

# This Is The American Forces Thailand Network

## AFTN Network Timeline 1964 thru 1969



**20 October 1964** MACTHAI J-6 requests permission for AFRTS outlet in Korat from Director of Joint Communications, Thailand

**4 December 1964** Chief of JUSMAG informed that Thai government cannot approve operation of a foreign radio station in Thailand

**16 November 1965** Thai Air Chief Marshall Dawee Chullasapaya agrees to closed-circuit broadcasting a U.S. military installations in Thailand

**14 May 1966** Seventy-nine military personnel spaces authorized for AFTN

**26 September 1966** Thirteenth Air Force requests television for Thailand

**4 October 1966** Thai Government complains, through American embassy, that radio signals from American military installations are radiating into nearby Thai communities.

### Broadcast Specialist Class # 003, Fort Benjamin Harrison, October 1966

*Standing:* GySgt Frank Alameida (USMC), PO/2 Chuck Combs (USN), PFC John Deering (USMC) behind GYSgt Frank Candelario (USMC), SSgt. Bill Treacy, A2C Mel thasnum behind TSgt Jack davis, A2C Bob Elyard (in shadow) in fron to PFC Mel Snodgrass(USA), A2C George Smith, A2C Gary York (in partial shadow), A2C A2C Bob Jarvis behind A2C Joe Ruggiero (now of H&G TV), A2C Jim Holmes, in front of Bob tuchel, A1C Don Aistrope and A3C David Mellish.



*Kneeling from left:* SSgt Davis F. "Doc" Ball, A1C John Lynn, A2C Walter Solarz, A1C George Crawford, and A2C Bob Koslowsky

Photograph provided by Davis F. "Doc" Ball ►

Most of this graduating class was sent to Thailand to begin manning the stations that would comprise the new Armed Forces Thailand Network (AFTN). .

- 11 November 1966** The AFTN key station begins operating at Korat RTAFB
- 6 December 1966** General Hunter Harris, Commander-in-Chief, PACAF, endorses proposal for television in Thailand
- 3 February 1967** Broadcast station at Nakhon Phanom begins operating.
- 5 February 1967** Headquarters, AFTN assumes operational control of affiliate stations.
- 8 February 1967** First AFTN station manager's conference held at Korat RTAFB.
- 10 February 1967** Network begins feeding programs to outlets from Korat RTAFB
- May 1967** AFNB teletype service begins at Korat RTAFB

<b>AFTN Facilities</b>	
<b>Station</b>	<b>On Air Date</b>
<b>AFTN- Takhli</b>	<b>3 May 1966</b>
<b>AFTN- Korat</b>	<b>11 November 1966</b>
<b>AFTN-Nakon Phanom</b>	<b>19 December 1966</b>
<b>AFTN-Ubon</b>	<b>1 April 1967</b>
<b>AFTN-Udorn</b>	<b>16 April 1967</b>
<b>AFTN-Utapao</b>	<b>30 May 1967</b>
<b>Hq AFTN</b>	<b>11 November 1967</b>

<b>AFTN Unmanned Satellites</b>	
<b>Satellite Stations</b>	<b>On Air Date</b>
<b><u>Mukdahan</u></b>	<b>June 1967</b>
<b><u>Phitsanulok</u></b>	<b>June 1967</b>
<b><u>Chieng Mai</u></b>	<b>June 1967</b>
<b><u>Green Hill (Khao Khieo)</u></b>	<b>June 1967</b>
<b>538<sup>th</sup> Eng Const Batt</b>	<b>8 November 1967</b>
<b>561<sup>st</sup> Eng Const Batt (Sakhon Nakhon)</b>	<b>15 November 1967</b>
<b>Camp Cloudy (Phu Khieo)</b>	<b>10 December 1967</b>
<b>Camp Vayama</b>	<b>6 February 1968</b>

<b>Lopburi (Koke Kathein)</b>	<b>23 January 1968</b>
<b>Khon Kaen</b>	<b>11 February 1968</b>
<b>809<sup>th</sup> Eng</b>	<b>12 March 1968</b>
<b>Bang Pla</b>	<b>25 April 1968</b>
<b>Kanchanaburi</b>	<b>8 May 1968</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> RRFs-Ramasun Army Station</b>	<b>17 February 1968</b>
<b>Phu Mu</b>	<b>3 May 1968</b>

