



Mekong Express Mail

Volume 8, Issue 2

THE THAILAND LAOS CAMBODIA BROTHERHOOD, INC.

www.TLC-Brotherhood.org

Long Tieng, Laos—A sentimental journey

by MacAlan Thompson

Mac & Sunee Thompson made a road trip up to Long Tieng, LS-20A, on behalf of the TLCB to deliver school supplies the week of 4 March. Mac found it to be a somewhat grueling trip, especially on the highways and byways of Laos.

I had been driven up to Long Tieng by road once before, in March 2006 with Roger Warner, but this trip took a different routing, downstream from Vientiane 90 km then north via a good dirt, then paved, road to near the “gold mine junction” where an Australian company has been strip mining for several years now. A new experience, I must say, driving through rural and mountainous Laos, not like the times I traveled in the “old days,” 1966-75, via airplane.

Now you are eyeball-to-eyeball with the villages, villagers, upland and paddy rice fields, noodle shops, and happily enough, can stop to take a leak whenever you want to, not like flying! As you get further north, largely Hmong with a mix of others in the few towns, and the “towns” become few and far between, although there are small villages along the road. On the southern stretch of this road up from the Mekong there’s a mixed bag of ethnics, Lao, Iu Mien (Yao), and Hmong (Meo). Indeed, in the town of Xaysomboun, former Moug Cha, LS-113, there is a number of fairly recent Chinese immigrants, merchant folks.



Mac's wife, Sunee, pauses on the road to Long Tieng in the wonderful mountains of central Laos. Photos by Mac Thompson.

see **Long Tieng**, continued on page 9

TLCB Brochures

By Bob Santo
Assistance Committee

The enclosed brochures present the story of our past and present assistance efforts in SEA from its beginnings in 1969 to the present day.

As we grow as an organization, it is important not to lose sight of one of the four main objectives of our brotherhood - to provide humanitarian assistance, particularly in TLC.

The two brochures enclosed in this issue of the MEM are the result of the efforts of many TLC members. We hope that these will educate our new members, as well as those of our members who have been with us for a while. They should serve as a way we can all get the word out to family, friends and community and business associates of just what we represent and how they may assist our efforts. We have a great story and one that we are eager to tell.

“TLC Brotherhood Assistance Program” briefly tells the story of our origins and what we have and continue to accomplish as an organization. “TLC Brotherhood Project Laos” describes one of our efforts in Laos, led by member Jeff Hudgens and supported by the TLC Assistance program.

We hope that you will all find these helpful in understanding our program and in explaining to others how they can help us. Please contact the BX Shopkeeper, Bob Pruiksma, email: rsusaf@Bellsouth.net, for as many additional brochures as you would like. Please feel free to distribute these to your local church groups, veterans service organizations, community centers and local media outlets. We would like to place a copy in the hands of anyone interested in helping us.

Flying The General

by Jim Michener

Jim Michener, a 15-year-resident of Laos as of this year, was a pilot for the 129th Assault Helicopter Company, 1966-67, which supported one of two infantry divisions of the Republic of Korea (ROK) beginning in May 1967.

The major problem about driving helicopters was all those moving parts manufactured by lowest bidders. Then there was the business about driving them in war. And then came the fickle business about uniformed passengers who were VIPs. Without warning, one day the CO, a major, called me in and invited me to fly the general. I'm still not sure why it wasn't what we in the



Lt Jim Michener and his Huey, Vietnam, 1967, above.

Farewell party for MG Byong H. Lew, standing next to Gen William Westmoreland, commanding officer of USARV, at division headquarters, September 20, 1967.



army called a "direct order." Anyway, the CO was very diplomatic. And who is going to refuse the Old Man, right? "And we'll even sweeten the deal by throwing in a brand-new Huey from the factory." Well, I'm not writing this article because I refused. Indeed, I would soon learn how much horsepower a brand-new Huey had. To be fair, up until that day several of us had been taking turns flying the general, and not in a brand-new Huey. But a decision had been made at, say, battalion or brigade: the general gets a permanent pilot and a brand-new Huey. This was May 1967. The war was still riding a steep learning curve.

