st Special Operations Wing at Eglin AF Auxiliary Field 9 provided A-1E aircraft during training while resources of the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB were used during the actual mission. One unconventional warfare configured C-130E (COMBAT TALON) aircraft was provided by Detachment 2, 1st Special Operations Wing, Pope AFB. The second C-130E was a PACAF aircraft which was withheld from returning to the theater after completion of a modification program. These two C-130s were used throughout training, deployed to Takhli RTAFB for the mission and redeployed to the CONUS upon completion. In addition, one airlift C-130E aircraft was provided by TAC to allow formation training to begin on schedule while the two COMBAT TALON aircraft were being modified with special mission equipment. In keeping with the original concept of using a UH-1H as the assault helicopter, two UH-1Hs were obtained from the JFK Center. These aircraft were used throughout training, and one was deployed with the JCTG and used as a backup for the HH-3.

3. Training Site. Eglin AFB, Florida, was selected as the training site because it provided an isolated training area, adequate troop facilities, and was the home base for HH-3 and HH-53 helicopters and HC-130P tankers.

Additionally, A-1 strike aircraft required for training were conveniently located at the adjacent Auxiliary Field 9 (Hurlburt Field). While range scheduling and other minor problems were troublesome, the range and troop facilities at Eglin were excellent and the ready availability of aircraft was a key factor in the on schedule completion of the extensive training program.

4. Logistics. During the planning phase, the JCS directed that each Service fund and provide Service-related support. The support provided by Service staffs was excellent. CONARC and other Army commands were issued verbal instructions by the Army staff to support the JCTG and responded fully to all requests. Chief of Staff, Air Force, provided COMJCTG with a personal letter to major commanders, directing full support on a "no questions asked" basis. This letter was handcarried by COMJCTG to the Commanders of MAC, TAC, and AFSC who provided the majority of Air Force support during training and deployment phases. Specific requests for support were then submitted verbally and these commands responded fully and rapidly to all requests. Individual requests for support from Navy units were submitted through OPNAV and were expeditiously satisfied.

5. Signal. Communications-electronics joint planning was conducted concurrently in three major areas of command interest: Task Group Communications, COMJCTG Command and Control Communications, and Command Authority Communications. Initial planning concepts established three basic principles which were applied on a joint basis in each major area of interest: maximum use would be made of existing communications capabilities, facilities, and standard service equipment; communications requirement and capability at each level of command would be identified and integrated into one flexible, responsive system from national level to ground force component level; and the ground force command communications system in the objective area would be critical to the success of the mission. Accordingly,

planning would be based on the key limitations imposed by ground force equipment capability to include frequency availability and compatibility.

a. Joint Contingency Task Group. The Task Group Communications Plan was developed in Annex K COMJCTG OPLAN, based on the ground force concept of operations in the objective area and the air element's operational procedures. The communications plan was coordinated with other JCTG planning elements and DOD staff elements to ensure feasibility, compatibility, and availability of US Army and US Air Force communications electronics equipment. The communications plan established the primary means of communications as radio telephone with audio (bullhorns) and visual (flares) as backup. The ground forces were to establish internal radio nets utilizing standard lightweight manpack, squad, and air ground radios. Air elements were to be integrated into the ground force communication system by guarding the ground force command net (FM) and entering the air ground net (UHF) utilizing standard aircraft radios. Individual survival radios were to be procured through US Air Force channels and issued to each individual in the ground force for coordination of search and rescue operations. Alternate ground force plans, when developed, required minimum change in the basic communications plan.

b. COMJCTG Command and Control Communications. The plan was based on the Seventh Air Force Operations Order for out-of-country operations. It identified existing in-theater secure/non-secure telephone and teletype circuits as the primary means of communications between the elements of the Command and Control System. To maintain security during the planning phase, it was directed that minimum use be made of telephonic and electronic message transmission means. Operational code words were obtained for use during the employment phase of the operation. The plan did not include frequency assignments. These were to be obtained from in-country personnel.

c. Command Authority Communications. The Fast Reaction Procedures for Controlling Forces Worldwide (NMCC Operating Procedures 9-18) provided for communications using "RED ROCKET" messages between the NMCC, CINCPAC,

and COMJCTG as the method to be used for transmission of mission approval from the National Command Authorities. In addition, the plan required secure record and secure and non-secure voice communications between the NMCC, CINCPAC, TACC-NS, Takhli RTAFB, and Korat RTAFB.

6. Medical. Screening of medical records was accomplished during the interview and selection of US Army personnel. A typical POW profile was prepared pointing out the various patient-type medical situations that could be anticipated. Several items of clothing and equipment were specially designed for POWs for recovery medical care and evasion and escape during egress.

7. Security:

a. The Security Staff Section was organized on 11 August 1970 and charged with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the security and counterintelligence posture of the project. The first actions of the section established the security of the planning group. Work areas were surveyed, visitor control established, room and area checking procedures instituted to insure that classified material was stored properly, written instructions published outlining personal responsibilities regarding control and handling of classified material, and all outgoing messages were channeled through the section for review prior to release.

b. The next effort was directed toward planning the security aspects of the operation. The Cover and Deception Annex was developed and provided cover stories for the training and deployment phases, and the Counterintelligence Annex tasked organizations to provide specialized assistance in collecting information concerning possible organized threats to the mission. The detailed advance planning for the security of the Eglin training complex began immediately after the training site was chosen. A counterintelligence survey of the site was conducted. Technical security surveys of key buildings were made, and movement control and access procedures were established where necessary.

E. TRAINING:

1. Organization:

a. The total training effort for the JCTG was organized to support the concept that all training would be centrally accomplished prior to departure from the CONUS. As noted previously, the driving factor in the selection of Eglin Air Force Base as the training site was availability of needed resources. This same factor dictated that air operations be conducted from Eglin Main and Hurlburt Field; security and proximity to the primary range (C-2) dictated that ground forces operate from Eglin AF Auxiliary Field 3. (See Part II, Section E.)

b. Planning, direction, and control of all air activities were conducted by a full-time operations and planning staff of two officers and two noncommissioned officers. Augmentation was provided on an as-required basis from aircrew resources. Liaison with base support agencies was effected initially through a SOF Liaison Officer as planned. Once contacts were established, the JCTG operations staff coordinated directly with all base support functions. This approach facilitated coordination and enhanced security.

c. Planning, direction, and control of ground force activities were conducted by a full-time staff of six officers and three enlisted personnel operating from Field 3. This operations and planning staff, responsive to the ground forces commander, concerned itself with operations activities exclusively while an element of 42 personnel provided necessary support. Coordination with base support facilities was accomplished through the air operations staff.

d. As training progressed from individual service to joint activities, the air and ground operations planning staffs assumed the joint planning function. Regularly scheduled joint meetings were used as a vehicle to effect necessary coordination of all joint activities.

2. Facilities:

a. Preliminary facility requirements were identified to the support base by an advance survey team composed of Army and Air Force personnel. Because of the extremely limited time available, this team was not able to accurately and thoroughly establish requirements and insure that all needed facilities were made available. Consequently, the operations staff, upon arrival, found itself deeply involved in arranging facilities before it could begin its function.

b. Air Force facilities were limited to those used at Eglin Main. The maintenance area was excellent with aircraft parking allocated in close proximity to the maintenance office. Office space provided for both the operations and maintenance functions was adequate. Normal base facilities such as billeting, messing, and services proved satisfactory.

c. Army facilities were limited to those on Field 3. These included a secure building used as a Tactical Operations Center, barracks for use by Task Group personnel, supply buildings, and storage buildings. Additionally, normal base facilities such as messing, laundry, exchange, Noncommissioned Officers Club, and theater were available for use. (See Part II, Section E.)

d. Of particular significance was the total dedication of Range C-2 to this operation. This range, in close proximity to Field 3, provided an excellent training area quickly reached and easily secured.

3. Logistics:

a. Identification of logistics requirements during the early planning stages were minimal because of the lack of time for detailed planning. Requirements generated during the training phase were satisfied by a combination of joint and Service actions. Although these logistics

actions occurred during the training phase, the majority of the requirements identified were to support the actual operation. Since there was no JCTG logistics staff officer available at the training site, the air operations staff assumed responsibility for this non-operational activity.

b. Logistics support provided by Eglin AFB was generally adequate. In the area of aircraft spares, several items not available through Base Supply were obtained through lateral support. Special support needed to maintain the peculiar equipment aboard the COMBAT TALON C-130E aircraft was provided by the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC). This support, along with special attention given by AFLC to the HH-53 spare parts situation, greatly facilitated air operations throughout the training phase. Support for the UH-1H helicopters was provided on a timely basis by Fort Rucker and Fort Bragg.

4. Ground Forces Training:

a. Individual and Unit Training. Individual and unit training was accomplished throughout the training period in accordance with the outlines contained in Part III, Section E. Joint training was the major theme of Phases III and IV. (See Part II, Section E.)

b. Tactics and Techniques. The special tactics and techniques employed during the training period and the operation were the employment of the helicopter as a gun platform, techniques for POW cell search, specially adapted hand and arm signals, and the bridge demolition plan. (See Part II, Section E.).

c. Special Equipment Development. The nature of the mission, that of forcibly removing the POWs from the compound cells, led to the examination and selection of many special items of equipment. This equipment, plus other non-standard US Army equipment, is itemized and uses explained in detail in Part II, Section E.

5. Air Force Training. The training phase of this operation was accomplished basically in accordance with the published JCTC Training Plan. Minor adjustments were made to compensate for changes dictated by experience as the training progressed. Unilateral Air Force training (including Army UH-1H operations) can best be treated in terms of special equipment development, tactics and techniques, individual and crew training, and formation training.

a. Special Equipment Development. The early phases of training included a concerted effort to develop special equipment either designed or adapted to the particular needs of this mission. These separate programs constituted an additional workload on both operations staff and aircrew personnel and further complicated an already complex flying schedule.

(1) Two types of night viewing devices were obtained and tested. These were lightweight starlight scopes and electronic binoculars. Training required for aircrews in the use of these devices was minimal. Both the scopes and binoculars were tested by C-130E crews as an aid to visual navigation but proved to be of little benefit due to the cockpit lighting. Ultimately, HH-53 crew members used the binoculars to better determine landing clearances and the starlight scopes to survey the surrounding countryside while on the ground in their holding areas.

(2) The QRC-128 VHF jammer was installed for testing on an A-1H aircraft. Test missions were flown over the Gulf of Mexico to verify the effectiveness of this system against CCI voice commands. After some minor interface problems, the systems were certified to be effective for this mission. Three QRC-128 jammer kits were prepared for installation in theater A-1 aircraft. This tactic insured that one jammer would be in the immediate objective area at all times. (See Part III, Section O, for detailed test report.)

(3) The FL-2B forward looking infrared (FLIR) systems were installed on the two COMBAT TALON C-130Es by Lockheed Air Service. Two technical representatives of the Texas Instruments Company were provided to maintain the systems. Early in the training phase, it was determined that the FLIR system would require the full-time attention of one navigator; therefore, one additional navigator was added to each crew. The FLIR proved to be reliable and a highly valuable aid in identifying check points enroute and pinpointing the objective. (See Part III, Section O, for additional information.)

(4) The AN/APQ-115 Radar GAR/I (Ground-to-Air Responder/ Interrogator) with the Motorola Radar Transponder SST-124 KU/XA was employed by the Assault Force C-130E

(5) The MK-20, MOD II, rockeye dispensers were tested on A-1H aircraft. These were intended to provide a road denial/anti-vehicle weapon that could be delivered from [ ] During the tests, which were conducted in the Eglin Range Complex, all rockeyes impacted on or within [ ] No problems were noted during the testing. Prior to deployment, a munitions loading checklist was developed for use with these munitions.

(6) C-130E Ordnance Delivery. Special procedures were developed for dropping illumination flares, firefight-simulators, BLU-27/B napalm fire bombs, and MK-6 log flares. Numerous test drops were made on land and water ranges from 1,500 feet above ground level to test dispersal patterns and timing sequences. Flares and firefight simulators were hand launched through the paratroop doors and log flares over the ramp. The

BLU-27/B fire bombs which were modified to function as visual markers required special rigging and palletizing for delivery from C-130 aircraft. The crew loadmasters, flight engineers, and one pilot safety officer received special training in their fusing, arming, and safe handling. These development and test programs included the preparation of all necessary checklists for handling, loading, and delivering these varied munitions. (See Part III, Section O, for detailed test report.)

b. Tactics and Techniques:

(1) The tactics envisaged in original mission planning called for two separate formations each comprised of a lead C-130E, helicopters, and A-1Es. As training and mission planning progressed, a change in tactics was dictated by the wide variance in aircraft low speed capability. Consequently, a tactical concept of two formations, each with a lead C-130E but with either helicopters or A-1Es, was developed which would provide better formation integrity and ease of maneuver.

(2) The low altitude profile intended to reduce likelihood of radar detection proved feasible during training. It was determined that the excessively nose high attitude resulting from the extremely low airspeed (105 knots indicated airspeed) degraded the C-130E terrain avoidance radar capability. Although the degradation was significant, it did not create a dangerous situation.

(3) Electronics countermeasures (ECM) tactics were revised when testing in the Eglin area showed that the COMBAT TALON lead C-130E ECM equipment could afford a degree of protection to its formation.

(4) During the early phases of training, intelligence data militated toward use of the UH-1H for the compound landing. The most cogent factor dictating against the UH-1H was its limited range which required

staging from a forward base in northern Laos. In an effort to eliminate the staging requirement, auxiliary fuel tanks were obtained, installed, tested, and proved feasible. With this quantum improvement in range, the UH-1H appeared to be the leading candidate as the assault vehicle. However, almost simultaneously, refined photo interpretation data confirmed the feasibility of using an HH-3 for the compound landing. This information, coupled with its increased troop carrying capacity, twin engine reliability, greater firepower, and aerial refueling capability making a last minute abort possible, dictated that the HH-3 be used in lieu of the UH-1H. In order to insure maximum flexibility and redundancy, the UH-1H crews continued to train as backup for the HH-3.

(S) Since the major enemy threat to a successful helicopter landing within the compound was the guard towers at either end of the walled area, the tactic of using an HH-53 as a gunship was conceived. This tactic was designed to augment the firepower of the HH-3 and was incorporated into the mission profile.

c. Individual and crew training. Specialized aircrew training began immediately upon arrival at the training base. Training required to master the unorthodox procedures and maneuvers was minimal because of the extremely high experience and proficiency levels of all crew members selected for this mission. Special training in munitions handling and rigging for C-130E aircrews, special night air-to-ground gunnery training for select HH-53 gunners, and formation training for the Army UH-1H crews constituted most of the unique individual aircrew training accomplished.

d. Formation Training. Formation training consisted of developing new procedures and techniques to formate the various types of aircraft involved. Both the HH-3 and UH-1H were required to operate beyond their normal envelope. To cope with the excessive density altitude and gross weight combination, they flew in a drafting position immediately behind

the left wing tip of the lead C-130E and HC-130P. All formation flying was done at night with minimum aircraft lighting and almost total radio silence. Additionally, procedures were developed and perfected for loss of visual contact, weather penetration, and hostile environment contingencies. Training for C-130E and A-1E formations was minimal since their airspeeds were more compatible.

6. Joint Training. As air and ground elements of the force achieved the desired level of proficiency in accomplishing their individual tasks, integration of the air and ground forces was started. The building block concept of insuring that each facet of the operation was mastered before moving on to the next element of the problem was the underlying philosophy throughout training. Joint training began by insertion of individual ground elements into the objective area on Range C-2. These insertions were conducted during daylight and at a "walk through" pace. As proficiency increased, the pace was stepped up until real-time movement was achieved. Simultaneously, training progressed from dry to live fire in the target area and the insertion of all ground elements in real-time sequence. As aircrews and ground troops mastered the coordinated heliborne assault phase, the A-1E element was introduced and air-to-ground ordnance delivery started. As each phase of training was mastered during daylight, training in that phase was then shifted to periods of darkness. Following the integration of all aspects of the objective area operation, partial and, finally, full scale real-time mission profiles were introduced. The force was declared ready to accomplish the assigned mission following the full profile mission on 6 October 1970.

7. Signal. Joint communications training was conducted concurrently with joint operational training. The primary means of coordination and direction of this joint training was through preparation and publication of Ground Force Signal Operating Instructions (SOI) based on Annex K, Communications Electronics JCTG OPLAN. The SOI was modified in each

successive training phase to reflect new operational requirements and procedures which had been identified in previous training as best supporting effective mission execution. Assault force communications training was conducted in four phases:

a. Phase I training emphasis was placed on classroom instruction in operation and maintenance of communications equipment, radio telephone procedures, and net discipline. Reduced distance radio nets were established to insure that every member of the ground force could set up and operate each type radio to be used. Two problem areas resolved were frequency assignment and logistics support for radios.

b. Joint communications training during Phase II moved out of the classroom into actual communications support of joint operational training at realistic distances under specific conditions.

c. Joint communications training during Phase III was concentrated on placing a realistic traffic load on the assault force communications system during full mission profile training. A continuing evaluation was made of the communications system to determine its responsiveness and effectiveness in meeting actual operational requirements. Problem areas identified and resolved during Phase III training were command emphasis on radio net discipline and procedures, visual signals, an additional forward air guide radio net, and utilization of new mission radio equipment during full mission profile training.

d. Joint communications training during Phase IV was directed toward detailed refinement of the assault force communications system to support not only the basic plan but also four alternate plans. Adjustments continued to be made in net structure, equipment distribution, and configuration in relation to assault force mission requirements. Problem areas identified and resolved during Phase IV training were net structure and reporting procedures for COMAFCON to COMJCTG, establishment of an additional

ground force emergency radio net, preparation of detailed communication requirements lists for final equipment checks, and development of internal ground force code words for inclusion in Ground Force SOI. The principal objective and value of Phase IV training was in accomplishing final refinements to the basic communications plan and rehearsing the communications adjustments required in execution of the four alternate plans. The actual ground force mission SOI was prepared directly from the Phase IV Ground Force SOI and, after in-theater coordination, was implemented with minimum change. The value of one document such as a Ground Force SOI or a communications flimsy to guide and direct joint communications training was repeatedly demonstrated and is considered essential to successful joint communications training.

8. Medical:

a. Instruction. Medical lectures during training covered preventive medicine in the field, first aid, and medical psychology. Among specific areas covered were personal hygiene, jungle survival, administration of intravenous fluids, care of wounds, and malnutrition.

b. Preventive Medicine:

(1) Operational Personnel. All personnel were weighed and blood pressure and pulse recorded in the early part of training. Men were again examined during the last week of training. Smaller, lean individuals gained one to two pounds, which was attributed to muscle mass. All overweight individuals lost weight, with the average weight loss being approximately one-half pound. All pertinent immunizations, including the October influenza injection, were administered. Each man who was not a stable reactor, or who did not have a recent Tine or PPD Test for tuberculosis was tested. All individuals were instructed on malnutrition and the effects of stress on individuals who had been internees for a long period of time.

(2) POWs. Ear plugs were prepositioned on each rescue helicopter and the paramedics were instructed to insert them into the ears of

the POWs as soon as possible after egress. Appropriate clothing was also prepositioned on the rescue helicopters and at the staging hospital. Delousing and laboratory testing was to be accomplished at the recovery hospital at Udorn RTAFB.

9. Security. The actual start of training signaled the most critical phase in the security posture of the project. Large numbers of military, both Army and Air Force, began gathering in various locations in the Eglin AFB complex, and the support required, in terms of housing, work areas, and administrative support, had to be justified with a creditable cover story. Early warning measures to detect the possibilities of disclosures of espionage activities were initiated and continual monitoring of personnel, both during and after duty hours, provided a constant reminder to project personnel that security was paramount. Extensive cover and deception measures were taken in the construction of the mockup of the target POW Camp at the field training site. Project radio and telephone communications were continually monitored and analyzed by members of the USAF Security Service to provide warning of possible compromise.

F. MISSION APPROVAL. At the time the JCTG was formed on 8 August 1970, JCS approved only detailed planning and training. COMJCTG was instructed to report to JCS when, in his opinion, the concept was tested, proven feasible, and training was nearing completion. The JCS would then decide at that point whether to seek higher authority approval for the deployment. On 10 September 1970, COMJCTG reported to JCS that the concept had been proven feasible and that the Task Group would be trained and ready to deploy on 10 October 1970. COMJCTG recommended that in-theater coordination and deployment be accomplished so that the operation could be conducted during the 20-25 October window. The JCS concurred and, on 24 September 1970, COMJCTG briefed the Secretary of Defense recommending approval for October. The Secretary deferred approval pending coordination with higher authority but approved briefing CINCPAC. COMJCTG briefed CINCPAC in Washington on 25 September 1970. CINCPAC offered full support and indorsed COMJCTG as having full authority and command of the operation. At the request

of the Secretary of Defense, COMJCTG briefed the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs on 8 October 1970, and it was determined that the operation should be delayed until November. On 27 October 1970, Chairman, JCS, approved the deployment of the in-theater coordination staff starting on 1 November and deployment of the Task Group commencing 10 November. Final approval for the operation was transmitted from JCS to COMJCTG via RED ROCKET message on 18 November 1970.

G. THEATER COORDINATION:

1. Headquarters Briefings. During the period 2-7 November 1970, detailed briefings on the operation were presented to CINCPAC, COMUSMACV, Commander Seventh Air Force, and Commander Carrier Task Force 77 by the Commander and Deputy Commander, Joint Contingency Task Group. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were represented at these briefings by the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities. The briefings included all aspects of the proposed operation and generally were presented only to Commanders, Deputy Commanders, and Chiefs of Staff.

2. Facilities and Force Generation. Theater facilities and force generation was accomplished exactly as planned. Starting on 5 November 1970, JCTG staff officers visited each wing, squadron, or facility commander supporting the operation and delivered letters of instruction containing the information necessary for the commanders to perform their assigned functions. Senior officers at Seventh Air Force established the bona fidis of the JCTG staff officers prior to their visits and all commanders enthusiastically provided requested support. To attract as little interest as possible, the JCTG staff elected to rely on scheduled and space available airlift to conduct the visits. This proved to be very time consuming and only numerous fortuitous connections made possible the completion of coordination on schedule. It is considered that dedicated airlift for this purpose would have obviated many of the problems encountered and allowed individuals more time to accomplish their tasks. As planned, electrical

communications were held to an absolute minimum and only a very few messages in a limited access privacy channel were required to followup the personal coordination visits. One major deviation from the published plan was the decision by the COMJCTG to add an F-105 WILD WEASEL force for SAM suppression. Although the inclusion of this capability had been discussed during planning, the decision to employ F-105s was made during in-theater coordination. The decision proved to be well-founded. It appears that the NVN SAM sites concentrated almost exclusively on the F-105s rather than the primary mission force.

3. Logistics. Logistics requirements were predominantly Air Force oriented since the ground force was able to deploy all but its housekeeping support. Again, theater commanders provided logistics support to the extent identified in the operational plan. Difficulties were encountered at the staging base because of the base closure program. However, all needed support was eventually produced and proved adequate. Supply support was provided from the JCTG organic spares kit which proved adequate in all respects.

4. Signal:

a. General. All coordination was conducted with the in-country Tactical Air Control System organizations using the cover that additional communications were required to test and evaluate the integration of automated COLLEGE EYE (EC-121T) air surveillance inputs into the existing automated Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector.

b. COMJCTG Command and Control Communications. Additional UHF and HF/SSB frequencies were obtained from MACV through the 1964th Communications Group. The TACC-NS, alternate TACC-NS, COLLEGE EYE, and radio-relay aircraft were requested to activate and operate spare equipment for all assigned task force communications nets. Since the Southeast Asia

COLLEGE EYE Task Force had returned to the CONUS in July 1970, the returning aircraft had to conduct several digital data link tests involving the radio-relay aircraft and the TACC-NS prior to the operational mission.

c. Command Authority Communications. The NMCC tasked the Defense Communications Agency (DCA) to terminate two dedicated voice circuits at TACC-NS and a teletype circuit at Takhli RTAFB. All requested communication links between NMCC, CINCPAC, and COMJCTG were operational 24 hours prior to their required use. Periodic tests were made to insure their immediate availability. The SEA DCA Detachment and 1964th Communications Group personnel installed the requested equipments and were continuously available in the event of a circuit failure.

