

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

X ALMEE  
TEAM

71-0413-1  
May 64-Jun 65  
Cy 2

DECLASSIFIED BY AF/HOH  
1AW E.O. 12958 (AMENDED)  
DATE: 20080718  
APPROVED FOR  
PUBLIC RELEASE

# PROJECT CHECO SOUTHEAST ASIA REPORT

DOWNGRADED TO CONFIDENTIAL

Richard Davis, Project Safe  
Paper, 1 June 1985.

DECLASSIFIED BY SAF/AAZD IN 1992  
AS PER SCG FOR RECORDS,  
1 APR 1988

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING  
DOD DIR 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

Copy 7 of 40 Copies

K717.0413-90  
c. 2

20080910284

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

*Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188*

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b>		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b>		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b>	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Department of the Air Force Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, CHECO Division Hickam AFB, HI				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> A -- Approved for Public Release					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> Project CHECO was established in 1962 to document and analyze air operations in Southeast Asia. Over the years the meaning of the acronym changed several times to reflect the escalation of operations: Current Historical Evaluation of Counterinsurgency Operations, Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations and Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations. Project CHECO and other U. S. Air Force Historical study programs provided the Air Force with timely and lasting corporate insights into operational, conceptual and doctrinal lessons from the war in SEA.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> CHECO reports, Vietnam War, War in Southeast Asia, Vietnam War- Aerial Operations, American					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b>

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
(This page is unclassified)

YANKEE TEAM

8 March 1966

Hq PACAF

Tactical Evaluation Center

Project CHECO

Prepared by

Robert L. MacNaughton  
1st Lieutenant, USAF  
SE Asia Team  
Project CHECO

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING  
DOD DIR 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

PACAF DOPEC 66-0005  
COPY 7 of 40 COPIES

K717.0413-90

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
(This page is unclassified)

~~TOP SECRET~~

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**HEADQUARTERS PACIFIC AIR FORCES**  
**APO SAN FRANCISCO 96553**



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

DOPEC

8 March 1966

SUBJECT:

Project CHECO, Southeast Asia Report

TO:

SEE DISTRIBUTION PAGE OF ATTACHMENT

1. Attached is a TOP SECRET AF EYES ONLY document. It shall be transported, stored, safeguarded, and accounted for in accordance with applicable security directives. "SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED, NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS. The information contained in pages marked NOFORN in this document will not be disclosed to foreign nationals or their representatives."
2. Reproduction of subject document is authorized to the extent necessary to meet an official requirement in the interest of the national security. Extracts will be classified according to their own content.
3. This letter does not contain classified information and may be declassified if attachment is removed from it.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

*Edward C. Burtenshaw*  
EDWARD C. BURTENSHAW, Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Project CHECO

1 Atch  
Project CHECO, SEA Report  
(Yankee Team), 8 Mar 66  
TS AF EYES ONLY



(This page is Unclassified)

YANKEE TEAM

DISTRIBUTION

Hq USAF		
AFCHO .....	2 Cys	(6 & 7)
AFXPDP .....	3 Cys	(8, 9, & 10)
AFXPDP-V .....	1 Cy	(11)
AFXOP .....	1 Cy	(12)
SAFAA .....	1 Cy	(13)
Air University		
ASI (HD) .....	2 Cys	(14 & 15)
AUL3T-66-7 .....	1 Cy	(16)
AWC .....	1 Cy	(17)
ACSC .....	1 Cy	(18)
USAF Academy .....		
TAC (OIH) .....	1 Cy	(19)
MATS (MAFOIH) .....	1 Cy	(20)
AFSC (SCEH) .....	1 Cy	(21)
AFLC (MCKH) .....	1 Cy	(22)
ATC (ATCOI-H) .....	1 Cy	(23)
SAC (DXIH) .....	1 Cy	(24)
USAFE (OI) .....	1 Cy	(25)
USAFSOUTHCOM (BOI-H) .....	1 Cy	(26)
SAWC-OIH (Eglin) .....	1 Cy	(27)
5 AF (DOIH) .....	1 Cy	(28)
13 AF (DOIH) .....	1 Cy	(29)
2 Air Div (DOIH) .....	1 Cy	(30)
	5 Cys	(1 thru 5)
Hq PACAF		
C .....	1 Cy	(31)
DOP .....	1 Cy	(32)
DP .....	1 Cy	(33)
DO .....	1 Cy	(34)
DM .....	1 Cy	(35)
DPL .....	1 Cy	(36)
IG .....	1 Cy	(37)
DOPEC .....	2 Cys	(38 & 40)



~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

(This page is Unclassified)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

YANKEE TEAM

Table of Contents

Chronological Development  
of Yankee Team Operations ..... Page 6

Administrative Procedures ..... Page 46

Navy Operations ..... Page 49

Air Force Operations ..... Page 50

Chain of Command ..... Page 59

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

(This page is Unclassified)

  
FOREWORD

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

This study on Yankee Team is a documentary of the U. S. reconnaissance effort in Laos from its inception in May 1964 through June 1965. Although overshadowed by the scale of the U. S. air effort in Vietnam, Yankee Team has provided a significant contribution to the prevention of a Communist take-over within Laos. It is intended to update this study on an annual basis as long as Yankee Team is required.

Both U. S. Air Force and U. S. Navy resources have been utilized in supporting the Yankee Team effort. For the period of the report, a total of 1169 sorties were flown. Of this number, the USAF flew 712 sorties and the USN flew 457 sorties.

Since June 1965, certain of the problems and restraints have been eliminated or reduced. The requirement for 24-72 hours advance notice for approval of emergency priority missions was changed by CINCPAC <sup>136/</sup> to permit inclusion of such missions in daily intent reports. Such requirements will be considered approved unless otherwise directed by CINCPAC.

The prohibition of photography on weather reconnaissance flights has been waived and such photography is now permitted. The restraint on retaliatory fire by escort fighters has been removed and retaliatory fire is now authorized except again the towns of Sam Neua, Khang Khay and Xieng Khouang. However, the employment of suppressive fire still requires the approval of the U. S. Ambassador,

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Vientiane and CINCPAC. <sup>137/</sup> Since June 1965, however, most reconnaissance missions have been flown without escort.

The minimum altitude restrictions which required JCS approval for flights below 10,000 AGL have been removed and such flights may now be flown at medium or low level. Route reconnaissance is normally flown at medium altitude (10,000 ft AGL or above). When low altitudes are required in such missions, a high speed, single pass technique will be employed. <sup>138/</sup>

The command arrangements for tankers and tanker support remain the same. The overall control of the operation remains with CINCPAC. This has been restated in the latest Yankee Team Operation's order, <sup>139/</sup> wherein COMUSMACV is designated as the CINCPAC coordinating authority for Yankee Team operations utilizing COMUSMACV forces in coordination with CINCPACFLT supporting forces.

*Edward C. Burtenshaw*  
EDWARD C. BURTENSHAW, Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Project CHECO  
Tactical Evaluation Center

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

  
CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF YANKEE TEAM OPERATIONS

The Geneva Conference of 1962 established a compromise troika government in Laos. While the Communist-Neutralist-Royalist coalition government still exists on paper, it ceased to function on 17 May, 1964, when Communist forces turned against the Neutralists who were co-located on the Plaine des Jarres (PRDJ). Within hours after the offensive started, United States Embassy sources were reporting the situation was critical. <sup>1/</sup> By the end of the day the PDJ was almost entirely in the hands of the Communists as the outgunned Neutralists ceased resisting and retreated, abandoning weapons, supplies and equipment in their haste. <sup>2/</sup>

A decision was made by the United States Government to the effect that overt intervention was necessary, not only to bolster the Neutralist forces but to serve as a signal to the Communists that the U. S. was determined to back the legal government. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma was reluctant to accept this offer; he felt that it would compromise his position as an impartial leader. U. S. Ambassador Unger convinced him that a reconnaissance effort might provide a means of proving that Viet Minh and Chinese Communists were assisting the indigenous Pathet Lao. Such evidence could be presented to the International Control Commission which was established by the Geneva Conference to monitor, supervise and arbitrate problems in emerging nations growing out of old French Indo China. <sup>3/</sup>



[REDACTED]

The first action in the build-up to this U. S. reconnaissance effort was an 18 May CINCPAC alert to Carrier Task Group (CTG) 77.4 to be prepared to conduct a show of force and reconnaissance over Laos. The CTG was directed to move to a point at the entrance of the Gulf of Tonkin, 16 degrees north and 110 degrees east. <sup>4/</sup>

Air Force elements were already present in Southeast Asia. A Reconnaissance Task Force (RTF) nicknamed Able Mable was in place at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam. F-100 Supersabres were located at Clark AB, Philippines and Takli AB, Thailand.

On 18 May, the JCS authorized the first Operation Yankee Team missions, which were flown by Navy aircraft. The Air Force flew its first mission in accord with the JCS directive, "during the daylight hours" of the next day, 19 May. <sup>5/</sup>

*Wrong - 1st  
Mission  
by AF on  
19 May 64*

Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) reported to CINCPAC on 20 May that the readout of these initial efforts showed no targets justifying attack. MACV proposed that a program of regular low level reconnaissance flights be initiated with two daylight and one night mission to be flown each week. MACV noted that continuation of the program beyond ten days would require three additional RF-101s for the Able Mable detachment. A further recommendation was that strikes against any targets discovered be made by unmarked Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) or Royal Laotian Air Force (RLAF) T-28s. The next option was strikes by marked VNAF and Farmgate aircraft followed by a final option of USAF/USN strikes. <sup>6/</sup>

The reconnaissance effort was formally christened on 22 May 1964, when JCS assigned the nickname "Yankee Team" to it. <sup>7/</sup> A few days later, the Ambassador to Laos requested a short moratorium on the flights. He explained his actions, saying, "Initial political and psychological impact of this intervention has clearly been achieved." Also, "Steady continuation at same level is not likely to have deterrent effect; renewal of flights, however, can be timed to make initial point again if forward thrust (which seems to have been blunted or to have been called off past two days except against Meo areas) is resumed." He reported that all priority targets had been covered and that his new Air Operations Center at Vientiane needed time to absorb this flood of information. He commented, "I had intended to ask interruption of flights one day earlier but agreed to proposed schedule for 26 May, covering approaches to Vientiane, because of reports from Thai sources that PL/VM preparing direct assault on Vientiane for today. As of 1000 hours, this has not happened and we do not expect it." <sup>8/</sup>

A continuous program of reconnaissance in Laos was authorized by the JCS in a message to CINCPAC on 25 May. <sup>9/</sup> The Joint Chiefs also made it clear that overflight of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was absolutely not authorized. <sup>10/</sup>

CINCPAC, in a 26 May message to MACV, spelled out the objective for Yankee Team. They were:

- a. Provide timely tactical intelligence which may be used by friendly forces in Laos in the conduct of current operations.
- b. Substantiate if possible the extent and scope of war material, troops and resources being moved from the DRV via Laos into RVN.
- c. Provide a psychological "shot in the arm" to the Lao, Thai and other friendly forces in Southeast Asia. (SEA)
- d. Demonstrate overtly to the communists our interest and our determination to stay in SEA.

CINCPAC further stated that the Yankee Team program had to be responsive to the requirements of the United States Team in Laos, COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, the JCS and higher authority. Thailand bases were not to be used under any circumstances and coordination between the operating forces was to be effected locally. COMUSMACV designated the Commander, 2d Air Division, Major General Joseph Moore, as coordinator between the Air Force and Navy. General Moore was given the authority to suggest, but not to compel the Navy actions. <sup>11/</sup> He established a special Yankee Team Command Post at 2d Air Division Headquarters which also functioned as Navy liaison office. With the dissolution of the command post in April 1965, the liaison office was augmented with more Navy personnel and became devoted entirely to coordinating Navy matters.

General Moore assigned the Navy all targets on the MACV target list located north of 18 degrees, 30 minutes for planning purposes. <sup>12/</sup> On the 29 th of May, he sent a message to PACAF requesting that he be given authority to employ U. S. aircraft and crews for search

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

and rescue (SAR) as he "deemed necessary in the event U. S. aircraft were downed over Laos." He did not receive a reply until 6 June when a Navy aircraft was shot down. The pilot ejected successfully. According to Colonel Robert F. Tyrell, the Air Attache in Vientiane, three requests were forwarded to the Ambassador asking the U. S. pilots be sent in to provide close support for the Air America Rescue helicopters. By the time authorization came through for use of Air America T-28 pilots, the rescue helicopters had both been shot up and Navy Lieutenant Charles Klussman was a prisoner of the Pathet Lao. <sup>13/</sup>

On 4 June the Secretary of State requested that the frequency of Yankee Team flights be cut back to one or two days per week, supplemented by demand flights related to specific objectives. <sup>14/</sup> CINCPAC replied in a message to JCS stating that he agreed that the need for tactical recce was reduced from what it was when the Pathet Lao forced Kong Le off the PDJ. However, in his estimation, the main purpose of Yankee Team was to provide the intelligence vital to decision making. "Experience has shown," he said, "that the Pathet Lao use periods of lull to build forces and it is at such times that it is necessary to watch them." In the South, reconnaissance flights were needed to keep tabs on communist supply routes from the DRV into South Vietnam through Laos. <sup>15/</sup>

However, scoring higher in the world's attention that this undercurrent of debate was the harsh reality of Lt Klussman's mishap and, on the next day, the loss of another Navy aircraft.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~ CONFIDENTIAL

On 6 June, the day before the mishap, the JCS directed CINCPAC  
to: 16/

...Be prepared to fly two low level reconnaissance sorties as a single flight over Laos on the Plaine des Jarres area on 7 June. Schedule eight fighter bomber aircraft as escort with optimum mix of weapons for AAA suppression. Escort aircraft are authorized to employ appropriate retaliatory fire against any source of anti-aircraft fire against recce or escort aircraft. Reference AMEMB Vientiane 061121Z, coordinate timing of operation and area to be covered by recce operation underway 7 June. Suggest Kitty Hawk resources be employed if operationally feasible. Mission should not overfly Khang Kycy KHAY or Xieng Khouang...

