



Mekong Express Mail

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THE THAILAND LAOS CAMBODIA BROTHERHOOD, INC.

www.TLC-Brotherhood.org

Baht, Fees in Thai Courts Accepted Only in Cash

By Scott Stucky, U'Tapao 75-76

U- Tapao Royal Thai Naval Airfield was located on the Gulf of Siam, about 120 km southeast of Bangkok. Established in 1965, it was by 1975 a mature installation with 11,000-foot runways capable of handling anything in the inventory and a variety of permanent or semi permanent buildings. Its primary mission was B-52 operations; the operational wing (the 307th Strategic Wing) was owned by SAC, while the base belonged to PACAF. The base straddled two Thai provinces—Chonburi in the north and Rayong in the south—a situation, which affected foreign criminal jurisdiction significantly. In the wake of the fall of the Republic of Vietnam in April 1975, the B-52s had been withdrawn; however, the base still had KC-135s, C-130s, and U-2s which conducted reconnaissance over parts unknown or, at any rate, classified.

The departure of the B-52s had not been accompanied by a concomitant departure of personnel. When I arrived, in 1975, as a captain, there were still 6,000 personnel at U-Tapao and some 20,000 in country. There were a number of bases still in operation: Don Muang at the Bangkok airport, Korat in central Thailand, Nakhon Phanom and Udorn in the northeast, and Chiang Mai and Ko Kha in the north. Takhli in central Thailand and Ubon in the east were closing or had closed. All of these bases except U-Tapao were formally Royal Thai Air Force bases. U-Tapao was formally a creature of Thai naval aviation. Unfortunately, the Navy was a distant third among the Thai services, having come out on the short end of a spectacular military coup around 1950. The only evidence of Thai naval aviation at U-Tapao was some C-47s, which seemed never to fly anywhere. The Thai military presence on the base was limited to flags, gate guards, and a few senior officers.

In my opinion, the United States very much wanted to maintain a reduced military presence in Thailand in the wake of the withdrawal from Viet Nam. U- Tapao, which had excellent facilities and was near a U.S. Army post and a superb harbor which the U.S. Navy used, was the prime candidate for

such a presence. As a result, the United States was in no particular hurry to return personnel located in Thailand—and at U-Tapao in particular—to the CONUS. Rather, many of the airmen who had worked on the B-52s were left in Thailand with very little to do

until their DEROS. Unfortunately, U- Tapao was on the main heroin supply route out of the Golden Triangle; heroin of exceptional purity was available very cheaply, around \$10 U.S. a vial. In addition, many airmen lived off base, a situation prompted by a desire for privacy and the condition of the enlisted dormitories on base for anyone below Top 3.

I arrived at U-Tapao on 19 June 1975. The first things I remember were the smirk on the face of the SP who walked onto our charter aircraft after we landed, and the blast of wet heat that hit one as soon as one deplaned. The next thing was the unique smell, composed of diesel fuel, Thai cooking, sweet flowers, and automotive exhaust that hung over everything. To this day, I cannot smell diesel fuel without thinking of U-Tapao. Junior officers were billeted in concrete BOQs, which, by that time, had only one person to a room. I spent my first night there in a rather large VOQ room. The BOQs were air-conditioned; in fact, their concrete construction made them rather clammy inside. Fortunately, there was another source of housing. The departure of the B-52s had opened up a number of crew trailers, which were formerly occupied by aircrews who were TDY in country. The great advantage was that the bath was right there, shared only with the other officer. There were no laundry facilities on base, as one of the informal agreements for our presence there was that nothing would be introduced which would deprive a Thai of employment. Thus we had to hire a mamasan through the billeting office to do the wash and clean up. You paid Billeting \$10 a month, which was not a bad deal. They did the wash by hand in large tubs. Every time you got your underwear back it had grown about two sizes, until it fell off and you had to buy some more at the BX.

The legal office was a handsome building located next to the CBPO. It had a slanted roof that was built to catch the sea breezes and funnel them into the building. We had a beautiful

see JAG, continued next page



Now's the time to make plans and reservations. Turn to page 3 for all the details. You will find the registration form in the mailing envelope with this issue. We'll see you there!

set of teak furniture in the courtroom, carved JAG badges on all the office doors, and a set of framed portraits of the Chief Justices of the United States. When the base was closed, they simply left all this stuff. I took my JAG badge and the portrait of Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, which had hung in my office, with me when I PCSed. Both were banged up in my hold baggage, but I still have them—the only things I have from there. The teak furniture probably ended up in some Thai's living room or as fuel for a noodle stand.

We generally ate at the Officers' Club in the evening. The food was lousy but you could sit in the bar and get a back rub from the cold towel girls while you listened to mediocre bands from the Philippines. One quirk of the cuisine on base was that most of the frying was done in fish oil, which imparted a peculiar flavor to attempts at American food. Another oddity of the Officers' Club was that it refused to serve the local beer, Singha lager, one of the world's great beers. Instead, we usually had San Miguel from the Philippines or rusty cans of American brews. Sometime in the winter the base veterinarian condemned the kitchen at the Officers' Club because it was too filthy for words. Everyone had to go eat at the mess hall for about two months (the food was better). The report was that about \$20,000 was spent on cleaning up and redoing the kitchen. It reopened in the spring, stayed open about a month, and then closed forever. Everyone then went back to the mess hall.

