January 3, 1973
FEPA strike.

Burke: Discontent among the pilots had led to the formation of FEPA. CARE/Asia personnel seemed to get special treatment when it came to such benefits as airline travel agreements. Taipei also could be dictatorial. He recalls the case of Charlie Davis in the mid-1960s. Davis was a good helicopter pilot who wanted to transfer to fixed-wing as copilot. Taipei refused, and Davis ended up quitting. He was a good employee who should have been retained. The union helped as first, but after two or three years the situation reached the point where the union wanted to dictate to the company. Also, unionization created problems with respect to special missions: These could not be flown on a seniority basis, as all pilots were not equally suited for this type of flying.

Utterback: This was at the end of the third year of the FEPA contract. Tom Krohn was negotiating for the company, which was proposing a 7.5 per cent pay increase. The Union representatives, however, were not budging. Operations were already contracting, and Utterback had been bumped from a Caribou to a Volpar. The meeting at Vientiane about the strike was confused. The pilots agreed to show up at the airport at 7 a.m. and sign a paper accepting the company’s terms. Only Foxy Foles refused. Base pay was cut 46 per cent. There were three points at issue: Company wanted (1) special project without seniority; (2) separate R/W and F/W seniority lists; and (3) base seniority list (no bumping). Utterback believes that the third point could have been negotiated.

Rhyne: Company clearly was out to break the union.

January 20, 1973
7 USAF Ch-53s and 2 AAM Chinooks transport 1000 troops to open the VTE-Luang Prabang highway. Four helicopters hit by ground fire. Highway reopened before ceasefire on February 22.

Mullen: On December 12, 1972, the enemy cut the road between VTE and Luang Prabang. A plan was formulated to retake Sala Phu Khoun: Operation BROOMHILDA. It involved a three-pronged attack. One column consisted of the remnant of ten FAR/FAN battalions and 2,000 Thai mercenaries.
commanded by General Paitoon (wore coonskin cap) and CIA type called "Big Red" for his beard; it would move up from Muong Kassi. A smaller column would move south from Luang Prabang. A third force, consisting of 3,000 Lao mercenaries [Kha?] from the south would launch a combined parachute and helicopter assault as the two columns converged on Sala Phu Khoun. The southern Lao forces was airlifted by C-130s from Pakse to Vang Vieng. The case officer was "Hard Nose." The agency people at first "were neither communicative nor friendly." After a preliminary bombardment, the assault got under way. The two columns "never got off their duifs" After three days of hard fighting, the "Hard Nose" force took the position. The operation ended in early February; the Lao force returned to the south and the Thai mercenaries garrisoned Sala Phu Khoun. Mullen recalls that all aircraft used in the assault were Air America; resupply by Air America and CASI.

Mike Ingham to WML, Jan. 7, 1993: "I was the agency 'commander' of Broomhilda. I had officially finished my tour in Laos and had been replaced as the head of the Thai program by LUMBERJACK and was asked by Landry to run this little shoot up. The operation wasn't much but a couple of things stand out. One was the incredible power of the Chinoos which were new to AAM and to me, as I had been a Marine and the Chinook was an Army chopper. The other was that this little operation was the occasion of the only tank battle that I know of in Laos. The FAR were involved and they had some old American tanks. One day, the Pathet Lao or NVA came down the road in a PT 76 right toward one of the FAR tanks. A few rounds were exchanged with no damage done. The FAR crew skedaddled and the fight was over."

January 27, 1973
Paris agreement on Vietnam signed.

Isaacs, Without Honor: Article 20 of the agreement pledged U.S., South Vietnam, and North Vietnam to respect Lao and Cambodian neutrality and to end military intervention. "But Article 20 was plainly little more than a diplomatic ornament. Only 185 words long, it contained no deadline for intervention to end. Nor did it create any mechanism for enforcement. It was simply a promise - one that had been made in two earlier peace treaties in the preceding nineteen years, only to be broken both times." (pp. 153-55)

[Last U.S. troops airlifted out of South Vietnam on March 29 as release of POWs completed.]

