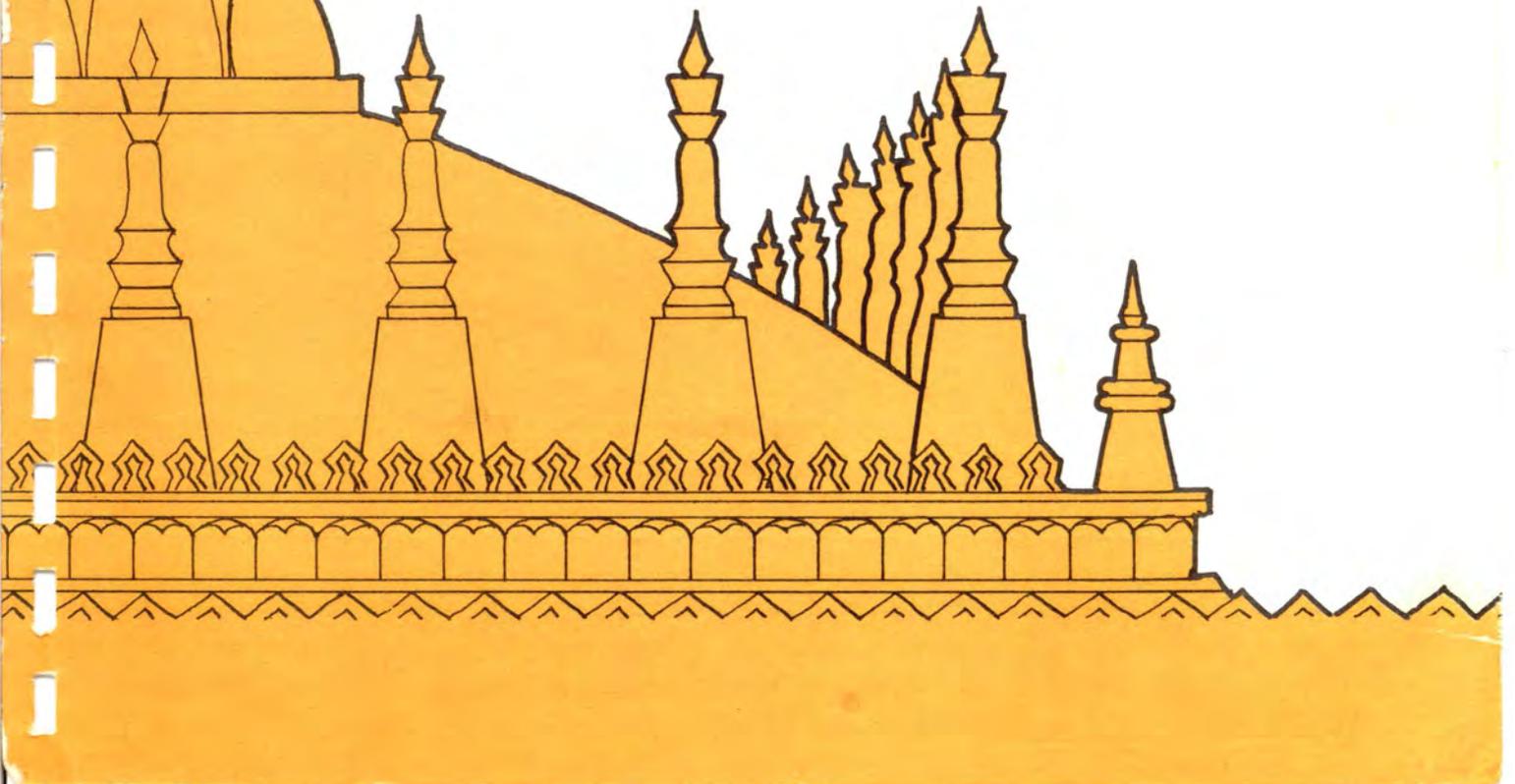


post report

Vientiane, Laos

December, 1968



POST REPORT

U. S. MISSION TO LAOS

1968





EMBASSY
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Vientiane, Laos

December 1, 1968

A WORD FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Laos is a nation of gracious and attractive people who have long suffered from the ambitions and aggressions of other nations. Despite the turmoil and the privations which have been inflicted upon them for these many years, the Laotians retain their gentle manners, their hopes for peace, and their devotion to the Buddhist way of life.

The United States is a signatory to the fourteen-nation Geneva agreements of 1962 which endorse the stated desire of the Royal Government of Laos "to build a peaceful, neutral, independent, democratic, unified and prosperous" nation. The work of American officials assigned to Laos is directed towards the accomplishment of these several objectives.

Americans working in Laos can feel a real sense of satisfaction in working with our Laotian friends towards these aims. At the same time, because of the difficulties inherent in their accomplishment, all these objectives pose formidable challenges both to the Laotians, and to the Americans and other friends of Laos who assist them in their task.

Therefore, I can assure any American official assigned here to Laos an interesting, rewarding and challenging tour of duty among a pleasant people and in a worthy country. This post report is designed to present some impressions of the sort of life which Americans in Laos can expect to live.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

William H. Sullivan
Ambassador

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ORIENTATION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF POST

Laos has two capitals: the royal capital of Luang Prabang and the administrative capital of Vientiane. Luang Prabang, located approximately 100 miles north of Vientiane on the Mekong River, is the residence of the King and is a small, picturesque provincial center, which is considered the most attractive city in Laos.

Vientiane, the political, administrative and commercial center of Laos, is the largest city in the country, with a population of about 167,000. It is a large provincial town in appearance and atmosphere. Vientiane is situated on the north bank of the Mekong, on one side of a large plain which extends some 40 miles north of the city and south over most of northern Thailand. Personnel stationed here find living conditions simple, but agreeably comfortable despite some inconveniences. Many have found that the close-knit atmosphere of the American and international communities enhances their tours.

There are a total of 21 duty posts within the country. The four main field duty posts are described in the last section of this report.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA AND POST

GEOGRAPHY

The landlocked kingdom of Laos, the keystone nation of the Southeast Asian Peninsula, shares common borders with six other countries, two of them Communist. The border runs 146 miles with Burma to the northwest, 263 with China to the north, 818 with North Vietnam to the northeast, 301 with South Vietnam to the southeast, 277 with Cambodia to the south, and 1090 (including over 500 along the Mekong River) with Thailand to the west. Its total area covers approximately 91,000 square miles, or slightly more than Idaho or Great Britain. A large part of the terrain of Laos, particularly in the north, is covered with dense jungle and rugged mountains, the latter sometimes rising over 9,000 feet.

CLIMATE

The climate of Laos is monsoonal with three seasons. There are five months of heavy rainfall from May through September, when the rains start tapering off in October, a cool season begins that lasts through January. February through April is hot and humid. In April, the warmest month, the temperature in Vientiane normally ranges between 72 and 93 degrees Fahrenheit, and in January, the coolest month, between 57 and 83 degrees Fahrenheit. However, temperatures of 103 have been recorded in April, and 39 in January.

POPULATION

The population, composed of many ethnic groups, is estimated at 2,738,000, but no accurate census has ever been taken. This sparse population is unevenly spread, with the greatest concentration in the Mekong valley. Perhaps half of them are ethnic Lao, a people of Tai stock who are believed to have migrated originally from southwestern China principally during the 13th century in the wake of Kublai Khan's oncoming forces. Mountain tribes, also of Tai stock, are found in north Laos, while a number of other mountain tribes of Indonesian or proto-Malay background inhabit central and south Laos. The lack of common origins, customs, traditions, and beliefs among the



Meo girls of Northern Laos pounding rice.