It was one of these escort aircraft which was shot down. This pilot was recovered.

Later that day, the JCS told CINCPAC that it was necessary that the communists be taught that the U. S. was going to conduct this reconnaissance program, and use force if necessary. Therefore, a strike force of eight F-100s staging from Tan Son Nhut was to strike the anti-aircraft installations at Xieng Khouang on 9 June. 17/  
After completion of the strike, pilots reported that two 750 pound general purpose bombs and 57 2.75 inch folding finned rockets hit the target area, with two pods of 19 rockets each being a direct hit. 18/

CINCPACFLT reenforced this determination with a message to units under his command directing that there be a minimum of two escorts per recce aircraft. 19/ CINCPAC was still not willing to go

NOT CINCPAC  
DECISION

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NPT a  
LPHC  
DECISION  
A STATE  
DEPT  
d 2014004

all the way in deterring the enemy. He directed on 8 June that there be no use of either napalm or cluster bomb units (CBUs). 20/

Thirteenth Air Force reported to PACAF that the effect of withdrawal of the Navy from air operations in SEA would depend on the pace of Yankee Team operations. It was noted that, "if the present schedule of operations and responsiveness is desired", it would require an increase in the Air Force effort as follows:

- a. Increase the RF-101 aircraft in country to ten.
- b. Augment the RB-57s with additional night configured aircraft.
- c. Deploy KB-50 tanker aircraft to RVN for in-flight refueling.

The writer went on to say, "if the current tempo of operations is not maintained, RF-101s presently in country can provide adequate recce of desired area. This would, in many cases, require staging and turnaround at Da Nang incurring delay of approximately two hours as opposed to in-flight refueling. Night recce with assigned two RB-57 aircraft would limit total night capability as well as sacrifice present all-weather recce attainable by the Navy." 21/

Yankee Team flights were an on again-off again proposition during these early days. On 12 June, Ambassador Unger reported to the State Department that Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma had agreed to resumption of the flights the next day. Souvanna requested that nothing be said to the press about this or the fact that escorts were being used. Ambassador Unger presented two "compelling"

~~TOP SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

NOTE:  
Bundy of  
Canned  
S. Phum  
To Holt  
Y.T.

arguments for publicly acknowledging use of escorts. These were:

(1) to assure congressional and public opinion that recon planes be adequately protected and (2) by public mention of escorts to (garble in message) force signal to Hanoi and Peking which would not be nearly as strong if we appeared to be trying to suppress this information." Souvanna then volunteered that he wanted maximum use made of the RIAF T-28s to interdict supply routes and destroy on the ground those supplies already in place. The Ambassador reported, "there is no question in the Prime Minister's mind that violations by Pathet Lao/Viet Minh justify actions already underway and perhaps more, but he insists for political reasons that we must avoid going on record acknowledging action and thus giving communists both propaganda fuel and pretense." He concluded the message by stating: "We have to assume always that RIG forces incapable of standing up to PL/VM if latter really meant to push through, conceivably with air support (there is of course always risk that communists will also introduce aircraft)."<sup>22/</sup>

sent out  
on 7 June  
64

The communists in a charge to the International Control Commission alleged that U. S. aircraft attacked Khang Khay <sup>9</sup> June and that there were several casualties suffered by the Chinese communist Economic and Cultural Mission there. This caused the Ambassador to request that he be given information on all U. S. air activities in Laos. He stated, "I need to be able to say "there were no U. S. flights" rather than that I know of none and believe there were none on that day. I also need to know of next

9 JUNE 64  
see  
N.Y. TIMES  
2 BACT  
SON  
10 JUNE  
64  
about  
14/5  
TUNG

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Very incomplete

CONFIDENTIAL

day's plans to be able to inject suggestion warnings, or, if necessary, stop order." 23/

On 20 June 1964, Secretary of State Dean Rusk told Ambassador Unger that he was authorized to express the following message as being personal from Rusk to Souvanna Phouma: 24/

...The United States is moving with great firmness to support his government internationally. The prestige of the United States is increasingly at stake and we are counting on him and the King to continue vigorously and steadfastly to work for unity, neutrality and integrity of Laos. In this they can be confident of our working with them in close harmony. I leave it to you just how you want to put this through for the best impact on Souvanna...

An important meeting of minds took place at Udorn, Thailand, on 15 June 1964, when CTG 77, 2d Air Division, Air America, 1st Air Commando Wing, Pacific Air Rescue Center, and CAS (CIA) got together to discuss SAR. Significant observations were reported by Lt. Colonel William Whisner, 2d Air Division acting director of operations in a memo to General Moore. He reported that Air America had a considerable SAR potential but that all SAR activities needed to be coordinated by a single agency. Colonel Tyrell, the Air Attache, was emphatic stating that an on-scene SAR commander was vital for successful pick-ups. The 7 June rescue of a Navy pilot went very smoothly when the military, represented by his office, assumed control of the search, in contrast to the previous day's operations. 25/

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Mr. Ben Moore, the Air America Chief, reported that Air America had five H-34 helicopters but would need five more for good SAR capability. He also said that the AA communications net was inadequate for the purpose. 26/ In their communications procedures, AA was using the code word "drop kick" when a pilot was down, rather than the traditional "Mayday", which would signal to the communists that a SAR effort was underway.

Colonel Tyrell presented an urgent requirement for a complete USAF/USN rescue plan to present to the Ambassador for approval. "He stated that the Ambassador was appreciative of the military's concern for rescue of downed personnel but that any plan involving U. S. aircraft would require State Department approval, particularly if armed escort were involved," reported Colonel Whisner. 27/

Weather, which had been the subject of a 2d Air Division message to Vientiane on 12 June requesting that Air America provide weather information, 28/ was also discussed at this conference. Air America pilot reports were a valuable source, as were some 40 covert radio stations. The problem lay in getting the data to 2d Air Division and CTG 77. It was agreed that an officer from the 30th Weather Squadron would be sent to Udorn to straighten this matter out.

The memo also mentioned intelligence: 29/

...The problem of lack of detailed ground intelligence at 2d Air Division and CTG 77.6 was discussed. It was apparent that Air America intelligence personnel have much more detailed and up-to-date information than is available at Saigon or on

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

the Constellation. A suggestion was made that 77.6 and 2d Air Division each send an intelligence officer to Udorn once each week for briefing and up-dating on the ground situation. This would be generally helpful for Yankee Team planning and more specifically would provide air crews with better E&E (editor's note: Escape and Evasion information). The Air America intelligence officer cited the first Navy bailout as an example of the latter. He said that the pilot would have had a much better chance of rescue if he had turned north instead of south when hit. Much of the area just a few miles north of route 7 is controlled by friendly Meo tribesmen...

Weather was discussed in a 2d Air Division message on 20 June which indicated that the 30th Weather Squadron headquarters at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, monitored current weather throughout Southeast Asia. Detachments were located at all major locations where U. S. forces operated. However, current information from Laos was very limited. Air America and post flight debriefing reports of Yankee Team pilots were exploited to provide the information needed. <sup>30/</sup>

Five messages concerning escorts during this period, were significant. First was a 16 June JCS message which authorized weather reconnaissance flights prior to the actual Yankee Team photo mission. It also authorized flak suppression by the fighters in advance of the reconnaissance aircraft. <sup>31/</sup> Commander of Task Group 77.6 asked CINCPAC on 18 June if he was right in the assumption that "escort" included any available attack or fighter aircraft. <sup>32/</sup> CINCPAC replied that he was correct. <sup>33/</sup> General Moore

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

sent a directive to the 33d Tactical Fighter Wing element at Da Nang on 18 June ordering that two F-100s be maintained on alert at all times and to be prepared to put two more on 15 minute and four on one hour alert. <sup>34/</sup> The final of the five messages was a CINCPACFLT decision to allow Navy forces to use the Snakeye bomb. <sup>35/</sup>

PACAF announced on 20 June that Thailand based USAF assets could be used for SAR. <sup>36/</sup> Two days later the Pacific Air Rescue Center at Tan Son Nhut informed PACAF that the procedures for coordinating rescue between Air America and USAF resources had been established. The AA H-34s could be scrambled through the Air Attache's office in Vientiane or by the HU-16 aircraft that was always in the area whenever U. S. aircraft were operating in Laos. <sup>37/</sup>

The Navy had EA-3B aircraft available for electronic intelligence gathering (ELINT) missions. CINCPACFLT put a hold on their use on 26 June until intelligence sources could verify whether fire control radar was present in Laos. <sup>38/</sup> JCS finally gave the execute order on their use on 30 June. <sup>39/</sup>

PACFLT  
FLEW  
ELINT  
IN  
EARLY  
JUNE

SEE MEQ (TS)  
CINCPACFLT  
TO CINCPAC  
11/04372  
JUN 64

Earlier in the month of June, the operational administrative procedures for controlling Yankee Team were established. They consisted of an exact list of message reports; specifically:

- OP-00....Proposed Missions
- OP-00....Modification of proposal
- OP-1.....Mission intent for the next 24 hours

[REDACTED]

- ~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~
- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
- OP-2.....Launch report
  - OP-3.....Recovery report
  - OP-4.....Post Flight summary
  - OP-5.....Incident report
  - IPIR.....Intelligence photo interpretation. <sup>40/</sup>

By the end of the month, the Air Force had flown 101 visual and photo missions on Yankee Team. The six in-country RF-101s has been augmented to ten and Operation Yankee Team was well underway. <sup>41//</sup>

The theory was brought forth early in July from the Commander 2d Air Division that he should exercise overall responsibility for air operations in the tactical area. This included designation of targets and tasks plus coordination and timing of mutual actions. <sup>42/</sup> CINC PAC appointed COMUSMACV coordinator for all Yankee Team missions and stated in a message dated 4 July 1964, that "if you (COMUSMACV) have cause to delay, cancel or reschedule for reasons that may unexpectedly develop, as coordinator you should take that action deemed necessary and appropriate. This includes notification of fleet units." <sup>43/</sup> In the following months MACV exercised this prerogative on several occasions, particularly when flights of the International Control Commission (ICC) were scheduled to conflict with Yankee Team mission.

CINC PAC sent another important message to Southeast Asia a few days later when it spelled out the JCS policy on rules of engagement. <sup>44/</sup>

TOP SECRET

8 Aug 64

a. When weather permits, reconnaissance aircraft will utilize medium altitude levels above effective hostile ground fire.

b. Route reconnaissance will normally be conducted at medium altitude.

c. Low level reconnaissance will be authorized when medium level reconnaissance will not give satisfactory results. Areas of known strong anti-aircraft will be avoided.

d. Low level reconnaissance against areas of strong anti-aircraft will be authorized only for specific cogent reasons, on a case by case basis when the requirements are of sufficient priority to warrant the risks involved.

e. In cases of missions flown at medium altitudes, retaliatory fire is authorized if the reconnaissance or escort aircraft are endangered by ground fire.

f. In cases of missions flown at low level and the reconnaissance or escort are fired upon, retaliatory fire is authorized either on the first pass with the reconnaissance aircraft or by circling back and conducting subsequent passes.

g. In cases of missions flown at low level against areas of strong anti-aircraft, flights will be escorted and escorts are authorized to employ best operational techniques to minimize risk, which, when authorized by JCS, may include attack of known anti-aircraft positions in advance of the reconnaissance aircraft where suppression of ground fire is considered essential for the safety of the reconnaissance aircraft.

Using the policy set forth by JCS, CINCPAC went on to provide further guidance: <sup>45/</sup>

a. Operational missions should be planned and conducted to emphasize minimum risk to planes and crews consistent with the achievements of desired objectives.

b. As a general rule, reconnaissance missions should be conducted at medium level. Medium level is defined as an altitude above the level of expected hostile ground fire.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

c. A differentiation must be made between routine and priority requirements. The determination of priority should be made by Ambassador Vientiane or by COMUSMACV based on intelligence requirements. COMUSMACV must evaluate the urgency of the requirement against the known risks of weather, terrain and hostile fire that must be accepted in accomplishment of the mission. This urgency or lack of urgency should be indicated for each requirement submitted to CINCPAC and will also dictate the operational commanders for the conduct of the mission.

d. In Laos there are areas that are free of hostile ground fire and other areas where hostile ground fire will be expected. Most of these areas are known to you. In scheduling missions over areas where hostile ground fire is not expected, low level coverage can be conducted if weather precludes coverage at medium levels and if risks involved with the hazards of weather and terrain at low altitude are acceptable. However, when missions are to fly over areas where effective hostile ground fire can be expected, schedule the mission at medium level. In those cases due consideration should be given to requesting use of presuppressive fire if considered essential to the safety of the mission.

