PEPLY TO: BSP  
ATTN OF: BSP  
SUBJECT: Combat Operation After Actions Report (BCS: PAF-Y1) (U)  
TO: Directorate of Security Police (IGS) (7/13th Air Force)  

20 August 1969

1. (U) NAME OR IDENTITY AND/OR TYPE OF OPERATION: Sapper attack against Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base.


3. (U) LOCATION: Ubon royal Thai Air force Base, Ubon Province, Thailand.

4. (U) CONTROL OR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, Thirteenth Air Force (PACAF).

5. (C) (U) TASK ORGANIZATIONS:
   a. (C) 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.
   b. (C) 8th Combat Support Group.
   c. (C) 22nd Headquarters, Royal Thai Air force ............
   d. (C) Sixth Military Circle, Royal Thai Army.
   e. (C) Ubon District Provincial Police.
   f. (C) Area Two, Thai Border Police.

6. (C) (U) COMMANDERS ENGAGED IN OPERATION:
   a. (C) Colonel Donald N. Stanfield, Commander, 8th Fighter Wing.
   b. (C) Colonel Elmer D. Howk, Commander, 8th combat Support Group.
   c. (C) Lt Colonel Pramool Siripala, Commander, Headquarters RTAF, 222nd Composite Squadron.
   d. (C) Major General Yong Ruadpotong, Commanding Genera, Sixth Military circle, Royal Thai Army.
   e. (C) Police Lt Colonel Vichion Karochanarat, Commander, Area Two, Thai Border Police.
7. **SECURITY POLICE STATUS:** At the time of the attack, the duty security force consisted of two-hundred twenty-nine (229) men. Ninety-six (96) of the on duty security force were USAF Security Policemen and one-hundred thirty-three (133) were members of Thai Security Guard Force, Company D, Fourth Thai Guard Regiment. The strength of the 8th Security Police Squadron was two hundred thirty-six (236) enlisted and three (3) officers. Of this total strength, two-hundred thirty-five (235) enlisted and the three (3) officers were available for duty. As a result of the attack, one-hundred thirty-nine (139) and three-hundred (300) trained Augmentees were recalled and posted by 0245 hours.

8. **INTELLIGENCE:** Available information indicated that insurgent activities in Northeast Thailand, in or near the Ubon Province, had decreased in the number of encounters by both the Border Police and the Provincial Police during the eight (8) week period preceding the 28 July attack.

   a. During the Month of May 1969, three separate reports were received of groups of three men being sighted in the vicinity of Ubon RTAFB. In each instance the groups were armed and had asked questions about the direction of the base. One report located the sighting four (4) miles from the base, one report cited the group as being seven (7) miles from the base and the three strangers had reportedly forced a Villager to provide them with rice and on 17 May 1969, the last report received of activities near the base, a local village resident reported three (3) strangers walking in the direction of a village which is about one and one half miles from the base. Both of the strangers were armed.

   b. Periodically, reports were received during May and June indicating movement of groups identified as Pathet Lao, North Vietnamese, and Thai insurgents operating against the Phibun, Buntharik and Det Udon Districts. Reports placed these units across the Laotian Border and reflected their activities as being along the lines of food gathering and recruiting of Thai Villagers in the Phibun District.

9. **EXECUTION:** At 0130 hours, 26 July 1969, one K-9 Sentry, A1C Kenneth D. O’Dell, posted on Ubon Northeast perimeter, Echo-77, was fired on by three (3) unidentified individuals. The first fire was received from a position approximately 30 yards inside the base perimeter fence, between the sentry and the active runway. The muzzle flashes observed by the sentry positioned the shots as approximately 20 yards from his own position. A1C O’Dell had been in the process of putting his rain gear on when he first saw the muzzle flashes. He had looked down and when he looked back at the location where the muzzle flashes were seen, the intruders had disappeared from view in the high grass and reappeared a few seconds later when they fired the second burst from a position about 10 yards from the concertina wire fence. At this time the intruders were between the sentry position and the perimeter fence. The sentry attempted to unleash his K-9. Central Security Control was advised that Echo-77 was receiving hostile fire. After releasing his K-9, and radioing CSC, the sentry went to the prone position in an
a attempt to return fire. He found himself behind a mound and could not see the position from which the fire was coming. He raised to a kneeling position and saw three figures running in a crouched position along the perimeter fence. At a point approximately 20 yards from the area where the second muzzle flashes were seen, the intruders exited the base through the concertina wire fence. The sentry was unable to fire at the intruders because his K-9 was proceeding toward the intruders and was in the line of fire. The sentry then ran to a new position near the perimeter fence where the second fire was received. Here, he tried to observe the area for movement outside the perimeter fence. At 0131 hours, Echo-2 Sector SAT for Echo Sector arrived on the scene and deployed with Echo-2. The two, three man SAT formed a line from approximately 50 yards Southwest of the position of the intruders exit point, to approximately 100 yards Northeast of the exit point. At 0133 hours, the Security Flight commander arrived. Echo-77, A1C O'Dell was withdrawn to the rear of the base and at that time the sentry and his K-9 were found to be wounded. A1C Kenneth D. O'Dell, had received a superficial flesh wound approximately 2 1/2 inches above the left knee, on the inside of the leg. The K-9 had received a gunshot wound through the top fore shoulder. The bullet appeared to have entered the left side, travelled a straight line across the body above the shoulder blades and back bone, exiting on the right shoulder. No vital organs or bones were involved in either the wound of A1C O'Dell or his K-9. A search of the area where the attack had occurred was still being conducted when the first of five (5) on base explosions detonated in the vicinity of Base Operations. The following sequence of events followed the attack on the sentry:

