

Welcome to the 54th Issue of our Newsletter



Town of Ban Houie Sai, Bokeo province, Laos, 1973. At center left, Wat Chamkao. Operation Brotherhood hospital is at extreme right middle. The Mekong River at top separates the town from Thailand. *Photo by William Sage from archives of Arizona State University.*

Our Last Days in the Golden Triangle

In 1969 we moved into our 19th station, a hospital once staffed by the legendary Dr. Tom Dooley

April 1975 was a historic time and place in the Asian mainland. Within that month, three insurgent regimes, one after another, took control of these countries — South Vietnam by the Vietcong. Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge and Laos by the Pathet Lao. The dominoes toppled, but not those predicted. For us who worked in Laos, where the victors said they can no longer assure our safety as well as those workers of other foreign aid agencies, their orders to leave were heart-wrenching. We had worked with our Lao hosts for so long, 18 years! — forging lifelong friendships with them and among ourselves. Here in this issue, we remember those times.



The Lao sign above reads Thomas A. Dooley Hospital Foundation, Houie Sai, Bokeo. At right, Dr. Dooley (front dark pants) with his Lao and American staff at Muang Sing clinic. Photo taken 1960s.



Working With the “Jungle Doctor”

When nutritionist **Erlinda Masibay** arrived in Laos on January 1967, it would be the start of a six-year assignment with Operation Brotherhood that posted her to various OB stations all over the kingdom, five of them. One was in the northern town of Ban Houie Sai, in the province of Bokeo. Moving into a small frame building as part of an OB team of medical personnel, she began cleaning out a room that would serve as her bedroom.

"I was fully conscious that I was going to occupy what used to be the bedroom of **Dr. Tom Dooley**," she remembers, referring to the legendary American doctor who came to Laos in 1956 to staff Lao government health facilities at a time when the country's health system, mired in a civil war, was undermanned, under-equipped, and practically broke. The building had three rooms -- a 20-bed ward, a nursing station and a surgical room. Dooley officially moved into the government hospital in November 1960, one of three that he staffed, the others were in Nam Tha and Muong Sing.

A snake that Linda found lurking in her quarters during her cleanup only gave credence to the reputation of Dooley as the 27-year old jungle doctor who

gave up a medical career in America to sail as a Navy corpsman for South Vietnam in 1954. It was not the best of times to be there. France, which ruled Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as its Indochinese possessions, had just lost North Vietnam to the Communist Vietminh and was now poised to take the southern portion. Encouraged by an American-backed Saigon government, thousands upon thousands of northerners fled south, swamping refugee camps with the destitute, sick and hungry.

This historic migration presented a grand opportunity for the Cold War propaganda duel between the two sectors. Dooley's Vietnam tour produced a book "Deliver Us From Evil" that promoted the South as a haven against the Communist North.

"What am I doing here?... " he wrote. "Out there in the makeshift refugee camp I had set up with U.S. Army tents, were more than 12,000 wretched sick and horribly maimed Vietnamese, most of them either very young or very old. They were fleeing from the Communists of North Vietnam ..."

"All in Vietnam dream and strive

for freedom...the people who toil in the ricefields with backs bent double and faces turned to the brackish mud, the naked children playing in the monsoon, the little fruit sellers in the arroyos of the markets and the poor with amputated arm or hand outstretched. They have one dream: Freedom." Dooley appealed for American aid, "believing that it can be the decisive factor in bringing about a victory for all the sacred things we stand for."

