

LORAN MONITOR STATION UDORN

The KLONG NAVY
JUL 1969
by SSGT Lyte Paulson

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UDORN'S KLONG NAVY

UDORN RTAFB, Thailand (13AF) -- The "Klong Navy" at Udorn is doing what some people here might consider to be an Air Force job, electronic aid to air navigation. (Editors note: Klong is Thai for a water canal).

This high and dry outfit, except maybe for some klong water, is the U.S. Coast Guard Loran Monitor Station which is part of the Loran-C Navigation System in Southeast Asia.

Affectionately nicknamed the Klong Navy by local units at Udorn, these Coastguardsmen are located in four small mobile trailers with a cozy 720 feet of deck space.

"LORAN - C is a highly accurate long range navigation system based on the measurement of accurately timed radio signals sent out from several synchronized transmitting stations," remarked Chief Petty Officer Bill Russell. "The transmitting stations are located at Sattahip, near U-Tapao, Thailand, Lampang, Thailand, and Con Son Island, off the south coast of Vietnam, with a fifth station under construction near Hue, Vietnam. "These transmitted signals are timed to within 20 billionths of a second, which translates to a position accuracy of approximately 25 meters," Russell continued. This elite outfit boasts that it is the most reliable Loran chain in the world, consistent with the narrow tolerances it must maintain. During the most recent 24 month period the chain has consistently been usable for over 99.7% of the time. This means

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that in a 30 day month, containing 43,200 minutes the system was unusable not more than 130 minutes.

Although available to any aircraft in the vicinity, the big user of the Coast Guard facilities are the units of the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance/Fighter Wing located at this northernmost base in Thailand.

The purpose of the monitor station here at Udorn is to insure this high accuracy by constantly comparing the navigation information to the actual surveyed position of the station, which remains constant. "If the information indicates that we have moved, then we must inform the other stations so they can alter their signals accordingly, to put us back where we belong."

The "Klong Navy" is a small crew with 16 enlisted men and two officers. It is commanded by Lieutenant David Carter.

On August 4th, the Coast Guard will celebrate its 179th birthday.