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ROUTING SHEET (5511)  
NAVMC HQ 335b (REV. 11-76)

8-01-705	VERICAL ASSAULT KOR TANG ISLAND&RECOV	NCNA	CNA-3068-75	06	2	07V			
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HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET (5211)  
NAVMC HQ 335h (REV. 9-73)

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1, DATE

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2. OPERATION CODE		3. UNCLASSIFIED SUBJECT (Paraphrase if necessary so routing sheet will not be classified)	
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		CHIEF OF STAFF CS							
		SECY OF GEN STAFF							
		DC/S FOR PLANS & OPS P							
		DC/S FOR MANPOWER M							
		DC/S FOR R & L L							
		DC/S FOR R & P RP							
		DC/S FOR AVIATION AA							
		DC/S FOR RD & S RD							
		FISCAL DIR FD							
		DIR OF MC RESERVE RES							
		DIR OF INFOSYSPT&MGT ISM							
		INSPECTOR GENERAL IG							
		DIR JUDGE ADVOCATE DIV JA							
		DIR OF INFORMATION PA							
		DIR OF HIST & MUSEUMS HD							
		DIR OF TELECOMM TEL							
		DIR OF INTELLIGENCE INT							
		DIR OF HQ SUPPORT HOS							
		LEGISLATIVE ASST OLA							
		COUNSEL FOR CMC CL							
		MEDICAL OFF USMC MED							
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In re: (CNA)3068-75  
7 November 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION LIST

Subj: Vertical Assault on Koh Tang Island and Recovery of S.S. Mayaguez working paper, forwarding of

Enc1: (1) Center for Naval Analyses Memo 3068-75, "Vertical Assault on Koh Tang Island and Recovery of S.S. Mayaguez - 15 May, 1975 (U)," Secret, 7 November 1975.

Enclosure (1) is a Marine Corps Operations Analysis Group (MCOAG) working paper which will eventually be a part of the overall MCOAG documentation and analysis of Marine Corps participation in the Cambodian and Republic of Vietnam evacuations (April 1975) and the recovery of the Mayaguez (May 1975). Enclosure (1) is MCOAG's preliminary reconstruction of the helicopter insertion and extraction of Marine Corps forces on Koh Tang Island and USS Holt on 15 May 1975. It is being circulated at this time to verify whether this reconstruction is consistent with the perception of individuals who participated in the operation. Additional working papers will address other aspects including detailed events leading up to the execution as well as the execution of the operation.

Your comments, both specific and/or general, on enclosure (1) would be greatly appreciated.

*Robert R. Gigliotti*  
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Director  
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Analysis Group

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(CNA) 3068-75  
7 November 1975

## WORKING PAPER

VERTICAL ASSAULT ON KOH TANG ISLAND  
AND RECOVERY OF S.S. MAYAGUEZ - 15 MAY, 1975 (U)

Urey Patrick

Marine Corps Operations Analysis Group

Autovon 225-9241

## CENTER FOR NAVAL ANALYSES

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~~SECRET~~VERTICAL ASSAULT ON KOH TANG ISLAND  
AND RECOVERY OF S.S. MAYAGUEZ - 15 MAY, 1975 (U)

I. (U) Introduction. This is a draft working paper on the helicopter insertion and extraction of Marine Corps forces involved in the recovery of the S.S. Mayaguez on 15 May 1975. The working paper is being circulated for a check on the paper's veracity and for comment and recommendations. The final draft will be included in the overall documentation and analysis of Marine Corps activity in Southeast Asia, April and May 1975. Additional draft working papers are being written on other aspects of the operations and will be circulated for comment.

II. (S) Summary of preliminary events on 15 May. CTG 79.9 (141400Z May) submitted a concept of operations to COMUSSAG/7AF (info among others, (CINCPAC) for approval/modification. This plan resulted from a meeting at Utapao at 1900G, 14 May in which CTG 79.9, USSAG representatives, CO 56 SOW, CTU 79.9.1 (CO BLT 2/9), CTU 79.9.2 (OinC, Boarding Party), and others participated. The plan called for eight helos to insert approximately 175 Ground Security Force (GSF) on Koh Tang Island at 0542G, 15 May, and, simultaneously, three helos to insert 48 GSF, 6 MSC, and 6 Naval personnel onto the S.S. Mayaguez. USS Harold E. Holt was requested to be in position to actively support insertion on Mayaguez. Maximum TacAir at insertion and for first four hours until helos could recycle was also requested.

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(S) USSAG frag order for 15 May (helicopter and TacAir) was issued by USSAG/7AF 141651Z May as of 1646Z. The order fragged three helos to insert 60 GSF on S.S. Mayaguez at 142242Z (0542G), nine helos were fragged to insert the GSF on Koh Tang Island also at 0542G. A second wave of 12 helicopters was fragged between 1015 and 1045G. Two subsequent waves of 12 helicopters were scheduled at 1445 and 1915G. The helicopter part of the frag order was in accordance with CTG 79.9 141400Z.

(S) COMUSSAG/7AF plan for the boarding of the Mayaguez and assault on Koh Tang Island is contained in USSAG/7AF 141730Z May, a DTG 44 minutes after the frag time. The USSAG plan called for the insertion, by eight helos of the Ground Security Force (GSF) on the island beginning at sunrise (approximately 2300Z 14 May). The plan contained conflicting directions concerning insertion of the Boarding Party. Para. 1, A directed that simultaneously (with the assault on Koh Tang) three helos would insert the Boarding Party directly on to Holt. Holt would then transfer the Boarding Party to the Mayaguez. In Paragraph 1, D (2), Employment, the statement is made that insertion of the Boarding Party on the Mayaguez will be via USAF helos.

(S) Reference 1 states that at midnight (14 May), USSAG/7AF directed, apparently by phone conversation, that the Marines would be inserted on the USS Harold E. Holt and Koh Tang Island simultaneously. Reference 12 (CTG 79.9 151138Z) states COMUSSAG/7AF 141730Z May approved concept of operations in CTG 79.9 141400Z

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except CTG 79.9 tasked to put Boarding Party aboard Holt (for subsequent transfer to Mayaguez). There are, however, two COMUSSAG/7AF messages with DTG 141730Z May. One is the plan described above containing conflicting direction for the Boarding Party insertion on Mayaguez and Holt. The other message is to CTG 79.9 and, although vaguely worded, is apparently the message referred to in reference 12. CINCPAC 142112Z May approved the USSAG/7AF plan of 141730Z and, among other things, directed the wording of para. 1, D (2) be changed to read that the Boarding Party board Mayaguez from Holt. Apparently verbal communications between COMUSSAG/7AF and higher authority, about midnight, 14 May, resulted in the change in the CTG 79.9 concept of 141400Z; i.e. board Mayaguez from Holt instead of direct insertion on Mayaguez from helos.

(C) There were a total of 16 USAF helos deployed to Utapao AB prior to or on 15 May for the subject operation. One crashed the night of 13 May while enroute from Nakhon Phanom. Of the 15 helos arriving at Utapao, one (#784) did not participate in operations on 15 May (apparently due to mechanical problems); one (Knife-51) was down, mechanical, until 0720G, 15 May; one (Knife-52) arrived at Utapao at 0400G, 15 May, too late to participate in the first wave; and one, (Jolly Green-44) arrive at Utapao on 15 May, time unknown, but did not participate in the first or second wave.

