

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology

Final Project Report

ISP Project Report

Information Security Project 2021

Project ID:

Submitted by:

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Abstract

SR86 Hijack is a capture the flag (CTF) program developed as for the requirements specified in the information security project module. This CTF program is developed in order to increase the practical knowledge of the players who are interested in information security-based tools and technologies.

In the CTF, the main scenario is based on an investigation scenario of an aircraft hijacking situation. The players will have to go through various types of practical information security forensic based levels in order to retrieve the flags required in the CTF levels.

In the initial parts of this final report, an introduction to the CTF development, a description about the scenario, and an introduction about the tools and technologies that were used to develop the CTF is included. In addition, details about the database development are included. The methodology that was used is thoroughly described in the methodology section. It includes brief descriptions about the levels and the methodology to play the various levels included in the CTF.

Additionally, how the **TryHackMe** implementation of the CTF was done and the development of the website is also described in the methodology section of the document. In the final sections of the document, an evaluation about the methodologies used, brief description about the problems occurred and the future possibility for the development of the SR86 Hijack CTF is discussed.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Dr.Lakmal Rupasinghe, Mrs. Chathu udagedara, Ms. Menaka moonamaldeniya, lecturer and instructors for the Information security project module for granting this opportunity to us to gain knowledge about how to create a CTF box, how to implement the levels, understand what are the tools and techniques that can be used for the implementation, how to host a CTF in a public platform such as TryHackMe properly and how to document a proper report for created CTF challenge in an academically accepted manner.

In addition, we are grateful for the continuous guidance, support and feedback received the implement this CTF.

Declaration

We declare that this project report or part of it was not a copy of a document done by any organization, university any other institute or a previous student project group at SLIIT and was not copied from the Internet or other sources.

Project Details

Project Title	SR86 Hijack: a scenario of a cargo aircraft with COVID 19 vaccines hijack situation
Project ID	

Group Members

Reg. No	Name	Signature
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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

This product is a CTF (*Capture the Flag*) challenge which is required for the information security project module conducted in 3rd year July/December semester. This CTF is mainly based on a scenario of an airplane hijacking situation which is related to the aviation industry. The purpose of designing a CTF with such a scenario is to attract players who are interested in aviation related incidents and military intervention related incidents. In addition, training and awareness for the aviation related staff and military staff is one of the main goals of the CTF design.

1.2 Product Scope

The CTF is focused on aviation industry which considered as an industry that uses highly critical systems. In this particular scenario the mainly considered scopes are the aircraft control center systems and communication systems that are used for routing of aircrafts. Specifically, some functionalities that are used in **ACARS** systems (Aircraft communications addressing and reporting system) that is used to communicate with the aircrafts is one of the systems that are considered. **ACARS** is used to communicate short messages between aircraft and ground stations such as, Weather messages, air traffic related messages or voice messages. A typical system architecture of an ACARS system is represented by the image below.

Future Air Nav system (FANS) and ACARS is used to communicate using short text messages. Technologies used in FANS and ACARS are,

- VHF datalink (X.25 routing protocol) TCP/IP in OSI model
- GSM communication
- SATCOM

Most standard ACARS transmit these messages in human readable format although some aircraft do encrypt the messages. In the scenario of SR86 hijack, the short messages between Air traffic control (ATC) tower and the aircraft gets intercepted by a false message. The selected features and

technologies used in the architecture of this ACARS system components will be researched further for the implementation of this CTF box.

The main objectives and goals of the CTF are,

- This CTF box can be used by an Aircraft control center to train their staff to handle a similar situation.
- Train aircraft handling related staff on the proactive measures that must be taken in a hijacking situation.
- Secure the possible loopholes in an aircraft controlling system.
- Train military personnel to handle an aircraft related hostage situation.

1.3 Project Report Structure

The methodology includes the design constraints of the CTF development. The development of the TryHackMe implementation and the development of the web application with the related back-end database development is included with the steps followed.

