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TRANSCRIPT OF NOTES TAKEN AT DEBRIEFING AT SOF

HEADQUARTERS, EGLIN AFB, FLORIDA, 30 November 1970

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's take it, going back to our old "building block concept," since we are now at the top of the structure. Let's see how well we can recall what went on the last couple of days over there. I think that for the most benefit, we ought to pick it up with the deployment and take it from Eglin into Takhli, pick up our briefing scheduled there, briefings that we had and move it right into the mission.

We will take the flights by weapon system up until join-up and then take it into the objective areas of formation and bring it back out again individually.

The group that left first was the advance party. We went to PACOM, Headquarters 7AF, Headquarters 7AF/13AF, DaNang, Cam Rahn Bay, Utapao, Korat, Udorn, NKP, and Takhli to make all the necessary arrangements. The lead time that we had in the theater was just barely adequate. For those of you that are not too familiar with what went on, there were four of us really in theater -- Colonel Frisbie, Lt Colonels Ropka and Willett, and myself -- who handled the Air Force end of it and Captain Campbell and Commander Hershey were over there handling the Navy end of it. There was no message traffic and no telephone used in setting up our operation over there. This raised a real problem -- everything was face to face. Those of you who were over there on your own without an airplane can appreciate the problem in getting around, trying to set something up on the tight schedule we had and depending on the airlines in Thailand and whatever they call that operation in South Vietnam, but whatever name they give, it is something else. We spent more time in passenger terminals waiting for airplanes that we did in coordinating our mission.

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I think the key facts that might be brought out here, at one time during the early planning, we had recommended a C-130 be kept with this force we had here when we started training, throughout the operation, with the thought in mind that with the spare crew members we had, we could keep that bird running in Southeast Asia and use it for transportation to get around. I think this should be made as a key point here; that this should have been the way to go. Unless you have dedicated airlift at your disposal in Southeast Asia, you spend more time waiting than you do getting around.

Colonel Frisbie, would you give your comments on your excursion into Okinawa?

COLONEL FRISBIE: I would rather give you a written report.

LT COL KRALJEV: All right. Captain Campbell, how about you? Do you have anything you care to comment on at this point or any problems you had, or do you want to include that in your written report?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: No, I don't think I have anything that would be of benefit to the entire group. It went pretty well as we planned except it was greatly compressed because as soon as we got over there Admiral Bardshar was running the Navy show and briefing the other Admirals.

(Went off the record per Lt Col Kraljev)

LT COL KRALJEV: Colonel Willett is there anything you could point out about the pre-deployment that took place?

LT COL WILLETT: Our schedule was too ambitious. I went to 22 locations from the time I left on the 30th. We have got to have airlift or transportation of some kind. If it weren't for Lt Col Ropka getting airlift for me, I don't think I'd have gotten around.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: A lot of ours was just sheer luck; it worked out beautifully by sheer luck.

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LT COL WILLETT: People would normally require permission to get crypto gear but they gave it to us when we wanted it; we had nothing but outstanding coordination received.

LT COL KRALJEV: The fact that we did get to where we wanted to go was because we went to the Air Rescue people and they got a C-130 tanker in here and picked us up and some of them got off on schedule; the transportation that we did get, we got by hook and crook rather than taking advantage of the schedules that were non-existent or too far in the future.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: A lot of ours was given by Vice Admiral Bardshar.

LT COL WILLETT: I would make one point - in a thing as complicated as this, General Manor surprised me at the end by the way he wanted Monkey Mountain reorganized and it was almost impossible communication-wise. Everything has got to be in more detail, a little earlier to give us exactly what he is looking for.

LT COL KRALJEV: I think this goes with experience. If General Manor ran another one of these, I am sure we would know ahead of time. I think a lot of it he learned as we went along, the same as we did. When we wanted to thank Colonel Anderson, Wing Commander at Takhli, he said, "You know, if you had given us better notice, we could have done a better job for you." If we had desired compromised security we would have given advance notice.

I think the best way to break it down from the aircrew standpoint is to work from the bases - Takhli, Nakhon Phanom and Udorn. Let's start with Nakhon Phanom. Major Rhein, how did you find the support you received when you arrived there?

~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR RHEIN: It was highly satisfactory, sir. They couldn't do enough for us. Captain Faggard, who was there, did an outstanding job as maintenance officer although he is not a maintenance officer. We are planning on writing an LOE on him. I believe he deserves quite a bit of credit. The aircraft were not loaded exactly as we had planned when we arrived over there that evening. However, it was fairly minor.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was this as a result of the wiring problem on those particular aircraft or communication?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir. For some reason or another, which we never quite determined, they had substituted some LAU-59s for MARK-47s on three of the birds.

LT COL KRALJEV: All three of the birds?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you ever find out what the lash-up was?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir, I never did because I didn't find out about it until I was in the cockpit and, of course, we never got back to Nakhon Phanom. Possibly one of the other pilots knows the answer. Any A-1's know? (No answer) It was on number 2, number 4, and number 5, I believe, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: It was different than what was on the piece of paper you gave them?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did it impose any problems?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir. The other variation did. We had tracer ammo rather than the non-tracer that we requested, which got my attention the first time we fired it.

LT COL KRALJEV: It wasn't all tracer, was it?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir, it was 2 and 3.

~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL KRALJEV: Rather than 4 and 1?

MAJOR RHEIN: Two and 3. It should have been HEI (High Explosive Incendiary) and HE (High Explosive) and we ended up with APT (Armor Piercing Tracer) and HEI (High Explosive Incendiary).

LT COL KRALJEV: Aside from getting your attention, did it degrade your mission capability any?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: I think we got their standard load, wasn't it?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir. We didn't get the standard load. But the aircraft that were set up that way - two single stick birds were used at the last minute and this may have had something to do with the load.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about you, Don - Lt Col Britton?

LT COL BRITTON: Excellent.

LT COL KRALJEV: How did you find your equipment?

LT COL BRITTON: Excellent.

LT COL KRALJEV: No problem?

MAJOR KALEN: The H-3's had the most work to be done on them, and the work was outstanding.

LT COL KRALJEV: You say you found holes, where equipment was removed, you didn't expect to find?

LT COL ZEHNDER: That's what we could just as well have gone without.

LT COL KRALJEV: As far as Takhli was concerned, C-130 people, your support was provided entirely by your own doing through your own maintenance people. As far as Takhli as a base is concerned, the support we received there was adequate. After considerable urging and a few misgivings, we finally received all the support that we needed. I think that had it not been for the local OSI establishment and the personal

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contact that we had with that establishment, we would have been in serious trouble. All of our physical support that we received in terms of furniture and supplies and what-have-you came from the OSI rather than from the Air Force Base.

LT COL BRITTON: It would seem like a base that has just been vacated would have briefing rooms better than what we had.

LT COL KRALJEV: O. K., let's start with the largest, the base theater - totally insecure. The largest formal briefing room was the wing briefing room where the wing, when it was active, the F-105's used to brief - seating capacity of 60 seats with aisle space very similar to the briefing facility we used for the joint briefing in the compound. The building at the time was occupied by the Wing Commander, the Vice Commander, and perhaps the DO and the admin shop. The local Thais were already in the building, replacing plaster, plugging up holes where plaques had been and in a quick description, very insecure. We thought that from a security standpoint to keep all of our aircrews in hand, use of that building was not in the best interests. Further, I think you appreciate the fact that an electronic sweep or whatever we used was essential and we had no way of sweeping that building and then protecting it. Building 103 we used was swept and under guard from then on so we knew we had security there. As far as the briefing room in the compound, the Army had that pretty well tied up. That would have been our choice, had we had exclusive use of it. We ended up tearing the wall out in Building 103 and using that and living with that air conditioning equipment.

LT COL BRITTON: I think we lost something in the briefing; particularly the guys in back, they couldn't hear half of it, and the guys by the air conditioning couldn't hear at all.

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LT COL KRALJEV: I think it was taking the lesser of the evils available to us. O. K. So much for the pre-deployment actions and arrangements that were made.

I understand when we got to Takhli we had two ground power units marked Det 2, 1SOWg.

MAJOR MOSLEY: That is true, it was unloaded by a Thai. Ground power units being taken to theater were stenciled with Detachment 2, 1st Special Operations Wing, thereby making it obvious to any individual that they were, in fact, from the ConUS.

MAJOR SKEELS: I happened to sit right next to one of those machines the whole trip and it did say, Det 2, 1SOWg, but it did say DaNang, South Vietnam.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's back track to the States, the C-130 deployment. I think we have beat to death the enroute support you were expecting and did not get. We have your written statements on that. Was the time given to prepare for deployment and get you over there enough time to be ready for the mission?

LT COL BLOSCH: I think it was ample.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Adequate.

LT COL BLOSCH: We had one delay at Norton, a fire indication, which put us three hours behind, and we made it up at Wake Island.

LT COL KRALJEV: That was on 558?

LT COL BLOSCH: 558.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the helicopters?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: Would it be too much trouble to deploy the two C-130's 12 hours or 8 hours apart instead of ten minutes apart?

LT COL KRALJEV: The reason for that was the maintenance support. Neither aircraft was self-sufficient. You had spares on each

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airplane. You had the engine on one airplane. If you would have difficulty you would have had to just sit and wait 24 hours, perhaps, and take your chances. If the spares you need are on the other airplane you will have to wait for them. If you leave 24 hours early and you have got what the guy behind you needs, you are in trouble. So from that standpoint, it is best to have the birds together.

CAPTAIN STILES: Someone mentioned enroute security.

LT COL BLOSCH: We were traveling under another name at that time.

LT COL KRALJEV: They always travel in pairs. The helicopter crew members that were sent out there three days ahead of the rest; can you explain Britt, why they were sent the way they were? Pretty significant is the fact that we got the aircrew there and intelligence was back here.

LT COL BRITTON: The reason those particular people went out first was because you had six seats available. It just so happened we had six aircrew TDY here so six equals six. It was just as logical to pick those six as anyone else.

LT COL KRALJEV: If you discount the fact that the first three of those six should have been filled by intelligence people, then I can buy it.

LT COL BRITTON: I was told to fill six seats.

LT COL KRALJEV: We understand this is not your problem. But I do want to make it a matter of record, we had six helicopter pilots and no intelligence. In the meantime, we had brought in the WILD WEASEL and MIG CAP intelligence people, and off came the helicopter folks. So, I understand you were given six seats to fill. My next question is addressed to Major Peshkin. Captain Jacobs is not here. Major Macomber, do you have a feel for what went on when that decision was made?

~~John Kennedy~~
MAJOR MACOMBER: No, Captain Jacobs was asked to stay to provide intelligence support for the people who remained, which was their plan.

LT COL KRALJEV: What kind of intelligence support was he to provide?

MAJOR MACOMBER: The normal up-date, continuing supervision; that's all I know about it.

LT BRINSON: They asked Captain Jacobs to stay here.

LT COL KRALJEV: Who is "they"?

LT BRINSON: I believe Colonel Britton asked him to stay here to go over the plan and help them study the last three days while they were waiting to go over. He asked Major Peshkin if he could stay. We did not know he had the O. K. until we got over there. We didn't know he was going to stay. I was the only intelligence officer there.

LT COL KRALJEV: We had the expert on the ground order of the battle and the ground troops were back here and it kind of left us in a bind, unable to provide any sort of intelligence information to the intelligence people in the theatre. Captain Knops, what stalled you out since you didn't arrive at Takhli on schedule?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: Well, the basic problem with MAC contract. They had a flight for Lt Col Kennedy and me; when we went down to confirm the flight on the 14th they said the flight was now leaving on the 19th - sorry about that. We said we have got to get out and they said we'll write you both TRs; the first available was Pan Am to Saigon.

LT COL ROPKA: What date was that?

LT COL KRALJEV: This was a real critical item over there. When we were at 7th Air Force there was intelligence material there that should have been made available to us immediately. We didn't have enough

~~TOP SECRET~~
intelligence to ask what this intelligence was. We had to by-pass 7th when we went through there. When we got the people from Udorn and Korat they pointed out to us certain information that was available in their headquarters, and we said please get it, and they went back to their units and had data put together and forwarded to us. There are certain daily up-dates that come out that are available in theatre and the C-130 people should have had these immediately on arrival and the intelligence people that we brought in came with empty hands. So, I think this should be included, Captain Jacobs, for whoever does the after action. That should be included in there as a lesson learned -- to be sure that we have the key intelligence people deployed as soon as the advanced element goes over.

LT BRINSON: How long were you there before we got there?

LT COL KRALJEV: About two days.

LT BRINSON: Because I got there and then the next day they got their material.

LT COL ROPKA: We would have liked to have started two days earlier with them. I told them not to remain because we did not have the intelligence support to provide them. Otherwise, we could have worked two additional days with them from the intelligence picture.

LT COL KRALJEV: We had the lead man from the Weasels and the F-4's there on the 13th and we sent them back to come back on the 15th, knowing when Captain Jacobs would be in. That's when they came back, on the 15th. You had been there one day then.

MAJOR RHEIN: That 141, helicopter pilots and the A-1's all had troop seats and AGE equipment all down the aisle. You couldn't smoke which really isn't a big thing but I didn't feel that the conditioning for the aircrews was really appropriate -- troop seats and all that equipment.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Not being able to smoke is an irritant but breathing those noxious JP-4 fumes is more than just an irritant and it doesn't do much good to know that this didn't happen on the way back, but the point is well made and this was a breakdown in the MAC planning. Those systems should have been purged before they went over. We had a MAC load planner come in back in September or early October. We told him we would have people accompanying these loads and told them how many. Yet, the airplane showed up here with nothing but side canvas seats. Those of you -- if any of you did come back on the 141 that came, brought the same stuff back -- we insured that the airline seats up front were there for the number of passengers accompanying the cargo. I agree on the way over, it was very poor conditioning.

MAJOR GARGUS: We had Captain Mazurek who was a Det 2 mission planner and I don't believe we utilized his skill as it should have been.

LT COL KRALJEV: Who are you talking about?

MAJOR GARGUS: Captain Mazurek.

LT COL KRALJEV: He was involved in the mission planning at a late date. I was not aware of his job in the unit.

LT COL BRITTON: Captain Mazurek helped myself, when the WILD WEASELS and F-4's were there, and luckily, he gave me a hand.

LT COL KRALJEV: We used him over there when we found out about it; we did not use him back here. You run into another problem with using the aircrew in intelligence planning. I think that this became obvious to us over there, particularly in the intelligence fields when you get to the SI information you can't give the aircrew. To have used him as primary in intelligence officer there I don't think we should have.

I guess that has everybody over there. Any other general comments on your particular cattle car over?

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LT COL BRITTON: It seems like the Hurlburt departure on that C-141 was perhaps good in some ways but kind of bad in other ways. There was quite a delay on it. They were having a refueling problem; that was the first one Hurlburt had ever seen or hadn't seen one in a long time, and they couldn't get power units to match. I understand they had a problem with the fuel, getting enough out to the ramp to load the airplane.

LT COL KRALJEV: Security folks, how do you feel? Did we gain anything by running a C-141, the only one in a year, through Hurlburt? If we had to do it over again, would we still do it?

MAJOR NEWMAN: I was on that C-141 that went through Hurlburt. At the time of the night it left, it didn't cause too much concern at all. The only concern was matching up the power unit; there was a great deal of hustling around and they were very much interested in matching up the power unit, knowing where it came from; in chatting with the crews in flight and prior to departure, I saw no problem.

LT COL BRITTON: I think they finally had to go up to MAC Headquarters and get permission to run their ground power in the aircraft, to get the valves open and refuel; there was no power available for that type of aircraft, period.

LT COL KRALJEV: If that is the case, that is something that should be made a note of. I do know we got the information before we left, and Hurlburt Base Ops assured us, yes, they could do it -- whether they were aware of the problem, I don't know.

LT COL BRITTON: This is like two to five o'clock in the morning at Hurlburt and it is so unusual that the Lt Colonel Base Ops Officer is running in and out all the time we were over there.

MAJOR NEWMAN: From elicitation of both the crew members and everybody around the area that night, because I talked to practically everybody as I have always done, they were convinced this levy was some part of a mobility test because of the unusual fact that a C-141 was there to begin with. They seemed to buy the idea that we were doing a mobility with funds while funds were available.

LT COL KRALJEV: With respect to security in movement, at Takhli it is just as dark at 7 o'clock at night as 1 o'clock in the morning and you don't buy a bit more security keeping people up all night than you do if you got there right after supper.

MAJOR MACOMBER: I was assured Hurlburt could handle the C-141. The reason we staged out of there was because of the unusual load -- all people -- and the mix of the Army people, that's why we didn't want to stage out of Eglin or some place else. The trip over from [redacted] was a problem. I haven't talked to anyone who made the trip from [redacted] to Hurlburt.

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LT COL BRITTON: When we arrived they were all sitting there for two or three hours on the ramp.

MAJOR NEWMAN: Once again, the fact is we are not tied into [redacted] by the Ranger Camp; they thought these people were part of the ranger camp and the mobility airlift was typical of the things they would do.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Security was not blown and you can't argue the success. I think as long as it was successful we can't knock it.

LT COL BRITTON: Security was not a problem, but refueling was. I am going to brief General Catton Friday and he is going to ask me how come you were all delayed at Hurlburt.

MAJOR SKEELS: Mobility exercises are going on at Hurlburt regularly to the Canal Zone with the C-123's and so forth; if they thought it was a mobility exercise, if that would occur to them, there was no

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LT COL BRITTON: Was that in fact the only C-141 operated out of there?

MAJOR RHEIN: I doubt it.

LT COL KRALJEV: Base Ops told us it was not that uncommon that they would get an occasional C-141. Whether they refueled them or not is something else.

LT COL BRITTON: All it takes is a power unit transferred from Eglin over there prior to the planning.

CAPTAIN STILES: The landing at Takhli was based somewhat on the take-off time here and the time table was late enough so they could load the airplanes during darkness.

LT COL ZEHNDER: You mean we sat on that ramp over there just to make it late enough?

LT COL KRALJEV: I think we have made the point that better coordination when using a base that is unaccustomed to these big airplanes, better coordination is needed. That brings us up to getting everybody enroute and into Takhli. Let's start with the 130. You arrived at Takhli. You were met, I presume you had no problem from an enroute standpoint getting in. How about once you arrived? Were the quarters adequate? Was the coordination?

LT COL CLARK: I got three pillow cases and no sheet.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: There was some discussion on our arrival time at Takhli. The time we were given at Norton was daylight and in the middle of the afternoon; and the time that Major Peshkin gave us was daylight, some time after dark here. We were told it was straightened out at Kadena; of course, we got nothing at Kadena.

LT COL KRALJEV: We made the judgment there was no sense in bringing you in at night because the airplanes just like yourselves had

been operating there in the day time, sitting on the ramp all day created no sensation. Secondly, when the sun came up you were going to be there anyway, so it made no difference when you arrived. So, we decided to let you go fly a normal daylight flight in and make it easier on everybody. Do you feel you had adequate time in place then, as far as your airplanes were concerned and your crew conditioning? You probably had no crew conditioning problem of any importance, you took it a day at a time and pretty well conditioned enroute. Okay, how about the A-1's? How do you feel about the time you had in theatre between arrival and mission time?

MAJOR RHEIN: I think it was sufficient. You might add here that probably one of the reasons that the mission was a success was that we did have the hop to get over to NKP and fly the aircraft prior to the mission. Had we not, we might have had the incompatibility problem with the radios, with the ground and with other aircraft. I think in the future missions this should be brought in.

LT COL KRALJEV: That is a point well made.

LT COL BAILEY: This is a question we asked earlier and we should go over it together. We were misled in Washington.

LT COL KRALJEV: I don't recall the question ever being raised in Washington.

LT COL BAILEY: It was raised by myself, strongly.

MAJOR SQUIRES: We were told we would have nothing but A-1E's - had we had A-1E's, they would have been compatible.

LT COL BAILEY: No, we were told they were configured the same as they would be here in the States and they were compatible with the States.

LT COL KRALJEV: A-1E, is this correct? The problem arose around the fact that we did not have a number of the A-1E's and that model was compatible, right?

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MAJOR RHEIN: The problem was that they didn't have sufficient number of dual stick A-1E type aircraft at Nakhon Phanom and, therefore, four A-1G aircraft were substituted. The A-1G aircraft did not have an acceptable FM radio set. So, therefore, four single stick A-1E aircraft were utilized on the mission, substituting for the four A-1G's.

LT COL KRALJEV: The reason that the A-1E's in the proper configuration were not available was because that the 56SOWg was in the process of phasing out the A-1E in general. We on the Air Staff put a hold on further disposition of A-1E's without any consideration for what kind of radio they had in them. We in Ops on the air side of the house did not consider the possibility of incompatibility. This was not considered because of ignorance on our part. We did not know that this problem could exist, so the Wing was told to hold a given number of A-1E's, which they did, and where you got your source on the fact that there would be no problem on radios, you got from the Air Staff.