In 1956, most Americans "got their first glimpses of Vietnam through ... the fevered, patriotic rose of his book", wrote **Diana Shaw** in the Los Angeles Times Dec. 15, 1991. The U.S. government recognized the book's tremendous propaganda value and its charming author in shoring up the Saigon government against the Communist insurgent Vietminh. Articulate, young and handsome, Dooley was a "media magnet" for the American counter-insurgency "hearts-and-mind" goal to win Vietnamese allegiance and popular support in America for its war. A promotions campaign included book tours, television appearances and guest at popular talk shows, audiences with notable political, celebrity, religious icons. extensive press coverage. Awards and accolades followed as well as donations

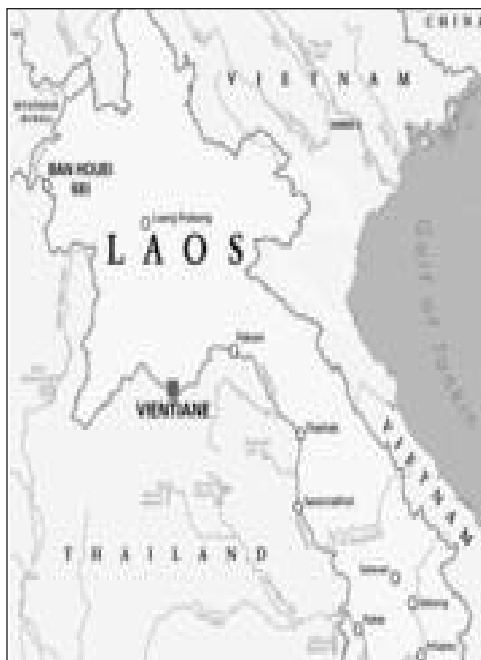
from drug companies, private individuals, and philanthropic groups. He became known as Dr. America.

After his Vietnam stint, he was given a desk job at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington D.C. but he wanted to go back to Vietnam. At a dinner in his honor hosted by International Rescue Committee, a private group assisting political refugees mainly from Communist countries, he was told that the Filipino medical-civic action Operation Brotherhood "already had Vietnam's healthcare needs covered" since 1954. In Shaw's account, he was then introduced to the Lao Ambassador to the U.S. **Ourot Souvanavong** who invited him to open a clinic in Vientiane, the capital city of his country.

"The Ambassador made a good case for coming to his country; the Communist insurgents Pathet Lao was gaining strength... The Pathet Lao were saying the Vientiane administration was slavishly bound to the colonialist United States. The government wanted to fight that image with a visible, effective demonstration of U.S. goodwill," she wrote.

Dooley agreed to go in 1956 and published another book "The Edge of Tomorrow" in 1958. Like his earlier book, it enhanced his selfless humanitarian reputation to an already admiring American audience. A New York Times review said that Dooley "is no professional writer; but through anecdotes and an Irish gift for the felicitous phrase he brings the reader an understanding of Laotian individuals, their ways of living, their attitudes, beliefs and superstitions, and their tragic needs, among them the need of simple, elementary medicine." The review noted that it was Operation Brotherhood "who freely gave their services to Vietnamese that inspired Dr. Dooley to work in a world so tragic that most Americans refuse to visualize it clearly or to feel it."

While in Laos, Dooley wrote Dr. **Richard Perritt** of the International College of Surgeons in Chicago, Illinois, USA in March 1960 "to visit the teams of Operation Brotherhood. The Kingdom of Laos has no medical school, and there is



no area where you could hold any kind of

formal lecture. However, you could indeed teach we doctors in this territory and show us some of the surgery that we could perform." By that time, OB had transferred in 1957 its work to Laos from Vietnam, this time under the auspices of the Junior Chamber of Laos, commonly known as Jaycees.

In 1957 Dooley founded Medical International Cooperation Organization or MEDICO, that later became the Dooley Foundation. Through fundraising drives, it recruited staff for three clinics in Bokeo province, at Nam Tha, Muong Sing and Ban Houie Sai. His volunteer team in 1960 at the Ban Houie Sai government hospital was composed of four Americans, one nurse and two medical technicians.

