

**Mapping Report 99**  
**Banteay Meanchey (01)**

MAPPING THE KILLING FIELD PROJECT 1999

(June 21-June 25, 1999)

1. BANTEAY MEANCHEY PROVINCE

District	Site Name/ Visited Date	Site Type	Est. Victim	Witness	File #/ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
Thmar Pourk	Banteay/22 June 99	Burial site 4 pits	400 up	Ek Sangvat ផែក សង្កាត	R 062208A/ 010701	N 13°56'5305"	E 103°02'5902"
Thmar Pourk	Andaung Sep Pheng/22 June 99	Burial site 1 pit	300 up	Hap Svang ហាប ស្វាង	R 062208B/ 010702	N13°55'0222"	E 103°02'4525"
Thmar Pourk	Trapeang Suon/22 June 99	Burial site 2 pits	N/A	Ky Keav គី គាវ Ek Sangvat ផែក សង្កាត	R 062209A/ 010703	N 14°00'4451"	E 103°04'0559"

On the afternoon of June 21, 1999, the Documentation Center of Cambodia sent a mapping team composed of Mr. Sin Khin, responsible for contact with local authorities and also interviews with witnesses, Mr. Ouch Sam Oeun, the Global Positioning System Unit (GPS) operator to record geographical positions of killing pits, memorials and prisons, Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara, responsible for filling information in site forms and helped interview witnesses, Mr. Yin Nean, responsible for drawing map of pits and prisons, and Mrs. Iem Sokhym was a report writer.

We flew from Phnom Penh to Battambang and we traveled in a car from Battambang to Banteay Meanchey Province.

At 3.30 PM our team got off the plan in Battambang Province and continued our journey in a car along 70 Kilometers road towards Banteay Meanchey Province. We arrived in Banteay Meanchey Provincial town at 5:30 p.m.

Next day, June 22, 1999 at 8:30 AM, our team went to Banteay Meanchey Provincial office to ask the provincial authority for information about the geographical locations of districts to which we were going. Unfortunately, we did not have chance to meet the provincial governor because the governor had already gone to Banteay Chhmar temple to meet with Thai delegation since June 21, 1999. We, however, met with Mr. Diep Chhuon, deputy chief of provincial cabinet. He let us know that after the election 1998, Banteay Ampil District has not been under Banteay Meanchey Province, but Oddar Meanchey Province. If we want to go there, we have to go to meet with Oddor Meanchey Provincial governor in advance. The Geographical feature is very complicated. It is about 70 Kilometers from Banteay Meanchey Provincial town. To get there, we had to take a full day trip. The district town is located in Samraong; so, we could go via National Road #6.

He then told us the way towards Thmar Puork District. Thmar Puork District is about 43 Kilometers far; so we had to spend 4 hours in order to get there because the road is very difficult. The security has been good since the government took measures to disarm weapons. After asking the deputy chief of cabinet, our team decided to set off our journey along Road 69A toward Thmar Puork district across Serei Saophorn District and Svay Chek District. The road is extremely difficult and there are groups of armed forces deployed along the road up to the district town.

**Banteay Site 010701 B  
Kak Sin village, Thmar Puork sub-district, Thmar Puork District**

At 12:30 p.m. the same day, our team arrived in Thmar Puork District and for administrative requirement we contacted with Mr. Hean Narun alias Chhat, deputy chief of Thmar Puork District. He said that he had known about our team because the deputy chief of the cabinet had told him on walkie-talkie (Icom) in the morning. The deputy chief of cabinet told Mr. Hean Narun to make our work possible and go smoothly. Mr. Hean Narun briefed us about geographical and security situation of the district. He said that Thmar Puork District consists of 6 sub-districts. The 6 sub-districts are Thmar Puork sub-district consisting of 7 villages, Phum Thmei sub-district consisting of 8 villages, Banteay Chhmar sub-district consisting of 11 villages, Rokar Romiet sub-district consisting of 20 villages, Kumrou sub-district consisting of 6 villages and Kathen sub-district consisting of 8 villages. The district consists of 60 villages and 79,876 people. Among them there are 26,749 females and there are altogether 10,615 families. Almost 99 percent of people earn their livings by doing farming. People's living standard in this district is worse than any other districts in Banteay Meanchey province because the people only rely on farming, and fish are rare.

**Geographical feature of District**

The district is located about 43 Kilometers Northeast of Banteay Meanchey Provincial town. Banteay Ampil District bound it to the West by Thailand, the East by Phnom Srok District, the South by Svay Chek District and the North.

Talking about security situation, before 1989 the district was under the control of the Liberation Resistance Movement. So, the Movement set all structures. The Liberation Resistance Movement was Funcinpec Party. After the general election in 1993, Son San acknowledged the district party and then by Funcinpec party. The Cambodian People Party could not access the district then. The administration in the district was chiefly controlled by military. Even though there was district authority, before doing anything, we had to ask permission from the military in advance.

In 1997, Mr. Hean Narun was assigned to be in charge of the district. Because the security situation was not stable, he decided to spend a year studying in the National Administrative School in Phnom Penh (1998-1999). He added that the situation before was not so good as now. It was very far different. The political situation now is good as the civil war came to an end; all armed forces have been disarmed and demobilized. The remaining armed forces are trying to learn law and be aware of the power of local authority. The military does not involve in our work anymore. The situation is good because our country has peace, and the military does not concern about the administrative work, but thinks about new methods of development and knows clearly about their responsibilities.