LT COL BAILEY: Lt Colonel Larry Ropka and Major Dick Peshkin, I don't think we have got to look that dumb. What are we writing it for? You are writing it so someone else will know, in fact, these details, and I think we didn't get specific enough and that is the lesson learned.

LT COL KRALJEV: We probably said "radios" rather than specific type of radio. Lt Col Britton, from the helicopter standpoint -- the time you had conditioning of your crews?

LT COL BRITTON: I would say that it was minimum. I don't think we could have used any less time from the time we arrived at Takhli. By this, I mean for everything, readjusting, the hour difference and the briefings that were required, the flight plan and so on.

MAJOR MURPHY: You are referring to the second group; as a matter of fact, I'm talking about the larger group rather than the first group sent in with the A-1's.

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LT COL BRITTON: That was completely adequate.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's move into the briefing schedule we had set up for you. Think in terms of the schedule, the hours of the day, and adequacy of the briefings. Take it by type of airplane. C-130 - Lt Colonel Blosch, Major Franklin.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Slightly crowded at times; otherwise adequate.

LT COL BLOSCH: Crowded, in the sense of people, not in time.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: No place to work, no desk, for my navigators and pilots to make charts, update charts. I think that was the only inadequacy.

LT COL KRALJEV: You are discussing the physical facilities that were inadequate. Did the fact that we leaned on your airplanes for some intra-theater airlift hurt in anyway.

LT COL BLOSCH: Only minor, very little.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: The only time -- the reason it did hurt is because we compressed it at the end. Had we not had the airlift, had we gone on the day that was scheduled, it wouldn't have hurt as much but there was some last minute work that was going a little quicker than planned.

LT COL KRALJEV: By virtue of moving up 24 hours.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL ROPKA: May I ask a question? Are the C-130 crews and other crews confident that they did as much as they could do in the States by preparing maps, charts, and paperwork as they would have done or could have done?

LT COL BLOSCH: I believe so.

MAJOR GARGUS: We had to hold a portion of our flight, a portion of the route, pending later intelligence.

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LT COL ROPKA: Let the record show there was considerable work done in the States before you got there.

MAJOR KORNITZER: The tanker crews, we started from scratch. We had never seen the route; we had to come in with a lot of procedures; we had to make up everything from scratch.

LT COL ROPKA: Were you rushed to accomplish that?

MAJOR KORNITZER: We had it done, but we had to coordinate with Lt Col Britton and Major Franklin, and what we were going to do with the weather and everything. When we got there, those two crews showed up and we immediately started talking.

LT COL KRALJEV: I think it is pertinent we got those tanker crews in a day earlier than scheduled. If you had had just the scheduled time, you would have been in trouble.

MAJOR GARGUS: I would like to add something to this. We did have a complete tanker route and or bit points planned before we left here and everything stayed as it was. Unfortunately, the crews were from over there, so they didn't see it until they got there so when they started from scratch, they took their maps and their forms and they plotted their own.

MAJOR KORNITZER: We had to come up with a lot of procedures, blind jack procedures used in the States, we never even discussed here. I thought there was going to be two tankers over there, because we worked with the ramp open so we could give the 130E some light and it made it rougher for the helicopter pilot to refuel, so we had some minor details.

LT COL KRALJEV: Major Kornitzer when were you read in on the problem?

LT COL BRITTON: He was read in on it the day after a group of pilots were read in; he was not available.

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LT COL KRALJEV: That was about the 29th or 30th of October, then, wasn't it? Do you think it would have been beneficial had you been read in earlier?

MAJOR KORNITZER: No, we didn't have the two tankers here so it really didn't matter.

LT COL KRALJEV: What you really needed, then, was more time in theatre?

MAJOR KORNITZER: Just a little bit.

LT COL KRALJEV: A-1's? Captain Jones?

CAPTAIN JONES: I don't think the mission troops on the C-130 were given enough objective briefing. They got the overall picture one day in the briefing, but as far as the definite area they were going to, the features, the inhabitants -- I think they should have been given a more complete briefing. I know the helicopter crews were much more familiar with the area where we were going.

MAJOR MAZUREK: Along with that, sir, there were no maps for the enlisted men. The only E&E maps we had were the navigator charts.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let me explain to you what happened on that. We asked for 75 E&E maps and blood chits. We got three envelopes marked 25 each from Colonel Ropka and I assumed that what was in the envelopes were blood chits and maps. It turned out it was only blood chits. At the same time, the Army came to me and asked for E&E maps and blood chits for every one of their troops. We sent them up. This was in the afternoon of the day that the mission was going to go, when I discovered that I didn't have enough maps to go around for all the helicopters. By this time we had already given a map to each Army troop so the only thing at that point we could have done was to have called back the ones from the Army; there was no need for each Army troop to have his own

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E&E map because they would never be alone. They, on the other hand, can be spread out and should have their own. We called to Udorn and got additional maps and we folded them up that night and counted them and handcarried them out to the helicopters so each crew member on the helicopter had one. There was just no way to get them back to the C-130. I understand we thought we had them and the envelopes were only blood chits. Agreed, it was an operations error. We should have had them. We learned at the last minute we didn't have them and there was nothing we could do to get them to you, but I think every other individual other than the C-130 aircrews had individual E&E maps along with the blood chits.

LT COL KRALJEV: A-1's?

MAJOR RHEIN: Other than the briefing already being crowded, there was no problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the content of the briefing? Were they adequate?

MAJOR RHEIN: I thought that there was an awful lot of repetition that we had already gotten before. I thought some of the briefings could have been cut down a little, or eliminated.

LT COL ROPKA: That was recognized but it was by design. We did have new folks there and we had to subject you to the same old stuff; you had been here for weeks, but the F-4's and the WILD WEASEL and other people just recently read into the problem; it was important that they hear it and we had no facility to segregate or control who got what, so it was considered the lesser of the evils to go through it all again and again.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's put it this way - they were going to get the same thing again for whatever reason.

LT COL ROPKA: How about the E&E briefing presented by the civilian gentleman, George Morton. Is it of any value?

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MAJOR RHEIN: I didn't get an awful lot out of it, Lt Col Ropka, and some of the information he gave I recognized as being wrong at the time. When we had contact with him about six or seven months ago over there, he wasn't too well informed then and he hasn't improved too much since then.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: His so called E&E briefing seemed more like a local familiarization than -- it really wasn't detailed enough for what a downed aircrew needed in that area.

LT COL BAILEY: I think you will get some feed-back from the Army. We weren't too happy with it. He probably gave us what he had but he didn't have what we needed.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let the record show that the E&E briefing was considered inadequate from an aircrew standpoint.

MAJOR SQUIRES: If it ever happened like that again, get one of the helicopter pilots that belongs to the company that operates out there, because those guys know the whole set-up; they know where people are every day.

LT COL KRALJEV: Or perhaps the Jolly Green people out of Nakhon Phanom.

LT COL BAILEY: When I was sitting in the Mess Hall with Mr. Morton and he didn't really know what type of briefing we wanted, or that he was going to give a briefing until the last minute, so I think that our communications failed, in getting the word to him, what we needed and what time. That was his comment. He said, "I got the word; I gathered the stuff up and hopped in an airplane." That isn't the way to give a briefing.

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LT COL ROPKA: They had no insight into the requirement, although it had been levied on the chief of station, Cass, Vientiane, the requirement had not been passed on to the working people until four days prior to the presentation of that briefing, so they were concerned about what to give. They did feel that we were, perhaps, expecting more than they could provide. Historically, they have had quite a number of friendlies up there and have had procedures for contacting and exploiting these friendlies. That is not the situation now. They were concerned, as were we, about their ability to provide specifics in terms of what to do and how to do it. They preferred not to get into an E&E lecture as to what is edible and not edible and long term survival. They did not feel that that was our expectation or our role. If that was the sort of thing that was lacking, we at Ops Staff are remiss in not presenting that either here or there.

LT COL BAILEY: That isn't what we had in mind.

CAPTAIN KENDER: How do you recognize a "Meo" if you had to contact one? I think when we left the briefing they felt they didn't know what a "Meo" looked like and how they dressed.

LT COL ROPKA: That was one of the key points they were tasked to provide.

LT COL BAILEY: He said "Meos" wear black, and one slide -- in this length of time we should have a slide of a Meo tribesman, it would have fixed it in their minds as to what to look for, but saying black pants or black skirt doesn't get it.

LT COL KRALJEV: What about the SAR? The briefing given by Lt Col Wells from the Rescue Center at Udorn; the real fast talking gentleman. Any comments on that?

CAPTAIN KENDER: Yes, sir, I was not impressed at all.

CAPTAIN MAZUREK: It sounded mere like an impression of his empire than anything else.

LT COL BRITTON: We got more things that they would not do than they would do and I failed to get very much from his briefing.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the helicopter folks? Can you give us an evaluation of that?

LT COL BRITTON: It was hardly necessary for the helicopter people. They have flown there and worked over there. They knew exactly what to do and expect. They pointed out the limitations for a night SAR mission and you couldn't really expect too much at night. But, it worked out pretty much like he briefed, I thought.

LT COL BAILEY: He did say over and over again, he said, "We have got these aircraft to pick up," and I think he kind of got the feeling that he made the men feel good. I got a good feeling when he started talking about "this is what we got going for you."

MAJOR GRIMES: He came back to us later and changed the approach quite a bit.

LT COL BAILEY: I think somebody must have talked to him. He came on with a negative aspect.

LT COL KRALJEV: He got considerable guidance from lots of people after he gave the Air Force briefing.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: We were still scrambling about two hours before mission what the code words were. Some of our men were not familiar with the new radios and there was a scramble to get them checked out.

LT COL KRALJEV: With respect to the code words, we got them in a message.

LT COL BAILEY: The Army never got them.

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LT COL KRALJEV: When he was there to brief he was unable to give us any code words. He went back and we asked him to send us a message immediately. The Air Force got it and coded it out to make the appropriate letters. This information never got to the Army.

LT COL BAILEY: No, we didn't get it but we did give him our list of people and their code names and numbers, so I don't think there would have been an operational problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's move on to the dispersal. Who went out first? The HH-3 and the A-1 crews? How did the time of the arrival of the availability of the C-130 and the flight up to Udorn? Any problems there from the helicopter standpoint?

LT COL BRITTON: There was no problem except one minor one. We landed, taxied back up to the building and we stopped and the 130 people got out and this guy shut all the engines down. I got with the loadmaster and told him to tell the pilot we wanted to go on down and it took some time to get that message to the pilot.

LT COL ROPKA: Apparently the pilot was not adequately briefed at Takhli. We had visions of that thing not starting again.

LT COL BRITTON: Also, this is something that may or may not be important, but right beside the ramp where we were, there were a whole bunch of Thai people looking in on us.

MAJOR SQUIRES: Fixing taxiway lights.

LT COL BRITTON: They stopped whatever they were doing and wondered what we were all doing there and other than that when we got to the airplane everything went great.

LT COL KRALJEV: The C-130 airlift people I personally briefed at Utapao when the mission was laid on and they were told they would all be passenger configured and engine running at off-load. Then I am sure

Major Peshkin, who was responsible for briefing the particular air-crew, I am sure he reiterated so why he shut down at the first stop, I don't know.

LT COL BRITTON: He shut them all down, and I am sure that like I say, Major Peshkin briefed him correctly because he briefed us as to how it would go. We had charts drawn, air field diagrams, and the whole nine yards.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the tanker people? He shut down in your line?

LT COL BRITTON: He taxied a little bit and I didn't know what he was doing.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about up to NKP?

MAJOR RHEIN: No problems, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: I guess we'll get Army inputs from the troop carrying bird. Let's take it by launch. Start with the first launch. Cherry 02. Speak to me about the delay. Fourteen minutes late.

LT COL BLOSCH: Number 1 compass was not in, it failed. I taxied back in and got it to work. We started tightening up connections and worked some, did a 180 and went back out and everything was working all right.

LT COL KRALJEV: What would have happened had you not been able to hit the right box or get the right relay to get that number 1 compass? Could you have gone with number 2?

LT COL BLOSCH: We had about 25 minutes we could go down and catch up. If we couldn't get the compass going, we would have gone on number 2 and hoped.

LT COL KRALJEV: What would the loss of number 1 have cost us?

LT COL BLOSCH: Double time on the navigator; he would have had to work with just one compass.

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LT COL KRALJEV: We wouldn't have lost any accuracy? We would have lost redundancy?

MAJOR GARGUS: That's right.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherry 01. Speak to me about number 3 -- let's back track a minute, you started off, Lt Col Blosch, ten minutes before take-off time. It seems I got word you were late starting. Did you have a problem in starting when you were ready to start? Was there a delay or anything that you know of? What was your engine time in relation to take-off? How far ahead of time did you start engines, how far ahead of take-off?

LT COL BLOSCH: Fifteen minutes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Peshkin gave me ten. I don't know whether he was confused

LT COL BLOSCH: The first or last engine? If he counted the last engine, that is about right.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you have enough time?

LT COL BLOSCH: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Assuming that you hadn't had compass troubles.

LT COL BLOSCH: We got off just about on time, with our delay.

LT COL ROPKA: Did you then fly your low level route to Nakhon Phanom?

LT COL BLOSCH: They held us to the IFR flight plan. They changed it about two times and they wouldn't give us our file route. That was another delay, in take off, getting the clearance.

LT COL KRALJEV: When you got to Nakhon Phanom you were told to turn off your IFF and go about your business. Was it you that approached control, started calling and the tower started calling -- you had no trouble with tower or approach control at Nakhon Phanom looking for you?

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MAJOR GARGUS: No, sir. We had trouble enroute with the GCI radar. They watched us. We did a lot of talking to them. We lied about our altitude. They kept calling for us and then Alley Cat relayed their call to us and finally quit. Went up to altitude because we were afraid we would start something, but this IFR clearance was a mistake; it caused us some problems.

LT COL KRALJEV: Think we should have gone tactical?

LT COL BLOSCH: Definitely. Everybody in the world wanted to talk to us. We didn't even have Korat on our charts. So we couldn't really plot our low level route.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let it be noted that the C-130 departures from Takhli should have been on a tactical clearance rather than IFR.

MAJOR PANNILL: The approach control at Takhli and Korat kept losing the IFF's and they couldn't quite figure this out, so we attracted a hell of a lot of attention.

LT COL KRALJEV: Korat approach control was not read in, was it?

LT COL ROPKA: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: All right, enroute to Nakhon Phanom was when we got the word on the delay on Cherry 01. At that time, we passed the word to Cherry 02 to be prepared to assume the lead and to take the A-1's with them. He rogered this. We attempted to pass the word to the A-1's -- we got the word to the tower, to the Wing Commander, but the A-1's flying had turned their radios off, and we will leave it hang there. Cherry 01, what time were you starting engines in relation to take-off time?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: About 35 or 40 minutes. I don't remember what the exact time was.

LT COL KRALJEV: It ~~was~~ considerably well ahead of your take-off time?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: It was.

LT COL KRALJEV: And you hit number 3?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We got rotation but no fuel flow or ignition.

LT COL KRALJEV: Then what happened?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We tried again -- nothing, so we went ahead and started number 4 and then tried it again and this time we couldn't get rotation. The bleed air valve had stuck to the closed. We shut down number 4 and started beating on it and hitting against the side of it. We closed it up and started numbers 1 and 2. We tried number 3 again; still got no fuel flow but got the light, so we started numbers 1 and 2 while they were closing up number 3. Tried number 3 again and this time we got fuel flow and ignition.

LT COL KRALJEV: It should be noted that when the word was passed to General Manor that they couldn't start number 3 he asked whether or not the take-off could be made on three engines, and I gave him a cursory, "Yes, it could be." I asked Captain Jones to check on the take-off data in the Dash-1 which he did and I presumed you conferred with Major Franklin at that time?

CAPTAIN JONES: No, sir, I was inside.

LT COL KRALJEV: So, the judgment was then given to General Manor it could be made safely on three engines. His decision, then, was to go on three, which we relayed to you. Your decision was to go on three?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Subsequently, General Manor called back and asked whether or not you could get back on two engines, at which time I gave him a judgment call of, "No, you could not from certain points of

your route," and he made the judgment to continue, re-examine his initial decision to go on three, realizing the risk involved in the event you lost a second engine at low altitude over the mountains, particularly, knowing we had an undercast. That got you off the ground 18 minutes late, as I recall.

CAPTAIN JONES: Staff Sergeant Brown was the man who contributed the most -- he used the old brogan treatment on the ignition control on number 3 engine, jiggling wires, kicking on it, beating it. I suppose that's what started it but if it hadn't been for his actions, Cherry 01 would have gone on three engines.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherry 01 departed 18 minutes late.

CAPTAIN ECHART: More like thirty.

LT COL KRALJEV: You got off at 18 -- (off the record talk) -- 28 minutes late. You went direct?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: Yes, sir.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We reported out on normal IFR flight plan. We couldn't read Takhli anymore, trying to give our next position report to Udorn and couldn't raise them. We were about forty miles out and Udorn tower came up and said contact approach control, which we did. We followed their instructions to overhead the airfield, and instructed the copilot not to answer anymore; just told him we were going to tower and that was it. As we proceeded north, they started calling on guard to contact control approach and head 090.

LT COL KRALJEV: Who was calling on this?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Both approach control and tower were calling on guard.

LT COL ROPKA: Colonel Mellish, the Wing Commander, was in the tower for the departure of the helicopters and he had been given instructions.

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Of course, he knew only part of the operations but he had been given information concerning the fact that you would go overhead and that you would be closing out overhead. Base Ops knew this before your departure even and had their arrival all set up. He did not clear it with approach control. However, Brigham was aware of all the departure details including the times and call signs and everything because of your lateness. Colonel Mellish had departed the tower and neglected to tie up this last detail.

CAPTAIN GUENON: Brigham should have heard this on guard.

LT COL KRALJEV: Would Brigham have heard it on guard homer?

LT COL WILLETT: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: We didn't hear it in MOTEL ALPHA.

LT COL WILLETT: You normally don't set up on guard. You set up on alternate frequency. Probably because we cautioned so much about talking on radios and stuff like that; we tracked you all the way in from quite a ways out.

LT COL KRALJEV: Suffice to say, then, that the tower and approach control facilities at Udorn were not adequately suppressed to support our mission. You overflowed Udorn. Let's move from there to the next launch which should have been the helicopter launch at 17 past the hour.

LT COL BRITTON: Everything went fine on the launch. I had something to say that doesn't exactly have an impact on the launch, but could have. The aircraft commander on Apple 03 showed up in our cockpit in Apple 01 about five minutes prior to engine start time with the announcement that some additional cargo, armed claymore mines, had been put aboard his airplane unscheduled and what to do about it. We didn't have time to find out what to do about it, so I just told him to take it and he did. This could have delayed him somewhat. They are dangerous enough unarmed, but armed is bad.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Who brought them out, Major Donahue?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Some Sergeant brought them out and we asked why and they said Sergeant Jordan said to put them on. We didn't like the idea of having them on because they said if they got hit, they'd blow up, so we didn't want them on due to our role in the exercise. We wrapped them up in our own flak jackets and put them where there was the most bulkhead behind the copilot seat. We just left them wrapped up in flak jackets; luckily, we had enough extras we were still able to wear some when we went in.

LT COL GRIMES: Jordan was one of the Army troops? This is the first I had even heard of it.

MAJOR DONAHUE: They brought some other stuff. I didn't even know what it was. They said it was perimeter defense in case we went down, anticipating we had on the last load of troops, but it hadn't been briefed and it was a big surprise.

LT COL GRIMES: It is such a small problem to arm these things when you got them set up.

MAJOR DONAHUE: There were two boxes of them.

LT COL KRALJEV: All right. It has been noted that they were brought to the airplane and we will pursue with the Army to find out what the background was and why they were brought up.

LT COL BRITTON: There was no problem on the launch at all. Our light signals worked fine, no need for a radio at all. It lifted off right on time. We departed. Shortly after turning North out of Udorn some stranger came by real close on a reciprocal of the holding formation. He had all his lights on. But he almost went through us.

LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else on the helicopter launch?

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MAJOR KALEN: The compass was bad in Banana. They left it there but it was bad.

LT COL ZEHNDER: Remember there was electrical gear and armor and everything so even Whiskey compass, we didn't know how good it was. Really, we were flying blind on just what we could guess.

LT COL KRALJEV: There should be a note inserted that when an airplane is stripped that the proper deviation should be determined before the airplane is flown on a mission and I think this is something until this instant had never occurred to me, and I don't know whether you all had considered it or not.

LT COL ZEHNDER: Another thing, the other problem they had was the lights on the pilot side of the aircraft, both airspeed and DG indicator were going out, blinking on and off -- more off than on.

MAJOR KALEN: But they weren't far enough off I felt we had to take any action; I knew he could see us; there was no doubt about that. We weren't that far off, so we just continued as we were.

LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else on the helicopters?

MAJOR KORNITZER: I don't know why we took off early; I think we should have taken off after they did. We left in the traffic pattern, staying clear of each other, waiting for them to get off, and then we had to set it up to come back over the field and get on that heading and got up. We could have taken off after they did, turn right, and join right up with them.

