

MEKONG EXPRESS MAIL



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE THAILAND-LAOS-CAMBODIA BROTHERHOOD, INC. VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1

Four Assistance Trips into Laos

by MacAlan Thompson

Mac Thompson lives near Bangkok and has been devoting a great deal of his time and energy, as well as personal resources, to our mission of assisting needy schoolchildren in up-country Laos. Long-time readers will be familiar with Mac's approach, but the editors have entered some small explanations, where needed, into Mac's usual breathless narrative about his recent trips to visit and generate TLCB projects.

February 2015

First off was a gaggle of TLCB folks in February: President John Sweet and wife Nancy, Assistance Committee Chair Les Thompson and wife Carolyn, and Roger Durant. They flew into Luang Prabang and our regular driver and I drove up to meet them, did some touristy stuff, then after a couple of days, we were off to Phonsavanh on the Plain of Jars (PDF).

At Phonsavanh, we did the Jars, visited the Nasala Primary School, where TLCB had funded new tin roofs on two buildings, had a wee bit of Beerlao and some good eats, and then motored south. On the way we stopped at the Phieng Ta Primary School where work was just starting on a small replacement building, with TLCB tin and cement and villager wood for trusses and siding. We had lunch and some lao hai, a sort of rice wine sipped via a long reed. A second stop was at the Khon Sana Primary School where the villagers decided to utilize the TLCB

tin and cement as a start on a completely new and much larger building, replacing the old falling-down facilities, a really large effort involving lots of village funding for wood and concrete blocks.

The Travel Gaggle poses behind one of the enigmatic JARS, on the Plaine.



Four Trips is continued on page 4.



Ban Nong School construction underway in January, 2016. Local labor and wood, TLCB steel and cement. Photos by the author.

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Editor's Notebook

I am quite confident that most editors feel, as I do, that every issue of their publication could be improved; however, I must confess to a certain pride in this edition of "The Mekong Express Mail." First of all, a good deal of it is devoted to what I consider the most important program of the TLCB, the Assistance Program. Not only do we have another edition of Mac Thompson's picaresque journeys through Laos and Thailand, visiting the recipients of the program, we also acknowledge the "above and beyond" contributions of our members to the Assistance Fund. Next, we have another contribution to "The TLCB Members Featured Fiction" series. Longtime member Cato McDaniel is publishing a book this month, we're excerpting it, and he's contributing the take from a book signing to the Assistance Fund. Good work, Cato. And third, we have another contribution to "Why I Joined the TLCB...." I certainly want to see more of our members' fiction (frankly, I suspect we've sometimes published it, although it wasn't labeled as such), and "Why I Joined..." is something all of you should be working on. Warning: I'm going to be coming after you!

John Harrington
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TLCB Hits 600!

Our Membership Chairman, Gerry Frazier, has announced that just before the end of 2015 our paid membership exceeded 600 for the first time. Dues are an important component of membership because they represent members' continued commitment to the Four Objectives of the Brotherhood and not only pay for our modest operating costs (20% of dues) like this newsletter, but also help fund our charitable Assistance activities. This makes it possible for the TLC Brotherhood to continue to devote 100% of all donations directly to our charitable works. Thanks and congratulations, Brothers and Sisters.

Cato McDaniel, whose book excerpt starts on the next page.

Cato McDaniel
The Warrior.



Cato McDaniel
The Chief Scientific Advisor
at Halliburton..



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The Tales of Six Tigers:

A Window on the Covert American War in Southeast Asia 1971 - 1975

by Cato McDaniel

Cato McDaniel is a TLCB member whose novel “The Tales of Six Tigers: A Window on the Covert American War in Southeast Asia 1971 - 1975,” will be published by Amazon in March and will be available in print and an e-edition. He is planning a book signing and has offered to donate the proceeds to the TLCB Assistance Program. The following is a profile he provided, along with a synopsis of “Six Tigers” and an introduction to Chapter 6, which the *MEM* is publishing here.

Cato’s explanatory remarks: I live in Woodforest just outside The Woodlands and Houston. I am the Chief Scientific Advisor at Halliburton. I am lucky that I am near retirement before this book makes the rounds at work. My buttoned-up image will be a thing of the past, but as some of you guys know that as you age you care less and less about more and more.

I am afraid we were not always gentlemen and there was really no way to write the novel on this topic without some profanity, sex, and violence. (Well maybe a lot.) It might not really be material for the *MEM* or the TLCB Website without some significant cleanup as a result. I would have to say that I am not proud of all the shenanigans we were associated with, but we were young and it was Bangkok in the seventies. The following is a synopsis of “Six Tigers” and it is followed by an introduction to Chapter 6, which is excerpted below:

With the United States entrenched in Vietnam and no end in sight, young Mac graduates from college knowing that his draft number might be called any day. So when an acquaintance from his past shows up and offers Mac the opportunity to escape being a rank-and-file soldier in exchange for joining a team assigned to covert operations, he jumps at the opportunity. The pay is good, he’ll get to use his understanding of electronics for assignments, and Mac is pretty sure that anything would be better than getting shot in a rice paddy. He just has to make it out of boot camp alive.

Mac somehow survives training and finds himself assigned to missions in Laos and Cambodia. Wet behind the ears, he works hard to prove himself to his comrades. But somewhere along the way, as he and his brothers spend time fighting in the jungle, enjoying R&R in Bangkok, and coping with the realities of war, Mac becomes a man.

Introduction to Chapter 6:

After getting involved with a covert operations program, Mac quickly realizes that the training is much worse than boot camp would have been, but he grits his teeth and makes it through both the initial training and jungle training as well before he is posted to an existing team as the electronic specialist to replace one who left.

Mac meets the team and gets ready for his first mission, just a milk run—in and out in one day. This is as easy as it can get, but even so he is more than a little scared as he prepares to run his first mission as the new guy on the team.

Chapter 6: My First Mission – Just a Milk Run

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

—Frank Herbert, *Dune*

We prepared to make the trip to Nakhon Phanom known universally as NKP or Naked Fanny. It was sort of a “semi-secret” base on the Mekong River bordering Laos. People there called it the “the end of the line at the edge of the world.” It was “semi-secret” since everyone knew about it and the electronic monitoring and covert actions that were conducted from there. Well, not all the electronic stuff done was actually at NKP, a lot was at Camp Ramasun (Ramasun is the name of the Thai god of lightning) just down the road. They had two IBM 3650s (cutting edge, state of the art, “Big Iron” computers) located in

the boonies of Thailand, behind two razor-wire-topped fences. This was more computer power than most American universities had at the time.

In the early days, when it was originally built with pierced steel planking (PSP) runways, it must have been pretty primitive. But by the 70s, the idea that it was the end of line and the edge of the world was just bullshit. They had food and water, a gym, swimming pool, bowling alley, and a theater.