He told us about his life in the Pol Pot regime. He was born in Thmar Puork Village, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. He studied in Serei Saophorn District. His father was a military commander. After the coup against King Sihanouk, he went to study in Phnom Penh. When the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, his family was evacuated from Phnom Penh to Bakan District, Pursat Province. His 6 siblings and his mother died from starvation in 1976. 17 April Angkar took his father to be reeducated because they knew that he was a soldier. He was then known as dead. Then in late 1976, the Pol Pot cliques informed that all people who had lived in Northwest were allowed to live where they used to live. This information made him decide to set off his journey in a boat from Champuh Ka-Ek pagoda, Bakan District towards Svay Daunkeo District and spent over night there. Next morning the Khmer Rouge cliques transported people in ox carts to Damnak Pongro Village, Russei Kraing sub-district Mong Russei District. Mong Russei District was then in Region 2. When arriving there, Mr. Hean Narun was shown a hill on which he was told to pave forest in order to build a shelter. He was then 16 years old. He did not know anything about such manual work, but in the Lon Nol regime he was taught how to camp; so, he took plastic sheets to use as a tent to build a shelter. He was then forced to join a regional mobile work brigade and forced to do hard work. He had a miserable life, as there was insufficient food with a can of rice for 20 to 50 people. Because of being too hungry, he decided to take off his clothes to exchange for rice bran to fry and eat. He felt very uncomfortable whenever he defecated and he sometimes used his fingers to help push his shit out. His shit looked like pig's shit because he ate rice bran like pig " human's track, but pig's waste " .

In the end, he said that he did not know clearly about any evidence because when he came here, the evidence was in ruin and he notified that what he said is true. He did not slander the Khmer Rouge.

**Andaung Sep Pheng 010702 B**

After meeting with Mr. Hean Narun at 2:30, our team met with Mr. Ek Sangvat, 47 years old, chief of office of Thmar Puork District. He was born in Andaung Thlong Village, Thmar Puork sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. He now lives in Andaung Thlong village, Thmar Puork sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Banteay Meanchey Province.

He told us that in the Pol Pot regime, this district was in Region 5, Northwest Zone. District headquarters was in Kathen Village, Thmar Puork sub-district, Thmar Puork District. The security office was in the Cambodian People Party's headquarters today. The district chief then was Chhat. Chhat was accused of enemy and killed later. He also knows some about the killing committed at security office in Thmar Puork district.

In the Khmer Rouge regime, he lived in this village, which is his native place. He was then an ordinary farmer. He was accused of having tendency as a student, but in fact he is just an ordinary literate. He was spied on and tested if he knew anything. His parents were in middle class and Buddhist bishop in the region. His father was accused of being a " Buddhist soldier ". In fact he was just an ordinary clergyman. His parents and his siblings died in early 1979. All together 7 people of his family died in the Pol Pot regime. In 1975 he was 20 years old. He then stopped studying to help his parents with work.

He said that in the first step, the Khmer Rouge arrested policemen, soldiers or people who had tendency with the Lon Nol regime, such as students, feudalists and capitalists to detain in the security office. All people kept in the security office were later killed. None of them have enough luck to survive.

Second step: The Khmer Rouge took base people to be detained in the security office. These people had small mistakes such as traveling from one village to another or they had fish, crabs or snails. They were accused of enemy and arrested them to detain in security office and killed afterward. Some people did not plow as what they were ordered. For example, they were ordered to walk on the right, when plowing, but they walked on the left, they were accused of being enemy and killed immediately in front of all people who plowed there so that the rest would not follow this example.

Third step: The Khmer Rouge played trick on people by telling people that people had to be evacuated out of the village to plant cotton, and hemp elsewhere. There, people would have enough food. They told people to prepare clothes and foodstuff to eat on the way. People were very happy, and they happily packed and took their children along with them. After 5 to 6 weeks, we all knew that in fact the Khmer Rouge played

trick to take people between 5 and 10 families from each cell to be killed in military barrack of Thmar Puork and at a water well near the security office.

The military barrack in which people were killed is now headquarters of Division 7 of Thmar Puork District and the well is near High School of Thmar Puork District.

Besides killing people, the Khmer Rouge deprived people of all kinds of freedom. The people, men and women, who were only joking to each other, were accused of committing moral offenses and were taken to kill in front of the public.

For killing, the Khmer Rouge took all the accused who were detained in the security office to be killed and thrown into a 10 meter deep and 8m x 8m mass grave. The mass grave is now in Por Phleak village, Kumrou sub-district, Thmar Puork District.

Between 1975-1977, this district was under the control of Northwest people. Then, there was enough food. Although people ate porridge, but they had sufficient food to eat. People produced plenty of crops, but Angkar educated them that they had to be patient because some of the crops had to be taken to feed people who lived along rivers as they almost died of starvation. In early 1977, Southwest people came to the district and accused the Northwest people of being betrayers. The Southwest people arrested Chhat, chief of district, to be killed. The new district chief was comrade Ream. Southwest people played tricks that they called all levels of cadres of Northwest Zone to have a meeting and ordinary people were evacuated to another place. In fact, they took those people to be killed.

In 1977, the Southwest people destroyed all Northwest cadres and started to control the zone. Then they started killing base people and they were less strict to the 17 April people. They were too strict with eating. People were not allowed even to walk from one house to another. If they saw any one walk, they accused them of being enemy, arrested and killed them immediately. Mr. Sangvat added that he then caught beriberi. He did not have any rice, but only little potato or manioc tubes. Then he smashed chaff and fried it to eat. One day when he got up very early in the morning to go to plow, he saw pig stuff of the Southwest people, he almost took them to eat because of being too hungry, but he dared not to. If he did that, surely he would have been killed. He was patient enough and walked away with tears.

10 people had a ration of 3 or 4 spoons of uncooked rice; so many people died of starvation. The chief of a model cooperative, in which Mr. Sangvat lived, was Comrade Kork [Contemptible Kork]. He was very cruel. No one dared to look at his face. If anyone dared to look at his face and he saw, he tied and killed him or her immediately.

In early January 1979, members of Ek Sangvat's family including his parents and siblings were taken to be killed and some died of starvation. In 1978, there was a victim escaping from the security office. He was taken to kill by chopping on the back neck. He then pretended to die, but

when the Khmer Rouge were away from the place, he got up and escaped. He is still alive now. The victim is Sim Sieu. He now lives in Pongro village, Mkakk sub-district, Serei Saophoan district. If we want to find the witness, we should ask his younger sibling, Sim Koy, living in Thmar Puork sub-district.