Kha women of the southern provinces.



Lao Teung hunter with crossbow.

various minorities poses serious difficulties for the political unification of the Kingdom. There are also influential minorities of Vietnamese and Chinese, and smaller groups of Cambodians, Indians, and Pakistani. In addition, there are over a thousand Frenchmen and other Europeans in the country, of whom few are permanent residents.

LANGUAGE

Lao is a tonal language like others of the Sino-Thai family. The Vientiane dialect has six tones, only three of which transfer directly to Bangkok Thai. Vientiane Lao and Bangkok Thai have areas of mutual comprehension only to educated speakers. As with English and French, abstract words tend to be cognate more frequently than everyday vocabulary.

Written Lao and Thai both use scripts of Indian origin, but Lao letters are rounded rather than angular, and Lao uses fewer consonants. The Lao spelling system is infinitely more representative of the spoken word than Thai, which tends to include unpronounced letters that display a word's Sanskrit origin.

Although textbooks in Lao have been developed through the sixth grade and are gradually being written at secondary levels, French remains the principal language of secondary education. French thus serves as the second official language, and is commonly used in government and commerce. Latest figures indicate a literacy of slightly over 20%. Furthermore, the numerous ethnic groups possess their own languages or dialects, and in the case of the Vietnamese and Chinese, their own school systems.

RELIGION

The predominant and, indeed, state religion of the Kingdom is Theravada Buddhism, common also to Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, and Ceylon. It is not unusual, however, to see spirit shrines in conjunction with Buddhist temples. While the mountain tribes are principally animists, some of them have adopted Buddhism while retaining many of their old beliefs.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

Laos is a constitutional parliamentary monarchy. Under the December 1955 revision of the Constitution, originally promulgated by the King in May 1947, the hitherto exclusively male franchise was extended to women. In normal times, general elections were held every five years. But Constitutional amendments passed in 1965 gave the King three options during times of crisis. He chose appointment after limited popular consultations, and a provisional two-year Assembly was selected.

The bicameral legislature is composed of a National Assembly of 59 members, which wields the real legislative power of the country, and a less active King's Council of twelve elder statesmen, all of whom are appointed directly by the King, six upon the recommendation of the Assembly. An absolute majority of deputies present is required to uphold bills returned by the King's council for Assembly reconsideration. This Council privilege has been rarely, if ever, exercised.

The Prime Minister is designated by the King in consultation with political leaders. The Prime Minister submits his proposed cabinet to the National Assembly for approval, a favorable two-thirds majority of deputies present being required for investiture. Deputies who are candidates for ministerial posts may not participate in the vote of confidence for a new government. Members of the Cabinet need not be Assemblymen. The pro-Communist Pathet Lao have recognized neither the previous legislature nor the present one which was designated in 1965.

The Constitution provides that the judicial power shall be separate and independent of the executive and legislative powers. In practice, the judiciary is the least vigorous of the branches of government.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

In the mid-fourteenth century, King Fa Ngoum united Laos, set up his capital at Luang Prabang, and ruled an area that would today encompass not only Laos but also much of northeast Thailand and the southernmost part of Yunnan province of China. In the following century, the Vietnamese began their periodic incursions, which persist to this day. By the 18th century, Thailand and Vietnam had begun their competition for Lao soil. In the early 19th century, the Thai of Siam obtained ascendancy over much of what is now Laos and retained their hold for the most part until France made Laos a protectorate in 1893. The Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1907 defined the boundaries of Laos as they exist today.

During World War II, Japan did not fully take over control of Laos until March, 1945, and just prior to their defeat the Japanese persuaded the King of Luang Prabang to declare his Kingdom independent. In September, 1945, the Prime Minister of the "independent" government proclaimed the creation of the Kingdom of Laos, including the areas of Vientiane and Champassak, under the King of Luang Prabang. In October, a provincial government formed by the "Lao Issara" (Free Lao) leaders, "dethroned" the King because of his alleged loyalty to the French. In May, 1949, French troops occupied Laos and recognized the sovereignty of the King of Luang Prabang over the entire country.

France gradually accorded Laos its independence, first - in 1949 "within the French Union" and, in October, 1953, recognized the Kingdom as a fully sovereign state, although Laos reaffirmed its adherence to the French Union. This relationship was dissolved upon the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements of 1954, which terminated the Indo-China War. Laos became a member of the United Nations in 1955.

From 1964 to 1960 pro-Western or Conservative governments held power, except for the brief interval in 1957-58 of a coalition government which included communist ministers.

In August, 1960, a young paratroop commander in Vientiane, Captain Kong Le, seized the capital in a coup. In an attempt to avert civil war among the non-communist elements, Prince Souvanna Phouma, a former Prime Minister, was again called upon to form a government. General Phoumi Nosavan, a leader of the conservative, anti-communist faction, at first agreed to serve in the government, but soon reversed his decision and established a military headquarters in southern Laos from which he mounted a campaign to retake Vientiane. He recaptured Vientiane in December, 1960, and Kong Le retreated with his troops to the northeast.

Meanwhile, Souvanna had accepted a Soviet aid offer, and the Soviets started airlifting supplies from the Soviet Union via Hanoi. The Soviets used this airlift to bring in arms and ammunition not only for the Kong Le forces, but also for the communist forces called the Pathet Lao who with North Vietnamese support, had split off from the Lao Issara movement when it accepted reconciliation with the Royal Government in 1949. Profiting by general political and military instability, the Pathet Lao returned to full insurgency. In early January, 1961, Pathet Lao and Kong Le forces, supplied by the Soviets and advised and encadred by the North Vietnamese, seized the strategic Plain of Jars, where they established headquarters. By the spring of 1961, the Pathet Lao insurgents, strongly reinforced by North Vietnamese units and cadres, had scored important military victories, and appeared to be in a position to take over the entire country.



The That Luang temple in Vientiane. In front is the statue of King Setthathirath, one of the more famous Laotian rulers.



Monument aux Morts, Vientiane

The United States was faced with three alternatives: The total loss of Laos to the Communists; military intervention, involving U.S. troops and other outside forces; or settlement of the crisis through peaceful international and internal negotiations to achieve a neutrality that would permit the Kingdom to survive as a nation. Bipartisan Congressional leadership was consulted on the decision to transfer the struggle from the military to the political domain. It was thus that the United States accepted participation in the 14-nation conference convened at Geneva in May 1961. After long and difficult negotiations the new Geneva agreements were signed July 23, 1962, providing certain international guarantees for the independence and neutrality of Laos. Internally, the Government of National Union was formed in June, 1962.

