

WELCOME

TO

KORAT RTAFB



HOME OF THE

553RD

RECONNAISSANCE

WING

THE 553RD RECONNAISSANCE WING INSIGNIA

THE 553RD RECONNAISSANCE WING INSIGNIA WAS DESIGNED BY THE WORLD FAMOUS CARTOONIST, MILTON CANIFF. MR. CANIFF IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS COMIC STRIP, "STEVE CANYON". THE FOLLOWING IS MR. CANIFF'S EXPLANATION OF THE INSIGNIA:

"The device shows-----an aggressive jungle cat-like creature, facing forward, airborne on gigantic bat wings. The entire area of the beast is colored midnight blue, but the eyes glow white against the nocturnal shading. The mouth is red.

The right front paw of the animal appears to be touching a representational design of the top of a globe marked with latitudinal and longitudinal lines.

In the upper left corner of the yellow field are shown jagged lines in the configuration of the ancient navigator's lines of position for a star "fix". The point of impact is indicated by a white circle within which is the ancient sign for SULPHUR. This is drawn in bright red.

The white eyes of the BAT CAT make clear the reconnaissance mission of the organization, while the deep blue signifies the secrecy surrounding the effort. The red mouth highlights the heat of the striking power implicit in the BAT CAT. The midnight blue and the golden yellow of the field further emphasize the day and night capability of the Wing, whether flying blind or not.

The tiger-like cat creature denotes the militant attitude of the personnel involved in the assigned task. The bat wings signify the sensitivity of the classified equipment issued to the 553rd and its application. The representation of the globe denotes the worldwide potential of the Wing and its mission. The SULPHUR sign at point of the "fix" dramatizes the enormity of the power which can be delivered to such a place as a result of the skill of the Wing. "

The words "Cavete Cattam" translated from Latin means "Beware of the Cat. "

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 553RD RECONNAISSANCE WING

The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing and subordinate units were organized at Otis AFB, Massachusetts on 25 February 1967 and Colonel Gus Weiser assumed command of the Wing on 1 March 1967. The Wing accomplished all training at Otis AFB under the direction of First Air Force (ADC).

The first cell of 7 EC-121R aircraft of the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing, led by Colonel Weiser, departed the CONUS on 13 October 1967. On 19 October 1967 the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing became a unit of Pacific Air Forces under 13th Air Force.

Initial operations of the Wing were out of tents and other temporary buildings. Maintenance facilities were shared with the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing, with the exception of several small metal buildings and PAC Vans. By the end of February 1968, all units were moved into permanent type facilities. During the period of time the Wing was housed in temporary facilities, all mission requirements were met, but many difficulties had to be overcome.

The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing began operations late in 1967. Since that time the Wing has experienced a rate of over 97% on-time take-offs, and a mission effectiveness rate of over 99%. The Wing generates 9 combat sorties a day to accomplish 24 hour coverage of the assigned mission. To accomplish the 553rd mission, there are 234 officers and 1217 airmen positions assigned.

On 8 July 1968, Colonel Henry L. Timmermans, formerly Commander of the 966th Airborne Early Warning and Control Squadron assumed command of the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing.

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The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing began operations late in 1967. Since that time the Wing has experienced a rate of over 96% on-time take-offs, and a mission effectiveness rate of over 99%. To accomplish the 553rd mission, approximately 1500 personnel assigned to the Wing.

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FACTS ABOUT
KORAT ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE
HOME OF THE
553RD RECONNAISSANCE WING

Housing: Korat Air Base is a thriving and well equipped air base. By Southeast Asia standards, quarters are superior to those found at most other bases. Generally you will be quartered with personnel from your own Wing and Squadron.

Transportation: Korat RTAFB is quite large and there is a considerable distance between your living quarters and your squadron area. Most personnel rely on the base shuttle bus for transportation. The buses run approximately every 15 minutes throughout the base, and may be boarded at designated bus stops. The Blue Routes (1 & 2) shuttle between the 553rd Contonment area and the main base area. The Red Routes run between the 388th Area, located on the opposite end of the flight line, and the main base. Many individuals have purchased bicycles, downtown, for approximately \$25.00. It is suggested that you check the Camp Friendship PX (adjacent to Korat RTAFB) for an American bike before buying one downtown. All personnel are encouraged to register their bicycles with the Base Security Police. Present Wing and Base policies discourage the purchase of motorcycles or motorbikes.

Finances: You will be paid once a month while stationed at Korat RTAFB. You have the option of having your check sent to your Post Office Box or to the bank of your choice. The local Bank of America offers complete banking facilities. Under the present Bank of America system, all checks are required to be sent to San Francisco for account posting. When the pay checks are mailed at the end of the month, there is approximately a 4 to 5 day delay before the local office receives confirmation of your check's arrival in San Francisco. This time delay may cause an individual to unknowingly issue a non-sufficient funds check. If you elect to use the local banking office, remember to allow for this time delay.

Required Fees: Thai Nationals are employed to clean all living quarters. They wash and iron clothes, shine shoes, and maintain general cleanliness of your living area. Enlisted personnel pay approximately \$7.50 monthly, due on pay day to the first sergeant's designated representatives. Officer BOQ fees are \$10.00 per month paid directly to the base billeting office. Airman and NCO Club dues are \$1.00 per month, and Officers' Club dues are \$3.00 per month. All fees are payable on the 1st of each month, and must be paid by the 15th of the month.