Mr. Ek Sangvat told us that some evidences, such as bones excavated from mass graves, wells and military barrack, and were stored in a 2m x 2m-thatch hut at Pothiveal Pagoda in 1982. There were about 700 bones, 400 of which excavated at the military barrack and another 300 excavated at the mass grave. The evidences were destroyed in 1985 when the Khmer Rouge armed forces captured Thmar Puork District and they burnt down people's houses, bones stored in Pothiveal Pagoda and shot a large number of people dead. He was also chased and fired with B40 rockets. Luckily the rockets did not hit his skin, but his clothes which covered his body were on fire.

In Thmar Puork district, there were a lot of people killed, but we do not know where they killed people. We know only 2 or 3 places.

Mr. Sangvat added that he himself also joined the excavation team in 1982, because he was a member of Thmar Puork sub-district committee, in charge of social affairs and culture. When excavating, he even saw the blind folding masks and human arms tied with ropes. There were 3 killing pits. The first was called Sep [Officer] Pheng well situated in Pophneak village, Kumrou sub-district, Thmar Puork district, Banteay Meanchey Province. It is 10 meters deep and 8m x 8m size. It is about 1.5 Kilometers far from the office of Thmar Puork District. The second was in the military barrack, which is 700 meters North of the district office. The place is now headquarters of Division 7 of Thmar Puork District. There were 4 main pits. Each of which was 8 meters in length, 3 meters in width and 2 meters dept. We excavated only one pit.

**Trapeang Suon 010703 B**  
**Thmar Dek Keh village, Banteay Chhmar sub-district, Thmar Puork district**

The third was in Dek Keh village, Banteay Chhmar sub-district, Thmar Puork District. In this place, there were 2 pits in Trapeang Suon. First we did not know there were killing pits in here, but when people dug to search for gold, they found pits in which the Khmer Rouge buried the corpses they killed. Mr. Ek Sangvat does not know the 2 pits but Mr. Ky Kav, captain, commander of engineering army F7, knows. He shepherded us to the place. In the place we could see small pieces of bone and pieces of noticeable materials.

Mr. Ek Sangvat concluded that there were a lot of pits in the district. He missed the 2 pits above. He does not know much about this because in the Pol Pot regime, the killings were secretly committed.

In the end, he added that he survives because he tried to work hard even though he caught beriberi. Whenever they gathered people, he tried to escape from one place to another. He hid himself in mobile work brigades. He could do this because in late 1978 the rule was not so strict as before. His parents and his siblings who lived in concentration places died. Mr. Sangvat said that Pol Pot cliques were very cruel. He will never forget what the Khmer Rouge did to him.

After interviewing Mr. Ek Sangvat, our team met with Hap Svang, 69 years old, born in Wat Chass Village, Thmar Puork sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. In the Pol Pot regime he lived in the same place which is Ekapheap village, Kumrou sub-district Thmar Puork district, Banteay Meanchey province. He now works in the Social Affairs and Culture Office in Thmar Puork district.

In the Pol Pot regime, he was a teacher of social affairs in Thmar Puork district. He healed people in this district. He cured beriberi, diarrhea, fever, etc. He used traditional medicine made of tree roots. He made the traditional medicine by himself. Later, there was a Chinese named Vien and his wife Lun. He was skillful in operating. In the Lon Nol regime, the Chinese taught Uncle Hap Svang how to produce traditional medicine and put into ampoule. 4 other youths also worked with them to produce the medicine. When the Southwest people came to take control over the district, Vien and his wife were killed. Then Hap Svang was responsible for curing beriberi, diarrhea, fever or period cease etc. in the hospital. He then was ordered to work in a plantation.

A Southwest woman came to be in charge of the hospital of Thmar Puork District. Most patients, who came to the hospital died, very few patients survived because only medicine, which was made of tree, roots were used in the hospital. They played trick that they evacuated people to plant cottons or hemp in different cooperatives. In fact they took families of people to be detained in a large closed-up hall. They called it a theatre hall. The hall could store 5,000 people. All cows, water buffaloes, and carts of people were sent out to keep in different cooperatives. At night, they drove trucks back and forth.

It seemed that these trucks carried people elsewhere, but they just drove the empty trucks. The people who were kept in the hall were taken to be killed in military barrack which is now headquarters of Division 7 of Thmar Puork district, and the other killing place was Sep Pheng well as Sangvat mentioned. Coconut branches were laid at the bottom of the well and after killing people, they laid coconut branches. They did like this until the well was full. There were 7 layers of coconut branches. He knew this because he joined the excavation team with Mr. Ek Sangvat in 1982. He added that Pol Pot cliques planned to kill all people by 1979, after harvesting season. Before killing, the Khmer Rouge gave Khmer noodle party. Fortunately, Vietnamese armed forces came in time to liberate our country.

He added that, he almost died in the Khmer Rouge regime. Chief of the district ordered him to heal the physiologically ill daughter of the district chief. He then was very scared as he had not experienced in curing such illness, but he pretended to know and used the tree root medicine to treat

the daughter. The daughter was eventually better and got rid of the illness. So, he could escape from death. The same chief of district later called him to heal another daughter who caught fever. He was then even more frightened. He thought to himself that he would surely die. Fortunately when he traditionally healed the daughter, she got better and got rid of the disease. So, he could escape from death again.

He clarified that the killing pits were in every sub-district such as in Banteay Chhmar sub-district, there were 10 pits. Each of which is 4 meters x 4 meters size. In Thmar Puork District, one sub-district formed a cooperative. So, the killing sites were in every cooperative during 1977-78.