Most of the officers had what were known as sawadee suits made, which they wore to the club. A sawadee suit was something that could only have existed in a decadent period like the 1970s. It was a pseudo-flight suit, done in polyester in garish colors like aqua, avocado, lipstick red, or yellow. They had rank insignia embroidered on the shoulders and wings, JAG badges, or other specialty badges embroidered on the chest, as well as one's name. A few months after I got there an edict came down that everyone had to remove the rank from them—evidently someone in authority thought it was tacky. It was ironic that the command could focus on something like this, when discipline as a whole was suffering.

When I arrived at U- Tapao, the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) was Lieutenant Colonel Jim Howey; however, he PCSed within a week of my arrival. The new SJA, for whom I worked the rest of the year, was Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel, retired) Doug Ward. At that time, he was a new lieutenant colonel, who had just come from the famed "Hopson University," the General Law Division, where I was later to spend 14 years as Reservist and civilian attorney. The other captains were Jim Potuk (now lieutenant colonel, retired) who had come from Japan some months earlier, and Tom Gallagher, whom I had known earlier when he was at Kelly AFB and I was at Brooks. Tom is now general counsel for a coal company in Charleston, West Virginia. Jim did the military justice, Tom the claims; and I the foreign criminal jurisdiction (FCJ). The Area Defense Counsel when I arrived was a guy named Julian Buenger, who had just triumphed in representing a senior master sergeant who was accused of larceny of revetment material in conspiracy with a number of Thais. Buenger first bargained the referral down to a special court-martial, and then requested enlisted members on the panel. They ended up with a 10-member special court panel

that included four E-8s and E-9s. The accused was acquitted. Buenger was given a spectacular going-away party.

We also had a Thai attorney-advisor, Mr. Prachan Chailangkarn, who did primarily foreign criminal jurisdiction and legal assistance. I worked closely with him for most of the year. He was a retired major in the Thai army who had learned English at the U.S. Army Signal Corps School at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Although only a major, he seemed to know every person of importance in mid-century Thai history. As the other bases closed, we got two more Thai lawyers from upcountry. I no longer remember their Thai names, but they went by "Charlie" and "Luke." Charlie had an LL.M. from the University of London, spoke excellent English, and was a natty dresser and something of a ladies' man. Luke came from Korat and was small and rather quiet.

The United States had no Status of Forces Agreement with Thailand; thus everything involving our people downtown was formally a case of first impression. However, by the time I got there a number of practices had grown up which lent some predictability to the situation. Non-drug offenses were almost always compounded; that is, the accused airman paid the aggrieved Thai a sum of money and that ended the matter. Assaults on girlfriends, damage to real property, car accidents, and similar matters were always handled this way. The accused had the choice of taking the matter to court, but since that meant being placed on international hold and remaining in Thailand indefinitely, he invariably chose to pay. Drug offenses, however, were crimes against the state and could not be settled this way. All drug offenses went to court. I had approximately 75 FCJ cases during my 11 months at U- Tapao and all but one involved drugs. Thai law on drugs was a curious compound of harshness and leniency. Possession of marijuana or bong was a 100 baht (\$5.00 U.S.) fine. Heroin possession, however, was an automatic year in prison. Possession with intent to sell, or sale, of heroin was three or more years. With marijuana, therefore, the issue was the collateral consequences of the conviction. If one pleaded guilty and paid the fine, one was then subject to administrative discharge for the civil court conviction, which could be a UD. For airmen who did not care about remaining in the Air Force, this was a way out, and some took it. However, a surprising number of them wanted to litigate the cases, and we did so. I had more than one staff sergeant with lengthy service who got into this mess, and litigated the cases to save their retired pay. Heroin cases were always litigated. My brief was to keep these airmen out of Thai prison. We usually—but not always—succeeded.

The system worked like this: Mr. Prachan in the office would be informed that an airman (we never had a case involving an officer) had been apprehended and was at the police station down in Ban Chiang, the nearest town in Rayong Province. I never did figure out how he was informed, as the police station had no telephone. It seemed to happen by osmosis. (I believe that the police radioed the gate shack, which then called the office.) We would go down to the station. The accused was normally sitting in a little cage, which occupied one corner of the station. He was hungry (they did not feed them), tired,

see JAG, continued on page 4

TLC Brotherhood goes

Way Out West !

In this issue of MEM you will find your registration form for the September 24-26 TLCB Reunion being held at the **Doubletree Hotel in Ontario, California**. Call **800-222-8733** or **909-937-0900** to reserve. Ask for the TLCB group rate. Book by Aug 25 to get the group rate. You can reserve for two days before and two days after the end of the reunion, if you wish and if space is available. Airport shuttle is available. The Registration fee is \$70 per adult, \$35 for children 12 and under.

Your reunion committee has been busy. Here is what is in store for you.

On Friday, there will be a tour of historic Fort MacArthur, one of the coastal batteries that protected the Pacific coastline during WWII and into the 1950s with Nike missile detachments in the local area. This will be a full half-day tour. Box lunches & water will be provided. Our group will be the only group touring the facility on this day and we have been promised access to areas not normally open to the public. The docent giving the tour has expressed interest in the TLCB and hopes to have time to find out more about our group's experiences after the tour. As scheduled, the bus will leave the Doubletree at 09:00 and should be at Fort MacArthur around 1100 giving time for lunch prior to starting the tour. The tour should end around 1500 and, being a Friday evening it may take around three hours to get back to the hotel. You can check out Fort MacArthur on the web at: <http://www.ftmac.org/>

On Saturday we visit the Planes of Fame Museum. It will be an afternoon tour of about three hours. Planes of Fame has many rare and unusual aircraft including the prototype Northrop

been priced separately, like the shirts and other memorabilia. We need a minimum of 30 signups to be able to offer each tour and the maximum is a full bus of 50 for each tour.

