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# Thailand

April 1974

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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28

Armed Forces

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# Thailand

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*This chapter supersedes the armed forces coverage in the General Survey dated March 1970.*

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## Armed Forces

### A. Defense establishment (S)

The regular armed forces of Thailand have a personnel strength of about 206,000. The army, with 132,100 personnel, dominates the armed forces and constitutes the country's chief deterrent to foreign attack. It also plays the preeminent role in combating Communist-directed insurgencies. The navy has a strength of 27,300, including a 9,000-man marine corps, and a ship inventory of about 161 ships and craft. The air force has 46,600 personnel and 349 aircraft, almost all of U.S. manufacture. These are the only indigenous SEATO armed forces on the Southeast Asian mainland. The regular armed forces are augmented by the Border Patrol Police (BPP), the Police Aerial Reinforcement Units (PARU), Special Action Forces (SAF), and the Marine Police Force (paramilitary components of the Thai National Police), as well as a part-time Volunteer Defense Corps supervised by the Ministry of Interior. In wartime or other national emergency, control of the police organization (excluding the Metropolitan Police) would be transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defense.

Among the regular armed forces, the navy is the least significant even though the marine corps component is considered to be reasonably well trained and led. This lack of consequence dates from an unsuccessful bid for political power by the navy in 1951. Following the suppression of the rebellion, the navy was largely neutralized as an effective combat force. Nevertheless, it has continued to receive defense budget allocations since reasons of national prestige require that Thailand have a navy. As a result, valuable resources have been expended to keep barely sea-worthy vessels afloat and to buy new ones which gratify the Thai national ego but are of questionable utility.

The air force, which joined the army in suppressing the navy rebels in 1951, has not been as inhibited in its development as has the navy. While some senior officers have been politically active, the bulk of the officer corps has remained relatively unpoliticized. The air force relies almost exclusively on U.S. materiel,

training methods, and operational concepts. It is probably the best trained and led of the three major services.

The army is by far the most important branch of the armed forces. Between the 1932 revolution, which overthrew the absolute monarchy, and October 1973, the army had been Thailand's preeminent political organization. During most of this period, military officers had occupied the position of prime minister. Until late 1973, army officers held many key cabinet posts. They were ubiquitous on the boards of large commercial corporations and headed the majority of the numerous state-controlled corporations, which are engaged in industries as varied as transportation and sugar refining. The area of responsibility assigned to the army officer corps extended far beyond national defense, and for many of its members, military duties were completely overshadowed by other interests.

The military is presently maintaining a very low profile politically as a result of the student riots in late 1973 and the subsequent forced resignations of Field Marshal Thanom, who was Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Foreign Minister, and Field Marshal Praphat, who was Deputy Supreme Commander, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Director of the National Police. They are now in exile. The Army Commander in Chief, General Krit Sivara has given his unqualified support to the newly installed civilian caretaker government headed by Sanya Thammasak. If the civilians are able to administer the country competently, future military coups may be avoided and Thai officers may form a political party to seek power within the parameters of the constitution.

Primary deficiencies that seriously limit the armed forces' capabilities in both conventional warfare and counterinsurgency operations are the following: the absence of strong Minister of Defense guidance to and pressure on the individual services to perform assigned tasks; lack of a sound logistical base; insufficient forward deployment of tactical forces; marginal equipment maintenance, minimal air defense capability; an inadequate mobilization base; inadequate financial support, and insufficient

personnel strength in combat and combat support units. The capabilities of the paramilitary forces to perform the counterinsurgency mission are restricted by the generally low quality of leadership, inadequate size of components, and ill-defined delineation of responsibility which results in poor coordination and excessive duplication.

Thailand's national defense policy has been directed toward military cooperation with its allies, both as an active participant in SEATO and in seeking firmer defense commitments from the United States. This policy stems from the awareness of Thai military leaders that without substantial foreign assistance and sources of supply, the country would be incapable of supporting a modern military force.

### 1. Military history

The first steps to modernize the Thai military establishment were taken in the mid-19th century under Western influence. Full-scale modernization on Western lines, however, did not occur until the outset of the 20th century. It is a source of pride to the Thai that the changes were effected by their own officers with little assistance from foreign advisers. (U:OU)

Close contact with Western forces was first made in Europe by the small Thai expeditionary force in World War I. During World War II, an extensive anti-Japanese underground force was raised in Thailand with the help of British- and American-trained "Free Thai" agents, and at the close of the war detachments of Allied troops, principally British, Australian, and Indian, were briefly in the country to participate in victory ceremonies. A Thai infantry battalion, supplemented by token naval and air elements, was among the first contingents to join the U.N. forces which undertook to repel the Communist invasion of South Korea in 1950. (U:OU)

Since 1950 U.S. influence has been predominant in the Thai military. At the end of World War II, the Thai armed forces were equipped with miscellaneous materiel acquired over the previous two decades from Japan, the United States, and various European countries. Stockpile depletion, obsolescence of equipment, and worldwide rapid technical advances made a comprehensive modernization program a matter of high priority for the armed forces. It was recognized that this would require much outside aid, and in 1950 the country entered into a military assistance agreement with the United States under which a modernization program involving advice, materiel support, and training was begun. Until June 1967 the program was funded under the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP). From July 1967 until June

1972, U.S. military assistance to Thailand was funded from U.S. Department of Defense service budgets (Military Assistance Service Fund). In July 1972 the U.S. resumed support of Thailand under MAP funding. The United States has supplied most of the equipment for all components of the armed forces as well as instruction in its operation, maintenance, and tactical employment. A sizable number of officers from all grades and service branches have had military training in the United States. The impact of this association with the U.S. military has profoundly influenced the form and orientation of the military establishment. Thai tactical and strategic concepts have been further conditioned by association with the armed forces of the other SEATO countries. (C)

As the intensity of the counterinsurgency effort in the Republic of Vietnam increased, U.S. Army and Navy engineer and logistical support forces and U.S. Air Force units moved into Thailand (the last in great strength—most U.S. land-based air operations against the North Vietnamese were flown out of Thai airfields), and small British, Australian, and New Zealand engineer and logistical support contingents were employed in various logistical projects, including airfield construction. These measures materially strengthened the defensive capabilities of the armed forces and reinforced Thailand as a key part of the anti-Communist security system in Southeast Asia. (C)

Feeling increasingly threatened by Communist wars of national liberation in Southeast Asia, Thailand sent a volunteer regiment in 1967 to join the non-Communist forces fighting in the Republic of Vietnam and later expanded the force to a volunteer division. During 1972 the last Thai units were withdrawn from South Vietnam, and Thai presence was ended in January 1973. (S)

### 2. Command structure

Under the interim constitution adopted in 1972, the King is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (Figure 1), he is, however a constitutional figurehead whose military duties are primarily ceremonial. Although he is a strong and unifying national symbol, actual control is vested in the Prime Minister through the Minister of Defense. Since the ouster of Thanom and Praphat, there has been much discussion about abolishing the Supreme Command. Presently the Supreme Command is functioning as a coordination agency between the services and the Ministry of Defense. A new Supreme Commander has not been appointed. (C)

The Council of Ministers (cabinet), with the National Security Council functioning as paramount

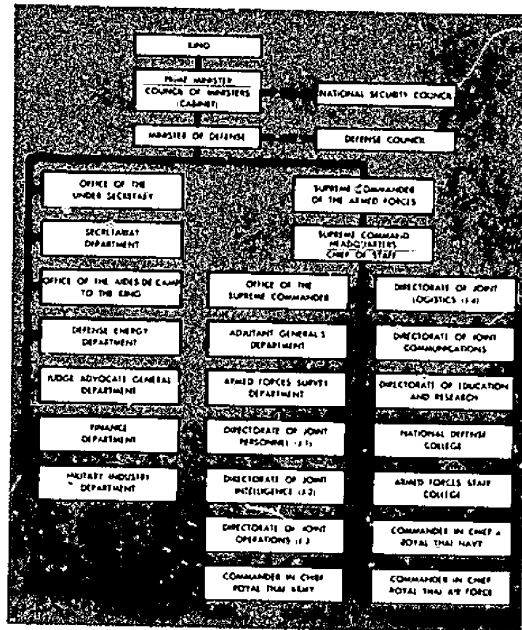


FIGURE 1. National defense organization (S)

com-elor, is responsible for maintaining national security and for all matters concerning national defense. The National Security Council consists of the Prime Minister as chairman, the Deputy Prime Minister as deputy chairman, the Secretary General of the National Security Council, the Ministers of Defense, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Communications, and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a position which has been vacant since late 1973. (U, O)

The Ministry of Defense is directly responsible for the maintenance and deployment of adequate armed forces to provide for the national defense. It is advised by a 23-member Defense Council headed by the Minister of Defense and includes the Under Secretary of Defense and his deputy, the Supreme Commander and his three deputies, the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command Headquarters and his three deputies, the commanders in chief, deputy commanders in chief, and chief of staff for all three military services, and three additional officers of general rank who have previously held high military positions or who have otherwise distinguished themselves. The Defense Council advises the Minister of Defense on general military policies, budgetary matters, mobilization, conscription, and special matters presented by the Ministry of Defense. (C)