After the design phase, a detailed description about the levels and the methods to play the levels is described. In the latter part of the document, an evaluation of the methodologies followed is described with the problems faced. In addition, the scope for the future development possibilities of the SR86 Hijack CTF is discussed.

2. Methodology

2.1 Requirements and Analysis

The SR86 Hijack CTF is a new self- contained CTF challenge that is planned to host in a web interface and using a **TryHackMe** room. The players can use the **TryHackMe** room or the website to begin playing the CTF and to submit the flags through the flag submission panels. Through the web interface and provided hints, players should access the FTP servers hosted in an UBUNTU virtual machine which will have the flags and hints related to other levels of CTF.

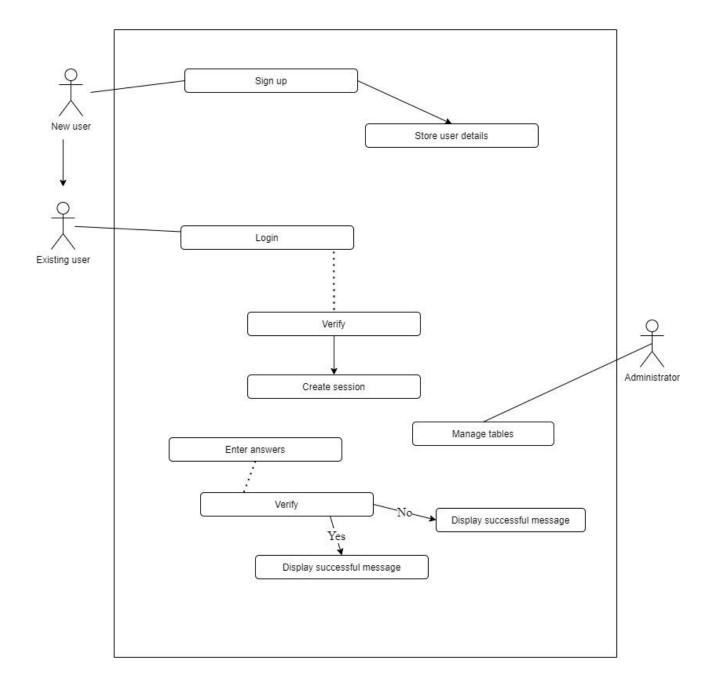
The CTF initially contains a web interface which give the users access to the CTF related materials, a login page and flag submission panels for various levels. In addition, a **TryHackMe** room implementation is done for better access and to increase the number of players. Through the hidden hints and flags inside the website, players can access to the server based on Ubuntu virtual machine and engage in playing other levels and submit the retrieved flags related to each level. Overall number of levels of the CTF is 8 levels that are mainly focused on forensic investigation-based technologies such as Cryptographic algorithms, steganography and password cracking tools such as **THC Hydra** and **Hashcat**.

Tools and technologies that are used for the design of the CTF is listed below.