On Sunday, the Memorial service will be held at the March Field Museum and all are welcome to tour the museum after the memorial. Transportation and entry to the museum are included in the registration fee. We need a head count of all those planning to attend so that we can work out the bus schedule and get the proper amount of tickets for entry into the museum. Many of the locals will more than likely drive to the service and depart for home from there. Visit the March Field Museum at: <http://www.marchfield.org/>

We will announce the name of our banquet speaker soon. The main entrees for the banquet will be BBQ Chicken Breast and Roast Sirloin of Beef. I was planning on bringing a fresh durian for the assistance auction, but the hotel does know what they are and said please do not.

The Doubletree Hotel is a first class hotel located less than a mile from Ontario Airport. They have shuttles to and from the airport as well as shuttles to the nearby Ontario Mills Outlet Mall. All of the rooms are being refurbished and will be like new for our reunion. Please take advantage of the reunion rate and remember that rate is the same for single or double occupancy, so if things are a little tight you can split the cost with a brother.

Les Thompson, California 04 Chairman



flying wing. Many, the flying wing included, are in flying condition and are flown at different events during the year. The museum has recently remodeled one of their hangars to look like the inside of a Navy carrier hangar deck and inside are several Navy aircraft from different eras. There are many things to look at. Planes of Fame's website is: <http://www.planesoffame.org/>

To keep the basic registration fees as low as possible, (banquet costs are approximately double what they are back east) and still provide a quality time for everyone, the two tours have

TLC Sisterhood 2004 Quilt Raffle

By Bob and Rosie Wheatley

It is time to start thinking about the September TLCB reunion and all that goes with it. Since the 2000 reunion in Colorado Springs, one of the highlights has been the drawing for the TLC Sisterhood's raffle quilt at the reunion banquet. Last year's quilt was a huge success, bringing in more than \$2,100 for the Assistance Fund. Work is now well under way on the 2004 raffle quilt.

In keeping with the patriotic theme of previous raffle quilts, this year's quilt colors are multiple shades of reds, whites and

see Reunion Quilt, continued on page 10

Reunion and Annual Meeting, 2004

dirty, and scared. If the police lieutenant was there, we signed for the airman and took him back to base. On occasion, the lieutenant was not there; then we had to leave the airman in the cage, because no one else had authority to release him. The airman was usually really shaken up when this happened. (We did have someone from base visit and bring food.) When the airman was released, we took him back to base and I gave him my standard lecture. We were required to place anyone in that situation on international hold, which meant that he could not leave the country until his case was finalized. We were authorized to pay bail and counsel fees under 10 U.S.C. 1037. Technically, the airman had to consent to this, and to extending his enlistment if that was a factor. Since the alternative was being turned over to the Thais and remaining in jail until his case was completed, they invariably consented. When I first arrived in country, airmen on international hold were not subject to any sort of restriction and were allowed to live off base. Since they almost invariably lost their clearances and frequently their AFSC, they basically had nothing to do except await trial. Many of them got into trouble again while awaiting disposition of their initial cases. I suggested to Colonel Ward that we ought to restrict everyone on international hold to base. He took it to the base commander, who agreed. This had a very salutary effect on misconduct, as airmen on this status could no longer loaf off-base, live with local women, get drunk and use drugs at will. Now they had to live in the dormitories and were subject to UCMJ action if they broke restriction. One thing I never figured out was why airmen in this status were allowed to roam around base, doing nothing. They could certainly have been employed at some sort of casual labor. As I saw things, one problem was undoubtedly the tacit agreement with Thailand that local people would do all that; but another was a kind of tired resignation, common in the Air Force in the 1970s, that held that good order and discipline were too much trouble. Once the airman was placed on international hold, the next step was a bail hearing. (The release to us at the police station was a temporary expedient; he had to be granted bail by a judge to remain in our hands.) We did not have authority to pay bail and counsel fees; that resided in the GCM convening authority, 13th Air Force, at Clark AB. Fortunately, 13th had established a forward location in Bangkok, which had a JAG, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Irving, assigned. We normally called him and got authority to pay them on the spot.

Bail and fees were always paid in cash; I never had a check cut for anything. Bail for a heroin case was 50,000 baht (\$2,500 U.S.) and counsel fees were 20,000 baht (\$1,000 U.S.), a very good fee in provincial Thailand. Marijuana cases were substantially less—the counsel fees were 5,000 baht (\$250.00 U.S.). (By comparison, one could eat three meals a day in Bangkok at kao pot [fried rice] stands for \$1.00 U.S.) I would go to Accounting and Finance early in the morning and get the money. They had a walk-in vault stuffed with Thai currency, and I would get what I needed on a hand receipt. I kept a running total that sometimes exceeded \$20,000 U.S. One problem was that, for most of the time I was there, the largest note in circulation was a red note-100 baht, the equivalent of a \$5.00 bill. When

one had to pay bail and fees on, say, two heroin cases, a huge pile of paper was required. Toward the end of my time there, the government introduced purple notes, which were worth 500 baht-\$25 .00 U.S. - but they were never common. You were supposed to take an armed guard if you had more than a rather small amount in cash, but I never did, because it would have been a tip-off that I was carrying it. When we arrived for the bail hearing, we first went to the attorney's office and paid him. Then we went to court. The accused would be taken away and put in a little cage under the courthouse where they held people until their case was called. When the case was called, we would go into court, they would bring him in, and normally bail would be granted as a matter of course. Then we would go to the court clerk's office and unload the remaining piles of cash, to be added to the huge piles, which sat behind

the counter.