The Ministry of Defense includes the Office of the Under Secretary, which is composed of administrative and industrial departments, and a Supreme Command with joint staff functions. The industrial element operates some of the factories which supply the armed forces. The Supreme Command Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces was established in March 1960 to exercise intermediate control over the three armed services. The Supreme Command provides a joint staff including several directorates. In actual practice, however, the Ministry of Defense and the Supreme Command Headquarters, located in Bangkok, exercise little direct authority over the component services. This is a result of the absence of an organizational equivalent of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and, until October 1973, the holding of several key political-military positions concurrently by a number of senior officers. Matters of high importance are usually referred directly to the Prime Minister, who normally consults with the Ministry of Defense and service commanders before issuing orders, a cumbersome procedure which frequently results in compromise solutions or delays. (S)

Although the three services theoretically are equal, the army is the dominant component. Senior army officers occupy the key positions in the armed forces structure and in many government posts. The preeminent position of the army is based on its political power (acquired through a succession of military coups) and on the strong assumption that the main effort in defense will focus on the Thai ground forces. Even under the current civilian government, Army Commander in Chief General Krit, a veritable military strongman, has been appointed to an ex-officio position, Director of Peace-Keeping, which allows him to attend cabinet meetings. Thai officials regard the sea and air defense of Thailand as largely the responsibility of the United States and other SEATO allies. The Supreme Command Headquarters Forward was established in April 1961 to serve as the nucleus staff of the Thai SEATO Force Headquarters. Because SEATO Plan Five has never been implemented, the Forward Headquarters is primarily responsible for action on urgent matters of an operational nature. It is vested with the authority for the coordination between allied forces in Thailand and local government agencies, specifically in matters of resource allocation and operational support. The Forward Headquarters also prepares contingency plans and studies and recommends policy for operations focused on Cambodia and Laos. (S)

## B. Joint activities

### 1. Military manpower (S)

As of January 1974, Thailand had 9,807,000 males in the ages 15-49. Estimates of available males by 5-year age groups and the maximum number fit for military service are as follows.

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	2,070,000	1,379,000
20-24	1,860,000	1,179,000
25-29	1,444,000	904,000
30-34	1,328,000	817,000
35-39	1,277,000	743,000
40-44	1,027,000	555,000
45-49	801,000	393,000
Total, 15-49	9,807,000	5,970,000

It is estimated that the average number of males reaching military age (18) annually in the period 1974-78 will be about 424,000.

Most military personnel are obtained through conscription. The large number of physically fit men permits the selecting of those most fit in filling the conscription quotas. Each year about 30,000 men are chosen by lottery and are inducted in two contingents (May and November). Under the 1954 draft law, all Thai males must register at age 18; at 21 they are liable for 2 years of compulsory military service. Because of inadequate funds the term of service has been shortened by 6 to 10 months a number of times, but present requirements are that inductees serve a 2-year term. A small number of women volunteers are accepted and serve in such fields as administration and nursing.

Generally the prestige of the military service stands at a high level. Predominantly of rural background, the average Thai enlisted man has little or no formal education and no experience with modern mechanical equipment. He has, however, an interest in learning and generally has aptitudes which, if properly developed, produce a good fighting man. He is patriotic, with a deep sense of loyalty to his King and respect for his superiors; is responsive to discipline; and is inured to physical hardship. However, the enlisted men are often not properly utilized, and unjustifiably large numbers are assigned to guard details and as orderlies at various headquarters.

Morale and discipline throughout the armed forces are generally good, despite low-pay scales for officers and enlisted men. In general, however, enlisted men consider military pay, benefits, and allowances better

than those of civilians with a similar degree of training and experience. The individual soldier is well fed, wears a smart uniform, and enjoys liberal pass and furlough privileges. His individual care is as good or better than that received by civilians. Dissatisfaction among junior officers with housing, pay, or the rate of promotions normally is heeded by politically conscious senior officers because dissension among junior officers, despite their lack of organization as a pressure group, has generated coup rumors in the past.

The custom of promoting officers on the basis of political reliability rather than on the basis of professional competence, has had an unfavorable effect on the quality of leadership. The caliber of field-grade officers is relatively high, however, and company-grade officers are generally competent. Armed forces officers of all ranks who have attended U.S. and other Western service schools tend to be more alert, aggressive, and knowledgeable about modern warfare than are their contemporaries who have remained in Thailand. The effectiveness of officers and noncommissioned officers is improving steadily; however, senior officers frequently lack initiative, supervisory ability, and the capacity for sustained effort under difficult conditions. There has been a gradual improvement in leadership within each of the military services as a result of the retirement of the senior officers and their replacement by more competent subordinates.

The armed forces maintain no organized reserve units. In the army, however, personnel who have completed their terms of military service comprise a large reserve force which is subject to mobilization. Upon release from active duty, NCO's and conscripts are carried for a maximum of 23 years in various categories and classes of reserve status. The first category consists of conscripted personnel who have completed their terms of regular compulsory service or those registered personnel who have completed their military training course. First-category personnel, totaling about 500,000, are further subdivided into three classes. The first class are those who have been in the reserves for less than 7 years; they comprise the army's "ready" reserve. The second class are those who have been in the reserves from 8 to 17 years. The third class are those who have been in the reserves from 18 to 23 years. The second category consists of personnel who are registered but who do not enter the service until the age of 30. These are considered as "second-class" reservists, and on reaching the age of 40 they become "third-class." Upon separation, army officers are assigned to the reserve until the following ages are reached: company-grade, 45 years; field-



grade, 50 years; colonels and generals 55 years. All qualified personnel not on active duty are retained in reserve status until at least the age of 45. All navy personnel who have served on active duty and have been separated in good standing are subject to recall until the age of 60. All physically qualified male air force personnel who have been released after serving on active duty are retained in reserve status until the age of 60. However, these reserves have only very limited refresher training, their military usefulness after they have been out of the service for more than a few years must be regarded as doubtful.

### 2. Strength trends (S)

Army and air force strengths have increased substantially during the past decade, while navy strength has risen only slightly.

The decision of the Ministry of Defense in January 1966 to require that all conscripts inducted after May 1966 serve the full 2-year tour has resulted in bringing army strength up to 132,100. Large-scale mobilization for a protracted period would impose a heavy burden that would strain national manpower resources. However, these resources are more than adequate to support present manning levels.

A major problem for all three services, and especially the navy, has been the retention of technically qualified personnel. The navy has a penalty system which permits a man to buy his way out of obligated service incurred after special training. This amounts to US\$24 per month of obligated service for naval academy graduates. Commercial firms also need technically qualified personnel and are willing to pay a man's penalty in order to acquire his services.

Assigned strength of the air force has been increasing steadily, chiefly because of a freeze on resignations and retirements. Efforts to increase the enrollment at the Airmen's Technical Training School and the Squadron Officers' School will continue, as will the freeze on resignations and retirements, in hope of increasing air force manning levels.

Figure 2 gives the armed forces strengths for the last decade.

### 3. Training (S)

The conventional and special warfare tactics employed by the Thai armed forces are based on U.S. doctrine. All Thai service schools pattern their courses after those of the United States. The program of instruction and the problems presented for student solution frequently are direct translations of those obtained by a U.S.-trained instructor. Over 9,000 Thai armed forces personnel have been trained in U.S.

FIGURE 2. Armed forces personnel strengths (S)

YEAR	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE	TOTAL (ROUNDED)
1962	79,000	21,630	16,700	117,000
1963	82,000	21,630	16,920	120,000
1964	82,000	21,600	17,900	121,000
1965	83,000	21,600	18,600	123,000
1966	88,000	22,300	19,200	130,000
1967	99,000	21,800	21,400	142,800
1968	100,000	21,800	24,400	146,200
1969	100,680	21,000	26,370	154,000
1970	117,900	22,500	29,400	170,000
1971	125,000	22,500	33,500	181,000
1972	125,000	22,500	33,500	181,000
1973	132,100	*27,300	46,600	206,000

\*Includes 9,300 marines.

military schools and installations, and many of these men have subsequently served as commandants and instructors of Thai training institutions. In addition to this and to the instruction received from the JUSMAG mission or U.S. Mobile Training Teams, Thai personnel have worked with specially deployed U.S. units in joint field exercises in Thailand. However, the persistence of a tendency on the part of Thai officers to keep control highly centralized and their reluctance to delegate authority through normal command channels have largely offset the gain that this training should have afforded.

The Directorate of Education and Research of the Supreme Command Headquarters operates the Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School in Bangkok. Graduates of its 2-year course are assigned to the army, navy, or air force academies according to personnel requirements of each service. The course of instruction at each of the service academies is 5 years. Upon graduation, a cadet receives a bachelor of science degree and is commissioned. Specialized courses for officers up to major and equivalent are conducted by the branch and technical schools of each service.

The Armed Forces Staff College, at Bangkok, is maintained by the Supreme Command Headquarters. The college trains senior armed forces officers in joint and combined operations and the planning of such operations. The National Defense College, also at Bangkok and under the Supreme Command Headquarters, provides advanced study for high-ranking military and civilian personnel in military, economic, and political aspects of the national defense. Noncommissioned officers may qualify for the Australian- and SEATO-supported Military Technical Training School operated by the Supreme Command Headquarters.