General Moore visited with the Ambassador to Thailand, Graham A. Martin, and the Commander of the United States Military Assistance Command Thailand, Major General Ernest F. Easterbrook on 8 July 64. In a Memo for Record dated 9 July 64, he reported that Ambassador Martin was worried about the actions that 2d Air Division had taken or was planning which involved Thai bases. The Ambassador suggested that a close liaison be established with General Easterbrook's office so that he could be kept informed and could in turn inform the Thais. 46/

[REDACTED]

CINCPAC expressed concern about mission priorities in a 10 July message. He said that priority one meant the requirement was urgent. The value of intelligence warranted immediate coverage and risk of low level flight and exposure to hostile fire. Priority two warranted early coverage but the time factor was not vital. The value of intelligence was not sufficient to warrant exposure to hostile fire during low level flight. Priority three represented the routine requirements. <sup>47/</sup>

The F-100 escorts were flying from Da Nang while the RF-101s were coming from Tan Son Nhut throughout this early period. The F-100s were generally configured with two 355 gallon fuel tanks, two LAU-3 rocket pods and a full load of 20 mm ammunition. In justifying non-use of the AGM-12, 2d Air Division operations personnel told PACAF that they considered the AGM-12 to be an excellent weapon and would use it whenever conditions were conducive to a sufficient degree of success or when directed by higher headquarters. However, 2d Air Division felt that the LAU-3 rocket pods yielded more flexibility. <sup>48/</sup>

In a memo to MACV-J2 dated 25 July, 2d Air Division reported that RT-28 aircraft had been accomplishing photographic missions over Laos. The film had been delivered to Tan Son Nhut for processing, and the air Attache in Vientiane had requested a time compression to only 12 hours on processing and return by jet courier. Colonel Allison A. Brooks, 2d Air Division's deputy commander said,

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

"This time compression may result in a conflict of priorities. We are presently experiencing an exceptionally heavy workload as a result of Lucky Dragon, Yankee Team, Laos, and in-country photography. In view of present DIA interest, we recommend the Laos photography be awarded first priority unless unforeseen events dictate otherwise." <sup>49/</sup>

Toward the end of the month, PACAF and CINCPACFLT both expressed concern to CINCPAC about suppressive fire. PACAF considered use of suppressive fire by Yankee Team aircraft most desirable. The message suggested that a combination of counterbattery and preplanned interdiction strikes be used against the "improving" communist anti-aircraft. <sup>50/</sup> CINCPACFLT said that suppressive fire was needed for low altitude missions, and while not 100 per cent effective, it would keep gun crews from firing with impunity. <sup>51/</sup>

CINCPAC amplified his rules of engagement in mid-August. He said: <sup>52/</sup>

1. In view of fighters in North Vietnam, you are authorized to arm Yankee Team escort aircraft for air to air combat, especially in areas where DRV aircraft could be expected to cross border in Laos.
2. Number, type, ordnance load and tactics of escort aircraft will continue to be determined on individual mission basis. This information will continue to be included in OP-00 reports for long range plans and OP-1 reports for individual mission approval. The following rules of engagement apply for Yankee Team operations in Laos.
  - a. If the reconnaissance or escort aircraft are fired upon by ground fire retaliatory fire is authorized either on the first pass with the

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

reconnaissance aircraft or by circling subsequent passes by escorts.

b. If the reconnaissance or escort aircraft are attacked by hostile aircraft, immediate and aggressive measures are authorized including hot pursuit but only to the DRV/Laos border.

c. When authorized by JCS on individual missing basis attacks to known anti-aircraft positions in advance of the reconnaissance aircraft is authorized where suppression of ground fire is considered essential for the safety of the reconnaissance aircraft.

CINCPAC went further into rules of engagement on 21 August when he informed tactical commanders that authority to launch Yankee Team weather reconnaissance missions had been delegated and did not require approval from high headquarters. Weather recce missions were authorized as required provided they were flown at altitudes and in areas where they would not be subject to hostile ground fire. No photography was permitted on these flights. <sup>53/</sup>

Communist forces in Laos, at the time these rules were promulgated, were credited with 27 millimeter automatic aircraft guns and 57 millimeter automatic aircraft guns. In addition, an 85 millimeter anti-aircraft battery was reported at Khang Khay. Basic ammunition for these weapons was believed to be point detonation high explosive rounds containing self-destructive element. U. S. and Air America pilots flying over Laos were, however, reporting burts at 15,000 feet, which indicated use of 85 millimeter at locations other than Khang Khay.



As the anti-aircraft and MIG threats increased, 2d Air Division's concern was established by a Directorate of Operations memo to General Moore. It said in part:

...Yankee Team operations over the past three months have developed into a predictable, standard pattern. Bases of departure and recovery, times of take-offs, routes to target, refueling areas and altitudes, and use of weather recce have become well established and are probably known to hostile forces...

It went on to note that the Air Force aircraft were particularly vulnerable to air attack while engaged in air to air refueling in the area south of the Demilitarized Zone and in the Panhandle of Laos.

The memo proposed that a four aircraft reconnaissance task force be moved to Don Muang to "provide more flexibility in route selection." It noted that "the major limiting factor to immediate implementation of this plan is the requirement for permission to use Thai bases. At present we do not have authority to use any Thai bases for Yankee Team except in emergencies." An alternate concept was to "meet the enemy air threat head-on by providing a fighter CAP. All that would be required for this plan would be to submit the increased fighter escort figure in the OP-00 and OP-1." The final recommendation was that the JCS "be requested to initiate action for obtaining diplomatic approval of the alternate Thai base concept." <sup>54/</sup> Regarding the OP procedural messages, CINCPAC told his subordinates that under current ground rules, missions required



[REDACTED]

approval by State, Defense and JCS. Missions had to be flown exactly as listed in the OP-00 and approved by JCS/CINCPAC. If deviations were desired they had to be submitted as an OP-00 MOD and the mission was not to be flown until the request for deviation was acted upon. <sup>55/</sup>

CINCPACAF was concerned during this period about the workload on the SEA reconnaissance force. He reported: <sup>56/</sup>

...Yankee Team requirements added to those of Able Mable have almost doubled the workload on our reconnaissance forces in Southeast Asia.

With this additional load, PACAF is concerned in committing a substantial amount of the RF-101 force for performance of weather scout missions in support of Yankee Team operations. We concede that reconnaissance crews can best perform weather scout for reconnaissance missions. However, request you comment on other possible ways to accomplish effective Yankee Team weather reconnaissance. How well will it affect the overall Able Mable Team reconnaissance mission.

Yankee Team statistics indicate that the Navy is leading the Air Force in total sorties. One reason for this is the inclusion of the Navy's EA-3B aircraft to perform ELINT activities on a continuing schedule. Request your comments on the advisability of incorporating an ELINT capability into our reconnaissance force in Southeast Asia.

Air Force should rightfully have the dominant role in performing reconnaissance over land locked areas; therefore, every effort should be made to close the gap and move ahead in the total Yankee Team comparison...

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Another suggestion posed during the period came from 13th Air Force commander concerning escort's use of munitions. General Maddux wrote:

57/

"...I have noticed in recent Yankee Team reports that the escort flights are using 2.75 rockets and 20 mm cannons as standard armament configuration. We have been authorized to use CBU-2's and AGM-12's on this type mission. As you know, our experience in using these weapons is very limited and it would be helpful to gain some experience in their use. In addition this late generation of conventional weapons reflects a high degree of effectiveness when employed against appropriate targets. Further, frequent use of modern and improved weapons such as AGM-12B's and CBU-2A's would exercise storage and maintenance crews and would improve handling and loading efficiency. In addition, I believe that daily use of these weapons will increase air crew proficiency through realistic employment..."

An important September message was one from General Moore to General Maddux, discussing Yankee Team reconnaissance missions north of 20 degrees. He reported that RF-101s from Tan Son Nhut and F-105s from Da Nang could carry out the mission using air refueling, but tankers would be required to make deeper penetrations into Laos than on past missions. He went on discussion operations from Udorn saying:

58/

"...Concept of operating from Udorn has been studied and is considered feasible. Although runway length and PPC facilities at Don Muang are superior to Udorn, the latter operating location makes possible unrefueled missions as far north as the Laos/Chicom border."

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

If escort is envisioned under current Yankee Team conditions, the F-105s at Korat or the F-100s at Takhli can be employed. Flying a high-low-high profile, with low portion starting and terminating at Udorn, the F-105 radius of action can reach 21 degrees north without benefit of air refueling. With one air refueling the F-105 radius of action is extended to the Laos/Chicom border...

That same day another message went out, this one from the 2d Air Directorate of Operations to CUMUSMACV. It proposed that four to six RF-101s be moved to Don Muang or Udorn, Thailand. "Both locations", according to the message, "have PPC facilities available for use but will require augmentation from available resources." Fighter escort could come from either Korat or Takhli, and tanker support could be provided by KB-50s from Takhli. The message noted a further advantage in moving the refueling operations further away from the Laos Panhandle area where the aircraft were particularly vulnerable to surprise MIG attack. The message concluded: <sup>59/</sup>

...In view of the foregoing, recommend action to secure approval of this concept through government to government negotiations. This will involve permission from Thai government for early move of four to six RF-101 aircraft and 25 to 30 support personnel to Don Muang or Udorn and permission to use Thai based fighters for Yankee Team escort...

In a 1 October message to PACAF, 2d Air Division reported on all Yankee Team missions flown prior to that date. There had been 124 photo sorties and 38 weather recce sorties for a total of 162. There had been 94 escort and eight strike sorties which gave a

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED]

grand total of 264 sorties for the Air Force's Yankee Team effort. Flak had been encountered 13 times and two RF-101s had been hit. The Navy during this same period of time flew 99 RF-8 and 32 RA-3B/EA-3B sorties for a total figure of 131 photo and ELINT reconnaissance missions. A total of 144 escort sorties had been flown for an aggregate Navy Yankee Team total of 275. In final analysis, 539 sorties had been flown, with the loss of two Navy aircraft. 60/

Ambassador Unger was still concerned about operations in Northern Laos. In a 2 October message to CINCPAC he suggested that RLAF RF-28s be used in reconnaissance of Nam Than and Phong Saly ten miles from the Chinese border. 61/

A report from the PACAF inspector General's Office published on 2 October dealt with a Special Assistance Inspection of Air Force operations in SEA. One significant subject discussed was fighter tactics. It said: 62/

...None of the aircrews in any of the squadrons had any experience in realistic attack techniques through which they could arrive at any point in space where the weapon could be accurately delivered without setting up the standard gunnery school pattern. The importance of this deficiency was quickly discovered by F-100 and F-105 aircrews on Yankee Team missions which encountered significant ground fire with the resultant loss of an F-100 and major battle damage to an F-105. No inference is intended that battle damage can be eliminated by tactics when accurate and intense ground fire is encountered. However, the pilot had no previous training in those tactics and techniques which would minimize battle damage. In the area of proven tactics and techniques, there is a major deficiency

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that exists Air Force wide. In addition to the dearth of realistic training, there is no approved consolidation of material on the subject of combat tactics and techniques that can be studied by pilots and planners. For many years, this deficiency has been known and various organizations and study groups established to develop material; but it is still with us...

In an embassy telecon from the Ambassador in Bangkok to the State Department on 5 October, the Ambassador summarized the guidelines for using Thai based USAF assets. Briefly, they included photo reconnaissance over Laos; armed escort for photo reconnaissance over Laos; SAR operations in Laos; armed escort and suppressive fire for Laotian SAR; air defense of Thai airspace with hot pursuit across neighboring borders authorized; and, in the event of direct Chinese Communist intervention, any use of Thai based airpower as needed. 63/

CINCPAC reported that U. S. close air support for RLAF operations in Laos was authorized using forces based in Vietnam or aboard aircraft carriers. 64/ CINCPAC also noted that the proliferation of target numbering systems was creating difficulties and suggested that all agencies adopt the COMAR system, as well as start referring to "reconnaissance objectives" rather than "targets". 65/

A KB-50 crash at Takhli on 14 October resulted in the grounding of all Yokota based KB-50s and their replacement, within Southeast Asia, with SAC KC-135s. However, the grounding order had not gone out yet when on 20 October 2d Air Division briefed COMUSMACV

[REDACTED]

on the operational concepts to be employed using RF-101s. 66/

A photo processing cell had been deployed to Tan Son Nhut sometime previously. On 20 October, it was reported that its equipment was not being used, though the personnel had been integrated into the 13th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron at Tan Son Nhut. The PPC equipment was not suitable for processing the special film used on Yankee Team -- Type 1, Sub type C, Class A also known as Kodak 4401. This PPC could be deployed to an austere base and support an RTF of six RF-101s provided that normal Class A or Class N film were used. 67/

General Moore told General Maddux that he concurred with the non-use of AGM-12B CBU dispensers. He noted that figure 5-5V of technical order IF-100D-1 places a restriction on landing with loaded CBU-2's. "Since the inception of Yankee Team escort missions, "said General Maddux, "only three flights have expended. It is felt that it would not be economically feasible to use CBU-2A's unless the probability of expenditure was substantially increased." 68/

October was a rewarding month to the men who had been laboring on Yankee Team. Down through Air Force channels came a message from the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency commenting on the excellent quality of Yankee Team photography. 69/

In an end of the month message, 2d Air Division operations people discussed some of the problems connected with Southeast Asia air operations: 70/

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

...The responsibility for U. S. Air operations over mainland Southeast Asia should be exercised by Commander 2d Air Division. Multiple forces, divergence of command and geographical separation between commanders results in unwieldy control of operations and lengthy coordination procedures. Unreliable communications nets in the area are cause for delay in coordination, complete breakdown in known actions between commanders could result, and the possibility of timely, complete reporting to higher headquarters would be questionable. The difference in weather phenomena between two widely separated points could cause unnecessary strike delays. For example, weather at the CVA could be such that launch is not possible, whereas the target could be clear and capability exist for land based aircraft to make the strike. It is the belief here that where there is a capability to do so, overall and complete responsibility should be held by one commander and all forces involved should be under his control performing an operation thoroughly familiar to him and his staff...

Previous suggestions that RT-28s be used for night reconnaissance in Laos instead of Yankee Team aircraft were finally quashed by USAIRA Vientiane in November. He vetoed a 2d Air Division suggestion that RT-28s be used for reconnaissance along route 7 because they would not be as effective as Yankee Team for night reconnaissance. <sup>71/</sup>

COMUSMACV requested authorization from CINCPAC to use 7th Fleet aircraft to supplement the limited night photo capability then present in SEA. <sup>72/</sup> USAIRA also said that RLAFF T-28s could make only a limited effort at reconnaissance in Northern Laos because of several restrictive factors. <sup>73/</sup> CINCPAC approved 7th Fleet night photo activity on 12 November. <sup>74/</sup> Activity was increasing in Laos, and this was rationale for expansion into night activity as well as more flights into the northern section which was discussed

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CTG 77.6 which was operating off Vietnam at Yankee Station -- 16N/110E -- had five RF-8A and two RA-3B aboard. CTG 77.5 scheduled to replace it on 22 November had about the same force. <sup>75/</sup>

COMUSMACV wanted an RB-66 reconnaissance package deployed into SEA. In a November message to CINCPAC, MACV asked that the RB-66s be sent, but requested that "these assets be based at Clark Field and increments redeployed to Tan Son Nhut as required for execution of operational missions. <sup>76/</sup>

The problem of CBU munitions was solved during November when a message to the Sacramento Air Materiel Area requested a waiver on having to expend CBU's prior to landing. It noted that "at the present time loaded LAU-3 containers are carried on escort missions since landings are allowed with this munition. <sup>77/</sup>

SAC and PACAF representatives had a series of meetings on 16, 17, and 18 November to draft a program for tanker support in the Pacific Command area. The conferees recommended that Kadena be the bed-down base for permanent tanker operations, the advantages being that it would "require only a modest addition to the investment already made at Kadena for SAC operations." Also, it would require less gold outflow than the old tanker location in Japan and would put the tankers in a better position to support SAC and PACAF Southeast Asia contingency plans.