In short, according to Mr. Ek Sangvat and Hap Svang, in 1984, statistics on people killed in every sub-district showed that 8,000 people died, but there were only 700 human bones excavated. Documents and evidences were burnt down when the Khmer Rouge captured Thmar Puork District in 1985. On September 30, 1985 Para armed forces captured the district as well and the remaining evidential documents were destroyed. A witness who used to be detained in the security office lives in a far away place to which we could not get access. The witness moved from Serei Saophoan to elsewhere. No one knows where he lives now if we want to see the witness we must ask his younger sibling in advance.

In the end, Mr. Hap Svang and Mr. Ek Sangvat said that if national or international court against the Khmer Rouge is set up, they will voluntarily be witnesses for the court to find justice for Cambodian people. They will not hesitate to do so because they also have relatives killed by the Khmer Rouge and they suffered a lot during the period of 8 months and 3 years. Uncle Hap Svang has 2 families of relatives. 10 of them died during the Khmer Rouge regime. Mr. EK Sangvat's parents and his other 7 siblings also died. So, they both are very angry at the Khmer Rouge forever and will never forget the events.

At 4:30PM in the same day, after the interview with witnesses our team set off its journey to examine genocidal pits. There were 3 excavation places, which were already mentioned. In the 3 killing sites, there were 7 pits. The guides were Mr. Ek Sangvat and Mr. Ky Keav, captain and commander of engineering army F7 bases in Ekpheap village, Kumrou sub-district, Thmar Puork district, Banteay Meanchey Province.

Now the pits were almost unable to identify as they were covered with soil, but our team took photos of the pits so that they can be used as the evidences and historical records for younger generation.

After examining the pits, we decided to pay a visit to Banteay Chhmar temple which is about 16 Kilometers far from Thmar Puork District town because we want to see the aspect of the temple with our own eyes and to see why Thai princess paid her visit to the temple.

The same day, our team arrived at Banteay Chhmar temple at 5:00 p.m.. According to villagers who live there, on June 22, 1999, there were a Thai princess, Sorin Than, 46 years old, and students in military uniforms paid visit to examine geographical feature of the temple and go around

the temple campus. They spent 100,000 baths on renovating the path to Banteay Chhmar temple and building a hut for dressing and rest room during her visit.

Mr. Ky Keav and military-policemen who were bodyguards of governor of Banteay Meanchey Province talked to each other during the meal in office of Cambodian People's Party that when the Thai princess with anger-like-facial expression got off the plane and went around to see the temple, she did not say thank or talked even a word to Princess Bophatevy and to the governor who tried to accompany her. Our team who also sat and ate near the military policemen in Cambodia People's Party of Thmar Puork District thought that the activity of Thai princess showed that there was something behind the visit. We witnessed the aspect of Banteay Chhmar temple. We felt very sorrowful and shocked. The temple was almost completely in ruin. Giant stones piling up on one another. There was no entrance to the inside of the temple as it was covered with piles of stones.

Banteay Chhma temple is 1 square kilometer, but the temple body is in ruin. We could see only giant stone piles. According to Mr. Ky Keav and Ek Sangvat, the temple were under the control of liberation armed forces, Sereikar [Free Khmer], before. Cambodian People's Party did not have chance to take responsibility for the temple, but after the general election 1998, Cambodian People's Party and Funcipec Party have cooperatively defended this area. So, the destruction of the temple is not part of CPP Party's responsibility because when the temple was under the control of liberation armed forces, some higher commanders ordered their soldiers to excavate for antiquities such as statues from under the temple. This caused the temple to collapse and sometimes the temple stones felt on their children to death.

In 1990, the temple was in fairly good condition, but after excavation for antiquities and statues to sell to the Thai, the temple was almost completely in ruin. The Thai buy a large sheet of the temple stone for 3,000 or 4,000 baths in Thailand.

According to Ek Sangvat, the Thai try to do this because they intend to destroy our culture by using their money to buy off consciousness of some Khmer people as they did in Lungvek period. He told us not to put the blame on anyone. Khmer do not desperately think about the nation and do not love their own nation; think only about their own benefits and keeps committing this. They eat and never get full and they are too tired to work for the nation and society. He told us about Cambodian-Thai border where the Thai captured our land step by step. If we want to see our border in Boeng Trakuon, he could guide us there, as it is only over 20 Kilometers from the district town. He said we will burst out into tear if we see the border, because we will feel sorry to see Cambodian land invaded and captured by Thailand by moving boundary post into Cambodia land. He said that he felt very sorry and pitiful but he does not know what to do, as high officials do not care about this. He looked sad and painful when he saw Cambodian land became Thai land. In Boeng Trakuon, which is located along the border, the Thai have secretly captured Cambodian land step by step. He almost burst into tears when he saw this. He has no ability to help save our land. This point Em Sokhym, asked him that does the provincial authority not care about this matter? He said, " they can not see the problem." He ended his words

because he was probably afraid of upper leaders. We are Cambodian. When we look at the history in the past we can see that our neighboring countries have always invaded our land up to even now.

After visiting Banteay Chhmar temple, our team returned to Thmar Puork District at 6:00 PM the same day in order to get us ready to go back to Banteay Meanchey Provincial town next day.

In conclusion, we have little results from the research, and interviewing witnesses in Banteay Meanchey Province because we went to only Thmar Puork District. We did not go to Banteay Ampil District because this district is now under Oddor Meanchey Province. If we want to go there, we should contact the provincial authority in advance. The way to the district is extremely difficult as there are a lot of big holes in the road and the bridges were destroyed by flood. So, we cannot travel by car. We have to take raft and then take ox cart. It is 70Kilometers far. We have to spend a full day to reach there. Dry season is better for us to travel than rainy season.

The witnesses, who were detained in the KR security office, lives very far from the site. His address is not clearly known. The time was not permitted. So, our team could not interview the witness. Even though, we have little results, we could compile this document to be published as the historical record for younger generation to be aware of the regime of 3 years, 8 months and 20 days.