5. Medical. The prepositioning of medical evacuation aircraft was coordinated by COMJCTG. Two C-141 medical evacuation aircraft were prepositioned at Clark Air Base, Philippines. Upon request of COMJCTG, these two aircraft arrived at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, shortly after the Task Group aircraft recovered. The JCTG Surgeon arranged for the base hospital at Udorn RTAFB to provide medical personnel and equipment necessary to activate and operate a Casualty Staging Unit.

6. Weather. Protecting the security of the operation imposed some special problems during in-theater coordination. Much of the decision base for the final launch hinged upon timely classified weather data. It was imperative that this data be available to COMJCTG and his staff. Air Weather Service, through Military Airlift Command, imposes its own set of restrictions and release authority for access to its classified data which generates a problem for coordinating close hold, low visibility missions. Initial access to classified weather data was denied by the 1st Weather Group Commander, acting within his AWS guidance

and authority. The project staff weather officer determined neither time nor security permitted Military Airlift Command and Air Weather Service approval. The problem of access was solved by a personal message from the Director of Operations, Headquarters USAF, to the Vice Commander, Seventh Air Force. There were no communications at Takhli RTAFB to handle classified weather data nor a secure voice circuit for necessary discussion. To accommodate this problem, a special unclassified code was developed for unclassified communication, a less than desirable, but acceptable, substitute for the full data. Through the 1st Weather Group, Seventh Air Force provided excellent support. The Southeast Asia Weather Center focused its efforts on project support and began issuing special forecasts on 17 November with hourly amendments through the night for specific locations. The 1st Weather Group, at COMJCTG request, provided two NCO forecasters and an NCO observer - all possessing expert area knowledge, a necessity for the mission. Some local interest was raised by requests to reinstall a weather facsimile at Takhli RTAFB and to provide map plots previously discontinued in the phasedown. Curiosity was satisfied by a cover story.

7. Security. A counterintelligence warning system was established to alert the JCTG Security Staff Section if MACTHAI/JUSMAG, CAS Bangkok, and/or OSI in Thailand received indications of a possible hostile threat to the bases in Thailand. Secure facilities at Takhli RTAFB were obtained to billet and brief operational personnel.

H. DEPLOYMENT:

1. Planning. During the planning phase of JCTG activities in August, airlift of the force was addressed. Conversations of an exploratory nature were held with action officers from the Directorate of Transportation, Headquarters USAF. As training progressed and briefings conducted which gave confidence in mission execution, the airlift problem was again addressed. Two avenues were pursued: identification of accurate requirements and investigation of the best means of satisfying these requirements.

2. Identification of Requirements. COMJCTG contacted Commander MAC for assistance in load planning. A standardization loadmaster from Dover AFB, Delaware, was sent to Eglin AFB to assist the JCTG staff in firming mission airlift requirements. After surveying both Air Force and Army mobility requirements, he produced load plans for four C-141 loads which took into account time-phased arrival and departure requirements as well as cargo constraints in weight, cube, and compatibility. (See Part III, Section H, for original load lists.)

3. Airlift Coordination. In mid-October COMJCTG coordinated specific airlift arrangements. He visited Headquarters MAC and discussed the problem with the Commander, who expected no difficulty with the JCTG requirement including the rigid security constraints which would be necessary. He asked that the special airlift mission requirements be requested from Headquarters USAF as this would create less question within his staff, although he was willing to satisfy the requirement on his own authority. Accordingly, a message directing MAC to proceed was dispatched by the Directorate of Operations, Airlift Division. The message was coordinated with the JCTG and Directors of Budget and Transportation before release. On 4 November 1970, a JCTG action officer traveled to MAC to complete final detailed arrangements. Working from the latest update of load lists and security guidance of the JCTG staff, deployment plans were completed. The aeromedical evacuation requirement was fully defined and procedures for redeployment were established.

4. Execution. In addition to the MAC airlift programmed, the two mission C-130s transported maintenance personnel and equipment. These aircraft departed Eglin AFB on 10 November and closed on schedule at Takhli RTAFB on 14 November 1970. MAC C-141s were scheduled for departure on 10 and 12 November with two scheduled on 16 November. Aircraft arrived as planned for departure during hours of darkness. Loads were prepositioned on the ramp and loading completed substantially on schedule. Minor departure delays occasioned by loading and maintenance difficulties were made up enroute.

5. Security. In the period immediately preceding and during deployment, the Security Staff Section increased its security and counterintelligence measures and psychological operations. Cover stories were developed and disseminated to prevent espionage or sabotage from interfering with the movement of the force, to insure the element of surprise, and to deny information regarding the movement. The section conducted surveys and inspections, recommended measures for maximum secrecy, and provided instructions to unit personnel concerning movement security. The section monitored the move to prevent, report, and investigate possible security violations and other security threats and to initiate corrective actions. Technical security surveys were conducted at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB and secure working areas were established and maintained. Counterintelligence inspections were conducted to insure that all personnel practiced the highest degree of safeguarding classified information and material.

1. EMPLOYMENT:

1. D-3 to H-7:

a. US Army. This period covers the actions of the ground force at the staging base (Takhli). (See schedule in Part II, Section I.)

(1) Following an uneventful but long and tiring flight, the ground force arrived at Takhli under cover of darkness as planned. Movement to billets was by closed van. Billets were occupied as assigned by the advanced party. A meal was fed to those who wished it. The remainder of that morning was spent resting and recovering from the flight. As part of the security cover, no insignia of rank nor US Army identification was worn and no outside formations were held.

(2) Preparation and Unit Activity:

(a) At 1400 hours, the US Army and US Air Force operational and support personnel were assembled in the base theater for a joint operational briefing. The air plan was covered by General Manor and the ground plan by Colonel Simons. Upon adjournment of the briefing, the platoon leaders, support personnel, and Army staff members were briefed on the schedule of events for the next three days.

(b) For security reasons, the exact geographical location and the name of the prison camp were withheld from members of the ground force who had not participated in planning. This precaution was intended to suppress leaks of highly sensitive information that might jeopardize the mission or a future mission should the current one be aborted. Further, it was felt that the members had sufficient information to fulfill their mission assignments. These strict security measures were slightly relaxed on 18 November as a copy of the OPLAN was passed among the platoon leaders for their personal perusal. On 18 November, a question period was held with platoon leaders concerning the order of scheduled activities and OPLAN content. During this period, platoons had unpacked all personal operational items, individual webbing, equipment, and weapons. These items were secured in individual billets. The communications equipment was in process of being checked out by the communication specialists, a process that would take until noon the following day.

(c) The schedule for 19 November was followed. Ammunition and grenades were transported in bulk to the billets from the supply hangar in closed vans. Ammunition was issued by platoon according to the munitions list. (See Part II, Section I.) Later, a search and rescue (SAR) briefing was presented by an in-theater SAR Commander. Slight adjustments were made in the force SOP to accommodate in-theater procedures. Immediately following the briefing, the platoons were engaged in weapons test firing and issue of communications items. The assault platoon leader, acting as Range Officer, set up the range and supervised platoon firing. Closed vans were utilized to transport the weapons and one element member fired the weapons of his element. The firing was not extensive but was intended to confirm the zero of the "night-sight" and to instill personal confidence that each weapon would function properly. Weapons cleaning period was modified to simply running a patch through the bore. During this period, the demolitions charges were checked and repacked. Initiation devices were completed and checked. An evasion and escape (E&E) briefing was given to the ground force by a CAS employee. The briefing covered Laos only. Plastic E&E maps and blood chits were provided.

(d) At noon on 20 November 1970, the launch order had not yet been announced to the ground force. On the premise that the order would be given, sleeping pills were issued as required and rest was ordered from 1300 to 1700 for all members. During the rest period, the launch order was received. Following chow, the force was assembled in the theater. A route briefing and target briefing was given to include the geographical location, the name of the target, its relationship to Hanoi's location (cheers went up) and specific instructions concerning the conduct of the force in the target area. Included were: decisive action, importance of time to success, care of wounded, SAR operations, and fighting as a complete unit in case of emergency actions. Colonel Simons then answered individual questions.

(e) Following return to billets to procure individual weapons and equipment, platoons were moved by closed van to the supply hangar. The following one and one-half hours were spent in a detailed and meticulous inspection of individual equipment following previously prepared checklists. Final preparations included pinning insignia of rank on collars and camouflaging skin surfaces. The atmosphere was one of carefully controlled excitement. No signs of apprehension were evident. All seemed confident and sure of success. Perhaps this had its roots in the extensive rehearsals conducted and the security gained from knowing one's job and having confidence in others knowing their jobs equally as well. During the last 10 minutes of the period, marshalling briefings were given for the staging area at Takhli RTAFB and for the launch base, Udorn RTAFB. The troops were moved to the C-130 transport aircraft by closed van. At approximately 2225, following an uneventful flight, the force debarked at Udorn RTAFB and were led by guides to the waiting assault aircraft. Platoon leaders checked assigned aircraft and loaded spare ammunition for the return flight. POW medical supplies had been loaded earlier in each of three primary HH-53 helicopters. The force loaded and departed as scheduled.

b. US Air Force:

(1) Briefings. Final flight plans were approximately 95% complete prior to deployment. Work was continued on mission charts and flimsies on D-3. A general mission briefing was given to all aircrew members (F-4, F-105, COLLEGE EYE, COMBAT APPLE, HC-130P, C-130E, A-1, UH-1H, and HH-3/53) on D-2. This briefing included detailed employment information such as altitudes, communications, and enroute procedures. Participants recommended minor changes, clarified procedures, and finalized mission documents. On D-1, briefings were presented which covered command and control, intelligence, SAR, and E&E. These were followed by

a detailed aircrew brief back covering each aircraft's portion of the mission. On D-day, the final weather and latest intelligence were briefed. Scheduling and contents of all briefings were according to plan.

(2) Aircraft Generation:

(a) The generation of mission and support aircraft proceeded on or ahead of schedule during the three days prior to D-Day. Both C-130E lead aircraft arrived at Takhli RTAFB on 15 November and were in-commission. They were test flown for systems checks on 16 and 17 November and were certified mission ready on 18 November. The 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group redistributed HH-53 helicopters within South Vietnam and Thailand so that ten HH-53Cs were at Udorn RTAFB on 15 November. On 17 November all 10 aircraft were mission ready although only seven (five primary and two spares) were requested. The primary and spare HH-3 helicopters arrived at Udorn RTAFB on 15 November. After extensive removal of unnecessary systems and equipment to reduce weight, the aircraft were test flown on 19 November and declared mission ready. Two CONUS based EC-121T aircraft (airborne radar platforms) were prepositioned at Korat RTAFB on 14 November and mission ready on 17 November. All other primary mission and support aircraft were drawn from larger fleets and no problems were encountered. It is significant that, other than the redistribution of HH-53 helicopters, all other forces were generated without a change in daily Frag Orders or operational patterns.

(b) The need for SAR augmentation by available theater forces was recognized during planning and training activities. This augmentation was considered essential in the event a SAR situation developed during egress of the assault and strike forces. Therefore, the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) at Udorn RTAFB was asked to identify and alert

rescue forces considered necessary to mount a first light SAR effort. These forces consisted of HH-53, HC-130, and A-1 aircraft normally not on alert status during the hours of darkness. A schedule was devised whereby such a force could be alerted, launched, and in position in northern Laos at first light.

c. US Navy. Three Strike carriers were needed to support the large number of aircraft required to carry out the Navy diversion mission. Two carriers were utilized from CTF-77 assets. The third carrier was diverted from CINCPACFLT resources. The Navy plan called for a total of 60 aircraft to participate in its area of operation. This force was made up of strike and support aircraft all of which were operationally ready for launch as scheduled.

2. H-7 - Weather Decision:

a. Critical Weather Factors:

(1) Favorable weather was a fundamental requirement for the mission and, as expected, proved to be one of the most difficult decisions required in the course of the operation. A moon of 25-75% illumination, 15 to 45° above the eastern horizon was desired to aid navigation, reduce detection, and provide adequate light for the ground forces. Launch could be conducted under instrument conditions but after joinup there had to be good visibility at flight level with an adequate open layer between 5,000 and 10,000 feet to permit the force to proceed safely. For refueling, only light turbulence could be tolerated. Upon reaching the Red River Valley, there could be no more than scattered low and middle clouds to permit moon reflections off lakes and rivers, no more than scattered clouds below 3,500 feet for A-1 tactics. Visibilities had to be good, and surface winds light.

(2) For the Navy diversion, Gulf of Tonkin seas had to be light to moderate, visibilities good, ceilings along the coast high enough to permit Navy tactics up to 17,000 feet.

(3) Weather at DaNang had to be good enough for COMJCTG and his control party to land and proceed to the TACC-NS.

b. The Weather:

(1) Throughout North Vietnam, South Victnam, and Laos, October and November 1970 were the worst weather months in years. Roughly five years worth of typhoons, based upon climatic norms, moved into the area during the two months. Cold surges of air from North Asia were far stronger and more frequent than ordinary for autumn. The last typhoon had helped to pull down a cold air surge from China blanketing North Vietnam and the mountains of Laos with rain and thick clouds for several days prior to 18 November. Typhoon Patsy at midday on the 18th was moving through the Philippines heading due west while another cold front was moving south through north China.

(2) The morning of the 19th, the Mission Commander was informed that Patsy was forecast to bring low clouds, rain, poor visibilities, and high winds to the northern half of South Vietnam, the panhandle of North Vietnam and the southern Gulf of Tonkin by evening on Saturday, the 21st - the date originally targeted. A cold front was expected to enter the Red River Valley on Sunday, the 22nd, with at least four days of very poor weather expected to follow. North Vietnam and Laos were still covered with clouds the morning of the 19th but an induced high pressure ridge with dry air from China was forecast to form between the typhoon moving west and the cold front moving south. By late afternoon of the 19th, there was good evidence that this ridge was building as forecast, with clearing in south-east China beginning to extend into North Vietnam.

(3) The Commander's decision-making process for the weather decision was influenced by basic weather data, forecasts relative to route and objective area, and by the fact that many mission elements were already

in motion such as the Navy diversionary force, tanker preparation, and the COMBAT APPLE launch. Knowing that Typhoon Patsy would, without doubt, force cancellation of the mission on 21 November and knowing that Carrier Task Group 77.0 would be affected by the typhoon in 48 hours, the Commander was faced with the dilemma of accepting what was considered a marginal enroute situation on 20 November or an almost certain delay of five to seven days by waiting for improved weather. The primary concern with the marginal enroute weather was the possibility of using higher than planned altitudes. Higher density altitudes would force the HH-3 to operate closer to its operating limits thereby removing flexibility of maneuver. Additionally, higher altitudes would make the formations more vulnerable to earlier enemy radar detection.

(4) On the afternoon of 20 November, an RF-4, with a weather observer aboard flew weather reconnaissance across north Laos to the North Vietnamese border, landing at Takhli RTAFB at 0900Z for debriefing. This mission further verified the anticipated drying air.

(5) Mission briefings provided an enroute forecast of scattered to broken clouds, bases 5,000 feet and tops 8,000 feet with broken to overcast clouds over high mountain areas, good visibilities, and no turbulence. In the Red River Valley, little cloudiness was expected with good visibilities and light northwest winds. Actual weather observed was very similar to that forecast.

c. The Decision:

(1) With these factors as a background, plus the added consideration of continuing to maintain operational security with a force already assembled, the Commander's decision was to launch the mission on 20 November 1970. Execution of the mission proved this decision correct.

(2) By midnight on the 21st, with Typhoon Patsy less than 100 miles offshore, the Navy diversion would have been impossible. DaNang's weather was marginal with crosswinds gusting to 30 knots. Extensive clouds, poor visibilities, and high winds covered the panhandle of North Vietnam and were beginning to work into the Red River Delta. The cold surge pushed through slightly behind schedule continuing the widespread poor weather into the following week. The night of 20/21 November 1970 was the only night for many days before and after that date that launch would have been possible.

3. Personnel Deployment. Deployment of ground troops and aircrews from the staging base to launch bases was accomplished by theater airlift as planned. Following coordination with Seventh Air Force, three C-130E airlift aircraft were positioned at U-Tapao RTAFB on 18 November and placed on alert for use by the JCTG. Thereafter, specific airlift requirements were coordinated with the Thailand Airlift Control Center (ALCC) at U-Tapao RTAFB. One C-130E airlifted the F-105 WILD WEASEL and F-4 MIG CAP flight leaders from Takhli RTAFB to Korat RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB respectively early on D-Day. On schedule, one C-130E airlifted the helicopter and HC-130P tanker aircrews from Takhli RTAFB to Udorn RTAFB and proceeded to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB with the A-1 aircrews. A second C-130E airlifted the ground force from Takhli RTAFB to Udorn RTAFB while the third C-130E acted as a spare aircraft during these vital movements. The spare UH-1H was deployed to Udorn RTAFB by the JCTG crews and was prepared to fulfill the assault helicopter role if needed.

4. Departure:

a. Assault Force:

(1) C-130E. Scheduled takeoff - 1555Z; actual takeoff - 1618Z. An IFR flight plan was filed from Takhli RTAFB to Udorn RTAFB.

The assault C-130E overflew Udorn RTAFB and the flight plan administratively closed. No problem was encountered with the clearance. During engine start, problems were encountered in starting #3 engine. After maintenance personnel were unable to quickly solve the problem, a decision was made by COMJCTG to proceed with only three engines. A final effort to start #3 engine proved successful. Departure was made 23 minutes late. Had it been necessary to fly the mission on three engines, this aircraft would have assumed lead of the Strike Force rather than the Assault Force.

(2) HH-3/53. All helicopter starts at Udorn RTAFB were normal. Light signals were used to indicate "ready for taxi." Taxi was started at prebriefed time with radio silence. All takeoffs at Udorn RTAFB were accomplished on time and without incident.

b. Strike Force:

(1) C-130E. Scheduled takeoff - 1525Z; actual takeoff - 1528Z. A delay in takeoff from Takhli RTAFB was due to an inoperative aircraft heading reference system which became operational after minor maintenance. An IFR flight plan was flown to Nakhon Phanom and time made up by flying higher than planned airspeeds.

(2) A-1E. Takeoff from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB was made four minutes prior to schedules time because of takeoff direction. The A-1 force was abeam the takeoff point at the programmed time. The joinup after takeoff was slow because of gear indication problems on the third A-1. The remainder of the departure was as programmed. The departure was made in complete radio silence.

c. Support Forces:

(1) HC-130P. The two HC-130Ps departed Udorn RTAFB as scheduled at 1607Z. The lead tanker rendezvoused and joined with the

helicopter formation. Because of an unidentified aircraft in the vicinity of the helicopter formation, the first tanker was delayed a few minutes in accomplishing the joinup. The second tanker remained to the rear of the formation and did not experience any difficulties. After the first tanker assumed lead of the helicopters, the formation proceeded according to flight plan.

(2) F-4 (MIG CAP). The 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Ubon RTAFB was tasked to provide eight primary mission and two airborne spare F-4D aircraft as MIG CAP for the Task Group. The first four aircraft took off at 1818-1819Z. The balance of the aircraft became airborne as scheduled.

(3) F-105G (WILD WEASEL). The 6010th WILD WEASEL Squadron at Korat RTAFB was tasked to provide five primary mission and one backup F-105G as SAM/AAA suppression aircraft. One aircraft ground aborted and the aircrew changed to the spare aircraft. The first four aircraft took off in flights of two; the first flight at 1745Z, followed by the next flight five minutes later. The fifth aircraft was airborne ten minutes later.

(4) COLLEGE EYE. The primary aircraft was airborne on schedule at 1500Z and the secondary aircraft at 1510Z.

(5) COMBAT APPLE. The primary departed Kadena AB in sufficient time to arrive on-station six hours prior to H-Hour. The Airborne Mission Coordinator was aboard this aircraft. A backup aircraft with an Alternate Airborne Mission Coordinator aboard, was available over the Gulf of Tonkin, if required.

(6) Radio-Relay Aircraft. A KC-135 radio-relay aircraft is normally on-station over the Gulf of Tonkin 24 hours per day. A specially configured aircraft equipped to support this mission departed U-Tapao RTAFB in sufficient time to arrive on station two hours prior to H-Hour.

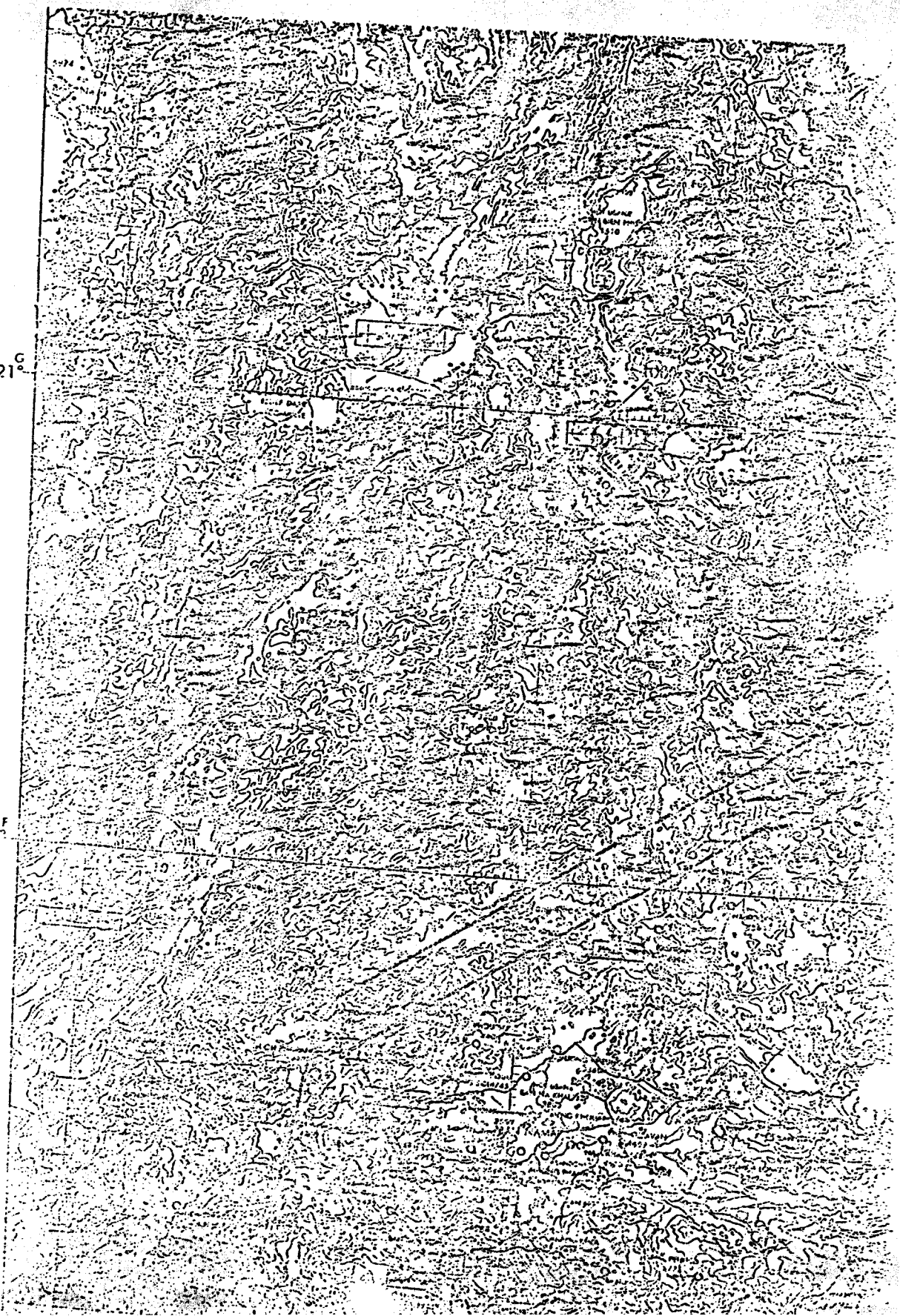
(7) KC-135. Ten KC-135 tanker aircraft departed U-Tapao RTAFB as required to insure three primary and one spare tanker aircraft were on Lemon and Orange extension refueling tracks from 15 minutes prior to fighter refueling time until released.