The major general, whose name tag read Byong H. Lew, was the CG of the ROK Tiger Division. His AO, area of operation, was Binh Dinh Province, which included the An Khe Pass. And one day, driving a brand-new Huey from the Bell factory, I appeared at his headquarters. God, that machine had so much power that it was unbelievable. You just thought about making it fly, and, well, it flew. In short, it basically took all the stress out of flying. Or so I thought. "And now we can talk," said the general as he moved to the jump seat. Why did he say that? Because on this Huey the avionics people had outfitted him with a helmet—yes, emblazoned with two black stars—that allowed him to talk to me, something that hadn't been possible on the previous Hueys. And I soon got to see why I was the chosen one, i.e., the guinea pig. I mean, how do you talk to a general? How do you tell the general that a helicopter isn't a genie in a bottle (the CO had already made a mess of one Huey while trying to please a simple lieutenant colonel). "Put Michener in there,"

somebody later told me had been said before I was invited to talk with the CO. "He's good at figuring out how to do things. After he has figured it out, he can tell us how to do it!" (We prior service guys got all sorts of challenging assignments.) And day after day, off the general and I (I was just a simple warrant officer, 23 by a month) flew into the wild blue yonder. Still, despite the fact that I was the aircraft commander, nobody, the CO included, had to tell me where the real power was. And I knew I was privileged.

I have to be fair and say the AO was "tame" during that time. All a villager



exclaimed the general when I raised the name of his aide-de-camp, who, maps in hand, had always come running to the Huey. "He's now a major general!" We both laughed. And diplomatic circles being as small as they are in Vientiane, a former ROK ambassador to Laos used to introduce me to his Korean friends as "the former pilot of General Lew." Why might he do that? Because he had been first secretary at the embassy in DC when (retired) General Lew was the ambassador. Small, small world!



Maj Gen Byong H. Lew, ROK (official photo provided by author)

had to do was raise a weapon and that particular village did not appear on the landscape the next day. "God," I used to exclaim to my fellow Huey drivers when I'd return at night, "I'm sure glad the rocks (ROKs) and us are on the same side!" However, in March 1972 the VC ganged up big time on Hill 638, a stunning ROK outpost at the top of the An Khe Pass; on both sides, it was a slaughter for 16 days. But in my time with the general, it was monsoon weather that caused the real grief. We army pilots had but tactical instrument cards. Air bases like Tuy Hoa and Phu Cat were still under construction. So even if you had the ability to fly IFR (Instrument Flight Rules), almost zero instrument approaches were available. The CO left it to me to explain what a Huey could and couldn't do. With a meter-long stick, I would draw diagrams of mountain passes and coastlines in the sand. The general was a good listener. And then out would come his swagger sick. I can still hear myself always saying, "Yessir, yessir, yessir." And then we would harness up and take off, and he would smile, and now that we were in the cockpit and airborne, he would pretty much defer to me. Once, when he needed to be in Dalat, I suggested that he take his Beechcraft. Still, he sent me in with staff from Tiger Headquarters. We tried a direct approach from coastal Phan Rang but soon became IFR in the mountains. I turned to the south and found the famous mountain pass north of Lien Khuong that also gave access to Dalat. Finally sitting on the ground at Cam Ly, 1,503 meters up in the sky, which is higher than Kathmandu, we could see neither end of the runway, nor much more beyond its perimeter. To this day I'm amazed that the Huey found the airstrip.

Twenty years ago this year, which was twenty years after I had last seen the general, I flew to Seoul and had a one-on-one reunion with Ambassador Byong H. Lew—yes, after retiring as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, he had become the ROK ambassador to Washington. "Oh, you remember Captain Kim!"

BX NEWS!

From our shopkeeper, Bob Pruiksma

Please be watching the BX web page. We are working to lower some (most) of the prices in the BX. We hope that by lowering the prices, we will make more of the items affordable and generate more sales, while still earning a modest profit "for the kids." BX profits go to our Assistance program.

We have a new stock of denim shirts in both long and short sleeve, sizes medium through 2XL. We also have new golf shirts in the same sizes. The new Golf shirts are a light blue and are made of a 50/50 blend. There are photos of the new shirts on the BX web page. You will also notice that as we order new stock, it will include the new TLCB logo that was designed by Jim "Dusty" Henthorn, and incorporates the three most common service ribbons attributed to the Vietnam War. This logo will also be displayed on the new hats.

I hope to see you at Dayton!

Project “Big Eagle”

By Randy Ryman

On 1 June, 1966 my orders read, “Following personnel, organizations indicated, TAC, this station, will proceed on or about 6 Jun 66 from this station, to APO San Francisco 96310 for approximately 179 days in support of project Big Eagle as directed by SAWC. Variations in itinerary authorized.”

Thus began Project “Big Eagle,” which would involve the deployment of eight highly modified Douglas A-26 Invaders, redesignated as B-26K “Counter-Invaders”, from England AFB, La., to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, with aircrews and ground support personnel to accompany them.