- 4 June 1967** New Network building for Headquarters AFTN becomes operational
- 3 July 1967** Major Thomas G. Martin assumes duties as Chief, AFTN, vice Lieutenant Colonel Jack R. Olsen
- August 1967** Voice line from Armed Forces News Bureau in Washington, D.C. installed at Hqs. AFTN
- 22 October 1967** First shipment of taped electrical transcriptions sent to outlets.
- 2-3 November 1967** Second AFTN station Manager's Conference held at Korat RTAFB
- 1 December 1967** Contracts with Associated Press and United Press International signed for radio and . journal wire services.
- 5 December 1967** Second shipment of taped electrical transcriptions sent to outlets.
- 10 December 1967** AFTN begins Audience Survey at all outlets.
- 12 December 1967** DCA SAM THAI initiates 1000 HZ tone to align all channels associated with the KVH-7 and B-030 circuits.
- 15 December 1967** MACTHAI Public Affairs Office receives AFNB voice line and teletype circuits in their conference.
- 31 December 1967** AFTN audience survey terminates
- April 1968** AFTNA receives verbal notification of 12 enlisted position losses- - effective FY 69.
- April 1968** COMUSMACTHAI J-6 assigns UHF Channel 74 to AFTN for TV tests
- 5 April 1968** AFTN-N initiates request for circuit priority on B-030



- 20 April 1968 TV test facility at U-Tapao complete and operational
- 9 May 1968 First airlift of TV equipment arrives U-Tapao
- 10 May 1968 TV Van arrives U-Tapao
- 10 May 1968 SAAD and AFTN engineers begin preliminary field intensity measurements at U-Tapao



**1st AFTN Station Manager's/ Program Directors Conference, May 1968**

*Standing:* L to r: SMS Neal Schneider, TSgt Ed Bradbury, TSgt Ron Will, TSgt. Chuck Albrecht, SMS Pat Rutter, Major Thomas G. Martin, Commander, MSgt, Art Sharpe, MSgt. Bob Eddy, TSgt, Jim Ewing, SSgt Al Owens, TSgt. Jack McAfee,

*Kneeling:* SSgt. \_\_?\_\_, SSgt Don Cormiae, SSgt Chuck Hawsey (AFRTS Sign), SSgt Doc ball, SSgt Billy Helms, (Official USAF Photo provided by Davis F. "Doc" Ball)

16-18 May 1968 First AFTN Station Manager-Program Director Conference held at Korat RTAFB

18 May 1968 Test pattern aired at U-Tapao

1 June 1968 Journal wire service cancelled for lack of usage

4 June 1968 Major Thomas G. Martin reassigned to Andrews

11 June 1968 Automation feasibility study to SAF-OIID



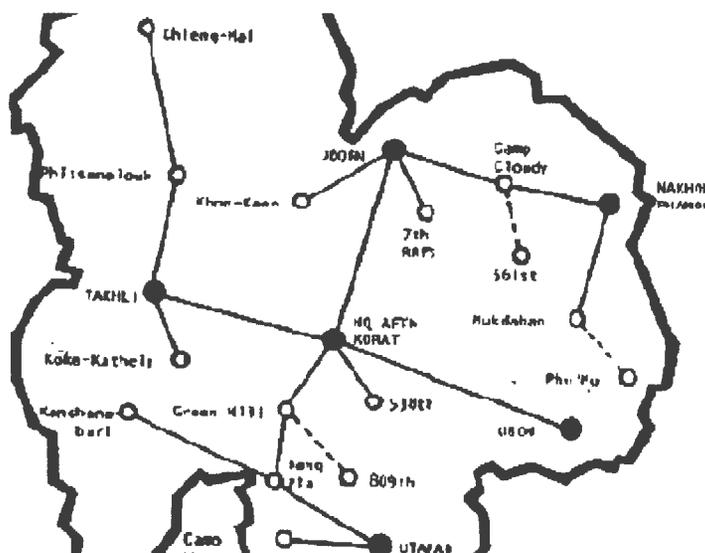
- 15 June 1968** Captain Michael J. Hall assumed duties as Chief, AFTN, vice Major Thomas G. Martin
- 25 June 1968** Deputy Chief, AFTN, requests excusal of AFTN-Korat personnel from HSC work details
- 8 July 1968** A controlled pattern TV broadcast began at U-Tapao
- July 1968** COMUSMACTHAI J-6 assigns Channel 80 as additional TV test channel
- 3 July 1968** Frequency proposal for TV Channels 74 & 80 is forwarded to 7/13AF
- 8 July 1968** AFTN-TV U-Tapao on the air▶
- 11 July 1968** Priorities are established for base-by-base construction of television facilities
- 15 July 1968** Interservice Support Agreement, providing for joint service manning, is sent to 13AF (DXI) for approval.
- 23 July 1968** Drawings of the U-Tapao TV facility provides 56 DES design reference for similar buildings to be constructed at Nakhon Phanom
- July 1968** The much-publicized penetration of the perimeter at Udorn RTAFB sets tighter security measures in motion throughout the network
- 5 August 1968** Mr. George Lim, of the AFRT Special Missions Directorate's engineering Division, completes his studies of facilities available for TV at all Thailand bases, and returns to SAAD to present his proposals
- 5-7 August 1968** AFTN's second station managers' conference plans network "get out the vote: programs
- 15 August 1968** Hq AFTN sends details of Korat RTAFB TV plans to Korat Base Civil Engineers
- 2 August 1968** All network station personnel begin completing "work logs" to assist with November 1968's upcoming manpower survey
- 27 August 1968** AFTN Engineering queries SAAD to obtain information for local Civil engineers on TV towers programmed for Thailand
- 31 August 1968** Network supply informs all bases that AFTN can obtain TV receivers
- August 1968** "Early outs", granted by Hq USAF, and the early advent of television without UMD TV personnel combine to create a network-wide austere manning situation