Eleven USAF helos (6 HH-53, 5 CH-53) were, then, in the first wave.

(U) The helos are, subsequently referred to as K for Knife (CH-53) and JG for Jolly Green (HH-53). The CH-53 model's primary mission

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is cargo/troops lift. The HH-53 model's primary mission is normally SAR. The HH-53 has a refueling capability.

(S) Final briefings for the first wave were given commencing at 0200 to 0230G, 15 May. Execution of the assault and recovery of Mayaguez was received verbally from COMUSSAG/7AF at 0356/57G; the eleven helos departed Utapao between 0414/16G and 0423/25G (reference 1 and 13). The first three helos (HH-53) carried the Mayaguez boarding party of 68 personnel; 59 personnel from Co. D, BLT 1/4, 6 MSC, 2 AF EOD, and 1 USA linguist. The remaining 8 helos (5 CH-53, 3 HH-53) carried 177 personnel of BLT 2/9(-) plus 3 USA personnel (linguist). As outlined above, the plan was to insert the boarding party on Holt (via hoist) from the three HH-53 and, simultaneously, insert the assault force on Koh Tang Island, two helos to the West side LZs and six to the East side LZs.

III.(S) Recovery of the Mayaguez. The three HH-53 helos (JG-11, JG-12 and JG-13) inserted on Holt between 0550G and 0624G. Holt, on "hel... operations" station at 0445G, was approximately 12 miles northwest of Koh Tang Island. (Mayaguez was anchored about 1 mile North of the island). Holt proceeded alongside Mayaguez and U.S. Marines boarded the ship at 0725G without resistance. A flight of USAF A-7D had laid CBU-30 on Mayaguez at 0710/16G. The Mayaguez was declared secure at 0822G. At 0950G, 38 USMC and 2 US Navy Corpsman returned to the Holt from Mayaguez for possible insertion on Koh Tang Island. 19 USMC remained on Mayaguez. (CTU 79.9.2 160837Z May). The 38/2 USMC/Navy were not subsequently inserted on Koh Tang. Holt had Mayaguez under

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tow (for international waters) at 0958G (reference 13). Holt cast off and began towing Mayaguez at 1020G (CTU 79.9.2 160837Z May). At 1005G, the Mayaguez crew was aboard U.S.S. Henry B. Wilson, having been recovered from a small Thai boat. (Note: Wilson arrived in the area, 4 miles east of Koh Tang Island, at 0718G, 15 May (reference 13).) The Mayaguez crew was transferred to Mayaguez by Wilson at 1300G. Holt cast off the towing rig and was escorting Mayaguez at 1545G. At 1615G, Holt was directed to join Wilson (at Koh Tang) as soon as possible. At 1700G Mayaguez was under her own power and Holt departed Mayaguez for Koh Tang Island with an ETA of 1730G (reference 13 and CTU 79.9.2 160832Z May).

IV.(U)Insertion/extraction, Koh Tang Island. Table 1 provides for each helicopter, by call sign, the planned insertion on Koh Tang, the reconstruction in this paper of insertion times and LZs, the number of troops inserted, WIA evacuated, and cumulative build up. Table 1 also provides extraction data. Table 2 is an accounting by number, from sources as indicated, of all personnel (excluding USAF except as noted) participating in the Koh Tang Island assault or recovery of the Mayaguez. Figure 1 is a time chart of USAF helicopter events for the first wave; figure 2 is a time chart of helicopters events for the second wave and the extraction.

(U) The times shown in table 1 and in figures 1 and 2 are developed from the analysis in section V below. Uncertainties associated

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TABLE 1 (S)  
 ASSAULT ON KOH TANG ISLAND (U)  
 (All times local, Gulf)

Helo Call	Nr. PAX on departure Utapao (ex- cludes AF crew)		Planned insertion		Reconstructed insertion		Nr. WIA on is. evac- uated to Utapao	Cumula- tive build up	Remarks
	Time	LZ	Time	LZ	Nr. in- serted				
<u>First wave</u>									
K-21	20	0542	West	0600	West	20	0	20	K-21 ditched, after insertion, about 0614. 1 AF crew lost.
K-22	20	0542	West	-	-	0	0	20	Aborted. Forced landing on Thai coast about 0737/50.
K-23	20	0542	East	0600	East	20	0	40	K-23 shot down in LZ. 5 AF crew also on island.
K-31	22	0542	East	-	-	0	0	40	K-31 shot down at water edge near east LZ; of total 26 aboard, 13 rescued by Wilson at sea, 0840-0935.
K-32	15	0542	East	0645/54	West	13	0	53	1 AF and 1 USMC WIA on helo. Returned to Utapao. 1 USA did not off load. Helo down at Utapao.
JG-42	27	0542	East	0700/10	West	27	0	80	Helo down on return to Utapao.
JG-43	29	0542	East	0700/10	West(s)	29	0	109	Inserted about 1000 meters South of West LZ's.
JG-41	27	0542	East	0900	West	22	0	131	Helo down on return to Utapao. Unsuccessful attempt about 1015 to off load remaining 5 PAX and pick up 6 WIA.
TOTAL	180					131	0	131	
<u>Second wave</u>									
JG-11	27	1015	-	1200	West	27	-	158	
JG-12	26	1015	-	1200	West	26	1	183	
JG-43(42) <sup>a</sup>	28	1025	-	1215/30	West	28	0	211	
K-51	19 <sup>b</sup>	1025	-	1215/30	West	19	5	225	PAX on K-51 were originally on K-23 (less 1 USA missed movement)
K-52	27	1025	-	-	-	0	0	225	Aborted. Landed Thai coast.
TOTAL	127					100	6	225	
Total First & Second Wave	307 <sup>b</sup>					231	6	225	
<u>Extraction</u>									
	Time	Zone	Number extracted		Off load PAX to:		Cumulative extraction		
JG-43(42) <sup>a</sup>		1415	East	0	Coral Sea	0	0	Attempt to extract K-23 personnel - unsuccessful. JG-43(42) received battle damage. To Coral Sea for repair	
JG-11		1810	East	20	Coral Sea	20	20	Passengers (20) plus 5 AF crew of K-23	
K-51		1854	West	44	Coral Sea	64	64	Coral Sea 10 NM southwest of island at 1815.	
JG-43(42) <sup>a</sup>		1909	West	54	Coral Sea	118	118		
JG-44		1910	West	34	Holt	152	152		
JG-44		1936	West	40	Coral Sea	192	192		
K-51		2010	West	29	Coral Sea	221	221	1 KIA, 3 MIA. on island.	