Joint training exercises involving army, navy, and air force contingents have been conducted at the initiative of the United States and SEATO. Since 1962, the armed forces have demonstrated greater effectiveness and coordination in SEATO-sponsored maneuvers and combined U.S.-Thai counterinsurgency field training exercises in vulnerable border areas. Joint army, air force, and police antidissident operations reflect considerably improved interservice and interagency cooperation. Since 1971, the Thai armed services have conducted annual joint field training exercises (JFTX) which have actually been major counterinsurgency operations. The largest of these, Operations Phu Kwang, was conducted in early 1972. JFTX 16 and JFTX 17, conducted in 1972 and 1973, respectively, showed improvements in logistics and fire support over previous operations. These operations have given the armed forces valuable experience and training in conducting multibattalion operations.

#### 4. Military budget

The Thai military budget is prepared in the Ministry of Defense, based on estimates of expenditures submitted by the service chiefs, and approved by the National Assembly. Because of the November 1971 coup and the suspension of the parliamentary system, the 1973 budget was approved by decree. (U/OU)

During recent years the military budget has ranked second among major categories of expenditures in the central government budget; it averaged over 17.5% of central government expenditures and about 3.5% of GNP. Details as to the allocation of funds to the armed forces on either a service or functional basis are not available. Military budgets for fiscal years 1970 through 1973, in millions of U.S. dollars (the Thai fiscal year ends 30 September of the year designated) are as follows:

	FY 1970	FY 1971	FY 1972	FY 1973
Military budget	223.3	243.7	253.3	276.7
Percent of central government budget	17.0	17.7	18.2	18.2
Percent of GNP	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.6

#### 5. Economic support and logistics

Thailand has a limited industrial capability to produce materiel for its armed forces. Agriculture is the most important sector in the economy with rice and rubber the leading commodities produced and exported. Local manufacturing is dominated by traditional agricultural processing industries—milling

of rice, sugar, and flour. Other important industries include refining of imported crude oil, assembling of motor vehicles from imported components, and the manufacturing of cement. (U/OU)

Domestic production in direct support of the armed forces is limited to small arms ammunition, quartermaster-type supplies (uniforms, boots, and tents), and small patrol and torpedo boats, all other military materiel must be imported. There are plans for local production of the West German-designed 5.56-mm HK-33 rifle by late 1973. The United States has been the principal supplier of weapons and equipment, but Belgium, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and Japan have occasionally furnished some equipment. Between 1951 and 1972, Thailand received US\$1.1 billion in military assistance from the United States, most of it as grant aid. (S)

#### 6. Uniforms and insignia (U/OU)

Uniforms of the armed forces are made from good-quality material and are well tailored. Three types of uniforms are authorized: service, dress, and field. For most occasions officers and enlisted men wear the service uniform. Tan or olive-drab cotton and olive-drab wools are used for both service and field uniforms, and dark-blue material for the dress uniform. Navy uniforms are made from cotton or woolen cloth in white, tan, or dark blue. A tan uniform which may be worn during duty hours consists either of a long-sleeved open-collar shirt with shoulderboards and long trousers or of a blouse with shoulderboards (similar to that worn by U.S. Navy officers), shirt with tie, and long trousers. Air force service and dress uniforms are made from a gray-blue cotton or worsted cloth.

Army and air force service uniforms consist of a single-breasted coat with four gold buttons, matching trousers, service or garrison cap, and black shoes. With this uniform, army personnel wear an olive-green shirt and tie; and air force, a white shirt and black tie. In addition to the single-breasted coat, air force personnel are authorized a short medium-blue-colored service jacket which is also worn with a shirt and tie. Service cap bands of army personnel are distinctive in color, according to the grade; magenta for general officers; blue for other officers; and green for enlisted men. Cap bands for all air force personnel are medium blue.

The traditional navy-blue service uniform worn by naval officers and chief petty officers includes a double-breasted coat, matching trousers, and service cap with white cap cover. Petty officers and seamen wear a white 2-piece sailor-type uniform and a flat hat



SERVICE UNIFORM



FIELD MARSHAL



GENERAL



LIEUTENANT GENERAL



MAJOR GENERAL



SPECIAL COLONEL AND COLONEL



LIEUTENANT COLONEL



MAJOR



CAP INSIGNIA



CAPTAIN



1ST LIEUTENANT



2D LIEUTENANT



COLLAR INSIGNIA GENERAL OFFICERS AND SPECIAL COLONEL

GROUND FORCES



SERVICE UNIFORM



ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET



ADMIRAL



VICE ADMIRAL



REAR ADMIRAL



CAPTAIN



COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT



JUNIOR LIEUTENANT



SUB LIEUTENANT



CAP INSIGNIA

NAVAL FORCES



SERVICE UNIFORM



MARSHAL OF THE AIR FORCE



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL



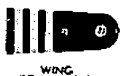
AIR MARSHAL



AIR VICE MARSHAL



GROUP CAPTAIN



WING COMMANDER



SQUADRON LEADER



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT



FLIGHT OFFICER



PILOT OFFICER



CAP INSIGNIA

AIR FORCES

FIGURE 3. Officers' uniforms and insignia (U/OU)

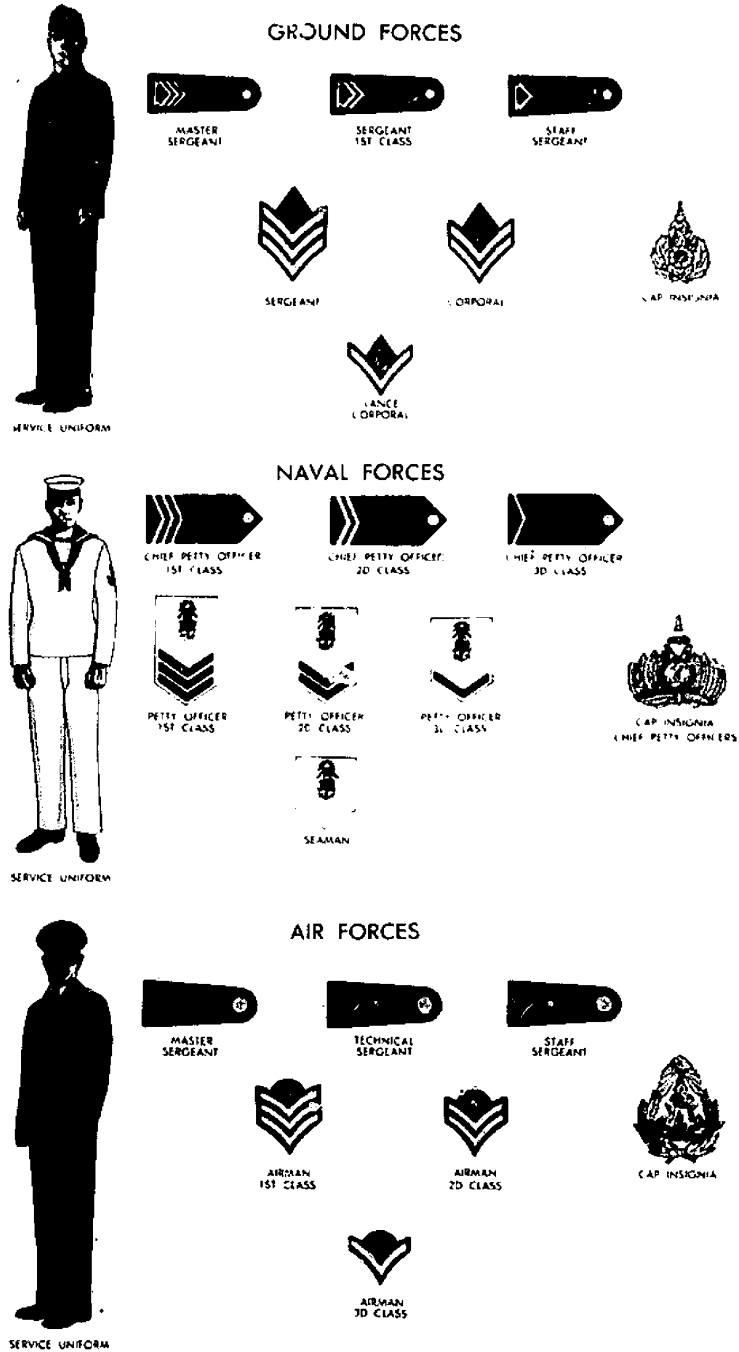


FIGURE 4. Enlisted men's uniforms and insignia (U/OU)

with black band bearing the name of the ship on which the individual is serving, or his duty assignment.

White or dark-blue dress uniforms, authorized for wear by all service personnel, include a single-breasted coat with standing collar.

Field uniforms worn by Thai armed forces personnel are generally similar to those worn by the U.S. forces.

The army officers' service uniform has metallic grade insignia on shoulderboards which are the same color as the uniform; the dress uniform has pink and gold-colored shoulderboards for general officers and scarlet and gold-colored for field- and company-grade officers. With the navy-blue service uniform, all naval officers wear gold-colored stripes on the sleeves of the coat to denote grade; on other uniforms, flag officers wear gold-colored shoulderboards with silver metallic grade devices; and senior and junior officers, gold-colored stripes on black shoulderboards. On service and dress uniforms, general officers of the air force wear silver metallic devices on gold-colored shoulderboards; shoulderboards of other officers are blue with gold-colored cloth stripes. Senior NCO's of the army and air forces wear metallic grade insignia on shoulderboards; other enlisted men wear cloth insignia on the sleeve between the elbow and the shoulder. Chief petty officer grades in the navy are denoted by cloth chevrons on shoulderboards; petty officers and seamen wear embroidered cloth insignia on the sleeve between the elbow and the shoulder. When wearing duty or field uniforms, officers and NCO's of the navy and air force display gold-colored metallic insignia of rank on the left collar tab of the shirt.