LT COL KRALJEV: Why did we sequence them the way we did? Except that, that is the way we did it here for three months.

MAJOR KORNITZER: We watched them take off and just joined up.

LT COL KRALJEV: Any reason why we changed the sequence?

LT COL CLARK: No.

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MAJOR GARGUS: We wanted to make sure that they were airborne, problems like we had with Cherry and engines wouldn't start, we wanted to make sure they were airborne before the choppers went up.

LT COL KRALJEV: I think we neglected to point this out when we discussed the Cherry departures. The lesson learned if you have two C-130's to launch you usually happen to launch them together where continuance of the mission is dependent on getting both of them together. You launch them together and you have them both up, and I think the same thing could apply to the tankers. If we had launched both of the Cherrys simultaneously the other one would have known certainly what was going on, and he wouldn't be twenty minutes up the road when the second guy was having trouble.

LT COL KRALJEV: A-1's? Major Rhein?

MAJOR RHEIN: No problem. We got off on the time we wanted to, possibly a little bit earlier than time to, on the other hand, mainly due to the fact that we were taking off on a reciprocal heading to the way we wanted to go and it took us a little while to get turned around and headed back up to the northwest. The join-up with Cherry 02 was a little exciting.

LT COL KRALJEV: Will you tell us about the rendezvous, please?

MAJOR RHEIN: The A-1's got airborne all right and we got joined up in good shape and formation, picking up Cherry 02, coming up from my left side. We started to ease over towards him there a little bit before we got to him he went into the clouds and we lost Cherry 02 for a while.

LT COL KRALJEV: For how long?

MAJOR RHEIN: Probably for about 10 minutes -- it really wasn't too long; we climbed on up, we were programmed to level off at about

7600 and we eased on up to ~~about 8500~~ 8600 feet and broke out on top and proceeded along for maybe five minutes and picked up the rotating beacon of Cherry 02 off at about our one o'clock position, maybe three or four miles possibly and from there on it was no problem except it did take us a while to join up, mainly he was holding 145 and we had to push the power up to get any overtake on him. We finally got joined up with him at a point just past one Alpha and then started a slight turn and finally slid in.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was he at altitude when he came across?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir, and he stayed there.

LT COL BLOSCHE: We went up to 8100 to try to stay out of the clouds.

MAJOR RHEIN: It could have been a problem had one of us decided to go lower or the other one high or vice versa; had they decided to stay low and us high we would have had a problem picking them up - it could have been a problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: When all else failed, you both went according to briefing?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, we just both went up and it worked out all right. The weather was not as forecast in that area, which caused the problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: That was your only problem on the rendezvous?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Helicopters, you had the tanker in sight all the time, right?

LT COL BRITTON: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: You rendezvoused with Banana. Any problem?

LT COL BRITTON: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: You got right in the drafting position. Did you get on the hose right away, or not?

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MAJOR KALEN: Not right away, there was some delay but it turned out there was no problem. We didn't get too high an altitude in preparing our performance; there was no problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: Were you able to fly at the planned altitude?

MAJOR KALEN: We were higher than planned altitude, flying above the clouds.

LT COL KRALJEV: How far did you have to go?

LT COL BRITTON: We were a couple hundred feet at times above planned altitude and we broke through the clouds there more than we ever had intended so we were actually finding out something.

LT COL KRALJEV: You actually were in the clouds while you were on the tanker?

MAJOR MURPHY: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Tell us about that.

MAJOR MURPHY: We were in the clouds. I had scanner reports on 2 and 3 and they loosened it up once or twice before we broke out of the clouds. I didn't know about four, whether they stayed in close to Banana or loosened it up or not. Four went Blind Jack and went under me, so I pulled up carefully and turned off to the left to our Blind Jack heading and then I broke out on top and then I could see everybody down below.

LT COL BRITTON: This is the thing we worked out on that; we came up with the procedure if we got in the weather we would stay for a while; if it got real bad and we lost visual contact they would call a Blind Jack. We had that other tanker behind us, too. His procedure was to do a 180 and climb back.

MAJOR MURPHY: One significant thing -- I was still able to see the tanker but I lost sight of 4 and the Banana who was in between the tanker.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you have a chance to talk to Colonel Brown after this?

MAJOR MURPHY: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: I wonder if he lost sight of the tanker?

MAJOR MURPHY: Apparently he did. I picked him up as he was coming in under me.

LT COL BRITTON: I would be surprised if 2 could see the tanker; at times we would lose the tanker, occasionally, with the thick clouds, so I'd really be surprised if 2 and 3 could see it at all. We used the same procedure we always use in air refueling at night, go under weather usually, the same thing if we hit fluffy clouds, gain altitude to make sure we have clearance.

LT COL KRALJEV: Three? How about you?

LT COL ALLISON: I kept 2 in sight most of the time but I couldn't see the tanker. A couple of times I lost him but it would just be for a moment. We were going to move back in; we got lose like Colonel Britton said but I had what I thought was 2 in sight, but I found out later I was missing one all the time; either you put out all your lights or they failed. Your lights were on originally and later on you had no lights, and I was one short. Before I moved in, I didn't know whether I was moving in on Apple 1 or 2, so I stayed out there for a long time waiting, and then finally we saw him in the moonlight when it did come up. Like Colonel Allison said when he turned, I turned with him and as long as I could keep him in sight I flew on him for very short periods of time, ninety seconds, two minutes or something like that, that we ever lost the tanker itself.

LT COL BRITTON: We definitely had the advantage of a good weather briefing and confirmation of the forecast. There were the clouds where they said they would be and at the same altitude, so I think the confidence

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level was high enough among ~~all of us~~ that we would soon be beyond this ridge that there was no problem.

LT COL ZEHNDER: From the standpoint of Banana, there was no problem in flying formation, although it is a lot easier to fly on the HC-130 than the other models, mainly because of the two position lights. You have two red lights, one of them a formation position light, and there's no problem hanging in on that, but on the C-130E it is pretty difficult, especially if he has his lights on very dim, because you can barely make out the position light on the wing tip. So, if it ever happens again, it might be well to throw on another wing tip with that light, in a certain type formation so you have to stick in very tight.

MAJOR KORNITZER: That weather was not as planned. It was eight-tenths overcast most of the time. In fact, when we hit the pre-IP, it was solid up to that point, and it was hazy in the distance, and we started letting down, and I was surprised when we broke out it was just beautiful.

LT COL KRALJEV: What was the highest altitude you had to go to, do you recall?

MAJOR KORNITZER: 4600 feet, which we didn't make. We were late joining up, due to this other airplane coming through the formation. We had to dive out of the way. He kept coming at us, and he turned around and he was on our right side. We couldn't make out what it was. We thought it was an H-53 going back into the formation, so we slowed down, came by, joined up. We were a little late, distance-wise where we were supposed to be in formation to start climbing. I had 30,000 pounds of fuel, stall speed is 101, so we were flying 105 knots and we could see the clouds, but we couldn't climb because he dropped back a little bit and slowed down. We were below 4600 feet. We were supposed

to be over, but we didn't make that. We went up to 1500 feet; we were flying 101 knots and we started climbing and we didn't follow the flight plan after that; we just kept going because of the weather.

LT COL KRALJEV: Do you recall how high you ended up?

MAJOR KORNITZER: 7800 - 8000 feet, up and down.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you ever have trouble at 8,000 feet staying in?

MAJOR KALEN: No, I didn't.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you have a feel for what kind of density altitude that was?

MAJOR KALEN: It was at least ten -- just right off the top of my head -- 12 degrees. It was at least 95.

LT COL KRALJEV: 9500? 10 degrees density altitude.

MAJOR KALEN: Performance wise, no problem at all.

MAJOR KORNITZER: We flew slower than 105 knots most of the time. That's why we called at point 2 we were five minutes late or something. We were flying slower.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherry 01, you rendezvoused with the tanker and helicopters?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We caught up with them sooner than I expected. Slowed to 180 and I could see the tanker and the helicopters as they passed in front of us, fell in behind them and slowed to 105. At one point, I thought Lime 02 had broke to the right to indicate for us to move in. We got up a little closer and he hadn't, he was still in there. Finally, when he did break we moved up under Apple 1 or 2 -- I don't know exactly which, but I felt that Major Kalen either couldn't see or had not finished refueling. I decided he hadn't finished refueling yet. We were down there for quite some time before he broke lose.

MAJOR KALEN: We had a small internal problem here, these people not being there soon enough. This flight engineer was not aware of the procedures. Therefore, we stayed longer than anticipated, but they were there on time; we would have been ready had he shut the valves off sooner.

LT COL KRALJEV: Create any problems?

MAJOR KALEN: No, just that we sat there.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: I think there should be some definite light signal or something for finishing refueling. Several times we thought they were finishing. So, we'd fish tail for a while and if they made any motion, it would look like they were breaking up, light would go off on their lamp and we thought it was a signal. We did see the green light. It was just anticipation on our part trying to get up there. After we joined up we descended to 6800 feet, went through a couple of clouds, so I elected to climb up about 7100 and stayed there for about half that leg and flew formation the rest of the way.

LT COL KRALJEV: Were you able to fly flight altitudes after that?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: You did this, you were either on top of an eight-tenths to a solid overcast?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: At points it was solid overcast but there was enough of the hills and so on to sneak through that the navigator could see check points and tell where we were. The valleys were completely fogged over.

LT COL KRALJEV: During this navigation phase, I think this is something we need to bring out. I want an evaluation from the A-1's and helicopter people. Could you have found your way without the Cherries leading? I am asking for your best judgment. Could you have found the

IP; could you have navigated on your own? Let's not let pride stand in the way.

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir. I think the A-1's could have.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could you have hit the IP at the appropriate time? Control ETA within two minutes?

MAJOR RHEIN: I think we'd have been close to that.

LT COL KRALJEV: We had a judgment call to make early in the evening on whether to let Cherry 02 go up and take the helicopters or stay with you.

MAJOR RHEIN: I think we could probably have done it. We would have been worried there quite a bit of the time. The first part of it -- after passing Channel 108 that was no problem going up to Channel 108, but after turning there and heading up north of Plain of Jars, the checks are pretty few and far between.

LT COL ROPKA: You did carry your navigation along and were cross-checking the best you could?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could you see turning points?

MAJOR RHEIN: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: So, all you could have gone on then is time distance?

MAJOR SKEELS: Just north of the border there was a ridge of high peaks - eight, nine thousand foot peaks. Up until I got those in sight I didn't know really where I was at. When I saw them and compared them with the line on the chart I had a real good idea the border was due in three minutes.

LT COL BLOSCH: We had to gain 7 minutes when the tankers called "6 minutes late." We had lost that six. Cherry 01 took the lead. We were completely turned off at one turning point. We went from something

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MAJOR FRANKLIN: Our radar went out at one time and we had to replace it. We had a problem with our GAR-1 receiver.

LT COL KRALJEV: Major Mosley, did you pick up anything on your gear?

CAPTAIN KENDER: You wouldn't unless it was being interrogated.

LT COL KRALJEV: I thought we were picking them up here.

CAPTAIN KENDER: Yes, sir, I have seen them at two or three different occasions within a half mile.

LT COL KRALJEV: I thought after you picked up the lead, you -- this was the concern we had, is turning them off after join-up.

CAPTAIN KENDER: After join-up there was no reason to have them on.

LT COL KRALJEV: I understand. If you recall, the first couple of times we flew here you said to turn them off after join-up because they were degrading the ECM gear.

LT COL ROPKA: From the time you took over formation until descent could you review briefly for us your navigational cover through there? Were you positive of your position at all times? And secondly, what you, in fact, used primarily in order of priority or precedence, navigational aids?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: The doppler went out; the computer went out and started counting down faster than it should have. The time that we crossed over point 3 and when we did go over point 4 we checked the ground speed. Of course, we were slowing down at that time so we don't know what it should be but it was a little high. We would have turned in ten miles too short if we would have gone on our doppler. So, we went on the ETA's, what we could figure out and the visual, hills that we had, radar, everything together. We didn't lose contact with the ground visually but this didn't seem enough to be of any use. I was

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reading a while, then turned back to the radar and we had good check points with it. Radar was primary through there.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was the FLIR of any benefit through that leg? Was it used at all?

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, at times. When we got over those clouds, of course, it wasn't of any use at all. I could see down through the clouds and small holes occasionally and pick up some confirms and check points. Further along it became more and more valuable and more and more of a help to pick out specific spots.

LT COL KRALJEV: So you said it was a radar leg primarily augmented by visual?

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, but primarily we went on the radar. We could have made it visually by looking at hills and popping up through the clouds we could have made it, but not precisely.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about Cherry 2?

MAJOR GARGUS: We had much the same situation. We planned to use radar as a primary to begin with and I was able to keep the aircraft aligned relatively well with radar and there were quite a few updates from the FLIR and from the map readers, but in most cases I was able to say, "Well, we are right on course, 3/10 to a half mile," and we'd say "check". It was not a real definite position they gave but they knew that we were left or right and when we made several turning points on doppler run out, we knew we were within a half mile or so, so we had no real problem other than it was impossible for us to regain all the time which we lost.

LT COL KRALJEV: That takes us to the IP (initial point).

CAPTAIN STILES: I have a question before you get to that point. You mentioned when Cherry 1 was having a starter problem you elected to have the A-1's go with Cherry 2. This was a deviation from the briefing.

LT COL KRALJEV: Yes, General Manor passed the word to Cherry 2. He was in position to pick them up; he wanted to pick them up and take them all in and overtake the helicopters.

CAPTAIN STILES: We were concerned about the old problem of finding the A-1's. You did anticipate to tell us where they would be.

LT COL KRALJEV: We got the report you couldn't start 3. We figured you weren't going to get it started. That was the assumption General Manor had and we were going to do the thing with one C-130 and this is the time he passed the word to the A-1's that it would be one big conglomeration and they would be turning behind the formation.

LT COL ROPKA: On this enroute segment, prior to the IP, what were the EWO's seeing, if anything?

MAJOR MOSLEY: Prior, of course, I saw our stuff as we were going out, 30, 60, 70 miles across into Laos; then I lost contact and then toward the Vietnamese border I started picking up early warning radar; could have been GCI radar and I felt it was College Eye at the time, but I guess College Eye was up, and I thought it could be the North Vietnamese but I thought it was College Eye. Then I picked up a few blips, I would have to check the tape to see what I called them. I think it was some kind of height finder down to the southeast of the border out where we were making SQUID, somewhere around SQUID, coming from that direction. Mostly, it was very, very quiet, almost like no one knew we were coming, but up to the initial point, it was obvious that these people weren't aware that we were coming as far as GCI radar is concerned.

CAPTAIN KENDER: I caught one at 6 Alpha early warning that swept us about a minute and a half. Long enough to get three or four stop watches on the sweep; then I never heard a height finder or GCI radar until we turned the point right prior to the IP. There was something to the south of us. It was a threat radar and by the time we recalled it was gone.

LT COL ROPKA: What kind of threat?

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MAJOR MOSLEY: I don't know, I think it was Triple A.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did it fall off by itself or did you knock it down?

MAJOR MOSLEY: By that time it fell off by itself.

CAPTAIN KENDER: I caught a FAN SONG radar at approximately the same place. It was definitely a FAN SONG radar outbound.

LT COL KRALJEV: Captain Knops, we are talking about what the EWO's picked up enroute and basically little activity inbound to the IP with one exception. Cherry 1 picked up a possible GCI.

MAJOR MOSLEY: I would say early warning GCI. The line passed through south of Hanoi, about 20 miles, but my equipment is not accurate within fifteen degrees. It was not a height finder.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: Height finder, GCI station, BAR LOCK, SIDE NET. Your BAR LOCKS, in fact, and a SIDE NET were on from the time you crossed the border.

MAJOR MOSLEY: Then I am sure that would be the one set up, College Eye wasn't up. He didn't take us for very long. We got across the border and down in the hills I would get an occasional blip.

CAPTAIN KENDER: When did that BAR LOCK come up?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: As soon as the Navy was coming off the tanker. As soon as the Navy passed the Combat Apple orbit. It came up and it did almost all the work, I would say, about 90 per cent, maybe even 95. West of Ba Vi you run into that valley where the river runs south and you might have been getting that one.

LT COL KRALJEV: You will have a chance to go over this with the EWO's and their tape. On the timing calls, was there any problem in anybody hearing those from one formation to another, from Cherry 1?

LT COL BLOSCH: No.

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~~LT COL CLARK~~
LT COL CLARK: There was a breakdown somewhere. I was not aware that Combat Apple was going to pass us on the discreet frequency and I was listening on UHF prime and I didn't hear him. Captain Knops was calling me and that was only half of the calls. Then I'd wait two minutes and HF was coming in with the code words. Putting these two things together, that's how we could tell what was happening. I think had we had the information back through the primary UHF we could have acknowledged you all on it and there would have been no need to use the HF.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you get all the HF calls?

LT COL CLARK: Yes.

LT COL ROPKA: How was that frequency selected ultimately?

LT COL WILLETT: That's the frequency they've used for years. There was almost a little bit of a mess on that, in that automatic frequency had continuous CW on it and the operator was not qualified and we got a qualified man there and we worked it out that way.

LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else?

LT COL ROPKA: One question on the final leg before the IP. Where did the weather break?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Five miles prior to the IP.

CAPTAIN STILES: No, a little earlier than that.

LT COL BLOSCH: When we started down towards the IP, it started to break up and clear to scattered, light scattered.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Prior to that point, we could see; there was a layered condition. It worked out pretty good.

CAPTAIN CONNAUGHTON: We were past the pre IP before we could let down. Before we found a hole where we could start descending toward the IP.

LT COL KRALJEV: How did we classify the weather? As forecast? Worse than forecast?

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MAJOR RHEIN: Worse.

LT COL KRALJEV: Worse in what sense?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: More cloudiness and higher tops.

LT COL KRALJEV: Higher tops and greater cover. What did we call the cover up through Laos?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: I think it might have been about 8/10, 7/8 coverage through Laos.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about once you crossed the border up to the time you started into the pre IP?

MAJOR MURPHY: Six/eights. It seemed like this coverage to the west was a lot heavier and it went to taper off toward the east because we were right on the border line.

LT COL ROPKA: What was the closest you ever got to the tops of the clouds in Laos?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We stayed right on top of them; of course, we went through a couple that were such that you could see out the far side.

LT COL ROPKA: Was any consideration ever given to sending back a weather report?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, but we didn't feel it was significantly enough different to bother with.

LT COL KRALJEV: What about your visibility at flight altitude?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Excellent.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the moonlight? How would you assess the degree of moonlight you had?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: Beautiful! Like sunshine.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did the amount of illumination and the elevation of the moon, is this what we would go with again?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN ECKHART: On certain headings, it will blind the map reader.

MAJOR GARGUS: I would like to make a comment on the weather.
Is Major Grimes here? ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

LT COL KRALJEV: No, I will tell him this later.

MAJOR GARGUS: After we were allowed to go to the aircraft and so on, I came back and I spoke to the weather man who gave us the briefing, and he did not really understand the type of flying we were going to do, which would have helped.

LT COL KRALJEV: We are at the IP. Let's see; Take Cherry 1 first -- from the pre-IP to the IP, on into the target area.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: The pre-IP to the IP, we had to come down a little faster than I would have ordinarily. We came down just a little bit lower than I would have ordinarily because of the cloud conditions. We let down into the broken area.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did this present a problem?

LT COL BLOSCH: There was no problem presented. We were close to a ridge. I never knew it. I felt sure he had seen the ridge and moved away from it.

LT COL BRITTON: Had the moonlight not been as bright as it was, the people, 4 and 5 on the inside of that turn may have been a little hurting for terrain clearance.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the rate of descent? Was that any problem?

LT COL BRITTON: No problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you have trouble finding the IP?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: A little bit. The biggest point visible was the hook in the river. Captain McKenzie on the radar picked up a void which he thought was the IP. I figured it couldn't have been because I saw Ba Vi at that time. At the same time, we picked up the hook on the river we could see trucks to the south on the road to the big lake.

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CAPTAIN STILES: One thing on that, Captain Jacobs briefed us very thoroughly about the amount of water; the whole area around the IP was flooded. We had difficulty in finding the exact spot we were looking for. We ended up actually turning slightly short of the IP. However, as soon as we turned, we realized it and then angled back in and we got back right on course as confirmed by the map reader at about six and a half miles from the target, and didn't have any problem after that.

LT COL ROPKA: Were things well organized in going through that period?

CAPTAIN STILES: We had no problems. As I say, I think we just picked the wrong spot; we realized it and came back at an angle and then across the road. We came right in with no real problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: At that point you were using map reader, radar and FLIR, everything, were you? Everything working?

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, sir, everything was working. We all knew where we were here, we were not exactly where we were programmed to be.

LT COL KRALJEV: Bearing in mind, and disregarding pride of authorship, was the decision to change the run in particular to the target a wise decision or go like we originally planned?

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, sir, because we had many good check points along that run in and there was no problem. There was no problem at all at the IP itself, the actual spot there was a little harder to pick out but we didn't have any problem whatsoever.