Issacs notes that Hmong forces reached a peak of 40,000 in 1967, but took heavy casualties thereafter. In 1971,
February 9, 1973

"Accident/Incident Report, C-123K, 56-4374," CIA Corporate Files, Box 62, UTD

Aircraft enroute to Savannakhet when hit by ground fire and crashed 18 kms SE Thakhhe (I-40) at 0732. Aircraft carry 12,000 pounds of general cargo and one passenger (company employee). This was a passenger/cargo flight between VTE-Savannakhet-Luang Prabang-Savannakhet-VTE. About 45 minutes after departure, there were two explosions in the vicinity of left engine, followed by a large fire. Boyles told the AFDs to jettison the cargo. As fire swept back along the fuselage, told the AFDs to jump. The first AFD to jump saw the aircraft go out of control. The left wing separated, and the aircraft began to spin. It exploded just before hitting the ground. Pilot Boyes, F/O Carrill and one AFD died.
they suffered 2,259 killed and 5,775 wounded, representing
30 per cent of their strength. By early 1972, there were
27,000 Hmong. "By the time Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho
initiated the Vietnam peace agreement, the Hmong of Laos had
virtually been destroyed as a people, and in their future
lay not peace, but further devastation as the Communist
conquest of Laos two years later scattered them in a
diaspora ending either in death or in years in squalid
refugee camps in Thailand." (p. 169) U.S. arranged in early
1970 for Thai "volunteers" to replace the depleted ranks of
the irregular units. They were recruited from the Thai army,
weathered, and given Lao ID cards. They were paid by the
CIA with DOD funds. There were about 7,000 Thais in Laos in
late 1971, increasing to 21,000 by late 1972. (pp. 169-70).

February 9, 1973
Howard H. Boyles, Jr., Jack W. Cavill, and Prasit
Chaichana killed in C-123K 564374. Aircraft hit by missile
when 12 kms ESE of Thakhel East. AFD Sourinh parachuted
from aircraft and survived.

Rhyne: Boyles flew non-direct route to get additional
flight time.

February 21, 1973
Cease fire agreement signed in VTE. On the same day,
NVA retake Pakson.
US halts air strikes; last two B-52 strikes in April.
Hmong down to 25,000 troops, but some 20,000 Thai in
Laos. Enemy number approx. 60,000 in northeastern Laos.
Coalition government formed, dominated by Pathet Lao.

Issacs: In early February, the PL/NVA increased
pressure at the conference table and on the battlefield
(temporarily capturing Pakson). At the same time, the US
was urging the Lao to make concessions. The agreement of
February 20 clearly favored the Pathet Lao: The US and
Thailand were obligated to end military operations in Laos
but North Vietnam was not mentioned. The ceasefire was to
take effect on February 22.

Issacs visited Long Tieng on the afternoon of
February 22. T-28s were conducting strikes in support of
VP’s troops against enemy positions as close as nine miles
away. "We could hear the deep crunch of the bombs falling
in the hills." Vang Pao showed Issacs an unsigned typed
communication that he had received a few hours earlier.
Issacs copies in into his notebook:

To: Major General Vang Pao, commanding general,
Military Region 2
From: Chief of unit, SKY, Long Tieng
Subject: Cease-fire agreement
T. R. Cash, F/O Ferrante (at controls). Aircraft suffered substantial damage during an attempted wave off on approach to HU pad. Three crew and 452 pounds of cargo on board. Ferrante and Cash suffered serious injuries, F/M minor. The aircraft was working out of 20A, flying routine shuttles in the morning. In the afternoon, it left LS-15 (Ban Na) for a high altitude pad in the area. Pad HU was on a ridgeline at 4,400 feet. Attempting to abort the landing, the aircraft hit the ground and started to roll down the mountain. The f/m jumped clear. Ferrante was employed on December 29, 1972 (U.S. Army trained). In his first local flight on January 25, 1973, he received fragment injuries to the left eye and face when the aircraft was hit multiple times by small arms fire. His pilot technique was "a causal factor" in the accident, but the aircraft was in less than perfect condition. F/O felt a power loss and initiated recovery which placed the aircraft in a position offering no hope of recovery. Cash was thrown out of the right cockpit door after he unfastened his seat belt and the aircraft was rolling downhill. He fractured the 4th thoracic vertebra and suffered abrasive wounds. Ferrante had multiple contusions.
1. In accord with the terms of the cease-fire agreement between the Royal Lao Government and the Neo Lao Hak Sat that established 1200 22 February as the time armed action between those forces would cease, the United States is honoring the agreement.