Army officers wear metallic gold-colored branch insignia on the right collar tab of the field uniform shirt and on the right lapel of the service uniform coat. Metallic gold-colored unit devices are worn on the left collar tab of the shirt and the left lapel of the service uniform coat. Naval officers' branch or specialty is indicated by various colored cloth stripes interspersed between insignia of grade stripes. Specialist ratings are indicated by gold-colored metallic devices worn on shoulderboards of chief petty officers and seamen. Air force officers wear gold-colored metallic unit devices on both lapels of the service uniform coat. Aviation badges are displayed above the upper left pocket of the uniform by authorized personnel.

The ranks of brigadier general (army), commodore (navy), and air commodore (air force) were phased out in 1961. They have been replaced by special colonel, captain, and group captain in their respective services. In the army the special colonel wears the colonel's rank insignia and general officers' collar insignia. The

navy and air force made no distinction in insignia between the new ranks and the regular captain-group captain ranks. Winter service uniforms and insignia for officers are shown in Figure 3; for NCO and enlisted personnel in Figure 4.

### C. Army

The Royal Thai Army is the dominant military service of the armed forces of Thailand. It has gradually improved and continues to improve its combat readiness and can cope with military situations ranging from localized insurgency to some overt aggression. With U.S. assistance a poorly equipped armed force has been transformed since 1950 into an army of growing professional competence and using modern weapons and equipment. In the past the army was oriented almost exclusively toward a conventional ground defense mission, but events in Laos and South Vietnam have alerted Thai leaders to the need to strengthen counterinsurgency capabilities against the established pattern of Communist attack—subversion, insurgency, and guerrilla operations. The army's increased involvement in counterinsurgency and civic action work, its operation of several Special Operations Centers at sensitive border locations since 1963, and the commitment of military units to countersubversion and antiguerrilla operations in the north and northeast beginning in late 1965 represent a significant departure from a longstanding government policy which assigned to the police paramount responsibility for border security and countersubversion. (S)

Certain inherent deficiencies in the military establishment tend to restrict gains that could be made through the increased supply of materiel and trained personnel. Thailand's military preparedness against either widespread insurgency or direct attack is seriously impeded by a lack of adequate command supervision at all levels and by insufficient combined arms and field training of units above battalion level. Other chronic weaknesses impairing army effectiveness are the preoccupation of senior officers with politics and their personal economic interests, a lack of an effective logistics system, undermanned combat and combat support units, and a poorly coordinated combat intelligence system. The negligible local production of war materiel and the resultant dependence upon foreign sources for weapons and equipment also limit the defensive capability. (S)

On the positive side, Thai military leaders have cooperated closely with the United States and SEATO in implementing programs designed to increase unit

and personnel strengths, to develop the army's logistics support capabilities, and to provide special forces-type training to the army and supporting paramilitary components of the national police and the Volunteer Defense Corps. The field experience of the Thai troops in Vietnam has added a combat-trained element experienced in battle and in working with allied military forces under joint command. (S)

The army, assisted by other military and paramilitary forces, is potentially capable of suppressing incipient insurgency. The conduct of counterinsurgency operations and civic action has improved somewhat in recent years. In early 1973 there were 17,500 troops committed to counterinsurgency, internal security, and development programs. All three army areas and the 5th Military Circle (peninsular Thailand) are engaged in counterinsurgency action. The army could probably withstand attack by the forces of Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, or Burma, acting independently. Also, when properly directed, troops would probably fight well against an attack, by North Vietnam and/or China but a major invasion by either of these countries could not be contained without immediate foreign assistance in troops and materiel. (S)

#### I. Organization (S)

The Commander in Chief of the Army is assisted by a Deputy Commander in Chief, two Assistant Commanders in Chief, and a Chief of Staff, who is not analogous to the U.S. Army Chief of Staff but acts in an advisory capacity with responsibility for supervision of plans and programs for the army. The Chief of Staff is assisted by a deputy and three assistant chiefs of staff for personnel, operations, and logistics. An Army Council, composed of ranking staff assistants and key tactical officers under the chairmanship of the Commander in Chief of the Army, is the principal advisory body on major policies of the army.

The Army General Headquarters in Bangkok comprises several staff sections: a general staff, special staff, technical staff, and training staff. The general staff consists of a secretariat, a comptroller, and four directorates—Personnel (G-1), Intelligence (G-2), Operations (G-3), Logistics (G-4). The general staff organization and functions closely parallel those of the U.S. Army. The special staff is concerned mainly with administrative and fiscal matters and the discipline and welfare of troops. It is organized into five departments headed by the Adjutant General, the Provost Marshal General, the Inspector General, and the Chiefs of Finance and Special Services. The

technical staff is responsible for the customary army technical service requirements. It consists of eight departments: Ordnance, Engineer, Signal, Quartermaster, Transportation, Medical, Veterinary and Remount, and Post Engineers. The training staff is concerned with the educational and training activities of the army and army reserves. It has five components: the Territorial Defense Department, the Army Field Forces, the Army War College, the Command and General Staff College, and the Chulachomkhalao Royal Military Academy. Training installations are located primarily in the Bangkok area.

For administrative and tactical purposes, Thailand is divided into four major territorial commands, and these are directly responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Army. Three are designated army area commands, containing one infantry division each, and the fourth is a smaller independent command, known as a "military circle" containing a regimental combat team. Subordinate to the three army areas are other military circles as well as military districts which function as administrative subcommands. A unit consisting of three infantry regiments but traditionally designated the cavalry division and an antiaircraft artillery division stationed in Bangkok are directly under the Commander in Chief of the Army, as are the special forces group and the airborne battalion. The territorial commanders have command, mobilization, and security responsibilities similar to those of continental army commanders in the United States. The organization employed by the area command headquarters is not suitable for a field army headquarters because of the lack of sufficient special and administrative staff personnel for tactical, logistical, and administrative planning under wartime conditions. To provide direction and coordination centers for counterinsurgency operations, Forward Army Headquarters have been established in north, central, and northeast Thailand.

The chain of command proceeds from combat force units upwards through division headquarters to the army area command headquarters to the Commander in Chief of the Army. The three infantry divisions have a marginal combat capability and function principally as an administrative headquarters. The lack of an effective tactical force structure stems from Thailand's limited experience in modern warfare and political considerations involved in providing sufficient command positions for the relatively large number of high-ranking officers. Subordinate to each infantry division are from two to four regimental headquarters. The infantry regiments become regimental combat teams when augmented by a field artillery battalion, a tank company, and an engineer

company. From the standpoint of training and operational readiness, the basic tactical formation is the infantry battalion. The units of the combat arms are organized along the lines of the triangular organization of the U.S. Army during World War II, but tables of organization and equipment are adapted to Thai requirements.

### 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>1</sup> (S)

The army has an authorized personnel strength of 150,000 troops, but combat and support arms are under strength. Actual strength is 132,100, consisting of 11,600 officers, 51,600 NCO's, and 68,900 other enlisted men. These totals include personnel of the small Women's Army Corps, most of whose members perform administrative and clerical duties in the Adjutant General's Department. Under MAP, the United States has agreed to support certain Thai troop levels when units meet certain stipulations; in mid-1972 there were 115,069 MAP-supported troops (at that time authorized MAP support strength was 145,611).

The army is equipped primarily with Korean war-vintage U.S. weapons and equipment supplemented by modern types. The principal field artillery weapons are of U.S. origin and include 75-mm pack howitzers, 105-mm howitzers, and a limited number of 155-mm howitzers. Major antiaircraft artillery weapons include U.S. 40-mm antiaircraft guns and quad .50 caliber machine guns. The army additionally has 4.2-inch mortars, and the tracked vehicle fleet has been updated with M-41A3 tanks and M-113 personnel carriers. The small arms inventory has been modernized with the introduction of M-16 rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, and M-60 machineguns.

Alarmed by what it perceived to be a mounting Communist threat, the Thai Government approved in January 1966 a Ministry of Defense request that military conscripts serve a full 2-year term rather than become furloughed out at from 14 to 18 months, a customary practice followed for "budgetary reasons." This strength augmentation also allowed the army to obtain increased military aid from the United States, as units manned at 80% of their authorized strength are qualified for 100% of authorized equipment.

The principal elements are five infantry divisions, an ineffectual antiaircraft artillery division (brigade), two independent regimental combat teams, three special forces groups, an airborne battalion, and a 155-

mm field artillery battalion. There is also an aviation department. One of the five infantry divisions and an independent regimental combat team were activated in 1971 and equipped primarily from resources of the former Thai Volunteer Force in the Republic of Vietnam. However, both the division and the regiment are currently understrength and in an organizational and training status. One infantry division, another traditionally designated the cavalry division, and the antiaircraft division are stationed in Bangkok; a third infantry division is in the north, and a fourth in the northeast. The independent regimental combat team is stationed in southern Thailand.