<sup>a</sup>JG-43 on return to Utapao assumed call of JG 42. This helo, originally JG-43, is referred to JG-43(42) in this paper. (U)

<sup>b</sup>The 19 inserted from K-51 were initially on K-22, first wave. Number of participants is 307-19 = 288. (U)

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TABLE 2 (S)  
 NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL KOH TANG  
 ISLAND AND MAYAGUEZ BOARDING (U)  
 (Excludes USAF except as noted)

	<u>Number Personnel</u>	<u>Source</u>
A. Number launched from Utapao and returned Utapao without disembarking on Koh Tang Island	35	Reference 19
Breakdown:		
1. WIA on helo (K-32), 1st wave - did not disembark	1	Ref. 1, Ref. 19, Ref. 20
2. Did not disembark from helo (K-32), 1st wave (1 USA personnel)	1	Reference 19
3. On 1st wave (K-22) returned to Utapao, missed 2 wave (K-51) (1 USA personnel)	1	Reference 19
4. Helo (JG-31) 1st wave, did not insert all PAX - returned to Utapao	5	Reference 1, Reference 18
5. Helo (K-52) aborted, 2nd wave. Personnel returned to Utapao	27	Calculated from 35 total, minus 8 accounted for
B. Number inserted on Koh Tang Island	231	Reference 19
Breakdown:		
1. Medevac to Utapao by helo	6	Ref. 20, Ref. 1, (note: 2 WIA on K-22 aborted 1st wave, returned to Koh Tang on K-51; not included in 6)
2. KIA on Koh Tang	1	
3. WIA on Koh Tang	3	
4. Evacuated by helo to Coral Sea/Holt	221	Calculated from 231 minus 10 accounted for other means
C. Evacuation by helo from Koh Tang Island	197	Coral Sea 152005Z, 160608Z, 8 161229Z May Coral Sea messages, Holt 152223Z May, Wilson 151550Z May
1. Number on board, Coral Sea	5	
2. Number on Coral Sea not evacuated by helo (5 survivors of K-31 transferred from Wilson)	1	
3. Number on Coral Sea count also included in Holt count	1	
4. Errors in Coral Sea messages	3	
3 personnel counted twice	3	
1 personnel cannot be identified	1	
5. Number evacuated by helo to Coral Sea	187	
6. Number evacuated by helo to Holt	34	Reference 1 and Holt 152223Z May
7. Total number evacuated by helo to Coral Sea/Holt	221	Agrees with Ref. 19, para 8 above.
D. Number personnel in K-31 (crashed off shore, 1st wave)	22	Ref. 19. In addition 4AF crew in K-31
Number recovered at sea by USS Wilson	10	Wilson 151550Z May. 3 AF crew also recovered.
Number WIA in K-31	12	Ref. 20
USMC	10	
USN	2	
E. Mayaguez Boarding Party (inserted on Holt)	68	Ref. 14 and BLT 1/4 241410Z May
1. USMC, Co D, 1/4 personnel	59	
2. AF EOD personnel	2	
3. MSC personnel	6	
4. USA linguist	1	
F. Evacuation from Koh Tang Island by helo		
<u>Helo</u>		
JG-11 (To Coral Sea)	20	Plus 5 AF crew. Crew and PAX of K-23
K-51 (To Coral Sea)	44	Calculated from total minus other helo loads.
JG-43 (To Coral Sea)	54	44 also mentioned in Ref. 3.
JG-44 (To Holt)	34	Ref. 1
JG-44 (To Coral Sea)	40	Ref. 1
K-51 (To Coral Sea)	29	Ref. 1
TOTAL	221	

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SECOND WAVE: KOH TANG ISLAND (U)

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• (S) FIG: 2 •

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with the times are discussed in section V. As discussed in Section V, two helos (JG-42 and JG-43) may have inserted about 0630G instead of about 0700G as shown in table 1 and figure 1.

(S) From table 1, the build up on Koh Tang compared to the planned build up as follows:

<u>Time (Golf)</u>	<u>Cumulative number on Koh Tang (excluding 5 AF crew of K-23)</u>	<u>Planned (based on USSAG/7AF frag 141651Z May)</u>
0600	40	180 <sup>a</sup>
0645/54	53	180
0700/10	109	180
0900	131	180
1015/45	131	480 <sup>b</sup>
1200	183	480
1215/30	225	480

<sup>a</sup>Actual number in first wave. Frag called for 0542G insertion. (U)

<sup>b</sup>Up to 12 helos planned for second wave. Assumes average of 25 (U) per helo.

#### First Wave

(S) From table 1 and figure 1, of 8 helos in the first wave assault on Koh Tang, three were lost to enemy action, one was forced to land in Thailand (about 12-20N 102-10E). Three additional helos of the eight received battle damage to the extent they were unable to participate in further operations for the day after their return to Utapao. One helo (JG-43) of the eight in the first wave assault on Koh Tang was able to continue operations.

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(S) Of the total of 11 helos participating in the assault and insertion on Holt, three were available for the second wave; JG-11, JG-12, and JG-43 (as mentioned above). JG-13 suffered battle damage after insertion on Holt (just how is not known, during a rescue attempt of K-23 personnel about 0810). Of nine helos exposed to enemy fire (including JG-13), eight (89%) were either lost or suffered damage to the extent they were not available for subsequent operations. Of the nine, two helos (JG-13 and K-22) made forced landings in Thailand while attempting to return to base and three helos were lost.

(S) Of the 180 personnel in the first wave, Koh Tang, 131 were inserted over a 3 hour time span, in three locations. This compares to a planned insertion of 180 within roughly 10 to 15 minutes at two locations. The breakdown of the 49 personnel (27% of the first wave assault force) not inserted is:

- 20 On K-22; aborted - forced landing  
Thailand coast.
- 22 On K-31; crashed in water
- 2 On K-32 (1 WIA in hover, 1 did not  
disembark)
- 5 On JG-41; unsuccessful insertion  
attempt following off load of 22  
earlier.

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(C) If a successful insertion is defined as one in which personnel are off loaded and an unsuccessful insertion as an attempt in which personnel are not off loaded, there were 6 successful insertions compared to 11 unsuccessful attempts in the first wave.

Second Wave

(S) The second wave was composed of 5 helos; one from the first wave assault on Koh Tang; two from the insertion on the Holt; one at Utapao previously down with mechanical problems; one at Utapao that arrived on 15 May too late for the first wave. From figure 2 and table 1 the five helos are estimated to have arrived in the Koh Tang area between 1115G and 1155G with a total of 127 troops for insertion. Second wave insertion commenced about 1200G with two helos (JG-11 and JG-12) inserting 53 troops in the western zones.

(S) Shortly thereafter, about 1210G, three helos (JG-43(42), K-51, and K-52) attempted to insert in the east zones. (Note: JG-43 on return to Utapao from the first wave took the call sign of JG-42. This helo is referred to as JG-43(42) in this report.) Enemy fire caused the three helos to abort the run. K-52, (following JG-43(42), and K-51), received damage (including a bullet hole in a fuel tank), was losing fuel, and proceeded to return to base via the Thailand coast. K-52 subsequently made a forced landing near the location of K-22, down in Thailand from the first wave. JG43(42) and K-51, after their aborted run to the east side,

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inserted 47 troops at an estimated time of 1215/30G, on the west side. K-51 and JG-12 returned to Utapao via the Thai coast location of the two downed aircraft: JG-11 and JG-43(42) remained in the Koh Tang area.

(S) The second wave inserted an hour and 45 minutes after the planned second wave insertion, and six hours after the first insertion at 0600G. Of the 127 troops embarked in the second wave, 100 were off loaded. The 27 not inserted (21% of the second wave assault force) were on K-52. The second wave insertion of 4 helos took approximately 15 to 30 minutes. There were four successful insertions and three unsuccessful attempts. In the second wave, 6 WIA were medivaced to Utapao (1 on JG-12 and 5 on K-51). Of the five helos in the second wave, four were able to participate in subsequent operations.