0134 Hours: Security Controller notified the Ubon Provincial Police of the 0130 attack and requested assistance be dispatched to cover the outside perimeter.

0135 Hours: Captain David P. Mills, Security Police Operations Officer and MSgt Richard Warren, Security Police Superintendent, entered CSC.

0140 Hours: Major Troy L Tucker, Chief of Security Police, entered CSC accompanied by Special Agent Larry Becking, USI.

0200 Hours: First on base explosion detonated. Reports received at CSC placed the location of this explosion near the C-47 aircraft parking apron, approximately 75 yards Southeast of Base Operations. Upon receipt of this report, Major Tucker immediately placed the Security Force in Red Option 1. TOC notified and the base siren sounded.

0205 Hours: Second explosion detonated. Reports placed this explosion in the vicinity of the CCA Site located approximately 150 yards Northeast of C-47 parking apron, and 75 yards East of the Base Fire Station. No fires were reported. The on-duty Security Flight Commander (Security #1) located at Echo-77, as a result of the 0130 attack, reported flashes which appeared to be made by a mortar, had been reported approximately 500 yards east of Echo-77 in the jungle area location off base.

0206 Hours: Base on information that the explosions were incoming mortars, the 38th ARRS was requested to launch a helicopter for aerial observation of the area where flashes had been observed. Subsequent reports from 38th ARRS reflected that they were unable to launch a helicopter as requested due to the rain effect on the rotary blades.
0207 Hours: Up-Channel report dispatched from TOC.

0208 Hours: Flare illumination was requested from the C-130 Mission.

0209 Hours: Third on base explosion detonation in the vicinity of the C-47 aircraft parking apron.

0215 Hours: Provincial Police advised CSC that police were in position on the predestinated locations of Ubon RTAFB perimeter.

0222 and 0224 Hours: Two consecutive explosions detonated near the major runway between the GCA Site and the area where Echo-77 first reported seeing the muzzle flashes. It was subsequently established through interviews with Security Police personnel deployed in the 0130 attack area, that explosions occurred in the following sequence:

a. (C) The 0200 explosion occurred at C-47 #0-76428, parked approximately midway of the C-47 parking apron.

b. (C) The 0205 explosion occurred on the East side of the GCA Power unit. Subsequent inspection revealed that the explosion detonated underneath the power unit trailer and had apparently been placed on the frame floor and did minor damage to internal power equipment. The unit had resumed operation by 0530 hours.

c. (C) The 0209 explosion detonated in the vicinity of C-47 #0-76282, parked adjacent to and East of the first C-47 affected by the 0200 explosion. Subsequently, it was determined that both explosions at the C-47 parking apron had detonated in the left wheel well of the two C-47s. Damage was first evaluated as minor due to the affected area being confined to the wheel well(s) area. Later it was established that damage had been found to extend throughout the left wing(s).

d. (C) The 0222 and 0224 explosions had detonated approximately 10 meters Southwest of the 5000 foot marker of the major runway. Two small craters were later discovered. No damage occurred as a result of these two explosions.

0230 Hours: Ubon Provincial Police advised CSC that the bridge across the Mun River has been secured.

At Approximately 0230 Hours: Report was received from Airborne C-130 Flare Ships that two boats traveling at high speeds had been observed moving East on the Mun River.

0300 Hours: The first of a total of 19 flares were dropped for illumination of Echo and Delta Sectors.

At Approximately 0300 Hours: Police Colonel Somrit Singharpreechar, Commander, Ubon district Provincial Police and Police Lt Colonel Vichien Karuchananrat, Commander, Area Two Border Police arrived CSC. Both were briefed by Major Tucker.
0315 Hours: Central Security Control advised that all off base check points were manned by the Thai Military Police Platoon.