2. As we discussed previously, USAF air support would cease as of 1200, 22 February. I confirmed this prior to attending your lunch in honor of your distinguished visitor today [Prince Sisouk] by talking with CRICKET, the ABCCC in this area. USAF were under instructions to clear Lao air space by 1200 this date.

Vang Pao told Isaacs that his positions, which were under heavy attack, could not hold out without US air support. (pp. 178-79)

The next morning in Vientiane, Souvanna charged the PL with violating the cease fire and asked for US air strikes. Nine B-52s hit targets near Paksong that night. Unimpressed, the PL continued fighting into March but without diminished intensity. There were B-52 strikes on April 16 and 17 but not full scale resumption of the war. A protocol to establish a new government was signed in September. The new government was formed in April 1974. Remnants of Hmong fought on but many fled to Thailand.
(pp. 180-81)

March 7, 1973
James H. Ackley, Clarence N. Driver, and Chudchai Chiewcherngsuk, and Kenkeo Narissak in C-123K 554524 enroute from Luang Prabang to Ban Houei Sal. Believed shot down over Chinese highway. Wreckage never found. O’Brien: “The enemy had reportedly set up a false radio NDB near the road on a frequency corresponding to one of our nearby stations. On bad weather days, it would be activated in hopes of sucking our aircraft within the range of the radar guns.”

April 1973
Castle: Cites End-of-Tour report by M/G James D. Hughes that was critical of Godley’s reliance on CIA military advice and showing “poor judgement and a misunderstanding of air power.” [see chapter 7, pp. 20ff]

May 1973
Daniel C. Arnold replaces Tovar as COS VTE.

Tovar, March 13, 1992: Tovar said that he "swallowed the party line" on Laos. He did not believe that the US ever would just walk away. If the ceasefire was broken, he believed that the US would come to Vang Pao’s assistance.
He also points out that the NVA suffered heavy losses in Laos. They stopped only when they were beaten.

June 1973
Parker: BAMBOO, KAYAK, and DUTCH leave. Parker remained at 20A with ZACK, HOG, and CLEAN.

In July 1973, Arnold (who had replace Tovar) sent word to disarm the Hmong "to facilitate the intent of the cease fire." "This was ludicrous." The Hmong were not going to surrender their weapons; they would have been slaughtered. Arnold subsequently came to 20A and told the remaining officers: "Put down your Hmong. Go home." Parker left on December 3, 1973. The Hmong GMs were disbanded but retained their weapons. HOG and ZACK stayed.

July 31, 1973

August 12, 1973
New York Times article by Malcolm W. Browne: 1971 was peak year for Air America in Laos: 41 planes based in country and 1,610 employees. By September 30, 1973, the last of the pilots will have left Laos, according to James Cunningham. Some planes will be sold; some will be scrapped. Despite the dangers (eight fatal crashes in 1972): "The high pay and excitement have continued to attract the pilot-adventurers who have come to love flying in the Far East. The pilots, who usually wear the heavy gold chain barcelets that have become a kind of Laotian-American symbol, deeply regret leaving."

October 1, 1973
Vientiane is now a satellite base of the North Thailand Division. The main thrust of its activities is now ground support rather than flying.

November 5, 1973
William A. Richards, ARR, MIRII, ETR: Richards was met on arrival 20a by Ownby, Raven FAC, who was performing duties of ARR. "Self-sufficiency was briefed as the modus operandi throughout Laos." However, it was immediately apparent that 20A unable to sustain operations without outside assistance.