#### Extraction

(S) The first extraction attempt was about 1415G. At that time two helos were available at Koh Tang (JG-43(42) and JG-11). This attempt to pick up crew and passengers of K-23, east side, was unsuccessful and resulted in battle damage to JG-43(42). JG-43(42) proceeded to the Coral Sea (about 90 miles away), escorted by JG-11. After this attempt, JG-11 was the only USAF helo available in the area until repair of JG-43(42) was completed at about 1700G. Three additional helos (JG-12, K-51 and JG-44) arrived in the area from Utapao between 1725 and 1800G, figure 2. Successful extraction

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began at 1810G with JG-11 extracting passengers and crew of K-23, east side. Four more extractions of 172 personnel from the west side followed between about 1854G and 1936G. See table 1. The final extraction of 29 occurred at 2010/11G. As sunset was at 1822G, the final extraction was in total darkness and required 4 attempts prior to the successful pick up.

(S) Of the five helos involved in the extraction, one (JG-43(42) received battle damage during the early attempt at about 1415G and one (JG-12) received battle damage when the actual extraction began. Two others (JG-11 and K-51) were reported with major battle damage at Utapao after the extraction (CINCPAC AF 172340Z May). It is not clear when the damage was received. As no damage was reported as occurring to these two aircraft on the second wave, it is assumed the damage was received during extraction. It is also possible, but not clear in the reports, that JG-43(42) received some battle damage during the extraction in addition to the damage received at 1415G.

(U) Table 3 provides a summary of helo operations, 15 May.

V.(C) Discussion of USAF Helicopter Flight Profiles, 15 May. The first wave helos (11 helos, 3 for Holt, 8 for Koh Tang) departed Utapao between 0414G and 0425G (reference 1), in general agreement with the time reported in reference 12 (0415G to 0423G). Planning enroute time for one way flight, Utapao to Koh Tang, was 1 hr, 45 min. Straight line distance from Utapao to Koh Tang is 190 miles, indicating an air speed of 110 kts for an enroute time of 1 hr, 45

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(S)TABLE 3  
SUMMARY OF HELO ASSAULT OPERATIONS (U)  
15 May

INSERTION

<u>Operation</u>	<u>Force embarked</u>	<u>Force inserted</u>	<u>Elapsed time for insertion</u>	<u># helos</u>	<u># helos lost</u>	<u># helos exposed to enemy fire</u>	<u># helos receiving battle damage (including lost)</u>	<u>% helos damaged to exposed</u>
Insertion on Holt	68	68	20 to 30 min.	3	0	1	1	100
First wave Koh Tang	180 <sup>a</sup>	131	3 hr. 0 min.	8	3	8	7	88
Second wave Koh Tang	127 <sup>a</sup>	100	15 - 30 min.	5	0	5	1	20
TOTAL	375	299	6 hr., 15-30 min.	16	3	14	9	64

EXTRACTION  
from Koh Tang

<u>Operation</u>	<u>Force embarked</u>	<u>Force extracted</u>	<u>Elapsed time for extraction</u>	<u># helos</u>	<u># helos lost</u>	<u># helos exposed to enemy fire</u>	<u># helos receiving battle damage (including lost)</u>	<u>% helos damage to exposed</u>
Attempt at 1415G	-	0	-	2	0	2	1	50
Extraction commencing 1810G	-	221 <sup>b</sup>	2 hr.	5	0	5	3	60

<sup>a</sup>Of 307 embarked on first and second wave, Koh Tang, one helo team of 19 was embarked in both waves. (U)

<sup>b</sup>6 in first wave were medivac to Utapao by second wave. 1 KIA, 3 MIA not extracted. (U)

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minutes. The distance is about 210 miles if the course followed is east along the Thailand coast to Ko Chang Island, then southwest to Koh Tang. A speed of 120 kts is required for a 1 hr, 45 minutes enroute time. In any event all helos should have arrived Koh Tang by or prior to 0610G (0425G + 1 hr, 45 min.).

(U) The following analysis of USAF helo events on 15 May is based mainly on reference 1 except where noted. Table 4 presents for the first wave helos a listing of events extracted from reference 1. Table 4 also contains timing of selected events by helicopter as reported by the reference indicated. This section analyzes the events and reported times to establish as nearly as possible the timing of major events. Except where noted, it is felt the time established are within 5 to 10 minutes of the actual times.

Insertion on Holt

(C) Reference 1 reports the insertion on Holt commenced at 0550G and was completed by 0624G. Reference 14 reports the Boarding Force was embarked by 0615G. Reference 13 reports, at 0633G, embarkation was complete and Holt closing Mayaguez at 25 kts. The helos inserting on Holt (JG 11, 12, 13) were the first to depart Utapao (about 0415G) and Holt was about 12 miles closer to Utapao than Koh Tang (reference 13 states Holt on station 12 miles NW Koh Tang Island at 0445G). Therefore insertion could have commenced on Holt as early as 0550G. The Boarding Party appears to have

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TABLE 4 (S)  
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS (AND TIMES) BY HELICOPTER (U)

Helicopter Call	First Wave		Time of Selected Events	
	Events (from Ref. 1)	Event	Time	Reference
	<u>Insertion on Koh Tang Island</u>		(Golf)	
K-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived LZ (west)</li> <li>• Cambodians opened fire while off-loading</li> <li>• Aircraft hit, one engine out</li> <li>• Took off</li> <li>• Ditched in water about three quarters of mile off shore</li> </ul>	Inserted LZ (west):	0555 0600	Ref. 5 Ref. 1
		Ditched:	0614 0614 0622	Ref. 2 Ref. 3 (K-21 may be in water) Ref. 4
K-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 15 seconds behind K-21</li> <li>• Landed in LZ (west)</li> <li>• Took off (because of ground fire) without off loading</li> <li>• Went back and laid suppressive fire for K-21</li> <li>• Went to location of K-21 ditching</li> <li>• Saw K-32 approaching location of K-21 ditching</li> <li>• Made run to insert Marines</li> <li>• Fired on, hit, loosing fuel</li> <li>• Aborted run</li> <li>• Headed north</li> <li>• JG-11 and JG-12 followed</li> <li>• Landed on Thailand coast</li> </ul>	Arrived LZ:	0550 0600	Ref. 6 Ref. 1
		Departed Koh Tang for Thailand coast:	0630	Ref. 3 (K-22 losing fuel)
		Landed Thailand coast (about 12-20N, 102-10E)	0750 0737	Ref. 1 Ref. 2
K-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started run to land east side behind K-31 &amp; K-23</li> <li>• Saw K-31 explode on beach</li> <li>• Saw K-21 coming out from west side</li> <li>• Aborted run</li> <li>• Watched K-21 ditch</li> <li>• Extracted 3 crew members of K-21 from water</li> <li>• Searched for 1 crew member of K-21</li> <li>• Told (by ABCCC) to insert on west side</li> <li>• Hit in hover over LZ (west) 1 AF, 1 USMC wounded</li> <li>• Landed, off-loaded USMC personnel</li> <li>• Launched for Utapao</li> <li>• JG-12 escorted to Thai Coast (where K-33 landed)</li> <li>• Landed Utapao. Aircraft down</li> </ul>	<p>Inserted LZ (west):</p> <p>Arrived Utapao from Koh Tang:</p>	0653 0654 0654 0821 0809	<p>Ref. 3 (Knife 32 flight entering area)</p> <p>Ref. 3 (Knife 32 off loaded 15)</p> <p>Ref. 5</p> <p>Ref. 12</p> <p>Ref. 21</p>