In preparation for the launch, everyone was putting together their packs. I laid out the equipment on my rack so I could see it all. To give you an idea of what we carried, I had collapsible canteens of water (16 pounds), my CAR-15 (seven pounds), a five pocket bandoleer with 100 rounds of 5.56 for my rifle in cardboard boxes of stripper clips (six pounds), and two regular canteen covers each with 5 X 20 round magazines (seven pounds), two claymore mines with wire and clackers (five pounds), two phosphorous grenades (four pounds), four HE frag grenades (six pounds), six 40 mm grenades for the

Tigers continues on page 12)

Four Trips *continued from page 1.*

We traveled on further south to visit the Kong Lor Cave via longtail boats. Note: A reminder to Mac, you dummy, keep hydrated! I had an episode of heat exhaustion, worked on



Nasala, where TLCB has funded new tin roofs for two buildings.



At Phieng Ta for a little "Lao hai" refreshment after viewing the new schoolroom replacement project, using TLCB cement and tin and local villager labor and wood.

Below, the old building at Khon Sana, where villagers have decided to use TLCB funding to build a new and much larger building. They will supply the labor.



beating it down with lots of water and ORS, intent on staying hydrated on subsequent trips.

We motored on to Thakhek and across to Nakhon Phanom (NKP), which is where we split up. The TLCB group remained at NKP and I went on to Nong Khai to pick up my wife Sunee's van and head back home.

June 2015

Next up was a trip in June, accompanied by Stewart McGurk (Floyd's #2 son, AKA "A2," no, don't ask!), Paul Hillmer, author of *A People's History of The Hmong* (a good read, get it if you haven't already done so), and Glenn Black and Auke Koopmans, who drove down from Chiang Mai. We moved on to Long Tieng (LT) for the first night, and ran into a batch of road improvements going up that way. We also ran into an unhappy cop at LT during our walking tour, who after an hour group interview at his small office, told us to simply "Get out of Dodge," or words to that effect in Lao. It being 1800 hrs already, a bit late for a two to three-hour drive south to the nearest guest house, our valiant driver and the owner of the LT guest house got on their phones and found someone local to override the cop's directive. Good! Drizzling in the morning, so on the road, still damp when we passed through Sam Thong headed on through to Phonsavanh, which took about four plus hours.

Next morning Paul flew down to Vientiane, then over to Nong Khai and a van to Udon to catch a late flight to Chiang Mai, as he had interviews to do there. Our first school stop in Xieng Khouang was the Ban Nong Primary School where the school head explained their plan to replace a small falling-down wood building with a much larger new one, with TLCB tin and cement and villager-provided wood for trusses and walls. I like this thinking; our funding is just the seed money, and the villagers build on it with their own funds and efforts for a much nicer facility. The walk-around was followed by a meeting, Lao contract-agreement signing, a baci, and eats along with Beerlao, of course. TLCB had earlier funded school furniture here.

Next day was the NaFa Primary School visit where the TLCB had funded new tin roofing. A good crowd of villagers and local officials was there to greet us, followed by speeches, contract-agreement signing and stamping, gifts from the school (Lao knife, shoulder bag, bunch of garlic), a toast to all, then a baci and lunch. Then, when I thought things were about over,

the singing started, along with the lamvong dancing, all of which went on for some time while the Beerlao flowed.

We got back on the road, but not to the hotel yet. There was one more school to hit today, the Nong Pet Secondary School, where the TLCB funded roofs for two buildings. Again, speeches, certificate signing, photo op, baci,

Continued next page.

eats, lamvong. Getting tired today, I am. Oh, yeah, Beerlao, too. It was back to the hotel in Phonsavanh with discussion about dinner... the Craters or the Bamboozle restaurant? At the Craters I said, "I'm tired, the Beerlao and lao Lao seem to be getting to me, only ice cream for this kid." The other guys said that sounded reasonable and joined me, except that I had two scoops to settle my stomach.

In the morning I had a chat with the owner of the Dok Khoun Hotel, not a real fancy place by any means, but it does have large rooms, wifi, hot water, sitters, and Sattelite TV for those who like such. He has a newish Toyota Land Cruiser VX, nice looking machine that he said ran \$110,000 via Dubai. Ouch!!

We then headed out to Phou Kout District and the Ban Lang Chong Lower Secondary School, a three hour drive to the northwest up towards the Nam Khan River, which flows into the Mekong far to the west at Luang Prabang. We stopped on the way for a photo-op at the leftover, shot-up PT-76 tank, drove past a lot of corn fields, which we were told are for export to Vietnam, then onwards to China.

The TLCB had funded the cement for a floor at this school. No party or baci as they didn't know we were coming, since there's no cell phone coverage unless someone climbs up to the top of one of the local high hills. The electric power lines had recently arrived at the village, and the road has also been improved since our last visit. The village has also received a new for-motorcycles-and-people suspension bridge across the stream that separates the village from their two schools. Things are looking up here in the development area. In spite of no advance notice that we were coming, the school principal and others did gather up some chicken, boiled eggs, sticky rice, Beerlao, and Auke tossed in his pack of Ritz crackers, so we did have a lunch.

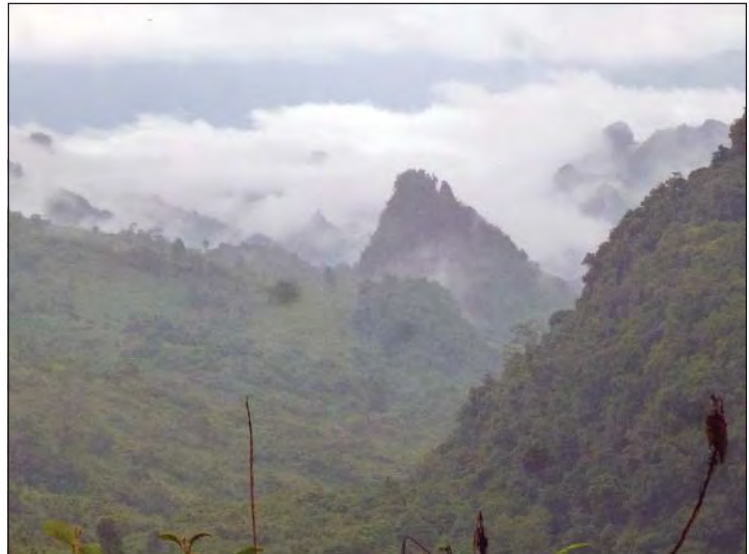
We traveled back to Phonsavanh to pick up our bags, then rode three hours south on a nicely paved road, Highway 1D, to Tha Thom (TT) District to remain overnight (RON). I do like the drive down to TT, and often stop by the bombed-out wat at Mounk Khoun, old Xieng Khouang Ville, L-03. There are lots of nice mountains in the region we drove through. "Good enough" guest house at TT, has two out of the four nice-to-haves: sitters and TV, but no wifi or hot water. Oh, well, been there, done that before. We were out to dinner at a local restaurant, and were just finishing up when the Lao officials side of our trip came to pick up Stewart and take him off for some more evening adventures. He said in the morning, "just gab, no funny stuff down there" ... if you can believe him.