To get this Airman’s perspective of Project Big Eagle, we have to turn the clock back to the fall of 1965, to Eglin AFB, Auxiliary Field #9, more commonly known as Hurlburt Field.

Hurlburt was my first official duty station. I was fresh out of Munitions School at Lowry in Denver With basic training and Tech school behind me, I was ready to see the “real” Air Force. When I got my bearings and checked, in, it was as if I had gone through a time warp. Where were all the jets? Not



On the flightline at Nakhon Phanom: a pair of A-26s, and a C-123 at right. In the background, an A-1 Skyraider. Photos provided by Randy Ryman.

one to be found, save for maybe the occasional T-33, and even that was about to be on the extinct list. A1-Es, T-28s, C-123s, Bird Dogs, Helios, and this B-26 with tip tanks. Where was I?

It did not take long to realize I had been assigned to a different part of the Air Force, but being just 19, and on my first base, I was not aware how different.

One thing I found out quickly, those old propeller driven planes could consume a lot of ammunition. Hurlburt almost exclusively used live ordnance for all training.

About the fall of 1965, rumors started circulating about the Air Commandos and the B-26s moving to Louisiana. Later they were looking for volunteers to go to Louisiana, and myself and several other munitions types volunteered to go. In December 1965, the unit transferred to England AFB, La. We moved in and set up shop.

The first month or so seemed to be pretty normal. Then things started to change. Rumor had it that this would not be our final destination.

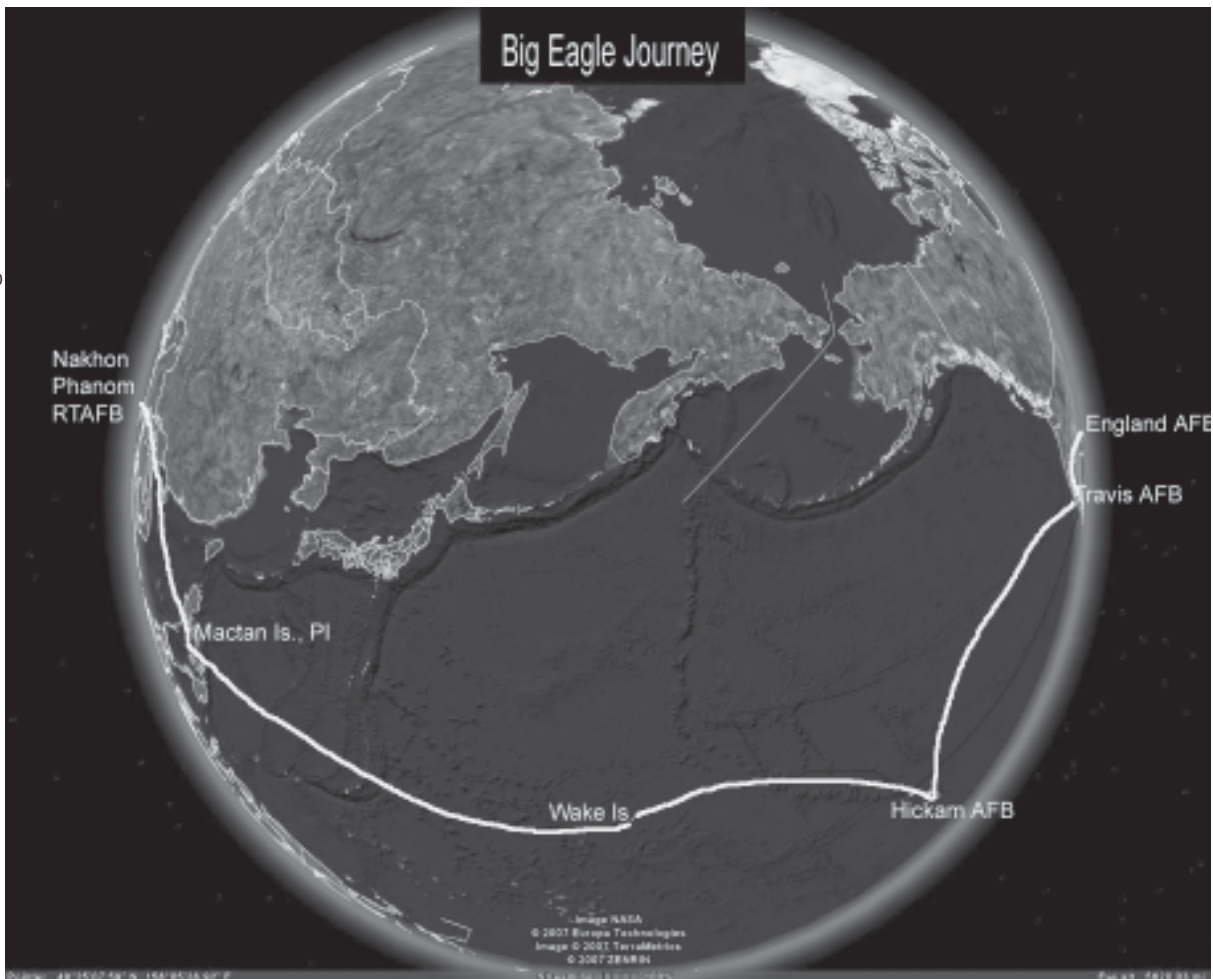
In February or March of 1966 we were notified of an impending TDY back to Hurlburt for about a week. We were told it was to be a firepower demonstration. I was assigned to the TDY. Our contingent left En-