LT COL ROPKA: Could you have run it visually without radars or FLIR?

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, even without the convoy on the road. What made it even better was the definite point, you couldn't miss it, whereas had you been up north on the river itself, you didn't have quite such a good check, and coming in there the more you looked at that route, the

more we studied it, the better it was. There were so many good things along that run. ~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL KRALJEV: What heading was given to the helicopters?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: 072 degrees.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was that programmed?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: 077 degrees was the base flight plan.

LT COL KRALJEV: So, you were off of it or correcting for wind, one or the other?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: We had the wind plus we were just a shade to the right, not very much, just a little bit. When Captain McKenzie figured out a heading and gave it, it checked with the map reader and with the FLIR, and that's exactly what we wanted. We had the wind and we were slightly to the right.

LT COL KRALJEV: What drift were you carrying?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: Three to four degrees.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did anybody make a wind assessment or even after the fact make a wind assessment for that terminal leg?

MAJOR DONAHUE: When we landed it was about 8 knots, the wind from the northwest when we finally got to the compound and made our pass we were definitely down-wind. You could feel the shudder; you had to go slower than usual because of the wind, and we were shuddering a lot.

LT COL KRALJEV: We had expected a northwest wind, hadn't we?

MAJOR GRIMES: Yes, northwest at 5 to 8 knots is probably very close.

LT COL KRALJEV: You climbed and arrived at Point Alpha. Where did you release the flare?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: Right over the top. I directed him visually and I remember going off a little bit further left; we should have gone where we were supposed to have gone to the left, but I wanted to make

sure we went over the river, as soon as I saw that little tip of it, I flew right into it and went right over the top of it. ~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you see the objective on the FLIR?

CAPTAIN STILES: I saw the objective on the FLIR; there was no doubt at all.

LT COL KRALJEV: Map reader did you see it?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: The compound itself? No, sir, I saw that little hook in the river exactly where it should have been.

LT COL ROPKA: Were the lights in Son Tay City or any other facility around there of any value?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: Son Tay was; it was perfect.

LT COL KRALJEV: Radar? Did you see anything?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: Our line-up was perfect as far as I could tell.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could you pick up the citadel on the radar?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: No, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could you pick up the city of Son Tay?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: No. I wasn't looking at Son Tay, checking the line up with the river.

LT COL ROPKA: By 'large river' you mean the Red River?

CAPTAIN MCKENZIE: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: So all three navigators agreed.

CAPTAIN STILES: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: And how about the pilots?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: The copilot saw that hook in the river.

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: I was in the back but I was not looking out the ramp at the time exactly when the flares went off. I glanced out to make sure they went off; we were looking for 4 and I was pretty sure it looked good to me.

LT COL KRALJEV: At that time, could you identify the objective?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: I wouldn't definitely say I did see the compound.
It looked good.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's pick up Cherry 2 at the pre-IP.

LT COL BLOSCH: Descending rapidly just as fast as we thought the A-1 could make it. We had four minutes to make up. We elected to try to cut the IP short just slightly and did so.

LT COL KRALJEV: You got to the IP how far behind Cherry 1?

MAJOR GARGUS: We didn't go right over the IP; we turned short of the IP slightly.

LT COL KRALJEV: Abeam of it?

MAJOR GARGUS: Short a mile - a mile and a half. I estimate we were 3 minutes and 50 seconds behind when we were abeam so this would cut our time down 3 minutes plus a few seconds on a straight line.

LT COL KRALJEV: Any trouble finding the IP?

MAJOR GARGUS: No, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: What were you primarily using?

MAJOR GARGUS: I saw it visually.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you have it on radar?

MAJOR GARGUS: Yes, sir, and I had a little different cut from Cherry 1. Ba Vi showed beautiful and the lake looked exactly the way it does on the chart but bigger; the lake and the city at the IP point, I was able to pick that up from about 14 miles from my angle. I also picked up the finger lake we penciled in which was short of that.

LT COL BLOSCH: It was swampy so we would have had no problem whatsoever coming directly over the IP, but we elected to go left and gain some time.

MAJOR GARGUS: We figured we were too late and we're close enough that we dove off and you can see it visually because it was just like the photograph said. Everything was just standing out so we swung in there about a mile, a mile short of the IP to try to gain some time.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about the FLIR? Were you picking it up on the FLIR?

CAPTAIN STRIPLING: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: You turned inbound; you dropped off No. 5?

MAJOR GARGUS: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Just No. 5?

LT COL BLOSCH: Just No. 5, as briefed.

LT COL KRALJEV: And you continued on then toward the target? At what point did you see the flares?

MAJOR GARGUS: It was after we dropped off 3 and 4, but it's on the tape, because we said, "There's the flares," and "There's their turning point." We can get it exact from the tape.

LT COL KRALJEV: About simultaneously, you saw the flares?

MAJOR GARGUS: About 20 seconds or something like that. It's hard to figure that much time; I expected 1 or 2 to be passed any second. We started our turn. I could see them shooting by already and they must have already put the power in to go.

LT COL KRALJEV: Is that what you went on, Cherry 2, the flares?

LT COL BLOSCH: Yes, sir. Peach 1 and 2 were headed in the same direction as we were. As soon as we started to turn we just started climbing.

LT COL KRALJEV: So we have got everybody in the objective area.

LT COL BAILEY: The frequency shift did take place out at the IP? Did everybody get back on frequency.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: No problem.

MAJOR SQUIRES: No problem.

LT COL ZEHNDER: Banana going in tried to change to 53.0 at the IP, but it wouldn't set on the radio.

LT COL KRALJEV: We found an incompatibility that you weren't aware of in the Banana but they found it at the IP. Fortunately, they did not have too much use for the radio. ~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR GARGUS: I will say again, we did drop No. 3 and 4 off at the right position but off to the left maybe 3/4 of a mile since we were upwind.

LT COL KRALJEV: It didn't pose a problem for 3 or 4?

LT COL BLOSCH: Everything was so predominant, we knew if we let them go there they would know where it would be at.

MAJOR SKEELS: I saw the light flash and saw 5 leave; I saw the IP and the river and the finger lakes and Ba VI. I just flew to where I knew we were going to go. It was laid out as the photo and the map had it.

LT COL ROPKA: Before we leave the Cherries, the electronics environment, EWO, from the pre-IP on, let's carry that through.

MAJOR MOSLEY: It was very quiet. I had the GCI mike on and we had picked up another one but at this time I was no longer really concentrating on where they were in relation to the aircraft. I was concentrating on whether it was a direct threat to the aircraft - it was no direct threat.

LT COL ROPKA: You did not pick up any Triple A Fire Can Radar?

MAJOR MOSLEY: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: Captain Kender?

CAPTAIN KENDER: I believe I would have to go back to the tape; I was definitely busy from the drop, I believe it was right at the drop is when they came up.

LT COL KRALJEV: Pick up the weather now.

MAJOR GARGUS: After we went to the aircraft, I returned to speak to the weather man and I discovered that he did not really understand what type of flying we were going to do and this was responsible for him giving us the impression that the weather was going to be a little bit

better than it actually was. He didn't realize once we started descending we would do no more climbs. I discussed this with him, where we had our orbit and one thing led to another and he said, "Well, you'll be able to go up and down and around these things." Once we are committed to our descent we will keep on going down; we can't climb because we may lose somebody, and he didn't know this so then we covered the weather from the border in and I learned at that point that we could not really descend until pre-IP area. Just exactly the way it was.

MAJOR GRIMES: When I last left it was the understanding there could not be a descent until the pre-IP.

MAJOR GARGUS: He wasn't aware of that; his impression was it would be normal flying just like you take an aircraft.

MAJOR GRIMES: He was briefed.

MAJOR GARGUS: He gave me very good poop and it turned out to be exactly the way it was. And he said, "Oh, you may find some sucker hole you can descend through and maybe stratified and you will be able to make it. However, we chose not to go in for that and stayed up.

MAJOR GRIMES: When you got into the refueling area, where were the cloud tops?

LT COL KRALJEV: This stuff has all been covered.

LT COL ROPKA: Just a general comment for this debriefing. What turned out to be your primary source of weather data, if there was a primary source, was the satellite or just general forecasting procedures, or what?

MAJOR GRIMES: We had satellite data; we also had some intercept weather data, elevations, valley stuff. We also had the weather reconnaissance that lined up before in the afternoon and this is all of these together.

LT COL ROPKA: Did you use for the most part the data provided for you, or did you have to do some extensive interpretation of your own at Takhli?

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MAJOR GRIMES: We used -- we had to do some considerable interpretation of our own; for example, where are we going to break out? How far is the ridge because nobody paid any attention to this for normal forecasting for quite a long time. We were feeling for example here that very soon after we got out of the mountains into the lowlands this stuff should break wide open. We didn't have any observation that would specifically verify that this did or didn't take place because of our distance between the site where we intercepted data where we thought with the (moisture) that was available. We still had to do quite a bit of forecasting on the basis of what we had.

LT COL KRALJEV: What I would like to do on this is pick it up on the individual aircrew briefings as to what went on in the objective area, rather than walk this group through 5 helicopters, 5 A-1's and 2 C-130's, say to pick up the egress as far as this group is concerned and discuss that portion of it and the recovery and then we will pick up the objective area during individual debriefs. I think that will be the best way to do it unless there is some reason that everybody wants to hear what everybody else did.

LT COL BRITTON: They probably do.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherry 1?

CAPTAIN STILES: After we made our drop at Alpha we made our two simulator drops, one was made visually, the drop at Point Bravo; however, on the FLIR I confirmed, on the cross-road - no doubt about it. The time was right. The second drop, the second simulator drop at Point Charlie was made on the FLIR, and certainly the pattern was real good because I gave him only a 5 degree alter. I put him right over it;

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I caught it on the FLIR, Point Charlie. The drop on Delta was made on the time. The radar called that one and I confirmed that one on the FLIR. If anything, we might have been one second early but the line up was right according to the way it should have been with the photographs and the map. Then the only difficulty we encountered was at Delta. We were supposed to have put out two containers of Napalm and the log flares.

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: On the green light we cut both restraining straps that held the Napalm into the aircraft. One Napalm went out and the other got stuck up in the airplane. We believe by the poor quality of plywood we had, it jammed into the roller and we had a live bomb on board, you might say. We had a time getting it out. It took us two minutes or so to get it out.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did it fall off of the rollers?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: No, it stayed on the rollers but I think the plywood had a sliver in it or something and jammed into the wheels of the roller. Those things were loaded the day before and the front end could have warped and dug into the roller. One thing that might have helped would have been new rollers.

LT COL KRALJEV: So you don't really know what caused it to hang up?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: That's the only thing we can say.

LT COL KRALJEV: What did you do to get it out when you finally jettisoned?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: About three of us picked it up. We pulled it up and we checked everything and we kind of pushed extra hard on it; it didn't go out. We pulled it back up and tried it again and it finally went out.

LT COL KRALJEV: To the best of your judgment, where did it land?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: In the lake, the big lake.

LT COL KRALJEV: Right on someone's holding point.

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: I didn't see it hit. There was just a big black hole down there where it went down. ~~_____~~

CAPTAIN ECKHART: We were right over the lake. It was in the portion of the fingers that were drawn in after we got the most recent photographs of the southern end.

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: As a consequence of that, we did not put out the logs. We just got the one live bomb and then closed up and went on our way.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you close up and reopen to jettison?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: No, it was live -- we thought it best to jettison. I was getting rid of that thing when he said green light; it didn't matter what they said up front. About the time he got the Napalm loose the first time was the first time we saw any activity. We saw Cherry 02's Napalm go off and the light started coming on just to the west where it hit; that's the first time we saw any activity on the ground, other than the trucks.

LT COL KRALJEV: During this portion did you pick anything up, Major Mosley?

MAJOR MOSLEY: I don't think so until after we went down and after they jettisoned the Napalm.

LT COL KRALJEV: Then you headed back to the west? You exited on the southern side of the lake?

CAPTAIN ECKHART: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Across the river and headed into the mountains and proceeded to your orbit point down track? Did you pick up anything ECM wise on the way out?

MAJOR MOSLEY: After we were out of the range of the normal SAM's I started getting an activity light on my APR-26, indicating FAN SONG

missile guidance radar. Then I would pick it up periodically, this was all within a minute from the initial intercept. Then I got a strobe on the SC band of my System 60 that I could not identify immediately. I thought it looked like an airborne range only radar which they have working on the MIG 17. I did not consider the FAN SONG a threat based on the intelligence and based on the fact that it was intermittent which meant I was probably somewhere off his beam. If I had been in his beam, I would have been getting long strobe plus my activity light wouldn't have jumped up and down.

LT COL KRALJEV: Then you don't feel they were working you then?

MAJOR MOSLEY: Not at that time, and I determined after some thought, they had a range only radar, but I wasn't rightly sure. I believe it may be feed-through from my APR 26, to my System 60 which I didn't know was possible. I don't think anybody up to this time had seen an activity light or a launch light which I got when the FAN SONG started coming on, and he came on and stayed. Then I got launch light and I suggested to the crew that we go down. We talked it over because I didn't really consider it a threat, and I remember asking the front end -- they said, "Well, do you want to go down?" And, I said, "Well, you could if you want to because I don't mind not seeing it." It was safe to descend so we did at that time and as soon as we did, the activity light and launch light both went off, and I lost the FAN SONG and at this time I believe Captain Custard saw a missile explode off to our right at a considerable distance.

LT COL KRALJEV: What altitude did you descend to?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Down on the radar.

LT COL KRALJEV: What detent?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: The one thousand foot.

CAPTAIN ECKHART: We played the whole thing by ear on the way out. We would come up when it would go away; as soon as we got it, we would go back down again.

~~TOP SECRET~~
LT COL KRALJEV: Okay, we got you enrouted out of the area. Did you see any activity on the north side of the lake?

MAJOR MOSLEY: I did.

LT COL KRALJEV: You see electronic activity or visual?

MAJOR MOSLEY: There was a height finder come up. There was an airfield to the north. He banded us intermittently going across the hills and up to the orbit point. He banded us constantly; that was the only electronic activity and two more height finders came up, too.

LT COL KRALJEV: Any other questions for Cherry 1?

CAPTAIN KENDER: Yes, sir, do you feel that Napalm could have ignited under water or not, or did you feel it was definitely no good?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: We couldn't figure out why it didn't go off in the airplane.

LT COL KRALJEV: Why would it?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: It was armed.

LT COL KRALJEV: It didn't separate from the pallet, did it?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: No, sir, it didn't have to. The trip wire was hit by something when they lifted it off.

LT COL KRALJEV: I can understand why it didn't go off, if it went according to your story because even in your fury I don't think you exposed it to the number of G's it takes.

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: It only takes 7 pounds of pressure against that thing to set it off once it's been armed.

LT COL KRALJEV: Where is this 140 G's or something he keeps talking about to us?

CAPTAIN KENDER: That's on impact, if it is not armed, yes, sir, but this is armed and it takes only about 7 pounds of pressure.

LT COL KRALJEV: On what? ~~TOP SECRET~~

CAPTAIN KENDER: On the igniter.

LT COL KRALJEV: Captain Kender, I want this thing thrashed out with Colonel Girard's people. There is nobody in his right mind that would have been carrying that damn thing with a 7 pound pull setting it off. This is what they have been telling us for ninety days, so let's get this straightened out. There is some confusion; either they gave us the wrong poop for 90 days, or you people have been unnecessarily scared.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: It didn't bother me until I got back, because I didn't think it would go off, either.

CAPTAIN KENDER: This 7 pounds is if it is inadvertently armed in the aircraft, like it was. As they were put on the airplane, sir, like I say 140 G's or whatever it is, that arming wire has been pulled and the device armed there is a difference now because after it is fused it only takes 7 to 7 and a half pounds of pressure to set it off.

MAJOR FRANKLIN: What I don't understand then is why doesn't it go off when the parachute pulls it. The opening shock of that chute would be more than 7 pounds.

CAPTAIN KENDER: It also takes a while for the battery to charge up; when this is pulled, it takes a couple more seconds for the battery to get charged.

LT COL KRALJEV: As far as our purposes in here, have we established it was armed in the airplane?

CAPTAIN CUSTARD: To the best of my knowledge, Sergeant Ross said that it was armed.

LT COL KRALJEV: How did they establish this?

CAPTAIN KENDER: By the wire. The wire that led the metallic to the bomb itself was loose, pulled from the bomb; the thing had rotated and was ready to go.

~~TOP SECRET~~
LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else on Cherry 01?

(No response at this time)

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 5, Major Murphy.

MAJOR MURPHY: At the pop up point Cherry 1 pulled away and called back 72 and we started our climb and initially as we started our climb on 072 heading it appeared that we were heading to the right of where Cherry was going. However, by the time we climbed to altitude - by the time we reached our 1500 feet we were following Cherry 1's track so apparently the wind was different at lower altitude than it was up high. But we were right in behind Cherry 1 as we went across. As soon as the flare lit Apple 4 made a right turn and started a descent and I was somewhat behind him so I held my heading there to recheck the target area to make sure it was lit, and it was. It appeared that the flare had overshot just a little bit. It lit up the target area very well. Then I made my right turn following Apple 4 and we descended down and crossed over the pop up point and proceeded on.

LT COL KRALJEV: Take us to the holding point.

MAJOR MURPHY: By the time I had the island in sight, Apple 4 was on the ground on the island and I made my approach and landed on a 260 heading. The island was flat, about maximum of five foot elevation above the lake's surface and very low scrub vegetation. No problem at all landing. After landing, turned out all lights and had all the crew members in the back on star light scopes. During the ground time, we observed several trucks, the people in the back observed several blacked out trucks come up to the east side of the lake and people got out of the trucks and were standing along the edge of the lake. I instructed the crew members

not to shoot unless shot at. We had proposed if we picked up anything we would depart and go over to the logs. They just seemed to stand out there and listened to the noise. I assume they couldn't see us. Some time after we had landed the SAM's started going off, exploding overhead in our area, the majority of which seemed to be coming up from the southeast of our position. We were on a 260 heading and there didn't seem to be any increase in activity around the area. The Aplo area was lit up the entire time we were in there. We were getting intermittent radio calls during this time. Some short transmissions from the ground and some partials from the other Apple aircraft. The next thing would be Apple 1 came out, and we saw him go south of the lake. We believe it was Apple 1. It was about the time he was coming out. During this time, I observed a white light traveling up the valley and I didn't know of anybody that should have had a white light at that time, so I don't know what it was. Possibly A-1's. It wasn't fast, but wasn't slow. I would say intermediate speed.

LT COL ROPKA: Was this in the vicinity of Ba Vi?

MAJOR MURPHY: We were sitting on the island at the time so he would be south of the lake heading up the valley.

MAJOR DONAHUE: I saw a white light in that vicinity, also.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: Several times.

LT COL ROPKA: Could it have been landing lights on a MIG 17?

CAPTAIN WALDRON: It wasn't that bright. I don't think it was.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you use your lights in landing out there?

MAJOR MURPHY: We landed only with our tip lights and formation lights.

LT COL ROPKA: Could you see where Apple 4 landed? Could you see him?

MAJOR MURPHY: Yes, he turned his tip lights off after I was on the approach.

LT COL ROPKA: Was this about the time the white light showed up?

MAJOR MURPHY: I'm pretty sure the white light came first.

MAJOR SKEELS: I turned mine on about that time.

LT COL KRALJEV: You said you thought you saw Apple 1 go by. Did he have running lights on, or what or did you just see his outline?

MAJOR MURPHY: No, it was the lights, I am pretty sure it was the rear, probably formation.

MAJOR SKEELS: At one time, I had position lights all the way up almost to the river before I turned them off.

LT COL ROPKA: When you were coming into the target area did you see lights around? Was Son Tay City lit up?

MAJOR MURPHY: Yes.

LT COL ROPKA: South of the city or the whole city?

MAJOR MURPHY: I would say the whole city. It just appeared to me that it would be any Southeast Asia city at two o'clock in the morning. There were sparse lights, but there were lights.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you notice after you sat down any lights going out in the -- around Ba Vi?

MAJOR MURPHY: No, I did not.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple was still lit up and stayed that way?

MAJOR MURPHY: Yes, it was still lit up when we flew out.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 3?