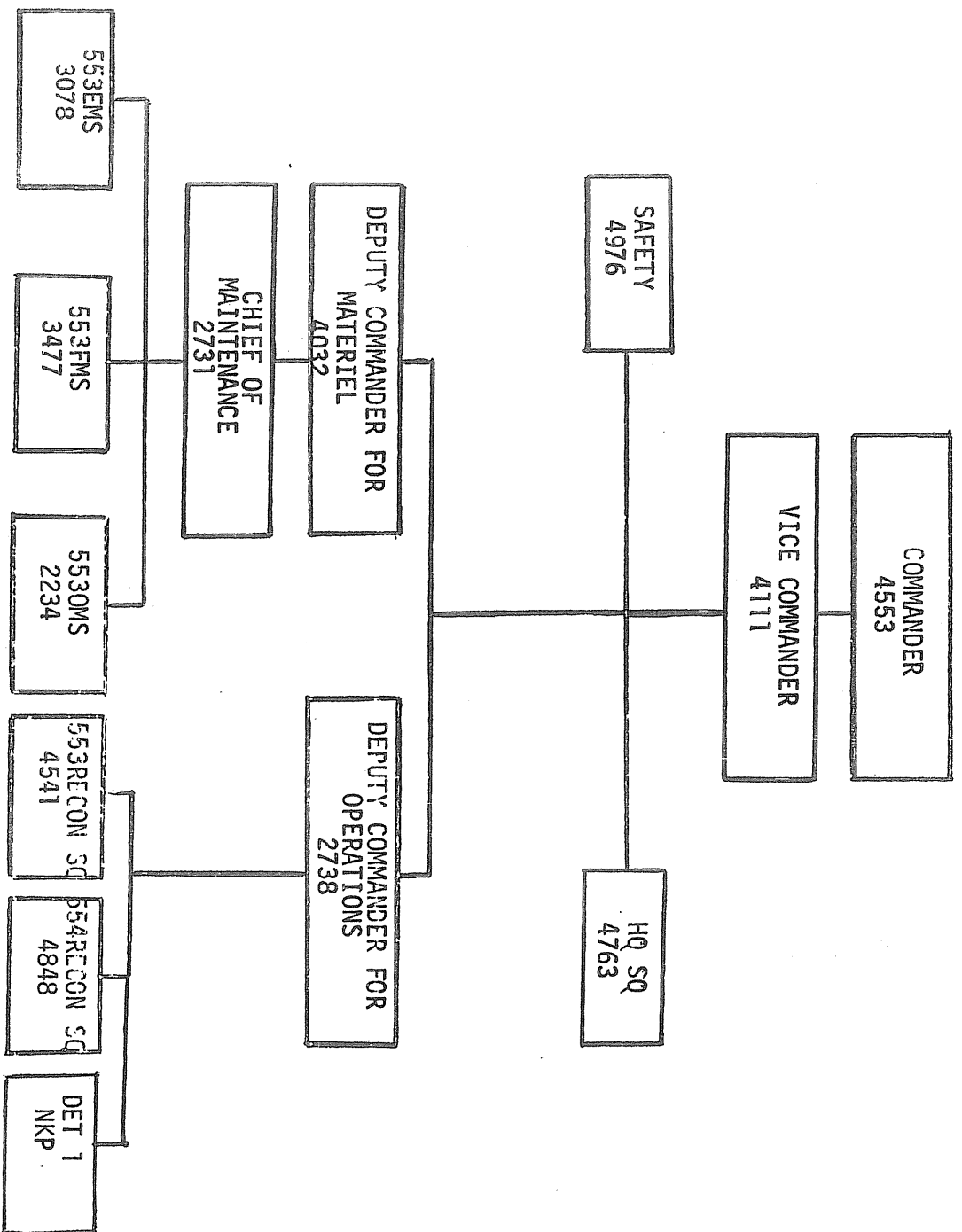
Briefing: All newly assigned personnel are required to attend a base sponsored orientation course before they are allowed off base. This briefing covers many areas pertinent to your travels within the local area/ Remember, this briefing is mandatory before you go to town.

Curfew: For E-4s and above, no curfew is presently in force, however, prudence should be observed in remaining in town during later hours of the evening. However, E-3s and below must possess a current pass (DD Form 345) while off base. These passes must be returned to the respective squadron orderly room by 2330 hours unless special written permission of the appropriate commander is granted. In any case, E-3s and below are not authorized on any street, road or public thoroughfare between the hours of 2300 and 0600.

Money: United States currency is utilized on all bases throughout Thailand, and there is a standing policy that only Thai Baht be spent off base. U.S. currency is readily accepted off base, however, spending dollars off base is illegal and can find its way into Communist channels. All clubs offer top dollar/baht conversion rates, as does the local banking facility.

Bars and Clubs: There are numerous bars and clubs in the Korat area. Most are below western standards and many are considered very unsanitary. Uniforms are not worn off base except on official business. As throughout SEA, Korat has its share of prostitutes and bar girls. One of the most undesirable by products of the world's oldest profession is venereal disease. Local varieties range from Gonnorehea and Syphilis, to more exotic strains. Many of the licensed prostitutes have V.D. All prostitutes, by Thai law, are required to register themselves with the local police and medical facilities. They are, additionally, required to have weekly checkups; however, EXTREME CAUTION should be exercised in dealings with these individuals. A clean bill of health is of short duration. If an individual is unfortunate enough to contract V.D. he should report immediately to the base dispensary for treatment. No disciplinary action is taken against those who become infected. Personnel should remember, however, that the loss of duty time adversely affects every in the squadron.

Off Limit Areas: Posted in appropriate areas are pictures and listings of establishments in the Korat area that are off limits. For your safety and protection, become familiar with this list and remain clear of the areas. The base Courtesy Patrol checks all of these establishments daily to insure that no military personnel have inadvertently wandered into an Off Limits Area.



553RD RECONNAISSANCE WING ORGANIZATION