Scott's fascinating tale will be concluded in a future issue.

Editor



FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:

by Ed Miller

Sawadee Pee Nawng. It is a pleasure for me to write to my Brothers and Sisters, just after Memorial Day. I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday and gave some time to paying respects to our deceased members. Just since Veteran's Day, 2003, four members have passed away—Ray Hatmaker, Chris Jeppeson, Beverly Haire, and Jim Bartholomew (Active Board Member). Continue to remember them and their families in your prayers. Those of us that attended Reunion 2003 in Fort Walton Beach this past year were fortunate enough to be around Jim and Beverly sharing stories and cocktails. All four of these losses were unexpected and came upon us suddenly. This is just one reason why I attend our organization's reunions. You just never know if it is the last time you may see a friend, brother, or sister.

Reunion 2004 Way out *WEST* is finally coming together and I will give a plug for this year's reunion in Ontario, California. Since I have been a board member and Secretary, it has always been our desire to have a west (Left) coast reunion. Seems like we were not good mountain climbers, and could only set up hooches in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I encourage all you Western members and especially California members to register and attend this reunion. It will not only make this a successful reunion but will lay the foundation for future reunions to be held on the west coast.

Latest Board Meeting As I am composing minutes for the board meeting that started January 16th and ended on March 25th. I will try and give you a general overview of a few items.

Brotherhood and Mission server rules needed to be addressed and add disciplinary authority to the Communications Chairman's duties. Current politics, advertising, and personal attacks are banned as message topics. The current server rules and tips are posted on our Web page - please read them. This same topic caused turmoil with our Board members and because of a now dismissed member we had two board members resign. The two board members stepped down before we put some enforcement into our server rules. After posting the

Secretary, continued next page

Secretary, continued

stronger server rules, that same member again failed to follow the rules, and quickly was dismissed by unanimous board vote. These servers are a great asset to our membership for fun and enjoyment; let's keep it that way. It is a membership privilege.

History is another important part of the TLC Brotherhood. We have completed a Memorandum of Agreement between us and The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University, which will act as the official repository and archive. It has been a long time coming and we can thank Dan Decker, for his association with Texas Tech. Our current Historian is Jim Roth and any information, photos, stories, or historical documents that you may wish to contribute, you should contact him. (Email: jjroth@verizon.net or Mail: 3032A Oakgreen Circle, Ellicott City, MD 21043) You will hear additional information from Jim Roth, in the future, about our program.

Our new Chaplain, John Loftus, formulated a document concerning chaplain duties. One important issue was concerning sending cards or flowers to members and their families. If you hear, or have knowledge of, a member experiencing serious health problems, having an operation or dying please quickly contact our Chaplain so that he can initiate appropriate actions. (Email: jloftus@comcast.net or Telephone: 609-386-1318).

John Sweet, MR. ASSISTANCE, and Bob Santo, our newest Board Member, designed a Thai language brochure with the intent to distribute in the local Thai Restaurants. The project and funds were approved to print the brochure. This is on a trial basis to solicit donations from the public. The restaurants are places that might bring people into contact with our organization and wishing to help children in Thailand. John says if they have any type of success of receiving donations (caused by the brochure) then we will give brochures to members that would like to distribute in their local area. The TLCB needs a steady

flow of monies just to sustain our current Assistance programs and our membership does not always provide enough support. You can give to Assistance anytime. It does not have to be a special event or time of year to give. Check our Assistance Web page regularly to see updates on our activities.

U.S.P.S. Mail Tip – Priority mail and Global Priority mail are premium services and your best mail option. But do not get too fooled by the title, it is still “FIRST CLASS” mail. Priority mail is shipped the same way your one stamp letter is shipped. All mail is trucked from your post office to the central Mail Processing Center; it is consolidated to mailing locations and then dispatched to the closest airport with FEDEX aircraft. That is right; FEDEX is our primary mail carrier now. So, do not waste postage paying for Priority on a 6-8 ounce large flat envelope - it should reach its destination in the same 2 or 3 days as a mailed Priority package. Upon arrival, what we call Incoming Air is processed immediately and is dispatched on the next truck trip (normally very early in the morning) to your local post office. Here it may pick up a day compared to a first class letter, flat or package that might be bottled up in the Automation section. Another nice fact with these services, the packaging material is available FREE and Delivery Tracking is now available for a small fee. I personally have been using Global Priority to Thailand with much success, a small flat rate envelope is \$5 and I use it to send letters, money orders, photos, and CDs. Previously, I used International Express Mail, which is still available but now I save a few bucks.

Good luck this summer, and hope to see you “Way Out West!”