see **Big Eagle** map on next page and continued on page 6



Did you ever consider how much water we crossed to get there?

MEM additions to image from Google Earth.



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TLCB Official Addresses and payments to TLCB

ALL payments of *any kind*, as listed below, are to be made payable to: **The TLC Brotherhood, Inc.**, and shall be mailed to the treasurer, at:

TLC Brotherhood
P.O. Box 343
Locust Grove, GA 30248

Always write payment purpose on memo line.
Dues (\$25 per year) **Reunion registration**
Assistance donation **BX purchase**
Monument donation **(any other: specify)**

Reunion 2007: Dayton, Ohio

TLCB tax return and board minutes: On web site, in *members only* section.



C-130s on the flightline at England AFB, Louisiana, June 6, 1966. The long journey across the Pacific is still ahead.

Big Eagle continued from page 4

England AFB on two C-123s. The firepower demo was to showcase the capabilities of the B-26.

This airplane was built by Douglas, most of which were built during 1943-44. At the time, the Martin B-26 Marauder was in service, so Douglas made their plane the "A"-26. Following the end of WWII, and the retirement of the Martin B-26, and the Air Force doing away with the Attack designation, the Douglas A-26 was renamed the B-26.

In 1963, On-Mark Engineering Co. of Van Nuys, California was awarded a contract to convert 40 low-time B-26 aircraft to a new counter insurgency version. This aircraft, a highly modified version, was designated the B-26K, Counter Invader. Before Project Big Eagle would deploy, it would undergo one final designation change. On this return trip to Hurlburt, we were treated like royalty. We were assigned to the transient officers quarters. Our rooms were cleaned for us. We spent the rest of Saturday and Sunday just meandering around, doing what we wanted. Life was good.

Monday morning, we reported to the bomb dump where we were to begin preparing the frag orders for the firepower demo, which was to take place on one of the Eglin ranges over the next couple of nights.

It was like a reunion at the bomb dump, talking to old friends who were still there. We were informed by the NCOIC that they would take care of the frag order and we could take the day off. It would be ready when we came back that evening. We accepted the offer, and went back to the BOQ,

changed into civvies, and went downtown. What a deal that was! This went on for the next couple of days.

That week some of us were told that there would be an important meeting that evening. It took place in the middle of the parking lot at the BOQ. We gathered around this lieutenant, and were informed that those of us there would proceed back to England AFB the next day and await further instructions.

After the return from the TDY to Hurlburt, some of us munitions types were asked if we would like to get some training on the gun systems of the B-26. I was all for that—anything that would put me closer to the airplanes and flight line, even if it was something left over from WWII. Although I did not know it at the time, about the only thing on this aircraft that was "left over" from WWII was its name and physical shape.

For some time, several of us worked in a hangar under the direction of Sgt. Lackey and Sgt. Dickey, who trained us to work on the gun system of the A-26. These two guys knew the gun system like the back of their hands.

At some point during the spring of 1966, the decision as to who would deploy on Project Big Eagle had been made. A briefing was called for those of us on the list, at the base theater. When we got there, Air

Police were at all entrances and exits and several on the main doors. We were required to show our ID and verify that to a list they had. The entire detachment was in attendance, enlisted,

Randy looked ready for anything as he waited to take off for the Wake Island leg of the journey, on this side of the International Date Line.



officers and aircrews.

Colonel Dominico Curto gave what seemed like a pretty vague briefing. He said the only ones permitted to carry fire-arms would be the aircrews. Anyone else attempting to take one would be severely dealt with. That got my attention, as I had one that I had intended to take, *wherever* we were going. I changed my mind.