On the road again in the morning, there were two more school projects to visit. Did see several logging trucks; and hoped they're for local use, not export to Vietnam or China.

First stop was the Phieng Ta Primary School to look at their finished building we'd seen started back in February. It looks good, longer than the original, wider, too, with TLCB tin and cement. The villagers said they'd run



Stewart McGurk on the famous runway at Long Chieng.



Morning in the Lao mountains near Long Chieng.



Impromptu lunch on the June trip.

Four Trips is continued on page 6.

Four Trips continued from page 5

out of wood, thus the half-walls. That's OK, lets in the breeze in the hot season and hopefully not too much rain in the wet. There were short speeches, certificate signing, no baci, and we hit the road for the next stop at the Sybounheuang Primary School where the TLCB had funded replacement school furniture. Signings and speeches, again, abbreviated baci, Beerlao, and then we mounted the road for the eight hour drive home.

November 2015

For this trip, I was joined again by Glenn Black, who took the train down from Chiang Mai, and a new TLCB member, Paul Carter, who was featured in the December 2015 MEM. We also met up with two couples from the U.S. who'd flown in to Vientiane. They had their own vehicle and we motored on up to Xaysomboun town, now called Anouvong as "Xaysomboun" is the name of the new province which includes Long Tieng District. We ROned at the old Phu Bia Hotel, which is really busy now that this is a provincial capital with lots of construction going on. We did find a new and much nicer guest house in town, and will stay there next trip.

In the morning we drove on up to Long Tieng and met up with Chris Corbett, also a TLCB member, and some of his motorcycle buddies. They'd planned to head on north to Phonsavanh via the dirt road but were turned back by the authorities; "unsettled conditions," they were told, so they headed west to Vang Vieng. We, too, were blocked from going that way, but we still needed to get up to Phonsavanh. We did manage to find a nice viewpoint on the hills to the west of the runway area for some photos, then headed back south to Rt 13S and on to Paksane to RON.

We moved on to Phonsavanh, with a school stop on the way at the Khon Sana Primary School, where TLCB had funded tin and cement, which turned out to be the seed for their completely new building, the balance funded by the villagers. It's pretty much complete and in use with TLCB-funded furniture. It's a nice setup, good job by the local folks. We remained over night at the four-year-old Anoulackkhen Hotel, a really nice place, with good views from the 6th floor; don't need to fly around

Four Trips is continued on page 8.

Kids at Khon Sana school using TLCB furniture, all marked with our labels to show the origin.



Long Chong school with new TLCB concrete floor.



Below, signing certificates at Ban Nong School.



D.C. 2016 Reunion Plans Taking Shape

by Gerry Frazier, Local Reunion Committee Chairman

This year's reunion, September 15-18, returns to the lovely Alexandria and the Washington, D.C. area. Come and add to the excitement of meeting new people and visiting our glorious Capital. Spend a couple of days and really take in the magnificence of this area and its history. In addition to our standard reunion activities, which include the hilarious, money-making Assistance auction, the fine banquet, and short annual business meeting, the agenda will include at least one visit to a local historic site—you won't be disappointed!

Our traditional group visit to the beautiful Vietnam Wall always stirs our hearts and personal remembrances of our fallen comrades and the reason for our service. It is also only a short walk away from the very moving Korean War Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, and a few minutes from the WWII Memorial, all worth the trip. Details on the additional tour will release as they firm up.

Our reunion hotel is the lovely **Holiday Inn and Suites, Alexandria, VA, just three blocks from the Potomac River and minutes from the sights and shopping in historic Old Town Alexandria.** The hotel is pet friendly with a pool and fitness center, a bike borrow program, a 24 hour business center, an on-site ATM, and a complimentary shuttle to King Street. In addition to hotel dining options, there are several good restaurants in the surrounding neighborhood.

Make reservations before August 25, by phone, at 1-800-465-4329, and identify yourself as a member of the TLC Brotherhood Reunion reservation group to be certain of getting our group rate. The TLCB negotiated group rate for non-smoking rooms, with either one King-size bed or two doubles, is \$119.00 per night. A parking fee (\$20.00 per night) is added if you have a car during your stay, making the 'practical' daily room rate \$139.00 plus taxes. To reserve additional days at the same group rate, 3 days before and after the reunion, call by the August 25 deadline. Cancel room reservations up to 72 hours in advance of check-in at no charge. Hotel web site is www.hioldtownalexandriahotel.com

2016 marks the fifth time our annual reunion has come to the Washington area, and gives members and family an opportunity to visit favorite landmarks and observe a busy Capital city in the days preceding a national election. The weather will be warm, but the hottest days of summer will be past. Attending the reunion is one of the best and most enjoyable ways to meet other members of this diverse and well-informed organization, and to gain insight to what it is all about. Plan now to attend in September.

Newest Members in the TLC Brotherhood

The 19 members listed below joined between the last issue of the MEM and the end of February. You can find more information on our website database. The Mekong Express Mail wishes you all a hearty "Welcome Home."

| No. | Branch | Last Name | First | City | State | Email |
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| 1716 | USA | Caldwell | Harry | Lanett | AL | HSCaldwell@Charter.Net |
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| 1725 | USAF | Poimbeauf | Robert | Port Lavaca | TX | BPoimbeauf@MAC.com |
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| 1728 | St. Dept | Vincent | Douglas | Irvine | CA | DL.Vincent@gmail.com |

Four Trips *continued from page 6.*



Ban NaFa villagers built this sanitary toilet using TLCB cement. A huge improvement over previous facilities that were in the way of a new road.



Happy Lao teacher greeting our gang with food for a feast.

town in a helicopter these days.

First stop in the morning was the Ban NaFa Primary School where we'd previously funded a new tin roof. During that visit, they'd requested a new toilet as a road was going through where the present toilet is located. The job was complete prior to our visit. So, certificates, signings, speeches, baci, eats, lamvong dancing. This is a good fun school!

Afternoon was back to the Ban Nong Primary School on



Lao officials and Mac, enjoy signing the documents that help keep our projects running smoothly.

the southwest corner of the PDJ, where the villagers are doing a replacement of an old, falling-down wreck of a wooden building. It's looking good, with foundation in, concrete posts up, three rooms plus porch, and larger than the old building. Wood for trusses and walls is still in the forest, some two plus hours further south up in the hills, already logged and hand sawed, drying and waiting for the road/trail to dry out so the wood can be brought into the village after the rice harvest. And, guess what...speeches, certificates, signings, snacks, no lunch, but Beerlao seemed to come out of the woodwork. Back to Phonsavanh.