1. BANTEAY MEANCHEY PROVINCE (ID Code: 01)

District	Site Name/ Visited Date	Site Type	Est. Victim	Informant	File #/ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
Thmar Pourk	Banteay/22 June 99	Burial site 4 pits	400 up	Ek Sangvat អែក សង្កាត់	R 062208A/ 010701	N 13°56'5305"	E 103°02'5902"
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Thmar Pourk	Trapeang Suon/22 June 99	Burial site 2 pits	N/A	Ky Keav គី គាវ Ek Sangvat អែក សង្កាត់	R 062209A/ 010703	N 14°00'4451"	E 103°04'0559"

**Introduction**

On the afternoon of June 21, 1999, the Documentation Center of Cambodia sent a mapping team to Banteay Meanchey Province. The team members are: Mr. Sin Khin team leader in charge of contact with local authorities and interviews with informants. Mr. Ouch Sam Oeun is the Global Positioning System Unit (GPS) operator to record geographical positions of mass grave pits, memorials and prisons. Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara is responsible for completing site information forms and assisting with interviews. Mr. Yin Nean is responsible for drawing site maps, and Mrs. Iem Sokhym, responsible for preparing the report.

At 3:30 pm, the team arrived by a commercial airplane at Battambang Provincial town after a flight from Phnom Penh, and then traveled by car from Battambang to Banteay Meanchey Province. The road trip was 70 kilometers. The team arrived in Banteay Meanchey Provincial town at 5:30 p.m.

**General Information of Banteay Meanchey Province**

The next day, June 22, 1999 at 8:30 am, the team went to Banteay Meanchey Provincial office to ask the provincial authorities for information about the geographical locations of Districts to which the team wished to travel. Unfortunately, the provincial governor went to Banteay Chhmar temple to meet with a Thai delegation on June 21. So we were unable to meet with him. However, we did meet with Mr. Diep Chhuon, deputy chief of provincial cabinet. He informed us that after the 1998 election, Banteay Ampil District was removed from the jurisdiction of Banteay Meanchey Province, and became part of Oddar Meanchey Province. If we wanted to go there, he explained, we would have to speak with the Oddar Meanchey Provincial governor. The geography is a bit complicated, and it is about 70

DC-Cam: Mapping the Killing Fields of Cambodia, 1999--

kilometers from Banteay Meanchey Provincial town. To get there would require a full day trip. The District town is located in Samraong, and we could travel via National Road #6.

He then gave us directions to Thmar Puork District. Thmar Puork District is only about 43 kilometers distant, but because of a difficult road, is four hours in travel time. Security has been good since the government initiated its weapons confiscation program. After our meeting with Diep Chhuon, our team decided to set off along Road 69A toward Thmar Puork District, passing through Serey Sophorn and Svay Chek Districts. The road is extremely difficult. There are groups of armed forces deployed along the road all the way to the District town.

At 12:30 pm the same day, our team arrived in Thmar Puork District. For administrative purposes, we contacted with Mr. Hean Narun, alias Chhat, who is deputy chief of Thmar Puork District. He said that he knew our team was coming because Mr. Diep Chhuon the deputy chief of the cabinet had informed him by walkie-talkie (Icom) earlier in the morning. Mr. Diep Chhuon had requested that Mr. Hean Narun make our work as smooth as possible. Mr. Hean briefed us about geographical and security situation of the District. He said that Thmar Puork District consists of six Sub-districts. The six Sub-districts are Thmar Puork Sub-district, consisting of seven Villages; Phum Thmei Sub-district consisting of eight Villages; Banteay Chhmar Sub-district consisting of eleven Villages; Rokar Romiet Sub-district consisting of twenty Villages; Kumrou Sub-district consisting of six Villages; and Kathen Sub-district consisting of eight Villages. In total, the District has sixty Villages some 10,615 families and 79,876 people. Among these are 26,749 females. Almost 99 percent of the people earn their living by farming. Living standards in this District are worse than any other District in Banteay Meanchey province because the people rely only on farming, and opportunities to supplement income with fishing are rare.

### **Thmar Puork District**

Thmar Puork District is located about 43 Kilometers Northeast of Banteay Meanchey Provincial town. Banteay Ampil District bounds it to the West, the East by Phnom Srok District, the South by Svay Chek District and on the North by the Thai border.

The security situation has been stabilized only recently. Before 1989, the District was under the control of the Liberation Resistance Movement, which was associated with the Funcinpec Party. After the general election in 1993, Son San's KPNLF and the Funcinpec Party shared control of this remote District. The Cambodian Peoples Party had little access at that time. The District administration was chiefly controlled by the military forces of the resistance movement. Even though there were civilian District authorities, they had to ask permission from the military prior to doing anything.

In 1997, Mr. Hean Narun was assigned to be in charge of the District. Because the security situation remained unstable, he decided to spend a year studying at the National Administrative School in Phnom Penh (1998-1999). Mr. Hean added that the situation prior to 1999 was not as favorable as it is now. The political situation improved as the civil war came to an end, and all irregular armed forces were disarmed and demobilized. The national armed forces have been trying to learn appropriate legal procedures and improve their respect for the power of the civilian authorities. The military progressively removed itself from civilian affairs. The situation is now good because the

country is at peace, and the military no longer concerns itself with administrative work, concentrating instead on new methods of development and staying focused on its own responsibilities.