Col Curto said we were not to discuss anything we knew with anyone else. We were told to get our bags packed and that we would be on alert status for deployment. We were never to refer to the B-26K as a "B" again. It was officially an A-26A. We were to go to the passport office, get a passport picture taken and wear a civilian shirt while having the picture taken. I had my picture taken, in a civilian shirt, and when the passport was issued, it simply said, "Abroad on an official assignment for the United States Government." It made no mention of being in the Air Force.

Although I was supposed to turn in the passport after our return from Project Big Eagle, I kept mine, and still have it to this day.

From this point until actual deployment, we were on various stages of alert. We even had a couple of practices. Everyone would gather their stuff and make for the flight line and go through the motions of checking our IDs etc., then take our stuff back to the barracks.

On June 1, 1966 we had orders, and an APO number. We were going to a place called Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. Other than finding that out, no one had ever heard of it, let alone knew anything about the place. We learned that the "B"-26 had been changed back to an "A"-26 because the Thai government had a problem with bringing bomber-designated aircraft into the country at the time.

On June 6, 1966 we arrived at the flight line, where two C-130s were sitting. After processing, we boarded the planes, one group for each plane. Each group had an officer in charge of the flight. Major Welch, an A-26 pilot, would be on our flight.

Our first leg took us to Travis AFB. Our duffle bags were loaded on to pallets, tied down with the netting and loaded aboard, along with some other gear. We had web seating along the sides of the plane.

When we arrived at Travis, Major Welch gave us a short briefing before deplaning, stating that we were to tell no one of our destination or discuss anything about our mission. None of us knew what our mission was anyway. He told us to stay close to the terminal area, as we would be departing shortly. When it

was time to return to the aircraft, they would announce, "All personnel on Big Eagle 1800 report to the aircraft immediately."

He used the tail # of the aircraft so we would know which group was called. We went into the terminal, and got strange looks. We were wearing our fatigues, with the traditional Cowboy hats and bloused boots and blue scarves. No one else was dressed like us. At the time, most Air Force personnel traveled in their dress blues or khaki uniforms. Some of the guys were questioned by some officer about why we were wearing fatigues. They referred him to the Major. No more questions were asked.

My group's departure was delayed for six hours by an aircraft problem and then we took off for the 11-hour flight to Hawaii. In the air, many went to sleep.

A card game started in the rear of the plane that would pretty much continue for the duration of our flight to Thailand. I crawled up on a pallet of duffle bags, made myself as comfortable as possible, and drifted off to sleep to the drone of the engines.

When I awoke the next morning, we were still airborne and it was just getting daylight. I looked out a window as we were coming in over Pearl Harbor. I saw a submarine surfacing, coming in, a beautiful sight. After we landed at Hickam AFB, the Major told us to stay in the terminal area until we boarded the plane for Wake Island.

I felt wide awake despite our sparse sleeping accommodations aboard the plane. We had perfect weather for flying. I peered out the window from my 20,000 ft. vantage point and saw nothing below but ocean—lots of it. I

talked to TSgt. Gilbert "Gib" Handley, a weapons type I met at England AFB while we were being trained to work on the A-26 guns. He had been in the Navy prior to joining the Air Force. He was the only Air Force type I ever saw that wore the dolphins on his uniform, signifying that he was submarine qualified. He told me what was involved in earning the dolphins medal. It was a medal worthy of respect to those who wore it. I studied the coffins that held the mini guns on the rear ramp, made of fiberglass and aluminum, slightly narrower than a real coffin

The leg from Hawaii to Wake Island took approximately 8-9 hours. Finally we began our descent. I knew nothing of this place, except that it was involved in WWII. We descended closer and closer to the water. It seemed that we were right on the wave tops and I hoped we would be seeing land soon. Bingo!

see **Big Eagle** continued next page



The famous Air Commando "Big Eagles" soon set up shop in a flightline hooch at Nakhon Phanom.

The edge of the runway passed under the wing, and I heard the wheels screech when they made contact with the runway. We were back on hard ground, somewhere in the vast Pacific Ocean.

At the terminal we were the only aircraft. The Major said to not go too far from the area. It was hot, but refreshing. The air on the plane was getting pretty stale, not to mention the other 36 or so guys who had also been cooped up in the plane for the past two days without showers. The chow hall was more like a nice dining room. We had table service. The food was good.

After about an hour, we were ready to depart. We had changed aircrews; the aircraft was refueled and ready to go. We took off for Guam, about a 6-7 hour flight.