A visit by a New York Times reporter in August 1971 described the Mekong River town of over "6,000 serene people...hanging with the sweetness of opium and peace." Indeed it sits where the borders of three countries define the Golden Triangle, a major shipping center of illegal opium from the nearby hills of Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. The civil war, said the news report, "has not touched it with death, destruction or an invasion of foreigners." That may have been the case then but in previous times, the province is the battle arena for inter-

mittent clashes between the insurgents and the Lao government.

When the Pathet Lao overran Nam Tha and Muang Sing in 1962, the hospital at Ban Houie Sai remained as the only medical outpost in the area serving battle casualties and 25,000 refugees from mountain tribes -- Hmong, Yao, Black Thai. The Dooley team departed in 1969. Dooley died in 1961 from cancer at the age of 34.

Located 230 miles northwest of Vientiane, The hospital "was small, poorly equipped and supplied," said Dr. Charles Weldon, chief of the Public Health Division of USAID. "The town's... inhabitants lived in dwellings and shops on the rough, dusty street that parallels the Mekong River". Across the river was the Thai town of Chiang Kong.

Aware of its buffer position to stem the insurgents, USAID stationed a team that oversaw projects to keep residents loyal to the government -- schools, drilling wells, agriculture, building roads. The U.S. Ambassador came to open a new market building. The need for a better hospital was raised by local officials. As a temporary solution, OB agreed to place an OB team in 1969, a band of four assigned from the Attopeu and Paksong OB teams. They were physician **Felix Romero**, dentist **Alfredo Reyes**, nurse **Romeo Agbayani**, medical technologist **Potenciano del Rosario**. On June 14, 1972, a new 50-bed, USAID-funded hospital was inaugurated. Over the next months, OB physicians, nurses, dentists, nutritionists, medical technologists, engineers arrived to serve in this newest and only OB station in the north.

By 1974, the political and military situation dramatically turned bad for the Royal Lao government and good for the Pathet Lao.. The latter, having acquired enough vital territorial outposts and ministerial powers, forged a coalition called the Provisional Government For National Unity(PGNU) that merged their Pathet Lao fighters with Royal Army Vientiane forces. In Ban Houie Sai, such an integrated force took over.

Employing fast-breaking coordinated campaigns to gain more control, the leftist faction of the PGNU staged people demonstrations that toppled civilian authorities in major cities such as Savannakhet, Luang Prabang, Pakse and Vientiane. In the capital city, demonstrators barricaded the USAID compound and the American residential enclave at Km. 6. Lao, French and English signs called on "Yankee Go Home" and "CIA Out."

At Ban Houie Sai, the USAID provincial coordinator "already knew their days in town were numbered," wrote **Ken Conboy** in "Spies On The Mekong." He was concerned of rumors that the Pathet Lao contingent of the integrated force would hold the town's expatriate population hostage. The town's expatriates consisted of several dozen, including 19 Americans, most of them aid workers, nine OB, one Briton, and an Italian priest. The provincial governor "was getting ready to leave," Conboy wrote.

Heightening the uncertainty, on December 25, a group of Laotian Army soldiers and Pathet Lao troops, estimated at 100 marched into town. They took over

the airport, military camp, the governor's office and the radio station. They demanded the dismissal of the Lao Army commander and complained about non-payment of their wages.

Three days later, two high ranking PGNU officials came to resolve the mutiny. On December 30, 1974, a Situation Report, sent by the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane read:

"All Americans in Ban Houie Sai and apparently, all other foreigners wishing to leave were permitted to cross to Chang Kong, Thailand morning of December 30 and are being airlifted to Vientiane. Preliminary total is 43 persons. First group arrived Vientiane approximately 1350 hours local and remainder will follow during course of afternoon."

A later telegram from U.S. Ambassador Charles Whitehouse listed the following OB personnel who were evacuated -- **Eula Altamirano, A. Rivera, Roger Mabunga, Romeo Agbayani, Ruben de los Reyes. Mario Dulyunan.**

The following year, the U.S. terminated its entire economic aid projects

in Laos and pulled out all its aid personnel and their dependents. The OB program, fully funded by USAID since 1963, was ordered closed by the Pathet Lao, as well as all other foreign aid activities.