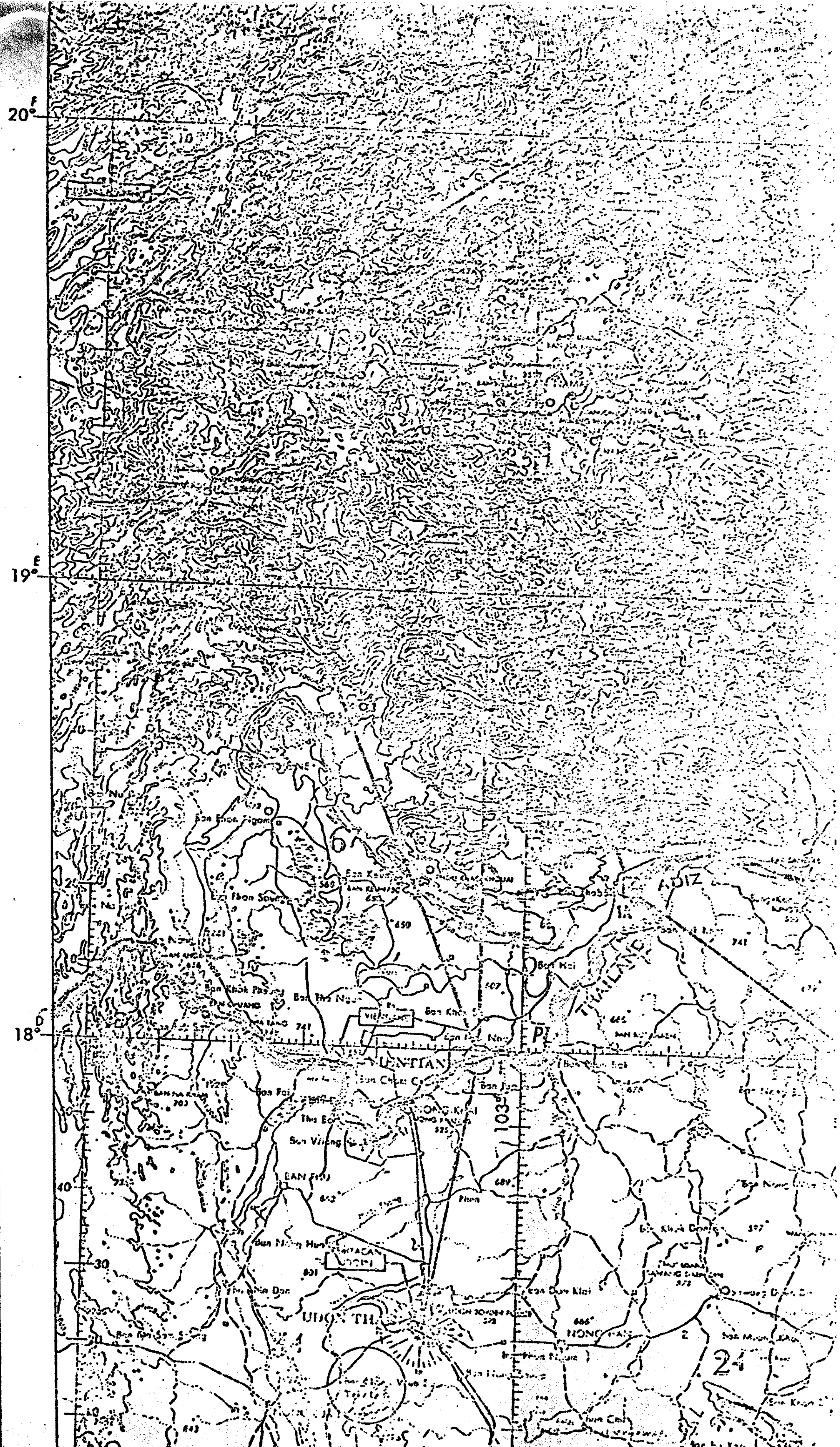
5. Enroute. (See map on following page.)

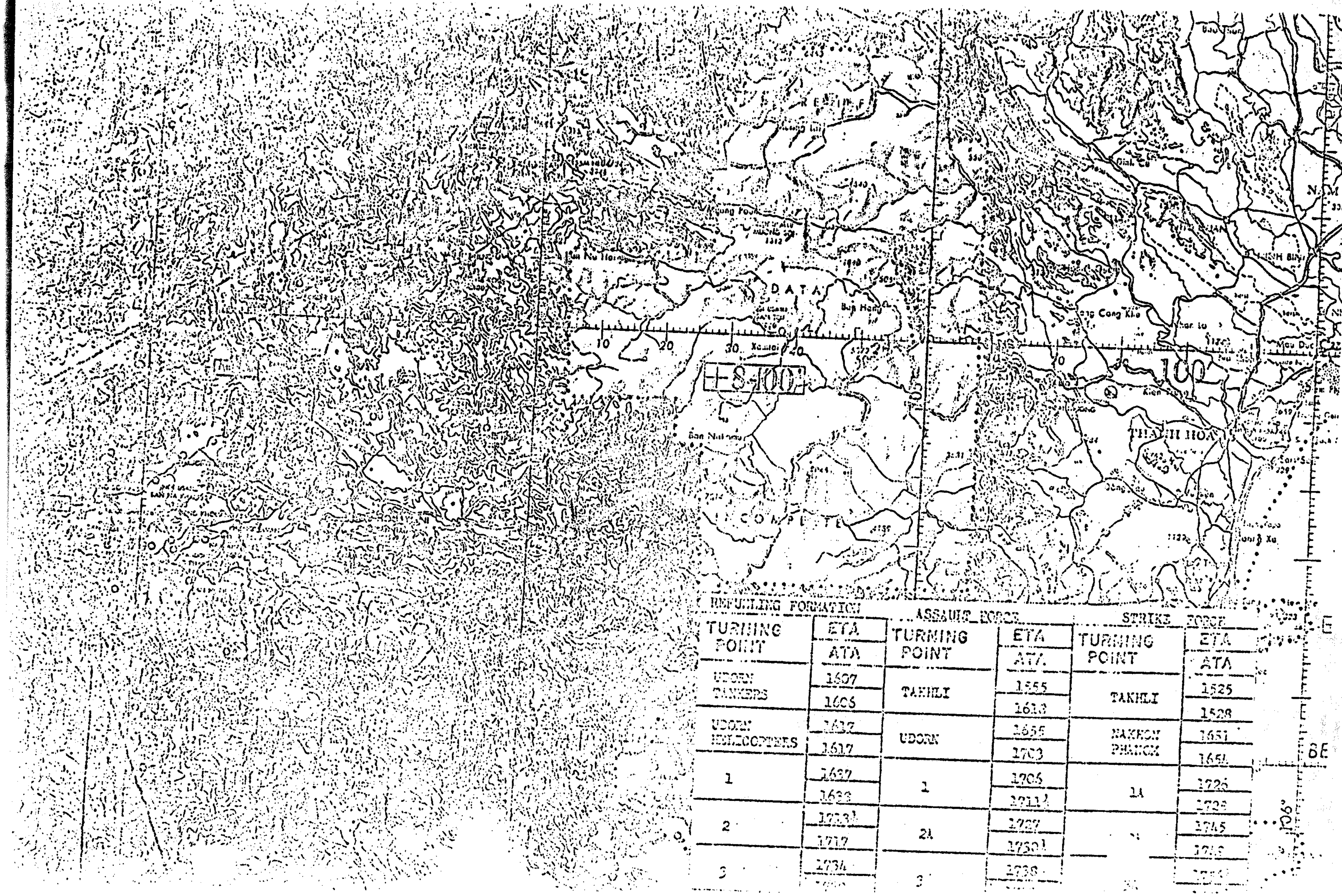
a. Assault Force:

(1) C-130E. The Assault C-130E regained lost time by flying higher than planned airspeed and shortening the route by eliminating dog-legs which were preplanned for just such a situation. The aircraft crossed over Udorn RTAFB eight minutes behind flight plan time. The higher airspeed was maintained until information was received that the HC-130P (tanker) was expected to reach Point 4 (end of refueling) six minutes behind flight plan. At this time, the flight plan airspeed was resumed. The Assault Force C-130E assumed lead of the Assault Force after Point 4. At this time the Assault Force estimated time of arrival to Point 7 (RVN border) was one minute ahead of flight plan. The mission was continued according to flight plan except for a small climb between Points 5 and 6 to avoid clouds. The Assault Force arrived over the acceleration point (one minute and 45 seconds from the objective) one minute behind flight plan time.

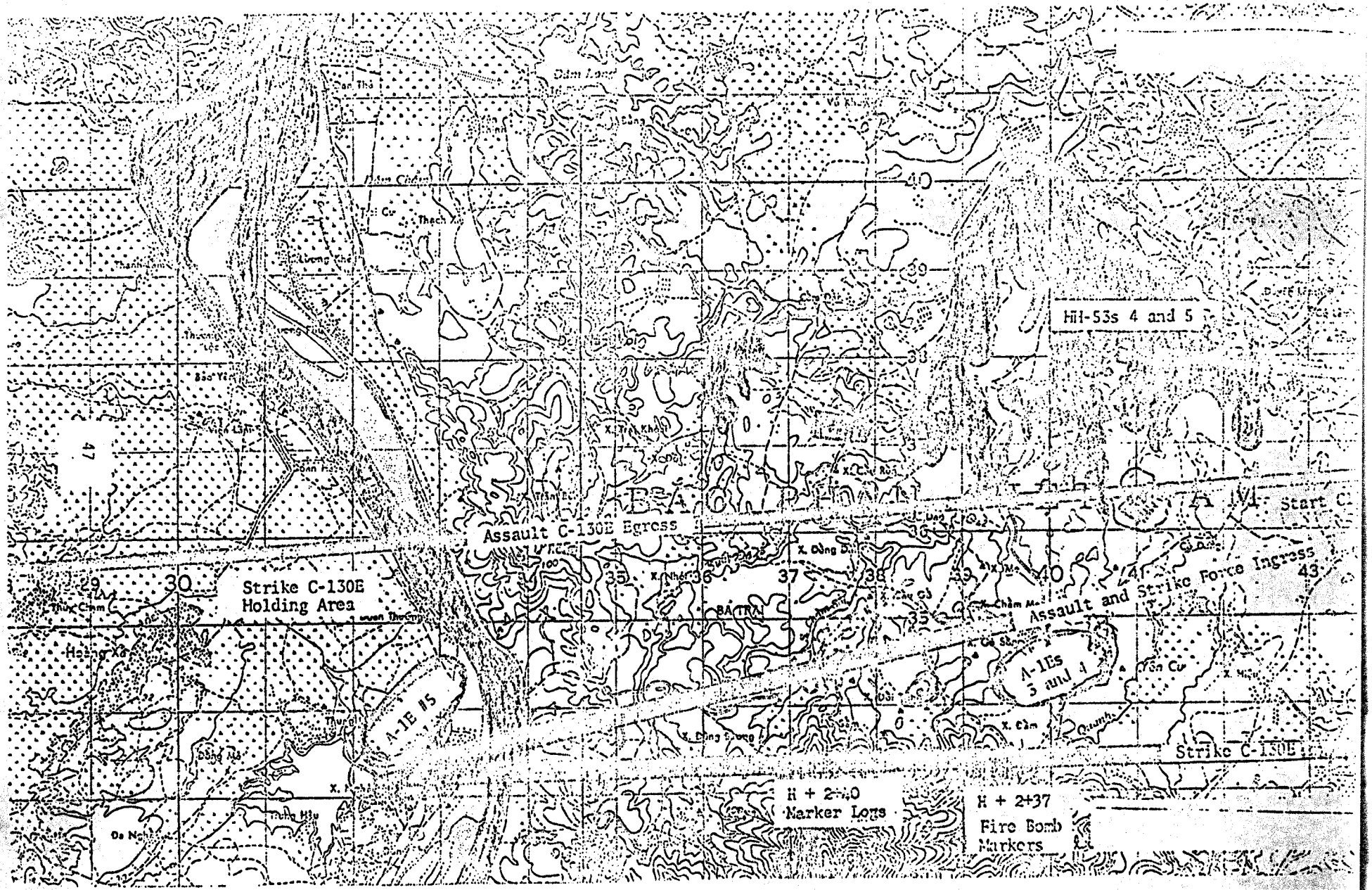
(2) HH-3/53. After takeoff and just as the helicopter joinup was being finalized, an unidentified aircraft passed through the formation on a reciprocal heading causing the formation to disperse. An immediate rejoin was accomplished. Rendezvous with the HC-130P tanker was accomplished without further incident. Climb to altitude was completed between Points 1 and 2. After level off at flight plan altitude, the formation flew through the tops of some clouds. All helicopters had intermittent visual contact and the formation, except the HH-3, temporarily increased separation. Air refueling was completed as programmed. The transfer of

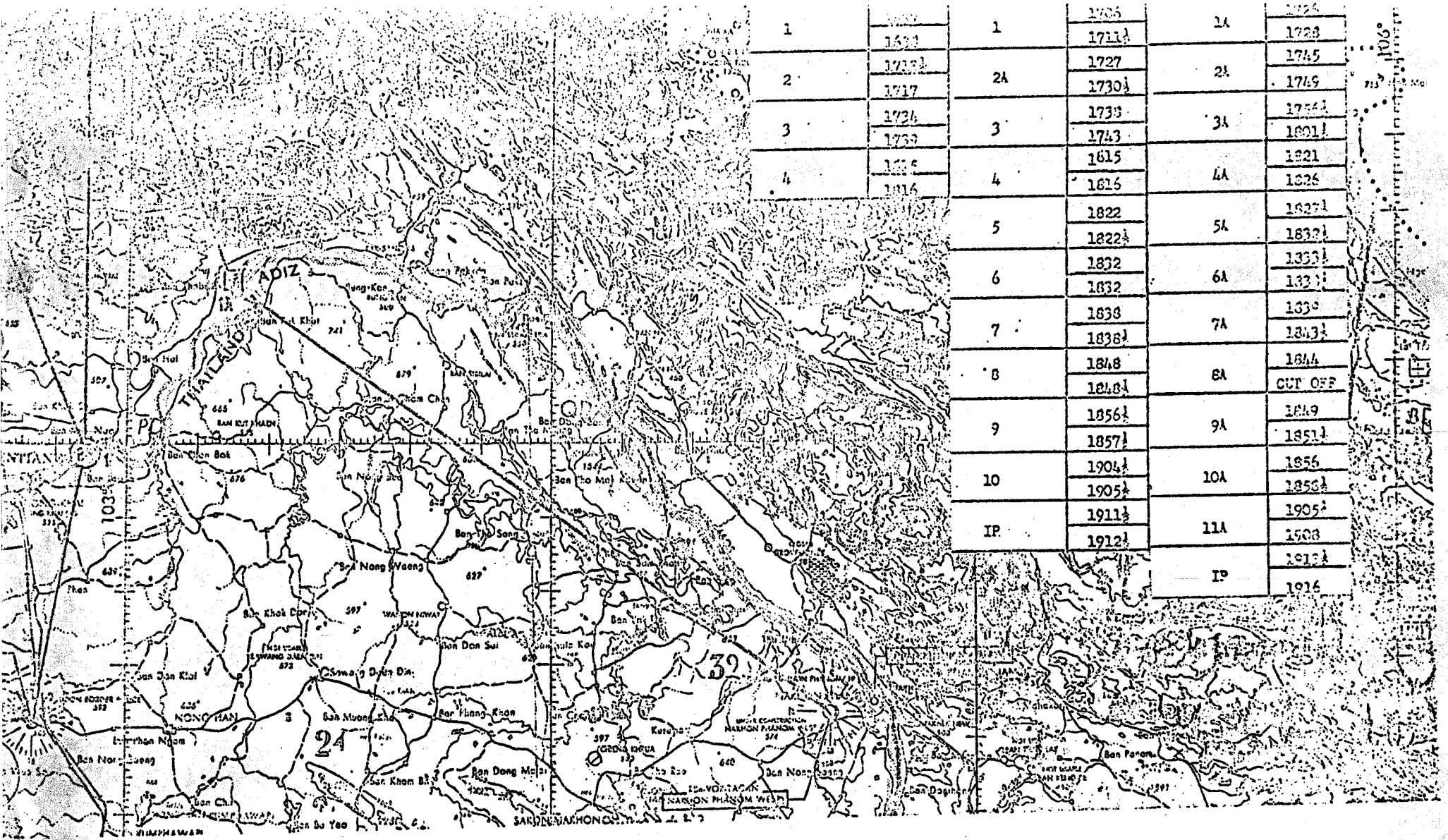

21° G
20° F
19°


20°
19°
18°
VIENTIAN
UDON TH
THAILAND
ADIZ
103°
Ban Hai
40
30
24



REFUELING FORMATION		ASSAULT FORCE		STRIKE FORCE	
TURNING POINT	ETA / ATA	TURNING POINT	ETA / ATA	TURNING POINT	ETA / ATA
UDORN TANKERS	1607 / 1606	TAKHLI	1555 / 1613	TAKHLI	1525 / 1528
UDORN HELICOPTERS	1617 / 1617	UDORN	1655 / 1703	NAKHON PHANOM	1651 / 1654
1	1637 / 1638	1	1706 / 1711	1A	1726 / 1729
2	1713 / 1717	2A	1727 / 1730	[illegible]	1745 / 1749
3	1734 / [illegible]	3	1738 / [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]


Hit-53s 4 and 5
Assault C-130E Egress
Strike C-130E
Holding Area
A-1E #5
Assault and Strike Force Ingress
A-1Es
3 and 4
Strike C-130E
H + 2+40
Marker Lons
H + 2+37
Fire Bomb
Markers



1	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	1A	[illegible]
	1711½		1711½		1728
2	1717½	2A	1727	2A	1745
	1717		1730½		1749
3	1734	3	1738	3A	1754½
	1739		1743		1801½
4	[illegible]	4	1615	4A	1821
	1816		1616		1826
5	1822	5	1822	5A	1827½
	1822½		1822½		1833½
6	1832	6	1832	6A	1838½
	1832		1832		1838½
7	1838	7	1838	7A	1838
	1838½		1838½		1843½
8	1848	8	1848	8A	1844
	1848½		1848½		CUT OFF
9	1856½	9	1856½	9A	1849
	1857½		1857½		1851½
10	1904½	10	1904½	10A	1856
	1905½		1905½		1858½
IP	1911½	11	1911½	11A	1905½
	1912½		1912½		1908
		IP		IP	1913½
					1916

lead from the HC-130P to the Assault C-130E was normal. Navigation to the start climb point was without incident. (See Part II, Section I, for route and altitude details.)

b. Strike Force:

(1) C-130E. The Strike Force experienced some difficulty in adjusting speeds and track for proper timing. When information was received that the HC-130P was estimating Point 4 (end of refueling) six minutes late, the Strike Force maneuvered to lose six minutes. However, after refueling was complete and the Assault Force was formed, Assault Force lead estimated arrival at Point 7 one minute early. This placed the Strike Force seven minutes behind flight plan. Since the maximum airspeed of the A-1s, in their mission configuration, was 145 knots indicated airspeed, it was necessary to bypass Point 8 and turn short of the IP to gain time. The Strike Force was less than one and one-half minutes behind the flight plan at H-hour. They had successfully regained their scheduled timing.

(2) A-1s. All aircraft had joined and were proceeding toward Point 1A at 7,600 feet. The Strike Force C-130E approached the formation from the left rear. At the time the A-1s were maneuvering to effect a joinup with the C-130E, the formation penetrated weather and the A-1s lost sight of the C-130. The A-1s started a slow climb and broke out on top of all clouds at 8,500 feet. The formation again acquired the C-130E and a normal rejoin was accomplished. The remainder of the flight to the objective was without incident.

c. Support Forces:

(1) HC-130P. The two HC-130Ps (tankers) and the six assault helicopters proceeded enroute as planned. Weather became a factor between Points 2 and 3, and it was necessary for the HH-53s to increase spacing in the formation. The HH-3 was able to maintain visual contact with the tanker.

The formation climbed at a faster rate than scheduled to avoid and remain clear of weather. Refueling operations were accomplished between Points 3 and 4 without difficulty. The Assault Force C-130E assumed lead of the formation after the HC-130P had turned toward Point 5. The lead tanker proceeded back to Udorn RTAFB for additional fuel as planned. No problems were experienced returning to Udorn RTAFB, refueling, or returning to Point 4. The second HC-130P remained at Point 3 while the force was in the objective area.

(2) F-4 (MIG CAP). All aircraft refueled on the Orange refueling track on schedule. The first flight arrived at its holding area at 1910Z.

(3) F-105 (WILD WEASEL). All aircraft refueled on the Lemon refueling track and completed refueling on schedule. The flights dropped off the tanker at four-minute intervals and spaced themselves to arrive in the objective area at two-minute intervals. The first aircraft arrived over the objective at 1908Z. A time pad had been planned in the refueling operation should a takeoff delay be encountered. This pad allowed the F-105G crew that experienced a maintenance delay to make up time and depart the tanker on schedule.

(4) COLLEGE EYE. The two EC-121T aircraft proceeded to DaNang without incident. All equipment was checked and found operational. Upon passing DaNang, both aircraft descended to 1,000 feet to avoid radar detection by the NVN Air Defense System. At 1735Z the primary aircraft lost #2 engine (broken oil line) and, since it was impossible to climb to operational altitude (10,000 feet), the aircraft aborted the mission and returned to DaNang. The backup aircraft climbed to its operating altitude and entered orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin at 1833Z. At this time it was noted that the APX-83 designed to receive friendly IFF/SIF was not receiving returns at extended ranges. A spare unit was installed with negative results. All other systems were operational.

(5) COMBAT APPLE. All systems were operational.

(6) Radio-Relay Aircraft. All systems were operational.

(7) KC-135. Refueling of fighter aircraft was completed as scheduled.