On June 9, 1966 in the wee hours of the morning we landed at a hot and humid place called Mactan Island, in the Philippines. We were fed breakfast in a field tent set up close to the ramp where the aircraft was parked. A2C Fred Lovell was on our flight. He was at Hurlburt when I arrived there almost a year ago. Fred was the 'old timer' to us. He had been in almost 3 years. Seems that every time there was a promotion, Fred was behind the door. Walt and I had been in scarcely a year and a half, and we had been E2Cs for 6 months. Fred had done a tour in the Philippines. He seemed to know where we were. Way off in the distance, we could see the glow of lights. Fred said it was Manila. [This may have been Cebu. Manila is hundreds of miles from Mactan Island. MEM]

We left on our final leg of the journey, a 4-5 hour flight to Nakhon Phanom, taking a route over Vietnam. We seemed to be flying over endless miles of jungle below. Finally, we began our descent into NKP, as Nakhon Phanom was called. We circled the area and everyone wanted to get a look at our new home.

All I saw out the porthole was jungle. Someone pointed out what seemed to be a small clearing, and said: "That is it." Could not be! It was not even big enough to set down a C-130. As we got closer, it did get appear to get somewhat bigger. Apparently the crew knew they could land there, because I heard the sound of the flaps and gear coming down. As the wheels made contact with the runway, I heard something I was not used to hearing. There was a terrible roaring noise coming from the runway, PSP, or "Perforated Steel Planking," steel planking with holes in it, locked together to form a runway. It was very noisy. The runway was only 6,000 feet—no room to get carried away on your run-out on landing or you would be back in the jungle. We taxied to the ramp, and everyone prepared to collect his baggage and get off the plane for the final time. Once again, Major Welch was going to say something before we got off. This time, A2C Fred Lovell beat him to it.

As the aircraft came to a stop, and the rear ramp lowered, Fred was the first one off the plane, ahead of Major Welch. Fred turned around and announced, mimicking the Major, "OK fellas, I'd like you to stay right around the terminal area, and don't go too far away, because we're only going to be here about 6 MONTHS!" After hearing the "we're only gong to be here a few minutes" speech from Major Welch at every stop we made for the last few days, this seemed absolutely hilarious, and the entire group broke out in laughter, including the Major. This place was like a sauna, hot and humid. We collected our gear, a duffle bag stuffed full of uniforms and a set or two of civvies, then were off to be assigned our barracks, or as we would learn to call them, the "hooches."



[To be continued in a future issue of MEM.]

Long Tieng, continued from page 1

There is now a daily "bus service" between Xaysomboun and Long Tieng. The "bus" is either an open-top six-wheel truck or a beat-up van. There is electricity all the way up to just 10 km short of Long Tieng itself and cell phone availability all over the place, but not yet in the Long Tieng area. There are not enough subscribers to justify expense of the relay towers. There is TV and the people largely watch the Thai channels, and soaps—more fun than the Lao stuff.

The road from the gold mine junction on up to Long Tieng is two hours and a bit rough and narrow and something of a butt-buster. Still, it works. You do not make much speed at all and do not want to, as there might be the local "van-bus" coming downhill. You do pass over some great countryside, over a number of Bailey Bridges left over from when USAID built the road back about 1973 or so. There are scattered small Hmong villages, and almost no shops or markets.

In Long Tieng itself the ethnic mix looks

Long Tieng is continued next page

These karst mountains of Laos are difficult to drive in or to fly in, but there are few mountains that present such spectacular views. This photo was taken by Mac and Sunnee on the way to Long Tieng.





On this map the white arrow upper right, points to the location of LS 20A, Long Tieng, once a small city of military activity in the fight for Laos.



Above, purchasing textbooks. Below, presenting the textbooks at Long Tieng.



On the road to Long Tieng, V.P gasoline! Could that belong to the legendary Hmong general Vang Pao, who is often referred to merely as "VP?" Probably not: he was recently arrested in the US, accused of planning a takeover of Laos.



At the "Gold Mine Junction," Mac and Sunee stop for refreshment, below.

pretty much like Lao and Lao Thueng. I did not notice any Hmong, even though the closest village to the south is mostly Hmong. In the SKY/AirAm/CASI/Ravens area, many of the old buildings still stand, a few of them still in use, others falling down. The Long Tieng primary school still occupies two out of the three old rock & cement classrooms and one wooden building with lots of holes. The market area certainly is not as large as it was when I visited now and then in 1969 when I was based at USAID/Sam Thong, but then there are not 10,000+ people there anymore. The runway still looks to be in good shape. In the old days it could handle the C-130, and as Les Strouse can attest, the C-46 reluctantly and with some difficulty, although none ever crashed there.

