

## Naming Practice of Royal Thai Army Camps in Context of Political Symbolism

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### Abstract

The military coup d'état in B.E. 2490 (1947) has instigated the conception of nationalism in a form of reestablishment of royal prerogatives of the monarch, as well as military power expansion in consequence. The Royal Thai Army has a role in maintaining national peace and order and a major role in Thai political system up until the present, particularly in a manner of establishing legitimacy in its political space expansion through distribution of manpower to be stationed in military camps throughout the country. There has been a practice of naming military camps after historical figures, local figures and places revered by the people so as to foster and strengthen national security. Hence, this article has intended to study the military camp naming practice of the Royal Thai Army in terms of political symbolism, and the findings thereof have indicated that the military camp naming practice involves three considerations; 1) serving the ideology of nationalism, 2) revising the history to venerate persons, and 3) maintaining political space and security within the immediate localities, which have developed into the political symbol of the Royal Thai Army and Thai society in harmony ever since.

**Key Word:** Military Camp, Royal Thai Army, Political Symbol

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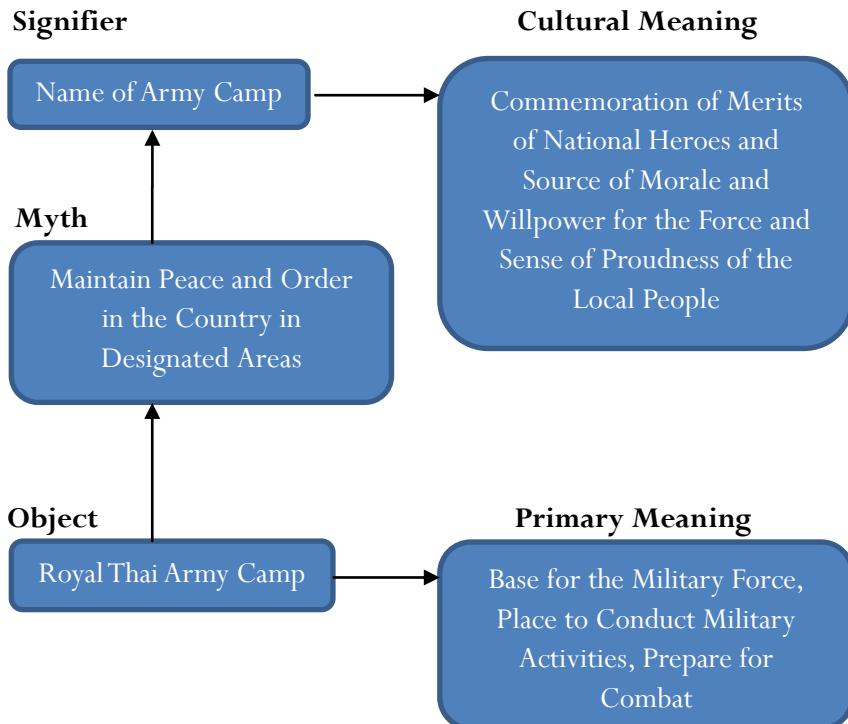
## Introduction

In the past, under the threat of colonialism affecting the stability of national security, a recognition of the modern Thai state was constituted; boundaries were drawn, grouping certain numbers of people under centralised public authority, and the foundation of modern Royal Thai Armed Forces for national defence was evidently materialised, as the first military camp of the Royal Thai Army, Chakrabongse Camp, Prachin Buri, was erected in B.E. 2462 (1919) (Directorate of Operations, 1981) to prepare for the defence against approaching western superpowers which had already subjugated Indochina countries to the east of Thailand. Prior to that, there had been an abolishment of the slavery system in Thailand, thus some peasants were conscripted for military service, and the emerging external threats also influenced the expansion rate of the force to augment to a great extent so as to defend the nation, such as the Indochina Conflict, and after such threats ended, there was a threat of communism influencing the security of state power and internal security. Therefore, it has become a primary mission of the Royal Thai Army to push for the erections of camps and assemble forces to be deployed in military units along surveillance areas which were critical strategic points throughout the country.