6. Objective Area. (See map on following page.)

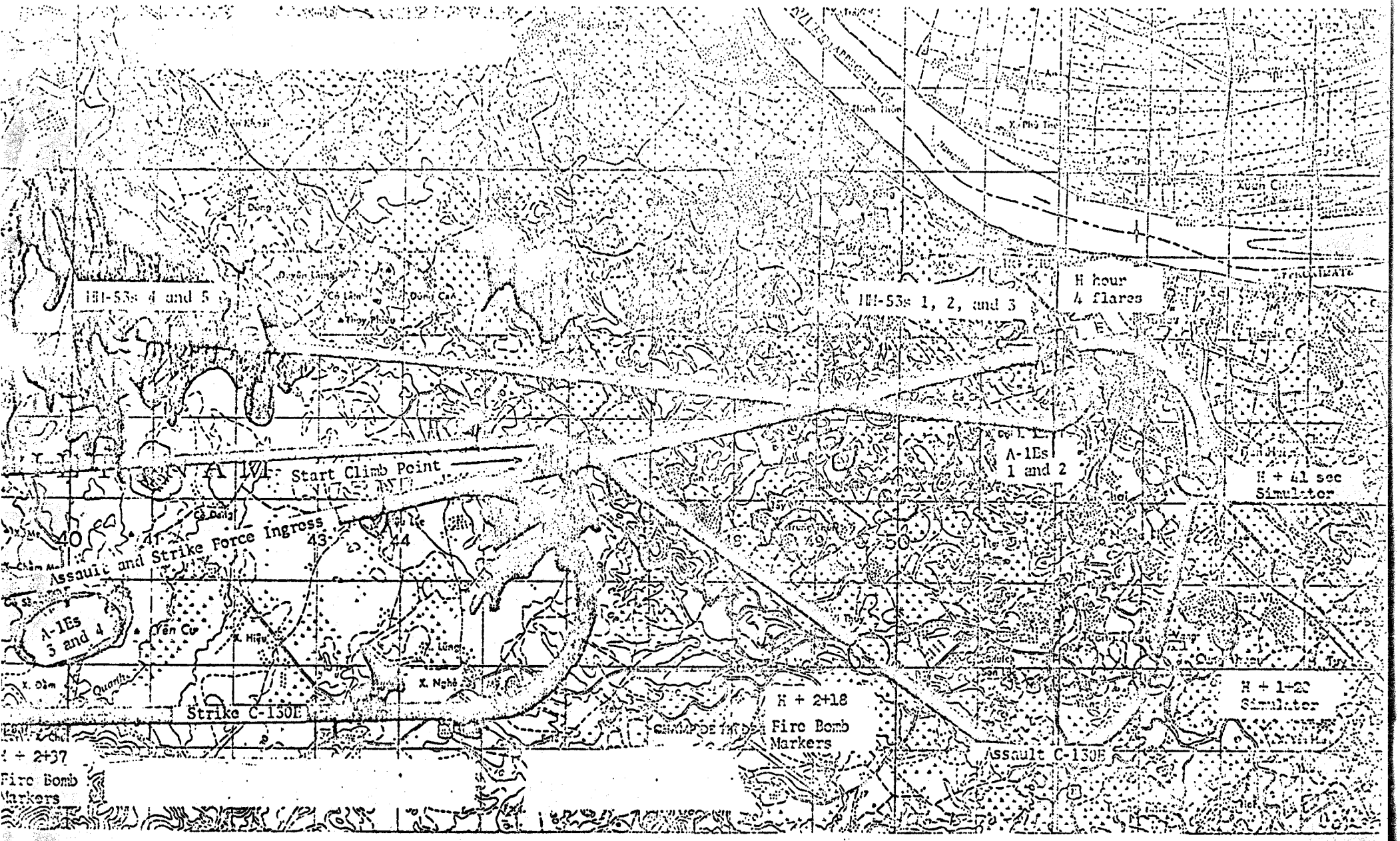
a. Assault Operations (HH-3/53):

(1) The Assault Formation arrived at the start climb point (3.5NM west of the objective) at 500 feet above ground level (AGL). The lead C-130E transmitted a heading of 072 degrees and pulled up and away from the helicopters. This heading was five degrees left of flight plan (077) to accommodate four degrees right drift and a displacement of 150 meters to the right of course at the start climb point.

(2) The first and second HH-53s and the HH-3 slowed to 80 knots. The third HH-53 slowed to 90 knots. The fourth and fifth HH-53s began their climb to 1,500 feet to perform their role as spare flare aircraft in the event the flares dropped by the C-130E were either offset or failed to ignite.

(3) The flares dropped by the C-130E ignited directly over the objective and HH-53s numbers four and five from their higher altitude observed HH-53 numbers two and three and the HH-3 proceeding to the right of course. Since the flares were satisfactory, numbers four and five proceeded to their holding area on islands in the Finger Lake 7NM west of the objective.

(4) The third HH-53 arrived first at the military complex 400 meters south (to the right of the inbound course) of the objective and started a firing maneuver but recognized that it was not the proper target. Number three did not fire and proceeded north to the correct objective


UH-53s 4 and 5
UH-53s 1, 2, and 3
H hour
4 flares
Start Climb Point
Assault and Strike Force Ingress
A-1Es
1 and 2
H + 41 sec
Simulator
A-1Es
3 and 4
Strike C-130E
H + 2+18
Fire Bomb
Markers
H + 1+20
Simulator
Assault C-130E
+ 2+37
Fire Bomb
Markers

where a firing pass was accomplished destroying the northwest guard tower and damaging the southwest tower, and the guard barracks in the support area.

(5) The HH-3 followed the third HH-53 and also recognized that the intended landing zone was the military complex south of the target. The HH-3 turned and proceeded to the correct objective. This delayed the landing in the compound by approximately one minute.

(6) The first HH-53 followed the HH-3 and, due to concentration on the landing zone, failed to see the HH-3 depart for the correct objective and proceeded to take buildings under fire and land in an area very similar in appearance to the intended landing zone at the objective.

(7) The second HH-53, which was 10 seconds behind number one, lost sight of number one and proceeded to the correct objective. Recognizing that number one was not at the objective, number two notified the Ground Force Commander aboard that alternate Plan Green, which allowed for the loss of HH-53 number one, was being implemented. Number two then proceeded to take number one's targets under fire and landed on the proper landing zone. After disembarking the Army troops, number two proceeded to the holding area one and one-half nautical miles west of the objective and landed.

(8) Meanwhile, the first HH-53 had disembarked Army troops at the complex south of the objective. Two minutes after departing the mistaken objective, the Army Component Commander recalled number one and the helicopter returned to move the troops to the proper objective. This was accomplished without incident and the troops in number one were disembarked at the objective seven minutes after the HH-3 and the second HH-53 had landed. Number one then proceeded to the holding area.

(9) At H+14 minutes, the first HH-53 was recalled to the objective area to onload troops arriving at H+19 minutes. Troops loaded rapidly and number one departed the objective at H+21 minutes.

(10) At H+21 minutes, the second HH-53 was recalled to the objective area to onload the remaining troops. Arriving at H+23 minutes, number two loaded and departed the area at H+26 minutes.

(11) Upon departure of the second HH-53, the third HH-53 departed the holding point and exited the objective area.

(12) As soon as the troop carrying helicopters cleared the Finger Lakes on egress, the fourth and fifth HH-53s departed their holding points and started egress.

b. Ground Operations (Through Extraction). The ground operation is described in four sections. An overall description of the operation is followed by sections detailing ground force actions by group.

(1) Overall Description:

(a) The ground force of 56 US Army officers and men was transported on three helicopters (see Part II, Section B, for organization of the ground force). The Assault Group (Blueboy) was transported by HH-3; the Command Group (Redwine) including the Ground Force Commander (Wildroot) and the Support Group (Greenleaf) plus the Alternate Ground Force Commander, by HH-53. The approach was made on an area similar in appearance to the target but approximately 400 meters south of the target area. The pilots of the HH-3 and the third HH-53 recognized the approach error and recovered sufficiently to enter the target area as planned with minimum delay. The pilot of the first HH-53, not realizing the approach error, inserted and debarked the Support Group south of the target area. The pilot of the second HH-53 did a 360 degree turn to realign his approach with that of the HH-3. Recognizing that the first HH-53 was absent from the planned formation, the pilot of the second HH-53 executed his portion of Plan Green by directing his left mini-gun to fire on guard building 7B while he landed. The Ground Force Commander was advised that the first HH-53 had not landed at the target area at H+2-1/2 minutes. (See Figures 1, 2, and 3 which follow.)

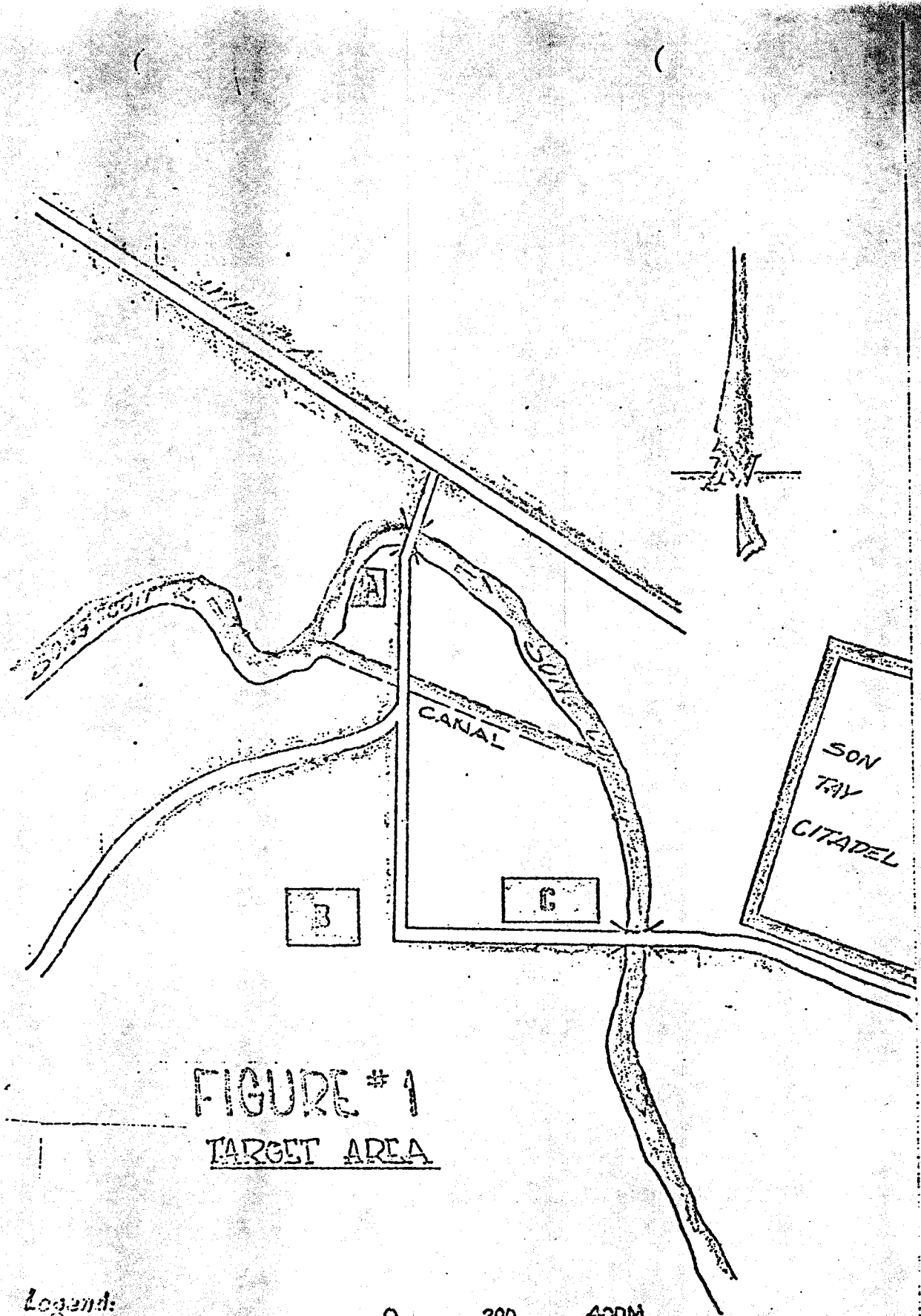


FIGURE # 1

TARGET AREA

Legend:

A: POW COMPOUND
B: COMMAND & CONTROL CENTER
C: RECREATIONAL COMPLEX

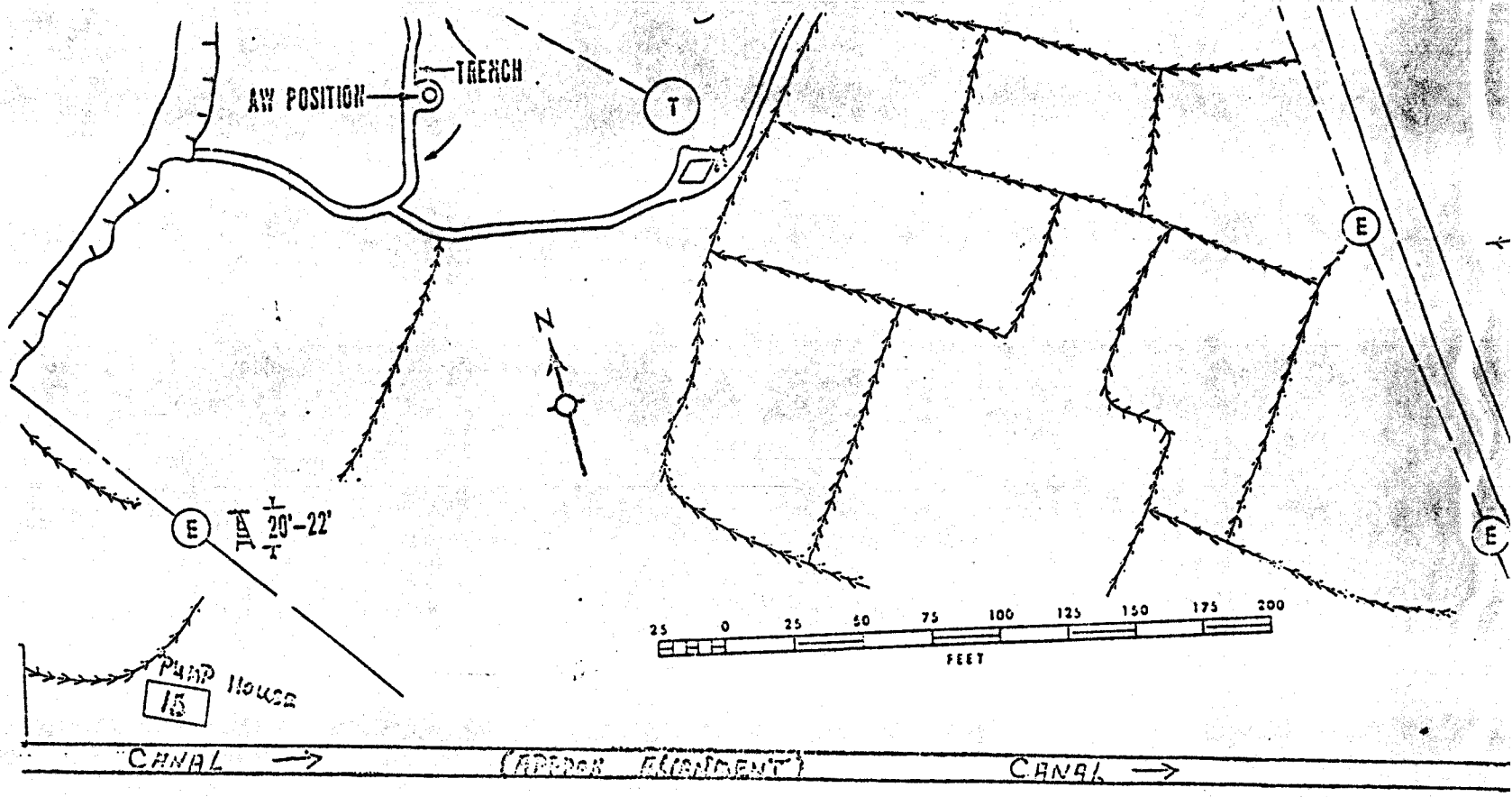
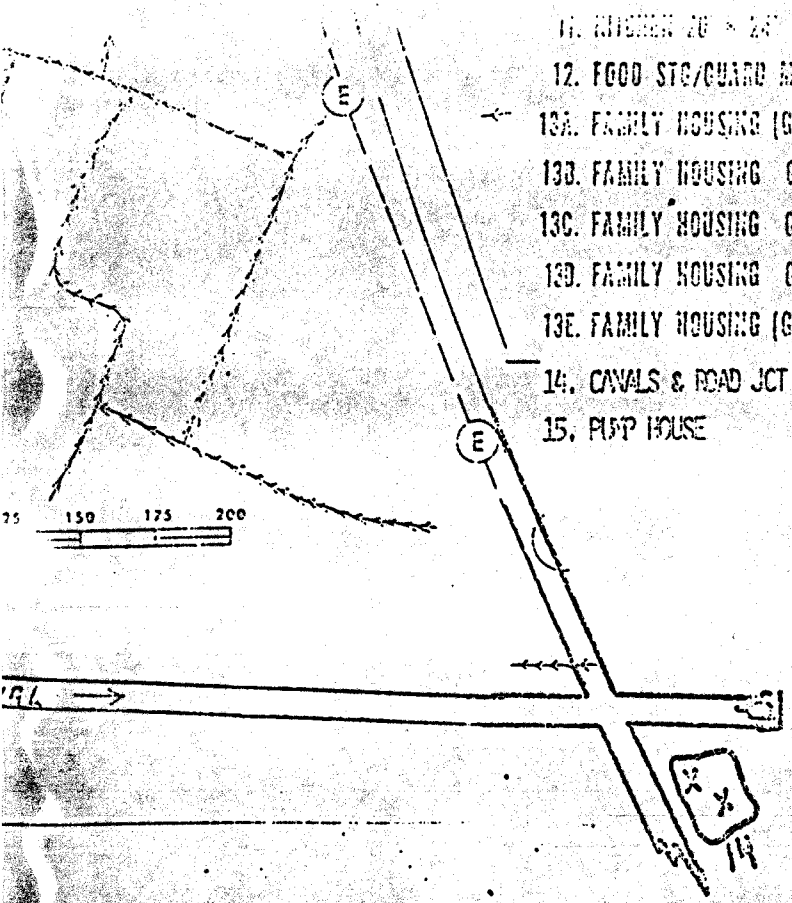


FIGURE* 2

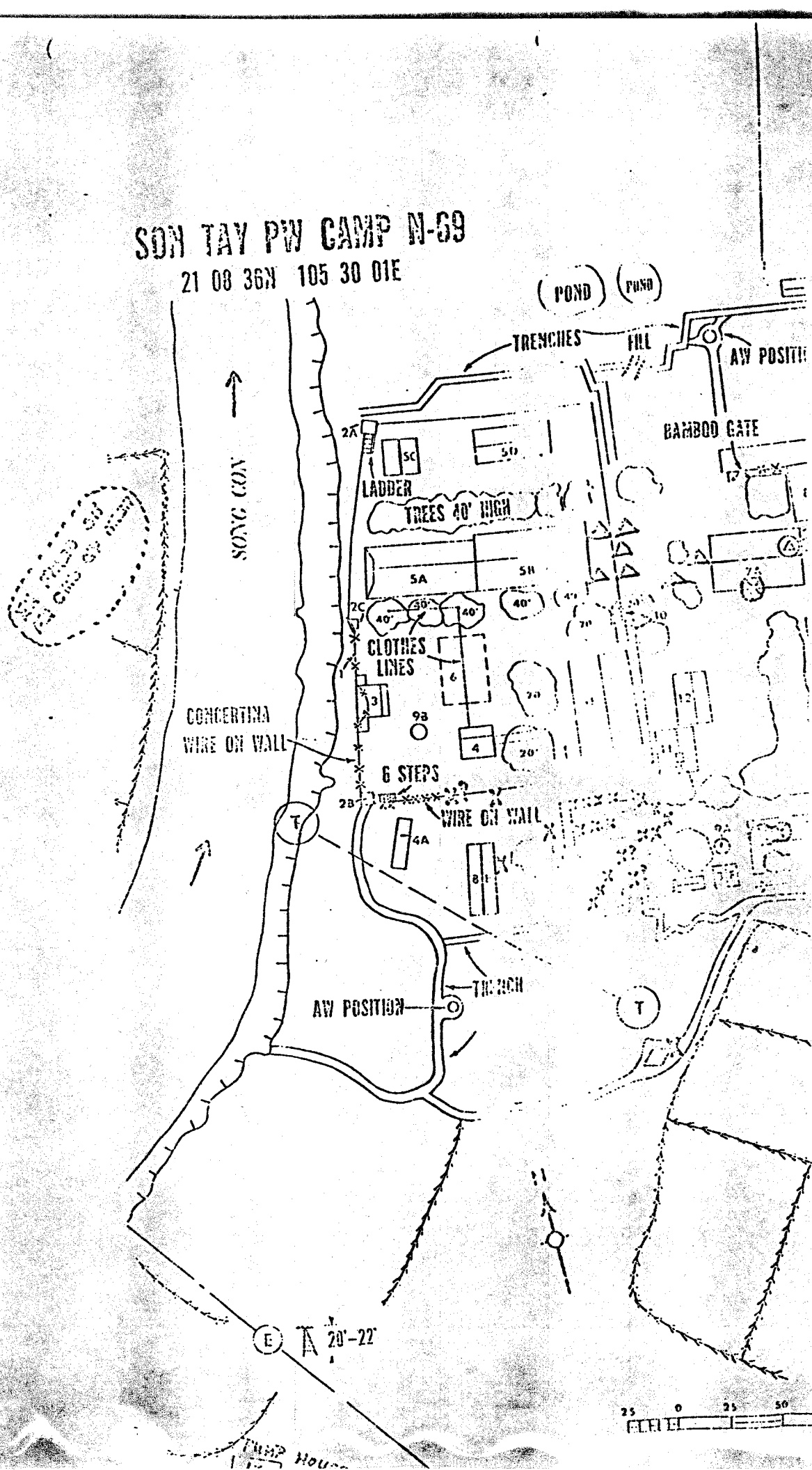


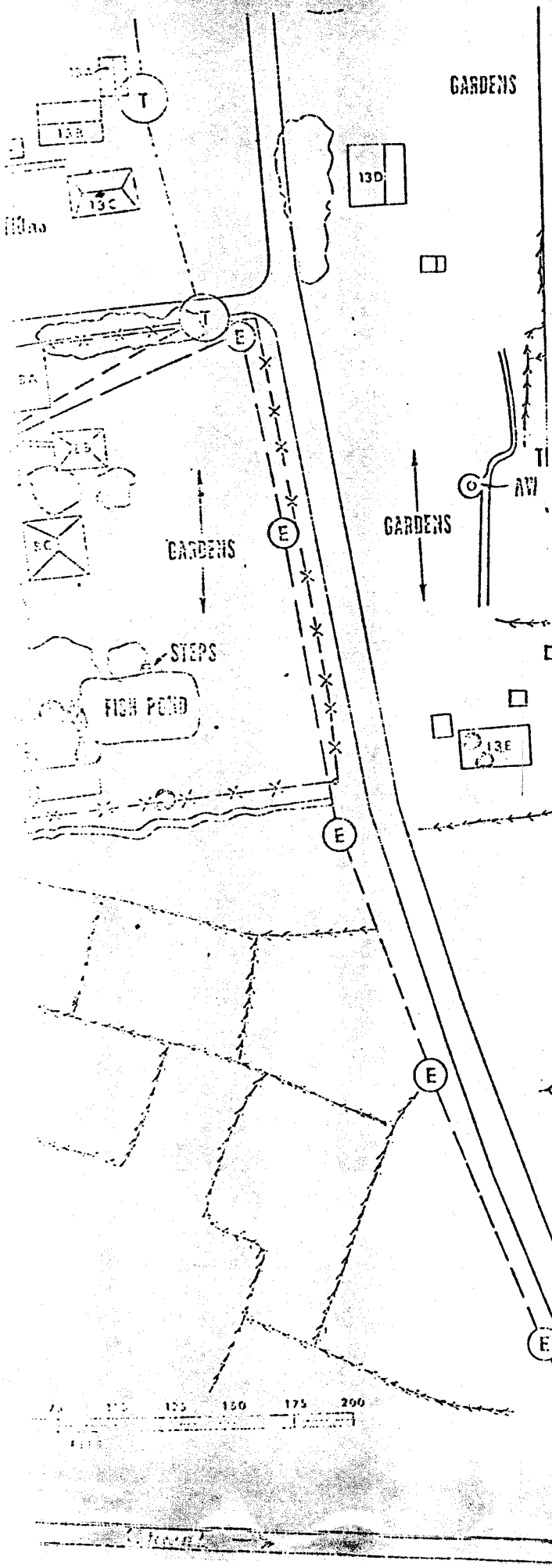
11. KITCHEN 20 × 28'
12. FOOD STG/GUARD MESS 27' × 23'
13A. FAMILY HOUSING (GUARDS)
13B. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13C. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13D. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13E. FAMILY HOUSING (GUARDS)
14. CANALS & ROAD JCT
15. PUMP HOUSE

*									COMMAND GROUP
		*	*				UNK	[illegible] 200 RDS, GATE OPEN 2 ENLARG S-N	ASSAULT GROUP
			*						SUPPORT GROUP
			*						SUPPORT GROUP
		M79							SUPPORT GROUP
		M79							SUPPORT GROUP
		M79							SUPPORT GROUP
		M79	M60						SUPPORT GROUP
*	*	*				*	2		SUPPORT GROUP
							2		COMMAND GROUP
		*	*						COMMAND GROUP

LEGEND.