The heaviest concentration of troops—roughly 40% of total army strength and including major infantry, cavalry, and artillery units—is in the Bangkok area. A secondary area of concentration is in northeast Thailand, opposite the most likely invasion routes into Thailand from Laos. The southern and northwestern border areas are only lightly defended.

The overconcentration of men and units in the Bangkok area and the paucity of units in the field severely hampers the army's readiness to meet the threat of invasion or of subversion and insurgency in the hinterlands. Deployment of military units to outlying regions to defend the border is difficult because of the inadequacy of the rail and road network and airlift capability. Additionally, such deployment normally entails a serious budgetary strain because of the Thai custom of paying per diem to troops operating away from their parent garrisons.

### 3. Training (C)

Individual basic training of conscripts and recruits is carried out in battalion training companies. The JUSMAG-initiated effort to set up a central training installation resulted in the establishment in 1959 of the Recruit Training Center at Phan Buri. Efficiently administered and well equipped, this center was similar to a U.S. Army replacement training center. However, trainees from the First Army Area only were assigned to the center, and therefore the spacious installation never operated at full capacity. The Recruit Training Center was closed down in 1966, a victim of Thai persistence in adhering to the traditional practice of training and assigning conscripts to units in home areas throughout their tours of duty.

Unit training up to and including battalion level is generally satisfactory, but field training above battalion level is seldom conducted, the result of both budgetary considerations and the lack of interest in such training on the part of senior army officers.

<sup>1</sup>For current detailed information, see the *Military Intelligence Summary*, published quarterly, and the *Order of Battle Summary, Foreign Ground Forces*, published annually by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Combined arms training is being actively integrated into all training and testing.

Graduates of the 5-year course at the Chulachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Royal Military Academy at Bangkok, the major source of army officers, are commissioned and assigned as officers of the various army branches. The branches and technical schools provide specialized training courses for officers up through major. The Army Command and General Staff College at Bangkok, modeled closely after its U.S. Army counterpart, provides divisional and regimental level staff instruction to field-grade officers. The army operates a War College on the U.S. model to provide advanced military education for colonels and above. The Noncommissioned Officer Candidate School provides 1- to 3-year courses for NCO candidates drawn from secondary schools. NCO's also receive specialized training at various branch schools during their military service.

Although the army has no reserve units or active reserve force program per se, it has since 1963 called up annually several thousand reservists in the area commands for about 15 to 30 days' refresher training with regular combat units. The reservist rolls are maintained at the various army area commands and recall is effected locally through the provincial governor's office. These mobilization tests generally have been successful. Other reserve training consists of voluntary ROTC-type instruction in high schools and colleges.

Since the inception of MAP and the JUSMAG mission in Thailand, U.S. training personnel have been regularly assigned as advisers to troops training in the field. The training scope has been broadened and the quality of instruction greatly improved through the use of U.S. graphic aids and translated U.S. Army training manuals. The training of several thousand army officers and enlisted men in service training schools in the United States and the U.S. Pacific Command areas and the subsequent assignment of many of these men to Thai military training has tended to upgrade training. An active on-the-job training program has proven to be very effective, particularly in the field of maintenance.

Despite progress in individual weapons qualification and in counterinsurgency training, desired standards have not been achieved in the fields of psychological warfare training, combat intelligence, field communications, combined arms training, night training, and evaluation and utilization of jungle and mountainous terrain.

#### 4. Logistics (S)

Thai classification of MAP supplies and equipment is similar to that of the U.S. Army; the Thai Army

converted to the U.S. Federal Stock System in 1960.

Approximately 90% of the army's materiel needs must be met through imports. Weapons and equipment are predominantly of U.S. origin and supplied through the MAP. Maintenance is still only marginally acceptable by U.S. standards but suffices for routine operational purposes; it continues to improve.

The technical service chiefs are directly charged with procurement of equipment for the services. The chiefs submit their requests to the Director of Logistics (G-4) for screening and further staff work by the Finance Department, which, in turn, forwards its recommendations to the Commander in Chief of the Army, who reserves the right to take final action. The army logistical system is hampered by complex requisition procedures and a complicated checking process to prevent losses that result in a system that is not responsive to combat units requests even in peacetime. The lack of supply management is the foremost weakness of Thai logistical operations.

The estimated basic materiel load of units would enable them to operate for approximately 5 to 10 days under sustained combat conditions. Resupply from depot complexes in Thailand would extend this period to a maximum of 30 days. The flow of supplies would emanate principally from Bangkok where the Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal, Transportation, and Medical Depots are located; the Engineer Depot is at Rat Buri, and the Veterinary and Remount Depot is at Kanenanaburi. Major deficiencies in the system which limit logistic support units are an antiquated petroleum distribution system; concentration of logistics type units and supply storage depots in the Bangkok area; and failure to position classes of supply at forward locations. The Army Support Command (ASCOM) project has been activated in Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) to support 2d Army for supply and maintenance activities. Planning continues for activation of ASCOM in Phitsanulok to support 3d Army and a smaller ASCOM at a later date to support the 5th Military Circle in the south.

#### 5. Army aviation (S)

Army aviation assets are subordinate to the Royal Thai Army Aviation Department. The army has a total of 235 rotary and fixed wing aircraft (119 helicopters). Army aviation units include three rotary wing companies, one light aviation company, two rotary wing maintenance companies and a light aviation company. The army aviation school recently graduated its first class of aircraft mechanics.

The addition of 80 UH-1H Iroquois helicopters to the army inventory has given an additional capability to counterinsurgency operations.



#### D. Navy

The Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is responsible for defense of the seaward approaches to Thailand and support of marine or other security forces conducting amphibious operations. Other missions are to assist the army and police in maintaining internal security, to conduct border security patrolling along the Mekong river, and conduct counterinsurgency operations. In wartime the mission would be carried out in conjunction with SEATO forces. (C)

The navy is capable of conducting limited but continuous sea surveillance patrols of selected areas of the Gulf of Thailand and can sealift one reinforced battalion. Antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capabilities, although limited by equipment maintenance and lack of experience in conducting ASW exercises, have improved with the modernization of ASW ships. Minesweeping capabilities are modest and not sufficient to conduct required operations in the Gulf of Thailand should external aggression occur. Only two minelayers are operational and are effective only for laying defensive minefields. The naval air arm has a modest surveillance/antisubmarine capability. The Royal Thai Marine Corps (RTMC) is capable of conducting small-scale (approximately 1 battalion-size) landings against light resistance; however, it lacks adequate artillery support for sustained combat. One of the main weaknesses affecting operation of the navy's logistic system is the varied origin of ships and equipment. Another is dependence on foreign sources of supply for petroleum products, ammunition, and spare parts. The RTMC has a shortage of trained personnel because of poor management procedures and a lack of adequate personnel and funds. The country's merchant marine and the fishing fleet trawlers could be of limited assistance to the RTN during wartime. (S)

The navy could lift a reinforced battalion and land it against light resistance. The navy has a substantial number of landing craft, but as there is no heavy-lift capability to transport these landing craft to an area of operations, the marine corps' landing vehicles tank (LVT) are the only Thai elements that can be made available for a ship-to-shore operation. Amphibious shipping could maintain 1,200 troops at sea for up to 5 days. Amphibious and service ships can also be used to transport and logistically support Thai or allied forces within the Gulf of Thailand area in the event road and rail bridges are sabotaged. Underwater demolition personnel are capable of carrying on coastal and underwater reconnaissance, demolition operations, and support of amphibious operations. The RTN's counterinsurgency role was significantly expanded

with the delivery of 10 river patrol craft in August 1972. Crew training was completed in October, and a total of 25 craft are operating with the Mekong River Operations Unit (MROU). These craft now present a navy presence and coverage along the entire span of the Mekong river from west of Nong Khai to south of Mukdahan, a distance of about 300 miles. Operation reports reflect a monthly average of 264 boats searched and 640 suspects interrogated. The MROU, a newly designated squadron of the navy, is under the operational control of the Communist Suppression Operations Command. Its primary mission is to prevent and suppress Communist infiltration as well as other activities which affect the national interest along the Mekong river. The MROU also conducts civic action and psychological operations, guards lines of communication and navigation and provides support for other Marine Police with 60 patrol boats and 30 smaller craft. Operations are hindered by poor communications and intelligence. (S)

The navy is gradually improving training and maintenance procedures. The receipt of new ships, the modernization of existing equipment, and the increased capability for equipment utilization have increased the navy's effectiveness. The mineswarfare capabilities of the navy are limited by lack of modern ships and poor materiel readiness. The minesweepers are not modern, but when their equipment is functioning they are capable of conducting effective mine countermeasure operations. Additional mine countermeasure vessels are required in order to maintain safe anchorages, harbor entrances, and transit of channel waters in the Gulf of Thailand. The navy's overall capability will continue to be hampered by the practice of maintaining old and ineffective ships for prestige and budgetary reasons, lack of true professionalism in its officer corps because of outside business interests, shortage of technically trained personnel, and heavy dependence on foreign supply. (S)

The RTN maintains close ties with the U.S. and participates in exercises with U.S. Navy ships and with other SEATO navies as circumstances permit. It receives U.S. military aid under the Military Assistance Program (MAP), which includes ship and craft procurement; logistics support, personnel training, and the construction of port facilities. The Royal Thai Navy is in theory coequal with the Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Air Force. In practice, however, the army is the dominant service. Some senior naval personnel are involved in Thai politics, but the navy itself has not been a major political force since 1951. The headquarters and main naval base are in the Bangkok suburb of Thon Buri. An operating base is located at Sattahip, on the Gulf of Siam. (S)

### 1. Organization (S)

Administratively, the Royal Thai Navy comes under the Supreme Command Headquarters of the Ministry of Defense. The senior naval officer, the Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Navy, exercises almost complete authority over the highly centralized naval establishment. He is assisted and advised by a Deputy Commander in Chief, an Assistant Commander in Chief, the Chief of Naval General Staff, an Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, an Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics, and a Counselor.