- August 1968**      Marathon broadcasts by AFTN affiliates in Ubon and Takhli net \$ 21, 700 for charity
- August 1968**      Restricted Programs Materials/Music
- 27 September 1968**      AFTN Deputy Chief and Korat local station PD travel to Saigon's 7AF (DXI) and a localized combat news service begins in cooperation with 7 AF's Tape Center
- 30 September 1968**      Chief, AFTN, departs Korat for SAAD and AFRTS-LA to view TV vans and provide necessary coordination for TV installation
- 5-7 December 1968**      Station Manager's Conference at Korat
- 11 December 1968**      Temporary TV antenna arrives at AFTN-Nakhon Phanom
- 12 December 1968**      Corrected interservice support agreement, for TV manning, is submitted for approval.
- 16 December 1968**      AFTN-Nakon Phanom TV installation crew arrives at NKP
- 18 December 1968**      The C-124 Globemaster carrying the NKP van arrives, and is unloaded at NKP
- 19 December 1968**      FY70 budget estimate is forwarded for approval. Because of increased TV commitments, budget for fiscal year 70 will be \$ 28,000.
- 20 December 1968**      First full-duplex operation on teletype circuit R-510 is confirmed with the AFRTS News Bureau in Arlington, Virginia.
- 25 December 1968**      AFTN-TV Nakhon Phanom beings program tests with Christmas Day programming.
- 31 December 1968**      VOCO approval is received for official sign-on from Royal Thai Government officials, on 3 January 1969.

**1 Jan 1969** The new AFTN manning documents cuts 12 slots, including an admin specialists as TV requirements grow.

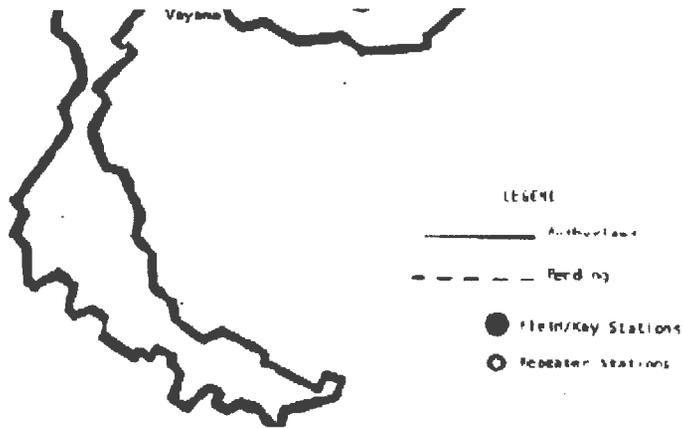
AFTN receives a request for extension of TV service to isolated Camp Ruam Chi Chai and Camp Change Pradit, which would require microwave relay from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. AFTN requests study of the proposal by the Sacramento Army Depot.



**3 Jan 1969** AFTN-TV Nakhon Phanom takes the air at 1430 hours.

**5 Jan 1969** A serious video outage within a TK-22 camera signs the AFTN-NKP television station off at 2200 hours.

**6 Jan 1969** Procurement begins for Project 96, as microwave systems are requested for Camp Vayama and Hill 272.



**9 Jan 1969** Replacements found in-country, and AFTN-TV Nakhon Phanom resumes broadcasting. Hq AFTN orders an extra camera as “stand-by” to preclude a similar event in the future.

**23 Jan 1969** Sacramento Army Depot awards the contract for procurement of 616 television receivers for use at all Thailand bases.

**31 Jan 1969** Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group forwards a request for extension of radio service to its Nong Hahn site.

**1 February 1969** Sensitive Material Guidelines (declassified)

**12 March 1969** AFTN-TV Udon signs on the air

AFTN-News initiates “Conference Calls” on the Network line to provide immediate command ability, while offering news and production material for television and radio.