## (S) TABLE 4 (CONT'D) (U)

First WaveHelicopter Call

	Events (from Ref. 1)	Event	Time of Selected Events		Reference
			Time	(Golf)	

Insertion on Koh Tang Island

K-31

- Crashed at waters edge east LZ

Crash:

0600 to about 0610 Ref. 1 (based on K-32 account)

0600 Ref. 7  
 0610 Ref. 5  
 prior 0615 Ref. 9  
 prior 0630 Ref. 8  
 0712 Ref. 2  
 0749 Ref. 4

K-23

- Crashed on beach in LZ, east side

Crash (and insertion, east LZ):

0600 Ref. 7  
 0605 Ref. 5  
 0605 Ref. 13 (ABCCC directs SAR flight to K-23)  
 0605-0615 Ref. 9  
 0636 Ref. 1 (first insertion on East side)  
 0639 Ref. 4  
 0655 Ref. 2

JG-41

- On final approach to LZ (east)
- Saw Knife aircraft explode and another leave island and ditch
- Aborted run
- Refueled
- Order (by ABCCC) to insert in west LZ
- Made insertion attempt, received heavy fire
- Aborted
- Held about 5 miles west while TacAir suppressed enemy fire
- Made insertion attempt
- Aborted
- Made insertion attempt
- Aborted
- Spectre called in and provided suppressive fire

Inserted 22 Marines:

after 0630 Ref. 5  
 after 0830 Ref. 10 (first spectre time on target at 0830)

Attempt to insert 5 Marines, pick up WIA.

about 0900 Ref. 8  
 1010 Ref. 3 (JG-41 in bound, medivac, spectre providing cover)  
 1047 Ref. 3 (mortar fire caused medivac depart LZ prior pick up)

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Helicopter Call	Events (from Ref. 1)	Time of Selected Events		
		Event	Time	Reference
<u>First Wave</u>				
JG-41 (Cont'd)	<u>Insertion on Koh Tang Island</u>		(Golf)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made insertion attempt, landed</li> <li>• Off loaded 22 Marines (out of 27 aboard)</li> <li>• Took off with five Marines still aboard</li> <li>• Made insertion attempt to off load 5 Marines and pick up 6 WIA</li> <li>• Attempt not successful</li> <li>• Refueled</li> <li>• Returned to Utapao, aircraft down</li> </ul>			
JG-42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived off Koh Tang Island at 0530</li> <li>• Refueled</li> <li>• Told by ABCCC two helos were down</li> <li>• Went into southernmost LZ (west)</li> <li>• Off-loaded 28 Marines</li> <li>• Intense ground fire</li> <li>• Refueled and returned to Utapao. Aircraft down.</li> </ul>	Inserted:	0620 0630 0708	Ref. 22 Ref. 5 Ref. 3 (JG 41 inserting. Flight of three; 41, 42, 43) (completed 0739)
JG-43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to Western LZ</li> <li>• Intense ground fire</li> <li>• Aborted</li> <li>• Made second run</li> <li>• Made 2nd insertion attempt</li> <li>• Landed, off-loaded 29 Marines</li> <li>• Returned to Utapao</li> <li>• Assumed call sign of JG-42 for short while</li> </ul>	Insertion:	0615 0630 0635 0708	Ref. 7 Ref. 5 Ref. 11 Ref. 3 (JG 41 inserting. Flight of three; 41, 42, 43)

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Helicopter  
Call

## Events (from Ref. 1)

Insertion of Boarding Party  
on Holt

20

JG-11

- Off loaded Marines to Holt
- Directed to escort K-22 to Thailand mainland
- Picked up 22 Marines from K-22 (on Thai coast) and returned to Utapao

JG-12

- Flew to USS Holt with JG-11 and JG-13
- Discharged passengers (27 Marines) at 0550G
- Directed to remain in area for SAR
- Refueled
- Directed rendezvous with K-22 and K-32
- Escorted K-32 to Thai coast where K-22 had landed
- K-32 continued to Utapao
- JG-12 stayed with JG-11 while JG-11 picked up Marines from K-22
- Continued to Utapao

JG-13

- Events not available after insertion on Holt. Returned to Utapao via Thai coast. No other activity noted. Aircraft down at Utapao

## (S) TABLE 4 (CONT'D) (U)

## First Wave

## Time of Selected Events

Event

Time

Reference

(Golf)

Insertion on Holt

0550 - 0624

Completed by 0615

Ref. 1

Ref. 14

Insertion on Holt

0550 - 0624

Completed by 0615

Ref. 1

Ref. 14

Insertion on Holt

0550 - 0624

Completed by 0615

Ref. 1

Ref. 14

Rescue attempt  
of K-230810 or shortly  
thereafter

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been embarked on Holt between 0615G and 0624G and Holt enroute to Mayaguez by about 0630G.

Insertion on Koh Tang, First Wave.

(S) USSAG 141651Z May, fragged all first wave helos to insert on Koh Tang at 0542G. From CTG 79.9 conversation, LZ 1 and 2 (north to south) were designated on the western side of the Island, and LZ 3 thru 8 (north to south) on the eastern side. K-21 and K-22 were to land in LZ 1 and 2; K-31, K-23, K-32, JG-42, JG-42 and JG-43 on the eastern side. From reference 1, K-32 followed K-31 and K-23. Also from reference 1, it appears JG-41, JG-42 and JG-43 were, in that order, to follow closely behind K-31, K-23, and K-32.

K-21

(S) K-21 reports (reference 1) that he arrived at the LZ (west) at 0600G. Reference 1 also reports first insertion on west side at 0600G. Reference 4 reports first GSF beach insertion as 0608G (which could have been either K-21 or K-23, discussed below). K-21 also reports that shortly after off loading he was forced to ditch about three quarters of a mile off shore Koh Tang Island. References 2 and 3 place the time of ditching at 0614G. Reference 4 indicates the time of K-21 ditching at 0622G although it is not clear that the time 0622G refers to the time of ditching or some other event such as time it was reported to USSAG HQ.

(C) Based on reference 1, the elapsed time from take off at Utapao to Koh Tang, and the reported ditching at 0614G, it appears K-21

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was in the LZ at about 0600/05G. It also appears this was the first insertion on Koh Tang Island (note: K-23 probably inserted at approximately the same time as discussed below).

K-22

(S) K-22 was with K-21 and landed in the LZ (west) very shortly after K-21 landed (15 sec behind, reference 1). Because of ground fire, K-22 took off without disembarking the troops aboard, went to the scene of K-21 ditching, returned to the LZ, and attempted another run. At this point K-22 was hit, began loosing fuel and headed north for Thailand, with troops still aboard. Reference 1 reports landing on the Thailand cost at 0750G while reference 2 states 0737G. The approximate location of the landing was 12-20N, 102-10E, about 135 miles from Koh Tang. At a speed of 120 kts, K-22 departed Koh Tang between 0629G and 0642G. Reference 3 reports at 0630G that K-22 was losing fuel. An 0630G departure by K-22 from Koh Tang results in about 15 minutes for K-22 to be at the scene of the K-21 ditching (about 0614G) and return for his second run to the LZ.