"In an effort to provide a stable command structure, MRR Commander, Gen Vang Pao requested and was authorized to appoint Maj Yang Xiong, a local Moun pilot, as Detachment Commander. This is his first command and he was initially hesitant about taking a firm hand in directing the unit." However, T-28 sorties in the past two months have increased
from negligible to an average of 5 per day. "Although
discipline has never been firm. there is not a scheduling of
pilots on a daily basis."

November 6, 1973
Siguard O. Larson, AAM, to Directorate of Procurement,
PACAF:
Between 1 July and 31 October, 17 incidents were
reported. Hostilities did not halt on 31 October as
predicted by Customer as there was an incident on 1
November.

At a meeting on Udorn on 26 September between AAM and
PACAF representatives, the following information was given:
12 incidents in March 1973 5 hits on aircraft 17
10 incidents in April 3
2 May 1
7 June 1
2 July 3
4 Aug 2
2 Sep 2

Despite the above, Air America reduced hostility pay
for flying personnel by 54.6 percent, effective October 1.
There would be a considerable morale problem if the
hostility pay was completely eliminated. At the meeting,
the government representatives continued to press for total
elimination of hostility pay.

[Knight: "I personally designed new project pay scheme
based on percentage of incidents per flight hour. I recall
that Caribous got no project pay - no hostile incidents
reported."]

1974

February 1974
DHC-6 operating between Ban Na and 20A.

March 4, 1974
Bangkok Post reports that Long Tieng is relatively
quiet. CIA men (Harry the Hat, the Greek, Mr. Clean,
Junkyard, Bamboo) have been quietly fading out of the
country for the past six months. The few remaining are
cleaning up paperwork, logistic details, and supervising the
final withdrawal of Thai forces. Concrete bunkers that were
CIA headquarters have been turned into office of USAID.
Date: Tue, 3 Jul 2001 17:23:47 -0400
From: "James Glerum" <jglerum@worldnet.att.net>
To: "Morales, Diane" <dmsinc@erols.com>, "Leary, William" <Wleary@arches.uga.edu>
Subject: Fw: AAM

The Thai message is new to me. Touching.

Jim

----- Original Message ----- 
From: JIMPITTA@aol.com
To: JIMPITTA@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 03, 2001 5:02 PM
Subject: Fwd: AAM

Here is a short, but interesting note from Gloria.


Return-Path: <gloflower@home.com> Received: from rly-yb02.mx.aol.com (rly-yb02.mail.aol.com [172.18.146.2]) by air-yb01.mail.aol.com (v78_r3.8) with ESMTP; Tue, 03 Jul 2001 15:43:45 -0400 Received: from femail21.sdc1.sfb.home.com (femail21.sdc1.sfb.home.com [24.0.95.146]) by rly-yb02.mx.aol.com (v79.20) with ESMTP id MAILRELAYNYB24-0703154337; Tue, 03 Jul 2001 15:43:37 -0400 Received: from c215739a ([24.4.42.197]) by femail21.sdc1.sfb.home.com (InterMail vM.4.01.03.20 201-229-121-120-20010223) with SMTP id <20010703194334.FQKV28041.femail21.sdc1.sfb.home.com@c215739a> for <JIMPITTA@aol.com>; Tue, 3 Jul 2001 12:43:34 -0700 Message-ID: <00ba01e1040a$90c99a80$52a0418@btvrg11.ln.home.com> From: "Gloria Lara" <gloflower@home.com> To: <JIMPITTA@aol.com> Subject: AAM Date: Tue, 3 Jul 2001 14:53:16 -0700 MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: multipart/alternative; boundary=""--X решение_000_00B7_01C103CF.E4279F00"
X-Priority: 3 X-MMEmail-Priority: Normal X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 5.50.4522.1200 X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V5.50.4522.1200

One more aside to the speech by Jim Glerum...Dick Ford has sent me a copy of the Flight Operations Schedule from that last day. The names of the two pilots who flew that day were Byrl King and Jim Rhine. Byrl King flew ETD 0800L, and Jim Rhine flew ETD 0600L and 1000L (the final flight).