**14 Mar 69** 7/13 AF Commander asks the U.S. Ambassador’s assistance in obtaining Thai government approval for FM radio service at Don Muang RTAFB.

**19 Mar 69** First 69 television receivers received from Sacramento Army Depot.

**27 Mar 69** AFTN-TV Korat signs on at 1500 hrs.

**31 Mar 69** AFTN’s Manning Document provides for additional spaces to man TV in Thailand.

Chief, AFTN, asks for help from the U-Tapao Base Commander in assuring that local base support, critically behind schedule, will meet deadlines for TV Project 96 (Camp Vayama and Hill 272)

**Mar 69** ABC and Associates Press news film and slide services are contracted.

**2 Apr 69** AFTN-TV Takhli begins broadcasting at 1800 hours

**7 Apr 69** Installation and operations are “finalized” at AFTN-TV Ubon, preparatory to a first broadcast. A demonstration for U.S. embassy and Thai officials is offered.

- 1 Jul 69** *Armed* Forces Thailand Network changes to *American* Forces Thailand Network as per directive from AFRTS.
- 1 Jul 69** Contracts let for AP, UPI wire services and AP Color Slide service for fiscal year 1970.
- 15 July 69** AFTN service is restored to Chiang Mai, using audio distribution system.
- 16-25 July 69** AFTN radio & TV cover Apollo XI flight with local live broadcasts as well as AFRTS-Washington direct feeds and INTELSTAT pictures direct from the moon.
- July 69** President Nixon visits, but AFTN reporters are denied permission to cover the event because of "insufficient space". USIS offers access to their coverage.
- 10-14 Aug 69** AFTN carries four important games network-wide during the 1969 Thailand Softball Tournament at Korat RTAFB.

**13 Aug 69** DCA/SAM/THAI locates the source of a month-long distortion problem noted on circuit KAR-1. Circuit had been logged out for a total of 72 hours.

**18 Aug 69** AFTN loses voice circuit B-030 (AFRTS-W) to a higher priority user. Outage is termed "indefinite".

**27 Aug 69** AFTN's proposal for network conversion to FM is forwarded to Secretary of the Air Force by Pacific Air Command.



**17 Sep 69** AFTN-TV Korat, plays the first video-taped program to be aired in Thailand, "Insight."

**24 Sep 69** Newly-created Network Production Department sends Thailand Orientation Stories to all stations for TV production.

**Sep 69** Hq AFTN asks several to request a late port call to smooth the transition into a critical manning situation.

**23 Sept 69** SAFOI-I turned down initial request for conversion of AFTN radio outlets to FM

**13 Oct 69** A full critique of AFRTS radio



programming was sent to AFRTS-LA

15 Oct 69

PCS orders were requested to transfer certain broadcasters around the network.

3 Nov 69

AFTN requests reconsideration of the plan to convert AFTN radio transmission to FM. All stations were again reminded of the sensitivity of a broadcast signal radiating off base.



6 Nov 69

First thoughts of an extensive AFTN audience survey were put in memo form by the Network Superintendent.

8 Nov 69

PCS transfer for MSgt Skip Mahnke, AFTN Korat to AFTN Udon.

12 Nov 69

A list of suggested revisions in AFTN news broadcasting "sensitive" subjects was submitted to 7/13th (DXI) to be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok.

17 Nov 69

The new "Kaleidoscope" format was begun combining news analysis and commentary from AFRTS-Washington voice line with contemporary music on the hourly week-day network radio program.

18 Nov 69

Temporary manning assistance was requested from 13 AF to alleviate a critical problem caused by a lack of an engineer at AFTN Udon.

3 Dec 69

Complete request and justification for an AFTN squadron designation was submitted to 7/13AF (DXI).

4 Dec 69

Permission on to conduct a test on FM feasibility was received from 7/13AF.

8 Dec 69

A complete study on upgrading the sound quality of AFTN's voice line to affiliate stations in order to achieve "full network status" was to 7/13AF (DXI)

9-11 Dec 69

AFTN Station Manager's Conference was held at AFTN-Korat.

23 Dec 69

AFTN asks American Forces Vietnam Network for a loan of a "7800" Video Tape recorder to be used at AFTN-Udon.

24 Dec 69

Preliminary test of FM transmission were completed and forwarded to 7/13 AF (DXI).

29 Dec 69

AFTN asks AFRTS-LA for an FM stereo program package for test purposes.

30 Dec 69

Network supply asks all stations to identify the location of TV sets signed out on AF Form on 1297.

◀ Back-Network History  
1970-1973 ▶

Timeline for