MAJOR DONAHUE: When we hit the pop up point, we could see them real well and knew we were right where we should be and he gave the heading 072 and we slowed down 95. I clicked my lights on so Major Allison could see them just a little while, just my formation and tip light for about a minute and a half. We flicked those on and I was trying to go

a little left of the heading to find the small river and called out a couple of times. I was on 068 instead of 072. Most of the time I went 2 or 3 degrees left because I could see the ground wall. I was looking for the river because we had planned -- I needed a little base leg to go across. We put out the lights in a minute and a half; then shortly after that the flares went. I was flying left seat. The crew said, "There it is!" We turned toward what we thought was it and about that time I didn't see any river in front of them and I said, "Hold your fire, I think it's a school house." We got a little closer and could see the big tall building. The buildings were too tall and there was no river so I did what Major Peshkin said. I saw the road going out; I turned left to go up to the camp and when I did -- I was in the left seat -- I saw Banana turning behind me, so I knew he was following me, and wasn't too concerned. Captain Waldron caught the site; we were right over it. I established a hover and swung around and got right over the school and started forward. The right gunner took the right tower; the left gunner got the left tower and I kept going by it. The trees were quite a bit higher than predicted. About that time Captain Waldron started screaming to get the hell out of there or something. I thought he was talking to me but my gun was still firing so I didn't move. I didn't leave. We were moving very slowly. The gun quit firing -- he was still saying "get out of there," but he wasn't talking to me, I found out later. There was some helicopter landing near the school. We came around and found our holding area with no problem, and landed without any lights and flares were still in the air when we landed. And I stayed there between 3 and 500 feet. I would estimate the time from the school until we were over the wall firing was about 13-15 seconds. It took no time at all. We landed there and when we landed we got a main transmission chip light that wouldn't reset. I didn't put my lights back on. I should have done that so they could find me.

MAJOR DONAHUE: We asked for SAR escort but we didn't have time to worry about it.

~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you ever find out what did cause the light?

MAJOR DONAHUE: No. It was a fairly new - on the H-53 you get slivers off a new transmission and there are frequent lights and I had a new transmission and when it came on I tied those two together and figured it was just a sliver. We had instruments to watch so there was no problem.

LT COL KRALJEV: No other indication of anything wrong?

MAJOR DONAHUE: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: You stayed in your holding point until what time?

MAJOR DONAHUE: We stayed there and of course we just sat and Apple 1 got his troops and Apple 2 went in. It took us a little while after Apple 2 because we didn't know if we were going to pick up any troops seeing as there were no people in the compound, so we sat there and initially we had a little trouble finding out if everybody was gone on Apple 2 or whether we should come in. But finally Apple 2 made a definite call that we were clear, followed very shortly thereafter by one of the Peaches telling us everybody was gone so we just took off from our position, low leveling out. We had a count on what we thought were SAM's. We saw what we thought were 10 to 12 SAM's; we saw about six bursts of 37 way late in the game -- we may not even have been airborne -- no, we were sitting on the ground to the north of the compound the first time we saw any 37. We saw the SAM hit the, apparently, the 105, I guess, and catch on fire. Then we went low level. I was sort of surprised that 4 and 5 were still waiting on the island -- I was glad they were. They stayed, waited on the island until we went by, as briefed.

LT COL KRALJEV: How did you know they were there?

~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR DONAHUE: I saw one of them. We heard radio talk, too. We heard Apple 4 ask Peaches if we were all out. Peaches said we were on the way out and I believe 4 came back and said to tell 3 to tell us when he passes us and we did and they relayed it and they came right after.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: When you hit that hootch, did it catch on fire?

MAJOR DONAHUE: I think so. We think he set it on fire.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: Because when we were about Charley Point, I could look over and I saw a lot of flame and smoke.

LT COL BRITTON: The bridge was not burning when I landed.

MAJOR DONAHUE: He said he saw a lot of sparks when he was hitting it and by the time we turned and landed it was burning real well. The hootch was on fire when we landed. It must have been your troops that put it on then; by the time we turned you had already landed and started out. By the time we sat down we speculated Hodges might have got it on fire.

LT COL ALLISON: I don't know whether it was our fire or you know the Special Forces that threw grenades in the thing, so I don't know what set it on fire. The only fire in the compound was the northeast guard tower when we landed.

LT COL BRITTON: That is all we saw, too; we did not see the hootch burning when we made the approach.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Just as a matter of thinking back, I think we were well-schooled in radio silence. I am disappointed I didn't make some radio calls there. For instance, when I flew over the school and saw Banana behind me I assumed the whole thing was behind me but because we had been taught to stay on interphone and by the time everything happened, I never had a chance to flip my radio on. They tried to make some calls but I think we should have abandoned radio silence or

had preset our radios sooner. ~~This could have been~~ This could have been just my error in not doing it but as soon as my left gunner hit the tower real good and he kept calling me and telling me repeatedly, tell them I didn't get anybody and there might be a man loose in the compound. Finally, I did make that call; I don't know if anybody heard it. I inadvertently went over the bridge and scared him while I was fiddling with the radio. It would have been better, I think, if I was preset on FOX and he was preset on UNIFORM or something like that at the IP so we were ready to make calls in the event emergencies arose.

MAJOR MONTREM: Our radios are maybe a little different, than the 130. To use your interphone exclusively you set up on a command radio.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Because of inadvertent transmissions during practice you did -- or Major Peshkin perhaps had emphasized for us to stay on intercom. But the wavelength switch was on intercom.

LT COL ALLISON: Do you know exactly - did you have the radar altimeter? Do you remember what your altitude was on your initial approach?

MAJOR DONAHUE: What do you mean? When I went across the school? I went across it pretty low.

LT COL ALLISON: In going in on your run? From a minute 45 seconds to the time you got over the school.

MAJOR DONAHUE: As the thing went in, as we went in on the course I started descending from the 500 because I could see real well and I wanted to be in a position to be on the approach. The lowest before the flares I went was 300 feet on the radar altimeter and he confirms this. That was the lowest before I saw the thing and started actual approach.

MAJOR KALEN: We never saw the river, either. Maybe if we had been 100 to 200 feet higher, we might have been able to see the river,

which was the checkpoint. I saw the road.

MAJOR DONAHUE: The lowest we went was 300. I agree with him; I was leading 300 feet.

~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR KALEN: We had nothing else to go by; I knew you were low but I didn't know how high above the ground we were until the flares went off. I don't believe I went to 300.

LT COL ZEHNDER: On the barometric altimeter we were reading 100 feet. We had no way of knowing because we had no radar altimeter on the airplane.

MAJOR DONAHUE: He had his on 200 and mine on 3 and they weren't on; we pre-briefed that and we had set it that way.

LT COL ZEHNDER: The river was hard to see when the flares went off, the river was the same color as the vegetation as you probably noticed, and it didn't stand out under the flare light. Under the moonlight, I think it would have stood out well. It was stagnant like green or something like that and blended in with the rice paddies around there.

LT COL KRALJEV: Banana?

MAJOR KALEN: At pop up point we saw the lights on Apple 3, followed him for a while, followed him fairly closely. The flares went off. There was conversation in the cockpit. I saw the road to my right, and I was asking if anybody saw it to the left and no one saw it. At this time, I had abandoned my heading indicator which is next to useless anyway and was following Apple 3. I saw the square-shaped object; however, it turned out we got over in toward trees right on the near side of the wall or the area where we thought the school was and we saw the buildings on the other side of the trees. Of course, when we got over it directly we realized this was not the place, it was the school. We broke left immediately knowing the compound was to the left. We acquired it just prior to Apple 3's firing. At which time we were downstream --

~~TOP SECRET~~

fortunately, we didn't pick up any ricochets. We were in behind him, I would say within 15 seconds or maybe less. There was some tossing about as we came across the fence. I thought it was his rotor wash or mine. Touchdown was more or less as programmed. We struck something upon touchdown. I was higher than anticipated, so I landed more positively, knowing full well I was going to hit some trees because that is all I saw in front of me. This hard object we think was a cement tower to the left which I did not see and we will have to talk to our flight engineer to confirm this. It slowed the rotor system down pretty rapidly and the deceleration caused the aircraft to yaw about 40 or 50 degrees while it was on the ground. The sudden stoppage jettisoned my special forces man who was in the door a little ahead of program. He was thrown out. He smartly picked himself up at which time we shut down everything. It was almost a simultaneous stop of everything. Whatever it hit stopped it pretty quickly, of course. We shut everything down as I said posthaste and waited their return.

LT COL ZEHNDER: The trees in there were a lot, lot higher. Once we got down below the trees, you know, we got down, we had good flare light -- things got dark very quick because we were right up against the trees in the compound itself.

LT COL KRALJEV: How far would you say?

LT COL ZEHNDER: 60 feet. The landing was beautiful.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you give any thought to flying that machine out?

MAJOR KALEN: We had fully intended not to. This guard tower on the opposite side of the POW which we couldn't fire upon was my biggest worry, so I was going to try and create as much scare factor for him as possible and cut off as many trees as possible to throw debris in his direction.

LT COL KRALJEV: This was the east tower?

MAJOR KALEN: That was the east tower. Consequently, I may have been a little bit closer than I should have been, but had he been there, I am sure he would have been totally incapacitated, which was my intent -- so, to answer your question, no, I hadn't planned on bringing it back.

LT COL ZEHNDER: We did expend considerable ammunition on certain buildings within the school complex.

LT COL KRALJEV: You did fire?

LT COL ZEHNDER: Yes, I would say about 8 to 10 guns.

LT COL KRALJEV: You did not fire?

MAJOR DONAHUE: No, sir, not in this group.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you go across it then?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Yes, sir, I went across it.

LT COL ZEHNDER: They were firing the whole time. We were coming up on it about at the time they acquired it and they stopped firing as we broke off. We broke off, I would say, almost just directly over it.

LT COL KRALJEV: What were they shooting at? What could you see?

MAJOR KALEN: I didn't see anything that might be conclusive as a tower; I was looking for the landing spot and there was something in it, so I didn't know what they could have seen that looked like a tower.

LT COL ZEHNDER: On the left-hand side going in with everything blanked out and from the angle they were shooting at they well could mistake the place for those buildings we had to the north on the compound and the tower because the trees going around the building looked an awful lot like a wall to start with, and you have got to realize that they had a very small angle they could see, shooting outside the airplane. From the right, I don't know because I couldn't see from the right.

MAJOR DONAHUE: It was, as I say, from back here it was square and it had vegetation ~~around it~~ which we had anticipated. There was some fixation in my mind the first thing that is going to jump out on me is a square thing and this was a square thing, and that was it, until we got closer to it.

LT COL ROPKA: Did you have a sense of being to the right of the flares at that point?

MAJOR KALEN: Slightly, yes. When we approached, the big tall trees in front of us on the near side of this area, I could see through the trees, buildings which were supposed to be the yard and, of course, to me, they became suspicious then.

LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else on Banana?

MAJOR KALEN: No. I might add one thing; we didn't waste more than 15 or 20 seconds at most, some key visual checkpoint would put us in it right away. The stream was nondescript; something that we know would very definitely stand out and pick it up; had we offset properly to pick up the stream and filed down around it, followed it, I think would have been better. To find a place like that was a little more difficult than anticipated.

LT COL ZEHNDER: Also, Lt Col Brown said he could see the whole force after the 130 had left. It was going straight towards him; he could see two helicopters veering off, going to the right, so had he gone on the air -- he said he could see everything from where he was, if he had set up on VF we would have been in good shape. So, I think an airplane behind us, if a guy can see it, tell you where to go instead of keeping your mouth all the time.

LT COL BRITTON: This had been briefed before; if anybody acquired the target, he would open up because radio silence was out after that. Marty has explained why he didn't. I think it comes back to this business, "How surprised do you want them to be?" All the way we backed this

thing off to 20 miles to give us a little better chance to find the place and we have been talking about the flare pops and all the time a lot of us, I think, just got caught up in trying to get in there too fast.

LT COL KRALJEV: If there is nothing else on the Banana, let's move on -- Apple 1.

LT COL BRITTON: Apple 1 at pop up point went to 80 072 heading and moved on. We were discussing in there whether we could see Banana or not because that's the one we wanted to follow, and we couldn't see Banana. We felt safe because he had briefed me at what altitude he was going to be at, roughly 400 and we were going to stay at 5. We got in there. The flares go off. We then picked up both 3 out in front and Banana both heading for this complex. Apple 3 went across it and didn't fire and then I saw him turn left and it was my impression, "there's some reason why he didn't fire," but it didn't occur to me that he recognized he was in the wrong place because it was right there, where it ought to be. I'm watching airplanes and not the ground part of it at all. Then he turned left and departed and Banana came in on what I thought was his landing approach firing. I quit looking at that place altogether and started concentrating on the LZ. On touchdown we saw there were things that didn't look right. For example, many more power lines around this place than had been briefed -- but I dismissed that as, "Well, that's another thing that didn't show up in the photographs." About this time, our attention was distracted while sitting on the ground by the fact that our ramp wouldn't open so we're taking care of that problem, getting the PJ back from the left gun. He had fired at a building which closely resembled the target. He opened the ramp so there was 15 to 20 seconds after we landed before the people got out. As soon as they got out, I got an "all clear" to go, took off and headed west again and about this time Apple 2 on the radio called me and said,

"You put your people out on the wrong spot," so I said, "Okay" and I called and said, "Give me a light and I am going to come back and get you." So we had a little difficulty making sure they were the people we wanted to pick up because we were afraid of picking up the wrong bunch. He gave us a light, we went in and got them, and moved all to the other place, landed, put them out and returned to our holding area. When we got back there, 3 turned his tip lights on and 2 turned his on and that left a spot for me in the middle and that's where I landed. If you want to figure out when those first two SAM's came up, to my left, they came up the first time we were on the ground, close to the school.

LT COL ALLISON: I think it was the second time when you were reloading.

MAJOR MONTREM: The two SAM's came up and one exploded still to the southeast of that position.

LT COL ROPKA: Had the flares gone out when you discovered your mistake on the first landing?

LT COL BRITTON: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: How about when you landed the second time?

LT COL BRITTON: Oh, yes.

LT COL ROPKA: How far would you estimate you were west of the school when you turned around? A mile?

LT COL BRITTON: Half a mile; I was out to the holding area.

LT COL ROPKA: When you got back on the ground, were they ready to board at that point, or was there hesitation?

LT COL BRITTON: No hesitation. They were there. Let's see. Just as we were leaving with them on board again the scanner called out some strange figure running around the airplane, but we had all our people, so it was not any of them.

LT COL ROPKA: And when you went over for your landing now at the proper place, did you perceive any firing or threat of any kind as you made your approach there? ~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL BRITTON: Just a lot of firing going on in the buildings. Landed at the original LZ.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 1 LZ then?

LT COL BRITTON: That's right.

LT COL KRALJEV: How long would you estimate from lift off to touchdown with them on board?

LT COL BRITTON: I would say 30 seconds. I would say from the time they should have been in their LZ until they were in their LZ probably was 3 minutes.

LT COL ROPKA: Did you observe firing from the school?

LT COL BRITTON: I didn't see any.

MAJOR MONTREM: When we were making the first approach there was a light on in that building and it was turned out as we touched down. I didn't see any ground fire.

LT COL KRALJEV: The people you said you saw milling around, were you able to identify anything specific?

LT COL BRITTON: Black pajamas -- dark blue. There was one thing; this complex building, the first time in I was concentrating on the LZ, the second time in we noticed and I would say that there was something else there besides what is called a school because the place has antennas on the building; and in the complex - high antennas, big antennas, and there are power lines out there in the field which go into it to indicate that they are a big user of power. I don't think it's a school, as such.

LT COL ROPKA: Did your gunner on the first landing at his first firing, fire as much as he desired?

LT COL BRITTON: Yes, and into the building, that he thought was the building.

LT COL KRALJEV: I presume when you landed over at the camp he did not fire?

LT COL BRITTON: No, no fire. Then after we had been in the holding area for perhaps five minutes, I would say -- maybe seven -- we were recalled as normal. By this time we had heard on UHF there wasn't anybody in there, so we knew what we were picking up when we went back in.

LT COL ROPKA: Did you see the A-1's beginning their work during your pick up of the Army at the school?

LT COL BRITTON: The only time I saw them at all was when we were enroute from the school back to the original LZ with the people on board, sort of scooting sideways across the ground, going north with our nose to the east all the time, and I saw a bunch of tracers come to my left and that was the Army working. That is the only time that I really paid any attention to them.

MAJOR RHEIN: I don't think -- we had not started to strafe at that time. This is when you were going back from the school to the LZ?

LT COL BRITTON: Yes.

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir, we didn't start strafing that bridge to the north until 20 minutes into the mission, sir.

LT COL ALLISON: Did you do anything to the south?

MAJOR RHEIN: No, sir, we did not.

LT COL KRALJEV: If you were 3 minutes late to the IP, you couldn't have been there very long if you were late getting your troops in.

LT COL ALLISON: We just made that assumption.

MAJOR DONAHUE: It was ~~very low level~~ and almost horizontal, either going west to east or northwest to southeast.

MAJOR RHEIN: It wasn't us because we didn't use the guns until about 20 minutes into the mission, probably.

MAJOR DONAHUE: When we were pulling out, we saw your guns in operation.

LT COL KRALJEV: The last time out?

MAJOR RHEIN: Okay, that was the only time we were strafing on that big bridge to the north.

LT COL BRITTON: I am reasonably sure we are right at what point we saw this burst going before we stopped for just a moment to see what was going on.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could it have been ground-to-ground?

LT COL BRITTON: I don't think so; the elevation of origin was too high.

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: My copilot said, "Where are those tracers coming from?" That was the same thing he is talking about.

LT COL ZEHNDER: Just after we broke through the wall and came outside I saw a wall of red come out; I thought it was you strafing to the north and east of the camp along the road.

LT COL ROPKA: Obviously, something was there. Are you, Colonel Britton, familiar with what an A-1 20 mm looks like? Did this appear to be a higher or lower light or fire?

LT COL BRITTON: I don't know; I don't remember.

MAJOR RHEIN: The A-1 you can almost count the rounds.

MAJOR DONAHUE: This was on his approach or hovering over there and both of us thought it was an A-1 but the rate of fire, the tracers were somewhat continuous. It was a fast rate of fire and it looked like two streams; it was south.

LT COL ROPKA: The only helicopter airborne there would have been 4 or 5.

LT COL BRITTON: All the helicopters were on the ground.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Originally, when you went back to pick up the people to move them back to the other area we could see you go across.

MAJOR MONTREM: There were some 300 foot hills to the west.

LT COL ZEHNDER: I was on the ground out of the camp and it looked to me they were hitting the road just a little bit to the north and east of the camp along the road that runs north and south. It was a pretty high rate of fire.

MAJOR RHEIN: That is not us.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's take a look at the helicopters.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: We both thought we heard Peach 01 call in from the west. At the same time he called in, we saw Apple 01. Before we could punch a button and say "look out!" or something, we could see tracers.

MAJOR RHEIN: I did call in from the west when I went into the foot bridge.

LT COL BRITTON: You may have been shooting at the foot bridge.

MAJOR RHEIN: No, we didn't shoot at the foot bridge.

LT COL ZEHNDER: I think I can fix a time here. This was just shortly prior to the time Green Star rockets going up.

MAJOR RHEIN: We were firing them.

LT COL KRALJEV: Then that is not the same time Lt Col Britton is talking about. If I understand it correctly you saw tracers as you were coming into Son Tay, the first time as you were coming into the camp.

LT COL BRITTON: That is the way I remember it.

LT COL KRALJEV: That would have been before you were firing.

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR DONAHUE: Two minutes ~~55 seconds~~ after we crossed over the delta I saw some from Son Tay -- I thought it was A-1's.

LT COL ZEHNDER: They shot an awful lot inside the compound, you know, the towers to the outside of the compound when they were in there.

LT COL KRALJEV: When you were coming in, was Apple 2 on the ground or was he out at the holding point?

CAPTAIN WALDRON: These we saw came from the air. They went under his tail rotors. We thought it was going to get his tail. They went right behind him and went under his tail rotor. From your direction and from our direction, we were sitting at about a 110 - 115 heading and he was crossing from right to left on this approach going towards the compound, and it went under and it was awful close to his tail.

LT COL KRALJEV: What lights did you have on then?

LT COL BRITTON: None.

MAJOR DONAHUE: We could see him silhouetted by the fire very nicely.

LT COL BRITTON: So we were recalled by WILD ROOT on UHF and I came in 30 seconds, and I was doing poor navigation that night -- I missed the LZ again. I finally got down and they were there. They didn't seem to be in any big hurry but very orderly. They got in, we picked up. We noticed that the tower power line had been blown down. Picked up, turned west and started coming out. At this time, we noticed ahead of us -- and I would say it was about a mile to two miles west of Son Tay, an airplane flying from south to north with position lights on. Low level, cruising by, didn't seem to be doing anything in particular, maybe looking and we just stayed under him.

LT COL KRALJEV: Fast mover?

LT COL BRITTON: No, I would say 150 miles, maybe. We just continued on our 260 heading and at 100 to 150 AGL doing about 150 knots.

We came up on the lake and that's when I called Apple 4 and told him I thought an airplane may have been hit by a SAM. That was my impression when that big explosion went up there. We had seen two lights converge. We had seen the SAM converge with another moving light but he rogered that and we just bugged on out. We had a call by our ramp man two or three times before we got to the river that things were after us and I think he was just a little excited about it so I calmed him down but he kept calling rockets following us. I think he was seeing SAM's and couldn't just judge how far they were. Before we got to the ridge east of the Black he got very excited and said, "Break left, it was right there," and I don't know what was right there. I didn't see anything. We went over that ridge and broke left and down into the river and down on the other side, kept bugging all the way out; we maintained good visual all the way.

LT COL ROPKA: You knew where you were when you crossed the river?