X * EN KIA/WIA (COMMAND GROUP)
0 = EN KIA/WIA (SUPPORT GROUP)
Δ = EN KIA/WIA (ASSAULT GROUP)


SON TAY PW CAMP N-69
21 08 36N 105 30 01E
POND
POND
TRENCHES
FILL
AW POSITI
BAMBOO GATE
SONG CON
LADDER
TREES 40' HIGH
5A
5B
5C
5D
2A
2C
CLOTHES LINES
CONCERTINA WIRE ON WALL
6 STEPS
WIRE ON WALL
4A
AW POSITION
TRENCH
20'-22'
25 0 25 50



LEGEND

1. COMPOUND 135' × 140' × 110'
2A. GUARD TOWER
2B. GUARD TOWER
2C. GUARD TOWER
3. LATRINE
4. LATRINE
4A. LATRINE
5A. PW CELLS 55' × 25'
5B. PW CELLS 55' × 30'
5C. PW CELLS ISOLATION 15' × 15'
5D. PW CELLS 15' × 37'
5E. PW MESS/INDOCTRINATION 50' × 30'
6. OLD BLDG FOUNDATION
7A. ADMIN AND COMM 40' × 27'
7B. GUARD QUARTERS 60' × 25'
8A. SUPPORT 25' × 20' (THATCH)
8B. SUPPORT 17' × 22' (THATCH)
8C. SUPPORT 25' × 25' (THATCH)
8D. SUPPORT 36' × 22'
8E. PROBABLE WATER STG 12' × 35'
8F. PROBABLE LAUNDRY 12' ×12'
9A. WELL
9B. WELL
10. GUARD SHACK AND MAIN GATE
11. KITCHEN 20' × 24'
12. FOOD STG/GUARD MESS 27' × 23'
13A. FAMILY HOUSING (GUARDS)
13B. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13C. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13D. FAMILY HOUSING GUARDS)
13E. FAMILY HOUSING (GUARDS)
14. CANALS & ROAD JCT
15. PUMP HOUSE

SEARCHED	CLEARED	GRENADED	FIRED IN
			*
			*
*	*		
*	*		
*	*		
*	*		
*	*		
*	*		
*	*		
*	*	IVG	
		IVG	
*	*	*	*
*	*		*
*	*		
		*	
		IVG	
		IVG	
		IVG	
		IVG	
*	*	*	
			*

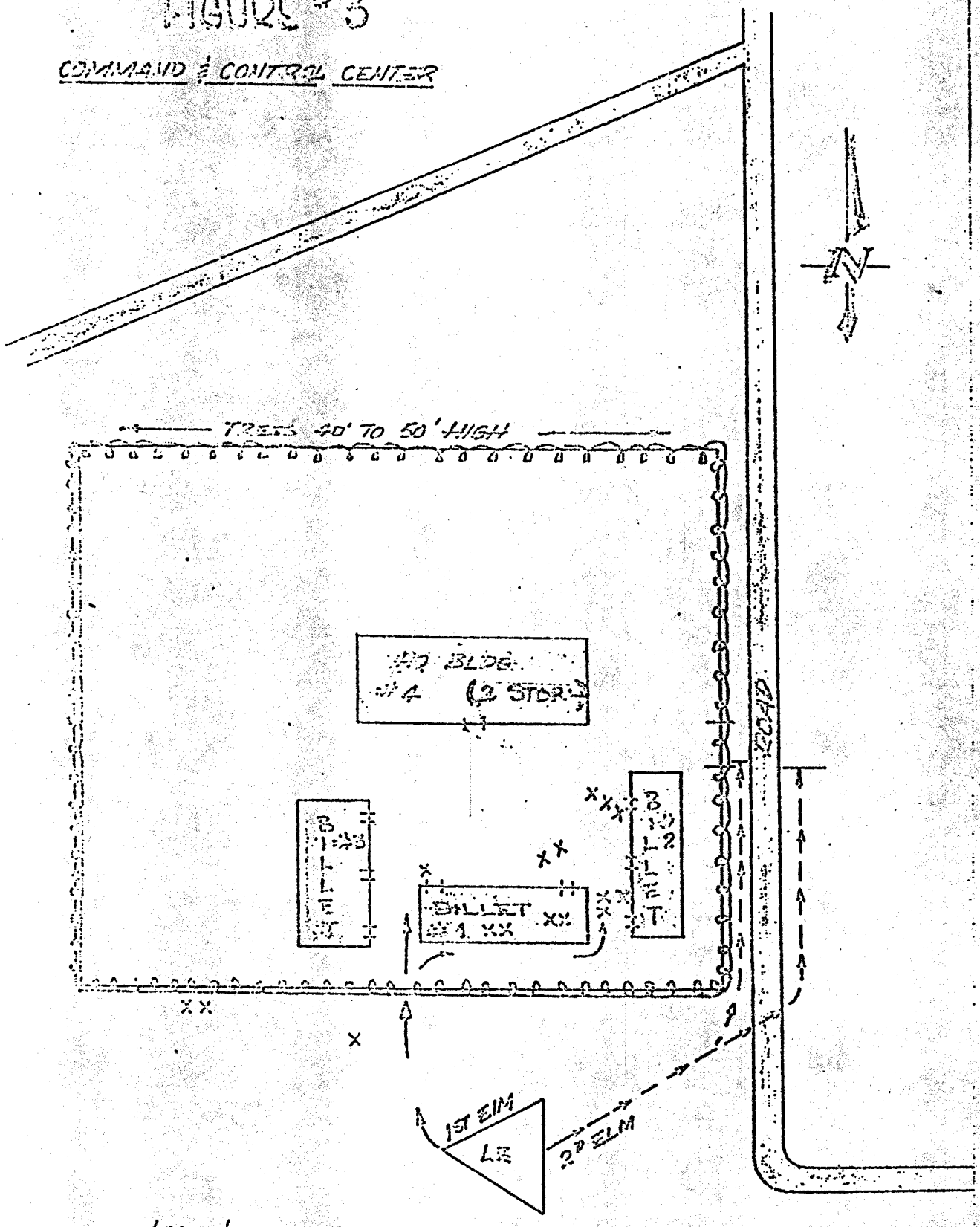
CLEARED	CHECKED	FOUND GI	FOUND GI & S & C	FIRE RCVD FROM	ENEMY IN BLDG SEEN	ENEMY IN BLDG KIA	REMARKS	UNIT
		*				UNK	MG 7.62 M-16 5.56	ASSAULT GROUP
		*				UNK	M-16 150 RDS	ASSAULT GROUP
							NON EXISTENT	ASSAULT GROUP
								ASSAULT GROUP
								ASSAULT GROUP
								COMMAND GROUP
								ASSAULT GROUP
							EN SEEN E. OF BLDG 5 KIA	ASSAULT GROUP
								ASSAULT GROUP
								ASSAULT GROUP
*			*				1 I/O INTO CEMENT BAG TO [illegible]	ASSAULT GROUP
		*		*		2/1	NOT ENTERED: BURN[illegible]	COMMAND GROUP
	[illegible]	*		*	*	6	RIFLE & GRENADE [illegible]	COMMAND GROUP
	[illegible]							SUPPORT GROUP
		[illegible]					BURNING HEAVILY	SUPPORT GROUP
*	*	*	*	*	*	7*	ASLTD. UNIFORMED AK-47	COMMAND GROUP
*		*			*		MOVEMENT HEARD, 2 EN RAN OUT [illegible]	COMMAND GROUP
								COMMAND GROUP
	*	*				UNK	M16 200 RDS, GATE OPEN 2 EN [illegible]	ASSAULT GROUP
		*						SUPPORT GROUP
		*						SUPPORT GROUP
	[illegible]							SUPPORT GROUP
	[illegible]							SUPPORT GROUP
	[illegible]							SUPPORT GROUP
		[illegible]						SUPPORT GROUP
	*				*	2		SUPPORT GROUP
						2		COMMAND GROUP
	*	*						COMMAND GROUP

[illegible] (CONTROL GROUP)

[illegible] (SUPPORT GROUP)

FIGURE #3

COMMAND & CONTROL CENTER



Legend:

X = EN KIA

= BARBWIRE

(b) H+2-1/2 to H+8 Minutes. Plan Green was partially executed by voice command from Wildroot to Redwine. Radio nets at that moment had not been opened. Redwine, less Element 2, initiated Plan Green with a delay of approximately two minutes. The Assault Group, which was not affected by the change of plan, continued to clear and search. In the area to the south, the Support Group Leader, recognizing his insertion had taken place in the wrong target area, was organizing for an extraction and attempting to break contact with the enemy. He was assisted by the Alternate Command Group who manned the LZ and contacted the extraction aircraft.

(c) H+8 to H+9-1/2 Minutes. The Support Group extracted under fire without casualty. Upon insertion at the correct target area, the Basic Plan was instituted without extensive radio traffic.

(d) H+9-1/2 to H+10 Minutes. The Support Group linked up and passed through Command Group elements. The Command Group then executed portions of the Basic Plan not yet carried out; clearing the pumphouse, demolition of the power pole, and destruction of the power station. Blueboy advised, "Negative items (POWs) at this time."

(e) H+10 to H+12-1/2 Minutes. The Command and Support Groups continued to move through their assigned areas neutralizing and clearing. Greenleaf Element 1, the demolition team, waited to be passed through the area enroute to the bridge north of the target area. Blueboy advised that search of the compound was complete with negative items present, and no items had been there in a long time. A Wildroot net call was made advising groups to "Prepare to withdraw to the LZ for extraction. Command and Assault Groups exit on first extraction helicopter. Set up LZ security, Command Group to west, Support to east."

(f) H+12-1/2 to H+21-1/2 Minutes. Decision to withdraw using only two helicopters was made. The first HH-53 was called in at H+14

minutes and requested flare as a directional aid. The lead A-1 was requested to strafe the bridge north of the target area. The HH-53 landed at H+18 minutes 50 seconds and onloaded the Command Group (minus Element 3, the Marshalling Area Control Officer (MACO), and Pathfinders) and Assault Elements 1, 2, and 3. A MACO count of 26 aboard the first HH-53 was passed to Wildroot.

(g) H+21-1/2 to H+23-1/2 Minutes. The second HH-53 was called in at H+22 minutes. The Support Group readjusted LZ security and the Assault Group Leader directed demolition of the HH-3.

(h) H+27 Minutes and Following. Final extraction was completed by the second HH-53 and Wildroot reported, "Count 33, count correct," to the aircraft commander. The total force of USA/USAF personnel on ground was 59. The MACO reported 26 aboard the first HH-53 and 33 aboard the second HH-53. No recount was taken. About an hour later, a recount was requested. On recount it was determined that the first HH-53 had 25 aboard. Several counts and recounts were taken without aid of cabin lights in both aircraft until it was determined that 59 were aboard, 25 on the first and 34 on the second HH-53.

(i) H+3 Hours. Immediately upon recovery at Udorn RTAFB, headcount confirmed that all personnel were present. Two casualties were sustained - one USAF sergeant with a broken foot and one USA sergeant with a flesh wound in the inner thigh. Key personnel were retained at Udorn for debriefing. The Ground Force was transported to Takhli by waiting C-130 aircraft.

(2) The mission of the Command Group was to secure the south wall, act as reserve for Assault and Support Groups, and act as control for evacuating prisoners to helicopters. (See Figures 1 and 2.) A detailed chronological record follows:

(a) H-20 Minutes. Twenty-minute warning was given.

(b) H-10 Minutes. Group was alerted and all gear was checked.

(c) H-5 Minutes. Group followed SOP checklist. Standup, secure seats up, remove tape from grenade, lock and load all weapons except 45 caliber pistol, one M-72 was primed by Security Element 2 and all radios were turned on.

(d) H-2 Minutes. All personnel ready to go. The Command Group Leader assumed his post adjacent to the left mini-gun.

(e) H-30 Seconds. Standby to debark.

(f) H-Hour. Flare drop.

(g) H+1 Minute. The HH-53 helicopter made a tight, left downward movement to get into position, followed by an extremely tight right turn into a go-around pattern. Approach to the landing zone was fast and violent. Both door gunners opened fire with mini-guns.

(h) H+2 Minutes, 30 Seconds. Command Group debarked and each element proceeded to its area of responsibility.

(i) H+2 Minutes, 45 Seconds to H+9 Minutes, 30 Seconds. The Command Group Leader realized that the second HH-53 had landed on the Support Group's LZ and that the Support Group had not landed. Plan Green was initiated and all elements were notified and diverted except Security Element 2. Element 2 was too far away for verbal contact and radio contact had not been established. The Command Group Leader, while directing Security Element 3 into position, came under small arms and rifle grenade fire from building 73. The building was taken under fire and the threat eliminated. The Command Group then noticed three to four NVA personnel

running north between buildings 11 and 12 and the compound wall. (See Figure 2.) The enemy was engaged with rifle fire. At the same time, another NVA ran between the Command Group and Security Element 1 in the direction of the Ground Force Command Party. The Command Group called out to the Ground Force Commander informing him an NVA was approaching, at which time the NVA was killed by a member of the Command Party. The Command Group then moved north to begin clearing its area of responsibility. Security Element 1 received word Plan Green was in effect while enroute to its objective, buildings 8E, 8D, and 4A. At approximately the same time, the element received small arms fire from building 7B and the area immediately west of that building. Fire was returned and two NVA with AK-47 rifles were killed. As Element 1 reached the hedge running east to west, south of building 8D, it received a heavy volume of fire from the building area. Movement was heard in building 8D, and the building was taken under fire. The building was assaulted by three members of the element, and a grenade thrown through a window. Five NVA personnel armed with AK-47 rifles were observed east of the building and were engaged by fire. At the same time, another NVA fired on the element from the west end of the building. This threat was eliminated. At the same time, two NVA came around the east end of the building and fired on the element. These two NVA, and one other observed running between buildings 8D and 8E, were killed. The portion of Element 1 not engaged in clearing building 8D had moved to the immediate west of that building, clearing buildings 8E and 4A. As they were doing so, four enemy ran out of these buildings and were fired on; results unknown. After buildings 8E and 4A were cleared, portions of Element 1 moved to the hole in the west compound wall where they linked up with the Assault Group. Security Element 2 did not receive word that Plan Green was in effect and, therefore, proceeded with the Basic Plan. On the way to its objective area, an M-72 LAW was fired at the power station. The station was hit, and the element moved on to its objective where it received

small arms fire from the southwest from approximately 200 meters. The enemy position was engaged and fire suppressed. One member of the element proceeded to set up Claymore mines in defensive positions, and another member moved back and cleared the power station. The element then received fire from the east side of the road from approximately 10-15 meters south of the canal from two NVA armed with M-1 carbines. This threat was eliminated by fire from the element. Security Element 3 moved approximately 60 to 70 meters toward its objective, the canal and river junction, when it received word verbally from the Command Group that alternate Plan Green was in effect. Due to the roughness of the terrain, it was difficult to move swiftly. There was a slight delay before the element managed to arrive in position to assault its area of responsibility. The element was in position south of building 7B at approximately H+5 minutes when the M-79 gunner and M-60 gunner took the building under fire. As the element assaulted the buildings, it encountered some difficulty in trying to traverse the concertina wire which surrounded the buildings. Also, there was a drainage ditch approximately five to six feet deep south of building 7B, running east to west. Upon reaching the objective area, the element first cleared the small building west of 8F and then 8F. The small building contained ducks, and building 8F was empty. Approaching building 7B, two NVA were encountered and eliminated. One member of the element entered the building and eliminated eight NVA hiding there. Another member of the element killed two NVA running through the courtyard, one carrying an AK-47 rifle. The Pathfinder Element, while enroute to the primary LZ, received word (verbally) that Plan Green was in effect. One member of the two-man element moved toward the pump station while the other member moved to the concrete power line pole. The Pathfinder, moving toward the pumping station, noticed a figure running in the same direction he was going. Upon reaching the pump station, the Pathfinder threw one concussion grenade into the building and, upon detonation, fired thirty rounds into the building. The Pathfinder then returned to the power pole to assist in

placing the demolitions on the structure. Just prior to igniting the fuze, the Pathfinders noticed an HH-53 inbound with the Support Group. As the helicopter landed on the LZ, the element ignited the time fuze and ran to the drainage ditch north of the primary LZ.

(j) H+9-1/2 to H+20-1/2 Minutes. The Command Group Element was notified by the Ground Force Commander to have elements in the Support Group area hold up until the Support Group reached its position then revert to the Basic Plan. After passing this information to its elements, the Command Element received word by radio from the Pathfinder Element that the primary LZ was ready and that the tower was down. Shortly thereafter, Security Element 1 reported its area clear and linkup with the Assault Group. This information was relayed to the Ground Force Commander who then informed the Command Group Leader that there were no items in the compound and that the Command Group was to embark minus the Pathfinder Element. After the grenade exploded in building 8D, Security Element 1 entered the building and seven NVA with AK-47 rifles were found dead. A portion of the element then moved to the west and linked up with the other portion of the element at the southwest corner of the compound wall where the entire element engaged a target across the river, identified by use of the night vision device, with M-79 and M-16 fire. Shortly thereafter, the element received word to pull back for extraction. The element then linked up with the Assault Group coming out of the compound and moved to the LZ. Shortly after eliminating the threat to the south of the canal, Security Element 2 received word from the Command Group Leader to pull back for extraction. At approximately the same time, a convoy of four or five small trucks were spotted at approximately 200 meters moving northeast on the NE/SW road. The convoy was engaged with a M-72 LAW, which halted the convoy. The element then moved to the LZ. After clearing building 7B, Security Element 3 came under fire from building 7B. As it was returning the fire, the element received word from the Command Group to pull back.

At the same time, elements of the Support Group reached their position. Element 3 then proceeded to pull back to the Command Group's location. The Command Group had Element 3 revert to the Basic Plan at this time. Upon reaching the pump station, the element cleared the building and set up in a security position to wait for the second extraction helicopter. NOTE: Element 3 should have boarded first helicopter. After the charge detonated, the Pathfinder Element noticed the tower had fallen and there were hot wires on the ground. The element then proceeded to set up the primary LZ lights and notified the Command Group of its actions. The Pathfinders then proceeded to set up the alternate LZ.

(k) H+20-1/2 to H+26 Minutes. Security Element 3 boarded the second extraction helicopter. As the Pathfinder Element moved to the telephone pole to cut it down, it met the Support Group Leader who informed them of the change in plans and that the element was to board the second extraction helicopter which it did at that time.

(3) The Assault Group mission was to secure the inside of the POW compound, to include guard towers, gates, and cell blocks and to release and guide POWs to the control point. (See Figures 1 and 2.)

(a) H-30 Seconds. The UH-3 assault helicopter approached the enemy's military complex 400 meters south of the POW compound. Door and window gunners began firing, assuming this site was the true objective. The UH-3 corrected the approach and flew north to the POW compound.

(b) H-1 Minute. The UH-3 made a west to east approach, crossing the west wall and began its descent into the compound. Again, door, window, and ramp gunners fired on areas of responsibility. Large tree limbs and one 10" tree trunk were severed by the UH-3 blades as it began settling to the ground, causing a violent, sudden maneuver of 30-40 degrees to the right. The right door gunner was thrown clear of the

aircraft but was unhurt and continued with the ground operation plan. The aircrew completed its landing procedures and the Assault Group debarked.

(c) H+1 to H+5 Minutes. Headquarters Element moved to its area of responsibility, cleared building 3, the southwest guard tower, broadcasted messages to prisoners, placed and detonated a demolition charge on the wall (4'x4' hole was blown), and established radio contact with the Ground Force Command and all action elements. Action Element 1 moved to cell block 5A. As the cell block was being cleared by two members, the other two members covered them by placing automatic weapon fire on the northwest tower. All members then moved to the rear of cell block 5A again splitting into two-man teams. Two moved to the tower, cleared it, and the area along the interior west and north wall, then entered cell block 5C. The other team of two men moved to cell block 5D causing three to five enemy to flee from this area toward the gate area where they were killed by Action Elements 2 and 3. Cell block 5D was entered. Vietnamese voices could be heard outside of the compound, and a large volume of automatic weapon fire including AK. Action Element 2 moved swiftly to cell blocks 5E and 4. As the doors to cell block 5E were being checked, two enemy soldiers rushed from the gate area and were killed. Locks on the doors were cut with bolt cutters and all cells were entered and cleared. Two of the locked cells were used to secure 100 plus bags of cement and metal bars. Action Element 3 moved to the gate and cell block 5B. One concussion grenade was thrown into the guard tower at the south side of the gate. Three enemy soldiers were killed inside and north of the gate and two were killed outside near building 7A. Cell block 5B was entered, and all cells were searched.

(d) H+8 to H+10 Minutes. Headquarters Element received an all clear and zero item count from all Action Elements. Elements were ordered to move to the previously blown exit hole in the southwest wall and to stand by. "Zero items" was transmitted to the Ground Force Commander.

A demolition charge was placed inside the HH-3. The Command Group photographer arrived via the blown hole and was taken to cell block 5A by Action Element 1 where he took three pictures. Action Element 3 reported that the Support Group had not arrived to relieve him at the gate (CRASH - Plan Green was in effect, and the Support Group was not in target area.)

(e) H+10 to H+15 Minutes. Headquarters Element received orders to deliver the first group of POWs. Action Elements 1, 2, and 3 were dispatched to Command Group MACO position. The Headquarters Element remained behind to complete the mission of destroying the HH-3.

(f) H+15 to H+18 Minutes. Headquarters Element reported ready to "marry up," i.e., activate helicopter demolition, to the Ground Force Commander. At H+23-1/2 minutes, permission was received, the demolition charge activated, and Headquarters Element Leader activated the fire-fight simulator.

(g) H+24 to H+27 Minutes. Headquarters Element departed the compound via the blown hole and linked up with the Ground Force Commander.

(h) H+33 Minutes. A large fire, believed to be the HH-3 exploding and burning, was seen to erupt in the target area by the Assault Group Leader.

(4) The Support Group mission was to secure the area north and east of the compound to include the bridge 150 meters north.

(a) H-30 Seconds. Stand by to debark.

(b) H-Hour. Flares.

(c) H+30 Seconds. Door gunner engaged target with left minigun.

(d) H+1 Minute. Support Group was inserted at the military complex located 400 meters south of Son Tay POW Compound. (See Figure 1.) Upon debarking, the Headquarters Element, while being exposed to automatic weapons fire, assaulted and penetrated the complex clearing the billet located at the southern end of the compound utilizing concussion and fragmentation grenades and rifle fire accounting for ten NVA soldiers killed. All elements were advised that a withdrawal was imminent. Element 1 secured the LZ and protected to the south and west. Element 2, upon debarkation, was exposed to automatic weapons fire and moved in an easterly direction placing fire on the road east of the compound.

(e) H+2 to H+5 Minutes. The Headquarters Element continued clearing the southern billets. More enemy personnel than expected were encountered, and a large volume of automatic weapons fire was coming from the two-story building located in the center of the compound. An M-79 gunner, detached from Element 1, placed accurate fire through windows and doors of the building eliminating the threat. At H+3 minutes, this billet was secured. Element 1 was receiving automatic weapons fire from the western edge of the compound. An M-60 machine gun was employed eliminating this threat. Element 2 had moved to the road and started clearing in a northerly direction on both flanks of the road for a distance of 150 meters. Several enemy were encountered but no enemy kills were confirmed due to distance involved. The element leader received instructions to close and secure the southeast portion of the extraction LZ. At H+4 minutes, the element began the movement as instructed.

(f) H+5 to H+9 Minutes. The Headquarters Element was clearing the southern end of two adjacent billets with fragmentation grenades. Four NVA, attempting to reach the two-story building (armory) from the eastern billet, were killed. At approximately H+6 minutes, movement was begun toward the extraction landing zone as directed. Movement

was completed at H+7 minutes, and all elements were accounted for by the Support Group Leader. The LZ was marked with strobe lights. Element 1 secured the extraction LZ and placed suppressive machine gun fire on the western portion of the compound. Element 2 closed the LZ and secured in a southerly direction.

(g) H+9 Minutes. Headquarters Element was last to board the HH-53 for extraction. The Headquarters Element plus the M-60 machine gunner from Element 1 laid down a base of fire into the compound while Element 1 and 2 boarded the aircraft. All support personnel were extracted. No casualties were sustained.