0357 Hours: Alpha Sector notified CSC that one shot had been reported near the 621st Tactical Control Squadron Site. Subsequent investigation by the Alpha Sector Supervisor and the Alpha Sector SAT failed to confirm the report.

0400 Hours: Major Roland A. Nielson, EOD, 408th MMS, advised CSC that the five on base explosions had been caused by satchel charges instead of previously reported mortar rounds.

0530 Hours: Central Security Control advised by the 6th Military circle that the Thai Army was in full alert and standing down at the time.

0630 Hours: Ubon District Provincial Police reported that a search of the area outside the perimeter where sapper squad exited the base had been completed. During the search, members of the Provincial Police discovered articles of abandoned clothing which was subsequently determined to have been discarded by the fleeing perpetrators. (See item10b(4)(h) this report). It was subsequently reported by the Provincial Police that the boats on the Mun River had been apprehended and were occupied by North Vietnamese refugees who live in the VC Village on Ubon. No connection between the persons in the boat and the sapper attack could be established.

10. (C) (U) RESULTS:

a. (U) U.S. and Free World Forces.

   (1) (U) USAF

   (a) (U) Casualties - None

   (b) (U) Wounded:

   1. (C) A1C Kenneth D. 'Dell, K-9 Sentry, 8th Security Police Squadron

   2. (C) Sentry Dog - Sheafer Tattoo Number X846.

   (C) (U) Aircraft Damaged/Destroyed:

   1. (C) C-47, serial number 0-76428 (cargo) damage left wheel well, left wing, left landing gear strut and left tire. No cover provided for these aircraft.

   2. (C) C-47, serial number 0-76282 (cargo) damage to left wheel well and left wing.

   a. (U) Facilities/Materials Damaged/Destroyed:

   (1) (C) Ground controlled Approach (GCA) Power Van.

   (2) (U) Free World Forces:
a. (C) Casualties: None

b. (C) Wounded: None

c. (C) Aircraft Damaged/Destroyed: None

d. (C) Facilities/Materials Damaged/Destroyed: None

b. (U) Enemy:

(1) (C) Killed in Action: None

(2) (C) Captured: None

(3) (C) Wounded in Action: None

(4) (C) Equipment and material Losses: Subsequent ground searches of the area during the period 28 through 31 July 1969 by base security personnel, EOD personnel, U.S. Army Advisory personnel and OSI ........ disclosed the items listed below:

(a) (C) One chemical Fuse/detonator (Chemical pencil) discovered near the damaged GCA Van.

(b) (C) One undetonated charge was found near the active runway near the two craters caused by explosion four and five.

(c) (C) One undetonated charge was found in the concertina wire at the base perimeter where the infiltrators exited through the perimeter fence.

(d) (C) One charge was found on the Southeast side of the active runway. This charge appeared to have been near explosion four and five on the North side of the runway and could possibly been blown across the runway. The chemical pencil detonator was bent just below the chemical container and the firing mechanism was unable to function. (This determination was made by EDO personne.).

(e) (C) A cloth foot or boot cover was found hanging on the concertina wire at the infiltrators exit point through the base perimeter fence.

(f) (C) A "Cap" from a plastic ....................... which the chemical detonators were carried was found in the wheel well of one of the C-47s.

(g) (C) A pair of wire cutters were found in the grass approximately 15 yards North of the position of A1C O'Dell at the time first fire was received.

(h) (C) Provincial Police discovered the following items abandoned outside the base perimeter fence:

1. (C) Two pairs of trousers made of dark colored material
2. (C) Four foot of boat cover made of O.D. nylon material with a piece of heavy rubber sewn around the top.

3. (C) One pair of dark colored shorts.

4. (C) Three hoods made of O.D. material.

5. (C) One Undetonated satchel charge.

(i) (C) On 29 July 1969, an undetonated charge was found at the concertina wire perimeter approximately 25 yards Northeast of the infiltrators exit point.

(j) (C) On 29 July 1969, Ubon Provincial Police reported undetonated charge off base approximately one-half mile, near the spillway of the levee of the Wang Nong Reservoir.

(k) (C) On 30 July 1969 a Thai employee of the base flight operations discovered a compass in the grass area adjacent to the C-47 parking apron, near the concrete abutment of the taxiway #3 culvert.

(l) (C) On 30 July 1969, two undetonated charges were uncovered in the vicinity of the C-47 parking area and one GCA van.

