

3rd of the 7th

AFTER ACTION REPORT: TV 2 TOWER (Team 3) 18-26 Dec 90

1. TEAM COMPOSITION:

See annex A.

2. MISSION:

At H-Hour, seize the TV 2 repeater complex vic 17P PA 743128 and stop its transmissions, remove essential repeater components to insure that it cannot be used by hostile forces and be prepared to exfiltrate with them. On order, return the station to operation and link up with follow on forces.

3. EXECUTION:

A. THE PLAN:

The original plan was developed in the months before the operation by SFC McGill. Using satellite photos, he selected an open area 100 meters to the east of the target as the LZ. The team would land, sweep the target with two assault groups moving from building to building in a leap frog manner. Rear security would protect dismounted approaches and secure the LZ. When the objective was clear the technical personnel would move forward and turn the transmitter off, then remove essential components. Upon completion of the mission, we would conduct ground link up, or the team would withdraw toward the LZ and exfil from the same LZ approximately two hours later. On order, the team would return and reactivate the site.

B. PHASE I:

The team members were recalled at 1700 hrs on 18DEC89. They moved by CH-47 and arrived at Albrook at 2145. At 2230 CPT Custer was attached to the team and the warning order was received. The 19th we rehearsed, made final equipment and communications checks, and briefed LTC Trumble and COL Jacobely.

The planned departure was 0100, but at 0030 we were informed that it had been moved up 15 minutes. We departed in two MH-60 at 0045 just as the shooting started at Albrook. The team was organized into four elements, Assault group A, Assault group B, Rear security group and the command element with CPT Custer, communications and the two technical specialist. The first helicopter had the first assault group led by SFC McGill, elements of the second assault group and one of the technical specialists. The second helicopter had the communications, one technical specialist, elements of the second assault group and rear security element.

When we arrived at the target, we found that the LZ was covered with 12 foot tall trees and dense brush. The first MH-60 threw their fast rope and descended 15 feet at the planned LZ, 100 meters from the target. The second MH-60 also fast roped. It was 50 feet up and 200 meters off the LZ. As the first stick waited, the second fought through the thick brush and linked up 15 minutes later. We quickly moved to the objective and began clearing buildings.

TM A cleared the generator building on the eastern side of the objective, then TM B cleared the main building by using small amounts of C4 and an electrical detonating system from a M-18 Claymore mine to open the doors. Uniforms and equipment for two soldiers was found but it appeared that they had recently departed in a hasty manner. TM A continued moving west and cleared the UHF retransmitter buildings on the west side of the complex. Now in control of the entire complex, the team leader CPT Custer moved to secure the main building with his communications sergeant SSG Ford and sent out security positions. TM A, led by SFC McGill, went into a blocking position with Claymores and LAW's on the road that approached from the south. TM B, led by SSG Ringland moved to cover the trail which entered the complex from the north. TM C covered the infiltration LZ to the east and the trail which ran through it. This was accomplished by 0115.

With the approaches secure CPT Custer moved to the TM C position and led the electronic technicians, SSG Eckoff and SGT Bryant to main building. They immediately shut down the retransmitter and by 0145 had removed the essential components from the unit and were prepared to evacuate them if necessary. At this time, CPT Custer requested guidance from FOB on mission status for exfiltration. The FOB had no information on possible link up and there was no incoming friendly signal to rebroadcast. In the absence of guidance, the team prepared for a long stay. Taking the components with them CPT Custer lead them back to the TM C position, near the LZ, to place maximum security on the perimeter and to separate the components from the building should there be a counter attack to place the station on the air again.

Through out the night situation reports were sent in. At 0530 stand to was conducted. At 0610 the team began sending out small elements to recon forward and walk the Final Protective Fire line. In doing this, the element from team two encountered a civilian man who fled, pursuit was not attempted and no shots were fired. At 0700 a through search of the buildings on the complex was conducted and several documents were seized and later sent to 3/7 SFG(A). At 0900 the entire unit, now secure, went to 50% security and began priorities of work (weapons, chow, sleep). At approximately 1000 hours, we received word that we would be exfiled. Team one reconnoitered the planned alternate LZ (17PPA 741122) and found it safe except for one 15 ft. tree. They then removed a tree with a claymore mine. At 1355 on 20 December, the entire detachment was returned to Albroom.

PHASE II

At about 0800 on 22 December, 1989, the special task organization for JUST CAUSE was abolished, and the detachment was reassigned to their former units, CPT Custer went back to A Company, SFC Wallick and SSG Bailey to A/1/7, the CCT returned to his element leader and the electronic technicians were preparing to return to 1109th Signal Bn. At 1030 the team received thirty minutes notification that they would redeploy to Cerro Azul to return the station to the air. SFC Wallack, SSG Bailey and SSG Campbell were unable to return with us. We picked up SSG Binaxas and SSG Debarron as replacements. Take off was at 1100. The team landed at the alternate LZ at PA743128 at 1120.

Just after infil as we were moving off the LZ a green four wheel drive vehicle approached from the north. When it appeared they would not stop three rounds were fired into the dirt bank beside them. This persuaded them to turn around and leave the area. The detachment moved up the hill to TV 2 and reoccupied the station. Security was established and the technicians began to work. At 1210 the repeater was restored but there was no incoming signal to broadcast. The AC power was lost at 1630 and the generator on sight was started to provide power. At 2000, an American, Mr. Ward called on the telephone. He was the man who had approached us in the green auto earlier. He provided information on activities in the area and arranged a meeting for the next day.