Of immediate importance under the 1962 Geneva agreements was the requirement that all foreign military troops and advisors, except a small French training force, leave the country within 75 days of the signing. Under the supervision of the International Control Commission (ICC) consisting of political and military representatives of India, Canada, and Poland, all 666 U.S. military advisory personnel (no U.S. combat troops were in the country) departed Laos before the October 7, 1962 deadline. Only 40 Vietnamese troops were withdrawn through ICC checkpoints, however. In his June 20, 1963, letter to the Co-Chairmen (Great Britain and the Soviet Union) of the Geneva Conference, Prime Minister Souvanna charged that substantial numbers of North Vietnamese cadres and combat troops remained in Laos, and the Prime Minister has repeated this charge on several occasions since. Within a few months of the signing of the 1962 Geneva agreements, the Pathet Lao supported by the North Vietnamese, began maneuvering to subvert or eliminate Kong Le's neutralist military forces, which constituted Souvanna's principal military strength. Minor skirmishing broke into open hostilities in April, 1963, just after a small group of Neutralists under Colonel Deuane Souvannarath broke away from Kong Le's forces and established what they called the "true Neutralist forces", but what the government prefers to term the dissident Neutralists. The Pathet Lao and the Deuanists attacked Kong Le's troops in the positions which they held jointly with the Pathet Lao in Xieng Khouang province. With assistance from the troops under Deputy Prime Minister General Phoumi Nosavan, however, Kong Le was able to extricate most of his units from these areas as well as from other locations in central Laos, and to maintain his positions in the western part of the Plain of Jars. These Pathet Lao aggressive tactics not only failed to destroy the neutralist forces, but resulted in much closer political as well as military cooperation between the neutralists and the conservatives. The Pathet Lao ministers withdrew from Vientiane, leaving Pathet Lao representation in the Cabinet in the hands of the two secretaries of state.

Following the failure of the tripartite negotiations of April 17 and 18, 1964, Prime Minister Souvanna announced in great discouragement that he was resigning. On April 19, troops of General Siho Lamphouthacoul, the Director General of the Department of National Coordination (DNC), a paramilitary organization which superseded the national police and some of its functions in 1960, arrested the Prime Minister and some high Neutralist civilian and military leaders. Elements of the conservative Army's Fifth Military Region under General Kouprasith Abhay soon joined the DNC forces. Due to the sentiments of the Lao people, as well as to the spirited intervention of foreign ambassadors, Souvanna was quickly returned to power: in fact, his military and financial power was increased at Phoumi's expense. Souvanna reorganized his government, discharging two of his left-leaning Neutralist cabinet members, who sought a relatively noisy refuge in Pathet Lao controlled territory where they still claim to be members of the Lao cabinet. In addition, Souvanna replaced several ministers and secretaries of state who were considered either corrupt or ineffective.

In the meantime, the Neutralist forces in the Plain of Jars, confused by the kaleidoscopic events in Vientiane, began to engage in some open disputes among various factions. Taking ad-

vantage of the dissidence in Neutralist ranks (and militarily using the strategic heights which they had captured from Kong Le's units in February), the Pathet Lao forces, supported by North Vietnamese troops, attacked the Neutralists in May, and attempted to represent their aggression as an open clash among Neutralist units. The attacks culminated in the withdrawal of most of the Neutralist troops from the Plain of Jars. Further Neutralist units and some officers were broken off from the Kong Le forces and placed under Colonel Deuane's nominal command but actually subjected to Pathet Lao control. The Indian and the Canadian ICC team was evacuated from the Plain just before the fall of Kong Le's headquarters.

These military developments prompted Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma to call for military logistical assistance, and the United States responded within the framework of the Geneva Accords. On May 26, the British, also at the behest of the Prime Minister, invited the signatories of the Geneva Accords to begin consultations in Vientiane on means of restoring peace. The United States and several other signatories accepted the invitation, which the Communist states spurned. At the close of consultations in June, the representatives concluded that the Pathet Lao, with North Vietnamese support, had initiated the attacks against the Neutralists, and that the deteriorating military situation in Laos presented a grave threat to the peace of southeast Asia. They recommended that, conforming to the Prime Minister's views, all parties should ceasefire and withdraw under ICC control and verification, to positions held before the most recent fighting.

Periodically during 1964, the Government presented evidence of North Vietnamese military involvement in Laos in violation of the Geneva Accords. In addition to documents and personal letters obtained from North Vietnamese soldiers killed in engagements with government forces, North Vietnamese soldiers were captured beginning in September 1964, and were brought to Vientiane for ICC interrogation and exposure to the world press.

With world awareness of the serious threat to the peace posed by continued Communist aggression, there have been various proposals for a new Geneva-type meeting of the 14 nations that took part in the 1962 conference. The United States had indicated its willingness to join some form of discussion to restore peace, provided Souvanna's pre-conditions were met of a ceasefire and Pathet Lao withdrawal to positions held before May 16, 1964. The United States has also pointed out that there already have been two high-level conferences on Southeast Asia and two formal agreements in 1954 and 1962--neither of which the Communists have carried out. Up to now, failure to achieve peace has not been due to lack of conferences but to failure on the part of Communist states to honor agreements already made. Since Peking and Hanoi refuse to end the conflicts by the simple act of leaving Laos and Vietnam alone, the United States remains committed to help Laos and other Southeast Asian nations in their struggle for security and independence.

Efforts on the part of the three Lao factions to resolve their difficulties, in meetings in Paris during August and September, 1964, likewise produced no basic concessions except a general agreement to continue talking. Talks have continued sporadically in Vientiane since then. Their main topic has been to discuss a place for the eventual meeting of the leaders of the three factions Souvanna for the Neutralists, Boun Oum for the conservatives, and Souphanouvong for the Communists.

In the meantime, in Vientiane, General Siho began to differ more and more from General Kouprasith. A particular reason for the split was Siho's revival of some of the monopolies and other corruption which Phoumi had practiced in order to have funds for maintaining political support. Colonel Bounleut Saycocie then led some forces in Vientiane in a January 31, 1965 "demonstration" allegedly against the general staff. Bounleut denied that he was acting on behalf of General Phoumi, and declared that he wished merely to show to the government and the general

staff that many professional Army officers, who were not interested in politics, desired a truly unified general staff that would get rid of Siho as well as certain bad elements from the Army. The "demonstration" provoked sporadic clashes between Fifth Region and police forces which finally erupted into open battle in Vientiane on February 3. Phoumi, attempting to give the impression that he had the overwhelming support of the Lao Army, including the forces of Bounleut, Siho, and the Second Military Region to the northeast, stated that he had lost confidence in the general staff, in the government, and in Souvanna, and felt constrained to take charge of the situation. Second Military Region troops attacked Vientiane from the south. The Siho police, when faced with an ultimatum to disperse peacefully, fought back, resulting in considerable destruction in the city. The forces under Colonel Bounleut, somewhat belatedly, rallied to the government and played a not inconsiderable role in destroying the last police resistance.

The February 3 battle settled many military and political problems, but Constitutional problems remained. The National Assembly elected in 1960 was coming to the end of its five-year mandate, and the government concluded, somewhat reluctantly, that regular elections could not be held because of internal warfare. Accordingly, a National Congress amended the Constitution, giving the King three options during times of crisis. The King selected the option of popular consultations, and the Fifth Legislature entered into session August 18.

The Pathet Lao were invited to participate in the elections but they predictably refused and denounced them as a farce. They have also continued to claim that they, along with the dissident Neutralist minister and secretary of state, have been excluded from the government. From their so-called "liberated" areas they continue to affirm that they remain the true representatives of the original coalition government, and continue to denounce the "Authorities of Vientiane" as American reactionaries. In the international sphere, they generally continue support of the Peking and Hanoi line except for some of Peking's more blatant attacks on the Russians.