The operational concept was to deploy ten KC-135s from ZI bases in January 1965. (Eight were assigned to the Foreign Legion Tanker

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

Task Force which had deployed to Clark AB some time previously and were, therefore, already in place.) A task force element of four aircraft and five crews was to start rotating weekly to Don Muang AB concurrently with the move from Clark to Kadena. 78/

CINCPACFLT granted authority to COMSEVENTHFLEET to schedule RA5C aircraft for day as well as night Yankee Team missions. Guidance for employment was a list of specific "do not's". "Do not schedule missions against heavily defended targets unless specifically directed to do so. Do not schedule the RA5C for weather reconnaissance missions. Select altitudes giving a reasonable margin of safety above ground fire envelopes." 79/

Two Yankee Team aircraft were shot down in mid-November. An F-100 escort was hit on his third pass over an AAA position on 19 November. The aircraft crashed and the pilot was killed. An RF-101 was hit in the same area two days later. This pilot was recovered.

Ambassador Unger reiterated his right to control Yankee Team mission when he said on 24 November that he had no objection to continue medium level Yankee Team missions over Laos as defined in JCS 002665 211924Z November 64. However, he insisted that all low level flights had to be approved by him on an individual basis. 80/ Second Air Division sent a copy of this message to PACAF which responded by noting the JCS message restricting the medium altitude environment to a minimum of 10,000 feet above ground level and saying: 81/

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

...PACAF considers that this operational restriction can only result in significantly less effective recce operations in Laos and deny U. S. agencies the intelligence necessary for both military and political planning. Any additional restrictions such as Reference B (The message from Ambassador Unger), if they apply to tactical operations, will further decrease capability for timely response to priority visual and photo reconnaissance requests...

Another 25 November message concerned the proposed deployment of the RTF to Thailand. It was from 5th Air Force, parent organization of the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing which operated Able Mable. Fifth Air Force wanted Don Muang to be used as Forward Operating Base (FOB) rather than Udorn. According to the message, Udorn's runways were too short and support facilities were completely inadequate. <sup>82/</sup>

Ambassador Unger was obviously unimpressed by the Air Force's arguments concerning altitudes and approval for Yankee Team missions. In a 27 November message he said that various sensor systems allow aircraft to operate just as effectively at medium altitude levels as they operate at low, providing periods of weather promise good ceiling and visibility. The message concluded, <sup>83/</sup> "Embassy reserves right to comment on all Yankee Team missions".

F-100s for Yankee Team escort had been based at Takhli, Thailand and Da Nang, Vietnam, with aircraft rotated between the two. On 1 December 2d Air Division told the 40th Tactical Fighter Wing, parent organization of the fighter squadrons, that "reduced squadron strength and sacrifice of unit integrity have degraded

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

operational capability, adversely affect morale of units involved, and sacrifice continuity of operations. Second Air Division informed the 405th that it would have to maintain strength at Takhli and Da Nang at 18 aircraft at each base, maintain squadron integrity rather than split squadron operations, and keep the same squadron at the same base for maximum continuity operations. <sup>84/</sup>

An interchange of messages between MACV and 2d Air Division provides a good discussion on altitudes. MACV cited CINCPAC 260830Z May 64 which provided authority for a continuing recce program over Laos; JCS 161904Z June 64, a JCS policy message defining medium level as the altitude above effective ground fire; JCS 211924 November 64 wherein medium level was redefined as at least 10,000 feet above the terrain; and CINCPAC 061913Z June 64 which recommended use of armed escorts for all photo flights over both the PDJ and Panhandle.

Said MACV: <sup>85/</sup>

...Since the beginning of the Yankee Team program, two photo and two escort aircraft have been shot down by ground fire while conducting recce missions over Laos. Following the loss of the last two aircraft on 18 and 21 November, the minimum altitude for medium level recce was raised to 10,000 feet. Though the increased altitude base effectively minimizes the risk at medium level, it is anticipated that some requirements for recce below 10,000 feet will continue. Since all four aircraft have been shot down while operating in the low level environment, it is considered that the flight parameters governing operations in this stratum should be reviewed in order to keep future losses at a minimum.

[REDACTED]

The message went on to list a number of specific questions.

The 2d Air Division's reply is quoted in full: <sup>86/</sup>

...In reply to referenced message, the following information is submitted for consideration. Lettered paragraphs reflect queries; numbered sub-paragraphs are answers.

a. Desired tactical altitude above terrain for BDA, Target Library, terrain study, etc.

(1) Best altitude for minimum risk at low level is below 1,000 feet, with escorts slightly stepped up. Escorts accompanying the recce to low altitude maintain flight integrity and eliminate problems created by weather.

b. Tactical advantages and disadvantages of using armed escorts on low level missions:

(1) Advantages: Escorts would provide additional visual coverage. The recce pilot is limited in obtaining low level coverage due to the attention required for line-up and camera actuation. The presence of escort discourages ground fire, offers immediate retaliatory capabilities and increases chance for a successful rescue operation. Option of utilizing two or four escorts governed by operational commander's estimate of situation would further insure success of the missions.

(2) Disadvantages: None, since the escorts do not limit the navigational capability of the recce aircraft at low level.

c. In conjunction with Paragraph b. the relative merits of flying unescorted section of two recce aircraft on these missions.

(1) Using two recce aircraft would assure broader target coverage, and eliminate the necessity for two runs over the same area by one recce aircraft. Two would not be required if target width is less than five miles. Using

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

unescorted recce aircraft would increase ability to respond quickly, since tanker/escort coordination would not be required.

d. Airspeed limitations imposed by equipment, escorts, tactics, navigation, etc.

(1) None: The concept of tactical reconnaissance is low altitude high speed visual and photo coverage of selected targets. This concept increases mission success in the following ways:

(a) The visual reconnaissance obtained at low altitude is reliable intelligence information and supplements the photo coverage.

(b) Weather presents little or no problem.

(c) The element of surprise enhances success.

(d) The ground laying and airborne intercept radars effectiveness is greatly minimized by low altitude high speed concept.

e. Probability of obtaining acceptable results if only single passes per mission are made over selected targets.

(1) Excellent coverage can be obtained on one pass if target width does not exceed five miles.

In summary, the aircraft and crews are completely capable of obtaining low altitude photography. The systems were designed for use at low level and we recommend that low altitude reconnaissance be flown below 1,000 feet, and escorts used for the additional visual and protective coverage they afford...

SAC was concerned about in-flight refueling. In a message to Chief of Staff, USAF, SAC said that it had long considered boom refueling more reliable than probe and drogue. However, the F-100 was not capable of using this boom refueling but had to relay on

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED]

the old probe and drogue method. Therefore, SAC concurred with the drogue refueling requirements for Southeast Asia and requested that only this method be used. 87/

SAC's refueling team was taking over the responsibility formerly given to the obsolete KB-50's. Eight KC-135's were on hand in SEA in mid-December. By 25 January, it was projected that there be six at Clark and four at Kadena. On 1 March, KC-135 operations at Clark would cease with the transfer of four aircraft to Don Muang, Thailand, and the other two Clark aircraft would join an additional two from ZI bases in making the Kadena force eight. At some point between April and June the shift would be complete with 11 KC-135's at Kadena and four at Don Muang. 88/

MACV in a 16 December letter to CINCPAC, reviewed some of the communications which existed regarding reconnaissance in Northern Laos and concluded by requesting authorization to employ Yankee Team resources. 89/

The first reference was a Hq 2d Air Division letter dated 28 November which requested reconnaissance of 64 definitive objectives in Laos north of 20 degrees latitude and east of the Nam Hou River. 90/ CINCPAC had previously requested that COMUSMACV coordinate with the American Embassy in Vientiane to obtain RIAF RT-28 coverage of these same objectives. The Air Attache had replied by advising that the RT-28s could make only a limited effort because of several restrictive factors. 91/ The Ambassador to Laos had approved Yankee Team operations north of 20 degrees and east of the Nam

[REDACTED]

Hou and Nam Houp rivers on 28 October. <sup>92/</sup> Therefore, MACV felt that Yankee Team operations should be initiated against these objectives.

At the end of 1964, 449 Yankee Team flights (reconnaissance missions) had been accomplished. Of these, 226 were USAF and 223 were flown by the Navy. The Navy had lost two aircraft, on 6 and 8 June, and the Air Force also lost two, and F-100 on 19 November and an RF-101 on 21 November. Starting with the 6 June loss of the Navy RF-8A, fighter escort was authorized, and during the year, 490 armed escort sorties were flown. The retaliatory strike on 9 June after the loss of the second Navy aircraft was the first use of USAF jet firepower in Southeast Asia. In total, including weather reconnaissance and ELINT missions, the two services had flown more than 1,500 Yankee Team missions during 1964. <sup>23/</sup>

January was the month of SAC's Foreign Legion Tanker Force to become fully operational. Regarding its use, SAC said: <sup>94/</sup>

...It is our desire that SAC's Tanker Task Force be as responsive to your needs as sound employment tactics and proper regard for the tankers' inherent vulnerability permit. Refueling tracks and altitudes should be planned to avoid hostile flak and it is our understanding and observation that this is being done. We also note that many refueling operations are necessarily being conducted well within the enemy GCI capability even though their capability in the form of hostile aircraft attack has so far not been exploited. Further, on occasion, tankers are requested to loiter, unescorted, inside the GCI line pending a second refueling by strike and/or reconnaissance aircraft. In such instances, it would appear a fighter CAP and/or warning/recall procedures should be considered...

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

CINCPACAF on 17 January, reminded his subordinate commanders that "operations in Southeast Asia are in the spotlight. Every aspect is under closest scrutiny by military and civilian authorities. In view of the complexity of the political situation, it is of prime importance that every possible measure be taken to guard against errors and malfunctions." He concluded the message by saying: "Air operations have provided continuous evidence of Free World success in countering Communist aggression in SEA for several years, in spite of the restrictions imposed on the nature of these missions. This trend of success can be placed in jeopardy by a single mistake resulting from carelessness, faulty judgment or other causes..." <sup>95/</sup>

The plans to realign the RTF posture in SEA were proceeding with the official notification from CINCPACAF on 20 January. The 45 TRS was to conduct reconnaissance operations as the Able Mable Unit at Tan Son Nhut. This was to be an eight aircraft force. The 15 TRS was alerted to deploy an TRF to Thailand consisting of six RE-101s with accompanying photo processing cell to be bedded down at Don Muang. Commander 2d Air Division was to be responsible for assigning missions. <sup>96/</sup>

PACAF summed up the whole situation in another message that same day which expressed the following concept: TRF at Tan Son Nhut (Alpha) will have primary responsibility for in-country reconnaissance requirements. <sup>97/</sup>

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

...Additive tasks such as shallow penetration Yankee Team missions in Panhandle area of Barrel Roll support will be levied, as required, by COM 2d Air Division. (B) RTF at Don Muang (Bravo) will have primary responsibility for medium level Yankee Team operations, with capability for low level reconnaissance...

The Air Attache in Bangkok, however, presented several objections to siting an RTF at Don Muang. They included the lack of parking space, lack of billeting space, insufficient water supply and lack of Thai Government approval for a unit move into Thailand. He reported:

"Locating at Don Muang would be a long term process if ever, and even negotiation on the subject would conflict with imminent KC-135 deployment. Possible to get it at Takhli, Udorn, or Ubon, but again will require some negotiating time with RTG, plus provision of facilities which do not exist at any of the three locations." 28/

Thirteenth Air Force, on 30 January, directed that a survey team visit Udorn AB, Thailand to "coordinate support and facilities required" for the deployment of the RTF to that base rather than Don Muang. 29/

"...Spring is historically the season for Communist offensives in Laos. In April, 1962, the Communists attacked Muong Sing and Nam Tha and drove the FAR out of Northwest Laos. In April 1963, the Communists drove Neutralist forces from Ban Ban, Phong Savan, and Xieng Khouang. In May 1964, the Communists drove Kong Le out of the PDJ and inflicted a severe defeat on FAR and Meo forces north of Tha Thom..."

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

The message from CINCPAC went on to review problems that had arisen in the conduct of reconnaissance missions in Laos. CINCPAC reported that of the 17 low level missions approved by his headquarters and submitted to JCS, only one was completely approved while four others were approved for partial coverage. CINCPAC said: 100/

...It appears there may be an assumption that low level missions are automatically high risk if the mission merely flies over an enemy AA installation. The tactics for low level missions in Ref B (COMUSMACV MACJ31 0766 DTG 090849Z/Jan 65 (S) specified a single high speed pass at minimum practical altitude. Analysis of these tactics does not indicate a high risk. In SE Asia, where the present threat is conventional AA guns, reduction of aircraft exposure time is the key to survivability at altitudes below the maximum range of AAA weapons. An aircraft traveling at 400 mph at 400 feet AGL is seen for 1.37 seconds when the obstructions to vision are 90 degrees apart. This is not adequate time for light guns and automatic weapons to bring effective fire to bear on the recon aircraft...