The navy organization consists of five elements subordinate to the Commander in Chief: the General Staff Group, which is composed of both operational and administrative bureaus; the Special Service Group, which includes such departments as hydrographic, naval science, and welfare; the Logistics Service Group, which comprises the departments of ordnance, supply, medical, accounts, and the naval dockyard; the Education Group, which includes all naval training establishments; and the Naval Operations Group, which consists of the Royal Fleet, Royal Marines, Naval Air Wing, and the Bangkok and Ban Sattahip Naval Districts. On the recommendations of the JUSMAG, the Royal Fleet in 1952 was organized on a task unit basis into the Patrol, Mine Warfare, Amphibious Service, Antisubmarine Warfare, and Air Squadrons. In 1973 the MROU was added. Operational control is exercised by the Commander in Chief, Royal Fleet, with headquarters in Thon Buri and in Sattahip. He is assisted by a Deputy Commander in Chief, a Chief of Staff, and an Engineer in Chief.

### 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>2</sup> (S)

Personnel strength of the navy is about 27,300, of which about 9,300 are marines. Of the total strength, some 3,200 are officers and 24,100 are enlisted men. Approximately two-thirds of all naval personnel are stationed in the Bangkok naval complex, and most marines are stationed at Sattahip and Chanthaburi.

The naval inventory totals 161 ships and craft. Of these, approximately 14% are not considered operational, and only 61% can be considered as combat ready. The most significant units are 2 destroyer escort (DE), 4 patrol escorts (PE), 7 large submarine chasers (PC), 28 motor gunboats (PGM), 4 coastal minesweepers (MSC), 4 tank landing ships (LST), 3 medium landing ships (LSM), 2 infantry

<sup>2</sup>For detailed information, see the *Naval Forces Intelligence Studies* and the *Military Intelligence Summary*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

landing ships large (LSL), and 1 amphibious fire support ship (LFS). There are also 1 coastal escort (PCE), 7 small submarine chasers (PCS), 6 motor gunboats (PR), 35 riverine patrol craft, 14 minewarfare craft, 27 amphibious warfare ships and craft, and 16 auxiliary service craft.

Mark I Yarrow class guided missile frigate, the HTMS PF-7, Mukut Rajakumarn (Crown Prince) was formally commissioned and accepted in May 1973 by RTN representatives. RTN personnel have been in the United Kingdom since November 1972 training on various systems, and the ship is enroute to Thailand and expected to arrive in March 1974. It is equipped with the Seacat missile system (surface to air system with surface to surface capability in visual range). This is the only guided missile ship in the RTN and was probably acquired more for prestige than any other reason. The frigate has multipurpose capabilities, including point defense, and is expected to be used as flagship for the ASW squadrons. RTN capability to maintain the missile system is questionable. In 1973, the RTN also accepted delivery of a US-built patrol escort.

Most of the ships were built during the 1935-45 period and are standard U.S. and British World War II designs. The fleet also includes pre-World War II ships built in Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Postwar construction consists of eight submarine chasers built in the United States in 1945-55 (one has been scrapped), three survey ships built in West Germany, and a motor gunboat built in Thailand in 1968.

Naval Headquarters and the main naval base, including the Royal Thai Naval Dockyard, are in the Bangkok suburb of Thon Buri, and a number of naval facilities are scattered along the banks of the Mae Nam Chao Phraya south of the capital. As the river could be readily blocked, all of these locations are highly vulnerable from a naval point of view. A very important operating base is at Sattahip, about 80 miles south-southeast of Bangkok on the Gulf of Thailand. Built at U.S. urging and with U.S. advice and assistance, it serves as an auxiliary fleet headquarters. Fresh-water supply has been a problem at the base, but the situation has been improved, and 12 ships are homeported at Sattahip. There is a naval operating base and auxiliary air station at Songkhla, on the southern shore of the Gulf of Thailand. There are also plans to construct a naval base at Phuket, on the Malacca (west) coast.

Most ships and craft operate out of the Bangkok Naval Station. Active ships are assigned berthing (small piers, buoys, or anchorage) in the Mae Nam

Chao Phraya at Bangkok, off the Ordnance Station at Ban Bang Na south of Bangkok and on the Mae Nam Chao Phraya, or off the naval base at Sattahip.

### 3. Training (C)

Training is the responsibility of the Education Group, and most naval schools are in the capital area. Most officers are trained for 2 years at the Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School, followed by 5 years at the Royal Naval Academy at Samut Prakan. The Naval War College, the highest naval educational institution, has the responsibility for the advanced training of officers. Located at Thon Buri, it conducts general, advanced, and senior-level schools that train the navy's deck, engineering, and staff corps officers. Officers commissioned directly from universities and those commissioned from the ranks normally serve only in staff and technical branches of the navy, and their naval schooling is usually limited to attending the Senior Officers' College.

Courses at advanced schools range from 6 months to 2 years. There are two courses for officers at the lieutenant junior grade level, a 1-year general line and a 2-year engineering course at the Naval Postgraduate School. For the lieutenant commander level there is a 1-year advanced engineering course and also a 1-year Naval Staff College course. Six-month courses are offered at the Senior Officers' College for senior commanders of the staff corps, and the Naval War College, at the captain and rear admiral level. In the Senior Officers' and Staff Colleges, civilian guest lecturers from various government agencies and universities are utilized in their areas of specialization, as are officers of other Thai military services, and on occasion, foreign military officers. In addition to attending naval schools, navy officers also attend the Armed Forces Staff College and National Defense College. A 5-week training course at the "Psychological Warfare College" in Thon Buri is conducted by the Operations Department of the General Staff Group, mostly for junior navy and marine officers; some graduates are assigned to civic action type developmental units operating in insurgency-threatened areas of Thailand.

Enlisted naval and marine personnel receive basic training at the Recruit Training Center at Klet Kaeo, part of the Ban Sattahip Naval District. Conscripts do not generally receive advanced training, but navy volunteers go on to a 2-year course at the Naval Rating School, also at Klet Kaeo. Both commands are under the Education Group. The Recruit Training Center is MAP-supported.

The Recruit Training Center is organized along the lines of the U.S. Navy Recruit Training Center, San Diego, California. Training is 7 weeks for the regular recruits and 11 weeks for Naval Training School candidates and recruits with less than a 4-year education. This is a typical basic course of indoctrination, infantry drill, seamanship, damage control, ordnance and gunnery, physical education, naval customs and regulations, and, for those requiring them, classes in elementary reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and history.

Approximately 1,200 recruits are assigned annually to the Royal Marine Corps for duty. The conscript term is for 2 years. The Naval Rating School trains career-designated volunteers in all the general service ratings except medical and dental. All students must be secondary school graduates. Upon graduation from the school, the trainee is rated a petty officer second class and sent to the fleet or the shore establishment for duty. The enlistment period is 5 years.

The Fleet Training Command under the Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Fleet, at Sattahip provides courses in such subjects as gunnery, fire and damage control, combat intelligence center (CIC) operations, torpedoes, ASW, minewarfare, administration, navigation, engineering, and underwater demolition. An underway training program has also been developed at the Fleet Training Command.

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps schools have contributed substantially to improving the professional qualifications of Thai naval and marine personnel. Since 1962 approximately 500 Thai naval and marine officers have received U.S.-sponsored training. Officers have also been trained in the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries.

Marines who enlist for the 5-year period (as opposed to 2-year conscripts) attend the Naval Rating School for 1 year and then for the second year transfer to the Marine Corps Education Center (MCEC) at Sattahip. This center along with its officer and NCO schools also provides marine recruit training and special amphibious warfare and ranger training, with emphasis on counterinsurgency operations. Amphibious training is conducted in the vicinity of Sattahip, which has training areas for exercises of all types and scales. Training exercises have been conducted with U.S. Marines in amphibious and jungle operations. In general, Thai marine training can be described as rugged, realistic, and effective.

### 4. Logistics (C)

Thailand's naval ship construction capability is limited to the construction of small naval ships at the

Royal Thai Naval Dockyard and the Bangkok Dock Co. Ltd., located in Bangkok. Construction has included patrol boats, small torpedo boats, and small auxiliary craft. However, components used in ship construction must be imported. The first two motor patrol gunboats are currently under construction at the Royal Thai Naval Dockyard. The majority of the ships forming the Thai naval fleet have been acquired abroad, mainly from the United States under the Military Assistance Program.