(h) H+9-1/2 Minutes. Support Group was inserted at Son Tay POW Compound. Upon debarkation, a radio transmission was received from the Ground Force Commander informing the Support Group Leader that Plan Green was in effect. This transmission was relayed to Elements 1 and 2.

(i) H+10 Minutes. The Headquarters Element completed linkup with, and passed through, Command Element 3 and implemented the Basic Plan. Buildings 7B and 8F were cleared utilizing concussion and fragmentation grenades and rifle fire, accounting for five enemy kills. A steady volume of fire was coming from building 7A and was neutralized by M-79 fire. Element 1 debarked and established a secure position approximately 15 meters south of building 7A. Element 2 debarked and headed in an easterly direction taking building group 13E under fire utilizing M-60 machine gun, M-79, and M-16 rifle fire.

(j) H+11 to H+22 Minutes. The Support Group Leader received a radio transmission indicating there were no POWs inside the compound. At H+12-1/2 minutes, the Ground Force Commander instructed the Support Group to withdraw and establish security for the extraction LZ.

This was accomplished at H+17 minutes. Element 1 was informed at H+12-1/2 minutes to close on the eastern portion of the LZ and secure. This was accomplished at H+14 minutes. Element 2 assaulted and cleared building 13E with concussion grenades and M-16 rifle fire. Two NVA were killed in building 13E. At H+13 minutes, Element 2 was instructed to close on and secure the southern section of the extraction LZ. This was accomplished at H+17 minutes.

(k) H+22 to H+27 Minutes. Headquarters Element received instructions from the Ground Force Commander to board the second HH-53 for extraction. The helicopter landed at H+23 minutes and the Support Group Leader notified Elements 1 and 2 to board the aircraft. At H+27 minutes, all Support Group personnel were extracted. No casualties were sustained. Element 1 secured east utilizing M-60 machine guns, M-79, and M-16 rifle fire. Element 1 was first to embark at H+26. Element 2 secured south utilizing M-60 machine gun, M-79, and M-16 rifle fire. Element 2 was the last element to embark at H+27 minutes.

(5) Synopsis:

(a) The ground operation was basically a long distance helibome raid characterized by tactical surprise, violent execution, and swift withdrawal. Complete tactical surprise was achieved by the manner in which the raiding force was transported and inserted into the target area. The landing of the Assault Group aircraft directly in the POW compound was a key factor. Violence of execution plus the heightened ability of raiding force members to deliver accurate fire using the single point sight accounted for the lack of friendly casualties compared to those sustained by enemy forces. As a consequence, swift execution of the mission was not measurably slowed by enemy action.

(b) The extensive and detailed rehearsals conducted by the joint force paid great dividends in the successful conduct of the raid.

Despite the absence of one-third of the force during the initial insert, the mission was neither aborted nor seriously delayed.

(6) Lessons Learned:

(a) The value of extensive and detailed rehearsals in the event of emergencies or changes in plans cannot be over emphasized. The success enjoyed by the force is attributed primarily to its level of training achieved through repeated rehearsals.

(b) Ability to successfully engage a target at night is of immeasurable value to a unit. This ability is estimated to be the major factor underlying the extremely light casualty figures of the raiding force even though the enemy possessed weapons of relatively equal capability.

c. Air Operations:

(1) Mission Forces (Through Extraction):

(a) Assault Force C-130E. Acceleration and climb was initiated at the acceleration point. The aircraft arrived directly over the objective and dropped four flares, all of which ignited. The aircraft then turned right and dropped two battlefield simulators southeast and south of the city of Son Tay, on target. At the release point for the BLU-27/B fire bomb markers, the first weapon armed but did not exit the aircraft. The second unit was dropped on target. The jammed BLU-27/B was freed and jettisoned in a lake west of the objective area. The MK-6 log flares, positioned in the aircraft behind the jammed BLU-27/B, could not be dropped on target. Therefore, the aircraft commander elected to not drop the log flares after jettisoning the BLU-27/B for fear of creating an additional and unplanned marker, which could have confused friendly forces. The flares were disarmed and returned to base. The aircraft exited the objective area and proceeded to its orbit point in Laos as planned.

(b) Strike Force C-130E. The Strike Force C-130E proceeded to the A-1 holding area southeast of Mt Ba Vi and dropped the two BLU-27/B fire bomb markers and pallet of MK-6 log flares on target. The aircraft then proceeded to and established an orbit over the mountains 15NM west of the objective. At approximately H+13 minutes, the EWO reported receiving SAM radar activity from both southeasterly and easterly directions. Evasive action was taken, the orbit pattern was abandoned, and protection behind the hills was sought. The remainder of the loiter time was spent at low altitude, below 1,000 feet AGL, with almost continuous SAM radar activity being received. Approximately eight SAMs were sighted over the objective area. The strike C-130E departed the orbit area after the last primary force pilot reported that he was exiting the objective area.

(c) A-1s. The Strike Force flew from the IP to the objective area as briefed. The fifth A-1 dropped off over the Black River as planned and the third and fourth A-1s dropped off at the holding point marked by the C-130E. The two primary A-1s arrived over the objective area and set up a left-hand orbit at 3,000 feet AGL. After two orbits, the Ground Force Commander requested the A-1s to attack the foot bridge to the southeast. Four white-phosphorous 100 pound bombs were dropped at this location. During the next few minutes, the A-1s expended six rockeyes on isolated areas on the road southwest of the camp. This was accomplished to decrease aircraft weight and increase maneuverability and loiter time. The Ground Force Commander then called the primary A-1s and requested an attack on the bridge north of the objective. The lead A-1 acknowledged and advised number two to strafe using 20mm. After one strafing pass by each aircraft, SAMs were sighted. Three more strafing passes were made by the A-1s. The ground forces were withdrawing at this time. The primary lead A-1 called the reserve lead to bring his element in to replace the first

element. The third and fourth A-1s arrived and the first and second departed to the west, jettisoning their remaining ordnance in the Black River as they egressed. The last helicopter was lifting off the ground as the second flight of A-1s completed one orbit over the objective area. No ordnance was expended by the reserve A-1 element in the objective area. The fifth A-1 maintained an orbit west of the objective area with lights on to draw MIGs should the Assault Force be threatened.

(2) Support Forces:

(a) F-4D (MIG CAP). While in the holding area, the aircraft maintained a 10-mile separation at 16,000 and 18,000 feet. AAA radar was observed initially at 1925Z and SAM radars at 1930Z. When the SAMs appeared to be in the direction of a MIG CAP flight, evasive maneuvers were initiated. The radar homing and warning gear performed as expected. The launches were easily verified as the launch appeared as a large orange fire ball followed by the white-orange flame trailing from the missile sustainer as it ascended. MIG CAP aircraft were forced to rely on their own airborne intercept radar for the detection of enemy aircraft due to equipment failure on the COLLEGE EYE airborne radar platform.

In addition, several MIG CAP aircraft performed a RESCAP role in escorting a damaged F-105G aircraft and orbiting over the downed crew.

(b) F-105G (WILD WEASEL). FanSong radar indications were not received until 1928Z; however, radar emissions were received from GCI search radars from the time the first aircraft arrived on station. Approximately 16 SAMs were launched at the WILD WEASEL force. At two different times, six missiles were seen airborne at the same time. Eight of the ten Shrikes carried were fired. There is no confirmation that the Shrikes struck their targets. All of the crews believed they fired within

the parameters of the Shrike.

Most of the Shrike launches were against less than "3-1/2 ring" signals because of the tactics used by the SAM batteries. The FanSong never locked on the aircraft as it headed toward the site. Full strength signals were not received until after 45 degrees of turn toward the escape heading had been made, at which time a lock-on occurred and the SAM fired. Another aircraft would have to be lined up with the site to take advantage of the strong signal. At 1945Z the F-105G flight leader directed the aircraft to move westward five miles from preplanned orbits as the SAM sites did not appear to fire when their targets were over 15 miles from the site. At 1940Z, the third F-105G, Firebird 03, was damaged by a SAM. While cruising at 13,000 feet, two SAMs were launched at Firebird 03. When the SAMs were within one mile of the aircraft, the pilot rolled over and descended to approximately 5,000 feet. When the two missiles arched down following the aircraft, the pilot made a hard pullout. The first SAM passed over the aircraft and detonated behind it. The second passed under the aircraft and detonated behind and below the left wing. The explosion was heard and it appeared that the left wing was on fire. The other F-105G aircraft in the air observed a bright ball of fire in the sky and detected an afterburner coming out of the fireball. The left wing and side of the aircraft remained bright for 12 to 15 seconds and then the fire went out. The aircraft continued to operate normally and egressed the area without further incident. At approximately 1946Z, the fifth F-105G, Firebird 05, was damaged by another SAM which detonated close enough to fill the cockpit with a brilliant flash and provide a mild shock wave. The only sign of trouble was the loss of the stability augmentation system which would not re-engage. The aircraft continued in the area until it was determined that the aircraft was leaking more fuel than it was burning. It appears that the SAM burst ruptured the fuel tanks. The aircraft

egressed toward the Plaine des Jarres where it flamed out at 32,000 feet. The aircrew ejected at 8,000 feet after a maximum range descent. Ejections were successful and the aircrew picked up at 2310Z and 2320Z. The foregoing recap of WILD WEASEL actions in no way represents the hazardous environment of multiple night SAM launches they encountered. The force went into this high threat area knowing it was "bait" and that its mission was to keep the missiles away from the Task Group. They did this successfully since all of the missiles appeared to be fired at the "high flyers." Their performance proved the need for and potential of a WILD WEASEL force.

(c) COLLEGE EYE. All systems were operational except the APX-83 (IFF/SIF) equipment. Without the IFF/SIF capability, the aircraft operated primarily as a MIG warning agency and radio relay. No MIG warnings were issued. Voice contact with the MIG CAP (F-4D) and WILD WEASEL (F-105) aircraft was exceptionally good.

(d) COMBAT APPLE. The [redacted] systems performed as expected. In addition to its normal functions, the FM enroute frequency of the Task Group was monitored. Enroute position reports were relayed to the TACC-KS via the COMFY SILK UHF net.

(e) Radio-Relay Aircraft. All equipments were operational with four channels available. The use of this aircraft permitted a direct UHF link between COMUSTG, the Task Group aircraft, and CTF-77.

7. Navy Operations:

a. A total of 59 Navy aircraft were launched with the primary purpose of diversion. This force included seven A-6s and 20 A-7s simulating

strikes over northern NVN and the Haiphong Harbor area. The combat air patrols consisted of 12 F-4 and F-8 aircraft. Six EC-1/ES-1 aircraft and 14 anti-submarine warfare, tanker, and other support aircraft constituted the remainder of the force. The strike plan consisted of two waves of aircraft divided into three tracks and three IRON HAND orbits. All Navy aircraft adhered to the specified tracks and the entire diversionary operation, including timing, was executed as planned.

b. Three Shrikes were fired at active FanSong radars in the Haiphong area and a total of 190 flares were dropped. No other ordnance was expended.

c. It is estimated that a total of 20 SAMs were launched at the Navy force, most of them at extreme range with ineffective results.

d. NVN reaction was initially slow, reaching a peak of intensity as the second wave was over the Haiphong Harbor. To the degree observable, the principal objective of the Navy diversionary effort was achieved. The density of Navy operations in the Gulf of Tonkin was the most extensive Navy night operation of the SEA conflict. Considering that two of the carriers arrived in-theater just prior to this operation, the precise execution of this mission without incident is commendable.

e. Weather in the Haiphong and northeastern NVN area was clear with unlimited visibility.

f. No operational difficulties were encountered and all Navy aircraft recovered safely.

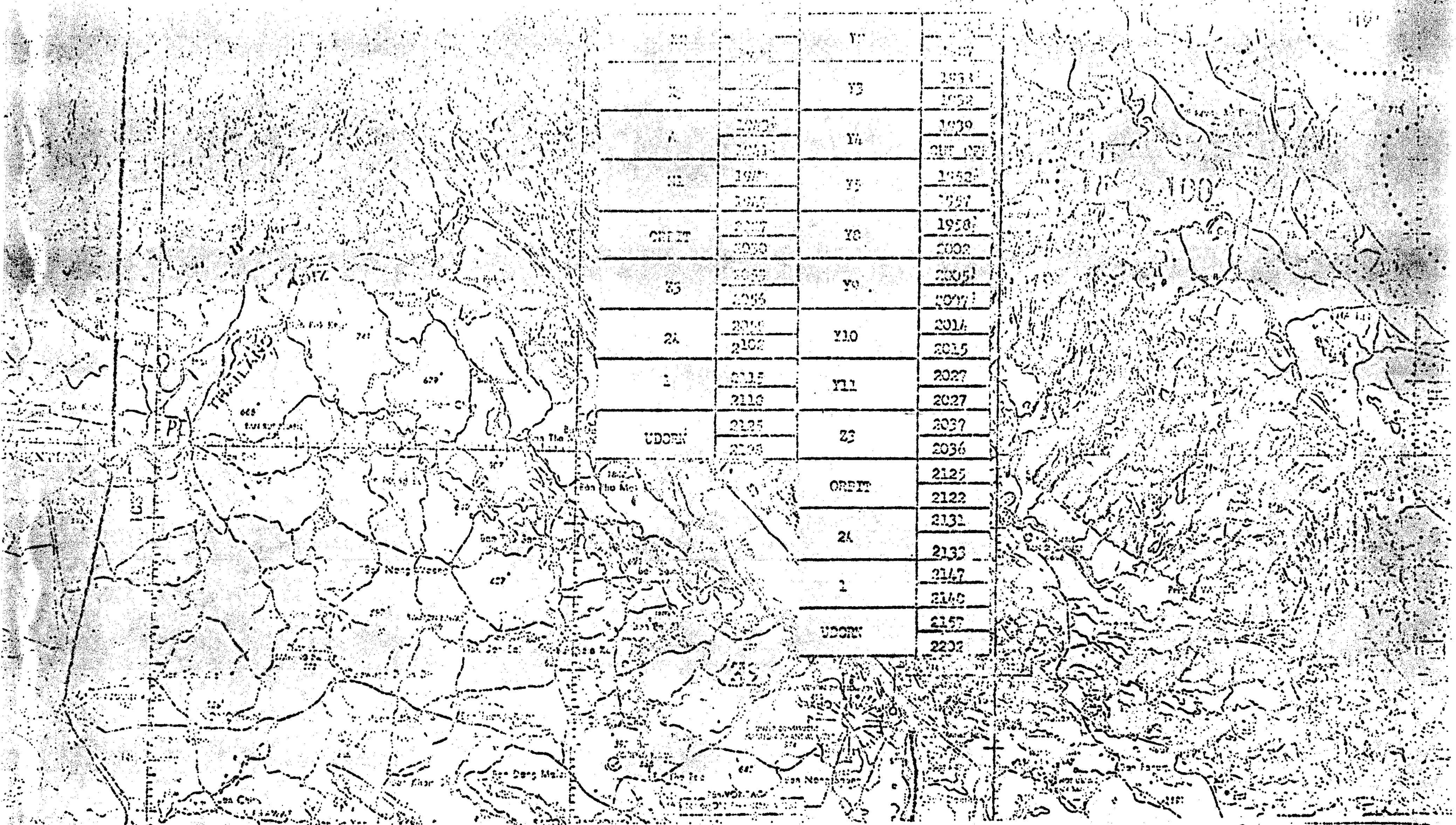
g. See Part II, Section I, for a detailed concept of operations.

3. Egress. (See map on following page.)

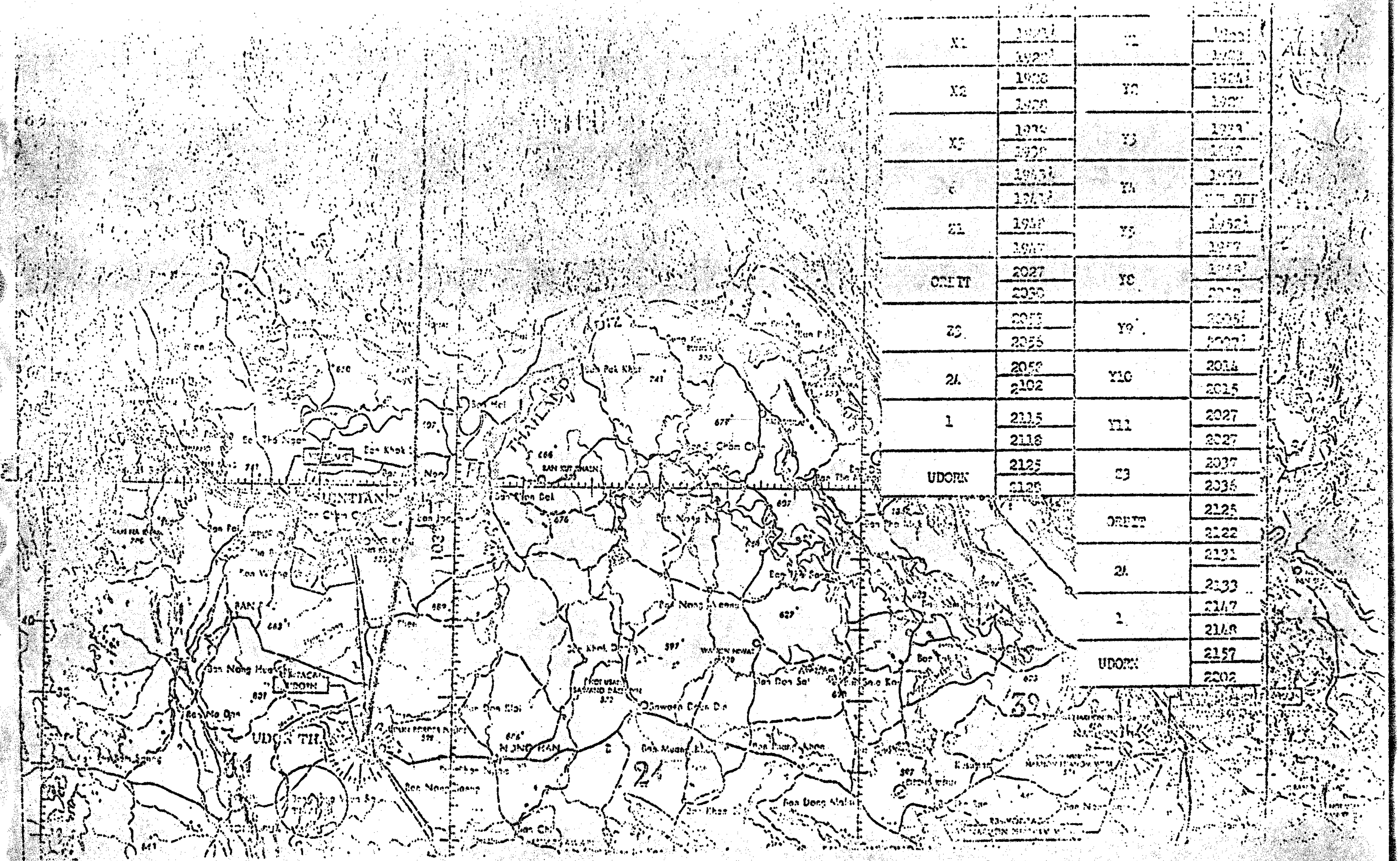
a. Enroute:

(1) HH-53s. As the first and second HH-53s crossed the Black River several crew members on HH-53 number three observed either A-1s or F-105s in their vicinity and issued MIG warnings. Upon hearing the MIG call, number three A-1 decided to jettison ordnance to increase maneuverability but elected to fire the rockets before jettisoning the pods to preclude use of the rockets if recovered by the enemy. Number three A-1 fired the rockets into a ridge line just west of the Black River. The rocket firing was observed by the helicopters and, in conjunction with the MIG calls, interpreted as an attack. The helicopters took evasive action by descending to minimum altitude.

At this point, HH-53 number three declared an emergency due to a transmission chip light which came on prior to the assault and had not been called to avoid confusion or concern. Number five HH-53 interrupted and escorted number three until Firebird 05, a SAM suppressing F-105, was reported down in the vicinity of the Plaine des Jarres. HH-53 number three then joined with number two. Numbers four and five departed with the HC-130 tanker, refueling enroute to the SAR area. Numbers one and two refueled enroute to Udorn RTAFB. Numbers four and five arrived in the SAR area where a C-130A aircraft was dropping flares in two locations about one-half mile apart. Number four proceeded to the southern set of flares and number five went to the northern set. After locating the immediate areas of both downed survivors, number five reported ground fire. The SAR aircraft then withdrew to await first light. Numbers four and five rendezvoused with King 21 (SAR HC-130) and number five refueled. During the refueling, number five was called into the SAR area to pinpoint the survivors for Sandy lead (SAR A-1). Number four arrived on scene and recovered the downed EWO. Number five then recovered the downed pilot,



[illegible]	[illegible]	Y[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Y3	1931
	[illegible]		1932
A	2002	Y4	1939
	2011		OUT OF
[illegible]	1977	Y5	1952
	[illegible]		1957
ORBIT	[illegible]	Y8	1958
	2030		2002
Z5	[illegible]	Y9	2005
	2056		2007
2A	[illegible]	Y10	2014
	2102		2015
1	2115	Y11	2027
	2116		2027
UDORN	2125	Z3	2037
	[illegible]		2036
		ORBIT	2125
			2122
		2A	2131
			2133
		1	2147
			2140
		UDORN	2157
			2202



X1	[illegible]	Y1	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
X2	1908	Y2	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
X3	[illegible]	Y3	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
6	[illegible]	Y4	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
21	[illegible]	Y5	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
ORBIT	2027	Y6	[illegible]
	2030		[illegible]
23	[illegible]	Y9	[illegible]
	[illegible]		[illegible]
24	[illegible]	Y10	2014
	2102		2015
1	2115	Y11	2027
	2118		2027
UDORN	2125	Z3	2037
	2125		2036
		ORBIT	2125
			2122
		24	2131
			2133
		1	2147
			2148
		UDORN	2157
			2202

rendezvoused with King 21 and refueled. Numbers four and five then recovered at Udorn RTAFB.

(2) Assault C-130E:

(a) Enroute to its holding point on the NVN/Laos border, the aircraft received emissions from FanSong radar (SAM target tracking and missile guidance). The aircraft descended to 1,000 feet AGL, the radar signal disappeared and the aircraft climbed back to flight plan altitude. At this time, a missile launch was detected by the EWO. The aircraft descended to 1,000 feet AGL and remained at this altitude until reaching its holding point in northeast Laos. Soon after the missile launch was detected, a missile was seen exploding several miles to the east of the aircraft. No further SAM activity was noted. The aircraft orbited its holding point for 49 minutes, providing UHF direction finding steers for returning A-1s and helicopters.

(b) After insuring that all aircraft had passed the orbit point, a climb to flight plan altitude was initiated. After passing 8,500 feet the EWO detected a conical scan airborne intercept radar approaching from the southwest. The radar signal disappeared after a rapid descent to 1,000 feet. A short time later a climb was made to flight plan altitude. No further radar activity was detected. The remainder of the flight was completed in accordance with flight plan.

(3) A-1s:

(a) Departure of the A-1s from the objective area closely followed preplanned procedures. Numbers one and two departed with the first UH-53. They jettisoned a total of five pods of rockets, four white phosphorous bombs, and two CBU-14 units in the Black River as they crossed outbound. Numbers three and four departed with UH-53s numbers two and three. These A-1s jettisoned their full ordnance loads on a 3,500 foot

karst peak approximately 5NM south of course on the west side of the Black River. Number five departed behind the HH-53s and did not jettison any ordnance.

(b) All aircraft utilized the preplanned return route and recovered at Udorn RTAFB. Recovery times spanned a 30-minute period because of varying airspeeds. Only number three recovered with less than one hour of reserve fuel.

(4) Strike C-130E. The Strike Force C-130E departed the objective area in low level terrain following mode due to a warning that MIGs were in the area. At approximately 90 miles from the objective area, the aircraft climbed to 8,500 feet and proceeded to the planned orbit point northwest of the Plaine des Jarres. UHF/DF steers were provided for all returning mission aircraft. After the last aircraft passed the orbit point, the strike C-130E proceeded to Udorn RTAFB without further incident.