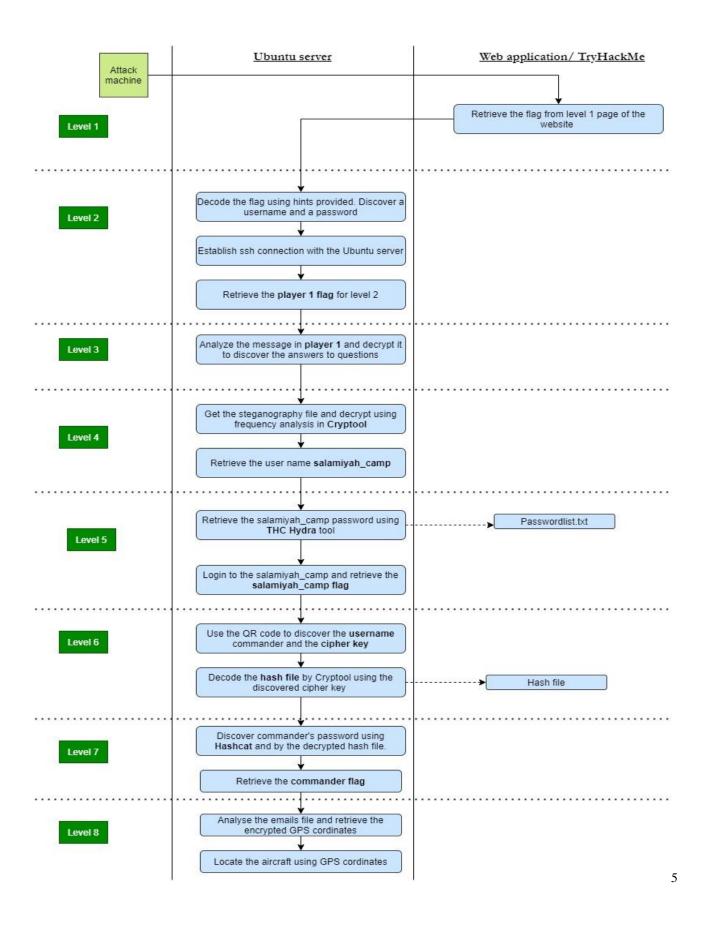
- Web application HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP
- **Database** MySQL, PhpMyAdmin
- **CTF VM** Ubuntu Server 18
- Attack machines THC Hydra, Hashcat, Cryptool, Steganography, Base64
 Encoder/Decoder, QR

2.2 Design

SR86 Hijack ER diagram - Database functions



Level explanation activity diagram

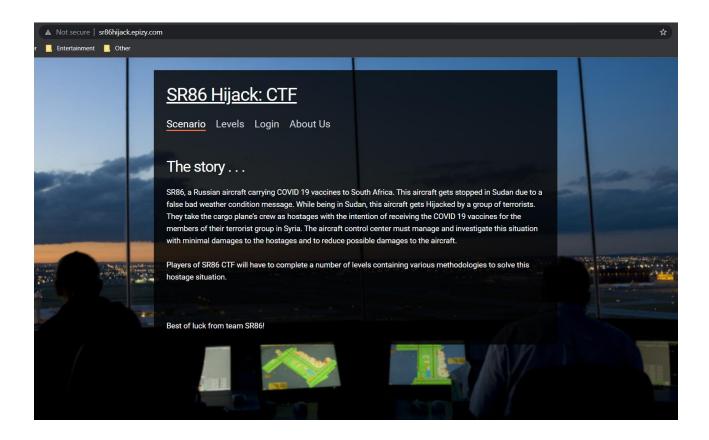


2.3 Implementation

Web application

Web application contains all the details about the levels of the CTF and also contains a login, signup pages for players to login to the CTF playing environment as an additional method to the TryHackMe implementation.

Link: sr86hijack.epizy.com

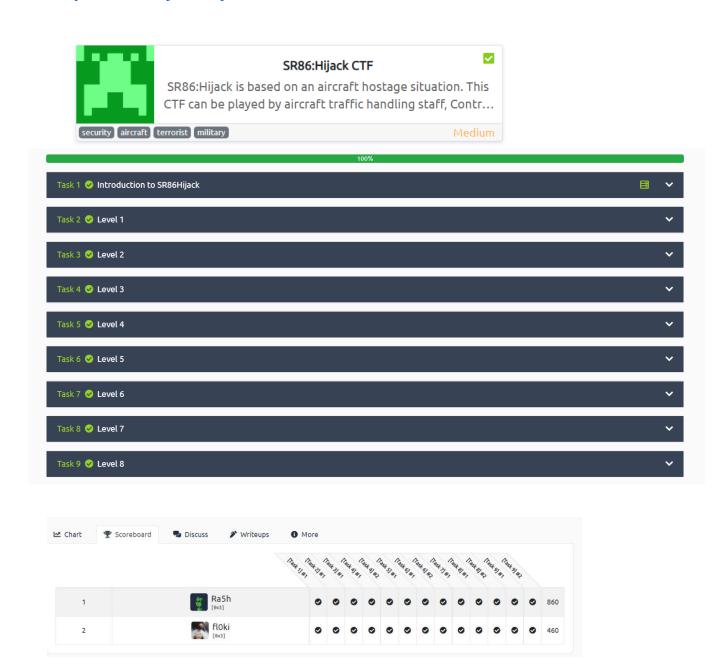


TryHackMe implementation

According to the requirements of the CTF development in Information security project, a **TryHackMe** room was created to host the SR86 Hijack CTF.