Routine repairs are made to ships up to destroyer size at the Naval Dockyard in Bangkok. Extensive repairs are usually performed in Hong Kong or Singapore. Minor repairs and maintenance are carried out at the Royal Thai Naval Base at Sattahip.

The logistics system, although adequate to support the navy in its present configuration, suffers because of the varied type of ships, craft, and equipment in the inventory; maintenance difficulties stemming from the advanced age of many vessels; and dependence upon foreign sources for basic supplies, including petroleum products, ammunition, and spare parts.

#### 5. Marine corps (S)

The Royal Thai Marine Corps (RTMC) is a separate operating force under the direct control of the Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Navy. Its missions include being prepared to conduct amphibious operations, providing security at naval establishments, special operations, and supporting army ground operations. Counterinsurgency training and civic action projects have received an increased amount of attention. The RTMC has received 2,300 M-16 rifles to replace older M-1 Garand rifles. Artillery support consist of 75mm recoilless rifles, 60, 81, and 4.2 mortars, 40mm AAA guns, 75mm pack howitzers, and six recently delivered 105mm howitzers. Three LVT-7's have been received to replace the old LVT-4's. The age of the LVT-4's and inadequate artillery support would hamper sustained operations.

The primary combat force of the marine corps is the regimental combat team (RCT), which the Thais call a brigade consisting of four infantry battalions and an artillery battalion. The balance of the corps consists of three light infantry battalions, a service battalion, a military police battalion, and a headquarters. The present combat potential of the RCT is such that it is rated as one of the country's most combat ready forces for any mission. The marine corps is capable of making an amphibious landing in battalion landing team (BLT) strength utilizing navy ships, if the sortie is of short duration. For an extended sortie, an additional attack transport (APA) would be required

to lift the landing team. It is estimated that the corps planning capability and state of training is such that an RCT landing could be effected, provided adequate sealift was made available and U.S. Marine Corps advisers were permitted to assist. The marine corps' greatest liability is a lack of enough trained technical personnel to maintain equipment properly; a training program to correct this is in effect. Marine Corps officers wear navy uniforms with backing under their stripes and use navy rank designations.

Authorized personnel strength is 10,517; however, actual strength is 9,300, including officers and enlisted men. Corps Headquarters and the 1st and 3d Infantry Battalions are at Sattahip, which is the main marine base. Also at Sattahip are the 4th Light Infantry Battalion, the Artillery Battalion, and the Service Battalion. The 2d Infantry Battalion is manning defensive positions along the Thailand-Cambodia border in Chanthaburi Province. The 7th Infantry Battalion is at Rayong. The 5th Light Infantry Battalion is at Ban Bang Na, and the 6th Light Infantry Battalion and the Military Police Battalion are at Thon Buri. A marine battalion participated in a major counterinsurgency operation in December 1972 and January 1973. It was deployed to northern Thailand and conducted a successful operation.

#### 6. Naval air arm (S)

The Naval Air Arm has a modest reconnaissance and surveillance capability. It has a total of 22 fixed wing, utility aircraft. The air arm is organized as an air wing of three squadrons and assigned to U-Tapao airbase.

#### E. Air force

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) is one of the more significant air forces on the Southeast Asian mainland. Its mission is to provide tactical air support for the naval and ground forces; aerial support for counterinsurgency units, including airlifting men and equipment; and air defense of the country. The air force has no strategic air capability. It is capable of carrying on tactical air operations, including armed reconnaissance and close air support as well as joint ground and amphibious operations. Increased level of insurgent activities in the northeast and north, has resulted in a steady increase in the number of tactical air missions requested by the army and the paramilitary forces. Two transport aircraft and crews are assigned to the U.N. Command in Japan. The air forces' transport capability can support peacetime requirements and in an emergency could be

augmented by Thailand's civil airlift. The air force capability to support the navy is rated as marginal. (S)

The major factor affecting air force capabilities is poor utilization of resources, including personnel. Command channels are hampered by too much ambiguity and confusion. The approximately 50 high-ranking officers (air chief, air, and air vice marshals) in the top echelons, leave little decisionmaking to the commanders of the operating units. Within the logistical maintenance systems, however, the decentralized system in effect results in low in-commission rates, improper assignment of personnel, and poor or inappropriate use of training. (S)

Improvement in the tactical air support capability is being effected under the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP) with the introduction of the Cessna A-37, C-123K, AU-23A, and OV-10 aircraft. As a result of extensive reorganization initiated in 1967, aircraft utilization rates have increased. An improvement in maintenance methods and concentrated emphasis on an on-the-job training program are improving overall operational readiness. Aircraft in-commission rates have been improved, averaging 85% in 1973. There are no provisions under the U.S. assistance programs to develop a Thai strategic air capability. The air defense capability will be limited for the next few years to the Northrop F-5A/B/E fighter aircraft. Thailand's air defense capability is considered marginal. The radar network has improved considerably over the past few years; completion of the planned gapfiller sites and the fourth long-range site in the northwest will give the air force an adequate aircraft control and warning system with respects to the aircraft and other facilities it is currently operating. (S)

### 1. Organization (C)

The organization of the air force is patterned after that of the U.S. Air Force. The Commander in Chief of the Royal Thai Air Force has the rank of air chief marshal and is responsible for the administrative and operational direction of the air force. Control is highly centralized, and little delegation of authority is granted by the Commander in Chief; headquarters are at Don Muang.

The air force structure is organized with a Headquarters Group, a Logistic Support Group, an Education Group, and a Combat Group. Within the Headquarters Group, the Commander in Chief is assisted by a Vice Commander in Chief, Deputy Commander in Chief, and a Chief of Air Staff. The Chief of the Air Staff has a vice chief and three deputies, one each for Operations, Logistics, and Plans

and Research. The Headquarters Group comprises an Office of the Air Adviser, the Directorate of Air Inspection, the Directorate of Administrative Services, the Office of the Secretary of the Air Staff, and seven air specialists of Air Marshal rank. There is, additionally, a coordinating staff with directorates for Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, Materiel, and Finance.

The Logistic Support Group has directorates for Aeronautical Engineering, Communication, Armament, Quartermaster, Civil Engineering, Transportation, and Medical Service. Within the Education Group is the Directorate of Education and Training, the Flying Training School, the Air Command and Staff College, the Air Academy, the Airmen's Technical Training School, and the Air Force Officers' School. The Directorates for Welfare and Civil Aviation are under the Special Services Group as well as the office of the Don Muang Air Force Base Commander.

The Tactical Air Command and the Security Force is under the Combat Group. The Tactical Air Command (TAC) comprises a headquarters, an air operations center, and seven air wings. Under the headquarters is the Air Ground Operations School and eight divisions: Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, Materiel, Photography, Communications, General Services, and Field Maintenance.

### 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>3</sup> (S)

The air force has a personnel strength of 46,600 (5,400 officers and 41,200 enlisted men), including 703 pilots and a 16,200 airbase security force personnel. There are 349 aircraft, including 61 jet fighters, 41 turboprop aircraft, 187 propeller aircraft, and 60 helicopters. All aircraft are of U.S. origin with the exception of the 23 DHIC-1 propeller trainers and 2 HS-748 transports furnished by the British. All operational aircraft are assigned to subordinate squadrons of the wings. Training aircraft are assigned to the Flying Training School. About 300 aircraft are assigned to tactical units. The squadrons and their locations, missions, and types of aircraft are given in Figure 5.

### 3. Training (C)

The air force emphasizes training and education, but in general the number of graduates of its training

<sup>3</sup>For current detailed information, see the *Free World Air Order of Battle*, the *Air Forces Intelligence Study (AFIS)*, and the *Military Intelligence Summary*, all published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

FIGURE 5. Wing and squadron disposition (S)

UNIT AND LOCATION	AIRCRAFT	MISSION
Wing I, Don Muang Air Force Base:		
Squadron 11	Lockheed T 33, RT 33	Jet reconnaissance and photo reconnaissance.
Squadron 13	Northrop F 5 A/B, RF 5A	Tactical fighter/interceptor/reconnaissance.
Wing II, Koke Kathiem Airfield:		
Squadron 221, Koke Kathiem Airfield	Fairchild AU 23	TAC support.
Squadron 222, Muang Ubon Airfield	North American T 28	Tactical fighter/bomber
Squadron 223, Udorn Airfield	do	Do.
Squadron 21, Chang Mai Airfield	North American QV 10	TAC support.
Wing III, Korat Airfield:		
Squadron 31	Sikorsky CH 34 C/D	Transport.
Squadron 32	Bell UH 1H	Utility.
Wing IV, Ban Ta Khli Airfield:		
Squadron 43	Cessna A 37	Tactical fighter/intercept.
Wing V, Prachuap Khiri Khan Airfield:		
Squadron 53	North American T 28	Tactical fighter.
Wing VI, Don Muang Air Force Base:		
Squadron 61	Fairchild C-123	Transport.
Squadron 62	Douglas C-47	Transport/counterinsurgency.
Squadron 63	Cessna T 41	Transport.
Wing VII, Ban Sattahp Airfield:		
Squadron 71	Cessna O-1, Helio U 10	TAC support.

programs does not meet the demand. Also, output of the training programs in the technical and advanced pilot schools does not keep pace with demands as more sophisticated equipment is acquired. The air force has experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining the Flying Training School with qualified candidates. The Air Academy, the primary source of student input, does not graduate enough personnel to meet the service needs. Graduates from civilian universities are being sought as substitutes.

