

RLAF Sikorsky SH-19s

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In the summer of 1955, the Royal Thai Air Force loaned 2 H-19 helicopters with Thai crews to the *Armée Nationale Laotienne* (ANL). The aircraft were based at Vientiane-Wattay airport and flew missions thru the first quarter of 1956 (Conboy/Morrison, *Shadow war*, p.17). The serials of these aircraft are not known, and the next Sikorsky H-19s flying for the Royal Lao military were those of Air America.



Air America Sikorsky H-19As H-1 and H-8, at Na Nhom, Laos on 11 June 60, flying for the Laotian Army Air Force, taken by E. C. Kirkpatrick (photos nos. 1KP-19-SC5268 and 1KP-19-SC5265)



Test flights of Air America (Laotian Army Air Force) Sikorsky H-19A H-1 around Vientiane in June 1960, photos taken by E. C. Kirkpatrick (photos nos. 1KP-19-SC5266, 1KP-A2-SC5253, 1KP-A2-SC5225, and 1KP-A2-SC5227)

From National Archives sources, the following details of MAP Grant Aid deliveries to Laos were submitted to the author by Sid Nanson (e-mail dated 30 May 2013, kindly sent by Sid Nanson to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to me); it should be noted, however, that these are deliveries that were programmed – they may not necessarily have taken place that way:

SH-19A's

4 SH-19A's received 4th quarter FY 62 (1 Apr 1962-30 June 1962)

1 FH-19A (?) received 1st quarter FY 63 (1 July 1962-30 Sep 1962)

1 FH-19A (?) received 4th quarter FY 63 (1 Apr 1963-30 June 1963)

This information seems to be wrong. From Liebchen (*MAP Aid to Laos 1959-1972*, pp.11, 148, and 150) and his statistics of RLAF aircraft, it becomes evident that the 4 Sikorsky H-19As (= S-55s) delivered to Air America in 1960 (see my Air America H-19 file at <http://www.utdallas.edu/library/specialcollections/hac/cataam/Leeker/aircraft/s55.pdf>) were considered to be the helicopter fleet of the Laotian Army Air Force. They had been the first 4 aircraft delivered out of a total of 6 SH-19A helicopters programmed, but as the H-19s proved to be too underpowered for service in Laos, the remaining 2 H-19s were never delivered to Laos.

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