In the morning we were off to the east to Moug Kham, the junction of RTs 7 and 6, the road north of Sam Nuea. Moug Kham is also known more familiarly to some people as Ban Ban, a largish town these days. Then it was an hour up the road to Ban Nam Chak and their primary school. The TLCB had funded cement for floors for four of their buildings. This is a large, mostly Hmong village area, long and narrow, strung out along the road which follows a ridgeline. There was quite a large turnout for the event, complete with certificates, signings, speeches, eats, Beerlao, lamvong, and a good time was had by all.

The last day saw us riding the road for eight hours back to the Lao side of the Mekong, across to Nong Khai, and on to RON at Udorn. Glenn stayed at a hotel in town, as he was to fly back to Chiang Mai in the morning; Paul went to the bus station for a night bus back to Bangkok, and I went to the older T-J's Restaurant for a burger, and was joined by TLCB member Mike Cosenza for a chat. Then it was a seven hours drive on the 4 to 12 lane Friendship Highway back home to Klong 10, about 35 km NE of Don Muang Airport.

January 2016

Last gasp here, January 2016. Anne and Ray, sis and brother-in-law, are visiting. She wanted a boat ride, so we arranged a trip on the Mekong River from Ban Houei Sai (BHS) to Pak Beng, where we hit the roads for some touring.

While there at Houei Sai, I asked around for a school teacher I'd worked with back in 1966 while with IVS* in Hong Sa. I'd heard that he was living in BHS post-1975, and lo and behold, his house was just across the road from our guest house! We had a nice reunion after 49 years. He's now 82 and fit, and sharp too; hope I'm doing as well when I hit that age. Oh, and he did have five years of "re-education" by the new regime after 1975.

We hauled out of BHS about 1000 hrs, arrived Pak Beng at 1700 hrs, found our guest house and looked for eateries, seemed to be not too many of the latter around. BTW, the boat cruise was nice, only 35 people vs the "world traveler" boats that sometimes hit 100! Good buffet lunch, too. Enjoyed the trip.

In the morning we checked on our regular driver, and it turned out he had driven all the way up to Pak Beng from Vientiane, about 10 hours without speeding, he said. We crossed the Mekong on a ferry, although they said they'd be out of business in a couple of months when the new bridge is completed. On down the paved road we encountered a somewhat delayed Hmong New Year's celebration, which was good, as I'd missed the one in Xieng Khoung in November; it was later than our visit.

We got to the junction at Muang Nguen and turned west

*NOTE "IVS" stands for International Voluntary Services, Inc., sort of a "private sector Peace Corps."

Four Trips is continued on page 10.

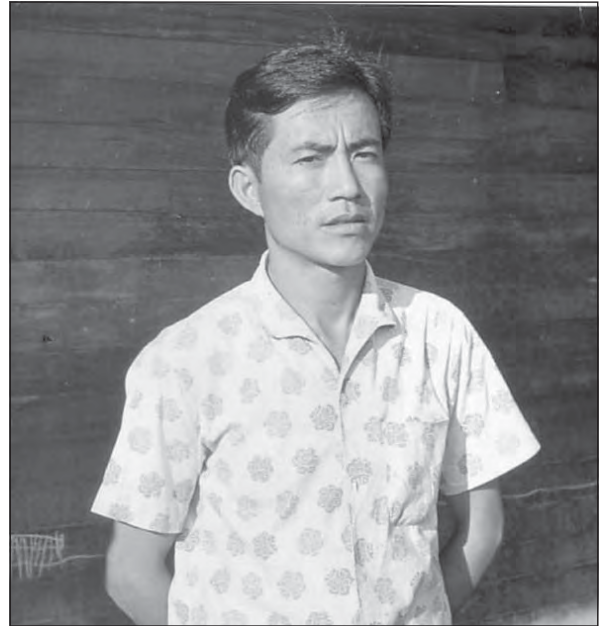


Local folks always love to show their appreciation by holding a "baci" ceremony. The strings are tied to guest's wrists to preserve good luck. It has become a national custom.

New roof going on at Ban Nam Thouang.



Reunion



Above, Hong Sa school principal Tan Khu in 1966, when Mac worked with him. Below, Tan Khu today, at age 82 and delighted to see an old friend 49 years later.



Four Trips *continued from page 9.*

to Xieng Lom/Hon, where I lived in the fall of 1967 for a few months. This is really a large town, not a “village” any more. Many schools are there now, several primary and one secondary. Went to see the school I’d worked on earlier—still there, still in use, and still has a few pieces of steel bracing installed back then. The teachers said it is due to be replaced—it could use it after 50-plus years. It was built next to what I was told back in 1967 was where the “Japanese” runway was located. Got to be a good story behind this!

Lunch, then we were on the road back to the junction and east an hour to Hong Sa. Also a large town these days, not much remains from 1966, but the biggest change is the roughly \$3.7 billion lignite power plant about set to start polluting the environment. Next day we traveled a dirt-gravel back road to Luang Prabang up through the mountains, a good run, the highlight of which was running into a couple of Hmong blacksmiths making a new axe head.

From Lauang Prabang, we decided to take a new routing rather than heading down Rt 13N to Phou Khoun and turning east on Rt 7 to Phonsavan (PSV). There’s a northern route mentioned on the RideAsia motorcycle Website that looked good, just a bit north of Lauang Prabang, then east to where it turns south to head to PSV. The first three hours were on good paved or dirt-gravel roads. Got to the end of that section and turned south on the pink track. This 2.5 hour section was rough and tiring. We arrived at the ferry for crossing the Nam Khan River, the same river that empties in to the Mekong at Luang Prabang.

Oops, no ferry operator, he’d “gone to town” and no idea when he’d return. It’s 1500 hrs now and we still have three plus hours to go to get to PSV. Happily, it turns out there’s a ford a few hundred meters downstream, out of view of the ferry. Found it, water was low enough, and across we went. Things looking pretty good for a while, then we hit a problem...they’d cut the road to install a culvert. Some places you might think a road would be cut halfway, install that section of culvert, fill, then cut the other half. Not here! But, they did have the system down pat and got it done in 45 minutes, so back on to PSV to RON.

Next sight on this road to Phou Kout is a strange, out-of-place “control tower.” There is an old runway nearby but we were told that this is actually an observation tower for an area where post-1975 training of Lao army troops took place. Interesting artifact anyway. Sun was setting as we motored on to PSV.

