

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Jesse Walton

PATRICK J. "Pat" and MELVYN "Mel" HOWRIGAN, AAM F/W pilot 1968-1972. Pat and Mel were stationed at Vientiane, Laos. Pat flew C-23K aircraft in Laos during in a period in which there was considerable fighting around the Plain of Jars in central Laos. During the dry season the Pathet Lao launched their offensive. Hill top positions were defended by Hmong warriors under the leadership of Gen. Vang Pao. AAM supplied these positions using helicopters, Caribou, C-123K and STOL (short field landing and take-off) aircraft. On an air drop mission to LS-32 (Bouam Long, Laos) in a C-123K with JESSE WALTON ground fire hits caused the air drop to be abandoned. Earlier on June 2, 1971 HERB CLARK and TRIKIT THUTTANON died when their C-46 was shot down during an air drop to the same position. Pat remembers flying with "Diamond Jim" VOYLES and making night air drops with RAYFORD W. "Jeff" JEFFREY. "Diamond Jim" VOYLES had the misfortune of landing gear-up in a C-123K at Pakse, Laos. However, investigation by JOHN C. McRAINEY established that Jim's aircraft had a history of landing gear problems and "Diamond Jim" was absolved of any responsibility for the accident. Pat remembers a C-123K landing approach at Long Tieng with JESSE WALTON in which the wing flap hinge broke causing the aircraft to try a slow roll. Full aileron was used and the landing at LS-20A (Long Tieng) was abandoned. Pat served a treasurer for F.E.P.A. (Far East Pilots Association). Mel worked at various times as a clerk in the traffic office, secretary for the chief pilot (Vientiane) and as F.E.P.A. secretary. Pat and Mel were married shortly after they left AAM in 1972. They have two sons Michael age 15 years and Danny age 13 years. They live in Orange County in Southern California. Pat was hired by Air California which latter was absorbed by American Airlines. He now flies captain on the 767/757 aircraft. Mel keeps busy with the house and looking after the boys. She like to play tennis and has become skilled at the game. Pat and Mel love to travel and do as much as time permits. Pat says quote "I owe a lot to AAM and the guys I flew with there. They helped me get a start in commercial aviation". Unquote.