Discussing the aircraft loss, CINCPAC reported:

...Of the four U. S. aircraft lost in Laos during Yankee Team operations, one was making its third pass over the defended area, two were making their second pass, and one was lost on its first pass. However, in the last case, the aircraft was over the defended area shortly after other U. S. aircraft had just departed, thus encountering an alerted defense. It is the contention of CINCPAC that Yankee Team reconnaissance missions flown at 1,000 feet and below are low risk missions for any area in Laos...

[REDACTED]

CINCPAC summed up the message by saying:

...We urgently need intelligence which only low level recce can provide. The efforts of JCS in supporting our low level reconnaissance program are appreciated and CINCPAC will attempt to provide more meaningful information on requirements and risks which will be of assistance to the JCS in justifying the CINCPAC YT program to the approving authority level in Washington...

Ambassador Sullivan, U. S. Ambassador to Laos, met with General Maddux, the 13th AF Commander and General Moore, 2d Air Division commander, at Udorn on 5 February 65. He reported to the Secretary of State that he saw "great merit" in the proposal that operational subcontrol for Air Force Yankee Team missions be shifted from Vietnam to Udorn. Ambassador Sullivan felt that the move to Udorn would relieve congestion at Da Nang and "should certainly result in more rapid refinement by YT photography of raw target data obtained from primary intelligence sources within Laos." 101/

On a Yankee Team mission in early February, a convoy of 15 to 20 trucks was sighted on route 12. The armed escorts accompanying the photo aircraft had the capability to strike such a target but were prohibited from doing so by the rules of engagement, even though aircraft flying on a Barrel Roll (A program of strikes in Laos by USAF and USN aircraft) mission could have attacked. 102/

North Vietnam's MIG capability has been growing, and General Moore expressed his concern about it in a message to CINCPACAF,

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

103/

General Harris, on 11 February. He said:

...Sooner or later NVN will launch its MIGs and attempt to attack our Flaming Dart, Yankee Team, or Barrel Roll mission aircraft. When that event occurs I believe it utmost importance to retaliate soonest by striking overwhelming blow at MIG bases. Recommend stage be set now to obviate long delay in obtaining approval for strike.

The commander of the Able Mable Detachment at Tan Son Nhut responded to a query from 5th Air Force regarding the use of the RF-101 (Modification 1181) aircraft which had been deployed to South Vietnam. The Modification 1181 was to enhance the RF-101's low level capabilities. He reported that "approximately 95% of the in-country missions are high to medium altitude area cover type photography which does not utilize the increased capability of the RF-101 (Mod 1181) aircraft but could be accomplished better with the old system." Regarding missions in Laos, "approximately 80% are medium altitude where the old system is superior." He also noted that "an aircraft with a capability for repeatedly changing film magazines during a long flight would be superior for this type of work." 104/

Heck 61, an RF-101 Yankee Team aircraft, and his Black Flight escorts had an embarrassing incident on 19 Feb 65 when they spotted a four engine transport type aircraft in their area. On their first identification run made at a distance of one mile, they were unable to see its markings clearly, so they made another pass, closing to within 500 feet. The aircraft was a C-54 which carried International Control Commission markings. 105/

39  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

Gen The Yankee Team rules and procedures file carried an intelligence report dated 21 Feb 65 crediting the Laotian Communist forces with two radar controlled guns on the eastern periphery of the PDJ. Most of the ground fire in Laos came from 37 millimeter or lighter weapons whose maximum range was listed as 4,500 to 5,000 feet, although the weapon was listed as having a "maximum vertical range of 19,865 feet."

Events of the months of March, April and May of 1965 will be treated as a unit because the messages pertaining to command and control which were exchanged during the period need to be read as a continuum. However, to deal first with the two key events relating to forces, the SAC refueling operation switched operating location from Clark AB to Kadena and Don Muang AB as scheduled on 1 March 65. The 4252d Strategic Wing, nicknamed the Young Tiger Task Force," took over operations from the former Foreign Legion Tanker Task Force. The unit at Don Muang was christened the "Tiger Cub" Task Force.

The reconnaissance task force moved into Udorn on 1 April. It immediately assumed the major share of the Yankee Team missions.

The first of the significant command and control messages was the following, quoted in full because of its significance. 106/

At the present time the tactical commander (2AD) is restricted in his ability to exercise required flexibility of decision and actions essential to successful execution of missions assigned. Specifically are Yankee Team, Barrel

[REDACTED]

Roll, Flaming Dart and Rolling Thunder missions in which planning and execution rigidly controlled at the highest levels with compliance being main source of concern of the operational commander. It is recognized that, at the present time, this is the way of life. However, fluidity of the combat situation, the fleeting nature of targets and fast breaking intelligence provided by excellent sources in SEA dictates a need for a change in the "way of life" to permit tactical flexibility. The rigid requirement which dictates the number of escort aircraft for Yankee Team Mission deletes an operational decision to provide sufficient force against late breaking intelligence concerning enemy AAA positions.

Guidance directives which state "avoid known areas of heavy flak concentration" fail to take into consideration the present enemy capability to rapidly move from one prepared gun emplacement to another. Believe broad guidance should be provided for country/mission objectives of airpower plus specific prohibitions on targets or target areas. With these factors and JCS target studies plus the operational commander's knowledge of weaponeering and understanding of peculiarities of each individual area, augmented with last minute intelligence, he can plan strike force level. Support (flak/CAP), Rescap and SAR with details not available to higher headquarters and without frustration of weaponeering, which at times appears to have been arrived at by outdated intelligence or limited computations. Weapons delivered on target are arbitrarily limited by a total number of airframes over the target whereas, considering for example, airframes only, the operational commander, in thinking of the F-100 Vs the F-105 for bomb delivery would normally favor the F-105 because it can carry up to three times the bombs of the F-100 with a similar CEP. When the B-57 with its load carrying capability enters his thinking, there are certain times when he would eliminate the B-57 because tactics and defenses would indicate the necessity for the higher speed of the F-100/105 in delivering on the target. 13AF/2AD staffs have been augmented by personnel trained and qualified to perform the weaponeering function. A simple directive to attack a

[REDACTED]

designated target with a stated desired percentage of destruction is sufficient guidance. Additionally, continued requirement to weaponeer for 90 per cent destruction may fail to consider that such a directive forces the operational commander to place larger Air Force than may be necessary to a confined airspace thus increasing the chances of enemy AAA/AW success. Especially, when the desired result is not of an immediate nature. For example, the Barrel Roll mission against Ban Ken Bridge. The massing of aircraft against a target provided concentration of enemy AAA/AW opposition. **Actually**, the first or second flight of strike aircraft destroyed the Bridge.

Should a lesser force (50 per cent probability of destruction) have been directed conceivably the target may not have been destroyed. On balance though, destruction of the bridge could have been accomplished on reattack (with a smaller fast in and out strike force) prior to commencement of the rainy season before the real impact of the bridge loss was felt by the enemy. This point was crystalized that same night when 50 enemy trucks easily forded the river beside the destroyed bridge. In the main, tactical mission planning has followed established concepts. However, the above merely points out the effectiveness of strikes has been hampered by high level direction of mission specifics, i.e., number and types of aircraft, ordnance loads, etc.

Tactical pilots may have gone too far in pushing their attacks in the past. We cannot generalize on this, but it is probable that, in some cases, this can be traced to lack of experience in combat. This would influence the pilot's decision to go back to determine whether multiple passes are desired. We have discouraged this practice. For normally defended targets, we expect one pass and then go.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

CINCPACAF went further in discussing the latter portion of the preceding message when he told his subordinate units that... <sup>107/</sup>

...Higher headquarters emphasis on getting impressive results coupled with the crews' enthusiasm, has resulted in additional exposure to damage by intentional passes through known AAA defenses...In most cases mission effectiveness and reduced risk of damage are contradictory objectives. We will attempt to prevent the risks of unproductive enthusiasm, but cannot resolve the basic contradiction...

On 6 April CINCPAC recommended to the JCS that approval authority for Yankee Team be vested in him. CINCPAC felt that after ten months of Yankee Team operations, the time had come to evaluate Yankee Team in the light of the Blue Tree Reconnaissance program. In Blue Tree, the JCS authorized daily medium level flights over North Vietnam at the discretion of CINCPAC. CINCPAC said, <sup>108/</sup> "It does not appear consistent to provide wide latitude to CINCPAC for accomplishment and approval authority for the recce program over North Vietnam and at the same time maintain rigid controls on the recce program over Laos."

COMUSMACV on 10 April requested that he have approval authority for Yankee Team missions. <sup>109/</sup> The Air Force supported this move assuming that the Commander, 2d Air Division would be COMUSMACV's deputy for the conduct of Yankee Team.

However, CINCPACFLT strongly opposed any delegation of authority to an echelon of command lower than CINCPAC on the basis that priority determination and coordination of all missions in Southeast

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

Asia needed to be done by CINCPAC who had both CINCPACFLT and CINCPACAF's total resources at his disposal. 110/

CINCPAC ended the arguments on the eve of the first anniversary of Yankee Team operations by saying, in a message to COMUSMACV. 111/

"CINCPAC is the controlling agency for Yankee Team operations. CINCPAC will establish reconnaissance objectives and maintain continually updated consolidated requirements list based on requirements established at Washington level, CINCPAC, Service Components, MACV and AMEMB Vientiane to provide a basis for the collection of maximum intelligence information...Specific intelligence objectives will be forwarded monthly to COMUSMACV for development of specific missions and tactically sound operations to satisfy requirements...OP-00s are required to be submitted to provide the specific information needed for evaluation and monitoring of this program. Operations will continue to be coordinated with AMEMB Vientiane...COMUSMACV and CINCPACFLT are authorized to conduct missions upon receipt of approved OP-00 plans. To provide the flexibility dictated by intelligence and operational situations COMUSMACV is authorized to deviate from OP-00 approved force composition, tactics and specified missions. Deviation will be submitted in OP-1 reports and may be executed without approval...Any approved mission initially unsuccessful may be re-flown without additional approval by assigning new YT numbers and submitting an OP-1 intent report. Reconnaissance flights may be conducted at medium or low level...Retaliatory fire by escorts authorized except against the towns of Sam Neua, Khang Khay, or Kieng Khouang. Use of suppressive fire not authorized unless AMEMB Vientiane coordinates and JCS approval is obtained..."

**TOP SECRET NOFORN**

Asir The message also established a new numbering system with the prefix "YT" to precede the primary photo or ELINT mission numbers and the Air Force to use odd series numbers and the Navy even. OP-00 and OP-1 reports were to be submitted by MACV while the OP-2 through OP-5 reports were to be submitted by the organizations executing the missions.

**TOP SECRET NOFORN**

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The administrative reporting procedures developed for Yankee Team were standardized and used for such other out-of-country missions as Barrel Roll, Steel Tiger and Rolling Thunder. <sup>112/</sup>

The OP-00 was the first requirement for any mission. It was a consolidation of all target requests and was submitted by MACV to CINCPAC and thence to the JCS as far in advance as possible but not less than five days prior to the first proposed mission.

Information required was:

1. Recce mission number and escort mission number.
2. Target or reconnaissance objective.
3. Route.
4. Number and type reconnaissance aircraft; number and type escort aircraft.
5. Reconnaissance base of launch and recovery; escort base of launch and recovery.
6. Primary altitude and risk; secondary altitude and risk.
7. Whether or not weather reconnaissance is planned in advance of the strike.
8. Whether or not ELINT was planned.
9. Recommendations such as requirements for suppressive fire; specific ordnance; additional escort requirements.
10. Remarks on amplifying information such as escort aircraft rendezvousing with reconnaissance aircraft subsequent to departing South Vietnam and altitudes and route turning points for ELINT aircraft.

The Yankee Team planning cycle might be described in the following manner:

1. COMUSMACV, in a message to 2d Air Division, requests coverage of a certain number of reconnaissance objectives during a specified period.

[REDACTED]

2. The Navy Liaison Officer and the Commander 2d Air Division or his representative allocate the objective list. The Navy Liaison Officer requests Yankee Team task group commander to prepare an OP-00A which is his proposal for accomplishing the objectives. 2d Air Division operations personnel prepare OP-00 for their objectives.

3. Navy OP-00A and Air Force OP-00 reviewed and consolidated at 2d Air Division.

4. A final draft of the OP-00 is carried to MACV for release. COMUSMACV transmits the OP-00 to CINCPAC.

5. CINCPAC reviews the OP-00, recommends changes and requests permission from the JCS to carry out the plan.

6. Approval by JCS and any additional changes or restrictions are transmitted by JCS to CINCPAC with information copies to all concerned. The execute order is then transmitted from CINCPAC down through the chain of command.

The OP-1 was submitted daily by COMUSMACV to CINCPAC reporting intent to fly missions for a particular Zulu calendar day. COMUSMACV also transmitted a daily reconnaissance summary recapping the day's operation. The OP-4 report provided the post flight operational summary. It was a requirement that this message be dispatched within two hours after the mission recovered. Incidents were reported in the Special OP-5 report. The other standard reports not mentioned were the OP-00 MOD and the IPIR. OP-00 MODs were used to request changes to previously approved missions. Once a OP-00 MOD was submitted, the mission could not be flown until the JCS acted upon it. The IPIR was the Initial Photo Intelligence Report prepared by photo interpreters assigned to the Air Force and Navy photo processing units.

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Each Yankee Team mission was given a specific number, selected from specially assigned numbers blocks. Once assigned, mission numbers could not be used again. Special suffixes were established to help further in describing the mission. They were EW for missions on the special Early Warning routes, XB for cross border missions--the shallow penetration missions across the border of South Vietnam into Laos, BDA for bomb damage assessment, and CAP for Combat Air Patrol.