Back to school visits. First off were the primary and secondary schools at Ban Samphan Xay, northwest of Mounk Kham, aka Ban Ban, on the road to Bouam Long. The projects consisted of floors for four wooden school buildings constructed a few years ago by the villagers. Then some ceremonies, certificate signings, baci, eats, Beerlao, plus one for the road.

For our last day in Phonsavan, we first visited the Ban Nam Thouang Primary School, which is one of five new tin roofing projects approved by the TLCB Assistance Committee. The Hmong villagers were working on removing the old tin when we arrived.

It was on to Ban Nong on the southwest edge of the PDJ

where the villagers are doing what will be a nice new building replacing a rundown old one. Things have dried out so they’ve been able to bring the sawed wood in from the forest three hours distant. The floor has been finished and wood framing going up. Still a lot of work remaining, but it’s progressing nicely. No signings or baci. Have done that already here, but they did set up some nice snacks so we had a gab session, and magically enough, some Beerlao. That evening several of the bosses from the Provincial Education Service & Sports hosted dinner for us. Nice of them, I thought. They do appreciate what the TLCB is doing for the schools in their province.

End of tour, and next morning we headed back to Thailand, hit one more road blockage on the way for an hour, a truck accident, and RONed at Nong Khai. Then it was back to home at Klong 10. Anne and Ray took a taxi to Swampyboom Airport where they caught the last bus down to Hua Hin. They really wanted to get back to the beach and some salt water, although they both also like the mountains of Laos.

Postscript:

Me? I’m standing by for more school assistance requests from Xieng Khouang. Do know they have several projects in the hopper, including a toilet, tin, and cement for a dormitory, doors and windows for one school, and more. All these will, of course, require funding and this is still early in the year... do hope the Assistance Fund holds out.



Mail: A Note From the Heart

[name withheld]

Dear Les, John, Bill, and Thelma, the wife of the Most Famous Pilot,

I hope your winter is going well, and donations are meeting our goals. My goal, since joining this organization a couple of years ago, was to make myself feel less guilty for several actions I engaged in within Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. OK, stop feeling sorry for myself.

I have realized how rewarding it is to give to many good causes—the good work that John Middlewood [the Northeast School] completed and the continued work of “Mac” [Thompson]. This Brotherhood has created several good results, and for this, I have found another \$131 for our efforts. There will be more to come if I continue to cut back. I sincerely hope that all members of the TLCB feel as passionate as I do. We do make a difference. Thanks for letting me be a member and continue to give.

[An Army veteran]

P.S. I hope “Mac” can continue to make some positive progress reports.

Shop the TLC Brotherhood Exchange!

Since the last issue of the *MEM* your Exchange contributed \$3000 of profit to TLCB Assistance. Your purchases contribute “to the kids!” Check out our great assortment of hats and shirts—and see all our goods at www.tlc-brotherhood.com.

Why I Joined the TLC Brotherhood

by Gary Beatty, TLCB Secretary

How I came to join the TLCB was a long, strange trip. Military service was not on the top of my list of things to do in the fall of 1970 when I received a draft notice—with an induction date of December 7. The date was ironic. My father was a Pearl Harbor survivor.

I had college student deferments for two years, and was number 195 in the first lottery, which turned out to be the highest number drawn in the last draft of the Vietnam War. In fact, mine was the last notice sent from the Clearwater, Florida draft board. When it's your time—it's your time.

The draft blew me into the Air Force recruiter's office. I took some tests, and he said I could be a para-jumper (PJ), which sounded exiting. So I signed up for the delayed enlistment program, reporting the following summer, getting me out of the draft.

After Basic at Lackland, then basic and advanced medic training at Sheppard, I went through the PJ physical screening. I couldn't clear my ears for the dive training so my career as a PJ ended before it began. However, because I'd graduated first in my class from advanced medic school, I began training for Independent Duty (ID). Off I went to Tyndall AFB in Panama City, Florida for OJT as an ID medic (90270). While there I also cross-trained as a flight medic (90250-A).

Eighteen months later I got orders. I'd never even heard of Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand, before then.

The year I spent at NKP left an indelible mark on me—mostly good, some bad. The latter, I discovered many decades later, is called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Being a medic requires compartmentalization of what you see and do—going from carnage to chow, and back, becomes routine. You keep the carnage suppressed—until years later, maybe you can't any more.

I left NKP in July 1974, to Maxwell AFB, for five boring months, before getting an 'early out' through the Palace Chase program. I then spent 15 months in a Reserve medi-vac unit at MacDill AFB. My time in the Reserves was frustrating. I was the only one in the unit who had actually done the job for real. You'd think that would make me a valuable asset to the unit. I learned otherwise. Apparently, knowing how things worked in the real world was frowned upon by the squadron CO—at least until my enlistment ended. Then my experience was an "important asset the Air Force wants to retain." I was offered a commission to stay in



Corpsman Gary Beatty, at left, treating a Thai child in 1974.

the Reserves. I declined, and my Air Force "career" ended after 6 years.

While in the Reserves, I used the GI Bill to complete my Bachelor's degree in Political Science and begin a Masters at the University of South Florida. Being a veteran, particularly a "Nam vet," was not conducive to college life in the 70s. So, like many, I kept my service to myself.

The economics of having a family cut short my pursuit of a Master's degree. I used my military training to work as a paramedic for a couple years before joining USAA insurance company in their Tampa office. I stayed at USAA for nearly three years,

leaving when I started law school at Florida State in 1983. Going back to college in my 30s was interesting. There were a few other vets and people my age, but most of the other students were a decade younger—and clueless.

Renewed self-awareness as a veteran came with my second wife, Ginny, an Army veteran and beautiful young nursing student whom I met working in the VA work/study office while in law school. Then in 1987, at my interview for my current job as an Assistant State Attorney in Brevard County, Florida, my boss—a combat wounded "Nam vet" asked if I was a vet. Being one got me the job. It was the first time being a 'Nam vet' was something positive. Even at USAA, I'm not sure they even knew I was a vet. I certainly got no recognition.

My re-awakening as a veteran coincided with the nation's recognition of Vietnam vets during the Reagan era. But when I went to join the VFW, I found out that I wasn't a "Nam vet" after all—because I was never in Vietnam. I'd apparently spent my SEA tour on R&R in Thailand.

Then in early 2004, I met TLCB member Charlie Logue, whose brother was a victim in a case I was prosecuting. Charlie noticed my miniature VSM lapel pin and asked where I'd served in Vietnam. I told him that I had not been in Vietnam, but was at a base in Thailand he'd probably never heard of called Nakhon Phanom. I expected the usual 'so you're not really a Vietnam vet' response, but was pleasantly surprised when Charlie said "When were you at NKP?" I told him '73 to '74. He asked if I'd heard of the Thailand-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood.