(S) A 0630G departure (or shortly thereafter) from Koh Tang is also compatible with the K-22 statement in reference 1 that JG-11 and JG-12 followed about 10 min. behind. JG-11 and 12 completed their insertion on Holt about 0610/15G and then, JG-12 states, he refueled prior to being designated to escort K-22 (and K-32). This would place JG-12 departure from Koh Tang area after 0630G,

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behind K-22, but apparently in company with K-32.

K-31

(S) K-31 was leading K-23 and K-32 into the eastern LZs. K-32 states, reference 1, he saw K-31 explode and then saw K-21 coming out from the western LZ, placing the hits and subsequent loss of K-31 between 0600G and about 0610G. JG-41 also reports that on first approach to LZ (east), he saw a Knife aircraft explode and another leave island and ditch. Karen (flight of 3 A-7D, reference 21) reports he was directed by Cricket at 0605G to assume (from Dennis 2) on scene SAR commander. Karen also reports he had contact with K-23 and K-31 but time of contact is not stated. Karen does state he strafed the beach (0615-0715) in support of the K-23 personnel. MCCC chronology shows helo status as of 0605G as 1 helo downed in water burning, (apparently K-31), and one helo downed in LZ, not flyable, (apparently K-23), with one USAF WIA. It appears then that K-31 was shot down (at waters edge, just short of the east LZ) at 0600G or a couple of minutes thereafter. It is not known where the reported 0712G time of reference 2 stems from. It is possible the time was meant to be stated as 0612G. The apparent time of loss of K-31 in reference 4 of 0749G may be referring to time of confirmation or some similar event to USSAG HQ. Reference 4 does not make clear what the times listed under "helo losses" refer to.

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(S) K-23 landed in LZ (east) but battle damage prevented take off. Reference 7, 5, and 9 all indicate time in LZ was about 0600G or close thereto, as does MCCC chronology as stated above. Dennis 2 (1 A-7D) Oprep-4 (388 TFW 150515Z May), states he was directed by Cricket to assume on scene commander for downed K-23 from Spectre 61 at 0600G. However, reference 1 states first insertion on east side Koh Tang Island was at 0636G (delayed due to ground fire) K-23 was the first and only insertion on the east side. Reference 4 indicates time of K-23 loss as 0639G (but note comment on reference 4 above) and reference 2 states loss as 0655G. It is possible therefore that K-23 made the first attempt with K-31, aborted and was shot down on a subsequent attempt after 0630G. The evidence however indicates K-23 was in the LZ (east) at about the same time, or shortly after, K-31 was hit and downed, i.e., about 0600G or a few minutes thereafter.

K-32

(S) K-32, followed K-31 and K-23 on the first insertion attempt to the east LZ at about 0600G, saw K-31 explode, aborted his run and proceeded to the scene of K-21 ditching. There K-32 extracted three AF crew of K-21 from the water and searched for a missing fourth crewman. How long K-32 searched is not stated in reference 1. After searching, Cricket directed K-32 to insert on the west side. While in the LZ or hovering over it, K-32 took hits resulting

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in 2 WIA (1AF, 1 USMC). After off-loading, K-32 proceeded to Utapao at maximum speed (2 WIA aboard) via the location of K-22's forced landing on the Thailand coast. JG-12 (reference 1) states he escorted K-32 as far as K-22 location on the Thailand coast from where K-32 went on to Utapao unescorted. Considering the time of K-21 ditching (about 0614G), that K-32 arrived on scene after that, picked up three personnel and searched for a fourth, K-32 insertion in LZ (west) must have been after 0630G. Reference 3 indicates 0654G, as does reference 5 (perhaps based on reference 3). Reference 12 states the first helo returned (with WIA) to Utapao at 0821G (this had to be K-32). Reference 21 states K-32 arrived Utapao at 0809G. K-32's route to Utapao was about 210 miles. A speed of 150 kts (about maximum cruise), translates into a 1 hr and 24 min enroute time. Subtracting the enroute time from reported arrival times results in an insertion time between 0645 and 0657G, close to agreement with reference 3 and 5.

JG-41

(S) JG-41 was on his final approach to LZ (east) when he saw K-31 explode (0600G) and K-21 ditch (0614G). He aborted, refueled, and made an attempt to insert on the west side. This run was also aborted. JG-41 then held in orbit while TacAir suppressed enemy fire. The first TacAir attack that could have been on the west side was by Hitest (4 F-4Ds), reported at 0810G (see TacAir paper). JG-41 then made two attempts to insert and aborted both attempts.

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Spectre 61 was called in. Spectre 61 first time on target was 0830G. (see TacAir paper). JG-41 then made an insertion attempt and off-loaded 22 of 27 Marines aboard prior to being driven off. Reference 8 puts the time of this insertion at about 0900G which is compatible with the Spectre attack coming at 0830G.

(C) JG-41 made another attempt to insert the 5 remaining Marines and evacuate WIA on the beach. Although not mentioned in reference 1, this attempt apparently followed another Spectre attack commencing at 0940G (see TacAir paper). Reference 3 indicates JG-41 in-bound for medivac from Koh Tang Island at 1010G with Spectre cover. This attempt was also unsuccessful.

(C) JG-41 then refueled and returned to Utapao. Providing a few minutes for the last attempt at about 1010G (JG-41 reported he got to the LZ and indicates he actually touched down) and some 15 minutes to refuel, indicates JG-41 departed for Utapao after 1030G.

JG-42

(S) JG-42, apparently with JG-41 and 43 on the first approach, at or shortly after 0600G, does not mention a first aborted run to the east LZ (when K-31 shot down). JG-42 does state he refueled after arriving at the island which agrees with JG-41 report of refueling. It should be noted that JG-12 and possibly JG-11 and 13 were also apparently refueling at about this time. (Up to six helicopters (JG-11, 12, 13, 41, 42 and 43) could have been refueling between 0610 and about 0645G). Reference 5 and Utapao Command Post

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150800Z May (0prep-4, JG-42) indicate JG-42 inserted at 0620/30G. Reference 3 indicates JG-41, flight of three, 41, 42, 43, inserting at 0708G. JG-42 states he inserted in the southern most LZ, which would be LZ 2. JG-43, as discussed below, inserted about 1000 meters south of the planned LZs on the western side. This leaves LZ 1 for JG-41 if the three made their insertion attempt at about the same time. LZ 1 could well have been the hottest, driving of JG-41.

JG-43

(S) JG-43 states he made an approach to the western LZ, aborted, made a second attempt which was successful, off-loaded 29 Marines and returned to Utapao. This insertion was 1000 meters south of LZ 1 and 2 on the western side (reference 8). Also JG-43 does not mention refueling. It would seem, however, that JG-43 did refuel at least once and perhaps twice as JG-42 did. Reference 11 indicates insertion at 0635G; reference 3 at or about 0708G; reference 7 at 0615G.

Insertion Times of JG-42 and 43

(S) The conflicting reports of the insertion times of JG-42 and JG-43 warrant further analysis. JG-41, JG-42 and JG-43 all state they departed Utapao at 0420/25G. JG-42 states he arrived off Koh Tang at 0530G; JG-41 and JG-42 do not state an arrival time. An average speed of 163 kts is required over 190 miles, the shortest distance for JG-42 to have arrived at Koh Tang Island at 0530G. This speed seems unreasonable. It is therefore believed that

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JG-42, as well as JG-41 and 43 arrived off Koh Tang around 0600G (about 1 hr and 40 min. after launch from Utapao, as planned).