On the military scene, the North Vietnamese, with decreasing assistance from the Pathet Lao, have made strong attacks against government positions in Sam Neua province during each dry season for the last four years. In Savannakhet Province in March 1965, the Vietnamese launched a daring attack against the Reserve Officers' training school at Dong Hene, along Route 9, some 50 Kilometers east of Savannakhet city. About 60 students and some officers successfully withstood the Vietnamese assault, and together with the Lao Air Force, accounted for a locally unprecedented 200 enemy dead. In addition, the government forces captured nine North Vietnamese Army prisoners. In November, 1965, the North Vietnamese unsuccessfully attempted to seize the Mekong River town of Thakhek, capital of Khammouane province. Several more Vietnamese soldiers were killed and captured in this venture. In January, 1968, North Vietnamese forces overran Lao Army forces at Nam Bac, weakening the Lao reserve capability. In the first four months of 1968 North Vietnamese Units, supported by Pathet Lao forces, harassed northern Laos and put increasing pressure on the south. The province capitals of Saravane and Attopeu were threatened and cut off from land communications. The military post of Lao Ngam was penetrated on one occasion and kept under continued pressure.

To conform with other Communist-instigated insurgency movements in Southeast Asia, the Pathet Lao was renamed the Lao People's Liberation Army in October 1965.

The ICC, which had been greatly hindered in its operations by Pathet Lao refusal to permit entry into its "liberated" territory, was asked to investigate these several communist attacks. Accounts of North Vietnamese captured in earlier operations in 1964, as well as during the Dong Hene attack, have been released as parts of majority reports signed only by India and Canada. The Poles refused to participate in the investigations. In February and April 1968, the Indian and

Canadian Commissions went to the South, visiting Attopeu and Saravane over strong Polish objections.

On the government side, a significant area in northern Vientiane province was regained from communist control during Operation Triangle in the summer of 1964. Towns like Vang Vieng and Kassy, and villages like Nong Peth, Done, and Muong Met were returned to the government fold. In south Laos, a concerted social, economic, and security program got under way in mid-1965 in the Sedone Valley. Efforts to integrate Neutralist forces into the National Army made progress after Neutralist colonels ousted Kong Le from effective command in October, 1966. A sad example of the periodic bursts of violence that occasionally characterize the Lao scene was the bombing, during the same month, of military targets in Vientiane by former Lao Air Force Commander, General Ma, and a few of his pilots, in a misguided attempt to annihilate certain military leaders.

In January and again in June, 1966, the National Assembly mounted separate interpellations of the government, the second series continuing into September. Their sponsor introduced a motion of censure against the government at the end of August, and the Assembly rejected the government's budget September 16. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma then asked the King to dissolve the Assembly. After consulting his Council, the King so ordered as of October 7. Elections for the Sixth Legislature began on January 31. The session, in marked contrast to its predecessor, was noted for its atmosphere of constructive cooperation between the government and the Assembly. The King closed the session on September 8. The Sixth King's Council was inaugurated in September and the First Session of this body was closed by the King on October 13. The Second Session of both bodies was opened by the King on May 11, 1968.

In October, 1967, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma traveled to the United States where he spoke before the UN General Assembly and met with President Johnson, Secretary of State Rusk and other American officials. In early November, the Prime Minister made an official visit to Australia. Also, in November, Crown Prince Vongsavang Vatthana traveled to the United States on an official 10-day visit, which included a meeting with President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey and other American officials. King Savang Vatthana completed a two-week official visit to India on December 15, 1967.

THE UNITED STATES MISSION

The U.S. Mission is composed of the Embassy, the USAID, the U.S. Information Service, the Army and Air Attaches, and the Marine Guards. The Chancery is located near the center of town on Rue Bartholomie. The telephone numbers are 2126/29.

The USAID/Laos Mission is located in the Na Hai Diao Compound, half a mile from the Embassy Compound. The municipal telephone numbers are 2071/2.

The offices of the U.S. Information Service are on Avenue Lane Xang, near the National Assembly and next to the Lycee. They may be reached through the American Embassy switchboard.

The Army and Air Attaches are located in the Na Hai Diao Compound and may be reached by using the American Embassy or the USAID telephone numbers.

The Marine Guards are stationed at the Embassy and USAID headquarters.



U.S. Embassy Compound at Rue Bartholomie: Chancery at the right.



USAID Compound at Na Hai Diao.

Washington agencies, or the post from which personnel depart, notify the Mission in Laos of new arrivals and on this basis all newcomers are met at the airport. Should there be a change in your schedule, however, contact an Embassy or U.S. Consulate enroute and ask that the post be notified of your correct arrival date. Should you arrive without the post's having been notified in advance, request transportation in the airline station wagon to the downtown area and phone the Embassy or the USAID from the airline office. There is almost always a U.S. Government employee or family member at the airport from whom you may request assistance, and you should not have too much difficulty in finding your way to the headquarters of your agency.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Major cities in the region are Saigon, Vietnam, with its twin city, Cholon, and Bangkok, Thailand, each of which has a population of approximately one million. There is daily round trip air service between Vientiane and Bangkok (two hours each way). Bangkok is a major air stop for flights to Rangoon, Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Manila. Down the Malay peninsula, Penang may be reached by train or plane from Bangkok for fine beaches and interesting shops; one may continue on to Cameron Highlands (for golf, cool weather and rest), to Kuala Lumpur, the capital, and finally to Singapore.

Within the country of Laos, places of interest include the royal capital of Luang Prabang, with its many ornate Buddhist temples, and Pakse, a food and tin center in southern Laos. Both of these cities are accessible by air from Vientiane. All of the sub-areas and regional areas of Laos described in this report are worth a visit.

In Thailand there is overnight train service (berths and food) between Bangkok and Nongkhai which is across the Mekong, near Vientiane. The river may be crossed by antiquated ferry or launch, and a short drive brings one into Vientiane. Bangkok may likewise be reached by a new paved highway from Vientiane (using the ferry to cross the Mekong). There are also domestic flights twice a week between Nongkhai and Bangkok.

At the present time, travel around Vientiane by U.S. Government personnel is restricted to a narrow radius of the city consisting of approximately 13 kilometers. Travel to other areas in Laos may be performed after approval has been received from appropriate authorities. However, within the above limitations there are the usual Lao villages and a number of tribal settlements. These are colorful and interesting, and will appeal to "shutter bugs". The villages are typically Asian, and the inhabitants are friendly and hospitable. It is interesting to watch the women while they weave cotton or silk by hand. Textiles are considered one of the country's finest products and worth collecting, but households which have an excess available for sale are rare.

TRAVEL IN THAILAND

There are several good beach areas two to three hours' drive south of Bangkok on both coasts. Bang Saen and Pattaya are the favorite vacation spots on the east coast, and Hua Hin on the western shore. At each location accommodations can be obtained at hotels or in private cottages. JUSMAG/Thailand has several cottages at Pattaya, and Hua Hin may be reached by train or car from Bangkok. Boats for fishing and water sports may be obtained at all resorts. Further down the Malay Peninsula, just north of the Thai-Malaysian border, is Songkhla, where a new hotel and pool are located on the beach.