(5) HC-130P. The spare HC-130P tanker refueled HH-53s numbers one and two and provided DF information as necessary on egress. The primary tanker refueled HH-53s numbers four and five and then proceeded with the helicopters to the area where an F-105 crew (Firebird 05) ejected. The primary tanker coordinated with the Udorn RTAFB SAR Center and directed the SAR effort for the Firebird crew members. Flares were dropped over the downed crew members and the HH-53s prepared for a night pickup. However, the flareship was unable to drop flares precisely over the downed crew members and it was decided to wait for a first light pickup. At first light, Sandy lead cleared HH-53s numbers four and five to make their pickups. All SAR forces returned to Udorn RTAFB without incident.

(6) COLLEGE EYE. The backup aircraft departed station at 2032Z and returned to Korat RTAFB.

(7) COMBAT APPLE. Upon completion of the operation, the aircraft assumed its normal [redacted] responsibilities and remained on station until [redacted].

(8) Radio-Relay Aircraft. Upon completion of the operation, control of the aircraft reverted to Commander, Seventh Air Force.

b. Recovery. All primary mission JCTG aircraft including the F-105s recovered at Udorn RTAFB. A parking plan for all aircraft was worked out in advance and a ramp coordinator was appointed to insure that aircraft were rapidly directed to designated parking areas. A majority of the aircraft arrived within the period between 2100 and 2200Z. Although available debriefing facilities and aircrew transportation were overtaxed, the recovery was orderly and no significant problems were encountered.

9. Reconstitution. The JCTG was reconstituted at Takhli RTAFB after recovery. Ground forces and helicopter and A-1E crew members were returned from Udorn RTAFB to Takhli RTAFB by theater airlift aircraft upon completion of preliminary intelligence debriefing. Crew members of F-105 WILD WEASEL aircraft were returned to Korat RTAFB by the same means. Mission C-130E and spare UH-1H aircrews returned their own aircraft to Takhli RTAFB. The A-1E and spare UH-3 aircraft were returned to respective home bases by unit crews.

10. Signal:

a. General. The detailed communications electronic planning, coordination, and training proved effective during the employment phase in providing required communications support from National Military Command level down to and including assault force operating elements in the objective area.

(1) Communications support to the National Military Command Center in Washington, D.C., was responsive and reports from the objective area were received with a two-minute delay from the objective area.

(2) Communications support in the TACC-NS at DaNang provided CHICOM real-time display and control of operations throughout the tactical area of operations.

(3) Communications support organic to the assault force provided effective command and control communications in the objective area.

b. Assault Force Communications:

(1) The assault force communications procedures established in the Ground Force Mission SOI (eight radio nets and visual signals) provided responsive and efficient command and control communications during the assault force ingress to, operations in, and egress from the objective area.

(2) All radio nets with the exception of the forward air guide (FAG) net were activated and functioned as planned.

(a) The air ground net (UHF) was extensively utilized for coordination of close air support, recall of helicopters for extraction, and relay of operational reports from COMARCOM in the objective area to [redacted] at the TACC-NS.

(b) The FAG net (FM) was not activated as an enemy ground buildup did not develop to the extent that FACs were required to direct close air support strikes.

(c) The three ground force task group nets were used by ground force group leaders for internal control and reporting during ground operations in the objective area.

(d) The ground force emergency net was used by the ground force support group in attempting to coordinate execution of the alternate plan and the SAR emergency net was used in recovery of two downed F-105 pilots.

(3) Visual signals (green star clusters, bean bag marking lights and strobe lights) were used as planned and on an emergency basis to

mark ground force elements' locations for helicopter pickup and to mark helicopter LZs.

11. Security. During force employment, the Security Staff Section monitored secure working areas for final mission study and briefings. Cover stories were developed and disseminated to account for personnel movement and aircraft departures. Aircraft movement security measures were implemented during the actual force employment, including radio silence, IFF silence, and strict ECM and radar beacon emission control.

J. COMMAND AND CONTROL:

1. General:

a. COMJCTG was responsible to CINCPAC for the conduct of the operation and continued to maintain operational control of JCTG elements throughout their deployment to Takhli RTAFB. At H-5, he assumed operational control of augmenting theater forces.

b. Mission control and coordination of the Task Group during the ingress, objective area, and egress operations were centralized with COMJCTG at the Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector (TACC-NS), Monkey Mountain, RVN. The command and control system was comprised of in-being elements of the Southeast Asia Tactical Air Control System augmented by two COLLEGE EYE airborne radar platforms which were obtained from USAF CONUS resources.

c. COMJCTG was in place prior to H-hour. The following elements were utilized and responsive to COMJCTG: Control and Reporting Centers (radar sites) at Udorn, Thailand, and Monkey Mountain, RVN; airborne radar platforms (COLLEGE EYE);

digital

Tonkin; radio-relay aircraft; and the Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector. All elements performed as planned except the airborne radar platforms and the digital link with the Navy's automated system.

d. Two airborne radar platforms were planned to be operational over the Gulf of Tonkin; however, the primary aircraft lost an engine and aborted; the backup aircraft experienced a failure in its IFF equipment used to track friendly aircraft. Thus COMJCTG was deprived of the capability of electronically monitoring the low flying task force. The periodic failure of a computer buffer (USMC-operated) between the Air Force and Navy automated systems deprived the TACC-NS of continuous display of the real-time air picture derived from Navy sensors. The backup automated teletype system was activated and provided a near real-time (two-minute delay) display of Navy derived air situation data.

e. All planned communications performed satisfactorily. In every case, more than one element monitored each assigned frequency and equipments were available for a total backup capability. COMJCTG was capable of maintaining direct control of assigned forces through the use of the radio-relay aircraft (UHF) and HF/SSB communications. In addition, two dedicated voice circuits (unsecure) were activated between the TACC-NS and the NMCC and CINCPAC. These permitted close to real-time mission progress reports to CINCPAC and NMCC.

f. The Control and Reporting Center at Udorn, Thailand, controlled all refueling operations for the F-4 MIG CAP and F-105 WILD WEASEL aircraft and provided required radar control of task force aircraft operating over Thailand and Laos.

g. SAM warnings were issued by an airborne Navy ELINT aircraft 10 minutes prior to the firing of the first SAM at the task force. However, task force elements do not recall hearing the warning. No MIG warnings were issued by control elements.

h. The airborne aircraft (COMBAT APPLE) provided a capability to monitor A-1 and C-130E FM transmissions, thus providing an additional communications link between the task force and COMJCTG.

2. Rules of Engagement. The Rules of Engagement specified in the JCTG Operational Plan were amplified by COMJCTG to permit the Air Force and the Navy diversionary force to utilize air-to-ground missiles (Shrike/Standard Arm) against NVN radar controlled SAM/AAA defenses that posed a threat to US forces. Also, CTF-77 was advised that no authorization had been granted by higher authority for the Navy forces to drop bombs.

3. SAM/MIG Warnings. It was originally planned to have all agencies with the capability to detect hostile aircraft issue hostile aircraft warnings on Guard channel. SAM warnings were to be issued to the high flying jet aircraft on their primary frequencies. During the mission briefings at Takhli RTAFB, it was recognized that extensive use of Guard channel for warning purposes would interfere with normal ground force communications. The ground force UHF radios possessed a Guard channel override feature, thus permitting Guard transmissions to block out normal communications. Because of this, all communicating stations were instructed to keep Guard transmissions to an absolute minimum unless an actual emergency existed. This procedure accounts for the minimum number of SAM warnings issued and received by the Task Group.

4. Control Messages. Code words were used in all message traffic dealing with Command and Control. (A listing of these messages is in Part II, Section J.)

K. [redacted]:

1. Airlift Coordination. Direct coordination with the MAC Airlift Command Post at Clark Air Base was effected by the JCTG Operations Staff.

Two aeromedical configured C-141 aircraft, prepositioned at Udorn RTAFB to return recovered prisoners, were dispatched to Takhli RTAFB for an H+15:00 departure to the CONUS. These two aircraft were used to move all Army troops except a small group of operations staff personnel who were retained to prepare equipment for shipment. The remainder of the passengers were Air Force crew members and support personnel. Two additional C-141s departed on D+1 with loads consisting of maintenance equipment, the UH-1H and accompanying personnel. The remainder of the JCTG departed Takhli RTAFB via C-141 on D+2 and closed at Eglin AFB at 0800Z on 24 November 1970. No significant problems were encountered on the redeployment of the JCTG.

2. Redistribution of Theater Assets. One theater airlift C-130 aircraft was retained at Takhli RTAFB until D+1. This aircraft was utilized to return theater helicopter and A-1E crews to their home bases and to return survival and special equipment to theater units. Survival equipment included vests, radios, weapons, and parachutes which had been provided by operational units at Udorn RTAFB and Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. Special equipment consisted of two helium compressors and helium cylinders which had been provided by the 3d ARRGp. These were returned to point of origin via rescue HC-130P aircraft.

3. Mission Aircraft Movement. Both mission C-130E aircraft were prepared and loaded with enroute support items on 21 November. The aircraft departed Takhli RTAFB on 22 November and arrived at Norton AFB, California, on 25 November 1970. The aircraft were input to Lockheed, Ontario, on 26 November for FLIR demodification. Aircrew personnel and enroute support items were returned to Pope AFB, North Carolina, via TAC airlift C-130 on 26 November.

4. Security. The Security Staff Section continued to implement safeguarding procedures for classified information and material. Applicable movement security measures were used. Security briefings were given to aircrews flying redeployment missions and actions taken to prevent unauthorized press releases.

L. POST OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES. Upon return to Eglin AFB, Florida, air and ground elements of the JCTG conducted detailed debriefings, prepared and submitted recommendations for awards and decorations, prepared letters of appreciation to supporting organizations, and prepared performance reports on personnel assigned to the JCTG.

1. Debriefings. Extensive and in-depth debriefings were conducted by both ground and air elements. A compilation of debriefing statements by members of the ground force is contained in Part III. A verbatim transcript of the aircrew debriefing is also contained in Part III.

2. Awards and Decorations. An Awards and Decorations Staff was designated and, concurrent with debriefing and report preparation, citations for awards were prepared for 115 Army and 162 Air Force members of the JCTG. These were submitted to JCS J-1 on 3 December 1970.

3. Letters of Appreciation. During the six months course of this operation, many organizations, agencies, and individuals rendered exceptional support to the Feasibility Study Group and the JCTG. There were so many, in fact, that it was impossible for the small JCTG staff to recognize all such support to the degree desired. However, numerous letters of appreciation were prepared for major organizations and units providing support and assistance.

4. Performance Reports. The majority of the personnel assigned to the JCTG were assigned for periods exceeding 90 days and, therefore, required performance reports. All required reports were prepared and submitted prior to release of the reporting officials.

5. Security. All JCTG personnel were given a thorough oral debriefing and subsequently executed a security termination and debriefing certificate. Safeguarding procedures regarding classified information and material were emphasized. The Security Staff Section was directly responsible for the

planned and systematic establishment and maintenance of the maximum secrecy of this operation. This accomplishment was one of the most significant contributions to the successful mission which was carried out with complete surprise and resulted in the safe return of all air and ground personnel.

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Medical

1. Approximately 2690 lbs of medical supplies were procured for the conduct of this operation. On each evacuation helicopter was placed:

150 Cans of Water

100 Cans of Survival food

Special sneakers, olive drab

Ponchos, camouflages

Ponchos, lined

Baby food, packaged, plain

Ear plugs

M-5 Medical Kits

2. Prepositioned at the Base Hospital, Udorn, Thailand, for immediate employment were:

100 sets of pajamas

100 sets of bathrobes

Cameras (to photograph POWs)

Delousing material

Additional plain package Baby Food

3. The hospital activated its Mass Casualty Plan at H Plus 2 hours, however, deactivated upon return of the first helicopter.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - GROUND FORCE OPERATIONS

		GROUND ELEMENTS			AIR ELEMENTS		
TIME* (LOCAL)	FORCE CMDR (WILDROOT)	COMMAND GROUP (REDWINE)	ASSAULT GROUP (BLUEBOY)	SUPPORT GROUP (GREENLEAF)	UH-3 (BANANA)	UH-53 (APPLE)	AH-1 (PEACH)
H'Hour (210219 Nov)							
H+30 Sec		Fly By	Insert in Target Area	Insert ACOM S of Target Area	01	01	Orbit Ar
H+2'30"		Insert (Plan Green)	Clear & Search	Combat Assault	02		
H+2'45"	Execute Plan GREEN	Clear, Search, Plan GREEN (-) E1 #2	Clear & Search	Begin disengagement, Secure LZ			
H+6'00"	Request Air Strike	Clear, Search, Plan GREEN (-) E1 #2	Search	Prep for extraction			ATK on bridge
H+9'00"		E1 #2-SE Road block	Search	Extraction (Underfire)		C1	
H+9'30"	Execute Basic Plan	Basic Plan E1 #3 receive GREENLEAF	Search	Insertion - Pass thru RW E1 #3		01	
H+10'00"		Basic Plan Reorient E1 #3	1st Neg Item Report	Assume Basic Plan role			
H+11'00"	NET CALL Prep to Extract		Search Complete "NEG ITEMS"				
H+12'30"	Withdrawal "Normal"	Prep to W/D Secure LZ (W)	Prep to W/D	Prep to W/D			
H+17'30"	Command & Central "Exit on	Regroup for Extraction	(-) HQEL Regroup on LZ	Secure LZ			Strafe Bridge
H+18'50"	Initiate Marking Flare	Load (-) E1 #3	Load (-) Hq E1	Secure LZ		01 Land	

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - GROUND FORCE (CONT)

	GROUND ELEMENTS				AIR ELEMENTS		
TIME* (LOCAL)	FORCE CMDR (WILLIAMS)	COMMAND GROUP (REDWINE)	ASSAULT GROUP (BLUEBOY)	SUPPORT GROUP (GREENLEAF)	HH-3 (BANANA)	HH-53 (APPLE)	A1-E (PEACH)
H+21'30"	APPLE 1 Cleared out	Extracted (-) E1 #3, MACO, P/F	Extracted (-) Hq E1	Reposition for LZ Security		01 cleared out	
H+22'00"	APPLE 2					01 cleared out	
H+23'00"	"Marry Up" Transmission					02 cleared in	
H+23'30"	MACO Count		Marry Up Set Demo Charge, Depart	Execute W/D Plan	Demo Charge		
H+25'20"	Command and Control	REDWINE reported "23 Aboard"	Move to LZ. Load	Load (-) E1 #2		02 Land	
H+27 (?)	EXTRACTION 2 Hq E1 -(6)	EXTRACTION EL#3 PF, MACO	EXTRACTION Hq E1 (3)	EXTRACTION			
H+27 (+)	Report to APPLE 2 "Correct Count-33"					02 Pass Count	
H+33(?)			Observed Detonation of H-3 Helicopter (Estimate)		Destroyed		
H+2(?)	Corrected count -34	Corrected count -25				01-25 02-34	

*All times are approximate - based on UHF and FM radio net tapes.

USAF Security Service provided continuous radio and telephone monitoring and analyzing services from training through redeployment. The periodic reports submitted by this group assisted the Security Section in assessing the security status of the project and in recommending improved security measures to the COMJCTG. Weekly training schedules were developed within the context of maximum operations security. Specific actions were taken to maintain the security of JCTG training by monitoring and analyzing pertinent intelligence information and by the application of prompt corrective actions when required. Counterintelligence psychological operations utilizing rumors, timely disclosures of false and/or misleading information, deceptive documents, photographs, maps, charts and diagrams were conducted to insure the security of the training.

d. As the training progressed, elements of the actual mission were disclosed to operating personnel through the use of cover stories and deception so that mission knowledge was systematically developed. This technique contributed significantly to security and integrity while maintaining high morale within the force.

e. On 2 September 1970, the Security Staff Section discovered the possibility of a significant unauthorized disclosure of classified information by a former member of the feasibility study group and the Security Section was directed to conduct a preliminary administrative inquiry which was concluded on 21 September 1970. During this period, the individual suspected of the violation was thoroughly debriefed and personnel suspected of being recipients of the information were located and all determined to be highly responsible military personnel with Top Secret clearances. Through discreet elicitation, they were queried as to the extent of their knowledge of the project and through the disclosure of deceptive information convinced the project was designed for special operations in the Middle East.

briefing and personnel departing the project, either permanently or temporarily, were given a thorough oral debriefing and required to execute a security termination and debriefing certificate.

b. Once actual training began, planned early warning measures for ascertaining unauthorized disclosures and possible espionage activities were initiated. They consisted of the employment of unwitting informants, systematic elicitation of civil population and military personnel, monitoring news media, analysis of intelligence reports, and screening of civilian labor and vendors. Limited counterintelligence support was obtained through liaison with OSI, USA counterintelligence organizations, Security Police, and local civilian authorities. Extensive cover and deception measures were used in the actual construction of the mock-up of the POW camp. Walls of buildings were simulated by the use of panels of target cloth stretched between upright poles. Trees were simulated by tall poles with pennants attached. Some buildings were outlined in two dimensions by stakes and narrow tape. Only portions of the three prison walls were erected, again by using panels of target cloth stretched between upright poles. The field training site containing the prison mock-up was cleared by the Security Guard prior to each training period and the area was secured from outside ground observation continually during use. The Security Staff Section conducted systematic and periodic surveys of the field training site as well as all other working areas and locations for adherence to security requirements and regulations as well as to ascertain security by observation.

c. All operations, ground and air, were observed by the Operations Security Officer to determine if significant intelligence was being revealed by the manner in which training was being accomplished. Patterns of ground activity, aircraft flight composition and tactics, as well as ground-to-ground, ground-to-air, and air-to-air communications were monitored and analyzed to insure that security was being maintained. Personnel from the

3. Theater Coordination. A counterintelligence study was conducted to assess the insurgent threat to the USAF bases in Thailand. It was determined that no hostile threat existed to the bases that were scheduled to be used in Thailand and that no known hostile agents were in the Takhli RTAFB area. A system was established to alert the Security Staff Section if MACTHAI/JUSMAG, Controlled American Source (CAS) in Bangkok, and/or OSI in Thailand received any information concerning a possible hostile threat to the bases in Thailand. The OSI in Bangkok was requested to provide technical security surveys at the appropriate sites at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB. Secured facilities at Takhli RTAFB were obtained to billet and brief operational personnel.

4. Deployment:

a. In the period immediately preceding and during deployment, the Security Staff Section increased their security and counterintelligence measures and psychological operations. A credible cover story was developed to show the force moving to Norton AFB for an advanced phase of mobility training, testing, and evaluation. This cover story was utilized to prevent espionage or sabotage from interfering with the movement of the force to Takhli RTAFB, to insure the element of surprise, and to deny information regarding the movement, its purpose, implications and organization. The Security Staff Section also acted in an advisory capacity in the preparation of the deployment schedule. The section conducted surveys and inspections, recommended measures for maximum secrecy, and provided instructions to unit personnel concerning movement security. The section observed the move to prevent, report, and investigate security violations and other security threats, and to initiate corrective action.

b. The following additional movement security measures were implemented:

(1) False information was disseminated designed to deceive or mislead as to the actual intentions of the move.

(2) Identifying marks and insignia were removed from clothing and equipment.

(3) Surveillance of areas and facilities which personnel frequented during off-duty hours was increased.

(4) Material and equipment was crated, covered, and guarded to conceal identity and provide protection from unauthorized disclosure.

(5) Physical security hazards at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, were evaluated.

(6) Curfew hours and restrictions were established.

(7) Security guards were posted at aircraft containing classified equipment and loading areas.

(8) Departed areas were examined to insure no information of intelligence value had been left behind which might disclose the destination, identity, and mission of the force.

(9) A stay-behind support group occupied the facilities formerly used by the operational force and continued deception activities utilizing telephone and radio communications and personnel movement. Joint Army and Air Force training continued but on a reduced scale.

c. Upon departure from Norton AFB, another cover story was developed to indicate the force was continuing mobility training to test and evaluate human fatigue factors in relocating to SEA. This cover story was disseminated during debarkation at Elmendorf AFB and at Takhli RTAFB.

d. All military personnel participating in the mission and Thai nationals at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB were given appropriate cover stories or security briefings.

e. A technical security survey was conducted at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB and secure working areas were established and maintained. Counterintelligence inspections were conducted to insure that all personnel were practicing the highest degree of security.

5. Employment. During employment of the force, the Security Staff Section continued to maintain the secure working areas at Takhli RTAFB and Ubon RTAFB to insure that all personnel practiced the highest degree of safeguarding classified information and material, particularly in handling, transmitting, storage and destruction. Strict radio silence was maintained during refueling and ingress, and electromagnetic emission control procedures were practiced throughout the mission.

6. Redeployment. During this phase of the operation, the Security Staff Section continued to implement the established security procedures developed during the planning phase. Pertinent movement security measures were again used. Security briefings were given to the aircrews flying redeployment missions and actions taken to prevent unauthorized press releases.