(S) The following discusses JG-42 and JG-43 insertion times. It is felt that following events with associated times are approximately correct as shown earlier for the helicopters indicated.

K-21: at 0600G in LZ, ditched about 0614G,  
inserted 20 personnel, west side.

K-22: aborted, enroute Thailand about 0630G.  
No insertion.

K-31: shot down at water's edge, east LZ,  
0600G or shortly thereafter. No insertion.

K-23: In east LZ, not flyable, about 0600/05G.  
20 personnel inserted (plus 5 AF crew).

K-32: Inserted 13 personnel (15 pax aboard),  
west LZ, after 0630G.

JG-41: Inserted 22 personnel, west LZ, about  
0900G.

(U) Using these events as a starting point, JG-42 and JG-43 insertion times are analyzed as follows.

(C) Although voice reports of the early action (first two to three hours) were confusing and sometimes misleading, reference 3 indicates JG-41, 42 and 43 were inserting at 0708G. A HQ Marine Corps Command Center (MCCC) working paper chronology notes a report that at 0655G two helos were in orbit waiting to land.

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and discharge and that at 0705G, these two helos did land. If JG-42 and JG-43 had inserted about 0630G, only 1 helo (JG-41) would have been available to insert troops at 0700G. The working paper also reports that at 0655G approximately 100 USMC were on Koh Tang Island and at 0705G about 150 USMC now on deck. This is contradicted by USSAG 151450Z May which states that at 0657G reports from the LZs confirm 54 GSF personnel on the ground. The 100 USMC on Koh Tang at 0655G could have been attained if JG-42 and 43 had inserted at about 0630G as follows:

<u>Helicopter</u>	<u>Approximate Time(G)</u>	<u>Cumulative Build up</u>
K-21	0600	20
K-23	0600	40
JG-42/43	0630	96
K-32	0645/54	109

but if that build up is correct, the 150 USMC on deck at 0705G is in error, as there would have been only 1 helo, JG-41, left to insert and he inserted about 0900G. So either the report that two helos were inserting at about 0700G is in error or the 100 USMC count at 0655G is in error.

(S) USSAG 151450G states a confirmed report that 54 GSF on ground at 0657G. 54 GSF on the grounds at 0657G more readily fits the build up ashore as follows:

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<u>Helicopter</u>	<u>Time(G)</u>	<u>Cumulative Build up</u>
K-21	0600	20
K-23	0600	40
K-32	0645/54	53

than any other insertion time scheme. That is, JG-42 and JG-43 inserting about 0700/10G, in accordance with reference 3. The working paper chronology of the MCCC report of two helos in orbit and inserting at 0705G also fits this time scheme.

(S) If it is assumed that JG-41, JG-42, and JG-43 were together on their approach and maintained their flight integrity, then the JG-41 account of reference 1 is relevant to all three helos until the time when JG-42 and JG-43 inserted. From reference 1, JG-41 states he was on final approach to Koh Tang when he saw one Knife aircraft explode and another leave the island and ditch (placing the time about 0610/14G). JG-41 aborted because of intense ground fire and refueled. He was then told by Cricket to insert on the west side and aborted this attempt. The sequence of events places this JG-41 first attempt to the west side after 0630G. The JG-41 account and the assumption that JG-42 and JG-43 were with JG-41 (JG-42 reports refueling after arriving at the island and prior to his actual insertion; JG-43 does not mention a refueling at any time) fit the report of reference 3 that JG-41 flight was inserting

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at 0708G, and accounts for the two helos (JG-42 and JG-43) reported to have discharged in the LZ at 0705G. It is therefore concluded that JG-42 and JG-43 inserted about 0700/10G (west LZ) and at approximately the same time JG-41 aborted a run to the west LZ. On the other hand it cannot be ruled out that JG-42 and JG-43 inserted prior to 0700G, about 0630G.

JG-11 and JG-12

(C) JG-11, 12 and 13 inserted the Boarding Party on to Holt as discussed above. JG-11 and 12 then escorted K-32 to the Thai coast, following behind K-22. JG-11 and 12 then picked up the passengers and crew of K-22 and were enroute to Utapao when directed to return the crew to K-22. K-22 states (reference 1) the crew was back with K-22 at about 0900G. JG-11 and 12 should therefore have arrived at Utapao about 0940G (Utapao about 75 miles from the reported location of K-22). JG-11 and 12 then participated in the second wave.

JG-13

(S) An account of JG-13 is not available in reference 1. Reference 1 does state that JG-13 proceeded from Utapao to Holt to Thailand to Utapao, and that JG-13 was damaged on return to Utapao. Reference 15 reports JG-13 had "30-35 holes". CincPacAF 172340Z May reports JG-13 landed at Rayong, Thailand with battle damage. Repairs made at Rayong and helo flown to Utapao. USSAG 150101Z (sitrep 038 as of 150040Z) reports latest information indicated 18 survivors picked up from helo that crashed at sea in vicinity of

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LZ and that rescue helicopter then reported to have crashed. From the apparent battle damage JG-13 sustained, it is surmised that JG-13 attempted, after insertion on Holt, to rescue K-31 personnel, received battle damage in an unsuccessful attempt, and proceeded to return to base, making a forced landing at Rayong, Thailand (10 to 15 miles from Utapao). Rotor (3 A-7D) Oprep-4 states JG-13 did make a rescue attempt of K-23 personnel, shortly after 0810G, and received battle damage.

ASSAULT ON KOH TANG ISLAND, SECOND WAVE

(S) Five helicopters participated in the second wave, JG-11, JG-12, K-51, K-52 and JG-43(42). JG-43 on returning to Utapao from the first wave assumed the call sign of JG-42. Subsequent mention of the helicopter is referred to in this analysis as JG-43(42). It should be noted that of the initial eight helos inserting on Koh Tang, JG-43(42) was the only helo of the eight capable of continuing operations.

(C) Reference 12 states first two helos relaunched (second wave) from Utapao at 0933G, second two at 0959G and a fifth helo launched at 1011G.

K-52

(S) K-52 states he departed Utapao at 0930G (one of the two helos departing at 0933G, reference 12) and arrived at Koh Tang at 1130G. At Koh Tang K-52 held in orbit north of the island. At 1208G Cricket directed K-52 (and JG-43(42) and K-51) to insert on the east LZ. K-51 was behind K-52 and JG-43(42). Ground fire caused K-52 to abort the run - loosing fuel; K-52 headed for Utapao via the Thailand coast. K-51 joined K-52 after inserting in the west LZ and

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and JG-12 also joined after inserting in west LZ. K-52 proceeded to Thailand coast near K-22 location and made a forced landing. JG-12 transferred PAX from K-52 to Utapao.

JG-43(42)

(S) JG-43(42) does not give a time of return to Utapao from Koh Tang on the first wave. If he departed Koh Tang about 0730G, as reconstructed in the first wave insertion above, he could have arrived at Utapao (via the Thailand coast route (210 miles) at a speed of 150 kts) at about 0855G. By process of elimination JG-43(42) is the only helo that also could have launched at 0933G (reference 12) in addition to K-52 (see discussion of K-51, JG-11, and JG-12 below). An arrival at Utapao at about 0855G provides 30 to 35 minutes for turn around to relaunch on the second wave.