An indoctrination program for new personnel is conducted by the Air Force Police. All recruits, technicians, and cadets receive basic infantry training. After basic training, some personnel are selected for more advanced programs.

A cadet class enters the Flying Training School yearly at Kamphaeng Saen Airfield (14°06'N., 99°56'E.) and goes through primary, basic, and advanced flight training in a regimen that parallels the pilot training program of the U.S. Air Force. The quality of instruction is good. Instrument (T-6) training is also conducted at Kamphaeng Saen. An advanced course using the North American T-28 is conducted at Koke Kathiem (14°54'N., 100°36'E.). Refresher programs in the Douglas C-47 and

Lockheed T-33 are conducted at Don Muang. The tactical squadrons supplement the formal training programs by continuing training in night flying, instrument flying, gunnery, rocketry, dive-bombing, supply drops, close air support, combat air patrol, and reconnaissance. Forward air control training continues to improve. Tactical flight training is accomplished with varying degrees of effectiveness, concentrating on air-to-ground ordnance delivery. Two of the T-28 squadrons have initiated a night ordnance-delivery program.

Technical training is provided by technical schools, all at Don Muang. Follow-on training for technicians is provided by their own units. U.S. Air Force training manuals and the Air Force Extension Course Institute courses have been translated into Thai and are being used in air force training.

JUSMAG and MAP support to the more complex technical schools has been significantly increased and includes training aids, equipment, mobile training teams, technical assistance teams, and the establishment of new schools. MAP funds have been allocated for an English-language school to qualify Thais for further U.S. training of all types. In the more technical

categories, training is provided in the U.S. Pacific Command area and the United States.

Student enrollment of both the Airmen's Technical Training School and Officer Candidate School, recently reestablished, is programmed to provide 360 new officers annually.

The Directorate for Education and Training has staff responsibility for the programs of professional training provided through the Airmen's Technical Training School, Air Academy, NCO Academy, Officer Candidate School, Air Command and Staff College, and Squadron Officer School, all located at Don Muang. All professional training schools conform fairly closely to their U.S. Air Force counterparts.

#### 4. Logistics (S)

All aircraft and equipment including supply support is provided by the United States. The Directorate for Air Engineering at Bang Su, near Bangkok, provides all supplies and depot maintenance support for all assigned aircraft, communication systems, and vehicles. The depot at Bang Su requisitions, receives, stores, and distributes all supplies and equipment, including petroleum. In addition, the depot acts as a single-point supply manager for all MAP supplies and equipment received in or shipped out of the country.

The Directorate for Air Engineering is also responsible for depot level maintenance of all aircraft. The depot at Bang Su has a limited capability to overhaul, repair, and modify aircraft and accessories.

The joint Royal Thai Army and Royal Thai Air Force Single Manager Supply and Maintenance Program for helicopter depot maintenance and supply at Bang Su is functioning effectively.

The Tactical Field Maintenance Wing provides maintenance support to air force units at Don Muang. The wing is comparable to a U.S. Air Force organization, but the maintenance capability is limited by the continuing shortage of skilled personnel.

Communications support, operations, and maintenance functions (including radar) are provided by the Directorate for Communications at Don Muang.

The Directorate for Civil Engineering at Don Muang is responsible for accomplishing repair and maintenance of airfields and facilities. Airfield maintenance and fire protection equipment, as well as mobile maintenance specialists and operators for utility systems, are provided by this directorate. On-the-line availability of equipment at facilities in the northeast is poor, and the equipment must be returned to Don Muang for repair and overhaul.

Storage, control, issue, and maintenance of all ammunition, explosives, and armament materials are provided by the Air Force Ordnance Depot at Don Muang. The depot is capable of rehabilitating certain types of weapons and ammunition. Ineffective distribution of personnel, lack of pre-planning for aircraft inspections and maintenance, inappropriate requisitioning actions, and poor delegation of authority are major factors affecting the air force's maintenance capabilities. Air force capability to support sustained combat operations is rated as fair. The establishment of the Logistics Control Center (LCC) has assisted in alleviating many supply, transportation, and maintenance problems. In spite of deficiencies, improvements are being made and aircraft utilization and in-commission rates are increasing. A major reorganization of armament and munitions operations is being accomplished, and these functions are now under direct control of the RTAF Headquarters. Results expected include more accurate fiscal programming, more efficient storage, procedures, and operator effectiveness in aircraft utilization.

#### F. Paramilitary (S)

The Border Patrol Police (BPP), the Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit (PARU), the Marine Police, and the Special Action Forces (SAF) are elements of the Thai National Police Department. These and the Volunteer Defense Corps (VDC) comprise the country's paramilitary forces. All are under the Ministry of Interior but would be under Ministry of Defense control during wartime or other national emergency.

The BPP was founded in 1951 to control activities along the Thai borders without antagonizing neighboring countries by increasing Thai military strength in the border areas. Since its inception, the BPP has had primary responsibility for maintaining peace in the border areas. Normally patrolling along the border to a depth of about 15 miles, BPP platoons are engaged in the prevention of narcotics trafficking, smuggling, and illegal immigration as well as intelligence collection, counter-subversion, counterinsurgency operations, and civic action, particularly among the primitive hill tribes where government presence is tenuous.

The BPP has its headquarters in Bangkok. It is directly subordinate to the Director General of the National Police Department. In wartime or during special operations, BPP contingents would be under the military and subject to the orders of the local military commanders.

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The general headquarters controls four Regional Commands, each of which includes two Area Commands. The present force includes 104 line platoons, 24 mobile platoons and 10 weapons platoons. The 14,600-man border force has received special forces type training and is equipped with standard light infantry weapons as well as rocket launchers and mortars. In addition to providing training assistance to the BPP, U.S. aid has alleviated shortages in small arms, communication equipment, and motor transport. The border patrols are developing a familiarity with remote areas, where, in contrast to other police components, they are generally well accepted by the local populace. BPP elements are participating with increasing effectiveness in counterinsurgency programs, but force strength is inadequate for the multipurpose mission extending along Thailand's extensive and vulnerable borders.

The PARU has its headquarters at Phitsanulok. It is a semiautonomous unit of the BPP and consists of about 1,300 special forces trained police personnel. Its mission is to provide mobile and airborne forces in support of the BPP in peacetime and in wartime to function as an airborne guerrilla striking force. The PARU has a creditable record of air-rescue actions and border security operations. It is equipped with U.S.-supplied small arms in good condition. The PARU's potential is limited by its small size and the inadequacy of available air transport.

The National Police Department Aviation Division, activated as a separate element in 1969, is subordinate to the Provincial Police and has a personnel strength of 490 (120 pilots), 50 helicopters, and 21 fixed-wing aircraft. The division, which is headquartered in Bangkok, provides airlift support to police and other government agencies in counterinsurgency, Communist suppression, or other law enforcement operations. The division operates out of staging bases throughout the country. Because of a lack of sufficient aircraft, the division does not have the capability to handle all airlift requirements.

Special Action Forces (SAF), an elite element of the Provincial Police, are quick-reaction units used to supplement police and military forces in counterinsurgency operations. These forces permit deployment of units to meet emergency situations without interrupting normal police assignments. Although highly trained and well equipped, the SAF's have insufficient strength and inadequate air support, which limits their effectiveness in carrying out their

assigned mission. The SAF are organized into 8 companies and 37 separate platoons, and their total strength is 3,500.

The Thai Marine Police (also known as the Water Police) is charged with preventing smuggling, enforcing customs and export regulations, enforcing law in harbor areas, preventing espionage and political disturbances in coastal areas, enforcing shipping and safety regulations on seagoing vessels, and prohibiting the illegal entry or exit of aliens and criminals.

Marine Police strength is about 1,700 men. The force has 26 bases along the Mekong, in the Gulf of Thailand, and on the Straits of Malacca. It has a total of 176 craft, including three 180-foot patrol craft, three 110-foot patrol craft, 16 in the 50- to 100-foot range, 52 in the 20- to 50-foot range, and 81 shallow-draft pursuit boats. The smaller craft are used for patrolling inland waterways, and the larger craft are engaged in coastal patrol.

The Marine Police had been plagued with obsolescent craft and inadequate budgetary support. However, government approval in 1969 of a 7-year project for strengthening and modernizing the force includes the building of a number of modern patrol boats, which have improved its effectiveness.

The Volunteer Defense Corps (VDC) is a part-time force established as a village home guard-type militia to supplement the Provincial Police in providing local security. The Minister of Interior is the Commanding General of the VDC, and the Minister of Defense is his deputy. Regional headquarters are located in each provincial seat and are commanded by the provincial governor.

Strength of the VDC is approximately 49,000. All personnel have been trained in a special program designed to prepare a counter-subversion and village defense force. Almost 13,000 VDC members are on full-time duty status. VDC personnel have, to a limited degree, participated successfully in field training exercises and counterinsurgency operations with army and border patrol police units. VDC effectiveness is hampered by a lack of transportation, firepower, and communications. Responsibility for the VDC is divided. The Department of Local Administration provides administrative support, the army provides weapons, training, and leadership. The VDC is organized into province companies, frontier border platoons, district companies, village security teams, and railroad units.