That night I went to the TLCB Website, downloaded a membership application, and mailed it with my dues the next day. I attended my first reunion that year in Ontario, CA and have attended all but one since.



Gary, at the 2013 TLCB Reunion. Photo by Bill Tilton



Tigers continued from page 3)

bloop gun (M-79) (three pounds), spare battery for the PRC-77 (two pounds), PRC-90 (three pounds), 1 brick of C-4 blasting cap wire, and a lot more assorted shit. I counted at least 60 or 70 pounds. Moose took a look and said “Pretty heavy, you are loaded for bear but it’s okay. Mike won’t be happy unless he cuts it down some anyway.”

As it turned out Mike didn’t bother to make an inspection and I went over, loaded for bear. Everything was packed and the packs were given the shake test to make sure nothing rattled or squeaked. We all ate lunch and then loaded up on Buzz’s bird and flew to NKP. NKP sat on the Mekong River bordering Laos. From the air the Mekong River was a massive brown snake moving through the green jungle. It reminded me of the Mississippi river in Louisiana, a true force of nature. When we landed, we were picked up by a box truck to keep us out of sight as much as possible. It took us to “Tiger Village,” a kind of barracks arranged for us by Nash. Everyone crashed. We would launch at first light. I did not sleep well. Before dawn, I got up, went across to the latrine, and made sure I had emptied both bladder and bowels. I did not want to piss myself or shit my pants on my first mission, a real possibility I had heard. Soon the team was up and moving. It was paint up time and each person had his own favorite pattern. I used the paint sticks to make my head and neck dark green, lightened the eye sockets with “Sandy Loam,” and added a tan “U” on my forehead where I have natural creases. Then, I darkened my nose and chin. The general rules are: if it sticks out it is dark, if it is recessed, it gets a lighter color and a few dark stripes just for the hell of it.

We walked out to the transport chopper. Mike was there with a Montagnard priest who proceeded to bless the chopper and us. Mike then asked, “Is everybody happy?” We all growled an affirmative. It was not far, so we all took our rope sections and tied up Swiss seats for the short rappel. A Swiss seat is the original mountaineer’s harness for rappelling. You take about a 12 foot section of rope and run it around your waist and then under your legs and back around the waist. You clip in with a “snap link,” a carabineer, in mountain climbing parlance. This snap link connects the harness to the rappelling rope. It is important that when you tie the Swiss seat that you put the lines that go under your legs so they do not crush your nuts or dick. It is a good idea to give it a couple of good test pulls to make sure everything is good to go. We loaded up and sat in middle of the helicopter back to back facing the doors.

The co-pilot was a guy named Joe; he had been the pilot of the crashed chopper so he knew where it was. Off we flew into the morning darkness. Three lengths of black kernmantle rappelling rope, not the shitty Army “green line” the military used, were fixed to each side of the helicopter since we would probably have to rappel in. One of the C-130 Specter gunships had made passes over the area looking around with forward looking infra-red (FLIR) and had not seen anything. We were the first ship in a line of five helicopters that flew at treetop level following the contour of the forest tops. We approached a small clearing and the line of helicopters slowed.

Out onto the skid I went, holding the line hooked up with a “steel snap link” carabineer to my Swiss seat. I had done this many times before but I still felt the butterflies in my stomach—big time. We dropped out of the line of birds and went into hover; tossed out the rope coils, pushed off, and rappelled down the short distance to the ground and just to the edge of the bomb crater. I had to break hard as I was going way too fast from being so heavily loaded, but I managed to slow before I landed. It was as perfect a rappel as I ever had done and ever would do for that matter. The other helicopters “hopped around us,” our helicopter going from the first to the last in the line. Hopefully, to an observer the line of helicopters appeared to continue without the pause for insertion.

As I was the first to touch down I immediately cleared my weapon for action and looked at the downed bird. This Landing Zone (LZ) must have been the result of a large bomb; it had a meter-wide swimming pool at the center and it had blown down and apart trees around it for a distance of 50 meters. It was a miracle that this was not a complete crash. The pilot had made it to the edge of the crater, but the skids had disappeared into the soft clay soil that now anchored it solidly to the ground. We quickly scanned the area around the site and saw nothing. I moved over to the downed chopper, which was in really bad shape. It had been sprayed with pretty high caliber weapons, probably a Duska heavy machine gun, the Russian equivalent of the US 50 caliber. As we got closer, the damage became even more obvious. The rotor blades had had several bad hits and were not flyable even if the engine had been good. The engine was shot to shit as well. This could not have happened in the air; it was hit with bullets here where it sat. There was no fixing this junk heap.

Now the question was, is the receiver intact or not? This was the high tech kit we came to get, a prototype designed to read the new sensors. The receiver had not been removed, but it had taken a Russian 51 caliber bullet that had basically exploded it. I pulled as many boards as I could and stuffed them in my pack, then reported that our work here was done unless we wanted to blow the thing, which was unnecessary in my opinion. There was no reason to even think about lifting this heap of junk out and back home. There wouldn’t be a big fat bonus for this job.

Mike said, “No problem let’s go, this is a really hot area these days.” He got Telephone to raise the extraction team, and the decision was made to head to the alternate LZ as a Pick up Zone (PZ) to avoid having a “string” extraction, where you are lifted out with a rope. “We will have to bushwhack a bit to get to a trail to take us to the PZ.”

We made it to the trail and headed toward the PZ as fast as we could. The PRC 77 crackled to life in Telephone’s earpiece. “There are NVA on the trail headed your direction.” Mike called for a Parthian Shot (A Parthian shot is a term meaning you turn and attack the enemy while you are fleeing) to give us time on the outbound. It is ambush time, us on them.

Mike decided on an “L” type ambush, set up where the trail curved sharply around a steep hill. He would be at the end of the “L” with the Stoner 63, a light machine gun, and two clay-

Continued next page)

more anti-personnel mines would be set against the hillside to take the back blast as much as possible. These mines, when detonated, produce a blast wave and spray seven hundred 1/8 inch steel balls, which would cut through the enemy like the great sword they were named for. The remaining team would be in two elements, Lyndell at the opposite end of the “L” with the M-79, and Moose. I was in the long element with Telephone and Pipes. There was probably some concern if I would really be able to fight. We quickly dug the mines into the hillside with overlapping kill zones against a small rocky outcrop covered with jungle growth. The rest of the team moved into cover as quickly as possible and camouflaged the entire site. This took all of 10 minutes; you can dig really fast when you need to.