LT COL BRITTON: Oh, yes.

MAJOR SQUIRES: You didn't show any lights going out at all?

LT COL BRITTON: None.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 2, Lt Col Allison.

LT COL ALLISON: At the pop-up point, we were pretty well located. I was flying and watching Apple 1 and Major Strayer was calling out landmarks; he had himself well positioned. Everything was going on schedule. We held 72 degrees and I continued to watch Apple 1. The flares came out pretty much on schedule and I could see him going into a complex and also I could see Apple 3. I saw Banana firing tracers. As we came on in, it started looking to me -- I don't know what alerted me to it, a radio call or what -- but we finally confirmed that this was the wrong place to go in, and either myself or Major Strayer

heard that the other crew had landed at the wrong place, so we went and took Apple 1's position on the ground. We fired at the troops there as we came into a hover and landed. We took off and went back toward the original complex to see if we were needed there, if something happened to Apple 1 or he did not get the message because there was quite a bit of radio chatter at that time in the cockpit, so I heard him confirm that he was going back in for a short period of time, and finally I got the impression that he was going in, so we went over to our holding area and after that it was pretty much what everybody else has relayed so far. We saw about 8 to 10 SAM's ... we saw the SAM hit what we thought at first was a Sandy. Later we found about all five of them. While we were sitting there on the ground we saw this stranger roam through the area. We were laying there facing the compound, must have been on a pretty much easterly heading and he came across. Right after he had left us, at approximately the time he would be coming out, he just turned his lights on because he was heading back like he was exiting the area. As he came up and I realized he was probably going better than 150 knots; the bird was moving out. It wasn't a jet going all out, but it was moving faster than you'd have thought. He had running lights, position lights.

MAJOR SQUIRES: Steady red and green.

LT COL ALLISON: I was facing the compound. They had a pretty good fire going on down there; I couldn't catch a silhouette so I couldn't tell whether it was a helicopter or a fixed wing or a jet but it was moving out a little bit, a little bit faster than a helicopter could have been.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Would this have been about H plus 20?

MAJOR DONAHUE: About the time Britton was coming out with his load?

LT COL ALLISON: While we were sitting there in our holding area our ramp gunner cut loose with about 50 rounds and apologized for his finger on the trigger. We were called in shortly after Apple 1 carried his load out and we were fairly sure we had WILD ROOT on board. We were carrying all the people out. It took a little bit of time to confirm it so I think Apple 3 had a little bit of trouble getting the word that we had all the people on board.

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's see if we can clarify the message that came out, that you were carrying 23. What did you transmit?

LT COL BRITTON: BLUE BOY 2 called me on the interphone and said, "We have 23 aboard."

LT COL ALLISON: Finally the crew on my airplane managed to get 34 of the boys, of the 34 they had on the ground. In the pattern at Udorn we finally admitted we had 34 people in the back of that airplane. Up to that time we counted only 33. We didn't get the information until we were on our way to Udorn that we did have 34 on board that aircraft.

LT COL KRALJEV: The question is this: 23 is the transmission that came out.

LT COL BRITTON: BLUE BOY 2 said, "We have got 23 aboard, one man missing, his name is Red Wing 03," so that is why I said Apple 1 has got 23 aboard with one missing and that's Red Wing 03, and he acknowledged. Then a long time later, I forget if it was prompted by an outside question, recount, we recounted and we came up with 25 including the Air Force type; I guess BLUE BOY hadn't counted them. 23 to 25, so we retransmitted that.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Of course, everybody in the objective area knew rather than items it had our own people. We had no code word for saying that we had 23 or 25 or 33 of our own people.

LT COL ROPKA: Was this on UHF?

LT COL KRALJEV: You never tied the 23 to the code name of

(b)(1) ?

LT COL BRITTON: No, not until much later.

LT COL KRALJEV: I am trying to find out how 23 (b)(1)

was forwarded.

LT COL BRITTON: That was never forwarded.

LT COL ALLISON: It came to us as a question, "How many (b)(1)

(b)(1) have you got?"

MAJOR PANNILL: Cherry 2 relayed a message?

CAPTAIN WALDRON: I couldn't tell you where it came from.

They said there were no prisoners. The first Apple came in and the guy from the ground said we have got 23 items on board. (b)(1) 23 items. I am sure somewhere somebody converted 23 items.

LT COL BRITTON: We never heard that, I am sorry to say.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: I was really confused then when I heard the word "items".

LT COL KRALJEV: You did then forward "23 (b)(1) ?

MAJOR MONTREM: We heard the first transmission, there is nobody in the compound, we are in the clear. Nobody asked us until we were almost back to Udorn.

LT COL KRALJEV: The 23 item bit came through on UHF and that's what the General heard. That's just the fact that they were monitoring UHF and he heard it.

LT COL KRALJEV: He asked it to be confirmed.

LT COL CLARK: This was some time later and he did not intend to ask at all. We had set up a procedure where he could get a (b)(1) (b)(1) count coming back out and he had decided he didn't want to do that. However, after everybody was outbound somebody called him and put the pressure on him and said they wanted a (b)(1) count, and we tried to get it.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL (USN): He asked - has the (b)(1) item already gone on the hot line and I asked confirm (b)(1) Apples 2 through 5. That's when the first zero showed up. ~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL CLARK: Again not from any aircraft. It was affirmative. We picked up 23 items on UHF. I heard that comment. When he tried to get the count as you say he said Apples 2 through 5 because he knew what was on 1 when they came back negative, he came back and did the whole thing again. This took place in about ten minutes.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: I don't believe any number other than zero associated with (b)(1)

LT COL KRALJEV: The question went out "Confirm 23 (b)(1) (b)(1)" and it came back into (b)(1) confirmed.

LT COL BRITTON: I never heard that.

LT COL KRALJEV: The General had it because he called me.

LT COL CLARK: Yes, sir, you are right; then people started figuring out what (b)(1) was. After he got the zero from Apples 2 through 5, he went back and confirmed on (b)(1)

LT COL KRALJEV: This question has already been answered as far as our headquarters is concerned, so it's purely academic. We are trying to find out how the thing did evolve.

LT COL CLARK: Didn't you say you were able to monitor the UHF in the exiting area?

LT COL WILLETT: Yes, but it depends upon the attitude of your airplane at the time.

LT COL CLARK: He was on the ground.

LT COL WILLETT: We were never on the ground. As soon as somebody transmits in your airplane, we can hear it.

LT COL KRALJEV: That is the problem; we never heard a thing until I talked to you.

LT COL BLOSCH: We left you at the IP. I was getting ready to make my turn; I had already dispatched the A-1's in order and on time and for about 1-1/2 minutes late but carrying them approximately thirty seconds further. We made our right turn with the northwest wind, which turn put us between 3 and 3/10 south of our track going back out. We planted our two BLUEYS and the logs on the side of Ba Vi in the lower slopes. Both BLUEYS went; the logs went and proceeded to our holding area. We didn't perform our holding in the manner in which it was planned. And I think right here I will tell you -- I'll let Captain Kender say why we did not.

LT COL KRALJEV: It was landed, wasn't it?

LT COL BLOSCH: It was landed.

CAPTAIN KENDER: Any time we gained altitude, of course, I couldn't see the terrain. Any time we poked our nose around a mountain there was a FAN SONG there. It was annotated on the tape. One time they looked at us for ten to fifteen seconds and I got one flicker. To me, this is not a good indicator because for an hour, hour and a half to two hours, the 26 was flipping back and forth. I'm not real confident in the equipment so it might have been a malfunction. But it seemed like we were there for thirty or forty minutes, almost continually in the beam of the FAN SONG radar.

LT COL ROPKA: Can you differentiate between the enemy working you and their high movers above you?

CAPTAIN KENDER: No, sir. If we're in the beam width he might not be looking at us but that is the danger of FAN SONG.

LT COL BLOSCH: At times when they called SAM, occasionally we could see the SAM's going up and it was then he would call me and say that is not for us and I would allow the aircraft to get back up and for about 15 to 18 seconds we would have free flying -- after that we would have to get down below 500 feet.

CAPTAIN KENDER: It is very possible at the range we were at ~~that altitude~~ that altitude they could not have hit us but we had some visual sightings on missiles which should have been low. I heard the WEASELS -- I also heard some other calls, SAM's! SAM's, that went low. I might have actually over-reacted to the FAN SONG threat.

LT COL BLOSCH: I don't know how many I saw. I can only say several. I only saw two when they flashed, they lit up our side of the mountain well above us.

LT COL ROPKA: Major Gargus, did you maintain navigation throughout these maneuvers?

MAJOR GARGUS: It was impossible. We had no heading. The only thing I was able to do was to monitor radar. We had numerous obstacle warnings and I was calling off the high terrain. I was getting radar fails which were not associated with obstacle warnings. This must have been due to the antenna failure because of continuous turns and positive and negative G's, and so on. This is one thing I have never observed before but I am sure this is what it was.

LT COL BLOSCH: We were turning close enough to the hills so we would have gotten warning on them.

MAJOR GARGUS: Visual navigation was good from the front. I was behind the curtain; I never saw anything.

LT COL BLOSCH: The valley floor was covered with thick ground fog; then occasionally a clump of trees would be sticking up through but you couldn't see the ground. Above the fog layer it was very clear and it was VFR.

CAPTAIN MAZUREK: The plan mentions, sir, C-130 capability of protecting itself against FAN SONG radar.

LT COL KRALJEV: That was changed in the rewrite of the plan. That's understood.

CAPTAIN MAZUREK: I don't believe that Cherry 2's role after the drop was defined until possibly the day of the mission. ~~TOP SECRET~~

LT COL KRALJEV: That has been noted.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Where we saw that white light several times, that was southeast of Ba Vi, in that general area, down the valley.

MAJOR SQUIRES: I saw it in the southern orbit down in the marsh land and it looked just to be south of Ba Vi and it looked either over Ba Vi or on the other side toward the objective area.

MAJOR DONAHUE: Whatever it was just seemed to be random, back and forth up there, oh, four or five thousand feet. I saw it many times.

CAPTAIN MOSLEY: During the time we were circling around it was only two spots; there was a valley down toward where 271, and it was either right down that valley or right due east. Of course, he didn't know our heading or he could know approximate position but there was just two sources.

MAJOR SQUIRES: Our pattern there, the southern most track we got stuck in the western part of it and just kept doing a 360. Every time we'd come east again we'd shake it up, and it was time to go north and instead of going in front of the mountain, we went behind the mountain into that swamp area where it was covered with fog and did a 360 behind the mountain there. Every time we kind of got toward the southern part, east again coming down that valley they would call a SAM.

LT COL KRALJEV: When did you finally get out?

CAPTAIN CONNAUGHTON: We were orbiting just about over our departure point behind the IP. We thought everybody was out and we were all clear to go. I called a hack on the lake and we started out and one of the SANDYS called back and said they were going to stay on the other side of the river for a while and get rid of some of their stuff and

we were just about to the IP and somebody called, "Bull's Eye" three times and we heard the SANDYS moving saying "Let's get out of here" and we did a 180 and came back over departure point again and pushed off.

MAJOR SKEELS: We no longer got any fire from the southeast, it was strictly on from the east and it sloughed off some.

CAPTAIN KENDER: I don't know exactly where the F-4 holding southeast but about 20 minutes after H we did pick up airborne intercept -- I thought at the time it was an F-4, it sounded that way, but it is possible it wasn't. That was a judgment on my part, he never did make a pass and we continued on. It was not a threat at that time.

LT COL KRALJEV: Up to this point.

MAJOR GARGUS: This is coming from our loadmasters. After we dropped our napalm a loadmaster reported tracers and he reported this as coming from Ba Vi. Later on we discussed it on the ground and we determined that they were not coming from Ba Vi but from behind, but it appeared they were coming in a direction from behind Ba Vi and in the direction of the objective area. Did anybody see that?

MAJOR SQUIRES: I think they were coming from the east ridge of this river on the edge of town. I saw what we assumed to be ground fire and we did see one good burst.

MAJOR GARGUS: This was H plus 5 minutes?

MAJOR SQUIRES: It appeared to be twin barreled, two lines of tracers; hard to say - they were quite a ways away from us.

MAJOR GARGUS: North or south of the IP?

MAJOR SQUIRES: South of the IP, almost due east there, off the river bank where we saw it, on the east side of the river. Northwest corner of Ba Vi; there's a little town down there that had a few lights.

LT COL KRALJEV: Peach 1?

MAJOR RHEIN: When we dropped off the Cherry 2, picked up ~~TOP SECRET~~ flares, started our climb toward 3,000 feet and we didn't quite reach 3,000 feet by the time we got into the objective area although I was climbing at a lower power setting so he could stay with me. As we approached the objective area I got confused in that the firing pattern was not as I had noticed it out of C2, I could see one chopper firing here and a little bit further apart I could see another chopper firing. That gave me an indication maybe something was wrong but I was not aware of what it was at the time. We did get over the objective area, the flares were directly over the foot bridge, southeast of the objective area, and of course they were headed for the citadel where they eventually impacted. We just stayed about 3,000 feet there for I don't know, four or five minutes, I guess, just watching. The Army didn't call on us for about 3 or 4 minutes. Finally, they called us and told us to hit the foot bridge at the southeast of the objective area, which we did. I put two M-47 bombs into the area and Peach 2 came right behind me and put two more in that area. We pulled back up and orbited. Periodically, we would drop down to the road southeast of the objective area and take off our rock eyes one at a time, lightening up the aircraft. Some time in there, WILD ROOT called us and told us to take out the big bridge. With the northwest wind we had, I instructed Bob we would use 20 mm only because we didn't want to put white phosphorus in that area for fear of smoke coming down from the southeast across the compound so we started strafing on the big bridge. Right after I pulled off from my first strafing pass back to under 3,000 feet got the word the first SAM's. I thought I saw it coming my way. I went around and rolled on over and went back down and went down the Red River between the banks. The moon was out so there wasn't any problem. I had less than one hundred feet on my altimeter, but I wasn't really watching that. From there we stayed kind of low quite a bit of the

time and this could have been what some of the choppers might have ~~seen there~~ seen there. We were down 300, 400 feet, 180 - 200 knots in that area. We would pop up - strafe - somebody would call "SAM". Peach 3 called SAM's again and we'd go back down and this continued on throughout most of the mission. We finally got rid of about half of our ordnance and I was not real sure how much longer we were going to have in the area, so as I planned I called 3 to come in. This was also about the time that I heard Lt Col Britton call he thought a SAM had hit one of the aircraft. No. 3 didn't answer me right off and I was afraid it had hit Peach 3. Then I called 4 and 4 called me and said they were having trouble out there and I thought that was confirming they had hit Peach 3, but that didn't happen, luckily. However, 3 and 4 came into the area. One and 2 exited out across the Black River and then everybody else started out. Other than that, there was no problem.

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: Peach 2. It was a very hair-raising time, to say the least, over the target. My copilot was talking occasionally, not a whole lot, but when I tried to listen to what he would say a UHF or FM would take place and I had to determine the priority of what I wanted to listen to and in the process I missed some calls, I am sure, but also I had trouble keeping lead in sight, and I didn't want to have a mid-air right over the compound so at one time I saw him pass directly under me with the moon on his wing tips, pass no more than 50 -75 feet below me, and I concentrated from then on trying to pick him up, not looking at the ground too much worried about this. Then we heard the activity on some chopper landing some place else and I felt at that time Banana had not landed on the proper side of the wall. This is what I thought so in my own mind things were kind of turned into a bucket of worms. Then they called that AXLE HEAD was lost. To me, this meant he was killed because he was just lost; it was repeated a couple of times

so I was really depressed. So the report came there were no items ~~TOP SECRET~~
two or three times repeated negative items, still checking, a little bit
later the SAM's came up and they appeared to be coming right at us and
my copilot became quite excited and said they were right on my tail,
telling me to get down lower and lower and lower and we were very low
and I missed the call Peach 1 was leaving the area but when Peach 3 was
inbound I figured I better be outbound. As I approached the Black River
I heard MIG's in the area and because I had half my ordnance on board
I pulled the handle to get rid of my ordnance and started jinking, looking
for landing lights because I assumed maybe these MIG's were going to
be on my tail, and I spent some time turning and jinking. As I egressed on,
alone without anybody in sight, really concerned, we were on the heading
we were going out on and we were down on the deck and we felt then we
were pretty much on our own but the radio chatter comes and again it was
hard to even find a time when I could call Peach 1 and ask if he had his
lights on. I figured it was more important that the troops on the ground
be able to transmit because they were having a problem also and I didn't
want to clutter up the airway by trying to have definite visual with Peach 1.
So that is pretty much the way it looked from Peach 2.

LT COL KRALJEV: What was your altitude when the SAM was
approaching?

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: If you take the 1500 feet or below, it was not
any problem. I dropped down to that altitude and I ended up a couple of
orbits in passing over the city probably at 75 and 100 feet.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: SAM definitely has a capability less than 1500 feet.

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: We all had that impression but we went down.
Apple 1 had called that SAM had got one. No call signs and I saw the
explosion and I thought it was Peach 1 gone, knocked down, so there I
was with my leader shot down. It was not too long before he made a radio
call and I was greatly relieved.

LT COL ROPKA: You in essence were operating independently in the target area?

~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: To some extent. I was close enough in the ordnance passes to drop right in and follow him.

LT COL ROPKA: Could you see him when he would pop up?

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: I only saw him when he was expending ordnance.

MAJOR RHEIN: I had Major Gochnauer in sight most of the time.

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: About half way when I decided this mid-air was very much a likelihood I turned my top fuselage light on so at least he would see me if I couldn't see him and I operated then with my light on.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you ever meet up with him before you got to Udorn?

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: Yes, we joined half way home; he done a couple 360's.

MAJOR SKEELS: As I mentioned earlier when I located the visual checkpoints and was sure that was what it was, the copilot said that's Ba Vi and the finger lakes, I ignored the 130 and started easing off to the right. I had a light problem, a flashing white light in the leading edge of the wing right gear down indications for carrier operations was stuck on. The only way I could get it off was to turn the master light off so I flew the whole mission with no external lights at all. So when we broke from the C-130, #4 followed me for a while but shortly thereafter he was forced to go to his pre-briefed holding altitude.

LT COL ROPKA: Was the Napalm marker that was burning of any value to you, Peaches 1 and 2 in reorienting yourselves and working?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, I knew it was there, I didn't have any trouble orienting myself at all. Like I say, the city stood out, the industrial area stood out. You could see the foot bridge. You could see the school and

~~TOP SECRET~~

it was just like looking at a map all right. There was no problem at all. The little river was a little harder to see but that was the way I could pick up where the compound was where the river ends and broke east. The compound just had to be right there. As I say, I was at 3,000 feet; it was a little easier to see from up there.

MAJOR SKEELS: After we made a couple turns I was sure 4 lost me because I wasn't concentrating on my wingman so he climbed to pre-briefed holding altitude, 2500, and I went to 2,000, and we were holding on the logs at Ba Vi, east of there slightly. There were what appeared to be campfire lights. I was interested more in anything that could be a threat to the force on egress and the copilot mentioned the tracers from back by the river which I never did see, so we talked it over whether that would be a factor or not and he said no it looked like everybody could get to the south, around them, and there was no problem. There were a couple of trucks out there going along the road, minding their own business, so the radio chatter in the compound area started picking up a lot and there didn't seem to be much activity where I was, so I thought I would get a little closer, which was my first mistake. Every direction I came across I don't know how many trucks; they all seemed to be driving a little bit and then stopping. I didn't know whether they were setting up to fire or what they were doing, but they got to be a bit much. I got over to the Napalm fire. That area seemed to be a little calmer so I held from there on a southeasterly circular orbit, at 1,000 most of them; 2,000 feet occasionally and my stub tank ran dry so I had internal fuel only and began to consider fuel and ordnance remaining and I called 4 that I was starting to jettison my rock eyes and my CBU. I found that the rock eye next to the stub tank was jammed and I had to later pull everything off but about the time I heard "negative items" and some chatter about ground fire or somebody else taking fire all I could vision was SAR then so I

moved in a little bit closer, still a mile and a half or two miles out at least, and then "AXLE HEAD is lost" and then over in the east I could see this flare light up quite a ways over and for a few seconds I couldn't figure out who was dropping flares over there, and about that time it went up instead of coming down. I thought it was a SAM. We were flying on a north, northwest heading. I had questioned Captain Jacobs quite thoroughly on the maximum range and so forth, and I was going to fly to a point just over the finger lakes which according to his chart was about the maximum point they could go. The first SAM seemed to have our number on it. We were maintaining a northerly heading and I think 4 called in SAM's also as a backup. Like he says, I got down to, we got down quite low. The copilot said "pull out" or something I didn't really catch, because there was some other chatter right then too, and I had 180 feet on the altimeter. I didn't know what the elevation was, so we made a couple circles out there and then fly back up and started back in, and here came 3 more -- so we played this game for about 10 minutes, and I seem to recall 3 salvos of 3 in our general direction. And then about the time, I believe it was, that Apple 1 had to pick up his people and had, was starting out there appeared to be a salvo of 3 SAM's off to the south.