An interesting addition that Dick Ford sent me was another document which he believes was probably inspired by the dedication he penned on the Flight Operations Schedule. Dick believes that the document was drafted by Thongsook Ratanaphoka, Abadie's secretary. He told me that he likes to believe that it reflected the attitude of the Thai's with whom AAM worked. The document is signed by three Thai's: T. Ratanaphoka, VP-NTD's Secretary, Turnover Group, T. Boonehaya, Security Administrator, Turnover Group, and B. Sarite, Office Boy, VP-NTD Office. The document reads as

http://webmail.uga.edu/cgi-bin/mailreader.pl?uid=0041005330&rev=6520

7-1-2001
follows:

"So farewell our heroic Air America, an episode we have long entrusted our beloved lives. The dramatic place where we were given guidance, faith, and courage to make living worthwhile. From nobody's child we became someone's and how profoundly proud we were, are, and will be. We may part forever but Air America sign will never die. It will smile in Thailand sky from now to eternity, at least..... for me."

http://webmail.uga.edu/cgi-bin/mailspiner.cgi/994199532/Read/6570
7/3/2001
April 18, 1974
UH34 H-45 departed 20A for Tango Pad with five Lao psgrs and 500 pounds of cargo. Overshot pad and touched down on right main gear only. Aircraft rolled over. F/M Latloi Manoon thrown from aircraft and killed. Pilot: Boonrat Com-Intra. [Marius Burke is in charge of Ops]

April 28, 1974
DHC-6 Sala Phou Koun, R.L. Watson, L. D. Wilderom, J.J. Brennan, AFD, ran off end of runway; substantial damage to aircraft; no injuries to crew.

June 3, 1974
Telex, VP-NTD UTH to Chief Executive Office, Washington:
"Today was AAM’s last day in Laos. Udorn-based aircraft were all out of Laos as scheduled, the last one out being C-7A 2389 piloted by Capt. F.F. Walker and Capt. M. W. Shaver which crossed the border at TE878 at 1113Z from VTE to UTH.

The VTE close out went well and the departure of AAM from Laos was without incident although some lumps are visible in the throats of those who put so much of themselves into the operation over the years. . . . We grieve for those missing and dead in Laos and regret that they too could not have enjoyed today."

June 30, 1974
Last flight from Udorn.

Romes: Romes went to Udorn when VTE closed. He was told that the special projects would be kept active with a half dozen helicopters and a half dozen fixed wing pilots. The decision to retain this core group, however, was reversed. Everyone was out of a job.

1975

May 15, 1975
VP leaves Long Tieng.

1960-1975: Hmong lose 30,000 dead out of population of 300,000.
Harry L. Carr, USAID Executive Officer, Laos, 1967-73, "USAID Executive Officer," December 1984, AAM Archives (Blevins file): "I have never regretted casting my lot with all those who served there. I have regretted, I always will, the devastation of a beautiful country, the cruel treatment of a gentle people, the deaths without number, and the ultimate failure of all we attempted. The final irony is that after so much effort and sacrifice - Lao and American - nothing remains to show for it. Nothing? I wonder. Perhaps something does remain, deep and still glowing in the soul of Laos, that may yet redeem our failed crusade. I know that my heart is still there. With Pop's."

Re "Secret War": There were a few responsible reporters (Keyes Beech, Bernard Kalb, Jack Foisie, Stanley Karnow) who wrote about the war in Laos, but much of the reporting was done by stingers "who relied on cute and quirks to sell their stuff, rather than on solid information. The 'secret war in Laos' (who many times did we see that headline?) had been reported by the Big Boys so often and stridently that it was a bore to most Americans, a minor sidebar to the 'real' war. But a struggling writer can always find a market for a flip description of arrogant bureaucrats muddling about in a funny little country. Laos was one of the last places on earth where a reincarnated Richard Harding Davis could invent caricatures of greedy generals, ridiculous functionaries fussing with meaningless papers, innocent natives foolishly trying to imitate foreign ways. Carr and associates were constantly amused by the notion that "the most media-served nation on earth" could be kept in the dark about a war that was common knowledge in Vientiane.

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(POW: 189) [List from Pat Landry, 3/12/93]
June 30, 1976
Air America liquidated; $20 million returned to Treasury.