It is also possible to travel by train or plane from Bangkok to Chiangmai. The streets of this small city are lined with flame trees, and picturesque temples are reflected in the klongs

(canals) which lace it. Located in a valley at 1,023 feet elevation, surrounded by mountains, Chiengmai offers a change of climate in the cool months, and is a tourists' delight. Attractions range from visits to obscure hill tribes and watching elephants work the teak forests, to trips to a silk and cotton weaving factory where Chiengmai silk and cotton may be bought at very reasonable prices. Other gift items to be found in this area include Thai lacquer, Thai dolls, silver, celadon ware, and basketry. Of special interest to some is the McKean Leprosy Colony, one of the largest in the Far East. Temple-touring in Chiengmai and its vicinity is possible, and interesting.

LIFE AT POST

HOUSING EMBASSY/USIS/ATTACHE

a. Government Quarters - The Ambassador's Residence, a U.S. Government-owned property, is a two-story French colonial house on the bank of the Mekong. It has a long living-dining room opening onto a spacious screened-in veranda. A large library, a powder room and a pantry are on the first floor. There are three bedrooms, each with bath, on the second floor. A cabana, at the rear of the house with a covered walkway connecting it to the residence, is used extensively for large-scale entertaining, and has two bedrooms and a bath for guests. There are a swimming pool and a badminton court at the rear of the residence, and a garden at the front.

The residence of the D.C.M. is a two-storey dwelling completely air conditioned located in the Wat Sisangvone and That Luang areas about 2-1/2 miles from the Chancery.

The home is Vientiane modern and has a large living room, a large dining room, a full kitchen and 2/1 bath on the first floor. A complete kitchen is also located in the basement and connects with the first floor kitchen by a dumb-waiter. The second floor contains four medium-large sized bedrooms, baths and sitting room. A screened-in porch may be converted into a fifth bedroom when necessary. The residence is suitable for large representational requirements.

While no gardens are located in the rear of the house there is a lovely large front yard with green lawns, bushes and shrubberies.

b. "Silver City" - The Embassy compound, called "Silver City" because of its aluminum exteriors, is approximately two miles from the center of the city, and two blocks from Vientiane's most spectacular structure, the That Luang, a Buddhist shrine. The compound consists of 18 prefabricated houses. Each house has two small bedrooms, one bath, one living-dining room, screened veranda and modern kitchen. Servants' quarters are at the far end of the compound. It is a lovely compound, with lawns in the public areas and colorful gardens maintained by the occupants of the houses.

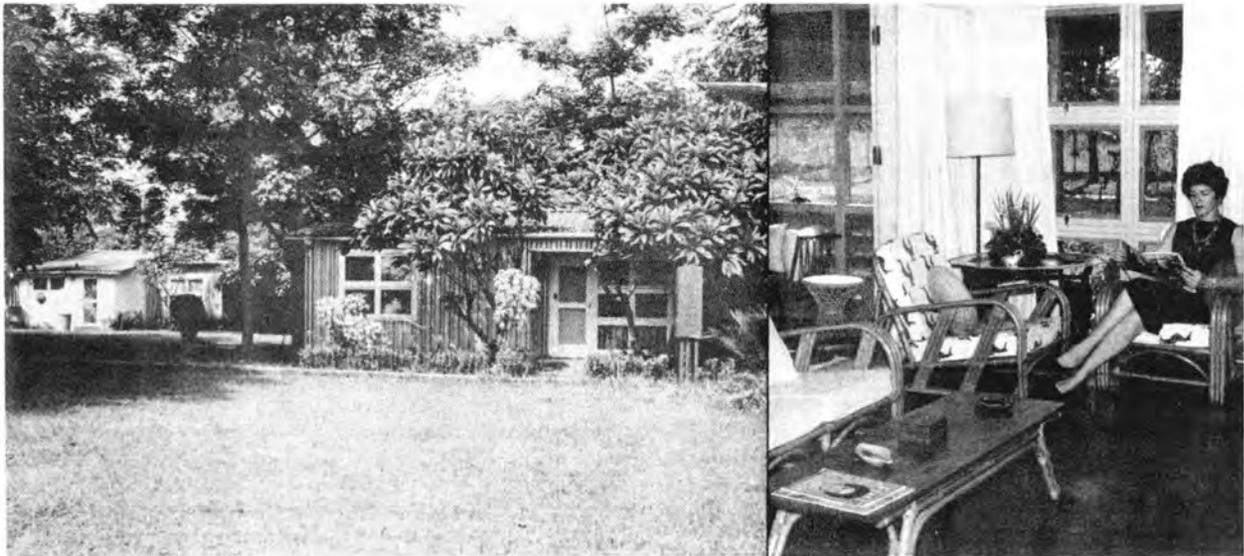
c. Leased Housing - The Embassy, USIS and Army and Air Attaches lease sufficient dwellings to provide adequate housing for all family and bachelor personnel. Representational responsibility of the occupant is kept in mind in leasing or assigning leased houses. The leased houses, for the most part, can best be described as "upper class" masonry types, and are not the most modern by American standards. Nevertheless, they are spacious and airy, usually with large, high-ceilinged rooms, at least one veranda, and small to medium-sized gardens.

d. Bachelor Quarters - Single personnel may be required to share quarters during a part of their assignment in Vientiane, but efforts are being made to assign them to individual dwellings as soon as feasible. Most occupants of "Silver City" are single employees of the Embassy and USIS, although married couples, some with one child, have occupied these houses from time to time. Bachelors with the Embassy, USIS, and Army and Air Attaches are also housed in government-leased houses.

Single and unaccompanied Attache officer personnel are housed in a BOQ compound located two miles from the center of the city on the road to Chinaimo. Single Attache enlisted men are housed in a number of leased houses located in various parts of the city.



Deputy Chief of Mission's residence and part of the living room.



Silver City cottages and typical interior view.

USAID HOUSING

Housing for USAID employees is provided in Government-owned or leased quarters. Basic furniture listed on pages 25 and 26 is supplied by the Agency.

"Kilometer Six" the main USAID housing area, is located six kilometers (4 miles) north-east of Vientiane. The Compound of 122 one-story family housing units of U.S. Standards includes paved streets, the American School, and a play area. Each unit is surrounded by an area of ground which will permit some gardening, and fences have been built around individual properties.

Most USAID personnel can expect to be directly assigned to suitable Km-6 housing upon their arrival, and usually will occupy these quarters for the remainder of their tour.

Most units are constructed of cement block masonry, concrete, and composition materials. All of them consist of a living-dining room with overhead fans, at least two bedrooms with small, built in closets, a kitchen, and a bathroom. One servant's room with lavatory and shower is provided. There are louvered windows and open areas to admit as much air as possible. At least one bedroom is air-conditioned. Water and electricity, both from USAID sources are adequate, but sometimes subject to restrictions during periods of heavy use. Each unit is equipped with a refrigerator, hot water heater, stove, water filters and kitchen cabinets.

About two-thirds of the family units are individual houses, with screened porches and large lawns, built between 1957 and 1960. All two- and three-bedroom houses have one bathroom; four bedroom houses have two bathrooms.

The remaining one-third are duplex style units with larger bedrooms and more built-in closet space, built in 1967-1968. Most of the three-bedroom duplex units have two bathrooms, one of which has a bath tub. However, these units do not have a screened porch, and the yard area is small.