As the Cold War Era ended, the Royal Thai Army has a new mission to maintain peace and order of the kingdom, and so it has been a vital mechanism in the mission by exploiting the ideology of nationalism as an instrument for building legitimacy and reestablishment of political imagination; as evident from the camp naming practice that revolves around historical sites or figures involved in acts of heroism of protecting the nation's sovereignty of Royal Thai Army camps across the country. This article has thus studied the concept of military camp naming practice of the Royal Thai Army in political aspect by employing the concept of semiotic interpretation of Roland Barthes to illustrate that the camp naming practice presents a link to political power.

Semiotics, or semiology, is the study of signification to analyse the nature of semiotic elements and semiosis, and apprehend how meanings are derived. Structuralism has explained that semiotic elements have a relation between each other combined to express meaning through sign; composed of perceived semiotic element, or the signifier, and its meaning, or the signified, so it means that, in terms of linguistics, sign consists of the signifier as the form of the word or phrase uttered and the signified as the mental concept we can understand from (Prachakul, 2006).

Furthermore, Barthes also proposes that sign is a relation between image and concept to express the sign as the language intended, whereas, in social aspect, sign would be produced to convey cultural meaning, for example, a villain in a play whom the audience think that he might have a matching personality with his role. Barthes called the signs which transmit cultural meaning as myth (Chantavanich, 2009), which was defined as a communication of message through cultural beliefs until naturalised, a form of deception; yet it does not mean that myths are fraudulence or concealment of their meanings, for it is humans themselves that get too engaged with such meaning and fail to realise that they have been constructed. Hence, myths are products of history work by using signs as medium to govern objects through considerations of their utilities along with attributes until they become “primary meanings” to embed cultural meanings into such objects (Prachakul, 2006) by using the military camp naming practice of the Royal Thai Army to explain the functioning of myth as per Barthes’ conception by diagram as follows:



According to the diagram, the use of myths would affect the notions of most people to acknowledge the names of national heroes or historical figures appeared as titles of army camps unquestioningly or without a doubt over heroic acts or significant events in the past, which they perceive as a form of virtues or bravery, deriving from sets of information being fed continuously and extensively by the state. Thus, it enables army camps throughout the country to prevail and participate closely in activities, or to bring about benefits into the community naturally without making its people feel alienated. From the study, it has been found that the key factors in the military camp naming practice of the Royal Thai Army in context of political symbolism are associated with three considerations; 1) service to the ideology of nationalism, (2) revision of history to venerate persons,

and (3) maintenance of political space and security within the immediate localities, which can be elucidated as follows:

### **Service to Nationalism**

As the development and formation of the concepts of nation and nationalism were established by the elites and passed on, implanting the sense of nationalism, to the masses, leading to a persistent relationship (Prasertkul, 2011), and the aftermath of B.E. 2490 (1947) coup resulted in that the conservatism rightfully gained more power, especially the institution of monarchy, the Royal Thai Army, for they were a protector of primary institutions of the nation, has thus produced a set of discourses to instil mutual recognitions through substantial processes, such as, objects, buildings, or ceremonies, to commemorate the names of significant figures, places, or events in the past (Hongkananukraw, 2011) into education system, or through local narratives, altering paradigm towards the senses of prouddness and loyalty, and unify the people in the nation. Furthermore, the number of military camps has still kept on growing, owing to the increasing number of soldiers stationed in regions to carry on missions of national defence, as well as monitoring internal security of the kingdom. In the monarchy era, there was only one military camp, Chakrabongse camp, to guard the border of eastern monthons up until the end of absolute monarchy era through to the era which the country becomes democratic.

On the rise to political power of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, a nation-building policy was implemented, utilising nationalism to influence political behaviour of the people in the desired direction by means of propaganda; introducing a common identity from the central authority to various regions to establish a sense of unity within the country and changing the name of the country from Siam to Thailand, along with creating symbols to impart the people with perception of strength and bravery, such as, tribute to soldiers who had sacrificed their lives at the Victory Monument to commemorate the victory against the superpowers in the Indochina Conflict (Thuamma, 2011), so reinforcement of the armed forces has

thus been dependent on the growth rate of force and the number of military camps in turn, as observable in the emergence of military camps of the Royal Thai Army in Table 1, which has classified the erections of Royal Thai Army camps by terms of political leaders as follows;