Chok Dee!
Ed Miller, Secretary



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Reunion 2004
September 23-26
Ontario/Riverside area in
Southern California

Somboon School, Near Udorn: Making Assistance Don

Text and Photos by Delbert (Bert) Mohr

The TLC-B / VFW joint school support program in Udorn is a great success, and you can rest assured that your donations are being put to good use. For the past three years I have had the distinct pleasure of being a part of this program by serving on the Udorn advisory committee. I have seen first hand the smiling faces of the children. I have met the grateful parents and teachers and I have been invited to join some of them in their school activities.

In February you will find that every school in Thailand hosts a children's day filled with sports, games, talent contests and parades. In April they have a parent/teacher day where the students pay their respect to their elders by putting on a school play and thanking them for all they have done for them. Of course this also happens to be the season for the water festival so everyone has a great time getting each other soaked to the bones with ice water.

If you visit the village schools around Udorn you will find that most of the schools have a vegetable garden and/or a fishpond on the school property. Since most of the children that attend these schools will never receive more than a high school education they are taught to care for the fish and plant a garden to prepare them for a life on the farm. The fish and vegetables are also used to supplement the school lunch program. The Ban Na Samboon School is one of these schools. One day my neighbor asked my wife and me if we would like to go fishing. Well we ended up fishing in the school's fishpond. Later that afternoon when the girls were cooking the fish on the school playground I noticed one of the teachers sitting in the schoolyard marking her students' report cards. We talked for about an hour and later she gave me a tour of the school. The school roof was like a Minnesota snowplow that has seen a bad winter cleaning the salt off the roads. It was filled with pinholes and if you were inside at night, with a full moon, you would more than likely see a few more constellations in the universe. They

Even though the school was closed for mid-term the students, parents and teachers turned out to say thank you. They will always remember the TLC Brotherhood's kindness!



had an old computer and the teacher informed me that it broke more than a year ago and they didn't have the funds to get it repaired. *Computers are the number-one requested item.* The lunchroom also served as the school auditorium, nurses' station and library. The school had several ceiling fans but half of them did not work and the student desks were falling apart.

I later met with the head master of the school to see what we could do to help. I submitted his request for assistance and about a year later it finally made its way to the top of our waiting list. We made another trip to the school to see if their needs had changed since the initial request. The school now has a new head master who has either repaired some of the desks or found some used ones and he had started construction of a new lunchroom about six months ago and the limited funds only allowed him to get this far (photo, below).



Above: Part of our donation to this school was to provide the materials to make the concrete pad to make it possible to complete the lunch room.



Following a delightful lunch prepared by the grateful parents, the school's head master presented Bob Wilson (VFW Cmdr) and Vichit Mingrachata (TLCB Udorn assistant committee chairman) with a nice certificate of appreciation.

Donations Go A Long Way



Above: As in our stateside kindergartens the young ones have naptime too. My wife Yen is holding up one of the popular sleeping mats we purchase for the kids. As you can see they fold up into a neat package. Vichit and the headmaster look on.



Above: ABC worktables, chairs, sports equipment, ceiling fans, wall lockers and bookshelves finish out our donation to this school. They still need a new roof and could also use a computer. However, we currently have 15 schools on our waiting list that also need your help!



Above: Nong Bua Ratchakwai elementary school. Not only is this small school probably the poorest one that TLCB helps, but it is the only one we know of in NKP area that accepts handicapped children. Out of about 250 students there are Downes syndrome, autistic, and partially deaf children. The table is laden with donated shoes and school clothing, and TLCB provides food packets to six needy students at this school.



Above, Left: So often we see banners and signs expressing the gratitude of students, school staff, and parents for the things TLCB has provided to them. This is at Ban Narathakwai Noi school.

Left and Below: representatives accepting shoes and food packets at Huabau. TLCB has also provided materials for their new tables and floor.

The principals and staffs of the schools we have helped have often noted improved learning as a result of TLCB help.



Some School Scenes from Nahkon Phanom, Right

As MEM was going to press we received a large assortment of photos from NKP. Here is a sample.

We Need Your Help for our Thailand Monument

by Gerry Frazier, Monument Committee chairman

After a brisk start, donations for the TLCB-sponsored monument and park at Nakhon Phanom Thailand have slowed to a trickle. The total collected to the end of May is \$8120.00. This sum is not sufficient to meet our objective of \$150,000 within the foreseeable future. Over half of the funds received to date have been given in memory of our deceased brothers, Chris Jeppeson and Jim Bartholomew. We are seeking external sources of funding for the project to supplement the contributions of the TLCB Membership, but most members have not yet made personal contributions.

Most members of this Brotherhood are aware that this project came about through a request to TLCB from a previous governor of NKP Province, in response to a TLCB suggestion for a monument in honor of those who served in Southeast Asia. The monument was designed by Jim Henthorn, reproduced as CAD engineering drawings by the late Chris Jeppeson, and delivered to the Thai officials in person last fall by Gerry Frazier. The site chosen for the monument is a new city park with an adjoining small lake inside the city of Nakhon Phanom. The monument will commemorate All Who Served - US and Allied forces, and during the Vietnam War.

Progress on the park site has been relatively slow up to the present time. Thai Army engineers have been assisting the city public works department in transporting fill material to the park to raise the elevation higher above the local flood plain. The temporary plaque and metal stand dedicated by Brig. Gen. Heinie Aderholdt, John Sweet, John Middlewood, and others during the NKP Days celebration two years ago has

been removed after being slightly damaged by one of the trucks transporting fill material, and will be reinstalled when leveling and grading are complete on the site.