I crawled down into a little hollow, arranged my camo plants and felt the damp ground beneath me. My heart was pounding, fear clutched at me; and blood rushed so loudly through my ears that it seemed the entire world could hear it. Then, through the brush, there was movement. I slowed my breathing, ignored the insects buzzing and biting, and the fear left and a strange calm arrived. Time slowed to a painful crawl, the hair on my neck tingled, but my stomach relaxed, and my fear replaced by focus. They began to enter the kill zone but there were too many, way too many—25 at least spread along the trail. Their point man slowed, almost stopping just outside the kill zone. Behind him, the long line of soldiers began to bunch into a tighter formation because the trail was narrow on the steep hillside and they had to step off the trail and onto the hill. They were almost in the center of the kill zone.

Now! Mike triggered the claymores. The blast wave and shot from the two mines swept down the slope, devastating most of the group, blowing some of them off the trail and down the hill. The back blast passed upslope and my ears started to ring. I was up and firing as the team began sweeping up the remainder of the trail with gunfire. Lyndell fired three rounds with the bloop gun as the team swept down the slope and back along the trail, mopping up the remainder of the NVA.

It was over in an instant, but I could still feel the adrenaline and hear my heart pounding in my ears. I was still ready to fight. Mike began calling for immediate extraction – the bird was twenty minutes out. Cleanup began – quickly looking for any Intel in the packs. As the FNG, Mike assigned me to check for any signs of life or Intel among the enemy who had been blown down hill by the claymores. It was, naturally, a really nasty job. The smell of blood, death, and burnt powder hung in the air as I tried to keep myself from gagging. I picked my way through the mangled bodies as quickly as I could, looking for any papers or maps and using my Tanto knife to methodically open the carotid at the neck just be sure. What the f.k am I doing here? I should have gone to Canada! There was a sudden movement; somehow one of the NVA had survived the blast. He had begun trying to stand up and was attempting to pull an AK up from the tangle and turn upslope to target the team. No one saw him except me.

The sudden movement caused me to snap back up and as I did, I lost my footing and slipped on the bloody ground. I slid down an inch or two and then spun as my foot slipped and then caught. Basically, I fell on top of him as he was turning

and trying to stand. Trying to regain my balance, I had swept my arms around and down like a spinning back-fist. In doing this, the chisel point of my knife, with all my weight behind it, struck him in the back of the neck. The blade went through his neck, between the axis vertebra and the third cervical vertebra, causing him to expire instantly and giving me just enough resistance to regain my balance. I stood up, regained my footing, and went back to the task at hand without a word. I was embarrassed by falling like a complete idiot and now I was covered with blood and gore as well. The entire team saw me fall, what a f.k up!

The team had seen my mistake as a purposeful spinning leap down, striking the man cleanly before he could fire his weapon at them. Moose laughed and said, “Well the FNG isn’t much of a conversationalist but he sure gets the job done, not like the last tech guy at all.” I heard Flaubert ringing in my ears: “There is no Truth, only perception.” I know I am a f.k up and this poor bastard was the victim of me being a God damn klutz. My first blood, my first kill, was the result of a f.king circus act fall down. I did not have time to even think about the strike. It had occurred just like Sykes said it would.

“The perfect strike must come naturally like snow falling from a bamboo leaf, without thought.”

This couldn’t have been what he meant, could it? Nope, this was just a massive f.k up. I was not snow and I did not fall from a bamboo leaf. This could only have been improved with clown shoes and a banana peel. I remember that it is better to be lucky than to be goo – it takes no effort.

I could have been in a normal Army line unit; I could have run away from my responsibility and gone to Canada. But I didn’t. I was here and it was now: do or die. Sherman was right, war is Hell. Oh dear God I am just such a f.k up!

Later, after I had had some time to consider that day, I realized that in war, morality is suspended. If I had let him kill someone on the team then I would have been responsible for his death. All that honor, duty, loyalty, and responsibility that had been beaten into us our whole lives was just a load of crap. This shit wasn’t glory at all.

Maybe I was lucky; my first blood did not require a conscious decision. It happened so quickly and without any mental debate, but the final, cold, steely-eyed analysis is that the decision is either kill us or kill them, and everyone will always vote to kill them. I did what I had to do, what I was trained to do, and what I was expected to do, although in this case, I did it by accident. I felt like a total f.k up and did not say anything to the team.

“Did anyone else notice this guy wasn’t a gook but is whiter than I am?” Mike looked and said, “Probably another f.king Russian bastard. Look at the stainless dental work, westerners always use gold.” It seemed there were Russian Special Forces “volunteers” fighting against us. Why was I so surprised? It was a great training opportunity for their Special Forces and probably their pilots.

There were several shoulder bags of Chinese and Vietnamese papers among the bodies. I collected them quickly and got over

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to the rest of the team who were getting ready to move. From the corner of my eye, I saw Mike looking across at me with his goddamned intense gaze. The son of a bitch could stare holes through you. If he only knew “The FNG is really a f..k up but a lucky f..k up” is what he would think. Maybe he did know. Reality intruded again. The smell of death was just awful and I felt like puking again, but didn’t.

We heard the incoming slicks and moved as quickly as possible toward the PZ, about 2 miles further down the trail, with no attempt to be silent. The pilot radioed that there was more movement down the trail behind us. Mike pulled little disc-shaped “toe popper” mines from his pack and planted a couple on the trail, and one ten meters down the trail but off to the side. Mike, with the Stoner-63 and Lyndell with the M-79 grenade launcher, pulled off into some thick cover. I gave Lyndell my 40 mm grenades and bandoleer and handed Mike a claymore with a phosphorous grenade taped to the front. “You carried two claymores? Shit!”

Are you complaining? “Always be prepared,” you know.

“Thanks.” He grabbed the mine and quickly placed it in a location backed up to a tree to reduce the back blast and camouflaged it with loose-leaf litter and dirt. I took his pack and Moose and I carried it between us. DD and Campbell grabbed Lyndell’s pack and we headed off as fast as we could to the extraction site. Just as we got to the clearing, we heard a small explosion. “Probably the toe popper,” said DD. Shortly afterward, the claymore, the bloop gun and Stoner all opened up, and then we broke out of the jungle into a clearing and ran toward the center where we popped purple smoke and flipped our hats inside-out so the orange panel pointed up to the sky and waved at them. Within a minute the extraction bird came in, hot and flared, reducing both vertical and horizontal speed to allow a near zero-speed touchdown. Mike and Lyndell were sprinting across the clearing and into the helicopter. Up we went and then the pilot gave the all clear to the gunships that came in and plastered the area from the clearing to where the white smoke from the phosphorous grenade drifted up marking the location.

I was now “blooded” as they say. The short trip back to NKP was uneventful; I actually fell asleep in the helicopter, wedged between Moose and Lyndell. Moose woke me up after we landed. “Damn it Red, you slept the whole way back.” Did I miss anything I asked? “No not really” was the reply. I was really tired, must have been the adrenaline wearing off.