**Table 1** Emergence of Royal Thai Army Camps by Prime Ministers' Terms of Office

Prime Minister	Terms of Office	Amount of Military Camp
Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram	(1 <sup>st</sup> term) B.E. 2481-2487 (1938-1944) (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) B.E. 2491-2500 (1948-1957)	1 11
Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat	B.E. 2501-2506 (1958-1963)	2
Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	B.E. 2506-2516 (1963-1973)	13
Mom Rajawongse Seni Pramoj	B.E. 2519-2519 (1967-1976)	1
General Kriangsak Chomanan	B.E. 2520-2523 (1977-1980)	5
General Prem Tinsulanonda	B.E. 2523-2531 (1980-1988)	25
General Chatichai Choonhavan	B.E. 2531-2534 (1988-1991)	3
Anand Panyarachun	B.E. 2534-2535 (1991-1992)	4
General Suchinda Kraprayoon	B.E. 2535-2535 (1992-1992)	1
Chuan Leekpai (1 <sup>st</sup> Term)	B.E. 2535-2538 (1992-1995)	1
Banharn Silpa-archa	B.E. 2538-2539 (1995-1996)	3

**Table 1 (Con.)**

<b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Terms of Office</b>	<b>Amount of Military Camp</b>
General Chavalit Yongchayudh	B.E. 2539-2540 (1996- 1997)	2
Chuan Leekpai (2 <sup>nd</sup> Term)	B.E. 2540-2544 (1997- 2001)	3
Police Lt. Colonel Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra	B.E. 2544-2549 (2001- 2006)	5
Abhisit Vejjajiva	B.E. 2551-2554 (2008- 2011)	1
Yingluck Shinawatra	B.E. 2554-present (2011-present)	2

From Table 1, it can be observed that the emergence of military camps has relatively multiplied in a great degree in comparison between each term of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, which presents a total of 11 camps emerged during the second term. Military camps were named after those of heroic kings, figures, and key historical sites revered by the people, partly due to the compromise over the power relations between groups of politicians and royalists had progressed; the image of the armed forces which had been eminent was reduced and resituated by that of the monarchy institution, whose royal prerogative had been restricted after the B.E. 2475 (1932) Siamese Revolution, until residing in the area of reverence of the people once again (Thuamma, 2011). After the rise to political power of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the ideology of royal nationalism was adopted as the ideal of development and defense against threat of communism (Winichakul, 2001), subsequently raising the status of the monarchy institution to popularity. Furthermore, the highest number of military camps emerged in the term of General Prem Tinsulanonda, compared to that during the terms of the other prime ministers, and it has been known in social perspectives that General Prem Tinsulanonda has offered his service to

the monarch, been working closely thereto, been loyal, and deeply trusted thereby. After his retirement from politics, he was appointed as a privy councillor and now serves as the Head of the Privy Council of the King of Thailand (Boonprong, 2011).

Therefore, the service to the ideology of nationalism was not only produced as an instrument to establish unity among the citizens in the country, but also to fabricate and amend mutual recognitions of the merits and virtues of Thai forebears in the past. The erections of military camps across the country is thus comparable to a representation of state power and an enrichment of the monarch's influence over regions, imparting into the visions and thoughts of Thai people who has been adhered to the institution of monarchy for a long period of time, instigating a feeling, a sense duty of all Thai citizens to protect "the spiritual leader of the nation". Whenever the country or society faces a crisis, these promotions of nationalistic ideals would always be ready to become a force that serves as the one who holds the power desires.

## 2. Revision of History to Venerate Persons

The feelings of nostalgia for the memories of people and places bringing up through sequences of significant historical events are often cited for greatness or grief at lost and reproduced by the state (Farrar, 2008) to prompt the sense of proudness towards nationality. The practice of the Royal Thai Army to name their military camps after names of historically significant figures and places,<sup>1</sup> which include name listings of nobles, military officers, important local figures and places, is a means to foster conscious mind in the citizens of the nation to memorialise their merits and virtues. So, the preceding production

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<sup>1</sup> Presently, there are military camps under the Royal Thai Army of 85 camps in total, but only 82 has requested for a camp title from the King or the Queen; the remaining 3 will not be included herein, namely Kaengkrachan Special Force Training Camp, Pratupha Special Warfare Training Camp, and Erawan Camp, as they have never requested for any title since there are no military units stationed therein.

