

The Thai Queen Mother's Tour of Nakhon Phanom Province

In January 1970, the Thai Queen Mother (the King's mother) made a tour of the Nakhon Phanom Province, visiting four somewhat remote villages. (This was a very special occasion as the remote Province had not had a Royal visit for a very protracted period.) Along with her aides, the Queen Mother was flown to these villages in a Thai Royal Air Force special VIP UH-1 "Huey" helicopter. The 56th Special Operations Wing stationed at Nakhon Phanom Air Base, was asked to provide transportation on this tour for the Nakhon Phanom Province Governor, Colonel Charas and his staff. The Wing assigned this task to the 21st Special Operations Squadron and I was fortunate to be selected to be the pilot of the CH-3E used for the mission. My co-pilot on the flight was Major Stuart and Sergeants Massengale and Cannon were the flight engineers. We were also accompanied by the base's Thai interpreter and an Air Force photographer.

At the last village that we visited, the Queen Mother presented me and each of my crewmembers a small commemorative medal in a[[recitation of the support we had provided to the Governor during her tour. Attached is a copy of an article from the NKP base newspaper picturing me receiving the medal from the Queen Mother. Other photos made during the tour are also attached.

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Queen Mother

Princess King Srisungvalya, Matron Saint of the Border Police, presents Maj. Robert R. Arnau, of the Wing Director of Operations, with a booklet and coin. The Queen's Mother made visits to Ban Lao Nard, Ban Ne Kha, Ban Phon Toom and Ban Pho Sai. Transportation was provided by the 21st Special Operations Squadron for the Nakhon Phanom Provincial Governor, Colonel Charas and his staff. Princess King Srisungvalya presented gifts of blankets, toys and medicine to the villagers. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Msgt. Bob Davis)