After the second or third salvo, we appeared to be in a straight easterly heading, and I saw the lift-off of one or two SAM's, went straight up in the area and exploded and there was a flash of three or four fireballs which I didn't connect with JP-4 on a heading that looked to be a southerly heading. They had no more burned out, then a single Triple A off to the north and another single and then about 10 to 15 bursts in a real tight cluster right directly under where the fireballs had been. I have never seen 85's but from depth perception and judgment in trying to make a guess it looked like 85's. I don't know whether it was or not. I could

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be mistaken, it could have been 100 or anything; it could have been 37. There appeared to be 20 to 25 bursts in a real tight group and that's the only Triple A I saw. The school area, the driver training area, the other area off to the southwest of the objective area were blocked out. In the moonlight on occasion I would see a nice quiet spot which looked like a well-gardened cluster of buildings in good repair with maybe painted metal roofs or whatever, and couldn't see any fence or anything around it, and I could only assume it was some of the things we had seen on the picture. There were no lights there and no traffic around there. When Peach 1 called us in, I started at about 1200 or 2000 feet and one of them called "clear the area" and a black shape went right under my nose. I don't know whether it was a chopper or an A-1 because of the angular speed and both blacked out. I had planned to make my first orbit around in an orientation maneuver. Picking up the camp was easy. There were several fires around. I recall the big building there was on fire, the fire that we had seen earlier. The fire had progressed to a point where it looked like a frame house skeleton, the rafters were burning. Everything else had died down. I remember seeing out of the corner of my eye what apparently was a guard tower set on fire earlier. I completed about 270 degrees of turn and somebody called, "Everybody out of the area!", or "Wild Root is out of the Area!" I don't recall what was said. So I called 4 and said, "Let's go with them," so we worked our way west. Again, I didn't see any ground for a while up to the IP, turned around Ba Vi and pointed out to the south, southwest and south of the track and fired off our three bombs and rockets into the mountainside there -- which when I think it over, other people probably thought was something else -- and then pulled the handle to get rid of the rest of my load. Proceeded from there to the border holding point and was starting to run a little low on fuel. I waited for 5 and 5, both Peach and Apple 4 and 5, and I

thought they apparently had followed, so I pressed on. Joined up with somebody about the channel K08 and proceeded in from there.

LT COL ROPKA: Did either of you ever see any trucks up the road or started up the road in the area where the Napalm was?

MAJOR SKEELS: Oh, yes, some were going the wrong way; it seemed to me they were just milling around. They all had their lights on. There may have been more with their lights off that I didn't see, but 15 to 20. I may have seen the same truck several times due to the turns and so forth.

LT COL ROPKA: But you were pretty confident of your ability to detect a truck or trucks coming toward the objective area?

MAJOR SKEELS: I wasn't looking for trucks per se, other than they could have carried a flex mount for a gun and I didn't think that would be the place to let one of them set up and let the whole force try to come back over. I wasn't looking for a truck as such but I found a lot of them but none of them wanted to shoot or didn't, or I didn't see them shoot.

MAJOR DONAHUE: When you let loose of your rockets, what heading were you on?

MAJOR SKEELS: I don't really know. I was past Ba Vi so when I looked back I couldn't see the objective area. There was a craggy mountain there.

LT COL ROPKA: What altitude?

MAJOR SKEELS: 2,000 to 2500 feet because I hadn't started to climb yet to get up over this thing. Somebody had called "MIG's" and I still had all this ordnance.

MAJOR MURPHY: Three called "MIG's" and it was just prior to when he called MIG's that the rockets were going our same heading 260, and they were fired no more than 500 feet above me which would put them at about 1,000 maximum.

LT COL KRALJEV: How many did you fire?

MAJOR SKEELS: I think I cleaned the tubes out which would be

21. I got to thinking back and I might have left three or six in there.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was this west of the IP river?

MAJOR SKEELS: Yes.

MAJOR BUNN: That craggy hill right on the other side there.

MAJOR SKEELS: The rock face there; I was shooting in that rock face.

MAJOR BUNN: I have very little to add here; basically, everything was the same. Dick was going to turn the light on for me. After about the third turn I did lose him. We were out there, individual types. Everything else was just as he covered it. I got close to him one or two times to evade the SAM's. I made a turn, flashed lights on for a few seconds, and turned them back off. He did see me there. When I had just turned to go in and they launched two more SAM's. We waited to see where those went off before I turned back inbound. Outbound I went east of the river. Until 1 and 2 came out and I did see some tracer coming out of the same site we were talking about earlier - I presumed he was shooting at the helicopters. Right after I crossed the river, Major Skeels was firing his stuff. I thought you were maybe half a mile south of the hill and south of our outbound course when I saw you fire the rockets.

COLONEL FRISBIE: Did you drop any ordnance in the target area?

MAJOR BUNN: Right up against the 3500 foot hill; I think we had one MIG call after he fired his rockets; I got another MIG call and that's when we pulled off.

LT COL KRALJEV: Is there a chance that the rockets he jettisoned are the same ones you're talking about?

MAJOR MURPHY: There is a chance, but the ones I saw weren't at 2500 feet. It must have been lower.

LT COL KRALJEV: I presume he was shooting down.

MAJOR MURPHY: Did you go out North or out of that 3500 foot hill just north of it? ~~TOP SECRET~~

MAJOR SKEELS: He was south and I was sitting right against the hill when I fired the stuff. He was to the south about a mile to a mile and a half away from me to the south of that hill.

MAJOR MURPHY: In the dark like that just off hand I would say that the rockets were hitting no more than quarter of a mile south.

MAJOR BUNN: He fired a lot of rockets.

LT COL KRALJEV: How many would you say?

MAJOR BUNN: It appeared to me to be about four volleys of about four each.

MAJOR SKEELS: Did you see them? I flew on closer to the mountain and pulled off the rest of the stuff and they were detonating on the ground in the trees.

MAJOR MURPHY: Almost simultaneously #3 called "MIG's!" and I saw the rockets and I turned off to the right and up the ravine.

LT COL KRALJEV: Do you recall when you fired yours off in relation to the MIG call?

MAJOR SKEELS: I was thinking it was before, but I don't really know.

MAJOR BUNN: I think we got two separate MIG calls and it was between the MIG calls.

LT COL KRALJEV: Intelligence, do you have any comment with respect to or any conclusions you can draw with respect to the MIG call? We are trying, if we possibly can, to determine whether these were or were not his rockets.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: I had absolutely no MIG's in the area at that time.

MAJOR SQUIRES: We broke off as advertised, preceived Cherry 2 drop his first Napalm out; I think he dropped two, saw his Napalm splash

which we hadn't expected to see at that particular point. All of the sudden we had a new lighted city on the side of the hill, all those logs; it looked like a new town on the side of the mountain. We started to hold a east-west heading off those logs and it was too tight. Turned around, started running back and forth north and south. In the meantime, observed the fireworks over the compound. Tracers I had never seen quite so many, little red tracers going up at any one time in my life. Heard the call they had been dropped at the wrong place. Heard him call, "Don't worry, old buddy, I'll come back and pick you up." They got together. The timing on that is a little bit obscure. Heard the Sergeant come up "AXLE HEAD was lost." This contributed quite a bit to the chatter. I assume it was a sergeant. He went along trying to describe what it was happened. We figured out if he was lost, he was only wounded. About this time, Peach 01 turned out all his radios except UHF as prebriefed and sat there and went directly to relaying on the UHF. I think he got off every word that was given to him relayed back to Monkey Mountain. We never heard a confirmation call at all. We did hear one after everybody had pretty well egressed the area. We saw the first two SAM's light up on the ground. In fact, we could see every one of them light up on the ground in the Hanoi area and saw them leap up and about the time they'd get off the ground, a voice would come in and say, "SAM." The first two appeared to be coming straight at us. I hated to stick this into here, but I think this one SAM that Apple 2 said hit an airplane and that airplane did not fly on and I wonder if in the back of my own mind -- (Col Kraljev took the discussion off the record for some minutes here)

LT COL ROPKA: I would like to ask a question of Major Squires. How many or were there any patterns of site that the SAM's came from?

MAJOR SQUIRES: To us, they appeared to be coming from the two sites - probably only one slightly south and to our side on the west side of Hanoi. They may have been scattered out there all at once, I don't know. It appeared to be a line and they all seemed to be coming generally from the same place, launched straight up and some went straight up; we were pretty well briefed about these beforehand. The ones that did worry us was about the third or fourth SAM that hit the aircraft. Right behind that was another SAM which I never saw go off. I assume it was a dud. Then all of a sudden, this orange flow went up and about that time Peach 3 hollered, "5 get down!" I forget what he said but it is on tape. That was the first time we ever took any evasive and we were still about 3,000 feet. It appeared they were tracking us. We were turned direct toward Ba Vi and trying to get down and wait until the thing got very close and pop back up again. But none of them at low altitude ever got into our area. The high altitude missiles appeared to be going to the west of us toward the Black River. When the SAM's from the south were called we didn't see those on the ground. Somebody said something about the SAM to the south -- we couldn't see this missile because we were behind the mountain at the time. We turned and went to the west side to Ba Vi down the river and sure enough there it came. This is the one I thought struck an aircraft. About two more were very close, approximately three or four hundred feet. We counted between the two of us and agreed upon nine SAM's. We stopped counting, there were quite a few after that. One of them was a dud. The rest of it went pretty well as advertised. When Peach 1 called for Peach 3 to come in, I heard him but I didn't understand and a couple of times I asked did he want us in there. At that time, I started toward Peach 3's orbit figuring they were going on in. We got over probably to wherever

the southern-most simulators were going off. That's as far east as we ever got. We could see the simulator and they were popping the entire time we were in there. As Peaches 3 and 4 started out, we were lining up on the trucks. Where the logs lit up the ground, approximately two or three miles to the east, of these things, was a tower with probably 4 to 5 lights on it. It was lit up when we came over the hill into the valley -- looked like a little old Christmas tree and it stayed lit the entire time we were there.

LT COL ROPKA: They were of different intensities?

MAJOR SQUIRES: One very bright on top and maybe four or five below all white, bluish white or some sort. We saw Apple 1 or 2, or Peach 1 or 2, I don't know which one, it was very low altitude, very close proximity to the logs, coming out with all bright position lights on red and green. It wasn't going very fast; it was extremely low and almost to the ground. At that time, I wasn't sure where anybody was. I did turn on my white light and headed back to the east. Intermittently, I would turn it off and on. It might account for the single white light around Ba Vi. We got over in 3's orbit by that time everybody else was heading back to the west. We still weren't sure of Apple 4 and 5 and I believe Cherry 2 asked Apple 5 to call the river or something, so we made another turn and went back and were still in the vicinity east of Ba Vi and waited to be sure they were across the river. The next one we had was Cherry 2 and asked Apple, Peach 5, "Are you clear of the area?" We were still several miles east; we told them we were clear, go ahead. About this same time we saw what I believe was Major Skeels' ordnance going off on the hillside. This did look strange the first time I thought it was a thousand lines of tracer going on the hill top. My first concern was for Cherry 2. Then it very suddenly dropped off.

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The haze at that range, it appeared to be all red. About this time Peach 4 said, "I'm in on a mountain from the north," and knowing what we were pre-briefed, I thought he was in on Ba Vi from the north and we were heading west just north of Ba Vi and we went back the other way a little bit to make sure we were clear of him. We had these trucks all the time we were there, the same ones on the road. (General Manor entered the room at this point)

MAJOR SQUIRES: As many as six or eight of them moving at the same time on the road with their lights on. I got the impression that they were headed up to this great conglomeration of logs and Napalm we had burning on the hillside.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Were these trucks on the road south of finger lakes?

MAJOR SQUIRES: South of finger lakes, north of Ba Vi, right east of Ba Vi. They were very close to this little tower, by the way, to the north of it.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Fairly close to that construction site down there? Those buildings?

MAJOR SQUIRES: Right up on the water. Negative, there was nothing there. We could see that spot in the area. The trucks were southeast and southwest of that spot. Upon the side of the hill just off the valley floor.

GENERAL MANOR: Did you drop any ordnance on them?

MAJOR SQUIRES: No, sir, I rolled on; everything was hot and everybody else had gone and I said, "I think we ought to get the trucks --" I said, "I don't know, I don't know either."

GENERAL MANOR: You brought all yours back?

MAJOR SQUIRES: Yes, 3 and 4 jettisoned in the mountainous area.

MAJOR SQUIRES: ~~TOP SECRET~~
MAJOR SKEELS: Two of my rock eyes and my CBU were in an open area and driver training area where it shows on the photographs as figure 8's, I figured this was a good place.

MAJOR SQUIRES: We got this, just at about the time we started out for the last time we got the Bull's Eye call. At that time we turned on all nav lights and our ALQ 128. The next time we got the MIG call I think the chopper, Apple 3, called it, I checked down at that to see if it was working, had a fail light on and we did reset it.

LT COL ROPKA: You turned it on before the first MIG call or after?

MAJOR SQUIRES: Before the first -- it was the Bull's Eye call we heard twice, I figured it was a MIG and switched lights on.

MAJOR SKEELS: We had ours on but I couldn't remember whether it was after or west of the Black River, I think slightly east.

LT COL KRALJEV: This was on the egress?

MAJOR SQUIRES: We were getting VHF tracing, if he had his on we might have a flight recheck.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: What time approximately did you turn that on? Plus 40?

MAJOR SQUIRES: About the time we crossed the river.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Plus 35 I would say.

MAJOR BUNN: Didn't you get a call from Rhein "turn them on, turn them on!"?

MAJOR SQUIRES: I heard somebody say turn on the jammer. I already had mine on and probably had them on for two minutes. We also got -- somebody kept his on. We were half way back to Z-2; we passed on the way out Apple 3, I believe it was I thought we were staying behind, I think we probably passed them at just about the border, we passed

Apple 3 just south of CH 108: Two was in the pattern with us, one was already on the ground. We were pretty slow coming out with the load.

LT COL ROPKA: Were you finding any fuel problems?

MAJOR RHEIN: The only fuel problem was my stub went down, flamed out for a second as I started up the mountain side there. Our main problem with fuel -- precomputed we should have all had fuel, this cost us a lot of fuel, high power setting, pretty high altitude; also our climb-out was a little bit slower than anticipated. This cost us a little bit.

LT COL ROPKA: Do you recall what you landed with Major Squires?

MAJOR SQUIRES: 600 lbs sir.

MAJOR SKEELS: On the fuel, like I say we cleaned off the airplane all right to the Black, hesitated a little bit at the border and because of the drop tank when it came off, jammed the rock eye sideways and we had to pull it off, I elected to fly hung ordnance, got right in behind the FALCONS. I did 23 miles final so I flew 46 miles further than everybody else and shut down with 250 pounds.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherries?

MAJOR RHEIN: About 600.

MAJOR BUNN: 900.

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: The previous day we flew these birds and they were pretty economical on gas on the test that we ran, so it was a pretty good bird.

LT COL KRALJEV: How much time did you log?

MAJOR RHEIN: 4+50.

MAJOR SKEELS: 5.3.

MAJOR SQUIRES: 5.2.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Did you see any activity down around the airfield?

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MAJOR RHEIN: I didn't look; I didn't notice anything down there.

MAJOR SQUIRES: Something nobody has mentioned in here.

The town Son Tay, as I said, was very well lit from where we were when we first got there. It stayed lit I would say until approximately H+7 to 10 at which time I think they blew the transformer up with the camp and approximately half these lights in town went out. The other half stayed on. We saw a definite blue flash sweep right across the top of that town the same instant all the rest of the lights went off. If it means anything, I don't know. Maybe somebody hit a line with an axe or something and cut it off.

MAJOR GRIMES: Hit the stepdown transmitter with a LAU. They verified it on the ground. The lights went out the same time across the way.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: That explains about thirty people there the next day working on it.

GENERAL MANOR: Ordnance drops 1 and 2 - 4 M-47's each.
Dropped 3 each Rock Eyes.

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

GENERAL MANOR: And made six strafing passes?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

MAJOR SKEELS: Sir, I dropped my ordnance, the remaining I jettisoned on the Black River hill.

GENERAL MANOR: In the objective area, that is all you dropped?

MAJOR RHEIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Cherry 1, you went to the border and held?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, sir.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did you give any DF steers?

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MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, I gave some and I think some of the guys were wanting some verifications.

LT COL KRALJEV: You stayed at the border area until everyone was past you?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: Yes, sir. I had some trouble getting verification Apple 3 had gone by. Finally, one of the Peaches verified.

LT COL KRALJEV: How long did you hold at the border area?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: How long did we hold? Everybody else had no problem. We held about 45 minutes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did anybody have any difficulty on the egress from the objective area to the border? Helicopters? Apple 1 - 2 - 3?
(No responses for the record were heard)

MAJOR DONAHUE: We thought we had a MIG chasing us. We left off as we came out the old SAM stories, and the two launches after we left the camp before we reached the Black. As I said, Intelligence said they wouldn't go below 1500 because we were at 100 feet I wasn't concerned, and we continued to press on. Just as we started to reach the Black the ramp PJ called that a fast-mover was coming around the mountain around Ba Vi towards us, so I broke right and jinking right and left and he said, "He seems right after us." As I recall, it was after we crossed the Black and I was still jinking and down to 100 feet or so there. He said, "He's started to walk in to us." It was very close to the river on either one side or the other and he said, "He's firing at us," and "They're walking in!" and he was real definite that it was a fast-mover type blacked out. We just kept going as fast as we could and looking for cover, and finally we got to a mountain that was bowl-shaped and climbed over the ridge and dove in there and just circled inside of it. I knew he couldn't get in there, and we stayed in there about 2 or 3 minutes circling and kept saying, "Do you see anything," and finally no further findings. The PJ said that

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he estimated they were rockets and he thought there were six salvos of 2 rockets each time is what he thought and they seemed to be getting closer to us. According to him -- he'll be at the eight o'clock and can give us exactly what he saw. Only one man on my aircraft saw this.

LT COL KRALJEV: Where were you, again?

MAJOR DONAHUE: A little north of track at this time -- when I first got the call he wasn't firing, and I turned north of track because he was coming down from the south and right near the Black I thought we got by the Black -- this is something I guess we'll never know -- but I thought we got on the other side of the Black on the west and we got into that bowl there and he was still right behind us according to this PJ until I got in there, and we stayed in there and circled.

LT COL BRITTON: You were blacked out?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Completely.

LT COL KRALJEV: And at 100 feet?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Yes, sir, or less.

GENERAL MANOR: At the initial briefing at Udorn it was mentioned by you or someone on your crew that four rockets were seen to come by the chopper and head into them as you were dodging or maneuvering away from the MIG's.

MAJOR DONAHUE: I never saw any of the rockets sir. MY PJ must have said that. He is the one who saw them and said they were heading as far as numbers, I'm just repeating what he told me. He is the one that saw the aircraft and saw the rockets -- I didn't.

LT COL KRALJEV: I believe the briefing items are these that Lt Col Brown made from Apple 4.

GENERAL MANOR: Do we have that crew here?

LT COL KRALJEV: No, sir. Anybody jettison ordnance east of the Black?

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MAJOR GOCHNAUER: Mine was almost over it; I saw that from the altitude I was at, it would impact right in the river.

LT COL KRALJEV: Were you taking any evasive action from SAM's when you were setting up for that?

MAJOR GOCHNAUER: No, sir, I was egressing; I just dropped it.

LT COL ALLISON: He was well ahead of us.

GENERAL MANOR: Who fired the rockets?

MAJOR SKEELS: I was the only one, apparently.

MAJOR DONAHUE: After we circled around the bowl I decided I had better tell somebody we had main transmission chip light on and called for Apple 4 and 5. After we left, we still flew low level for a while, but told 4 and 5 we would like to catch up with them and I think Murphy got there first and got in behind us and stayed with us and about this time the SAR effort developed and somebody was trying to tell that one would stay with me and only one of them would go and I said, "Let them both go, I'll catch up with Apple 2," because by then he was getting ready to take some fuel and both 4 and 5 left us; it was around LIMA 50, I think.

CAPTAIN WALDRON: It was after the turning point of 225 degrees.

MAJOR DONAHUE: But we caught up with Apple 2.

LT COL KRALJEV: This was after the border crossings?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Yes, sir, well after. He probably didn't catch me until after the border crossing or right about at the border crossing and they escorted us in. We were switching radio frequencies too because of the SAR effort and maybe this is the reason why they didn't hear us. Anyway then Apple 2 kept us in sight. We were a little faster than him and didn't want to wait because we didn't take fuel; we didn't have to because we were right on the time and we just proceeded back in with Apple 2 keeping us in sight until we were across the fence.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Peaches, up to the border on the egress, any problems?

MAJOR SKEELS: I didn't have any directional finder and used time and distance and it worked out fine. I did get some confirmations from Peach 1 to give me a steer into his position.

LT COL KRALJEV: You got it from Peach 1 instead of from Cherry 01?

MAJOR SKEELS: Right.