of history in Thai society has originated under three mainstreams of historical conception; 1) nationalist history, which adheres to the association with the institution of monarchy, 2) localism history, and 3) localism-nationalist history, which praises local figures or individuals sent by the central authority to govern that brings fourth benefactions to the locality and becomes a favourite among the local inhabitants under the context closely related to the ideology of nationalism (Samniang, 2013). Hence, the Royal Thai Army, to amend the history to venerate persons in accordance with said ideology, has authorised military units stationed in each locality to submit a request to be granted with a camp title from His Majesty the King, Rama IX, provided that each of the military units in Royal Thai Army has to adopt a set of selection criteria for the personal names; that such persons have to contribute to the country in aspect of military affairs, as per the practical guideline of the Directorate Of Personnel on selection of names of figures to name military camps, that is; 1) the owner of such name should be one who has greatly contributed to the country, particularly in aspect of military affairs, 2) must be one who has been respected among local soldiers and people, 3) has already passed away, unless such is a member of the royal family, 4) in order to name a military camp after such person, according to the principle of history, a waiting period should be passed until it is evident that such person has become a historical figure before naming the military camp after, then it will be passed along to the process of request for a camp title (Directorate Of Personnel, 1981).

Therefore, names of figures and historical places renowned amongst the public or the local have been exploited to institute legitimacy and coherence so as to gain acceptance of the local community. Examinable from Table 2 are the historically significant figures or places after which Royal Thai Army camps have been named categorised by ranks as follows;

**Table 2** Titles/Names of Royal Thai Army Camps

<b>Title of Rank</b>	<b>Title/Name of Royal Thai Army Camp</b>
King/Queen	1. Somdet Phra Narai Maharat 2. Phra Nangklao Chao Yu Hua 3. Somdet Phra Suriyothai 4. Somdet Phra Phuttha Yodfa Chulalok Maharat 5. Somdet Phra Naresuan Maharat 6. Somdet Phra Ekatotsarot 7. Somdet Phra Boromma Trailokkanat 8. Vajiravudh 9. Prapokklao 10. Taksin 11. Phra Pin Klaow
Former Honourable Title of King	1. Somdet Chao Phraya Maha Kasatsuek 2. Wachiraprakan
Front Palace Royal	1. Surasi 2. Sura Singhanat 3. Maha Sakdiphonlasep 1. Chakrabongse 2. Bhanurangsi 3. Phetchaburi Rajasirindhorn 4. Vajiralongkorn 5. Sirindhorn 6. Adisorn 7. Somdet Phra Srinagarindra 8. Kamphaengpetch Arkarayothin 9. Thong Thi Khayu 10. Purachatra 11. Prachaksinlapakhom 12. Sapphasitthiprasong 13. Sri Patcharin 14. Chiraprawat 15. Phichit Pricha Kon 16. Khun Nain 17. Khet Udom Sak 18. Vibhavadi 19. Kromma Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra 20. Maha Chakri Sirindhorn 21. Sonabandit
Peerage/Royal Family Member	1. Mengrai Maharat 2. Pho Khun Pha Mueang 3. Khun Chom Tham 4. Khun Chueang Thanmikkarat 5. Pho Khun Bang Klang Hao
Ruler of Ancient Kingdom	

**Table 2 (Con.)**

<b>Title of Rank</b>	<b>Title/Name of Royal Thai Army Camp</b>
Local Nobility	1. Kawila 2. Suriyapong
Nobility/Warri or	1. Phanatdi Sri Uthai <sup>2</sup> 2. Si Suriyawongse 3. Phra Yod Muang Kwang 4. Bodindecha 5. Phraya Sunthon Thada 6. Phraya Surawong Watthanasak 7. Phraya Phichai Dap Hak 8. Surasakmontree 9. Phraya Chaiyabun 10. Phra Si Phanommat 11. Rattana Rangsan 12. Aphi Bori Rak 13. Phraya Ratsadanupradit 14. Phraya Samantarat Burin 15. Ratanapol <sup>3</sup>
Military Officer	1. Phahonyothin 2. Thanarat 3. Promyothee 4. Paireerayodej 5. Nimman Konlayut 6. Pibulsongkram 7. Weerawatyothin 8. Kris Sivara 9. Prasert Songkhram 10. Siharat Dechochai 11. Prem Tinsulanonda 12. Yutthasin Prasit 13. Sarit Sena 14. Sena Narong 15. Ingka Yuttaboriharn
Commoner	1. Suranaree 2. Thep Sattri Si Sunthon 3. Thep Sing
Place/Buddha Image	1. Ram Ratchaniwet 2. Phanatdi Sri Uthai* 3. Si Song Rak 4. Si Sothon