The four bedroom units are generally reserved for families with four or more children. Some of the bedrooms are quite small. It is advised that larger families bring double deck bunk beds for doubling up. These are not provided by the Mission.

RESIDENCES ON THE ECONOMY

There are several residences on the Na Hai Diao Compound itself and USAID leases a number of residences in various locations of Vientiane. These range from 2 to 5 bedrooms, and are generally of masonry and concrete construction. The leased residences are generally larger than the Km-6 units and provide more privacy and more contact with the local population. They are equipped and furnished in the same manner as the Km-6 houses, but utility services are not always dependable.

These residences are generally occupied by employees whose representational responsibilities require close contact with local officials or whose duties require them to be near the compound.

BACHELOR QUARTERS

Most USAID quarters for single employees are in leased compounds. Sunset and Rainbow Villages are on opposite sides of the road 5 kilometers from the center of Vientiane on the road to "Kilometer Six". Both have duplex type brick and masonry houses. Sunset Village has 24 sin -



A newly-built duplex at Km.6 USAID Housing Compound.



Bachelor housing at Sunset Village.



Typical Leeville Annex cottage



Km. 6 interior.



Ten Apartments.



Leeville Annex interior.



Den in each of Ten Apartments.

gle-bedroom apartments. All the apartments have a large living dining room, at least one bedroom, a small kitchen, a bath equipped with shower, and a store room. The kitchens are equipped with electric stoves and refrigerators. There is a washing machine for each two apartments. One bedroom is air-conditioned and the living room has ceiling fans. Electricity and water are provided from USAID sources.

The Ten Apartments are within walking distance of the USAID offices. Each consists of a long room which serves as a combined living-dining area, and another room of equal size which is air conditioned, and is usually separated by a partition to provide a bedroom and a small den. The bathroom has a shower. Each of these apartments is equipped with a washing machine as well as the usual appliances. Water is provided from the city water system, electricity from USAID sources.

The Six Apartments are near the down-town area and are about six minutes by car from the offices. All of the rooms are large and include a living room, a dining room two bedrooms, two baths, kitchen and two enclosed porches. One bedroom is air conditioned. Both electricity and water are provided by the city and are usually dependable.

LEEVILLE ANNEX

This Compound of 16 two-bedroom houses, is located about four kilometers from the USAID office buildings. The houses were constructed in 1966, and are similar to those in Km-6, but smaller. Furniture and appliances are the same as in other housing areas, with one airconditioned bedroom. Electricity is provided by a generator of the owner, and is usually dependable. Dependable water service is provided by the city system.

KILOMETER SIX

Twelve 1-bedroom apartments, with the same facilities as other single occupancy units are available in the Km-6 Compound. They are somewhat smaller than other single apartments, and thus will usually be occupied by employees at post without dependents who spend a considerable amount of time working at field stations where suitable housing is not available.

FURNISHINGS

EMBASSY

The Embassy, USIS and Attaches provide basic furniture and furnishings in all Government-owned and leased houses. This includes the items listed below, quantities varying depending upon the size of the quarters and the representational responsibilities of the personnel housed.

Living Room

Sofa
Arm chairs
Footstools
Bookcase
Desk

End tables
Floor lamps
Coffee tables
Grass rugs, as needed
Table lamps
Draperies

Dining Room

Dining table
Dining chairs

China Closet
Lamp

Buffet

Room divider/screen where required
Draperies

Bedroom

Beds
Mattresses
Night stands
Air conditioner

Dressers
Wardrobes
Lamps
Draperies

Kitchen

Refrigerator
Water filter
Stove

Exhaust fan
Water heater

USAID

House

Apartment

Living Room

2 ea
4 "
4 "
2 "
4 "
2 "
2 "
1 "
1 "
4 "

1 ea
2 "
4 "
1 "
4 "
1 "
1 "
1 "
1 "
2 "

Sofa or sectional divan
Chairs, easy, rattan
Tables, end
Table, coffee
Lamps, table
Lamps, floor
Footstools
Bookcase
Desk
Chairs, clamshell
Rush matting for floor covering

NOTE: The house standard is based on the living rooms in KM-6 houses.

1 ea
8 "
1 "
1 "

1 ea
8 "
1 "
1 "

Dining Room
Table, dining
Chairs, dining
China closet
Buffet

Each Occupied Bedroom

1 ea	1 ea	Bed, single, complete w/mattress
1 "	1 "	per person (or double for couple)
1 "	1 "	Chest of drawers per person
1 "	1 "	Night stand per person
1 "	1 "	Wastebasket per bedroom
1 "	1 "	Lamp per night stand
1 "	1 "	Pillow per bed
		Rush matting for floor covering

Kitchen

1 ea	1 ea	Refrigerator
1 "	1 "	Stove
2 "	1 "	Filter, water
2 "	1 "	Stand, water filter

Bathroom

1 ea	1 ea	Clothes hamper
1 "	1 "	Waste basket

Miscellaneous

1 ea	1 ea	Air conditioner for each occupied bedroom.
1 "	Some Apartments	Washing machine
1 "	1 "	Ironing board
		Fan (for each room including enclosed porch where air conditioner or ceiling fan is not installed)
2 "		Fire extinguishers

NOTES:

1. Some chaise longues, serving carts and dressing tables (vanity) were obtained by transfer from another agency. They are not standard stock items and are available for issue infrequently.

2. Single employees may be required to share a washing machine with other single employees.

3. If a family chooses to convert a bedroom to another purpose (e.g., study or dining room), the Mission will make adjustments in furnishings on an exchange basis if possible.

OTHER HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

On a temporary, stand-by basis, the Mission supplies a welcome Kit of essential household items such as dishes, glassware, flatware, linens (except towels and washcloths) and kitchen, utensils, but personnel coming to this post are urged to bring in their accompanying baggage and in air freight a limited supply of those items without which their particular family cannot get

along for the three months it will probably take for household goods to arrive. The local market is a source of supply for additional crockery, pots, pans and towels, although not of superior quality.

(1) Bring in accompanying luggage:

Electric Iron
Calling cards (husband's official cards and "Mr. and Mrs." cards)
One or two sharp knives for cutting; can opener; bottle opener
Towels and washcloths for each member of the family
Alarm clock
Scissors and minimum sewing kit

2. Air Freight:

Since the welcome kit is withdrawn upon arrival of air freight, bring all essential household items to last until your sea freight arrives. (For entertainment purposes, the American Women's Club and/or the American Community Association has a rental service of dishes, glassware, linen tablecloth and napkins, silver tea and coffee service, punch bowls, chafing dishes and flatware.)

And additionally:

Lightweight blanket per person
Special baby formula, if required (Mission supplies cribs but other baby furniture is available on the local market, with the exception of play pens)
Sweaters Place mats and napkins
Coasters (all glasses require them because of the humidity)
Special games, toys and cards
Limited supply of electric appliances if weight allowance permits
Transoceanic transistor radio or small tape recorder
Shower curtains and hooks
Candles and holders

(3) Concerning your sea freight:

Home life is important in Laos because of lack of entertainment facilities in the community, and dinner or cocktail parties are the usual mode of entertainment. Therefore, an adequate supply of inexpensive glassware is needed, as well as an insulated ice bucket, a variety of serving dishes, and an inexpensive set of china.

Kitchen equipment should include basic pots and pans, plus a large container for boiling water, an adequate supply of pans for cakes, pies, and casserole dishes. A pressure cooker is an asset if you have one already. Canisters and covered containers for food are necessary and useful.