The number blocks were:

1000	Air Force	RF-101
2000	Navy	RF-8A
3000-3699	Navy	RA-3B
3700-3999	Navy	RA-5C
4000	Air Force	RB-57
5000	Navy	EA-3B
6000-6299	Air Force	escorts from South Vietnam bases
6400-6499	Air Force	CAP for Laotian T-28 Strikes
6600	Air Force	escort from Thailand Bases
7000-7399	Navy	escorts
7400-7499	Navy	CAP for RIAF T-28 strikes
8000	Navy	Weather reconnaissance
9000	Air Force	Weather reconnaissance

Thus, a typical mission using an RF-105 escorts from a Thai base against one of the early warning routes might be numbered YT EW 1221/6885. Or a Navy mission designated YT 3001/7001/5120

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

would be an RA-3B photo aircraft with EA-3B ELINT support and F-8, F-4, or A-4 escort.

NAVY OPERATIONS

The basic concept for Navy operations was to launch and recover the reconnaissance, escort and refueling aircraft entirely from a carrier (CVA). One carrier informally designated the Yankee Team CVA, was normally assigned to conduct Navy Yankee Team operations. It operated from Point Yankee -- 16 degrees north, 110 degrees east -- retiring from the position at night or when no missions were scheduled. Navy elements were prohibited from approaching closer than 40 miles to mainland North Vietnam or Hainan Island. The Yankee Team CVA normally had four destroyer escorts and was supported by the ships of the Carrier Task Force 77.

The total Navy effort in Southeast Asia was a product of Task Force 77 consisting of sub task groups numbered 77.4, 77.5, 77.6, and 77.7, which were rotated in and out of the South China Sea area. As an example of this rotation, the following actual schedule is presented:

CTG 77.4	28 November through 28 December
CTG 77.7	28 December through 15 January
CTG 77.4	15 January through 4 February
CTG 77.5	4 February through 24 February
CTG 77.4	24 February through 15 March

[REDACTED]

Typical aircraft loads for the carriers which participated in Yankee Team were as follows:

CARRIER	F8E	A4E	A1H	E1B	RF8A	RA3B	A3B	UH2A	KA4E	F4B	A4C	CL1A	KA3B	EA3B	RA5C
(1)*	16	8	10	2	5	2	2	2	6	X	X	X	X	X	X
(2)	X	10	10	4	5	4	X	2	8	18	X	X	4	1	X
(3)	16	6	10	2	5	2	X	2	6	X	X	X	1	1	X
(4)	X	20	12	3	3	2	X	2	X	19	X	1	3	1	16

\* (1) Ticonderoga (2) Constellation (3) Bon Homme Richard  
 (4) Ranger

The basic reconnaissance aircraft in the above chart are the RF8A, RA3B, KA3B and the EA3B. The aircraft were launched from their carrier and did not usually need refueling inbound to the Panhandle. However, for returning flights, tankers were positioned near Da Nang. Da Nang was used as a recovery base in the event of missed refueling.

#### AIR FORCE OPERATIONS

The Air Force's Yankee Team Operations were characterized by a steady, fairly predictable pattern. Launch base, until the March development of the RTF to Udorn, was always Tan Son Nhut for the RF-101. Originally the escorts always came from Da Nang, but later, came directly from Takhli or Korat in Thailand. The KB-50 tankers operated from Tan Son Nhut or Takhli. Their replacement KC-135's flew from Clark AB, Philippines, though after 1 April they operated from Kadena, Okinawa, and Don Muang, Thailand.

[REDACTED]

<u>Launch/Recovery Base</u>	<u>Mission</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Distance (Nautical Miles)</u>
Tan Son Nhut	Recce	Plaine de Jarres (PDJ)	675
Da Nang	Escort	PDJ	375
Tan Son Nhut	Recce	Panhandle (PH)	350
Da Nang	Escort	PH	60
Udorn	Recce	PDJ	120
Takhli	Escort	PDJ	300
Korat	Escort	PDJ	275
Udorn	Recce	PH	130
Takhli	Escort	PH	375
Korat	Escort	PH	275

---

There were six standard orbit points for tankers and six standard entry points for the aircraft to cross the border. These were not requirements set by any authority but simply convenient points established by the Yankee Team planners.

Fighters were always available to ward off MIGs from the highly vulnerable air-to-air refueling operations. Refueling armed fighters demanded that armament safety checklists be completed by the fighter pilots prior to rendezvous closure with 2,000 feet minimum separation during rendezvous. Rendezvous was conducted by GCI from head-on position insuring a 4,000 foot separation until behind the tankers.

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Fighter escort tactics were described by Major Jimmy L. Jones, flight leader of Parka flight which escorted Fern 61, an RF-101, on 113/ a 16 January, 1965, reconnaissance mission...

"...Take-off at 0805L with four aircraft, two primary and two spares. Normal climb to 30,000 feet enroute to Thakhet TACAN. Rendezvous with Fern 61 was accomplished at 0840L 30,000 feet over Thakhet. The two spares were then broken off and Parka 71-72 accompanied Fern 61 to the target area for reconnaissance mission. We flew approximately 2,000 feet higher than Fern 61, keeping slightly wide at all times. Gradual descent was made from the rendezvous point to the target area. Fern 61 arrived at the target at 0851 and at 12,000 feet. Parka 71-72 maintained between 13,000-15,000 feet at all times and lined abreast of Fern 61. On the second pass over the target Fern 61 called he was drawing ground fire. Fern 61 called a second time that he was drawing ground fire and this time Parka 72 reported he had visual contact with the source of the ground fire. Fern 61 cleared Parka flight to attack the ground fire. I cleared Parka 72 to attack the gun position he had in sight as I still had not located the position. Parka 72 made a descending right turn from 14,000 feet. During this time, I (Parka 71) observed numerous gun flashes coming from the heavy forest just south on Ban Bei Bridge. I then made two hot CBU passes over this area. First pass was from west to east at approximately 300 feet at 520 knots. Second pass was over same forest area about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile farther south. This pass was in the opposite direction (east to west) at 510 knots, 300 feet. I noted on both passes that numerous tracers were coming at me directly from the 12 o'clock position. Parka 72 reported numerous gun emplacements in a wooded area slightly west of my second CBU pass. I then attacked this area from east to west 525 knots, 350 feet and emptied my remaining CBU ordnance in this forest..."

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

To give further insight into the Yankee Team administrative and operational procedures, one mission has been selected to follow from the time it was requested through to the final product, the hard intelligence. This mission, flown 17 January, 1965, was numbered YT 1342 EW-2. The number indicates that the mission was flown by an RF-101 Voo-doo over Route EW-2, one of the Early Warning Routes flown at periodic intervals to gain foreknowledge of Pathet Lao/Viet Minh buildups.

COMUSMACV 114/ proposed the mission in a 9 January 1965 message to CINCPAC. It was one of three proposed in the OP-00.

(10) YT 1342/6195 or 6649  
YT 1343/6196 or 6650  
YT 1344/6197 or 6651

(A) Targets: Three coverages of EW-2 plus pinpoints of V-201 Ban Keng Kao Military area (164535N/105081E) V210 Ban Ha Nhom mil area (170210N/1054350E) V-282 Ban Seng Phan hwy br, route 23 (172915N/105421E) V-188 Ban Lang Khang AAA batteries (173345N/103419E) and 7T-324 Ban Lang Khang refuel and supply pt (1734N/10543E).

(B) Route: entry pt to start of EW-2 (1642N/R10610A) along route to V-201 (164535N/1060810E) to V-210 (170210N/105450J) to V-282 (172915/1054215E) to V-188 (173345N/1054419E) to 7T-342 (1734N/1054J) to end of EW-2 3NM from DRV border: (1737N/10543E) to exit point.

(C) Primary date: 15 Jan  
20 Jan  
25 Jan

(D) Remarks: F-105 rndv point (1637N/10633E). Route of escorts: KRT to entry pt (1605N/10505E) to rndv pt to common route. Detach from recce at (1637N/10633E) to exit pt (1605N/10505E) to Korat.

[REDACTED]

The abbreviated form used in the above message shows first, the type of aircraft used. 1342 is the 1000 or RF-101 series. 6195 is between 6000 and 6499 which indicates the escort is an F-100, while 6649 is one of the numbers between 6500 and 6999 reserved for F-105's. CINCPAC approved the missions and forwarded the proposal to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JCS replied in a message to CINCPAC approving the missions but amending the sub-115/ mission as follows:

D. YT 1342, 1343 and 1344. One mission, low-level coverage only of Ban Khen Khan Kao military area (1645N/10508E) and Ban Lang Khang supply point 1734N/10543E. Remainder of route at medium level. The other mission authorized at medium level. After the low level mission is flown, recheck and determine if a re-run at low level is necessary. If so, re-submit for approval.

Second Air Division's Yankee Team Operations Section issued the frag order for 1342 EW-2 on 16 January: 116/

Part III

- A. Det 1, 33TG TSN
- B. Fern 54
- C. YT 1342 EW-2
- D. 1/RF-101
- E. T/O 17/0405
- F. N/A
- G. Fly against targets: EW-2 plus pinpoints of V-201 Ban Keng Khan Kao mil area (164535N/105081E) V-120 Ban Ha Nhom mil area (170210N/1054350E) V-282 Ban Seng Phan hwy br, rte 23 (172915N/1054215E) B-188 Ban Lang Khang AAA batteries (173345N/1054419E) 7T 342 Ban Lang Khang Refuel and supply pt (1734N/10543E).
- H. Recce/escort freq 311 OMC. Escort (Steer 05-06) will join recce 280/50 DNG at 25M, 17/0455Z.
- I. Route: TSN to 280/50 DNG to targets. Detach from escorts 280/50 DNG. Land TSN/DNG.
- J. No AAR reqd.
- K. Low alt auth on V-201 Ban Keng Khan Kao and V-188 Ban Lang Khang. The rest of the rte med alt only auth. Code name Little John.

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Part IV

- A. 67 TFS Da Nang RVN
- B. Steer 05-06
- C. YT 6649
- D. 2/F-105
- E. T/O 17/0440Z
- F. 2/CBU-2, Max 20 mm HEI, 2/450 gal est tanks
- G. Fly armed escort for YT 1342 EW-2
- H. Recce Escort freq 311 OMC. Rndv with recce (Fern 54) 280/50 DNG, 25M. 17/9455Z
- I. Route: DNG to 380/50 DNG to common rte. Detach from recce 280/50 DNG. Land DNG.

Part V

- A. 67TFS Da Nang RVN
- B. Steer 07-08
- C. N/A
- D. 2/F-105
- E. T/O 17/0440Z
- F. 2CBU-2, max 20 mm HEI, 2/350 gal ext tanks
- G. Airborne spares for YT 6649
- H. Recce/escort freq 311 OMC
- I. See part I and IV
- J. No AAR reqd
- K. Spares will not penetrate the Laotian border unless replacing primary aircraft.

Part I of the above message ordered weather reconnaissance to be flown in advance of the flight and Part VI ordered eight F-105s to be on ground alert to provide coverage for rescue aircraft in case the reconnaissance or escort aircraft were shot down. Interpretation of the code used for each section, requires that you know that "A" designates the unit, "B" gives call signs, "C" is the flight number, and "D" is number and type of aircraft. The rest of the items are self-explanatory.

On 15 January, CINCPAC ordered that the missions proposed in the basic OP-00 be flown, as modified. 117/ COMUSMACV submitted its OP-1 report for missions to be flown that day.

TOP SECRET NOFORN

[REDACTED]

The missions were launched. According to the OP-2 reports, on the 17th, with the RF-101 off at 0400Z and the fighters at 0440Z. After accomplishing the mission, the aircraft landed and an OP-3 report was submitted saying, "YT 1342 (EW-12) and YT 6694 ATA 17/0612Z." 118/

Two OP-4 messages were distributed, one for the reconnaissance aircraft and one for the escorts. The fighters reported that they from "Lao Bao Tchepone to 1711N/10532E to 1736N/10520E to Ban Lang Khang." 119/

C. As per YT 1342 EW-2. Lead expended total of 300 rounds of 20 mm and two CBU's. Nbr 2 expended 125 rounds of 20 mm and two CBU's. Targets of expenditure in Ban Lang Khang area of AAA sites at WE 7642 (37 mm site) and WE7742 (AW site and possible 37 mm site). Both targets received both CBU's and strafing. No apparent radar tracking. No ground vehicles. One person observed running toward trenches. At V-201 no observations.

D. WX: Ban Lang Khang area, 8 to 10 thousand scattered, visibility 10 NM. OPS-5 to follow.

The reconnaissance pilot reported that "50 per cent of the route photographed. The rest impossible due to WX. V-201 100%, V-188 100%." 120/

C. 37 mm fire at 1658N/10548E from Ban Seng Phan area; automatic weapons and 37 mm fire in Ban Lang Khang area. (many positions) AW fire at XD 5239 apparently from trenches. No retaliation.

The immediate OP-4 reports were amplified in the OP-5 which followed later. 121/

CONFIDENTIAL

Flight proceeded to Lao Bao (alt 10M to Tchepone, descending (500 feet near Tchepone). V-201 Ban Keng Khan Kao area covered 100 per cent at altitude of 500 feet AGL (one pass). Flight climbed to 13 thousand and up route 91 to 1711N/10532E, broken undercast encountered at this point. (8M broken). Passed over V-188 (alt 500 AGL) heading 090. At this point AAA fire was received. Here recce climbed to 10M and watched escort expend. BDA later taken of expenditures. (alt 12M). WX conditions 1/2 of target area overcast: 1/2 scattered. Escort circled back (wide circle) at 1728N/10540E recce saw escorts receive fire from Ban Seng area. Fire was definitely 37 mm. Site pinpointing impossible. Escorts made wide circle and came down valley, this time at 300 feet at 400 kts. Steer 05 expended 6 tubes of CBU's. Steer 06 expended 12 tubes of CBU's and 125 rounds of 20 mm (at WE 7642 RF-101 was at high altitude guiding the escorts over the target). Heading was 100 degrees. The firing appeared to be located in front of a line of trees. Escorts turned left around Mu Gia Pass, heading west. Flight turned over (approx) 1736N/10520E and came down valley again. This time recce did not direct other than say "37 mm on your left". Both F-105's made passes on AAA sites, at WE 7742. On this pass 05 expended 300 rounds of 20 mm and 28 tubes of CBU's. Steer 06 expended 22 tubes. Recce informed 06 that he had hit an AW position, and that 05 had hit an AW site slightly to the south. Escorts had no time to observe possible targets in Mu Gia Pass. Escort rejoined recce at WE 8020 and made run over area at medium altitude for BDA. AW fire was received from XD 5239, apparently from a series of trenches. No retaliation taken since acft were not endangered. AW fire was very light. The 37 mm fire received from the Ban Seng area, when the F-105's were at 1728N/10548E, could not be pinned down. No radar tracking was apparent at any time. No vehicles were seen anywhere around Mu Gia Pass. Some people could be seen diving for trenches. Most of the AW and AAA fire reported today was observed by the recce A/C. Many AW positions were in the area south of the

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

pass. Almost all were concealed. F-105 pilots were too low and fast to see most of the fire. Pilots reported barrage fire (light) protecting Mu Gia Pass. Many AW positions located on rolling hill at WE 775415 up hill to WE 775423. Recce and escorts undamaged. Final report.