This room enables a built-in scoreboard and other necessary analysis tools to analyze users' progress with the completion of CTF challenges.

Link: tryhackme.com/jr/sr86hijackctf



Backend

phpMyAdmin panel

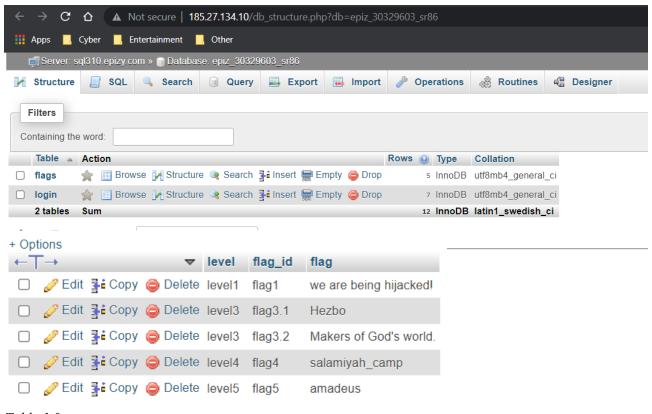


Table 1.0

User login table

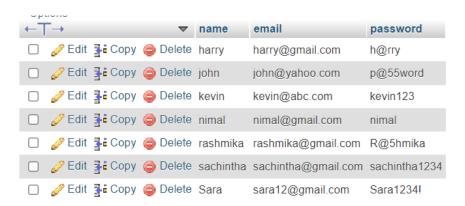
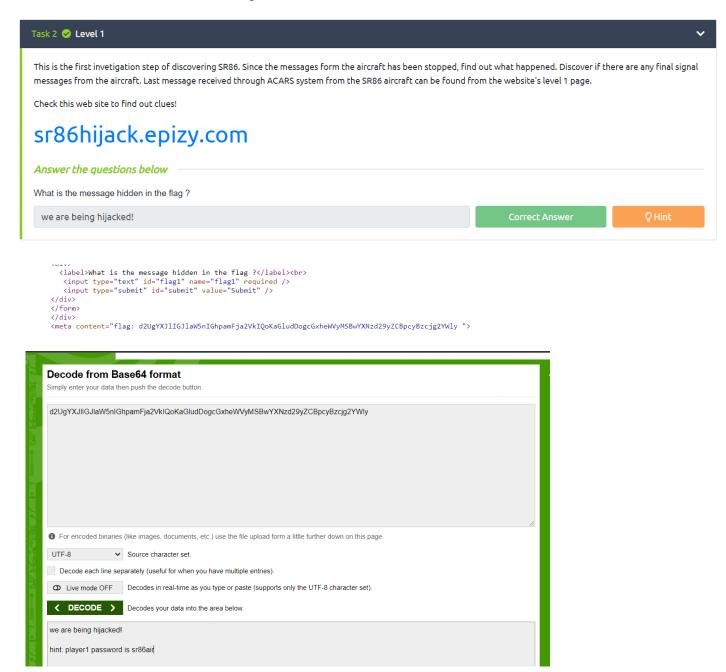


Table 2.0

These tables manage the user logins and the answer submissions from the web application end of the CTF development.

The objective in this level is to find the hidden flag in the level 1 web page source code. The flag is base 64 encoded.

As a Hint base 64 decoder links are provided



Questions:

What is the message hidden in the flag? we are being hijacked!

Player needs to connect to the player 1 user account in the ubuntu server using the discovered credentials in the previous level.