If you have not yet donated to this project, please consider doing so. The day is coming closer when we will need to advance funds for the development of the monument site, and our current small nest egg will be depleted. Furthermore, the Monument Committee is actively seeking recommendations to reach large private or corporate donors who can more rapidly help us meet our goal. There are opportunities for veterans groups or corporate donors to finance a dedicated structure within the park which could bear a separate commemorate plaque. If you know of a prospective donor, please contact Gerry Frazier by email (gfrazier@gisystems.net). The mailing address for donations is:

TLCB Monument Fund
PO Box 425
Springfield, VA 22150

Why I Have Not Returned to Ubon

By Vern Wagner, Ubon 68-69, Nha Trang 70

Like thousands of other GIs, I found myself defenseless against the charms of Thai maidens. One week after arriving at Ubon, I fell for a lovely dark eyed beauty. In a matter of days I was paying her rent (\$30/mo), and playing the role of a father to her three year old Amerasian son.

I had never known such happiness. I often looked up at the palm trees outside our bungalow, and wished for time to stand still. DEROS finally arrived, and I had to return to CONUS where I was miserable. I had rented a Thai P.O. box for her before leaving, where I sent money orders for her expenses, and gifts for her son. We wrote often, and I assured her that I would come back in a year. I told him to review both letters, and if he still

After the mandatory six months, I volunteered for SEA duty again, and was shipped out to Nha Trang AB, Vietnam. I was attached to a Special Ops Squadron that flew to Laos & Thailand on a daily basis. At the first opportunity, I joined a crew headed for Ubon. She was not at 'our' house, so I asked neighbors, and eventually found her at another house. Her 'Sah-wat-dee' performance seemed genuine, and I presumed she was happy to see me.

Later, I questioned her about the Stars & Stripes newspapers beside the bed, the XL flip-flops in the shower, and the Budweiser in the refrigerator. Her reply, "My brother's stuff." Regardless of my doubts, I flew to Ubon twice a month to visit, and pay her expenses.

One fine day in Nha Trang, I received a letter from an NCO at Ubon who told me he was engaged to my girl, and wanted to be a father for her son. He said my visits were ruining his love life, and included a love letter she had sent to him. I took out the last love letter I had received from her: same letter, different name.

I took my copy, stapled it to his, and put them in an enve-

wanted her, he could have her!

I flew to Thailand, and put the letter in his PSC box at Ubon before going to see her. One look at my face, and she knew that I knew. She mumbled about not believing I would return, and that she did not want to hurt me, etc. I explained that what she was doing was unfair to all of us. I turned and walked away as she begged me to come back again.

Back at Nha Trang I destroyed her photos, but I have often regretted destroying them. Such beauty should have been preserved. Her darling face, and dimples are only memories that remain locked in my heart with the tears. If living, she would be a 63-year-old senior citizen by now. I have flown to Thailand dozens of times, but have never returned to Ubon. Going back can be painful.

Editor's note: Vern Wagner joined the TLCB in the spring of 2004. He served as a flight surgeon in the Air Force and today is a medical doctor.



Karl Richter and Nitnoi



Nitnoi at left, with Karl

According to some of the people who knew F-105 pilot Karl Richter, he had a pet monkey named Nitnoi. They say he left it tethered outside his hooch, and when it got loose it would wreak havoc, clearing furniture and jumping all over the place. Several messages were received by Karl's high school acquaintance, TLC Brother Dave McNeil, describing this monkey. All mentioned that after Karl's death the monkey was taken to Ubon and given to (then) Colonel Robin Olds. The rest seemed to be rumor, to the effect that the monkey promptly bit General Olds, after which its fate was unknown. One message explained that the presentation occurred at the second River Rat reunion at Ubon, and that Olds was the host (as wing commander). It was said that the monkey was then locked up in the bathroom of Olds's mobile home quarters, where it tore everything up. General Olds was one of the respondents to Dave's research effort. Here is what he said about Nitnoi:

[Regarding] Karl. I met him only casually a couple of times, but knew of his gutsy performance. All of us were saddened when he went down. For some reason his squadron mates presented me with his monkey at a function at Ubon. I accepted him gladly, named him Stokley Carmichael, and we became fast friends. To the consternation of everyone there, I used to turn him loose in the O Club bar on an occasional evening. Little Stokely terrorized the place.

Robin Olds



Above: PJ Charlie Smith in 1967

Charlie Smith was the PJ who attempted to rescue Karl Richter, who was killed during ejection from a battle-damaged F-105 while attempting to return to friendly territory from over North Vietnam. Smith was decorated eleven times during his tour, and flew 152 combat missions on the HH-3E helicopter (the Jolly Green Giant). 1/Lt Karl Richter was shot down on what was officially his 198th North Vietnam mission (though he almost certainly flew more than that because he sometimes contrived to avoid missions being counted toward his total). Charlie Smith retired as a Chief Master Sergeant and has worked in California real estate and ranching since that time. He is justifiably proud of his service

as a pararescueman.

"It is my duty as a pararescueman to save life and aid the injured. I will be prepared at all times to perform my duties, placing these duties before personal desires and comforts. These things I do...that others may live." The PJ motto.