Mr. Hean told us about his life in the Pol Pot regime. He was born in Thmar Puork Village, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. He studied in Serey Sophorn District. His father was a military commander. After the coup against Prince Sihanouk in 1970, he went to study in Phnom Penh. When the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, his family was evacuated from Phnom Penh to Bakan District, Pursat Province. His six siblings and his mother died from starvation in 1976. After that, Angkar took his father to be reeducated because they knew he had been a Lon Nol soldier; Mr. Hean knows his father was killed. Then in late 1976, the Pol Pot clique informed the people in Northwest that they would be permitted to return to live in their previous homes. This news convinced Mr. Hean to set off on a boat journey from Champuh Ka-Ek pagoda, Bakan District towards Svay Daunkeo District, where he spent the night. The next morning, the Khmer Rouge transported people in ox carts to Damnak Pongro Village, Russei Kraing Sub-district, Mong Russei District. Mong Russei District was then in Region 2. Upon arrival, Mr. Hean Narun was shown a hill on which he was told to clear forest in order to build a shelter. He was then 16 years old. He did not know anything about such manual work, but during the Lon Nol regime he had been taught how to camp, so he used plastic sheets to build a shelter. He was then assigned to a regional mobile work brigade and forced to do hard labor. Life was miserable, as there was insufficient food, only one can of rice for twenty to fifty people. Driven by hunger, he exchanged his clothes for rice bran to fry and eat. This caused him to feel very uncomfortable whenever he defecated, and he sometimes had to use his fingers to help push his feces out. His said his feces looked like pig's shit because he ate rice bran like a pig. He left a "human's track, but a pig's waste."

In the end, he said that he did not know clearly about any evidence of genocidal crimes, because when he arrived here, the evidence had already been lost. He said, "I did not speak ill of the Khmer Rouge."

After meeting with Mr. Hean Narun at 2:30p.m, our team met with Mr. Ek Sangvat, 47 years old, chief of office of Thmar Puork District. He was born in Andaung Thlong Village, Thmar Puork Sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. He now lives in Andaung Thlong Village, Thmar Puork Sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Banteay Meanchey Province.

Mr. Sangvat told us that during the Pol Pot regime, Thmar Puork District was part of Region 5 in the Khmer Rouge Northwest Zone. District Headquarters was located in Kathen Village, Thmar Puork Sub-district, Thmar Puork District. The Khmer Rouge security office was located in the same structure that houses the Cambodian People Party's headquarters today. The District chief at that time was named Comrade Chhat. Chhat was accused of having enemy connections and was later killed. Mr. Sangvat also knows something about the killings committed at the security office in Thmar Puork District.

In the Khmer Rouge regime, Mr. Sangvat lived in this Village, which is his native place. In 1975, he was 20 years old. At that point, he gave up his studies to help his parents with work. He was then just an ordinary farmer. The Khmer Rouge accused him of being a student, but in fact he was just an ordinary literate. They spied on him, and tested him to find out if he knew anything. His parents were middle class peasants, and his father was a Buddhist functionary in the region. The Khmer Rouge accused the father of being a "Buddhist leader."

But in fact, he was just an ordinary clergyman. His parents and his siblings died in early 1979. All together, seven members of his family died during the Pol Pot regime.

Mr. Sangvat said that in the first phase, the Khmer Rouge arrested policemen, soldiers and people who had any connection to the Lon Nol regime, such as being students, or feudalists, or capitalists, and detained them at the security office. All people kept at the security office were later killed. None of them was lucky enough to survive.

In a second phase, the Khmer Rouge took base people to be detained in the security office. These people had made small mistakes such as traveling from one Village to another without permission, or were illegally in possession of fish, crabs or snails. This was enough to be accused of being an enemy, to be arrested and detained at the security office, and subsequently to be executed. Some people did not plow in precisely the fashion they had been ordered to plow; for example, they might be ordered to walk on the right side behind the plow, but instead they walked on the left. Such criminals were accused of being enemies and killed on the spot in front of other people assigned to do plowing, so that the rest would not follow this bad example.

In a third phase, the Khmer Rouge tricked the people by telling them that they had to be evacuated from the Village to plant cotton and hemp elsewhere. There, the people were told, they would have enough food. The Khmer Rouge instructed the people to prepare clothes and foodstuffs to support them on their journey to the new location. People were very happy, and they hurriedly packed and took their children along with them. After five or six weeks, however, it became clear to all that in fact the Khmer Rouge had tricked them, because they were taking between five and ten families from each group to be killed at the Thmar Puork military barracks, as well as at a water well near the security office. The military barracks where people were killed is now headquarters of Royal Cambodia Armed Forces (RCAF) Division 7, Thmar Puork District, and the well is near the Thmar Puork District High School.

Besides killing people, the Khmer Rouge deprived the local population of all kinds of freedoms, even the simple pleasure of chatting with neighbors. Men and women who were only joking with each other were accused of committing moral offenses and consequently executed in public. The Khmer Rouge took all the accused who had been detained in the security office to be killed, and threw their bodies into a well, creating a mass grave ten meters deep, and eight meters by eight meters. That mass grave is in Por Phleak Village, Kumrou Sub-district, Thmar Puork District.

Between 1975 and 1977, this District was under the control of Northwest Zone cadre. Under that administration, there was adequate food. Although people ate only simple porridge, they had sufficient nourishment to avoid starvation. People produced plenty of crops, but Angkar educated them that they had to be patient because some of the crops had to be allocated to feed people who lived along rivers, and who were suffering from starvation. In early 1977, Southwest Zone cadres came to the District and accused the Northwest Zone cadres of being traitors. The Southwestern cadre arrested Chhat, chief of District, and executed him. The new District chief was Comrade Ream. The Southwest Zone cadre operated by deception; they called all levels of cadres from the Northwest Zone to a meeting, and evacuated the ordinary people to another place. In fact, they took those people to be killed.

In 1977, the cadres from the Southwest purged all Northwest cadres and seized control of the zone. Then they started killing base people, as well. They also became even stricter toward the 17 April or New People in terms of food ration. New People were not even allowed to walk from one house to another. If they saw anyone trying to visit a neighbor's house, they accused him of being an enemy, arrested and killed him immediately. Mr. Sangvat added that around this time, he fell ill with beriberi. He did not have any rice, only a few potatoes or manioc tubes. So he smashed chaff and fried it, trying to make a meal. One day, getting up very early in the morning to go work the fields, he saw some pork belonging to the Southwest cadres, and he almost took it because he was so hungry. But he dared not. If he had, he feels he surely would have been killed. Instead, he was patient, and simply walked away in tears.