JG-43(42) would then have arrived in the Koh Tang area about 1130G with K-52 and held in orbit. An insertion attempt was made shortly after 1208G, to the east side with K-51 and K-52. This run was aborted. JG-43(42) then inserted on the west side followed by K-51. The insertion on the west side occurred after 1208G, reference 3 indicates insertion prior to 1233G. Based on the above, it appears insertion was between 1215G and 1230G. JG-43(42), after insertion, refueled and remained in the area for SAR duties.

K-51

(S) K-51 was a down aircraft at Utapao until 150720G. K-51 initially launched from Utapao to assist K-22 returning from the

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first wave, was diverted to Koh Tang, and again diverted back to Utapao when about three quarters of the way to Koh Tang. Three quarters of the way to Koh Tang and back to Utapao is about 300 miles, placing K-51 return to Utapao about 0920G to 0950G. K-51 departed Utapao on the second wave at 1010G, the fifth aircraft to launch (reference 12). At Koh Tang, K-51 joined K-52 and JG-43(42) about 1155 or 1200G (based on a 1 hr. 45 min. enroute time). K-51 aborted first insertion attempt (with K-52, JG 43(42)) to the east side, then followed JG-43(42) into the west LZ. Time of insertion was about 1215/30G as discussed under JG-43(42). While in the LZ, K-51 picked up 5 WIA Marines. K-51 joined with K-52 and JG-12, proceeded to the Thailand coast, then "as quick as possible" to Utapao. Estimated time of arrival at Utapao is 1355G/1400G, based on an estimated 1230G departure from Koh Tang and use of maximum cruise of 150 kts.

JG-11 and JG-12

(S) JG-11 and 12 returned to Utapao about 0940G from the first wave insertion on Holt (see JG-11/12 discussion under first wave). Reference 12 states 2 helos departed for the second wave at 0959G. JG-12 states he was back at Koh Tang on the second wave at approximately 1130G. These times provide approximately 20 min. for JG-11 and 12 to turn around at Utapao for the second wave and 1 hr. and 30 min. enroute time to Koh Tang, equivalent to about a 140 kt cruise speed. (The estimated time of arrival at Utapao is based

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on a K-22 statement - an error of 10 minutes would result in a 30 min. turn around time for JG-11/12). JG-11 and 12 were directed to insert on the west side. Reference 17 indicates insertion was at 1200G. While in the LZ, JG-12 embarked 1 WIA Marine, then escorted K-52 to Thailand, loaded K-52 PAX after K-52 made a forced landing, and returned to Utapao; time of arrival at Utapao was 1440G. JG-11, after insertion, refueled and remained in the Koh Tang area.

#### EXTRACTION FROM KOH TANG ISLAND

(C) The first extraction attempt (unsuccessful) was at about 1415G. The attempt was to extract the passengers and crew (25 personnel) of K-23 from the east LZ. At that time two helos were in the Koh Tang area, JG-11 and JG-43(42). The successful extraction attempts began about 1800G. At that time 5 USAF helos were in the Koh Tang area; JG-11, JG-12, JG-43(42), K-51 and JG-44. In addition 2 Navy SH-3 helos were launched at 1610G from Coral Sea to assist, but they did not make an extraction.

#### JG-43(42)

(S) JG-43(42) remained in the area after the second wave insertion. JG-43(42) states that at 1415G they were directed to extract GSF (passengers and crew of K-23 in east LZ). They were covered by JG-11 who had also remained in the area after the second wave insertion. JG-43(42) received battle damage during this attempt, lost one engine, and proceeded to the Coral Sea (at 1415G about 90 miles from Koh Tang (CTG 77 150856Z)), escorted by JG-11.

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JG-43(42) and JG-11 arrived Coral Sea at 1530G (CTF 77 150840Z May). JG-43(42) damage was repaired and he launched from Coral Sea about 1710G (CTF 77 150957Z May) for Koh Tang Island. At that time Coral Sea was about 25 to 30 miles from Koh Tang (CTF 77 150957Z May). JG-43(42) was the third helo to extract personnel from the Island (the second on the west side). JG-43(42) picked up 54 (reference 1) personnel from west LZ at 1909G (reference 3) and transferred them to the Coral Sea.

JG-11

(S) JG-11 departed Coral Sea at 1610G (CTF 77 150914Z May) in company with 2 SH-3G, for Koh Tang Island. JG-11 states he, JG-43(42), and JG-12 "worked area" for approximately 90 minutes under control of Nail 68 (an OV-10) and was finally able to pick up K-23 crew and GSF (reference 16). Reference 1 states this extraction was at 1815G. Reference 3 indicates between 1808 and 1812G. Reference 3 also indicates JG-11 on deck Coral Sea, about 10 miles from Koh Tang, at 1827G. Reference 1 reports 25 extracted. CTF 77 151140Z reports JG-11 on board Coral Sea at 1828G, debarked 5 AF and 20 USMC. JG-11 refueled and departed Coral Sea at 1845G (CTF 77 151148Z May).

JG-12

(S) JG-12 arrived Utapao from the second wave at 1440G. They departed Utapao for Coral Sea at 1545G with 14 AF passengers (a relief flight crew and maintenance personnel). JG-12 arrived at

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Coral Sea at 1725G and departed for Koh Tang at 1735G, after disembarking passengers (CTF 77 151040Z May). JG-12 states that after Tac Air strikes, he hovered over K-23 for approximately 2 minutes to determine if survivors were aboard (after JG-11 picked up K-23 crew and GSF). They were covered by K-51 and a boat from Wilson. At this point JG-12 was hit; reference 3 indicates the time as 1822G. JG-12 proceeded to Coral Sea arriving at 1904G (reference 3) where the aircraft was down.

K-51

(S) K-51 estimated time of arrival at Utapao from the second wave is about 1400G. K-51 was down with hydraulic problems on arrival. After repair, K-51 launched with fuel and other items for K-52, down on the Thai coast, then proceeded to Koh Tang Is. Reference 3 indicates K-51 had departed Utapao prior to 1605G and was expected to be in orbit off Koh Tang Is. at 1755G. At Koh Tang, K-51 extracted 44 personnel from west LZ about 1854G (reference 3), the first extraction from the west side. The personnel were transferred to Coral Sea and K-51 returned to Koh Tang for the last extraction of 29 personnel. Reference 3 indicates the last extraction was at 2010 or 2011G. Reference 2 reports extraction completed at 2020G. Reference 4 also reports extraction completed at approximately 2020G.

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(S) JG-44 did not participate in the first or second wave.

Reference 1 states JG-44 initial arrival at Utapao was on 15 May but does not provide a time. JG-44 launched from Utapao at 1615G for Coral Sea. Enroute they were diverted to Koh Tang and joined with JG-43(42). An enroute time of 1 hr. 45 min. indicates arrival at Koh Tang about 1800G. At Koh Tang, JG-44 followed JG-43(42) into the west LZ, picked up 34 personnel and delivered them to the Holt. As JG-43(42) extraction was about 1909G, JG-44 extraction must have been about 1909G or 1910G. After delivery to the Holt, JG-44 returned to Koh Tang and extracted 40 personnel from the west LZ. Reference 3 indicates the time was about 1936G. The 40 were delivered to the Coral Sea. Reference 1 then states JG-44 returned to the island, extraction was completed however, and he was directed to join JG-43(42) and return to Utapao.

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