F-105 Losses (by year and month) compiled by David F. McNeil July 19, 2003

Month	Year:									
	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73
Jan	0	1	5	5/1	4/2	1	1/1	0	0	0
Feb	0	0	4	1/1	3/2	3	0/1	0	0/1	0
Mar	0	4	6	9/1	4	3	1	0	0	0
Apr	0	5	9	8/3	2/1	1	2	0	0/1	0
May	0	7	14	8/2	5	0/1	0	0	0/1	0
Jun	0	4	10	5	3	2	0	0	0	0
Jul	0	8	18/2	11	3/1	2	0	0	0/1	0
Aug	1	7	16/3	9	2/1	1	0	0	0	0
Sep	0	11	13	2	5/1	0	1	0	0/2	0
Oct	0	6	5	17/3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Nov	0	6	8/1	11/3	1	2	0/2	0	0/1	0
Dec	0	5	6/1	3	3	0/1	0	0/1	0	0
Sub-Totals	1	64	114/7	89/14	35/8	24/2	5/4	0/1	0/7	

Totals by Model D's = 332 F & G's = 43

Grand Total 375 aircraft



Left: Dave McNeil shows off his grandson in front of a plane many will recognize. This O-1 Bird Dog, in USAF markings similar to the first planes flown by the 23rd TASS at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, appeared at the "Wings Over Hickory" airshow in Michigan. Dave knew Karl Richter when they both played high school football in Michigan and has been a great help in gathering information about Karl and his final mission.

Reunion Quilt, continued from page 3

blues, arranged in blue/white and red/white blocks overlaid with red/white stars. The finished effect is visually striking, with the blocks and stars forming widening diamond patterns, expanding outward from the center of the quilt. A blue border all around brings the finished dimensions of the quilt to 72" by 84", suitable for a full size or queen size bed. Crafted with "TLC" and made from fully washable all cotton fabrics, it will make a beautiful and durable addition to any home.

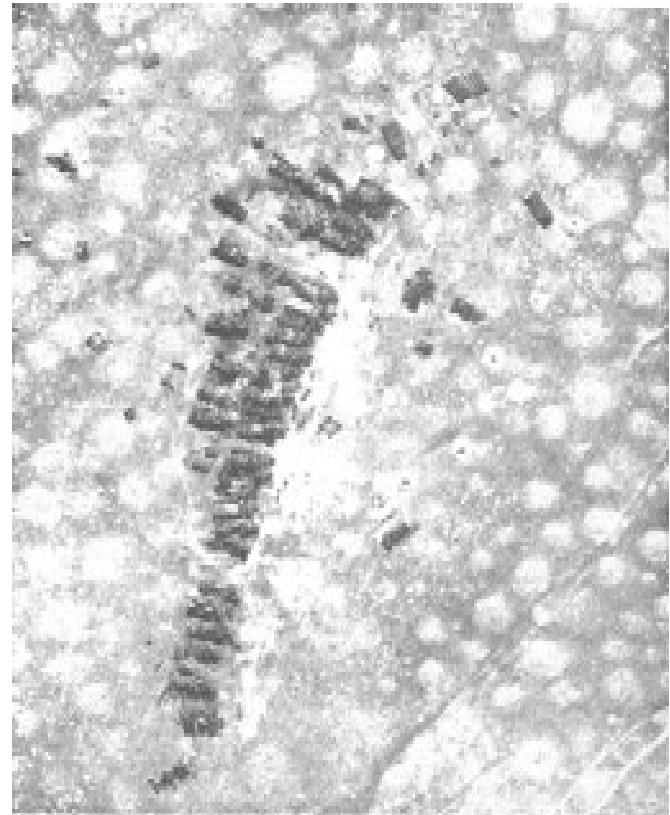
As in previous years, ticket prices are \$2 each, or three tickets for \$5. There is no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase. Photocopy the raffle tickets sheet in this MEM as often as you like. This year's ticket sales are not restricted to TLCB / TLCS members. Sell as many tickets as possible to your coworkers, friends and relatives. The winner need not be present at the drawing to win.

Remember, every dime raised in ticket sales goes to the TLCB Assistance Fund to help bring smiles to the faces of the children of Thailand.

Send filled in tickets, with your payment by check or money order to:

TLCS Raffle Quilt
8018 W 900 N,
Carthage, Indiana, 46115

Make your check or money order payable to **TLCB Assistance Fund**. Tickets and payment must be received by September 10, two weeks prior to the reunion, so please do not delay. Send your tickets today. Help us make this year's fund raiser a record breaker for the kids.



What Is It?

Have you ever seen the photo above? Even better, have you ever seen this place? If not, see if you can guess. This military photo appeared in Aviation Week magazine in the late 1960s with an erroneous caption. (Answer on page 11).

Typical Assistance Project Cost Breakdown

Illustrating the great value obtained by purchasing donated goods on the local market.