From Table 2 which lists the names of historical figures granted as military camp names, most of which were upper-classes who had played a major role in country governance or performed a heroic act, demonstrating bravery, in wartime in the past, as well as carried out a critical mission concerning national security. Considering the ranks of each group, the first lists the names of previous kings, with pre-

<sup>2</sup> Phanatdi Sri Uthai Camp is the only military camp named after two names adjoined, that is, a sacred Buddha image “Phra Phanatsabodi” and the name of a noble, who is of importance to Chao Taksin Maha Rat, “Phraya Sri Uthai” categorised under Nobility/Warrior and Place/Buddha Image.

<sup>3</sup> Her Majesty the Queen granted the title of Ratanapol on 9 October B.E. 2527 (1984).

coronation titles of kings being the second. These names have been highly regarded among militarists and the people, as these are tied with an old belief that a king is Indra descended from heaven as “incarnation (avatar) of god” to be a great ruler and a warrior or supreme commander aim, to ease sufferings and promote happiness of the people of the kingdom and eliminate all enemies of the country, like Bodhisattvas (enlightened ones) who bestow welfare upon the people and battle against all evils (Loasinwattana, 2006), such as the commemoration to the great victory that freed Siam from Burmese rule of King Naresuan the Great, whom the Royal Thai Army regarded as a great hero of the nation, and pass on to the mass the experience in a manner which embodied a belief that renders his image as divine through many memorials, and monuments of king, situated within government areas, military camps, temples, and schools for the people to pay respect to for good fortune (Adulyapichet, 2013).

The third group is the group of the front palace who held a relationship status close to the king as brothers, acting as vanguards in war to triumph, for example, the marching of Somdet Phra Bawonratchao Maha Sakdiphonlasep to deal with insurgency in Vientiane with success (Viravong, 2010). Similarly, the fourth group also comprises royal peerages and royal family members who performed a duty in military affairs and contributed to the country to such extent renowned among the Royal Thai Army and general people. The fifth group consists of rulers of ancient kingdoms; the fact that the Royal Thai Army has placed the importance on these names of heroes, and named military camps after which, conveys respect and honour, and creates good feelings among the locals, particularly those within the region of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Area, responsible for the northern part of Thailand. Besides, the practice of naming military camps after rulers of ancient kingdoms could be seen as recollections of the past according to local narratives, collecting information and historical evidence of each figure, made weighty and reliable by analytical processes of historiographers, to write new pages of history so as to erase the vague

memories of the local people, replacing them with new “places of remembrance” in substantial forms, such as museums, and remembrance festivals (Vattanakul, 2007), encouraging the people in the community to participate and acknowledge the existence of historical figures, as the central state power desires.

The sixth group is the titles of camps named after local lords, selecting from the lords of northern provinces who accepted the consolidation of power from Siam, which the central used befriending approaches with the northern lords, giving them respects and freedom to govern internally, as well as not interfering with the existing customs (Prayulsatien, 1981), along with exemplifying the evidence of loyalty of the northern lords, for instance, that Chao Kawila had gathered troops and fought alongside Siamese army to fend off the enemy was considered praiseworthy, so he became a favourite among Siamese Royal Court since even before King Rama I was enthroned (Poomsukho, 2005). The seventh group is the nobility who offered their services to the king and became fond of and trusted thereby, commended for working on the monarch’s behalf with honesty, as in an instance of Chao Phraya Surasakmontree (Jerm Saeng-Chooto), who had offered his service and become the first to enlist in the King’s Guard Regiment and work in the royal footsteps of the king with knowledge and expertise, becoming a good role model among the officers in the Royal Thai Army ever since (Palakawong na Ayuthaya, 2013), or as in the instance of the local noble admired by the people in Satun, Phraya Samantarat Burin, who was a Malay descendant, a follower of Islam (Muslim), and so accomplished in the performance of his duties as Siamese government intrusted him with the title of Phraya (Rythaphirom, 2003). The eighth group includes military officials who were once high-ranking officers of the Royal Thai Army or praised for their heroism in wartime, for example, the officers who played a part in the heroic act in the Indochina Conflict that resulted in Thailand acquiring some parts of Laos and Cambodia back from the French, such as Luang Phromyothi, leader of Burapha Army, and Luang Paireerayodej, deputy leader of Burapha Army, whose names