Dickie Labao, a nurse who had spent some months in Ban Houie Sai, was among the last batch of OB personnel who flew out of Vientiane's Wattay Airport to Bangkok, Thailand. On the way to the airport on May 29, 1975 he remembers:

"Time to leave for the airport. Our belongings had been packed to leave at a moment's notice. Only one luggage to a person was the order. An open top Army truck was waiting outside our Vientiane OB House. I, **Ato Pangilinan**, travel officer, **Dr. Gil Cabrera**, medical technologists **Val Handog and Tomas Madrinan**, architect **Fruto Bingcang**, accountant **Rey Yoro**, exited the front door, leaving all our household stuff, beddings and all, inside. We passed by the hospital to bid goodbye to our Lao staff. Sad, silent faces. Sok dee, pai dee. Farewell. good luck, they said. They knew this day was coming. We had worked together for so long."



The Operation Brotherhood team served in Bokeo province beginning in 1969 and pulled out in 1974 as the civil war intensified. Swimming in the Nam Ngao river was a pastime for **Dr. Jose Ballesteros**, nurses **Sofia Deza** and **Dickie Labao**, supply officer **Conrad Calangian** and visiting administrator **Luis Ongsiapco**. shown here in 1972. By the 2020s tourists can also play Tarzan ziplining 130 ft high-above the forest ground, from their treetop houses.

Life Spent Fully, Memories Intact To the End

April 30 is a date that, as this is being written in 2025, most Americans would rather not note in their collective memory. But there is no forgetting. It marks the day 50 years ago, when America, the most militarily powerful country in the world at that time, lost a 20-year war to a third world country. They call it the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese call it the American War.

On this day, its 50th anniversary, the American media is awash in commemoration. Like rubbing salt in raw wounds. No forgetting the 58,318 names of American dead combatants chiseled into the granite walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. The Vietnamese, on this day, honor their own dead in a grand victory parade in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). Estimated one to three million, both combatants and civilians, had died.

The war is officially dated from November 1, 1955 to April 30, 1975. But lost in its origins, was the arrival in South Vietnam a few months earlier of Operation Brotherhood (OB). The seeds of the conflict grew from the partition of the country between the north and the south. It unleashed a historic migration of a close to a million refugees from the north to Saigon, suffering from disease, hunger and death. An emergency relief effort, initiated by the Junior Chamber of the Philippines, commonly known as the Jaycees, shipped medicines, shelter supplies, clothing, food.

With support from worldwide Jaycee chapters, philanthropic groups and governments, the OB project, originally planned to last for only a few months, spread from refugee camps to villages. Press accounts described it as an extraordinary humanitarian response, Asian led, Asian staffed. What fascinated observers were the volunteers from Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Hongkong, Singapore and Malaya as well as from France and the USA. The largest contingent were from

the Philippines, 195 Filipinos in all.

"We were young then, and never minded threats to life and limb," remembers **Mart Martell**, an administrator. The medical personnel -- doctors and nurses -- were joined by village development specialists like agriculturists and fishery technicians. Volunteers lived and worked together, in claustrophobic closeness, spread across the provinces, some in remote places. All non-combatants, three drowned in Tay-Ninh province --- Filipinos **Dr. Jose Alejo**, nurse **Adela Pimentel** and Vietnamese-Filipino interpreter **Yvonne Ocampo**.

What was accomplished in a scant 31 months, from their arrival in October 14, 1954 to the project's termination in December 21, 1956? In his book "Adventures in Viet-Nam", Filipino historian **Miguel Bernad, S.J.** summarized the medical outcome: "Some of the results could be quantified in statistics. The medical teams had treated a total of 721,379 persons in the dispensaries and mobile clinics. In addition they had attended to 7,862 patients in the hospitals and performed 5,023 surgical operations. After their withdrawal, they had left behind 197 Vietnamese trainees who had undergone training in various skills."