Note: See attached map for clarification of items found and their association with the vicinity where attach occurred.

11. (C) (U) Administrative Matters: On 28 July 1969, forty-five (45) radios of the one hundred sixty-five (165) assigned were not available for use due to maintenance. Due to the storage of radios available for actual use on post, communications problems existed at the time of the attack. Although the sentry who received the hostel fire, was radio equipped, the sentries adjacent to him on either side were not aware of the situation, nor could they be informed because neither had radio communications.

12. (C) (U) (Indistinguishable) during the period 28 through 31 July, 1969 Security (Indistinguishable) and U.S. Army advisory personnel (Indistinguishable) the following items either abandoned or lost by the infiltrators:

1. (C) One chemical fuse/detonator was recovered in the vicinity of the GCA Power Trailer. This fuse or detonator was not attached to a charge.

2. (C) A total of five undetonated charges were discovered in the vicinity of the route of egress of the infiltrators. All recovered explosive charges were wrapped with an inner layer of O.D. nylon parachute material used in the recovered clothing. The outer layer wrapping material was a water proof plastic like material, dark blue color. Local OSI reported that 1969 weapons cache, were constructed of 85% Petaerythrite (PETN) and a...
plasticizer, dibutylthalide, 10.7%. The compound is reportedly equivalent to C-4 and is believed to be factory produced. All recovered explosive charges were equipped with both a friction and chemical fuse/detonator. Two of the chemical fuse/detonators were tested by the EOD and detonated in 45 and 48 minutes. The frictions fuses were found to be five second delays. Chemical fuse/detonators found with undetonated charges were stored in plastic tube containers, each of which were marked with three white lines or dots believed to indicate the time setting of each detonator.

3. (C) A piece of fatigue type material had been used to tie the concertina wire back to provide an opening. Only the inside strands of the wire were tied.

4. (C) A pair of wire cutters were discovered in the high grass approximately 30 yards inside the base proper, near the location A1C O’Dell first saw the muzzle flashes.

5. (C) One boot or foot cover made of O.D. nylon parachute material was found caught in the concertina wire where the infiltrators departed through the hole in the perimeter fence.

6. (C) A plastic cap from a container used to store a chemical detonator was found in the wheel well of one of the C-47s.

7. (C) The provincial Police discovered items of clothing on the outside of the base perimeter in the immediate vicinity where infiltrators departed through the fence. The clothing appeared to have been abandoned, possibly in an effort to prevent description of the infiltrators being given to the Provincial Police. Items of clothing found were: Three hoods made of the same O.D. nylon material as the foot covers, two pairs of long trousers, dark colored material, one pair of dark colored short trousers and four foot covers similar to the one found caught in the concertina wire.

8. (C) Also, at 1800 hours, 28 July 1969, the Ubon District Provincial police discovered on undetonated satchel charge approximately one and one-half miles off base in line with the only route accessible to the Mun River from the point where the infiltrators departed the base without going through the city of Ubon.

(b) (U) 30 July 1969:

1. A compass bearing Chinese writing was discovered near the Southeast side of taxi strip number 3, on a line between the GCA Power Van and C-47 parking apron.

2. (C) An undetonated charge was discovered near a culvert on the Southwest side of taxi strip number 3 approximately 50 feet from the discovery of the compass.

3. (C) A second undetonated charge was discovered in a ditch between the GCA Power Trailer and the active runway. The charge was submerged in the water of the ditch and was discovered as a result of a search conducted after finding the charge by the culvert.
4. (C) At a point approximately 40 feet from the Northeast side of taxi strip number 3 and approximately 3 feet from a dirt service road running parallel to the active runway, six wooden plugs used to fill the hole in the plastic charge when the detonator is stored separately, were found. This appeared to be the location where the five used charges were armed with the detonators.

(c) (U) Techniques: The clothing found by the Provincial Police abandoned on the outside perimeter of the base, and that found caught on the concertina wire indicates that the infiltrators were well concealed in dark clothing which covered all parts of their body, with exception of the face. The foot covers used over the bare feet, or over other footwear, would lessen the noise of walking on the hard surface of the runway, which in this instance they had to cross to reach the objective. During the debriefing of A1C O'Dell, it was learned that he had established a trend in the way he walked his post prior to the attack. A1C O'Dell related that he had placed his foul weather gear on the west end of the post near the concrete abutment and had proceeded to walk the post until around midnight. The post was walked from the abutment to the East and where A1C O'Dell would spend from ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before returning via the same route. A1C O'Dell estimated it took between 12 and 16 minutes to walk the post. Just prior to the attach, O'Dell had walked to a point about midway of the post when it started to rain. He had returned to the concrete abutment and was in the process of putting on his foul weather gear when he was fired on by the infiltrators. Although it is impossible to determine the actual method used to gain access to the base, the most probable techniques seems to be the timing of the sentry and entering the base though the perimeter fence while the sentry was on the East end of the post. The high grass, coupled with the distance of 1,000 feet from the east end of the post to the concrete abutment on the West end, made it possible for the infiltrators to cross the post undetected. The use of the foot covers indicates planning to silently pass the sentry. The scattered locations of the undetonated charges, compass, wire cutters and materials left at the arming location, adds to the probability that the sapper team was working under pressure of time and in their haste, actually lost some of their equipment. Had A1C O'Dell not returned to his foul weather gear, the infiltrators would most likely departed the base, undetected.