had once been used in honour for a district in Battambang and a district in Pibulsongkram, respectively (Ongsakul, 2012), but the names of the districts were changed when Thailand had to return the areas to Cambodia after the World War II. Currently, the names of the two officers have been re-commemorated as names of a military camp in Prachinburi and one in Sa Kaeo (Directorate of Operations, 1981), which are virtually the symbols of defence against invasion from the east. While some officers had projected personal images that were not so good in the eyes of the public, like Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat, whose massive amount of assets surfaced in the public eye after his death, but in the perspectives and viewpoints of commanders and generals of the Royal Thai Army, he was considered to be a great contributor in the development of the Royal Thai Army and the nation, and thus respected by the soldiers. Hence, he was the only military officer who was commended so highly that both his name and surname were used to entitle military camps, Thanarat Camp and Sarit Sena Camp, of which Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat further augmented the power of legitimacy of himself and the personnel with “Army of His Majesty the King”, which became a symbol of proof of loyalty in consequence (Boonprong, 2011).

The ninth group is the group of commoners who were praised for bravery and ability to fight the enemy invading their land to victory, reflecting their love for the land and that the normal people can also participate in national defence. For the last group is places and Buddha images worshipped by the people or symbolically important to the locality. Anyhow, there were two military camps not listed in the table since they were not named after important figures nor places, namely Nawamintharachini Camp and Surathampitak Camp, as the two had been granted with such names by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit (Directorate of Operations, 1981) so as to lighten the load of royal works of His Majesty the King in military affairs.

Therefore, it has been demonstrated that the revision of history in order to venerate persons, when associated with the royal institution in an aspect, which is regarded as a source of cultural

capital, a symbolic social capital that Thai society gives acceptance, respects, and faithfulness to (Yanyongkasemsuk, 2007), indicates the status of power of Thai elites which has been strong as always.

### **3. Maintenance of Political Space and Security with the Local**

The Royal Thai Army has begun to change the feeling of the people under the discourse changing from “Military Zone-Do Not Enter” to “Military Zone-Welcome” and with “For The Nation, Religions, King, and People” as the Royal Thai Army motto, which is considered as a means to establish political space within the locality in a manner of inviting people of various groups to participate in the accessibility and allocation of resources in the local area, which were formerly clustered around the power of government officials, to local power groups more (Wisaprom, 2013). The erection of military camp in each locality requires justification and alignment of the local people. If any locality presents a major conflict, the security affairs section needs to narrate the origins of military camp names, as in the case of Phra Yod Muang Kwang, whose heroic acts might not be as widely acknowledged but symbolised a local official loyal to the Siamese royal court who fought against injustice from colonising countries; prior to the erection of military camp in Nakhon Phanom, B.E. 2521 (1978), the area was presented with a dispute to seize the masses between the state and communist terrorists, so the force tied his story to supernatural phenomena as in Thai traditional beliefs<sup>4</sup> to gain

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<sup>4</sup> There is a narrative saying that a military officer of general rank dreamt of a Thai male wearing traditional clothes named Phra Yod Muang Kwang, whose soul was still adrift in Laos, begging the officer to summon it to Nakhon Phanom to build a shrine for the people to worship and pay homage to. Every year, on 12<sup>th</sup> of April is the anniversary ceremony of Phra Yod Muang Kwang Camp, which many military officers have mentioned about abnormal activities occurred during worshipping rites, such as heavy rain and storm and abnormal drop in temperature, and gone back to normal right when the rites concluded, thus became a hearsay among commanders and generals participated.

acceptance and alignment from the local community, which led to military camp entitlement after him in due course (Office of the Culture Commission, 2013).