"There were of course other things that could not be quantified" Fr. Bernad said. "How does one measure the effect of a project upon a people? Or upon the individual volunteers."

Consider the case of Filipino nurse **Alice Padullo**. At 24 years old, she joined OB in Vietnam in 1955 after graduating from nursing school and working at the Bethany Hospital in San Fernando, La Union province, the Philippines.. "OB made a tremendous impact on her life as it opened opportunities for her career and future," her niece **Valaine D'Ambrosio** tell us by email from Seattle, Washington where Alice spent her last days in hospice care.



From top, Alice Padullo left in South Vietnam. in Laos third from left in 1962, OB patches and pins.

As her memory declined, there was one constant memory she recounted over and over -- her time with OB Vietnam from 1955 to 1956. There was a marble (piece) that she kept close by in her last year of life. She'd show and tell the hospice chap-

lain and nurses that it came from the marble mountains of Tourane, central Vietnam. She remembered Vietnamese phrases that she learned. She would tell us of the many volunteers from various fields of work, the doctors, dentists, engineers, nurses, social workers."

After Vietnam, Alice migrated to the U.S.A. under a Exchange Visitors Program for nurses from 1956 to 1961 to work at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she completed postgraduate studies in ophthalmology nursing. Returning to the Philippines, she joined OB which by then had transferred its project in Vietnam to Laos in 1957. She served there from 1962 to 1965, then flew back to the U.S.A. to work for 28 years in the Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle, retiring in 1993.

Alice happens to be among the

first OB Vietnam volunteers who transitioned to OB Laos, employing the aid experience from her Vietnam days. Indeed even after their Laos sojourn, some trekked on the same volunteer path, doing their thing in other places, away from home. **Sabina Fajardo**, an agriculturist in Paksong, joined the Peace Corp. as did nurse **Puring Dayawon** who trained midwives in Nepal. **Penny Flores**, a social worker in Sam Neua, mentored teachers for two years in Ethiopia. Administrator **Louie Ongsiapco** joined the United Nations High Commission on Refugees assisting civil war victims in Timor Leste, Bangladesh and Myanmar. (See October 2007, Mekong Newsletter "Continuing A Tradition...")

Valaine remembers Alice in an email to me: "My sisters and I took care of our aunt and her husband Perry in the last

four years of their lives. She passed away days after her 92nd birthday. Perry died at 90. Lives well lived, both sharing their love of travel, casinos, fishing, dancing, and RV'ing, visiting family and friends throughout the U.S. I was the primary caregiver and how I wished I received your OB Newsletter when she was alive, to go through her experiences. She married Uncle Perry in 1978, the love of her life. They were married for 44 years when he passed away. They had a beautiful life together. His nickname for her was Lady Luck, while his was Perry Como."

Alice married **Perry Padullo** in 1978 who died at the age of 90. She had married OB engineer **Rodolfo Pacifico** in Laos but were divorced in the 1970s when they settled in the USA. Valaine sent us photos and artifacts Alice had kept from her Vietnam and Lao days.

Seeking the Fate of an Activist Grandfather

For the 1,000 plus persons in our association who worked in Laos from 1957 to 1975, our exodus from the kingdom in 1975 marked a transition from, if not the end, of a cherished sojourn. It was transformative (lots of marriages), dormitory-style living in harm's way, in remote places. Then 50 years ago, we dispersed across the four corners of the planet, most of us returning to our homeland the Philippines. Our website (mekongcircle.org), launched in 2001, was a godsend. At last, a means to seek, reconnect with long-lost colleagues. Hey Mario, where are you?