After established a SSH connection player need to submit the flag for the Player 1.



```
player1@sr86-VirtualBox:~$ cat flag1.txt
{SR86Hijack:player1Flag}
player1@sr86-VirtualBox:~$
```

Flag:

{SR86Hijack:player1Flag}

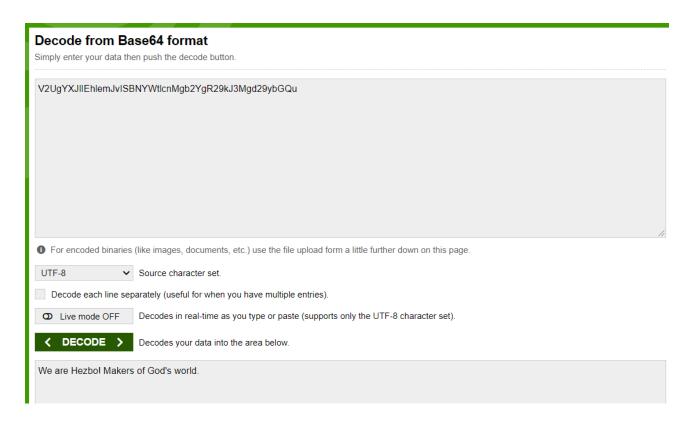
In the level 3, player is already logged in to terrorist group system using the player1 user account. In this level, player needs to find the terrorist group's name as well as their motto by steganography tool that is provided as a hint.



Staganography tool: https://stylesuxx.github.io/steganography/



Then the player will have to decrypt the base64 encoded message retrieved from the stagonography task.



Questions:

What is the Terrorist group's name? Hezbo

What's their motto?

Makers of God's world

In the level 4, player needs to find a hidden message in the level 4 directory which was received. This message is encoded using Caesar cipher. An image of Caesar is provided as a hint for players to guess which cryptographic algorithm to be used when decoding the message.

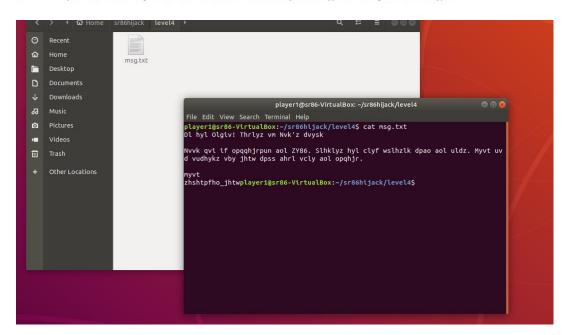
In addition, a hint is provided to use Cryptool as the decoding tool.



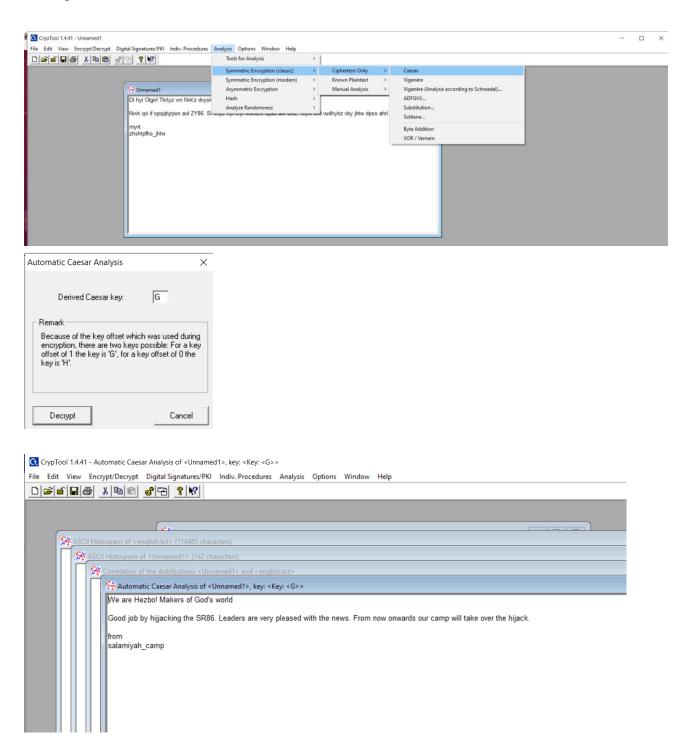


There are news from military intelligence that the aircraft has been taken to a camp in Sudan. Try to discover the camp's name.