Photography from the flight was developed and an IPIR was prepared. The initial IPIR reported no essential change in any of the targets "since YT 1339, 16 Jan 65". However, a follow-up 122/ that same day discussed the Ban Na Chat AAA Batteries.

Three occupied light AAA (37 mm) BTRYs with four positions each. One six position probable anti-aircraft machine gun BTRY. AW located at each BTRY. Coords are approximate center of three BTRYs which were approximately 100 yards apart. Individual coords cannot be determined from series 250 chart. Frames: VT 213-215, RSV 239-243.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

The Chain of Command

Yankee Team operations were controlled through a tenuous chain of command which stretched from Washington to Saigon with many way stations. At the top, of course, was the President and Secretary of Defense who were constantly briefed on Yankee Team operations.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were the agency which reflected the views of the Executive Branch and were the "approving authority", defining operational parameters and waiving them for any mission which could not be fitted within the guidelines which the JCS established.

Directly subordinate to the JCS was the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC). CINCPAC, as the unified commander for all U. S. forces in the Pacific, was responsible for military actions in Southeast Asia.

His deputies were the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), Commander in Chief Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF), and Commander in Chief U. S. Army Pacific (CINCUSARPAC).

The Navy chain of command then evolved down through the Commander of the Seventh Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT) to Commander, Carrier Task Force 77, the commanders of his respective Carrier Task Groups 77.4, 77.5, 77.6, and 77.7.

Under CINCPACAF in the Air Force chain of command was 13th Air Force. Thirteenth Air Force's subordinate commander in Vietnam was the Commander 2d Air Division. While under the operational

CONFIDENTIAL

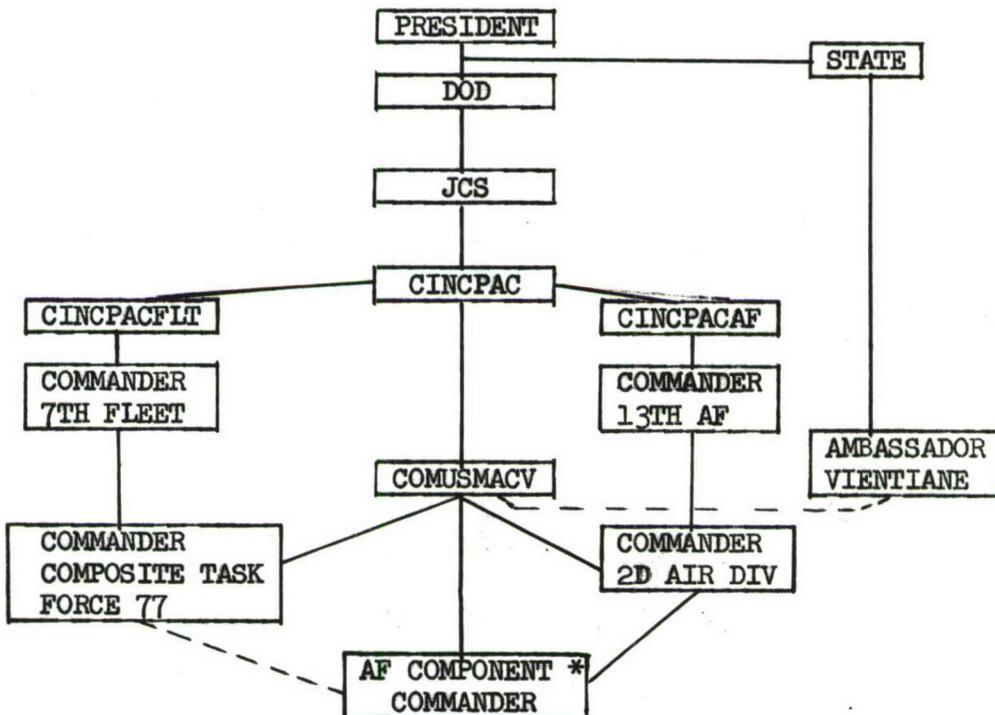
[REDACTED]

control of 13th Air Force, the Commander 2d Air Division was also the Air Force Component Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (COMUSMACV).

MACV was a subordinate unified command whose commander reported directly to CINCPAC. COMUSMACTHAI occupied a position similar to COMUSMACV for Thailand operations. His Deputy Chief was responsible for Laos Operations.

The other significant element injected into the Yankee Team chain of Command was the Ambassador to Laos and his Air Attache.

So, the following representation of the Yankee Team Chain of command can be drawn.



\* (AF Component Commander synonymous with Commander, 2d Air Division.)

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

If one were to try and define a request net for objectives, it would show many agencies forwarding requests for coverage to MACV where a consolidated list would be drawn up. This list was approved by CINCPAC and the JCS, and then was given to the Commander 2d Air Division where it became his responsibility to coordinate with the Navy Liaison Officer to assign the objectives.

The proposals for coverage were forwarded through MACV to CINCPAC to the JCS, and approval came back from JCS to CINCPAC. Here, significantly the execute order was given out through the respective service command channels. In other words, the execute order for the Air Force went through CINCPACAF and 13th Air Force, while that for the Navy went through CINCPACAFILT and Commander Seventh Fleet before it reached the actual execution agency. This was at best a time consuming project, and at its worst, a command net fraught with the perils of many persons jealously guarding and exercising the prerogatives of their positions.

Interservice rivalry was a constant undertone in the Yankee Team disharmony. Both the Air Force and the Navy were justifiably concerned about acquitting their roles in Yankee Team well, and the consequent constant attempts at upstaging at points in the chain of command above the execution level, were a continuing problem to the 2d Air Division and CTG 77 operations personnel.

This bulky chain of command points up two problems basic to U. S. operations in Southeast Asia; namely, overcontrol from levels in the chain of command which are not familiar with the

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

situation in the theater of operations, and interservice rivalry which was seen before in South Vietnam when the Army assiduously retained control of its Caribous and withheld them from the Tactical Air Control System; and was carried into the out-of-country operations with the Navy and Air Force competing.

The Ambassador to Laos in a message to the Secretary of State, discussed the chain of command problem for a Barrel Roll mission, which used essentially the same command channels and administrative procedures adopted for Yankee Team. He said: 123/

..."We were all impressed during this discussion, with the avalanche of messages, originating from various sources, and a very often crossing in the air waves, which contributed to eventual definition of this mission. Even after they had all been put together around the general framework of a target designation which had been recommended by Vientiane and approved by Washington, D. C., they left a considerable degree of imprecision for the positive results to be accomplished with very little attention to the negative possibilities to be avoided. It seems to me that these considerations could lead to one of two different conclusions: (A) strike missions against individual points in Laos require such complex planning, photo, etc., that they cannot be mounted on a rapid response basis to fleeting targets developed in a tactical situation, or (B) more precise methods have to be developed to define strike missions and each interested U. S. government element involved in the transaction has a fixed responsibility for establishing certain aspects if the mission..."

Barrel Roll points up another problem; that Yankee Team, because it required 24 to 72 hours for approval on an emergency

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

basis, was not accomplishing one of its objectives in helping to maintain a current anti-aircraft order of battle. <sup>124/</sup> Yankee Team could have provided vital pre-strike photography which could have established if gun positions were occupied.

Another restriction which was detrimental to Yankee Team was the prohibition against use of napalm on escorts. Second Air Division operations personnel considered this to be an outstanding weapon for use against AAA positions. But its use was specifically disapproved. (Use of CBU-2A munitions was authorized by JCS 8899/ August 64.)

As referenced in a 2d Air Division message, the JCS approved weather reconnaissance missions prior to the photo mission but specifically stated, "do not conduct photography on these missions." <sup>125/</sup> Is this refusal to allow photography of targets of opportunity efficient usage of the hardpressed SEA reconnaissance aircraft assets? Second Air Division did not think so, and reported in a 26 January message to 13th Air Force that: <sup>126/</sup>

"...informal information here from Major Parks who recently debriefed CSAF and JCS on Barrel Roll Mission #9 indicated JCS unaware we unable to photograph targets of opportunity on Yankee Team WX runs. We have been unsuccessful in the past in getting MACV and up line approval to do this. Since Major Parks indicates this may not be in accord with JCS thinking, request assistance in obtaining permission to photo targets of opportunity of WX missions."

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

Sometimes questions in semantics brought about problems. For example, the JCS directed that there never be more than four RESCAP (fighter support for rescue aircraft) over "target" at any time. Second Air Division had to send a message to its units saying, "area search effort not considered target." A target was the specific location where an individual was down. 127/

Rules of engagement appeared to be quixotic -- trucks sighted by escorts on a Yankee Team mission were immune to attack while those same trucks sighted by Barrel Roll aircraft, could be destroyed." 128/

Previous mention has been made in the chronological section of this study of the stringent rules regarding altitudes for flying Yankee Team missions. At the start, the JCS defined medium altitude as "that altitude above the effective range of ground fire", for small arms and most automatic weapons, 3000 feet.

After the loss of an RF-101 the day after Laos AAA batteries had shot down a Yankee Team F-100 aircraft, 2d Air Division presented a good exposition on the confusing guidance concerning altitudes.

"...Second Air Division operational planning and mission execution instructions are as contained in CINCPAC 08/0009 July and CINCPAC 26/0130 July. YT 1273 mission aircraft was flying route reconnaissance which is normally flown in the "medium" altitude zone as directed by CINCPAC 08/0009 July. Portions of this particular route (route 12) were flown at 15,000 feet AGL and the remainder at 3000 feet AGL due to cloud deck at 4,000 feet. These altitudes were within the medium altitude limits set forth

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

by JCS (reference CINCPAC 08/0009Z July). The flight was planned to avoid known AAA positions along route 12. Upon completion of the route reconnaissance the pilot of the RF-101 went to the AAA site to obtain BDA of gun site involved in downing of F-100 on 18 Nov 64..."

The message went on to discuss the fact that BDA was usually flown at either high altitudes above 25,000 feet or low altitudes between 300 and 500 feet. 129/

"...CINCPAC 26/0130Z July stated that medium altitude be redefined as an altitude above effective small caliber AA fire. Small caliber should be defined as 37 mm or less. The range altitudes for medium level could then be from approximately 3,000 feet (above the range of MG fire), to 15,000 feet (above effective range 37 mm)..."

CINCPAC then stated that medium altitude for Yankee Team missions was 10,000 feet. The obvious result was less effective coverage of objectives due to the increased affect of weather. Strike aircraft could hit with ceilings at 1,000 feet or even less, which meant that Yankee Team BDA of targets struck on Barrel Roll and RIAF strikes was often impossible to get. Even though 2d Air Division and CINCPAC had presented powerful arguments for flying highspeed low level missions, the JCS refused to relent on their previous ruling that special justification had to be presented for any missions flown below 10,000 feet. The Ambassador to Laos' statement that various sensor systems allow the reconnaissance aircraft to operate just as effectively at high altitude as at low was disproved in view of the inefficiency of the RF-101 Model 1181,

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

especially modified for high speed low altitude oblique photography which could pick out targets in the jungle growth but was not good for high altitude area cover.

Granted that the U. S. Ambassador to Laos had a major stake in Yankee Team, but having Yankee Team missions approved on an individual basis by the two career embassy "political/military" specialists in his Political Section seems questionable in view of the fact he had Army and Air Force attaches assigned to his office. An example was the June <sup>1964</sup> shootdown of Navy Lieutenant Klusman. The Ambassador was perfectly willing to allow helicopters piloted by U. S. national Air America employees to go into the area and attempt to make a pick-up. However, he would not allow fully qualified Air America pilots to fly armed escort in T-28s until after both helicopters had been shot up. 130/

An odd situation in the command structure was the relationship of the KC-135 tankers to the total air resource in SEA. They were "under SAC operational control but responsive to PACAF requirements." 131/ This presented no major problems during the period covered by this study, but the potential existed. "It is the belief here", said the Commander, 2d Air Division in a message concerning another subject, "that where there is a capability to do so, overall and complete responsibility should be held by one commander and all forces involved should be under his control performing an operation thoroughly familiar to him and his staff. 132/ Yet, while striving to gain

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

CONFIDENTIAL

TOP SECRET NOFORN

operational control of Navy, Marine and Army aviation elements, the Air Force was treating SAC as a "sister service".

Elements in the Air Force chain of command opposed MACV's position as controlling agency for out-of-country operations. For example, a 13th AF message to 2d Air Division states in part, "Continued controls exercised by MACV as effect unilateral AF missions is unacceptable and not in the best interest of the Air Force." 133/

Previously, PACAF had queried 13th Air Force, "Do you launch SAR CAP and SAR support strikes in Laos in our (i.e. CINCPACAF) authority or does MACV authority have to be obtained?" Thirteenth Air Force said that the problem was "whether unified-sub-unified command channels or unified-component command channels apply." Thirteenth Air Force told General Moore that it had advised PACAF that, "(A) SAR support, CAP or strikes, is launched on your directive as 2d Air Division Commander, and not as ACC for MACV. (B) You undoubtedly notify Vientiane but do not hold up actions pending approval." 134/

When 2d Air Division tried to launch a strike against the gun positions which shot down the two aircraft in November, it was discovered that MACV did have something to say about this, and approval for the strike was not given.