Then, an unusual message popped up April 8, 2021 from a name not in our directory:

"I was wondering if among your members any have worked at some point with my grandfather Bong Souvannavong who was in the King's Council but was several times a Minister in the 70s. He was already retired but a political activist with his political party. I am trying to get



Bong Souvannavong (left) Lili Sisombat

testimonials and give a better view of who he was as a person."

The writer is **Lili Sisombat**, a senior governance specialist with the World Bank in Washington DC. She is a member of the Lao Women's Association in France established in 1977, a support organization for Lao refugees. With a doctorate in Sociology, her focus is on the return of exiles to Laos. France, together with Thailand, Australia and the U.S.A., were favored places of escape, of the estimated 350,000 Lao diaspora (almost 10 percent of the three million residents)

after the Pathet Lao took power in 1975.

Her grandfather **Bong Souvannavong** is described by an American Embassy dispatch in September 1975 as the "last angry man in Laos." At 69 years old, "he is member of one of the two oldest Vientiane families, served as province chief of Luang Prabang, founded Lao National Union Party in 1947, served as National Assembly Deputy for Vientiane 1947–51 and 1955–59, was President of Constituent Assembly 1946–47, and President of National Congress for Revision of Constitution in 1948 and 1956. He served in several cabinets under Prince Souvannarath, Phoui Sananikone and Prince Boun Oum and as King's Councillor (1965–1971). More interestingly, he frequently criticized American aid as a cause of corruption, attacked the political ambitions of the Lao rightist generals..."

In early October, although known as an advocate of reconciliation with the Communists, he was taken away by the Pathet Lao government along with

two of his daughters and 79 followers.

" We would not see my grandfather again afterwards," Lili said. This month of April, as we mark the end of the Indochinese Wars in 1975 (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) Lili remembers her last day in Laos:

April 1975. I am celebrating my 9th birthday. I go to the Alliance Francaise in Vientiane to attend my classes on how to read and write French. In the following days, my mother Toun says we need to leave, and we should not tell anyone. "It is a secret" she conspires. All five of us will leave, my parents, my elder sister, my little brother and I. It is nighttime and the only things I remember asking was "Why? why are we leaving? what about our dogs Blacky and Lucky, can we take them with us? Who will look after them? How long will we be away?". These were cute puppies with brown marks that made us so happy. Days go by, we are not told where and when to go. I remember we visited my grandfather Bong to pour ສົມມ້າ ສົມມ້າ sǒm má: k'há:lāwā, to give our respects and ask for his pardon as we leave. I think we took a photograph with him and he told my parents

"leave with your children for their future, you know the situation in our country".

The watch hands. The next days, we boarded one of the last commercial flights out of Vientiane. We are stranded in Bangkok for a night. Adults rarely tell their young children what the situation is, why things are happening. I did not see the takeover in Vientiane, the demonstrations, the first arrests. We traveled to Paris via Tehran or was it Karachi? for refueling. We remained on the tarmac for several hours, unable to deplane. It was hot, I was thirsty, bored. It was then that I learned the sense of time, what a minute or an hour lasts. I kept asking: what time is it? What time is it? I could see my father's Omega watch hands moving, one second, sixty seconds, one minute, an hour, too many hours. Time was not elastic."

Bong was a Deputy representing Vientiane province in the Lao National Assembly when Operation Brotherhood teams arrived in Vientiane in 1957. During the first weeks, OB Chairman Oscar Arellano made a round of courtesy calls to various high ranking civilian and military persons including the chief Buddhist monk. There was no mention of a visit

with Bong. In our research we informed Lili that a founding member of the Lao Jaycees, OB's official sponsor, and its first president, Inpeng Suryadhay, was her uncle. So, there was a thread of a connection, however slim, with his grandfather.