In the server, you will find a message received from someone. Unfortunately, it is encrypted. You might need to decrypt it.



Players must use the frequency analysis to discover the cipher key that is used to encrypt the message



Questions: What is the username discovered? salamiyah_camp

In the level 5, need to find password for login to another account known as salamiyah_camp that was discovered in the previous level. Player needs to use tool **Hydra** for the password brute forcing attack in order to discover the password for the salamiyah camp.

```
kali@kali: ~/sr86
                                                                                                                                                    _ 0 >
File Actions Edit View Help
   kali@kali: ~/Downloads
                                           kali@kali: ~/sr86
    -(kali⊛ kali)-[~/sr86]
                -l "salamiyah_camp" -P passwordlist.txt \
> 192.168.164.102 ssh
Hydra v9.1 (c) 2020 by van Hauser/THC & David Maciejak - Please do not use in military or secret service
 organizations, or for illegal purposes (this is non-binding, these *** ignore laws and ethics anyway).
Hydra (https://github.com/vanhauser-thc/thc-hydra) starting at 2021-11-12 23:40:19 [WARNING] Many SSH configurations limit the number of parallel tasks, it is recommended to reduce the ta
sks: use -t 4
[DATA] max 16 tasks per 1 server, overall 16 tasks, 564 login tries (l:1/p:564), ~36 tries per task [DATA] attacking ssh://192.168.164.102:22/
[STATUS] 179.00 tries/min, 179 tries in 00:01h, 388 to do in 00:03h, 16 active [22][ssh] host: 192.168.164.102 login: salamiyah_camp password: amadeus
1 of 1 target successfully completed, 1 valid password found [WARNING] Writing restore file because 3 final worker threads did not complete until end.
[ERROR] 3 targets did not resolve or could not be connected [ERROR] 0 target did not complete Hydra (https://github.com/vanhauser-thc/thc-hydra) finished at 2021-11-12 23:43:08
__<mark>(kali⊕ kali</mark>)-[~/sr86]
                                                                                                                                                255
```

Password list that is needed for the Hydra is provided as a hint in the level description. Players need to retieve the flag that is created for the salamiyah camp and provide it as an answer.

Questions:

What is the discovered password for the user? amdeus

Flag:

{SR86Hijack:salamiyah campFlag}

In the level 6, player must discover a username for login to the next account named as commander, which is a user account belongs to a higher-ranking terrorist. Player should scan the provided QR codes and retrieve the hidden message and discover the username.



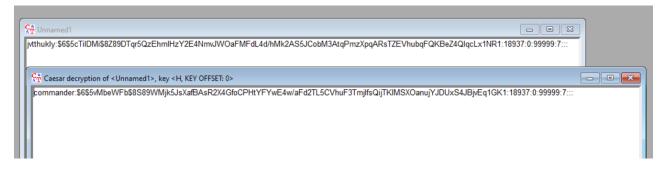
https://me-qr.com/text/105042/show

Note these down. You might need them in the future

Hint: "commander" is the username for next level

Caesar cipher key - 7

Along with the username, a Caesar cipher key is provided which is needed to decrypt a Hash file using Cryptool. Player should decrypt the provided Hash file using this key and retrieve the decrypted hash file to use in the next level.



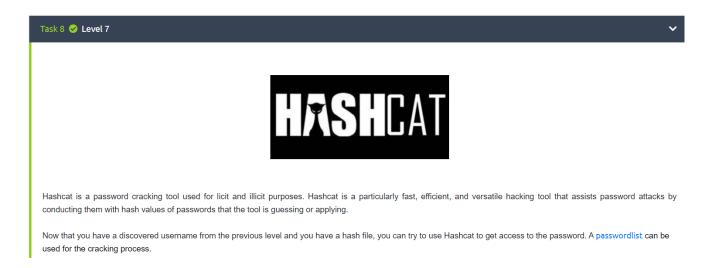
Player will have to keep the decrypted hash file to use in the next level.