In peacetime when the country is not at war, military camps, apart from being the place to train the army, are also used to conduct activities with external parties, such as, inviting representatives from government agencies, politicians, important figures, and the locals to join the camps' anniversary ceremonies, including social activities like Children's Day and field trips of students from southern border provinces to create good attitudes towards soldiers amongst the youths (Royal Thai Army News, 2013), drug rehabilitation programmes under the name "Wiwatphonlamueng School", and lectures about royal projects and sufficiency economy philosophy to agencies and schools visiting the camps, as well as tourist attractions, relaxation sites for the people and the army, which generate tourism incomes to each locality (Royal Thai Army's Tourism Promotion Office, 2013). On top of that, the locals can receive healthcare services provided within the camps, which are not just for the army units of Royal Thai Army. The hospitals in the camps of Royal Thai Army (Royal Thai Army, 2013) are listed in Table 3 below;

**Table 3 Royal Thai Army Hospitals by Regions**

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1 <sup>st</sup> Army Area (Central Region)	(1) Chakrabongse Camp (2) Thanarat Camp Hospital (3) Nawamintharachini Camp Hospital (4) Sura Singhanat Camp Hospital (5) Surasi Camp Hospital (6) Bhanurangsi Camp Hospital (7) Adisorn Camp Hospital (8) Ram Ratchaniwet Camp Hospital
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The researcher thanks Lieutenant General Phanu Kosonsit, Former 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Area Deputy Commander, for his time to participate in the interview and confirm on the story from firsthand experience.

**Table 3 (Con.)**

2 <sup>nd</sup> Army Area (Northeastern Region)	(1) Kris Sivara Camp Hospital (2) Weerawatyothin Camp Hospital (3) Sri Patcharin Camp Hospital (4) Somdet Chao Phraya Maha Kasatsuek Camp Hospital (5) Somdet Phra Phuttha Yodfa Chulalok Maharat Camp Hospital (6) Sapphasitthiprasong Camp Hospital (7) Suranaree Camp Hospital (8) Prachaksinlapakhom Camp Hospital (9) Phra Yod Muang Kwang Camp Hospital (10) Si Song Rak Camp Hospital
3 <sup>rd</sup> Army Area (Northern Region)	(1) Kawila Camp Hospital (2) Khun Chueang Thanmikkarat Camp Hospital (3) Somdet Phra Naresuan Maharat Camp Hospital (4) Chiraprawat Camp Hospital (5) Surasakmontree Camp Hospital (6) Pho Khun Pha Mueang Camp Hospital (7) Suriyapong Camp Hospital (8) Phichai Dap Hak Camp Hospital (9) Mengrai Maharat Camp Hospital (10) Wachiraprakan Camp Hospital
4 <sup>th</sup> Army Area (Southern Region)	(1) Khet Udom Sak Camp Hospital (2) Thep Sattri Si Sunthon Camp Hospital (3) Sena Narong (4) Ingka Yuttaboriharn Camp Hospital (5) Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp Hospital

From Table 3, it is observable that the Royal Thai Army emphasises on implementing development strategies on the people within each locality, particularly in the northern region and north-eastern region, notably by the higher number of hospitals than the others, due to the fact that the two regions are rural and remote and the people therein lack of accessibility to quality healthcare services. In

addition, the hospitals also operate mobile units to help and ameliorate those who encounter danger of various forms. Therefore, building hospitals within military camps could be considered as a scheme of the Security Department, utilised as a means to approach the masses, conduct reconnaissance during conflict situations over supports of the public and those who hold different political ideologies (Srisombat, 2013). Hence, It is regarded that military camps are exploited to maintain political space through aforementioned activities; a means to publicise proactive policies of the central to the locals, as well as changing attitudes of the local people in remote areas to empathise and confide in military agencies, securing the localities and promote positive images thereof in the public eye.

## Conclusion

The naming practice of the Royal Thai Army Camps is an instrument to serve the ideology of nationalism that the power of the state, in a manner, has defined as a symbol of power relationship over local communities, which has been preached to accept the existence of military camps as a representation of national security and national defence mission. The selection of names of important figures or places or objects venerated by the people, to convey symbols of bravery, sacrifice, virtue, or spiritual centre for the people, to name military camps, instead of army units, implies the intent to reduce the gap between the people and the Armed Forces, as well as to stir up the sense of esteem and appreciation towards the authority of central government over the local areas, rendering them to contribute to national development, security affairs, and reinforcement and enhance the harmony between the people and the Armed Forces in a sustainable fashion.

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