Future prospects for the area? Well, electricity in Long Tieng is one, perhaps due in later this year; poles have already been dumped along-side the road from about 10 km south. A large hydroelectric dam is planned just 10 km distant on the Nam Ngum River, which would bring lots of people and money into the valley. They might even have to upgrade the road. Tourism? There is some thought of having such in the future. There would undoubtedly be a number of civilian and military vets of the area who'd like to come back for a visit. If and when area



roads are upgraded, a grand circle tour could be made: Vientiane north, east to the PDJ (Plain of Jars), south via Xieng Khouang Ville/Moung Khoun to Sam Thong and Long Tieng, and perhaps west over to Vang Vieng and back to Vientiane. It would take 4-5 days. That would be fun.

I'm looking forward to the next trip, as is Sunee.

(See more photos on the next page)



Inside and outside of Ban Na Ngua primary school. Sunee is in the light shirt, walking up toward the school.



Inside the old primary school at Long Tieng, above, shows TLCB help is needed..



Vang Pao's house is still to be seen at Long Tieng., above.



At the end of their journey, Mac and Sunee relax by the Mekong at Luang Prabang, ancient capital of Laos.



See You At Dayton: *Back to Our Beginnings!*

Schedule of Events

Thursday: Aug 9, Check in anytime. Hospitality Room open.

Meals are on your own. Many places to eat within walking distance.

Friday: Aug 10, Buses at about 0830 to take people to Museum for 0930 unveiling and presentation of plaque from TLC-Brotherhood to the museum.

After Plaque Presentation, board buses to "Presidential Hangar Tour." After the tour buses will return to hotel, or you may tour the museum. Photo ID is required for this tour.

Friday evening: Assistance auction in the Hospitality Room.

Saturday: Aug 11, Morning TLC annual meeting. Afternoon free for tours or time to socialize with old friends. Buses will take you to the Museum for the banquet. Dress code will apply for this function. If not properly dressed, the museum staff will ask you to leave. We have the museum from 1800 until 2200. Cocktails (cash bar) will be in the modern flight hall with several aircraft open, or available for viewing inside. About 1900 the call to dinner will sound. Honor guard will present the colors and do the POW/MIA table. At this time the MG Metcalf will be asked to say a few words.

Our Guest speaker, William Guenon, will talk about leading the helicopters on the Son Tay raid. 2200 buses return us to the hotel.

Hospitality room will be open.

Quilt drawing will take place at the Banquet

Sunday: Aug 12, Possible memorial service outside of hotel in an area with flag poles etc.

Important notes:

At the Dayton Reunion Banquet, members attending must dress in business casual. At a minimum that means for men dress slacks and a shirt with collar. A sport coat would be appropriate.

For our ladies, slacks/skirt & blouse, or a pants suit would be appropriate. No shorts, blue jeans, flip-flops, tee shirts or tank tops. *These are the Museum's requirements* and are, in my opinion, how we should be dressed at all of our banquets. A general officer and his wife have been invited so I hope we can make a very good impression on the entire museum staff. We should not look like a bunch of troops just coming out of the jungle. If you are not dressed properly you will be asked to depart from the banquet. John Loftus, TLCB President

Special Offer: Send in your check and we will enter your information on your tickets for you! Do it now!

Hotel Facts and Details

2800 Presidential Drive

Fairborn, Ohio 45324

Phone: 937-426-7800

Fax: 937-426-1284

Rates for August 9th thru August 12th are \$89.00 per night, plus 12.5% state and local taxes, for a total of \$100.13 per night. This is for king or 2 doubles. The rates are good for 3 days prior or 3 days after the reunion.

You must call the reservation department at 937-426-7800 and request the group rate for "TLC-Brotherhood."

Note: In addition to adult sizes, youth-sized shirts will be available in youth medium and youth large. No small youth-size shirts will be available, as our logo will not fit. The price for these shirts in both sizes will be \$15.

Rosie's quilt to raise money "for the kids" again

By Bob Wheatley

Do not miss your opportunity to enter the TLC Sisterhood raffle for the 2007 hand-made quilt, which will again benefit the TLCB's Assistance Fund that benefits needy children in Thailand. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Dayton Reunion Brotherhood Auction August 11. You do not need to be present to win.

This year's spectacular quilt features the quilt pattern "America the Beautiful."