Question:

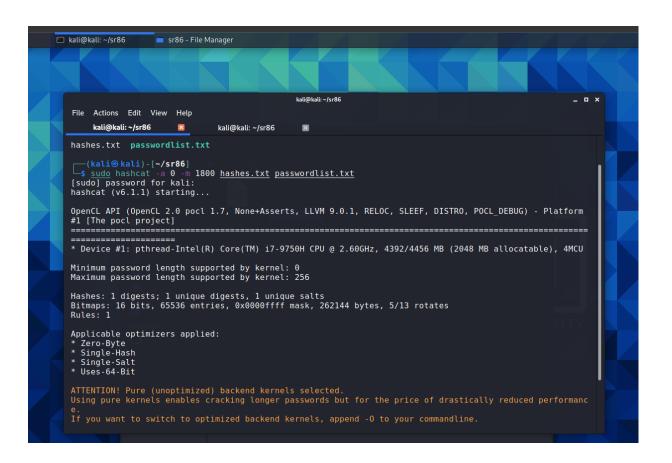
What is the username discovered?

Commander

In the level 7, players need to find the password to login to the next account which is known as commander which was discovered in the level 6. Player needs to use the **Hashcat** tool for to discover the password of the commander account.



Password list that is needed for the Hashcat is provided as a hint in the level description.



```
File Actions Edit View Help

kali@kali:-/sr86

| Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Kali@kali:-/sr86 | Ka
```

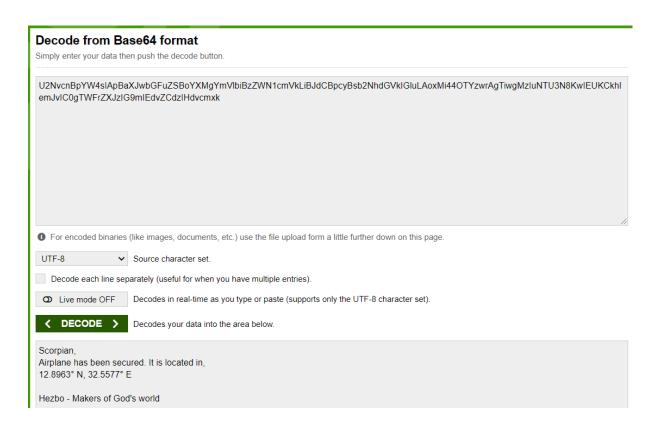
Questions:

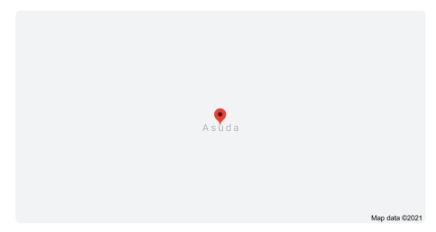
What is the password discovered? Scorpian

Flag:

{SR86Hijack:commanderFlag}

In the level 8, player will have to decrypt the base64 encoded message and retrieve the GPS codes in the hidden message which stored in commander account.





Map for 12.8963° N, 32.5577° E

Questions:

What are the GPS coordinates discovered? 12.8963° N, 32.5577° E

What is the name of the location that the aircraft is hidden? Asuda

After discovering the location of the aircraft. The assigned tasks for the SR86 Hijack CTF challenge will be completed.

2.4 Testing

Different variations of tests were conducted in order to test the functionalities of the developments in the CTF. Evidence that were collected are displayed in the Appendix A: test results section.

- I. TryHackMe Virtual machine connection
- II. Answer submissions
- III. Web application's connection with the back end

3. Evaluation

3.1 Assessment of the Project results

Scoreboards were used to analyze the project results. In the TryHackMe implementation, a score board is used to store the player progresses and their relevant scores. Using that dashboard, an analysis could be performed based on player progresses.