LT COL KRALJEV: While you were egressing to the border, Cherry 2, you departed your planned orbits and headed back to the west?

LT COL BLOSCH: Yes, sir, as planned.

LT COL KRALJEV: Any problems?

LT COL BLOSCH: No problems. I think we gave everybody a scare, a little anxiety trying to locate Apple 3 on another frequency.

MAJOR DONAHUE: I was working mine and mine gave me my steer back -- after that there were quite a few flares.

LT COL BRITTON: I would like to ask Cherry 2 -- did you drop flares?

LT COL KRALJEV: No, that was the candle stick that was called in for the SAR effort.

LT COL BRITTON: This was before. There was a flare light under you. I didn't know whether you dropped it or not. It looked like it was right over LIMA 50. Do you remember that, Lt Col Allison?

LT COL ALLISON: Yes, it was at the turning point, too, right as we intercepted the southbound heading.

LT COL BRITTON: I didn't see it go off as a flare, but I saw it under you.

LT COL BLOSCH: There were quite a few flares. I think they were all surface-launched.

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LT COL BRITTON: I went right under you then and turned over you.

MAJOR SQUIRES: Those might have been mortar flares down there.

LT COL BLOSCH: The flare I saw was a little mortar flak -- I saw that light out there, and I was getting a little jumpy.

LT COL KRALJEV: On the Cherries, any activity on the EWO?

MAJOR MOSLEY: When we got up to our orbit I had the GCI radar from Hai Phong and I had two radars to the southeast down around Squid Point coming from that direction was on up, and we were making these orbits and we'd lose radar at one end and I'd have to ask the navigator. All radar would be lost at the south and we'd go back up north and they'd come back up. Then we'd go down and there wouldn't be anything. I ended up with one GCI and one AIAF Squid and two night fighters and we changed our orbit.

LT COL CLARK: Get a little confirmation from Lt Col Willett. You were busy with that SAR effort when they were around the border area. The scope would show that one track was identified as a MIG in that area.

LT COL WILLETT: There is a mis-identification coming up. They were tracking there again. Since there is no confirmation MIG's were up, and on the egress back across they had a MIG coming back across the Laotian border at the same time we were egressing from the Gulf of Tonkin - we have no confirmation that a MIG was coming up.

LT COL CLARK: We had no confirmation that SAM's were coming up, either.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: Oh, yes!

LT COL KRALJEV: Why didn't they call it?

MAJOR SQUIRES: The call was never made.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Are you saying that you had advance warning of the SAM's coming up before they were sighted?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: In the case of the first one? About a minute to 30 seconds, I guess.

LT COL KRALJEV: Was this passed to anybody?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: I heard the Navy telling about it.

LT COL CLARK: I thought that was the object of that airborne radar, to let us know about these things.

LT COL WILLETT: DEEP SEA called some SAM warnings and they were based on the Navy launch.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: But not completely.

LT COL WILLETT: After Navy proceeded they came up with a couple SAM warnings.

LT COL KRALJEV: Did the people feed your information at Monkey Mountain that the SAM's were coming up?

LT COL WILLETT: Yes.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: I got it after the fact from Combat Apple. When I got it and when it was broadcast are two different things.

LT COL WILLETT: But DEEP SEA, a Navy bird, did broadcast one that I know of.

LT COL CLARK: What is their function then?

LT COL WILLETT: What is their function? Their function is to get it to the mission aircraft.

LT COL KRALJEV: That is their purpose of being there and we got no service from them.

LT COL WILLETT: We stopped SAM warnings because every time -- we agreed when this thing started we'd stay off of Guard Channel to permit the Army to operate on Guard. Because they use that radio for relay. We agreed to hold back unless it became really a threat and

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with WILD WEASEL we were going to leave it up to WILD WEASEL to handle it on that side.

LT COL CLARK: He never knew that these SAM's were coming up.

LT COL WILLETT: Every time a SAM comes on the air if we tell somebody, you're going to blanket the entire communication system

LT COL CLARK: But he did have this information and could decide what to do about it.

LT COL WILLETT: If you keep asking for SAM's to be broadcast you can forget about the override feature on your radios.

LT COL KRALJEV: Your point is well-taken.

LT COL WILLETT: One came up right after the Navy started up the Gulf.

LT COL KRALJEV: All right, but nothing was broadcast over on our side.

LT COL WILLETT: They go through the radio relay and it's got a 1 KW transmitter which comes out on guard.

LT COL CLARK: My point is that SAM warnings should not have been broadcast to everybody up there but they should have known that the SAM's were becoming hot and be aware of them -- at least that. Because the first thing we knew, the SAM's were coming up and that was it! Cherry 1 sitting there in their orbit had no height finders working and that is pretty much of a prime GCI site, isn't it?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: There is something missing; a controller; they don't have a controller?

LT COL CLARK: Don't they have a net feeding into the controller?

LT COL WILLETT: These GCI sites do not have a controller.

LT COL CLARK: What does it do with the information it has?

LT COL WILLETT: Their only requirement is to provide search and height information to the primary GCI for their sector.

LT COL CLARK: On Cherry 1's orbit you have a height finder and you have an early warning search set and that constitutes GCI information. Now, surely they weren't doing this because they happened to get up at two or three o'clock in the morning and had nothing else to do. What were they doing with the information? There is a lot of talk -- but they were getting GCI information on that one aircraft.

MAJOR MOSLEY: As we climbed up I guess about 8,000 - 8,500, our orbit altitude was 5,000 feet, the return altitude was nine -- as we climbed to about 8,000 - 8,500 - I was picking up the radar of the tanker and I picked it up for about I guess maybe 15 or 20 seconds and I got an AI radar from the same general direction within 10 degrees. I mentioned this to the crew and we decided to descend and we descended and the radar disappeared at about 7,000 feet.

LT COL ROPKA: Would that direction have been southwest of your position?

MAJOR MOSLEY: It was twelve o'clock. I can't say that it was a Soviet radar but it was airborne and it was conical scanning.

LT COL KRALJEV: Could it have been the F-4 on their refueling track?

MAJOR MOSLEY: It could have been an F-4 radar; that's what I thought it was.

LT COL KRALJEV: Can you try to set up a time line for that?

MAJOR MOSLEY: The navigator can, I am sure.

LT COL KRALJEV: It will be on the tape.

MAJOR MOSLEY: The point in this whole question is everybody trying to discount the fact that any MIG's could possibly have been up because nobody knows for sure that they were, but information was being gathered that could have been used for GCI factors and I think all this information must be put into proper perspective and see whether they were up there or not.

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LT COL WILLETT: If you are talking about the border site having a height finder passing to somebody else, you don't run GCI based on that type information.

MAJOR MOSLEY: No, sir, I picked up nothing on the border; absolutely nothing. That doesn't mean there wasn't something there; it could have been. I am not saying that is a GCI site he is getting; I am saying it is GCI type information. What is he going to do with it?

LT COL WILLETT: That's passed all the time if you call height finder as part of GCI information, but that doesn't constitute a threat even in our defense systems. You can't run your intercepts on it. It is too late. Captain Knops, what information do you have, from what sites - who did you get your report from?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: 29 - 32 and some from 57.

LT COL WILLETT: You haven't picked up anything from DEEP SEA?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: I read their original report.

LT COL WILLETT: Have you got a report from all the sources?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: The one I got from 57 is incomplete because they had a lot of garbage going on at the same time.

LT COL WILLETT: Do we have that available here?

CAPTAIN KNOPS: Some of it.

LT COL WILLETT: I am looking for all of it to be put into a composite picture.

LT COL KRALJEV: All right, this will be your area, Lt Col Willett, you thrash it out.

MAJOR RHEIN: If you came up with something, why didn't we get a SAM warning?

LT COL KRALJEV: Let's see what he can thrash out of the reports they got from the various agencies.

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LT COL WILLETT: For your information, you had birds out there that could provide you this. Combat Apple and Navy 121 and you had your WILD WEASEL -- that's the only people that are in this business.

LT COL KRALJEV: If you depend on electronic emanation from the site and from the radar. What about whatever the proper term is for what goes on on the ground that we are supposed to be getting some of?

LT COL WILLETT: We will have to look at the whole thing.

MAJOR MURPHY: Backing up just a little bit to where this 105 got hit, did anyone except myself and WEASEL, the one that got hit, hear a beeper? I heard a beeper but when I picked up this WEASEL he said, "Yes, I got it for about the last 15 minutes I was in the air."

CAPTAIN GUENON: That was (b)(1) I am sure it was.

LT COL KRALJEV: That's new to us.

LT COL BLOSCH: We got a beeper for a short while. You could barely hear it.

LT COL KRALJEV: I don't think anybody heard (b)(1) in the objective area.

LT COL WILLETT: No, sir.

MAJOR SKEELS: We heard (b)(1) make a guard test real early.

LT COL KRALJEV: You didn't hear it at the objective area, though?

MAJOR SKEELS: At the IP.

LT COL KRALJEV: (b)(1) ?

MAJOR SKEELS: It says, "This is (b)(1) with a UHF guard check."

LT COL WILLETT: That is the radio relay again.

LT COL KRALJEV: Then it would have been a relay.

LT COL WILLETT: Yes.

LT COL KRALJEV: Anything else now on egress and recovery?

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LT COL BLOSCH: Just prior to Peach 5 coming out, I guess somebody was calling MIG's and somebody else said, "No, they are not," and Apple 3 told us later somebody said yes, they were. You said no they were not. Did that come from College Eyes or anybody? Sir, this took place in about 10 - 15 seconds, all three transmissions. Somebody said there was MIG's and about two seconds later somebody said there are no MIG's and right on top of that they said there was -- who was this?

MAJOR MURPHY: That was Apple 3 that said there were.

LT COL BLOSCH: Who said there were not?

(No responses for the record were heard)

LT COL KRALJEV: Major Murphy, I would like you to cover the SAR.

MAJOR MURPHY: We were in trail with Apple 3 when we not notified. I gave Apple 4 a call and found out his location and I joined up with him. We then rendezvoused with LIME 2 and proceeded out on an outbound course, sort of cut the corner and proceeded on down in the area of the west side of the PDJ. It was about 14 miles, 114 radial off of Channel 108 and when we arrived in the area candles were already dropping flares. Apple 4 advised me that we would both go in and get one each so I headed for one set of flares and he went to the second set. I had trouble getting a vector in on the BRAVO man, once I was in the area. I couldn't get him to make a comprehensive statement, which is unusual but we knew we were right in the area because he would call when we'd pass over him, and about this time McLeod computed we could not hover at the weight we were at, so we moved out of the area, dumped some fuel a short distance away; went back in and finally got him to pop a Mark 13 flare, pinpointed him, and came into a hover about 150 feet above his position. As we came in rather steeply, one of my crew

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members called, "Ground Fire!" I don't know which one, I never saw it, and the copilot never saw it. There was a village just a short ways down the hill from his position and later on we tried to get confirmation on friendly or hostile, but they couldn't give us a definite on it. Anyway, we pulled out of the hover and about this time Apple 4 said we would go into an orbit and wait until first light. I had visions of a more prolonged mission so I advised him that I needed some fuel. The king bird just had come into the area and we rendezvoused with them and Apple 4 hooked up and was taking on fuel when Sandy advised us that they were ready to go and they wanted us to come over and pinpoint the man I had located. So, I went over there, pinpointed to the best of my ability the BRAVO man's location. A couple of minutes later Apple 4 showed up and I departed to the west. And just as I came over the ridge line I got a call from the ALPHA man and he said that he was at our 3 o'clock so rather than press on to the tanker to get some more fuel, I recalculated and figured I'd stay there until the BRAVO man was picked up. So, we orbited in the area and Apple 4 picked up the BRAVO man and was coming out when my PJ spotted the parachute of the ALPHA man and I advised Sandy that we had the ALPHA man's chute in sight and he advised us to go ahead and make the pick-up. I started my approach. The ALPHA man popped a smoke which came up right next to the chute. I made the approach into a very deep ravine or bowl type area and passed over a hootch some 100 yards from the chute. I advised Sandy of this and established a hover in the area. We were getting some real turbulent winds. It was apparently a tail wind; we were getting attitude warnings the whole time we were in the hover. I had no real problem other than in picking the man up, he got on the hoist and we found out he had almost been blown out of the tree, as he had not secured himself to the tree. He was still hanging in the tree but he got on the penetrator and had trouble releasing his chute, but he

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finally got rid of that, and we hoisted him on board and departed. We rendezvoused with KING and took on some more fuel and proceeded home. One problem we had locating the man at night was candle was having trouble, I believe, determining on where to drop his flares because Apple 4 wanted them on one side of the ridge and I needed some on the other side of the ridge. So other than the first flares when I arrived on the scene there were no more flares right over the particular area where the BRAVO man was. I think had we tried to work one man at a time we could have done it a lot smoother and accomplished both pick-ups at night.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 1, did you refuel coming back again?

LT COL BRITTON: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 2?

LT COL ALLISON: No.

LT COL KRALJEV: Apple 3?

MAJOR DONAHUE: Negative.

LT COL KRALJEV: And 4 and 5 did?

MAJOR MURPHY: Several times.

LT COL KRALJEV: Any problem on landing recovery at Udorn - the handling?

MAJOR FRANKLIN: We sat there for an hour, talked to Base Ops and couldn't get any help there and we still waited for 20 minutes after that.

LT COL ROPKA: There were two sets of wheels dispatched prior to your arrival. Both of them missed connections. When the dust started to settle I counted noses and we sent a third set and you walked in just then. The guards sent out one as the first aircraft was to arrive.

MAJOR SQUIRES: The de-armers were not prepared to take care of those guns at all. I think the guns were still hot when they flew them

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LT COL ROPKA: You have to appreciate we could not alert Base until after we got underway. We were short of trucks, drivers, we had the vehicles and drivers that were not accustomed to this sort of thing and not that familiar with the base ramp and the DM did everything he could to get people out there. They were working on another FRAG Order, had worked their load crews and armorers 18 hours prior to their departure so they were having problems.

MAJOR RHEIN: Major Gochnauer and I fired our guns. We naturally had switches safe by the time I got to Udorn but a couple guys there looked up at it and came up on the wing and said, "Fire a gun, sir?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, they look okay to me; why don't you go ahead and taxi right in?" By that time, my rear end was getting a little tired and I was disgusted, and we taxied on in with hot guns.

LT COL BRITTON: We were the first helicopter back in there and I really believe they must have put their dumbest people in the tower because we couldn't get anything out of it. At any time it would have been ridiculous but we had been briefed they would be expecting us and tell us to go park somewhere. Later on, I found out somebody had a message for us before we left which I didn't get about where to park.

LT COL ROPKA: You were the only one I didn't get to. You were absent there for a short period.

LT COL BRITTON: So they let us set out there for a good five minutes while we discussed this thing. I called for an ambulance about 20 minutes out; I got there and finally I got to the ground and I say, "You got an ambulance looking for us somewhere?" And he said, "Do you need an ambulance?"

LT COL ROPKA: We had a very severe breakdown in communications. We did get an entire take off and recovery plan to BRIGHAM

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thinking they would be in the best position in the morning to meet every aircraft. As you may or may not be aware, and as I anticipated everybody returned at the same time within about 30 minutes. BRIGHAM could see you. He knew you were inbound and he knew your Mode 2 Squawk. I didn't get the first call from BRIGHAM. I called them four times and they said, "I'll let you know." You were on the ground and parked when I walked out the front door. You should not have needed to call. They never called me, and it was not as organized.

LT COL BRITTON: You can't understand the guy because there is so much background talking, two or three other guys up there.

LT COL KRALJEV: Navy?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: We don't have anywhere near the type detail you have because we haven't talked personally to the flight crews so we have a more generalized type of report. We had 60 airplanes scheduled and 59 of them got in the air. One of the A-6's making a low run in toward the Haiphong Harbor; they were short one A-6; they only had 7 rather than 8. I think the first planes were getting up in the area a little bit early, 3 or 4 minutes, and they had to do some turning but they did hit all of their points exactly as plotted on the plan. There were three basic tracks, one inland north of Haiphong, another one up and down the coastline that dropped the flares. They dropped 190 flares and the A-6 track scheduled 8 planes at two minutes apart to make a run in towards the Haiphong Harbor and break off just as they hit the center of the missile envelope. There were 3 Shrike missiles fired by the A-7's that were flying the Iron Hand flights. Jim, the pilot that we talked to, it was relatively quiet, just a nice navigation flight. Again, in a general sense, we felt the diversion was very effective in keeping the people on the ground busy and it did sound like some confusion was taking place.

In retrospect, I was a little concerned that although we met our schedule exactly from minus 20 to plus 25 -- I got a little concerned about hearing all about all these MIG's in the air and the Navy diversion was over. This made us think the MIG's can concentrate on the other side of the operation because the diversionary planes have completed their mission and gone. In retrospect, it would have been very simple to keep them there for another ten minutes. It is just that the MIG's didn't get airborne as early. The Admiral of the Navy said 20 SAM's were launched. I am quoting from a message report that came in after I left. In general, though it was a very simple noneventful flight for the Navy. Two of the carriers launched about 26 airplanes on a single launch, and the Navy's previous night launch out in the Gulf of Tonkin was 16 airplanes, so they made a damn good effort and from where we sat and which I think we saw very accurately they flew exactly the way they were supposed to, and it does seem it was very successful in providing the diversion.

LT COL ROPKA: What was the weather like in the Navy area?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: Very good, extremely good. One of the pilots came up right after they landed and they said it was absolutely beautiful up there.

LT COL ROPKA: How about at the carrier sight?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: It was good - for launches it was very good. It was getting a little cruddy by the time they started coming back.

LT COL ROPKA: Were there any incidents on recovery?

COMMANDER HERSHEY: I think one plane from Hancock had to divert to DaNang, but with the number of planes in the air this is not unusual. I think it was running a little low on fuel and we were in much more than normal frame of mind to quickly divert anyone to DaNang rather than pushing our luck at sea because we did have so many aircraft

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in the air. That's an extremely large night launch from a carrier task force, 60 airplanes; really there was nothing of great significance.

LT COL ROPKA: As I recall you did not have occasion to use the reserve tankers at 135?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: No, we didn't need them and the Admiral was kicking himself later. He said he was going to order us to use it anywhere just because they were there and in the heat of the battle that slipped his mind, but we didn't need them but it was nice to have them, and we could easily have used them.

LT COL WILLETT: Sir, what do you mean by MIG's that got airborne.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: Well, this is based, again, just on the information that has come into us. I understand there is a big question about when the MIG's got airborne and again from what we are feeding in over the circuits and also some message reports it sounds like if there was any airborne it was a little bit later than we anticipated and it might have been nice to have a negative diversion still in the area. The point you are bringing up, of course, is obviously we are not positive at least in this point in our discussion when the MIG's were airborne but at the time, it sounded like they were buzzing around after the Navy had left.

LT COL WILLETT: The enemy IFF interrogation equipment was being used aboard your aircraft and they did not detect any MIG's under GCI control. They use their IFF's like we use our IFF's. It appeared they were tracking our F-4's we assume, and that's about where we stand in our analysis at this time.

LT COL CLARK: Is that track the one that came barreling down the scope in the objective area and the one that turned west and turned around and went east again.

LT COL WILLETT: We had one when the operation started, and

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we had another one further south and one at the end.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: The first two are one and the same.

LT COL KRALJEV: And they turned out to be F-4's.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: The first one I will explain to you later. We don't know what it was. We can't begin to pin it down to anything. If anything somebody was playing games with us.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: One thing, the Navy expended no ordnance other than flares and the three Shrikes fired at the FAN SONG's. No other ordnance. The aircraft flying the track other than the low tracks toward the harbor, all of them were A-7's.

MAJOR ANDRIATIS: Were they fired on by any other aircraft?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: No, no one reported being fired at.

A very uneventful flight for the pilots.

MAJOR SQUIRES: It might be of interest to you that we saw those flares from way over by the Black so they're strong candlepower.

CAPTAIN KNOPS: On the supposed MIG track that went over the area that was six minutes, I was plotting this and watching it six minutes after they would have landed that this track passed overhead. I was talking to one of the helicopter crew that said they saw and heard an aircraft pass overhead at approximately that same time on the proper heading. It passed almost directly overhead and turned west and went straight west for about two minutes and then turned and went northwest and came back to the east. Did you hear this? That was at about 1,000 or 1500 feet.

LT COL WILLETT: I just saw one with lights on.

LT COL KRALJEV: One other quick area -- redeployment. C-130's?

CAPTAIN CONNAUGHTON: It seemed like they pushed off awful early; a lot of guys were taking their crew rest from the night before.

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LT COL KRALJEV: Your aircraft commander made your departure time. He wanted to make good.

We have spent considerably more time and have gone into considerably more detail than what we had anticipated for this portion of the debriefing. Which raises an obvious question: Is the next session where we were going to debrief by crew essential? What can we get by a crew by crew dissertation of what we have discussed two times. You still think it is valid then to have the crew-by-crew debriefing?

(Off the record discussion)

LT COL KRALJEV: Gave instructions for various further debriefings and the meeting adjourned.