In keeping with the high standard of the Sisterhood Quilt in past years, this year's one will feature the Liberty Bell, the Statue of Liberty Torch, the Stars and Stripes, a church and an American Eagle. In the center will be a large American flag, waving over Purple Mountain Majesty and Amber Waves of Grain. The quilt will measure 62" wide by 68" long.

This edition of the MEM includes a sheet of raffle tickets, with a suggested tax-deductible donation of \$2 for each ticket. If you want to enhance your chances of winning, copy your sheet of tickets. You can also download from our web site a PDF of the raffle tickets sheet and print out as many as you need, for yourself, your friends and neighbors.

When filling in each ticket, TLCB members should remember to fill in their TLCB membership numbers on the right-hand side of the ticket. Your number is on your membership card. Your check should be made out to TLC Brotherhood, Inc. In the memo section write Quilt Raffle. Mail tickets and check to **TLC Brotherhood, Inc., P.O. Box 343, Locust Grove, GA 30248.**

Things you may not know about the Assistance Program

By John Schillo

Since being appointed Assistance Committee Chairman, I have learned that there is more to the Assistance Program than first meets the eye. Even as a member of the Assistance Committee, I did not fully appreciate all that goes on. I thought, if I did not fully appreciate all that is being done, what about the general membership of the TLCB? After I posted the e-mail about our joint venture projects with the Air Commando Association's McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, I received some e-mails from new members asking for more information about the Assistance Program.

The Assistance Program has three major areas of interest: Student Aid, Medical, and Quality of Life.

If you make a donation to the Assistance Fund, your money will go into the general Assistance fund, which is used mainly to provide food packages to needy students. It is also used for, but not limited to, sleeping mats, desks, tables for the lunchroom and, recently, water purification systems for the entire school. There is a more direct way you can help a student. By designating your check for Student Aid instead of Assistance Fund, that money is set aside so that you can sponsor an individual student through the school year. John Middlewood administers this program and will select a student from the many applicants he has and will keep you advised as to your student's progress. This program has been growing in popularity to the point that the Board of Directors established a procedure for it. I posted that procedure in January but will send it to anybody who was not a member then or would like another copy.

For example, Meechai, in the photo at right, was in our Student Aid Program. He attended the university and is now a teacher working on an advanced degree. He is one of many success stories from the Student Aid Program. There are more to be told. They await your help.

Thailand has a form of socialized medicine, so medical aid is available but not *widely* available. Sometimes a student and family must travel away from their village to get the medical aid, putting a financial burden on the family. The Assistance Program has a Medical Aid Fund, which is used to help pay for some of the travel expenses so a parent can accompany the child to get the medical care. In the past we have highlighted MoMae and her heart surgery.

This month, the Committee approved funds for a 5-year-old boy and his parents to travel from NKP to Ubon to have surgery on his foot. The equipment was not available at NKP. The child was not able to walk normally. It cost \$215 to send him to Ubon to have the surgery on his foot, to help him lead a more normal life. So far we have helped 7 children, mostly heart patients. The need is never ending. The Medical Fund is

running low and there are many more stories like this waiting.

Thanks to the help of the Air Commando Association, four schools now have a water purification system. We are working on a list of future projects that we can undertake together. In this country, we joke about the water and walk around with our bottled water. To the kids in these schools, dirty water is a daily reality.

Mac Thompson has just completed his second trip to Long Tieng (LS-20A), in Laos, to build bathroom facilities for the school there, the details of which are covered in another article. We were able to secure some outside donations to help put Mac's trip together.

Knowing Mac, I am sure he is formulating his plan for the next trip. I am just as sure that John Middlewood is also compiling a list. While both of them and many others are working hard to make these and other programs a success, the Assistance Committee, the Chairman and the Treasurer have the hardest part. We have to find the money or say "NO" to a project. How do you say, "No, we can't help fix your foot" or "No, you can't have clean water to drink."

Not everything involves money. John Middlewood teaches English at several of the schools. We are in the very early stages of possibly coming up with some way to get old first or second grade reading books that can be sent to him to use in his program. If you know of a school in your area that is upgrading their lower grade readers, perhaps you could get them

to donate them to the TLCB. We have not worked out the logistics of getting these books to Thailand, the cost involved or any tariff that might have to be paid. Right now, this is just an idea. We welcome any ideas you might have on how to improve our program. If you have an idea, send it to me. If you have an extra \$10 or \$20, send it to:

The TLC Brotherhood, Inc,
P.O. Box 343
Locust Grove, GA 30248

Be sure to put your membership number in the memo section and note if it is for the Assistance Fund, Student Aid Fund or the Medical Fund.



Meechai gets his diploma from the princess.