“I just really needed a nap.” Everyone seemed to be looking at me as we walked over to the Chief’s office to drop off the intel, the boards I pulled, and to brief Nash that it was 100% a loss, while Buzz fueled up the bird. Mr. Nash looked at me and asked, “Whose blood?” I remembered how I must look and replied, “Not mine, just some guys we met while we were on a walk.” Nash smiled and shook his head, “Looks like you just went completely berserk on some unfortunate bastards. They told me you were aggressive and Sykes’ attack dog, but Jesus Mac, you are covered with blood and gore and you really stink. Just try to keep a little bit lower profile, boys, even the

Air America guys will be asking questions. You all look pretty damn suspicious.”

Sykes’ attack dog? What the f..k was that about?

My first mission was pretty much a complete failure. We didn’t recover the complete box, we made contact with the enemy, and I came back covered in blood and guts. It could have been worse. We were all back in good shape and the bad guys got a pretty good bloody nose for their efforts. I did not give a shit. We were in and out and alive, and I got all the important circuit boards. Damaged yes, but we had them. I’d take failure like that any day. But this was supposed to be a milk-run mission with no excitement. If this was a milk-run, I didn’t want to know what happened during a real mission. I was more than a bit concerned.

We headed back to our own little base camp, “the nest,” satisfied in having completed the mission and living to tell the tale. I was completely filthy, covered in gore. I should have taken a shower at NKP, but I was still in shock and not thinking about keeping a low profile. I headed for the showers, which, as luck would have it, were empty. Every time I wanted to shower they were empty, but it seemed we always had really clean Marine guards. So there was no warm water, and no water at all until the water truck came.

The solution to my dilemma was literally heaven sent. It rained. This was a really common shower method during the rainy season. The storms were amazing because you could see the curtain of water moving towards you, and all you had to do was stand still. I stood outside on a wooden pallet, stripped off my clothes and began to scrub myself with a bar of soap. I was soon joined by the rest of the team, each carrying beers.

Nash handed me a beer, and I said thanks and handed him the soap. He and rest of the team proceeded to dump their beers on me in what was affectionately known as the “beer baptism,” making me an official member of the team. Nash then announced my new name, “I thought a lot about this one and decided ‘Snake’ fits you pretty well. I was told you were full of surprises, and you seem to be damn fine for a tech guy.” Well at least it wasn’t ‘Red,’ I thought. It could have been worse, and as it turned out ‘Snake’ didn’t stick for long.

The rain slowed, and then stopped. We got dressed and gave our dirty clothes to the local laundress. I gave them an extra two green notes (40 baht) due to the condition of my fatigues. Mike said, “Let’s go to town.”

After a careful snake check, we piled seven people into an old Citroen DS that had been made into a convertible of sorts. The car literally sat on the ground; its air suspension tired and leaky from years of brutal service and neglect. Mike started the beast and it rose up like a magic carpet and we proceeded to a local restaurant, where I ate the best pad Thai I had ever had, and then to a local bar where the Jack Daniels tasted better than it ever would again. We moved from the bar to the bathhouse and soaked in the hot water. There was one more thing we wanted and that was available here as well. I would think about my first mission after we got back home to the nest.



TLC Board member to join DPAA

by William R. Peterson
TLCB Vietnam War Commemoration Chair
TLCB Public Relations Chair

I would like to announce that I have been asked to join the staff of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The mission of this agency "is to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation." DPAA is a field agency of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy.

I believe the TLCB is the reason I have been offered this position. About two years ago I saw a problem in the DOD Website honoring Vietnam War veterans. I called them and Col Schilz, USAF, their Chief of Staff, invited me to meet with them to discuss it. I took Gerry Frazier (TLCB Membership Chair) and my son (a former Marine Infantry Squad Leader in the 1/1). We discussed the importance of the "Secret War" and the contribution our veterans made to the war effort. Over the course of four hours we changed their thinking. The TLCB became a Vietnam War Commemoration Partner and we began to fulfill our obligation to conduct 6 events over three years to honor Vietnam War veterans.

I am told that about 4 months ago Major General James T. Jackson, U.S. Army (Retired), the new director of the Commemoration Office, and Col. Schilz were in a meeting with Lt General Michael Linnington, U.S. Army (recently retired), the new director of DPAA. At some point, my name came up and I was contacted by Director Linnington's office to set up

a conference call.

He called on 12 January and said, "We have 25 minutes. I want you to tell me more about yourself and how you can help our mission." I did that. He replied by email shortly after the call saying, "Bill -- thanks for your time today, and your offer to help analyze our toughest cases. Our analysts will reach out soon ... we're checking to see what's possible (regarding clearances). In the interim, we'd like to collaborate UNCLASS where we can." The call came in this week and we are expecting to begin in early March.

DPAA is responsible for all POW/MIA missing personnel worldwide with 83,095 unaccounted for from WW II, Korea, Vietnam, and other locations. <http://www.dpaa.mil/Home.aspx>

There are 1.624 to be accounted for from the Vietnam War. I will be working Southeast Asia, beginning with Lima Site 85 and the covert Commando Club unit which is "one of the toughest cases." I've been working on it privately since 2005, and I worked directly with Commando Club from November 1967 until 11 March 1968 when they were overrun. It is so fitting that I now have the official opportunity to investigate the unknown factors concerning Lima Site 85 - 48 years to the day after their terrible ordeal.

I will do my very best to earn the trust this office places in me, on behalf of the men and their families.

TLC Brotherhood, Inc. 2016 Annual Meeting NOTICE

The TLC Brotherhood, Inc. Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, September 17, 2016 at the Holiday Inn and Suites in Alexandria, Virginia.

The nominating period for the 2016 board of directors elections begins April 1st and ends Midnight EST, April 30th, 2016. Active members may nominate willing active members per the bylaws. Prior to submitting a nomination, make sure your nominee is willing to serve. The board will not accept nominations after the nominating period closes.

Members of the Nominating Committee for 2016 are as follows:

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--|--|
| Chairman: | Ken Schmidt | schmidt-kenneth@att.net | 40649 Crystal Drive Three Rivers, CA 93271 |
| Member: | Ed Miller | ed.pet.travels@cox.net | 139 Fulmar Circle NE Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 |
| Member: | Robert Santo | bobsanto2@verizon.net | 16 Todd Court Huntington Station, NY 11746 |

Send an email or mail submissions to any Nominating Committee member

The following positions are up for re-election in 2016:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
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| Treasurer | Incumbent: Bill Tilton | Eligible for re-election |
| Member at Large | (2 Positions open) | |
| | Incumbent: William Peterson | Eligible for re-election. |
| | Incumbent: Paul Lee | Eligible for re-election |

The publication of candidate biographies is optional. The nominating committee will provide the bio publication procedure to the nominee and nominator upon receipt of a nomination. Bios will be published according to policy as set by the chairman of the communications committee.

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