13. (C) (U) EVALUATION OF OVERALL OPERATION:

a. (U) Action deserving commendation: None

b. (U) Areas where improvement is required:

(1) (C) Utilize all available equipment, i.e., NODs, starlight scopes, mortars for illumination.

(2) (C) Establish fire and barrier plans.

(3) (C) Keep grass and foliage short.

(4) (C) Training of K-9s conducted during daylight hours or at
the kennel training area.

(5) (C) More control over ingress and egress of base.

(6) (C) More emphasis on methods of sentries working posts. (Should not set routine pattern).

(7) (C) Security in depth (be nosy).

(8) (C) That surveys of vital support facilities are necessary to identify areas in need of improved physical security. (See attachment 21).

(9) (C) That close coordination is necessary with local friendly forces. (See attachment 22)

for the commander

Eugene A. Lamar, Major, USAF
Chief, Security Police

22 Attachments
1. Map of Charges and Abandoned Equipment (C)
2. Map of Post in affected vicinity (C)
3. Photo of Concrete Abutment (U)
4. Photo of Concrete Abutment (Close UP) (U)
5. Photo of Concertina Wire (U)
6. Photo of C47 Wheel well #0-76428 (C)
7. Photo of C47 Wheel well #0-76282 (C)
8. Photo of GCA Power Trailer (C)
9. Photo of Interior GCA Power Trailer (C)
10. Photo of Explosion #4 and #5 (U)
11. Photo of Explosive Charge Wrappings (C)
12. Photo of Charges, Fuses, and Detonator (C)
13. Photo of Foot or Boot Cover (C)
14. Photo of Hood (C)
15. Photo of compass (Open) (C)
16. Photo of Compass (Closed) (C)
17. Photo of Wooden Plugs and Safety Strap (C)
18. Photo of Wooden Plugs and Caps (C)
19. Photo of Shell Casing (C)
20. Photo of Shell Casings rear view (C)
21. Copy of CSG (BSP) Ltr, 11 Aug 09, Security Survey of Water Plant and Power Plant (U)
22. Copy of Ubon Governor's Ltr, 15 Aug 69 (C)
(1) Position behind concrete abutment where sentry first received fire.
(2) Direction of fire on sentry.
(3) Approximate vicinity of perimeter where infiltrators departed thru fence.
(4) Path through grass where infiltrators exited thru interior perimeter, also location where provincial police discovered items of clothing.
Chips or bullet indentations in concrete abutment behind which the sentry was located when first fire was received.
(1) Concertina wire tied back at this point to provide rapid escape route.

(2) Wire of exterior perimeter was cut and path led out to roadway.
Wheel well damage to C-47 #0-76428 caused by first explosion. Charge was placed on landing gear strut (1) which forced blast upward.
Wheel well damage to C-47 #0-76282 caused by explosion number 3. Charge appeared to have been placed on the under side of the landing gear strut.
Exterior damage to Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) Power Trailer caused by explosion number two.
Interior damage to Ground Controlled Approach (OCA) lower Trailer caused by explosion number two.
(1) Crater caused by explosion # 4.

(2) Crater caused by explosion # 5.
(1) Plastic like material used on outer layer of explosive charge wrappings
(2) O.D. parachute like material used for inner wrapping.
Foot or boot cover discovered caught in concertina wire where infiltrators exited thru perimeter fence.
Hood discovered by Provincial Police during search outside perimeter. The only item released by Police for photographing.
(1) (2) (3) - Wooden plugs used to hold place for fuse/detonators when charge is not armed.
(4) - Safety strap for chemical fuse.
(5) (6) (7) - Wooden plugs.
(8) (9) (10) (11) - Caps for plastic containers for storage of chemical fuses.
Three shell casings discovered with aid of metal detector. CAL 7.65
View of shell casings depicting markings and calibre.