In a message on 19 February 1965, CINCPACAF said: 135/

[REDACTED]

"...(1) Some progress has been made in obtaining recognition that for maximum effectiveness USAF missions should be conducted under Flaming Dart procedures, whereby operational control remains CINCPACAF, rather than Barrel Roll/Yankee Team procedures under which operational control is exercised by subunified commander.

(2) Admiral Sharp has recently indicated agreement with General Harris that Flaming Dart or equivalent procedures provide for more effective operations.

(3) We are also gaining support from Ambassadors Martin and Sullivan for designating Udorn ASOC as operational focal point for execution and control of missions conducted in Laos.

(4) The progress mentioned above can be nurtured in every instance that we are able to conduct missions under other than Barrel Roll/Yankee Team procedures. Conversely, progress can be inhibited by directives which specifically prescribe missions as Barrel Roll or Yankee Team."

In March, the Commander 13th Air Force, writing to CINCPACAF,

said:

"...At present time the tactical commander (2AD) is restricted in his ability to exercise required flexibility of decision and actions essential to successful execution of missions assigned. Specifically are Yankee Team, Barrel Roll, Flaming Dart, and Rolling Thunder missions in which both planning and execution are rigidly controlled at the highest levels with compliance being the main concern of the operational commander. It is recognized that at present time this is the way of life. However, fluidity of the combat situation, the fleeting nature of targets and fast breaking intelligence provided by excellent sources in SEA dictates need for change..."

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

That change never came. In May 1965, after 364 days of Yankee Team operations, CINCPAC stated that he was the single controlling agency for Yankee Team.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

TOP SECRET NOFORN

YANKEE TEAM

Footnotes

- 1/ (S) Msg, AIRA Vientiane, Cite CX-124, 17 May 64.
- 2/ (S) Msg, AIRA Vientiane, Cite CX-129, 19 May 64.
- 3/ (S) Interview, Colonel R. L. Tyrell, USAIRA US Embassy, Laos, 16 Apr 65.
- 4/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to TG 77.4, 180057Z May 64.
- 5/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 181742Z May 64.
- 6/ (TS) Msg, MACV to CINCPAC, 201147Z May 64.
- 7/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to MACV, 222305Z May 64.
- 8/ (S) Msg, AMEMBASSY Vientiane to SECSTATE, DEPTTEL 1080, Flash 1441, 27 May 64.
- 9/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 251740Z May 64.
- 10/ Ibid.
- 11/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to MACV, 260836Z May 64.
- 12/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to TG 77.4, 281012Z May 64.
- 13/ (S) Interview, Colonel R. L. Tyrell, USAIRA, US Embassy Laos, 16 Apr 65.
- 14/ (TS) Msg, SECSTATE to JCS, 041110Z June 64.
- 15/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 052218Z June 64.
- 16/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 060632Z June 64.
- 17/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 6706, 072022Z June 64.
- 18/ (TS) Msg, 1 ASOC to CINCPAC, 0621F, 090715Z June 64.
- 19/ (TS) CINCPACFLT to CTG 77.6, 080048Z June 64.
- 20/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CTG 77.6, 081638Z June 64.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 21/ (S) Msg, 13AF to PACAF, ODX 0384, 161158Z June 64.
- 22/ (S) Msg, PACAF to 13AF, PFCVC 444, 120230Z June 64.
- 23/ (S) Msg, AMEMBASSY Vientiane to 2AD, No. 482, 15 June 64.
- 24/ (S) Msg, PACAF to 13AF, PF1WA 5015, 202053Z June 64.
- 25/ (S) Report of Staff Visit, Lt Colonel W. Whisner acting Director of Operations, 2AD to Major General Moore, 22 June 64.
- 26/ Ibid.
- 27/ Ibid.
- 28/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to USAIRA Vientiane, 120808Z June 64.
- 29/ (S) Report of Staff Visit, Lt Colonel W. Whisner, Acting Director of Operations, 2AD to Major General Moore, 22 June 64.
- 30/ (S) Msg, 2AD to 13AF, 200352Z June 64.
- 31/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 161904Z June 64.
- 32/ (TS) Msg, CTG 77.6 to CINCPAC, 181250Z June 64.
- 33/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CTG 77.6, 182228Z June 64.
- 34/ (S) Msg, 20DC to 33 TFW, 667-64, 18 June 64.
- 35/ (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CTG 77.6, 200334Z June 64.
- 36/ (TS) Msg, PACAF to 2AD, 202345Z June 64.
- 37/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 20DC-678, 22 June 64.
- 38/ (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CTG 77.6, 260231Z June 64.
- 39/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 301559Z June 64.
- 40/ (TS) Yankee Team Command Post Procedures File.
- 41/ (TS) Yankee Team Command Post Submission to Unit History, 1 August 64.
- 42/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 20DC-729-64, 4 July 64.

- CONFIDENTIAL
- [REDACTED]
- 43/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to MACV, 042119Z July 64.
  - 44/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to MACV, 080009Z July 64. ✓
  - 45/ Ibid.
  - 46/ (S) Memo for Record, Major General Moore, 9 July 64.
  - 47/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to 2AD, 100005 July 64.
  - 48/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 20DC 788-64, 23 July 64.
  - 49/ (S) Memo, 21DC to MACV J-2, 25 July 64.
  - 50/ (TS) Msg, PACAF to CINCPAC, PFODC 64-TS-209, 250520Z July 64.
  - 51/ (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 290359Z July 64.
  - 52/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to PACAF, 111947Z Aug 64.
  - 53/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to 2AD, 210101Z Aug 64.
  - 54/ (S) Memo, Lt Colonel Scott to Major General Moore, Subject, "New Yankee Team Concept", 20 Aug 64.
  - 55/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 210102Z Aug 64.
  - 56/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 13AF, PFDOP 3114, 301354Z Aug 64.
  - 57/ (TS) Msg, 13AF to 2AD, 13CCR 18703, 21 Aug 64.
  - 58/ (TS) Msg 2AD to PACAF, 2CCR 64-TS-221, 250132Z Sept 64.
  - 59/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to COMUSMACV, 20DC - 64 - TS, 222564Z Sept 64.
  - 60/ (S) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, Limdis, 010010Z Oct 64.
  - 61/ (TS) Msg, AMEMB Vientiane to CINCPAC, 021124Z Oct 64.
  - 62/ (TS) Report, Special Assistance Inspection of AF Operations, SE Asia, PACAF Inspector General, 2 Oct 64.
  - 63/ (TS) Telecon, AMEMB Vientiane to SECSTATE, EMBTEL 441, 051420Z Oct 64.
  - 64/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to PACAF, 140834Z Oct 64.
  - 65/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to PACAF, 140407Z Oct 64.

- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
- 66/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to COMUSMACV, 20DC-64-2498, 200945Z Oct 64.
  - 67/ (S) Msg, 2AD to CINCPACAF, 20DOS , 200222Z Oct 64.
  - 68/ (S) Msg, 2AD to 13AF, 20DOT, 22 Oct 64.
  - 69/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 2AD, 240055Z Oct 64.
  - 70/ (S) Msg, 2AD to AFRES Takhli and Tan Son Nhut, 2MOC00 477, 30 Oct 64.
  - 71/ (S) Msg, USAIRA Vientiane to 2AD, Cite CX-912, 010435Z Nov 64.
  - 72/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MAC J-2 13338, 060900Z Nov 64.
  - 73/ (S) Msg, USAIRA, Vientiane to 2AD, Cite CX-941, 080730Z Nov 64.
  - 74/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to MACV, 120030Z Nov 64.
  - 75/ (S) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 140453Z Nov 64.
  - 76/ (S) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MACJ-2 401 4081, 150655Z Nov 64.
  - 77/ (S) Msg, 13AF to SMAMA, (DTG Unavailable) Nov 64.
  - 78/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to CSAF, PFDOP 45072, 201333Z Nov 64.
  - 79/ (S) Msg, CINCPACFLT to COMSEVFLT, 200218Z Nov 64.
  - 80/ (S) Msg, USAIRA Vientiane to 2AD, Cite CX-1023, 240358Z Nov 64.
  - 81/ (S) Msg, PACAF to 2AD, PFDOP 03149, 250123Z Nov 64.
  - 82/ (TS) Msg, 5AF to CINCPACAF, 50DC 42886, 250430Z Nov 64.
  - 83/ (S) Msg, USAIRA Vientiane to 2AD, 270810Z Nov 64.
  - 84/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to 405 TFW, Clark AB, 20DC-CP-64-TS-2995, 011210Z Dec 64.
  - 85/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to 2AD, MACJ-31 15622, 040240Z Dec 64.
  - 86/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to MACV, 2 OCT-OA-64-TS-3007, 8 Dec 64.
  - 87/ (S) Msg, SAC to CSAF, DOOTOT 09189, 102242Z Dec 64.
  - 88/ (S) Msg, 13AF to 2AD, 150857Z Dec 64.

- CONFIDENTIAL
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- 89/ (S) Ltr, MACV to CINCPAC, Subject: "Reconnaissance North of 20 Degrees in Laos," serial 00591, 16 Dec 64.
- 90/ (S) Ltr, 2AD to MACV, Subject: "Reconnaissance in North Laos", 21DC, 28 Nov 64.
- 91/ (S) Msg, USAIRA Vientiane to MACV, Cite CX-941, 080730Z Nov 64.
- 92/ (S) Msg, AMEMB Vientiane to MACV, 011128Z Oct 64.
- 93/ (S) MACV Historical Report, 30 Jan (64) 1965?
- 94/ (S) Msg, SAC to 2AD, DO 00018, 04-2312Z Jan 65.
- 95/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 5AF, DOP 50023, 170030Z Jan 65.
- 96/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 5AF, VC 00082, 200019Z Jan 64.
- 97/ (TS) Msg, CINCPACAF to 5AF, VC 50017, 200725Z Jan 65.
- 98/ (S) Msg, USAIRA Bangkok to 13AF, Cite C-056, Jan 65.
- 99/ (S) Msg, 13AF to 2AD, 13ODX 02050, 300444Z Jan 65.
- 100/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 030300Z Feb 65.
- 101/ (TS) Msg, AMEMB Vientiane to SECSTATE, 051129 Feb 65.
- 102/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to AMEMB Vientiane, MACJ-31 3083, 102238Z Feb 65.
- 103/ (TS) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 2CCR-65-TS-1299, 110748Z Feb 65.
- 104/ (TS) Msg, Det 1, 33 TG to 5AF, 45 RTS-TS-65-1677, 190208Z Feb 65.
- 105/ (S) Mission Report, Mission 14065, 19 Feb 65.
- 106/ (S) Msg, 3AD to 2AD, Zippo 03-100, no date.
- 107/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 5AF, VC 00234, 031952Z Mar 65.
- 108/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 030153Z Apr 65.
- 109/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MACJ-31 11544, 100550Z Apr 65.
- 110/ (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 141744Z Apr 65.
- 111/ Ibid.

- [REDACTED]
- 112/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to 2AD, 310302Z Feb 65.
- 113/ (S) Msg, Det 3, 18TFW Korat to 2AD, 160715Z Jan 65.
- 114/ (S) Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MACJ-31 0766, 090849 Jan 65.
- 115/ (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 003748, 140035Z Jan 65.
- 116/ (S) Frag Order, 2AD, YT 00137, 16 Jan 65.
- 117/ (S) Msg CINCPAC to CINCPACAF, no dtg, 15 Jan 65 (2AD MC No. 1-15-616).
- 118/ (C) OP-3 Report, 2ADYT 00150, 170635Z Jan 65.
- 119/ (S) OP-4 Report, 2ADYT 00152, 170915Z Jan 65.
- 120/ (S) OP-4 Report, 2ADYT 00153, 170915Z Jan 65.
- 121/ (S) OP-5 Report, 2ADYT 00155, undated.
- 122/ (S) 13RTS 00134, 18 Jan 65.
- 123/ (TS) Msg, AMEMB Vientiane to SECSTATE DEPT 1347, 250209Z Feb 65.
- 124/ Ibid.
- 125/ (S) Msg, 13AF to CINCPACAF, 130DC 05541, 031725 Mar 65.
- 126/ (S) Msg, 2AD to 13AF, 20DC 00375, 26 Jan 65.
- 127/ (S) Msg, 333 ABS to 80 TFS Korat, PASEP of 2AD, 20DC-CP-00474, 202200Z Nov 64.
- 128/ (TS) Msg, COMUSMACV to AMEMB Vietiane, MACJ-31 3083, 062238Z Feb 65.
- 129/ (S) Msg, 2AD to PACAF, 2ADYT 00485, 23 Nov 65.
- 130/ (TS) Interview, Colonel R. L. Tyrell, USAIRA US Embassy, Laos, 16 Apr 65.
- 131/ (S) Msg, CINCPACAF to 13AF, PFDOP 45073, 232046Z Nov 65.
- 132/ (S) Msg, 2AD to 13AF, 20DC 00352, 27 Oct 64.
- 133/ (C) (AF EYES ONLY) Msg, 13AF to 2AD 13CCR 01483, 230341Z Jan 65.
- 134/ (S) Telecon, 13AF CC to 2AD, No. 140, 181002Z Nov 64.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~

- 135/ (TS) (LIMDIS) (Special Action/AF EYES ONLY) Msg, CINCPACAF to CSAF, DOP 50093, 190450Z Feb 65.
- 136/ (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 220135Z Sept 65.
- 137/ Ibid.
- 138/ Ibid.
- 139/ Ibid.

~~TOP SECRET NOFORN~~