Items Purchased	Baht Price	Dollar Price
8 Ceiling Fans	B5,520	\$137.72
1 Stove (Gas)	B1,745	\$ 43.54
1 Water Filter	B4,290	\$107.04
3 Wall Lockers	B6,510	\$162.43
2 Metal Desks	B5,180	\$129.24
30 ABC Work Tables	B5,400	\$134.73
30 Plastic Chairs	B 960	\$ 23.95
30 Sleeping Mats	B2,700	\$ 67.37
Misc. Sports Equipment	B3,292	\$ 82.14
1 27 meter X 1.80 Meter Roll Snacks for Kids	B3,200	\$ 79.84
	B 500	\$ 12.48
Left over funds after above purchases, given to school principle to purchase school supplies	B 783	\$ 19.52
Total	B40,080	\$1000.00

Ban Huay Samran Primary
 School Spending
 TLCB Assistance Committee
 Motion #19-04-T

*Exchange Rate 40.08 Baht per U.S.
 Dollar*
 $\$1000 \times B40.08 = B40,080$

High Flying Jolly Green

by Russ O'Neal

Prior to September 1967 the HH-3E Jolly Greens were based at Udorn RTAFB. Our normal procedure was two aircraft on alert at Lima 20 Alt (Long Tieng) for NVN SARs, two on alert at NKP for the trail and western SVN, a single back up bird and crew on alert at Udorn and the remaining two Jolly's in maintenance. Although I believe we were authorized 10 aircraft, the most I can remember us having was seven at any one time.

The birds at 20 Alt depart 20 Alt at sunrise and fly to Lima 36 to pull strip alert. They would return to 20 Alt at dusk. Lima 36 wasn't secure at night. We rotated crews every three to four days. Air America flew the fresh crews up from Udorn unless one of the 20 Alt birds needed maintenance at Udorn. Then we would fly a fresh bird (or birds) and crews up to 20 Alt for the rotation. We basically did the same for the NKP birds, except the NKP birds would stay on alert at NKP.

In late August 1967 the first HH-53B Supper Jolly Greens arrived at Udorn. It took about a month to show new crews the ropes, get them up to speed and on their own. So in September 1967 the HH-3E Jolly Greens packed up and everyone moved to NKP.

In the late spring of 1967 I was pulling alert at NKP when we got a call that a road watch team over on the trail had run into a problem. Seems one of the little guys had stepped on a land mine while the team was moving the night before and needed to be evacuated for medical attention. I can't recall the area where they were located. I do remember they were east of a very heavily protected section of the trail. We planned a safe route in and out flying through a narrow gap between known gun positions to the North and South. The Intel shop kept an up dated master flack map for the crews to review. Each crew member then updated his personnel flack map based the master in the Intel shop. Intel briefed and debriefed each crew before and after each mission. The master flack map was updated based on crew input during mission debrief.

Our flight in was uneventful, just another leisurely flight into Laos enjoying the beautiful Lao country side, weather was clear and a million miles visibility. We easily located the team with the help of a friendly Nail FAC working the area. The team was located at a high elevation so we pickled (dropped) our drop tanks to get the HH-3E light enough to hover. A routine hoist recovery of the injured little guy was made from about 150 feet above the ground due to the thick jungle canopy in the area. When I pulled the little guy into the chopper he was holding the nastiest looking M1 carbine I hade ever seen. All the varnish was worn off the stock, the rifle bluing was gone, the clip was inserted and a round was in the chamber. My PJ (Can't remember his name CRS) immediately grabbed the M1 from him and cleared the weapon. The mine had blew the little guy's heal off his right foot. He was in considerable pain.

As we turned west to head back to NKP we got a big surprise. A storm cell had moved in and was setting dab smack over our intended route back to NKP. We called NKP weather asked them to give us an estimate as to just how high the cell was. Their response was about 12,000 to 13,000 feet ASL (above sea level). This wasn't what we wanted to hear. The HH-3E didn't like flying much over 10,000 to 11,000 thousand feet ASL. If my memory serves me right I believe the H-3's service ceiling is 12,000 feet. Helicopters and thin air (nose

bleed altitude is anything over 50 feet AGL in a helicopter) don't mix well. We didn't have enough fuel to fly north or south around the bad gus's gun positions, remember we just pickled our drop tanks with 400 gallons of now much needed JP4. This was prior to the HH-3E's having in-flight refueling capability, so we couldn't call a tanker. We had three choices, fly over the bad guys and their guns (not a good choice since we already had our guy), climb to safe altitude above the highest mountain peak and punch through the cell (not good, we could see a spectacular lightning show going on in side the cell) or go over the top of the storm. Not a good choice either, but better than the alternatives, since we were now flying a very light HH-3E. Remember we just dropped 400 gallons (2,600 lbs) of fuel. It should be noted that Air Force regulations require that crews be on oxygen anytime they fly above 10,000 feet in an un-pressurized aircraft. But, hay you gotta do what you gotta do to complete the mission. So up we went, and up some more and some more. At 12,000 feet we were still below the top of the cell. So we climbed some more, our little H-3 was really struggling. At 13,000 we were still below the top, so up some more. Now the ole gal was really complaining, shaking and vibrating. At just under 14,000 feet we reached the top of the cell and turned toward NKP. It took us about 45 minutes to reach the other side of the cell, clear weather and start down out of nose bleed altitude. Yep, so goes another day in the life of a Jolly Green Rescue Crew during the secret war.

But we weren't really there, were we?



The Answer

The odd photo on page 10 shows a row of trucks in Laos, near the base of the valley that leads to Nape' Pass. It appeared a number of times in civilian publications, always misrepresented as enemy trucks destroyed there. Even autoritative *Aviation Week and Space Technology* got this one wrong. Their caption claimed it was a lineup of destroyed North Vietnamese supply trucks that had been strafed by the Air Force, who had knocked out more than 30 trucks after they had been loaded. In fact these rusting hulks were a familiar landmark for FACs and other pilots flying in Laos, and were said to have been junked by the French prior to 1955.