Lili's own research on her grandfather revealed his final fate. After his arrest, he together with hundreds of former rightist Ministers and armed force officers, were airlifted to the northern province of Houaphanh. At so called reeducation camps, they languished for years, as prisoners. She found a letter from one prisoner, describing the last days of Bong. It read:

"Until the last moment, his morale had never been low, only his body could not keep up with age, lack of food, medicine, and freedom of movement. Locked up 24 hours a day, starving, skeletal, exhausted, unable to have bowel movement for a whole week, the makeshift enemas performed by another prisoner allowed him to regain a little consciousness before dying three days later in November 1978."

Oral and Visual Histories Now Online

The academic literature on Laos is not a black hole. Take any recent title, flip to the index at the back of the book, then to the bibliographic listing of its archival primary and secondary sources. It's fulsome. Wonder then where that oft-repeated phrase about this "little-known, secretive country" came from. There are doctoral and masters thesis, monographs, histories, numerous studies in Asian journals, fiction and non-fiction works. Lately, with the end of the Indochinese wars of the 1960s and 1970s that engulfed Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, a bunch of memoirs have surfaced. Most were authored by American service personnel, CIA operatives and diplomats. They belong to that genre of "I-was-there-this-is-how -it-was" heroic exploits during the "secret war". I devoted heroic hours myself wading through five of them and published capsule reviews in our Newsletter (see December 2005 and March 2021 issues).

The three-volume Vietnam and Laos 1960s memoirs of Dr. Tom Dooley were best sellers. Another American doctor **Charles Welton** described his struggles managing a public health program of U.S.A.I.D which included OB during the late 1970s in Laos in his 1999 memoir "Tragedy in Paradise: A Country Doctor At War in Laos.". **Primo Doreza**, a Filipino army ordnance specialist trainer to the Lao Armed

Forces from 1959 to 1949 took his turn in a self-published 1994 memoir "From Panay To Laos and Beyond." OB published our own titles - "Goodbye Vientiane" (2004); "Filipinos in Laos" (second edition 2015), "Laos: Why We Cannot Forget" (2024). All OB titles are available from Amazon.

We can relate to many of these Laos memoirs because they described events of the times we were there. Unlike dense, multi-foot-noted academic histories, they are easy reads and most conveniently, written in English. This is not the case with the very few works by Lao authors written in English. "Seri: An Anthology of Lao-Australian Refugee Writings" (2007) collects the experiences of former diplomats, soldiers, clerks, housewives, students, in both English and Lao After the Pathet Lao takeover of Laos in 1975, a few hundreds Lao sought refuge in Australia. By 2021, a census counted 17,000, drawn, according to Lao scholar **Mayoury Ngaosyvayhn** by "tolerance and benevolence of Australian society as a whole. In contrast. she writes that the Lao refugee communities which settled in France or in the U.S.A. "have encountered demanding, less accommodating environments."

A new addition to Lao memoir history comes in the form of interviews mostly with former soldiers with the Lao Armed Forces and

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guerrillas recruited and trained by the CIA to battle North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao insurgents. " They served in various roles as military region generals, Forward Air Guides, liaison officers with US CIA and other officials, nurses, infantry soldiers involved in large unit actions and those on Road Watch teams along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They also discuss training, life before enlisting, as well as life in America as refugees after 1975," said a description posted by the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. Copy the link below into your browser to open the site and watch the participants tell in English and Lao their experiences.

"There are currently 8 interviews . Some sessions include a translator. We have more interviews to add. They are a work in progress. We are looking to expand the archive to include more interviews if you

know of anyone who could contribute. They are a valuable addition to the Library of Congress collection," **Ryan Wolfson-Ford** told us. While most oral histories are only in text, this collection is unique in combining both formats, He is a Southeast Asian reference specialist in the Asian-Division of the Library with a focus on Laos and Thailand and also researches Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar.. He holds a doctorate in Southeast Asian history from the University of Wisconsin in its Madison campus and was a lecturer of Asian history at Arizona State University. He has added two of our OB books in the Library collection.

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/lao-special-guerrilla-unit-and-royal-lao-army-veteran-interviews/about-this-collection/>