It is the experience of families living in the Embassy and USAID compounds that electric appliances can be used effectively, and therefore bring such appliances as you are accustomed to using normally and especially a vacuum cleaner. If your vacuum cleaner requires disposable bags, please bring an adequate supply for your tour, however, APO facilities make ordering from the States quite easy with delivery usually within three weeks.

It is the responsibility of each family to provide its own pillows and linen. These should include table linen for everyday use, as well as for entertainment purposes, bath and kitchen towels, bath mats, and bed linen for single and king-sized beds.

Winter months between November and February are cold enough to require some warm clothing for everyone and perhaps an additional woolen blanket for each bed. If you have a small electric space heater, you may find it useful.

A tool box containing hammer, screw driver, pliers, small saw, nails, screws, hooks for pictures, and string will be a source of constant satisfaction to the homemaker. However, such items are available locally. Materials for cleaning and insecticides are usually available at the commissary.

The municipal water system provides adequate water for most of the city of Vientiane for bathing, cooking, laundry, gardening, etc. KM-6 and Silver City have their own wells, as do some individual houses. Water supply is seldom a problem, although sometimes the Mission must truck water to certain houses. All water in Vientiane must be boiled and filtered before it is used for drinking, making ice cubes or washing vegetables and fruits. This does not prove to be an undue hardship on the household, as filters are furnished to all personnel.

All houses occupied by U.S. Government personnel are equipped with European or American-style toilet and bathing facilities, although not all quarters have bathtubs. Hot water heaters and refrigerators are run by electricity. Kitchen ranges use either bottled cooking gas or electricity, depending on the availability of electricity in different parts of the city.

Electricity for residences is provided by U.S. Government generators located at the Ambassador's residence, Silver City, the Embassy, the Nong Douang area, Na Hai Diao Compound, Kilometer 6 and the That Luang area. Leased residences which cannot be connected to these generators (because of distance or lack of generating capacity) are provided with municipal electric power. Some USAID houses supplement municipal electricity with standby generator units, which are provided when available and are sufficient for limited use on occasions when city power breaks down. Electric current supplied by U.S. Government generators to residences is 110 volts, 50 cycle. It is recommended that all incoming personnel bring 110 volts, 50 cycle appliances, in anticipation of being supplied U.S. Government-generated power, and then if necessary, obtain transformers from Thailand or Hong Kong after quarters have been assigned and settled in. Personnel already owning transformers should ship them to the post.

Electric current fluctuates, and all electrical equipment is subject to damage to a certain extent. Voltage regulators may be required for some appliances. There are few electrical repair shops in Vientiane and delicate or complicated repair work must usually be done in Bangkok or Hong Kong.

On the USAID compound generators maintain the current at a reasonably steady rate. Standby generators are provided as necessary in many houses and apartments in the city. When the city's current is changed to 220 volts, USAID will provide adequate step-down transformers for American 100-117 volt appliances. A new generating plant has been installed in USAID's Kilometer 6 area to insure adequate electrical current there. Electric power is barely adequate in rapidly growing Vientiane, and there are many times when generator failures black out or brown out large sections of the city. The Mission attempts to provide power to all houses that can be economically reached from its own generator or from small emergency standby generators. The power shortage is expected to last until 1971 or thereabouts.

Within the U.S. Government network there are several inter-connected telephone exchanges which are, in turn, connected with the municipal telephone system. All offices have telephones and all of the Embassy, USIS and Attache residences are serviced through these exchanges. All

American residences in the USAID and American Embassy compounds and the Kilometer 6 area are serviced by telephones, and the majority of the USAID residences around the city are also equipped with telephones. It is possible to make and receive phone calls.

Commercial telegraph service is available, but is expensive and not satisfactory because there are long delays in delivery of messages.

USAID families, and some Attache families, are provided with washing machines. USAID bachelor apartments have either individual washing machines, or have access to a machine shared by several units. Embassy and USIS do not provide machines, but families with infant children may find a wringer-type washing machine desirable. Automatic washers and dryers should not be brought. There is no need to ship air conditioners or stoves to the post. The agencies provide air conditioners for occupied bedrooms and a refrigerator and stove to each housing unit.

Families or personnel with extensive representational responsibilities may wish to ship an additional refrigerator or freezer. Personnel who enjoy music should bring a record player or tape recorder, or plan to have one shipped from Hong Kong, where they are reasonably priced. The humidity often warps records, but in the absence of television, good radio programs and professional entertainment in general, records and tapes are considered a necessity rather than a luxury. If you already have small electric heaters or electric fans, bring them, since both are useful.

FOOD, CLOTHING AND SERVICES

FOOD

THE AMERICAN COMMISSARY

Participation in the cooperative commissary is available with a required deposit of \$200.00 for married employees and \$100.00 for single employees. The deposit is refunded upon departure from post.

The commissary is open six days a week. A wide variety of food items is available, including canned goods, canned and frozen juices, staples, eggs, cheese, meats and poultry, bread, milk (canned or powdered), toiletries, cigarettes, cleaning materials, liquors and soft drinks. A good stock of baby foods and cereals is usually on hand, and there are vitamins for both children and adults. Frozen fruits and vegetables are usually available. Not all items are in stock at all times but it is possible to do major shopping at the commissary for those who do not wish to use the local markets.

The purchase of quantities of soap, tooth paste and shampoo prior to coming to Vientiane is not necessary unless one requires unusual brands.

It is suggested that if a particular brand of cosmetics or items of toiletry is preferred, you bring a several months' supply with you.

Occasionally a limited amount of kitchen and household utensils are available.

Commissary members may also place special orders to be filled in Hong Kong or Bangkok. A reasonable charge is made for this service.



The American Commissary at Vientiane.

LOCAL FOOD

Fresh fruits and vegetables of excellent quality may be obtained on the local market. In season one may buy mangos, Chinese snow peas, beans, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, cabbage, spring and dry onions, eggplant, bean sprouts, potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoes, radishes, pineapple, oranges, bananas, pomelo, papaya and several other varieties of fruit. Owing to poor livestock control, meat (beef and pork) is not of a particularly high quality compared to American standards. Because of the lack of sanitary handling of meat, it is necessary to cook the meat until it is "well-done." Many housewives do purchase meat locally and then treat it by adding tenderizer and freezing it for a period of time. It is not possible to purchase U.S. cuts of meat on the local market. Chickens on the local market are small, and usually are not as tender as that obtained from the United States. Good fish is available, as are fresh shrimp, lobster and other seafoods shipped in by air from Bangkok or Saigon. No local dairy products may be used. Eggs are usually available at local markets, but are slightly more expensive and smaller than U.S. eggs.

BAKERY GOODS

There are several bakeries where good pastries and French and sliced bread may be bought. Loaves of sliced bread are also available at the commissary.

BEVERAGES

Various beverages including Cokes and Pepsis are obtainable in Vientiane as well as a wide variety of wines, beer and whisky.

CLOTHING

In planning a wardrobe for Laos the following facts should be kept in mind:

- a. It is very hot, except for a brief period of time, so that cottons are the most practical garment.
- b. Dry cleaning is marginal, however, some Americans have had satisfactory results. A supply of a dry powder cleaner, such as Woolite, may prove beneficial.
- c. There is little available in the way of ready-made clothing, underwear, hose, or shoes in Vientiane.
- d. Tailoring is not a local art, but is becoming one. Better work is done in Bangkok and in Hong Kong.