3.2 Lessons Learned

Many lessons were learned while developing the SR86 Hijack CTF challenges. Initially the development of the CTF was began with minimum knowledge on CTF challenges and the tools and technologies used when creating CTF challenges. Overcoming the skill gap and fulfil the requirements of the CTF development increased the group members knowledge and as well as the confidence.

3.3 Future Work

In the future, this development can be modified towards the level of a real-world industry based aviation security investigation training material. Usage of industrial systems would improve the functionality of the CTF challenges, and it will maximize the output that is received from such challenges.

4. Conclusion

This CTF development contained a CTF challenge that was designed based on a hypothetical scenario regarding the aviation industry which is considered as an industry that uses highly critical systems. The purpose of designing a CTF with such a scenario was to attract players who are interested in aviation related incidents and military intervention related incidents. In addition, training and awareness for the aviation related staff and military staff was one of the main goals of the CTF design. Through the development it is concluded the objectives are achieved towards a certain level.

Although the intended objectives were achieved, there are visible limitations to the system developed. Lack of industry level aviation-based systems, secure servers are considered to be some of the limitations identified.

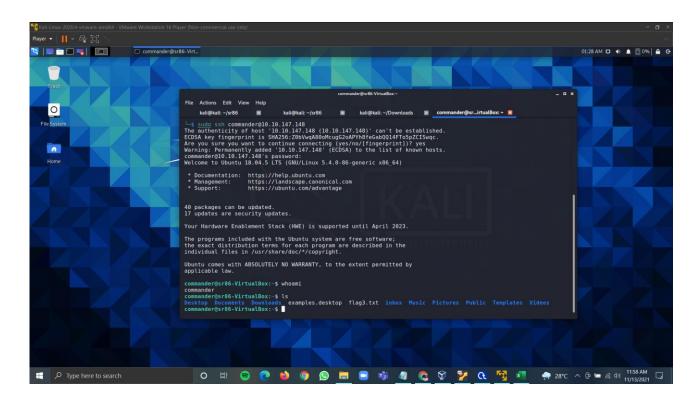
In future research on a CTF that is based on aviation ACARS systems, these identified shortcomings can be eliminated or minimized. Through such a development, the reach of the CTF challenge players will be able to increase. In addition, it will be able to be used in the industry level investigation trainings. In conclusion, as an overall beginner level CTF challenge, it is concluded that the SR86 Hijack achieved its intended objectives.

Appendix A: Test Results

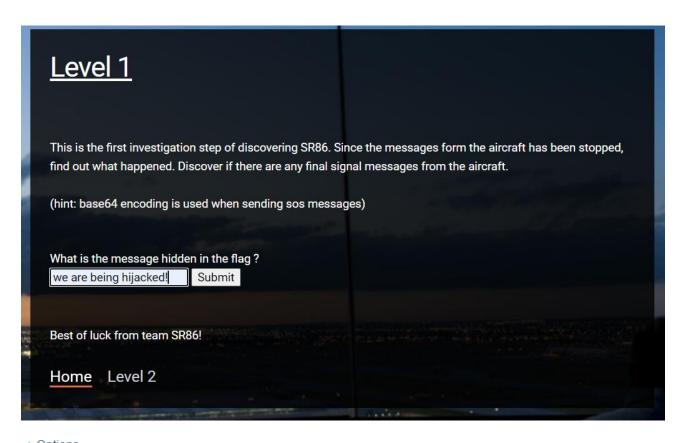
I. TryHackMe VM connection results



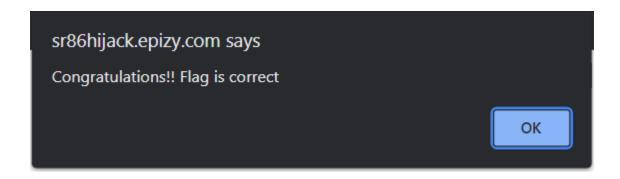
ssh connection established between the attack machine and the TryHackMe VM



II. Answer submissions







III. Web application's connection with the database backend