7. Post Operational Activities:

a. All JCTG personnel were given a thorough oral debriefing and subsequently executed a security termination and debriefing certificate. Secure working areas at Eglin AFB were established as necessary for the post operational activities. Additional civilian administrative personnel were obtained for the preparation of the after action report. Security clearances of these civilians were verified and they were given security briefings and debriefings upon conclusion of their participation in the operation. The Security Staff Section continued to implement safeguarding procedures for classified information and material developed during the operation, and to advise the JCTG staff personnel in classification management.

b. The Security Staff Section was directly responsible for the planned and systematic establishment and maintenance of the maximum secrecy of the operation. This accomplishment was a significant contribution to a successful mission, which was carried out with complete surprise and resulted in the safe return of all air and ground personnel.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS - COMMAND GROUP

TIME	HQs ELEMENT	SEC ELE 1	SEC ELE 2	SEC ELE 3	PATHFINDER
H+2'30"	Debarked	Debarked	Debarked	Debarked	Debarked
H+3'	Initiated Plan GREEN	Initiated Plan GREEN	Engaged Power Station with M-72 LAW	Initiated Plan GREEN	Initiated Plan GREEN
H+5'		Assaulted Bldg 8D, 4A, & 8E	Set up in Road block Position	Assaulted Bldg 7B	Cleared Pump Station, Set Chgs on Tower
H+9'		Cleared Bldg 8D, 4A, & 8E. Passed torch & Camera to Assault Group	Engaged Enemy near position. Cleared Power Station	Cleared Bldg 7B	Blew Tower
H+10'	Revert back to basic plan	Engaged Target across river		Engaged Enemy in Bldg 7A	Set up primary LZ
H+11'				Relieved at position by support group	
H+12'	Received word to withdraw. Informed Elements.	linked up with Assault Gp 2 Withdrew to LZ	engaged convoy with M-72 LAW then withdrew to LZ	moved to Pump Station Set up in Security Position	Set up Alternate LZ
H+14	Boarded Apple 1	Boarded Apple 1	Boarded Apple 1		
H+24					Received word to Board Apple 2
H+25				Moved to LZ & Boarded Apple 2	Boarded Apple 2

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - SUPPORT GROUP

TIME	HQs ELEMENT (GREENLEAF)	ELEMENT #1 (GREENLEAF 1)	ELEMENT #2 (GREENLEAF 2)
H Hour (7:00:30 Nov)			
H+1	Insert 450m south of Target area	Same HQs	Same HQs
H+2	Penetrate & clear compound		
H+3		Extraction LZ secured	Road clear 150m North
H+5	Aircraft inbound		Instructed to close on LZ
H+6	Began movement to LZ		Closed on LZ
H+7	Support Group closed on LZ awaiting extraction		
H+9	Extraction	Extraction	Extraction
H+9'30"	Insertion into tgt area	Same HQs	Same HQs
H+10	Cleared bldgs 73 & 8F Linkup with Command Gp Element #3	Secure 15m South/Bldg 7B	Assaulting Bldg 13E
H+11	Rcd net call "neg items, prepare to withdraw"	Net call relayed	Bldg 13E cleared & net call relayed
H+12'30"	Prepare to withdraw & secure LZ	Movement to LZ security	
H+13			Instructed to break contact & secure LZ
H+14		Established LZ security	
H+17	Broke contact & closed on LZ (Notified Wildroot)		Closed on & secured LZ
H+23	APPLE 2 landed		
H+25'30"	Boarded Aircraft	Boarded Aircraft	
H+26			Boarded Aircraft
H+26'30"	Support Group accounted for with negative casualties		
H+27	Extraction		

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - ASSAULT GROUP

TIME	HQs ELEMENT	ACTION ELEMENT 1	ACTION ELEMENT 2	ACTION ELEMENT 3
H+1	Debark	Debark	Debark	Debark
H+1'30"	Clears Bldg #3	Cleared Cell Block 5A	Clears Front of Cell Block 5E	Moves to Gate
H+2	Clears S/W Tower	Cleared Cell Block 5A		Clears Gate
H+2'30"	Broadcast message Places wall charge	Cleared N/W tower	Entered, Cleared & searched Cell Block 5E	
H+4	Answered Ground Force net call	Answered Assault Group net call	Same action Element 1	Same action Element 1
H+5	RCD ACD clear FM Blueboy 1	Cleared Cell Block 5C 5D		Entered, Cleared & searched Cell Block 5-3
H+9	RCD "NEG ITEMS" FM Blueboy 1			
	REC "NEG ITEM MAX security area and 5B FM Blueboy 3 REC Torch and photographer FM Redwine			
H+10	Transmits "NEG ITEMS" to Wild Root	Moved to hole		Moved to hole
	REC NEG ITEM FM Blueboy 2			
H+11	Transmits "NEG ITEMS COUNT COMPLETE" to Wildroot		Moved to hole	
H+14	PREP BANANA demo charge			
H+15	Dispatched 1st package		Moved to LZ	Moved to LZ

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - ASSAULT GROUP (CONT)

TIME	HQs ELEMENT	ACTION ELEMENT 1	ACTION ELEMENT 2	ACTION ELEMENT 3
H+16	Dispatched 2d package	Moved to LZ		
H+23	Request permission to "MARRY UP"			
H+23'30"	RCD "MARRY UP" Initiated demo charge and fire fight simulator			
H+25	Moved to LZ			
H+33	OBSV EXPL OF BANANA	"		

Atch 3

PART I

SECTION J COMMAND AND CONTROL

1. Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector. The Tactical Air Control Center-North Sector (TACC-NS), located at Monkey Mountain, RVN, served as the Command Post for COMJCTG. It provided the Commander with real-time air situation data obtained from the Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS), and the two in-country radars located at Udorn, Thailand, and Monkey Mountain, RVN. It was planned to use COLLEGE EYE aircraft (airborne radar platforms) to provide low level coverage west of Hanoi; however, the aircraft had equipment failure and was unable to track friendly aircraft at extended ranges.

a. COMJCTG controlled his forces through the existing air-to-ground communications network. To provide communications with the National Command Authority, two special circuits were terminated at the TACC-NS. The primary circuit, through CINCPAC, was satisfactory throughout the period of the operation and the alternate circuit was not utilized. Through the use of a radio-relay aircraft operating over the Gulf of Tonkin, COMJCTG had direct UHF communications with the Task Group and the Navy Command Post afloat. In addition, COMBAT APPLE monitored the force enroute FM frequency and relayed appropriate information to the TACC-NS and elements of the force when contact on UHF was impossible. To insure that inoperative radio equipments would not degrade the operation, backup equipments were operational at the TACC-NS. In addition, COLLEGE EYE and the radio-relay aircraft monitored the primary and alternate UHF force frequency. COLLEGE EYE also monitored the primary HF/SSB frequency.

b. The TACC-NS computerized equipments and display consoles were operational throughout the entire mission. The normal operational crew was responsible for maintaining the air situation and monitoring all of the Task Group radio frequencies. Three of the six display consoles were allocated to COMJCTG and his staff to enable them to monitor the Task Group operation. Communication terminations were realigned to meet COMJCTG requirements. The on-site operations personnel retained their normal air defense responsibilities. The Commander of the TACC-NS personally selected the operational crew that supported COMJCTG.

c. In addition to the COLLEGE EYE equipment failure, the digital link (Link-11) between the TACC-NS and NTDS was periodically inoperative, thus depriving COMJCTG with a current real-time air picture derived from Navy sensors. Because of the incompatibility of the Air Force and Navy automated systems, a USMC-operated computer buffer is utilized to pass air situation data between the two systems. Periodic power failures at the buffer site interrupted the flow of real-time data. During these power failures, the backup computer driven teletype system (Link-14) was activated. A teletype input delays the display of air situation data approximately one to two minutes.

d. The COLLEGE EYE equipment failure (IFF/SIF) negated a capability to control the MIG CAP below 7,000 feet over and west of Hanoi. If MIG aircraft would have attempted an intercept of the F-105 WILD WEASEL and F-4D MIG CAP aircraft, intercept control would have been transferred to RED CROWN (Navy Command and Control Ship). MIG aircraft operating below 7,000 feet would have to be intercepted using only the airborne intercept radar of the MIG CAP aircraft. COLLEGE EYE equipment was operational

and would have provided MIG positions to the MIG CAP using a range and bearing from Hanoi (BULLS EYE). In addition, Navy BAR CAP aircraft were available

e. In-country identification procedures were modified to permit all Task Group aircraft to be tracked and identified using their MODE II SIF codes.

f. The following communications were available to COMJCTG:

(1) Ground-to-air (UHF). Task Group, COLLEGE EYE, COMBAT APPLE and Naval Forces.

(2) Point-to-point (HF/SSB). C-130E aircraft, COLLEGE EYE and Navy Command and Control Ship.

(3) Point-to-point (DCS). NMCC, CINCPAC, 7AFCC, 7/13AFCC, alternate TACC-NS and other elements of the SEA TACS.

g. Lessons Learned:

(1) To conduct such an operation, a computerized system is required to integrate (fuze) all sources of data and display them in real-time. Communications are extremely vital for positive control of similar types of operations. The use of an Airborne Command and Control platform, with the capabilities of the TACC-NS and operating in the vicinity of the operation, could have simplified the communication links, improved detection capabilities and provided positive radar control of the entire force. The number of elements could have been reduced, thus minimizing the risks involved in using a multiple element Command and Control System.

(2) The lack of airborne MIGs simplified our problem. However, airborne MIGs could have amplified our deficiencies; i.e., lack of an airborne radar capable of detecting airborne targets over a land mass. Complete reliance on a "cooperative" enemy in

a risky business. For a smaller operation, not requiring the extensive use of other sensor systems, a helicopter borne radar (similar to the one now undergoing testing) accompanying the Task Group could have satisfied the Command and Control requirements. In addition, communication procedures should be coordinated with in-country forces in sufficient time to introduce them into the training program.

2. Airborne Radar Platform:

a. Two EC-121T airborne radar platforms (COLLEGE EYE) were scheduled to operate over the Gulf of Tonkin. The aircraft departed Korat RTAFB on time and all equipments were brought to an operational level prior to passing DaNang. The primary aircraft broke an oil line and lost #2 engine while proceeding up the Gulf of Tonkin. It returned safely to DaNang. After reaching altitude in the Gulf of Tonkin, #2 aircraft experienced IFF/SIF equipment failure and was unable to receive IFF/SIF returns at extended ranges. A spare unit was installed, however, with negative results. Without the IFF/SIF capability, the platform operated primarily as a MIG warning agency and a radio-relay. Voice contact with the MIG CAP was impossible, the normal 7th Air Force MIG warning procedures would have been utilized in the event MIGs became airborne; i.e., range and bearing from Hanoi (BULLS EYE).

The [redacted] positions were also operational.

b. A post flight inspection of the defective IFF/SIF equipment on #2 aircraft revealed no defective equipments. While the aircraft was on station, interference was encountered on the IFF/SIF frequencies. Prior and during the duration of the interference, IFF/SIF returns could not be reliably received beyond 30-40 miles. When the aircraft departed the station, the interference disappeared. On the next flight, with no

maintenance performed, the system was again checked, and the system was operational. There is no adequate explanation for the interference or lack of IFF/SIF returns at the time of the writing of this report. It must be noted, however, that the Navy was jamming NVN radars at this time.

c. Lessons Learned. Complete reliability on non-radar equipments and a "cooperative" enemy for detecting and tracking aircraft is a high risk. An airborne radar capable of overland operation would reduce this risk considerably. In addition, an airborne platform capable of fusing all source data would greatly reduce the reliance on a long-haul sophisticated communication system and the number of command and control elements involved in this operation.

3. Radio Relay Aircraft:

a. Radio-relay aircraft were operational over the Gulf of Tonkin during the entire period of the operation. It was planned to add four additional UHF channels to the existing four channels for a total of eight channels. The aircraft was designed (Group A) for eight channels; however, their normal day-to-day operation only required four channels. When queried prior to this operation, Headquarters Strategic Air Command (SAC) personnel advised the additional equipments were in Southeast Asia; however, the in-country personnel had no knowledge of their location. This change in capability required the increasing of the number of users on the existing four channels and prevented COMJCTG from monitoring all of the discrete frequencies of the various elements of the supporting force. Because of the phase-down of the Southeast Asian conflict, airborne radar platforms were returned to the CONUS and the digital relay equipments required to link these aircraft with the TACC-NS had to be reinstalled in the aircraft. To insure compatibility of the newly installed equipments, several airborne tests were required prior to the operation.

b. Lessons Learned. Authorized components of in-being systems should be retained and be available to the user for short notice requirements.

4. Airborne Platform. Air Force airborne RC-135M aircraft (COMBAT APPLE) were operational over the Gulf of Tonkin for the entire period of the operation. An Airborne Mission Coordinator, fully cognizant of the entire operation, was available aboard this aircraft to assume control of the operation in the event that the TACC-NS became inoperative. COMBAT APPLE performed as expected and had direct secure UHF communications with COMJCTG. In addition to its normal functions, it monitored the Task Group's FM frequency and relayed pertinent information to COMJCTG.

A backup was also launched with an Alternate Airborne Mission Coordinator on board, and flew a southern COMBAT APPLE orbit.

5. Mission Control Messages.

18 Nov 70 A message was hand carried to CTF-77 that provided rules of engagement and coordinating procedures.

182030Z Red Rocket One message from JCS, "Final go."

182225Z COMJCTG advised CTF-77, "NCA approval received."

182355Z COMJCTG advised COM7AF, "NCA approval received."

190911Z COMJCTG advised CINCPAC and NMCC that the Task Force was ready. Also advised that a delay due to weather was possible.

b. Lessons Learned. Authorized Group B components of in-being systems should be retained and be available to the user for short notice requirements.

4. Airborne Platform. Air Force airborne RC-135M aircraft (COMBAT APPLE) were operational over the Gulf of Tonkin for the entire period of the operation. An Airborne Mission Coordinator, fully cognizant of the entire operation, was available aboard this aircraft to assume control of the operation in the event that the TACC-NS became inoperative. COMBAT APPLE performed as expected and had direct secure UHF communications with COMJCTG. In addition to its normal functions, it monitored the Task Group's FM frequency and relayed pertinent information to COMJCTG.

A backup RC-135M was also launched with an Alternate Airborne Mission Coordinator on board, and flew a southern COMBAT APPLE orbit.

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200310Z COMJCTG advised CTF-77 of a "preliminary go."

200856Z COMJCTG advised CINCPAC and NMCC of "final go" decision and that the operation would be advanced 24 hours.

200926Z COMJCTG advised CTF-77 of "final go" decision.

201345Z COMJCTG advised NMCC and CINCPAC he was in position at his Command Post at the Tactical Air Control Center - North Sector, Monkey Mountain, RVN.

6. Pertinent Activity Report Messages:

COMJCTG advised the NMCC and CINCPAC of the following information:

171030Z	COMJCTG was in place at Takhli RTAFB.
172000Z	Task Group arrived at Takhli RTAFB.
201545Z	C-130E #1 off Takhli at 1532Z,
201625Z	C-130E #2 off Takhli at 1613Z.
	HH-3 off Udorn at 1618Z.
	HH-53s off Udorn at 1618Z.
201704Z	HC-130s and A-1Es off on time.
201743Z	Situation satisfactory.
201823Z	Navy diversion launched.
201827Z	Refueling complete.
201840Z	Task Group crossed NVN border at 1838Z.
201908Z	Situation satisfactory.
201928Z	MIG threat.
201929Z	Landed in the objective area safely.
201932Z	MIG threat all clear.
201935Z	Situation satisfactory.
201950Z	All aircraft departed objective area.

202015Z Task Group crossed Laos border (egress).

202027Z SAR effort required. F-105 down.

202035Z Possibly negative PWs. Leaving TACC-NS for Udorn.

210215Z NMCC provided with "Initial Summary of Operations."

PART II

SECTION K

(N O T U S E D)

PART II

SECTION L

(N O T U S E D)

PART II

SECTION M - SECURITY

1. Planning:

a. On 10 August 1970, the Security Staff Section was organized with one USA Area Intelligence/Counterintelligence Officer, Chief of Section, one USAF Counterintelligence Officer (Special Agent) from the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and one Hq USAF officer from the Directorate of Operations with the responsibility of Operations Security and Cover and Deception. This minimal staffing for security planning and operations complied with the strict compartmentation procedures established and maintained throughout all phases of the operation. The Security Staff performed the unique and complex role of supervisor/operator over a broad area in a limited time frame without additional Special Agent support for counterintelligence operations or enlisted intelligence administrators. Advanced security planning began on this date and immediate security and counterintelligence measures and procedures were instituted. An access list was established and subsequently maintained of all personnel who had been provided knowledge of the essential elements of the project. The authority for disclosure and dissemination of classified information pertinent to the operation was established. All personnel assigned to the project on a permanent or temporary basis were given a thorough security briefing. Procedures for safeguarding classified information and material were published and disseminated in a letter of instruction and briefed to all personnel. The procedures outlined individual responsibilities; classification and marking; control of defense information and material; transmission, storage and security of working areas and containers; and destruction of classified material. Security Control Officers, Top Secret and alternate Top Secret Control Officers and Couriers were formally appointed for all locations and properly instructed in their duties relating to accountability, identifiability, reproduction, dissemination, storage, and destruction. Security clearances of the project personnel were verified and files and dossiers reviewed as appropriate. Selected working and storage areas were subjected to a technical

security survey and secured against espionage, unauthorized disclosures, or access by unauthorized personnel.

b. Oral security debriefings were prepared with appropriate wording, and security termination and debriefing certificates prepared for the period up to redeployment and upon termination of the operation.

c. A cover and deception plan was developed and credible cover stories were utilized as required in coordinating activities within DOD (Annex M to COMUCTG OPLan).

d. The Security Staff also developed the Counterintelligence Annex to the COMUCTG OPlan which tasked organizations to provide specialized assistance in collecting information concerning possible organized threats to the mission of the project.

2. Training:

a. Actual preparations for opening and securing working and training locations at Eglin AFB were initiated well in advance of the actual start of training. The Washington planning location was secured. All working and training areas at Eglin AFB were secured, appropriate technical security surveys were conducted and a security guard from the USA Special Forces was posted at the Army component maximum security building and, when required, at the controlled access points to the field training site. A counter-intelligence study was conducted which indicated that no known Communist Party (CP) USA members reside in the ten counties of Florida which surround Eglin AFB and no CP sympathizers or active CP supporters were known to be in the area. Operational data for Eglin AFB and the surrounding area was collected and analyzed. A survey of the field training site, Range C-2, at Eglin AFB was conducted prior to construction of the Son Tay POW training complex by examining the area from the ground and the air, and by checking maps, airline schedules, flying charts, satellite orbiting schedules, local military and civilian traffic habits, and fishing and hunting regulations. All security clearances of key personnel were verified and the files and dossiers reviewed as required. All newly assigned personnel were given a thorough security

briefing and personnel departing the project, either permanently or temporarily, were given a thorough oral debriefing and required to execute a security termination and debriefing certificate.

b. Once actual training began, planned early warning measures for ascertaining unauthorized disclosures and possible espionage activities were initiated. They consisted of the employment of unwitting informants, systematic elicitation of civil population and military personnel, monitoring news media, analysis of intelligence reports, and screening of civilian labor and vendors. Limited counterintelligence support was obtained through liaison with OSI, USA counterintelligence organizations, Security Police, and local civilian authorities. Extensive cover and deception measures were used in the actual construction of the mock-up of the POW camp. Walls of buildings were simulated by the use of panels of target cloth stretched between upright poles. Trees were simulated by tall poles with pennants attached. Some buildings were outlined in two dimensions by stakes and narrow tape. Only portions of the three prison walls were erected, again by using panels of target cloth stretched between upright poles. The field training site containing the prison mock-up was cleared by the Security Guard prior to each training period and the area was secured from outside ground observation continually during use. The Security Staff Section conducted systematic and periodic surveys of the field training site as well as all other working areas and locations for adherence to security requirements and regulations as well as to ascertain security by observation.

c. All operations, ground and air, were observed by the Operations Security Officer to determine if significant intelligence was being revealed by the manner in which training was being accomplished. Patterns of ground activity, aircraft flight composition and tactics, as well as ground-to-ground, ground-to-air, and air-to-air communications were monitored and analyzed to insure that security was being maintained. Personnel from the

(3) Surveillance of areas and facilities which personnel frequented during off-duty hours was increased.

(4) Material and equipment was crated, covered, and guarded to conceal identity and provide protection from unauthorized disclosure.

(5) Physical security hazards at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, were evaluated.

(6) Curfew hours and restrictions were established.

(7) Security guards were posted at aircraft containing classif equipment and loading areas.

(8) Departed areas were examined to insure no information of intelligence value had been left behind which might disclose the destinatio identity, and mission of the force.

(9) A stay-behind support group occupied the facilities formerly used by the operational force and continued deception activities utilizing telephone and radio communications and personnel movement. Joint Army and Air Force training continued but on a reduced scale.

c. Upon departure from Norton AFB, another cover story was developed to indicate the force was continuing mobility training to test and evaluate human fatigue factors in relocating to SEA. This cover story was disseminated during debarkation at Elmendorf AFB and at Takhli RTAFB.

d. All military personnel participating in the mission and Thai nationals at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB were given appropriate cover stories or security briefings.

e. A technical security survey was conducted at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB and secure working areas were established and maintained. Counterintelligence inspections were conducted to insure that all personnel were practicing the highest degree of security.

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c. All operations, ground and air, were observed by the Operations Security Officer to determine if significant intelligence was being revealed by the manner in which training was being accomplished. Patterns of ground activity, aircraft flight composition and tactics, as well as ground-to-ground, ground-to-air, and air-to-air communications were monitored and analyzed to insure that security was being maintained. Personnel from the

USAF Security Service provided continuous radio and telephone monitoring and analyzing services from training through redeployment. The periodic reports submitted by this group assisted the Security Section in assessing the security status of the project and in recommending improved security measures to the COMJCTG. Weekly training schedules were developed within the context of maximum operations security. Specific actions were taken to maintain the security of JCTG training by monitoring and analyzing pertinent intelligence information and by the application of prompt corrective actions when required. Counterintelligence psychological operations utilizing rumors, timely disclosures of false and/or misleading information, deceptive documents, photographs, maps, charts and diagrams were conducted to insure the security of the training.

d. As the training progressed, elements of the actual mission were disclosed to operating personnel through the use of cover stories and deception so that mission knowledge was systematically developed. This technique contributed significantly to security and integrity while maintaining high morale within the force.

e. On 2 September 1970, the Security Staff Section discovered the possibility of a significant unauthorized disclosure of classified information by a former member of the feasibility study group and the Security Section was directed to conduct a preliminary administrative inquiry which was concluded on 21 September 1970. During this period, the individual suspected of the violation was thoroughly debriefed and personnel suspected of being recipients of the information were located and all determined to be highly responsible military personnel with Top Secret clearances. Through discreet elicitation, they were queried as to the extent of their knowledge of the project and through the disclosure of deceptive information convinced the project was designed for special operations in the Middle East.

3. Theater Coordination. A counterintelligence study was conducted to assess the insurgent threat to the USAF bases in Thailand. It was determined that no hostile threat existed to the bases that were scheduled to be used in Thailand and that no known hostile agents were in the Takhli RTAFB area. A system was established to alert the Security Staff Section if MACTHAI/JUSMAG, Controlled American Source (CAS) in Bangkok, and/or OSI in Thailand received any information concerning a possible hostile threat to the bases in Thailand. The OSI in Bangkok was requested to provide technical security surveys at the appropriate sites at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB. Secured facilities at Takhli RTAFB were obtained to billet and brief operational personnel.

4. Deployment:

a. In the period immediately preceding and during deployment, the Security Staff Section increased their security and counterintelligence measures and psychological operations. A credible cover story was developed to show the force moving to Norton AFB for an advanced phase of mobility training, testing, and evaluation. This cover story was utilized to prevent espionage or sabotage from interfering with the movement of the force to Takhli RTAFB, to insure the element of surprise, and to deny information regarding the movement, its purpose, implications and organization. The Security Staff Section also acted in an advisory capacity in the preparation of the deployment schedule. The section conducted surveys and inspections, recommended measures for maximum secrecy, and provided instructions to unit personnel concerning movement security. The section observed the move to prevent, report, and investigate security violations and other security threats, and to initiate corrective action.

b. The following additional movement security measures were implemented:

(1) False information was disseminated designed to deceive or mislead as to the actual intentions of the move.

(2) Identifying marks and insignia were removed from clothing and equipment.

(3) Surveillance of areas and facilities which personnel frequented during off-duty hours was increased.

(4) Material and equipment was crated, covered, and guarded to conceal identity and provide protection from unauthorized disclosure.

(5) Physical security hazards at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, were evaluated.

(6) Curfew hours and restrictions were established.

(7) Security guards were posted at aircraft containing classif equipment and loading areas.

(8) Departed areas were examined to insure no information of intelligence value had been left behind which might disclose the destinatio identity, and mission of the force.

(9) A stay-behind support group occupied the facilities formerly used by the operational force and continued deception activities utilizing telephone and radio communications and personnel movement. Joint Army and Air Force training continued but on a reduced scale.

c. Upon departure from Norton AFB, another cover story was developed to indicate the force was continuing mobility training to test and evaluate human fatigue factors in relocating to SEA. This cover story was disseminated during debarkation at Elmendorf AFB and at Takhli RTAFB.

d. All military personnel participating in the mission and Thai nationals at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB were given appropriate cover stories or security briefings.

e. A technical security survey was conducted at Takhli RTAFB and Udorn RTAFB and secure working areas were established and maintained. Counterintelligence inspections were conducted to insure that all personnel were practicing the highest degree of security.

5. Employment. During employment of the force, the Security Staff Section continued to maintain the secure working areas at Takhli RTAFB and Ubon RTAFB to insure that all personnel practiced the highest degree of safeguarding classified information and material, particularly in handling, transmitting, storage and destruction. Strict radio silence was maintained during refueling and ingress, and electromagnetic emission control procedures were practiced throughout the mission.

6. Redeployment. During this phase of the operation, the Security Staff Section continued to implement the established security procedures developed during the planning phase. Pertinent movement security measures were again used. Security briefings were given to the aircrews flying redeployment missions and actions taken to prevent unauthorized press releases.

7. Post Operational Activities:

a. All JCTG personnel were given a thorough oral debriefing and subsequently executed a security termination and debriefing certificate. Secure working areas at Eglin AFB were established as necessary for the post operational activities. Additional civilian administrative personnel were obtained for the preparation of the after action report. Security clearances of these civilians were verified and they were given security briefings and debriefings upon conclusion of their participation in the operation. The Security Staff Section continued to implement safeguarding procedures for classified information and material developed during the operation, and to advise the JCTG staff personnel in classification management.

b. The Security Staff Section was directly responsible for the planned and systematic establishment and maintenance of the maximum secrecy of the operation. This accomplishment was a significant contribution to a successful mission, which was carried out with complete surprise and resulted in the safe return of all air and ground personnel.