The food situation became critical under the Southwest Zone cadres. Each group of ten people had a ration of three to four spoons of uncooked rice; many people died of starvation. The chief of the model cooperative in which Mr. Sangvat lived was named Comrade Kork. People call him A-Kork, or the Contemptible Kork. He was very cruel. No one dared to look at his face. If anyone dared to look at his face and he saw them do it, Comrade Kork would tie them up and kill him or her immediately.

In 1978, as Mr. Sangvat recalls, a prisoner who escaped from the security office was recaptured and he was taken to be killed. The Khmer Rouge aimed to execute him with a chop on the back of his neck. The victim pretended to be dead, but when the Khmer Rouge left, he sprang up and made good his escape. That lucky man is still alive, and is named Sim Sieu. He now lives in Pongro Village, Mkakk Sub-district, Serei Saophoan District. If we want to interview him, Mr. Sangvat said, we should ask his younger sibling, Mr. Sim Koy, who lives in Thmar Puork Sub-district.

In early January 1979, several members of Ek Sangvat's family, including his parents and siblings, were taken to be killed. Others died of starvation.

Mr. Sangvat told us that some genocide evidence, including bones excavated from mass graves, wells and the military barracks, has been stored in a two meter by two-meter thatch hut at Pothiveal Pagoda back in 1982. There were about 700 bones, 400 of which had been excavated at the military barracks, and another 300 from the mass gravesite. The evidence was destroyed in 1985 when the Khmer Rouge armed forces captured Thmar Puork District and went on an arson rampage. They burned down people's houses, as well as the hut containing the bones at Pothiveal Pagoda. They also shot a large number of people to death. Mr. Sangvat himself says he was chased and fired upon with B-40 rockets, but luckily the rockets did not score a direct hit. It was a close enough call, however, that his clothes were set on fire.

In Thmar Puork District, many people were killed during the Khmer Rouge regime, but Mr. Sangvat does not know the precise locations of all the execution sites. He knows only two or three places.

Mr. Sangvat added that he himself joined a team exhuming mass graves in 1982, in his capacity as a member of the Thmar Puork Sub-district committee, responsible for social affairs and culture. When excavating the mass grave pits, he saw blind folds on the corpses, and arms bound with ropes. There were three killing locations. The first was called Sep [Officer] Pheng well, situated in Pophneak Village,

Kumrou Sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Banteay Meanchey Province. It is ten meters deep and eight meters by eight meters in size. It is located about one and a half kilometers from the Thmar Puork District Office. The second location was at the military barracks, located 700 meters north of the District office. As previously mentioned, that place is currently headquarters of RCAF Division #7 in Thmar Puork District. There were four main pits at the barracks. Each pit was eight meters long, three meters wide, and two meters deep. The exhumation teams in 1982 excavated only one of those pits.

**Trapeang Suon—010703 B N 11°00'44.51" E 103°04'05.59"**  
**Dek Keh Village, Banteay Chhmar Sub-district**

The third location was Trapeang Suon killing site in Dek Keh Village, Banteay Chhmar Sub-district, Thmar Puork District. In this place, which the locals called Trapeang Suong, there were two pits. At first, this killing site was unknown to District authorities, but when local people dug up the site searching for gold, they revealed pits in which the Khmer Rouge had buried the corpses of their victims. Mr. Ek Sangvat is not familiar with that particular location, but Captain Ky Keav, Commander of Engineering Army Group F7, did know. He guided us to the place, where we saw small fragments of bone and other pieces of material.

Mr. Ek Sangvat believes that there are many more pits in Thmar Puork District. He missed the two pits described above, and believes that the authorities have missed others, as well. He ascribes this lack of knowledge to the fact that during the Pol Pot regime, the killings were almost all done in secrecy.

At the end of our interview with Mr. Sangvat, he told us that he believes he survived the Khmer Rouge regime because he always tried to work hard, even when he was sick with beriberi. Whenever they gathered people, he tried to escape from one place to another. He hid himself in mobile work brigades. He could do this because in late 1978 the rules were not as strict as before. His parents and his siblings, who were confined to concentration camps, did not survive. Mr. Sangvat said that Pol Potists were very cruel. He will never forget what the Khmer Rouge did to him.

After interviewing Mr. Ek Sangvat, our team met with Hap Svang, 69 years old, born in Wat Chass Village, Thmar Puork Sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Battambang Province. During the Pol Pot regime he lived in the same place, that is, at Ekapheap Village, Kumrou Sub-district Thmar Puork District, Banteay Meanchey Province. He now works in the Social Affairs and Culture Office in Thmar Puork District.

Early in the Pol Pot regime, Mr. Svang was a traditional healer in Thmar Puork District. He cured beriberi, diarrhea, fever, and other maladies using traditional medicines made from tree bark, leaves and roots. He made the traditional medicine himself. Some time later, he met an ethnic Chinese named Vien, and his wife Lun. Vien was a skillful healer. Vien taught Mr. Hap Svang how to steam the medicinal roots to produce liquid medicines. Four other youths also worked with them making medicines. When the Southwest cadre came to take control of the District in 1977, Vien and his wife were killed. After that, Hap Svay was responsible for treating beriberi, diarrhea, fever, menstrual problems and other sicknesses at the hospital. Later on, he was ordered to work at a plantation.

**Banteay (Military Barrack)—010701B**  
**Kak Sin Village, Thmar Puork Sub-district**

**N 13°56'5305"**

**E 103°02'5902"**

A woman from the Southwest was put in charge of the hospital in Thmar Puork District. Most patients who came to the hospital died. Very few survived, because only traditional medicines were used in the hospital. The Khmer Rouge cadres played a trick, saying that they were relocating people to plant cotton or hemp at different cooperatives. In fact, they took those families to be detained in a large closed-up hall. They called it a theater hall, and it could hold 5,000 people. All cows, water buffaloes, and oxcarts seized from the captives were distributed to various cooperatives. At night, for some reason, they drove trucks back and forth. It seemed that these trucks were carrying people somewhere, but in fact they just drove empty trucks back and forth.

