



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY, HAWAII
FORT SHAFTER, HAWAII 96858-5480

DAPC-PED-H

22 January 1986

SUBJECT: Trip Report - Laos

Commander
USA CILHI
Ft. Shafter, HI 96858-5480

1. At 1127 hours, 30 December 1985, a joint crashsite survey team departed Honolulu International Airport enroute to Vientiane, Laos. The team consisted of LTC Joe Harvey, and Sergeant First Class Randy Hill of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Sergeant First Class Richard B. Huston of the Army Central Identification Laboratory, Sergeant First Class Donald Mears, 6th Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Chief Kenneth Wilkins, medic, from Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station. The team arrived in Bangkok, Thailand at 0135 hours, 1 January 1986. The team was billeted in the Bangkok Regent Hotel.

2. At 0900 hours, 1 January, team members met with Lieutenant Colonel Mathers and Senior Master Sergeant Bill Gaudory, of the JCRC Liaison Office. Arrangements were made for team visas and tickets into Vientiane, Laos. SMSG Gaudory would be accompanying the team as interpreter.

3. The team departed Bangkok at 0930 hours, 2 January 1986, and arrived in Vientiane at 1130 hours the same day. Team was met by Mr. Fred Shoup, Political Officer from the American Embassy. Team members were then transported to the Lane-Xang hotel for billeting.

4. At approximately 1210 hours, the team met at the residence of Mr. Shoup where we were joined for lunch by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Peoples Democratic Republic of Laos. The representatives included Dr. Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn, Major Sy Inthavong, Sayakane Sisouvong and a Lao interpreter. We were also joined by Miss Laura Jackson of the U.S. Embassy. During the luncheon, Major Sy informed us that a meeting between the American Survey team and the Lao representatives would be held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 1430 hours that afternoon to discuss the survey mission.

5. At 1345 hours the Embassy driver returned the team to the hotel to prepare for the afternoon meeting.

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6. The survey team members, accompanied by Mr. Shoup, arrived at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 1420 hours and were escorted to a conference room, where we were joined by MFA representatives, Major Sy, Sayakane and the MFA European Political Officer who acted as stenographer for the Lao delegation.

7. The two major topics presented at the meeting by Major Sy were 1) a report from his visit to the crashsite on 23 and 24 December, and 2) tentative itinerary for the actual survey on 3 January.

8. Briefly, Major Sy's personal survey of the crashsite provided the US team with the following observations:

a. No holes or craters, such as were found at Pakse, were located at the crashsite.

b. The crashsite and surrounding area is covered in new growth.

c. No burning took place at or near the crashsite.

d. The wreckage covers an area approximately 100 meters in diameter and contains several portions of wreckage.

(Question) SFC Huston: "Were you able to pinpoint an area that in your opinion was the main impact point of the aircraft?"

(Response) Major Sy: "Yes, and the area is clear (no brush) and is where most of the aircraft wreckage is at."

e. Major Sy himself located "several" "remains."

(Question) LTC Harvey: "Do you still have these remains and may we have them?"

(Response) Major Sy: "Yes, I will turn them over to you on our return from Savannakhet."

f. There are explosives in and around the crashsite.

g. There is presently no landing zone for the helicopter.

(Question) LTC Harvey: "Is there an area that can be cleared for a helicopter to land?"

(Response) Major Sy: "Yes, and I have already given an order to the Provisional Army to begin the clearing."

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h. We would be landing at a village called Ban Buang, about 8 kilometers from the site. A truck would take us 4 kilometers up Highway 9, and we would walk from there.

(Question) SFC Hill: "According to the map, there is a road network that appears to run close to the crashsite. Do these roads still exist?"

(Response) Major Sy: "During the war there were roads that ran close to this area, however, they are not used any longer and have become overgrown and ruined."

9. At this point, Major Sy gave the team the itinerary for the following day, 3 January. The text is summarized below:

The joint survey team would depart Vientiane at 0700 hours on a Lao MI8 helicopter for a two hour ride to Savannakhet where we would take 30 minutes to refuel and meet the provisional governor. He would then accompany us on the 40 minute ride to the landing zone, Ban Buang village, G.C. XD 182 361, located next to Highway 9.

10. On 3 January, the team, along with the Lao delegation, arrived at Ban Buang village at 1005 hours. After the helicopter had shut down, Major Sy learned that the truck scheduled to take us up Highway 9 was not here, as the local militia thought we were going to land at the LZ they had cut near the crashsite.

11. At 1020 hours, the survey team left the village by helicopter to see if we could land at the LZ next to the crashsite. However, after circling the area several times, the pilot of the MI8 decided the LZ was not cleared enough for him to set down, and at 1048 hours the helicopter arrived back at the village to off load team members.

12. The survey team then began the walk up Highway 9, and had gone approximately 3 kilometers when we were picked up by a provisional army truck and taken the last kilometer to the trail leading off Highway 9 to the crashsite. The 4 kilometer hike to the crashsite was on a well-used trail and was relatively simple. We were joined by security team members from the provisional army that was guarding the crashsite. Team members arrived at the crashsite at 1245 hours.

13. The crashsite center was easily located due to layout of wreckage. The team immediately broke down into 2 groups and began a detailed analysis and survey of the area.

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14. It was determined that the aircraft was on a 225 degree magnetic heading when impact occurred. An explosion and fire did occur in the area believed to be the crashsite center, so determined because of the location of 2 port engines and wing, and one starboard engine and landing struts. A large amount of fiber glass, some electrical wires for gauges, and small remains fragments were located in this area. Several portions of fuselage and tail sections were located; however, a complete tail number was not visible. The digits 0, 4, and 5 were distinguishable which would coincide with #55-0044, tail number of Ref No 1807, Spectre 13.

15. Aircraft wreckage covered an area 45 meters by 65 meters. It is believed that two major dig areas will be required by the excavation team. These areas are both located in the area of crashsite center and consist primarily of major items, such as armor seat plating, ammunition, wires from instruments and insulations, all of which would come from the compartments where crewmembers are normally seated. One area is a crater similar to the one excavated during the recovery of Spectre 17 in Pakse, Laos, in February of 1985 (S&R 02/CIL/85). This area also contains armor plating and landing gear struts.

16. SFC Mears, EOD, located and identified several 20 mm and 40mm rounds, some of which were still fused and potentially hazardous.

17. In addition to surveying the actual crashsite, team members accompanied by Major Sy identified those areas that will serve as the LZ, and campsite for both the American and Lao teams.

18. The survey team departed the crashsite at 1410 hours, stopping in Ban Buang village at 1600 hours, for air movement back to Vientiane. The team arrived in Vientiane at 1845 hours, 3 January 1986.

19. On the morning of 4 January, the American team along with Mr. Shoup met with the Lao delegation to discuss the upcoming excavation. Although no definite time frame or team composition was agreed upon, LTC Harvey informed the members of the Lao Delegation that an early February time frame would be suitable, and recommended that the team composition be the same as the team at Pakse.

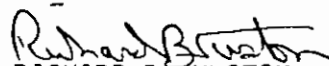
20. Major Sy agreed that LTC Harvey's proposal was possible and then raised three additional major points/questions:

- a. Would the US team provide the power for the Lao camp?
- b. He requested that a lesser amount of explosives be utilized.
- c. He requested that the US team restrict their photography to the actual crashsite and not the village and Provisional Army members.

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21. Team members departed Vientiane at 1405 hours, 4 January, arriving in Bangkok at 1530 hours. The team remained in Bangkok until the morning of 7 January, departing at 1045 hours, and arriving in Honolulu at 0830 hours, 7 January 1986.


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