The people imprisoned in the theater hall were taken to be killed at Banteay (military barrack), now headquarters of Division #7, Thmar Puork District.

**Andaung Sepheng Well—010702B**

**N 13°55'0222"**

**E 103°02'4525"**

**Ekkka Pheap Village, Kumrou Sub-district, Thmar Puork District**

The other killing place was Sep Pheng Well, as Sangvat also mentioned. Coconut branches were laid at the bottom of the well, and after they loaded in a certain number of bodies, they would put down another layer of coconut branches. They did this until the well was full. In the end, there were seven layers of coconut branches, each covering a pile of victims. He knows this because he joined the excavation team with Mr. Ek Sangvat in 1982. Mr. Svang believes that the Pol Pot cliques planned to kill all of the people by 1979, after the harvest season. Before carrying out their killing, the Khmer Rouge gave a Khmer noodle party. Fortunately, Vietnamese armed forces came in time to liberate the District.

Mr. Svang added that he almost lost his life during the Khmer Rouge regime. The Khmer Rouge District chief ordered him to heal the chiefs sick daughter. He was very frightened, because he was not familiar with her particular illness, but he pretended to know what to do and used tree root medicine to treat her. The daughter eventually got better, and was cured of the illness. And so he escaped death. The same District chief later called him to heal another of his daughters who was ill with fever. He was then even more frightened. He thought to himself that he would surely die. Fortunately, the traditional medicines he used again healed the daughter, and she got better. Again he escaped death.

Mr. Svang explained to the team that there are killing pits in every Sub-district. In Thmar Puork District, each Sub-district was organized as a cooperative. So, in effect, killing sites were created in every cooperative during 1977-1978. In Banteay Chhmar Sub-district, for example, there were ten pits, each with the size of four meters by four meters.

In short, according to Mr. Ek Sangvat and Hap Svang, in 1984, statistics on people killed in every Sub-district showed that 8,000 people died, but only 700 human bones were recovered through excavation. The documents and evidence detailing this information were destroyed by fire when the Khmer Rouge captured Thmar Puork District in 1985. On September 30, 1985, Para armed forces captured the District, and the remaining evidentiary documents were destroyed. An informant who survived detention at the security office lives far away, too far for us to interview the subject. The informant moved from Seret Saophoan to another location. Only his sibling knows where he lives now.

At the end of our interview, Mr. Hap Svang and Mr. Ek Sangvat said that if a national or international court to judge the Khmer Rouge were established, they would volunteer to testify before the court to help find justice for the Cambodian people. They would not hesitate to do so, because they had relatives killed by the Khmer Rouge, and they suffered a lot during the period of three years and eight months. Mr. Hap Svang has two families of relatives. Between the two families, ten members died during the Khmer Rouge regime. Mr. Ek Sangvat's parents and his seven siblings also died. So, they both are very angry at the Khmer Rouge, and will never forget what happened to them.

At 4:30 pm that same day, after the interviews with our informants, the team set off on its journey to examine the genocide sites. There were three places where excavation had been done, as already mentioned. At these three killing sites, there was a total of seven pits. We were guided by Mr. Ek Sangvat and Mr. Ky Keav, captain and commander of Engineering Army Group F7, based at Ekpheap Village, Kumrou Sub-district, Thmar Puork District, Banteay Meanchey Province.

Today, the pits are almost unidentifiable, as they have been covered with soil. Nonetheless, the team photographed the pit sites as historical evidence for the younger generation.

After examining the pits, we decided to pay a visit to Banteay Chhmar temple, about sixteen kilometers from Thmar Puork District town, because the team wanted to see the temple and to learn why a Thai princess was visiting the temple.

We examined Banteay Chhmar temple. We felt very sorrowful and shocked. The temple was almost completely in ruins. Giant stones were piled up one upon another. There was no entrance to the inside of the temple, as it had been covered with piles of stones.

Banteay Chhmar temple covers an area of one square kilometer, but the temple itself is a ruin. We could see only giant stone piles. According to Mr. Ky Keav and Ek Sangvat, the temple had previously been under the control of liberation armed forces, the Sereikar (or Free Khmer). The Cambodian People's Party (CPP) was not responsible for the temple prior to 1998, but since the 1998 general election, the CPP and the Funcinpec Party have cooperated to defend this area. So, the destruction of the temple was not the CPP's responsibility. When the temple was under the control of the liberation armed forces, some commanders ordered their soldiers to excavate for antiquities such as statues under the temple. This caused the temple to collapse. In one instance, this caused temple stones to fall on children, killing them.

Up until 1990, the temple was in fairly good condition, but after being looted of antiquities by thieves, the temple was almost completely in ruins. It is said that a large sheet of the temple stone fetches 3,000 to 4,000 baht in Thailand.

In conclusion, we achieved few results from this research expedition. In interviewing informants in Banteay Meanchey Province, we went only to one of its Districts, Thmar Puork District. We did not go to Banteay Ampil District, because that District is now administratively part of Oddar Meanchey Province. When we wish to go there, we will have to contact the provincial authorities in advance. The trip to that District will be extremely difficult, as the road is riddled with numerous big potholes and the bridges have been destroyed by flooding. So, it will not be possible to make that trip by car. The logistics will involve a raft and oxcarts. It is seventy kilometers distant, and will require a full day of travel. It will be wiser to attempt that trip in the dry season, rather than the rainy season.

The informant who survived detention in the Khmer Rouge security office lives very far from the site, and we have not yet been able to determine his current address. Time did not permit it, so our team could not interview that informant. Even though we have few results, we nonetheless compiled this document to be published as an historical record for younger generation, so they can be aware of the troubles during the 3 years, 8 months and 20 days of the Khmer Rouge regime. End./