With the increase in tailors and dressmakers in Vientiane, and the accessibility of Bangkok and Hong Kong, it is not considered essential to plan and purchase a wardrobe to last the full two-year tour. Clothing needs can be further supplemented by ordering from the United States. The "catalog" houses are well patronized by personnel assigned to Laos.

Shoes deteriorate quickly at this post, and it is recommended that a good supply of all types be brought. If you have a difficult foot to fit, all shoes should be purchased in the United States. Shoes may be made to order in Bangkok and Hong Kong, and they are less expensive than good ready made shoes in the United States. They also provide variety at this post where all footwear is subjected to dust, bad streets, rain and the abrasion caused by loose gravel. White shoes may



Top: Vientiane
Morning Market.

Center: Whole-
sale Vegetable
Section.

Bottom: Live
Poultry Section.

be worn a good part of the year, but are impractical at times because of the rain and mud. A pair of lightweight, comfortable, easily cleaned walking shoes are invaluable. If corrective or special baby shoes are needed it would be well to set up a source of supply in the United States.

Lightweight raincoats or topcoats and umbrellas are useful for all members of the family, as the morning and evening can vary from chilly to cold during the cool months, and there is a long rainy season. These items will also be required if you visit Hong Kong during the winter.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEN

Washable suits of cotton, sharkskin, linen, or dacron are worn on official occasions and for work in the office buildings, which are air conditioned. They are worn with lightweight cotton shirts and ties. In many USAID offices, the usual attire for men is lightweight slacks and short-sleeve or sport shirt, without tie. For leisure activities men wear shortsleeved shirts and shorts or slacks. All items should be washable and since a change is often necessary at least twice a day, a good supply of clothing is required.

White or lighter colored suits for warm weather and dark suits for cool weather are usually worn for dress occasions and for formal wear a white non-wool dinner jacket and black trousers will suffice the year around. However, officers who are expected to attend official functions must have a white suit. If you do not have one, it can be tailored either at post or in Bangkok. Personnel now at the post find that the wash-and-wear, drip-dry type are the most appropriate. Men are advised to bring khaki shirts and trousers for use in the field. A hat is required only for protection against the sun. The Philippine "Barong" or dress shirt is frequently worn for informal occasions.

One lightweight wool suit will prove useful during the cool weather, and may also be needed when travelling out of the country. A lightweight raincoat which can also serve as a topcoat is practical. A wool or orlon sweater and a jacket can be used during the "winter" months. However, the supply of wool clothing should be kept to a minimum because wool mildews during the rainy season unless carefully maintained. It can be protected by being kept in plastic bags in a closet which contains an electric light. Frequent airing in the sun is also a protection.

An ample supply of comfortable walking shoes is necessary, since facilities for shoe repair are limited. Men expecting to travel in the field should have comfortable heavy-duty footwear. They should be a little wider than the size normally worn because feet are likely to swell in the heat. A good supply of socks is important because they must be changed frequently. Cotton socks are preferred by most men because they are cool and wash readily. For the same reason cotton underwear and pajamas are also preferred. Elastic disintegrates rapidly in the tropics and wherever possible should be avoided.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WOMEN

Casual Wear and Sports Clothing - Women usually find that dresses are more comfortable for casual wear than skirts and blouses. Daytime cottons are most suitable to this climate, but any cool fabric which can be washed easily will be proper. Sunbacks are good for casual wear. Shorts and slacks are useful at home, but should not be worn by women on the streets in the downtown areas. During the cooler months (October through February) women will need heavier cottons, linens, and occasionally lightweight woolen suits and jackets. Jacket-type cotton, nylon or dacron dresses, or dresses with matching sweaters, are ideal for the cooler season. At least two bathing suits, caps, towels, and other swim accessories should be brought if you plan to use

the swimming pool. This is the type of clothing which deteriorates most quickly. If you play tennis, appropriate clothing should be brought from the United States.

Hats and gloves are not worn by American women generally, but it would be good to bring one light and one dark hat for weddings or travel wear. Even on these occasions their use is optional. Some women wear hats to church, but most do not. Hose are worn only in cool weather.

Raincoats of the lightest procurable type and rainboots are needed during the rainy season. During hot weather some women find open shoes most comfortable, but others prefer the closed type because of the dust and rain.

A good supply of cotton or nylon lingerie should be brought to the post. It is not obtainable locally, and is difficult to find in either Bangkok or Hong Kong. Half slips are practical. An extra supply of bra-back repair and elastic may be included, but may be obtained locally.

After-Five and Evening Wear - At least several short cocktail dresses should be added to the wardrobe. Women whose representational responsibilities require their attendance at high-level official functions will need at least two long evening dresses.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

Clothing needs for children must be met in the United States, with the exception of a limited amount of tailoring which can be done in Vientiane, Bangkok, or Hong Kong. A normal supply of underwear, socks, shoes and blue jeans should be brought, but it is not recommended that a two-year supply be brought for growing children. The Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs will be a reliable means of shopping through the APO and with the new PAL and SAM mails, (specifics on these services are obtainable from your home post office) orders are usually received in three weeks. Items can be shipped by air parcel post but this is much more expensive than ordinary mail. Boys usually wear jeans or slacks, with short-sleeved shirts, to school. For dress in cool weather they wear a suit, and during the remainder of the year they wear slacks and shirts. For play they wear shorts or jeans.

Girls wear cotton dresses or skirts and blouses to school, and shorts or jeans for play. They require several dressy cottons for parties, which are a frequent and important activity in the lives of children here.

Both boys and girls should bring at least two swim suits each, and other swim accessories.

A normal supply of shoes should be brought for all children because shoes wear out quickly. Some people prefer to make arrangements with a shoe store in the United States for ordering by APO. Shoes can also be obtained from mail order houses. Sandals may be purchased locally, either off the shelf or made-to-measure. Very good shoes can be made to order in Bangkok and Hong Kong.

If you have an infant, bring whatever clothing is required and an adequate supply of plastic panties, diapers and nursing bottles. Disposable diapers are sometimes available at the commissary. It is advisable to bring a play pen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SEWING

If you make your own clothes, bring patterns and your own sewing machine. Notions are now

obtainable in Vientiane, but they are not always available in the color and size required. Needles, thread and accessories for ordinary sewing may be obtained at various stalls in the local market.

SUNDRIES

Cosmetics are generally available in the commissary, but the choice of brand is limited and shipments are erratic. It is suggested that you bring a two months' supply of your favorite types to allow time for ordering by mail in event those at the commissary do not meet your requirements. Feminine personal accessories are almost always available at the commissary, but a limited supply should be brought. A few simple drugs, such as aspirin, may be bought at the commissary. Prescription drugs for which there is a constant need should be brought or mailed from the United States. Initial supply of medicine prescribed by the doctors at the post will be furnished by the post dispensary.

POST ORIENTATION PROGRAM

A post-wide orientation program is held several times a year. Newly arrived employees of all elements of the Mission and their adult dependents attend. The purpose of the program is to provide an over-all view of the organizational structure and functions of the Mission and its component parts, as well as general information about Laos.

Speakers include the Ambassador and the heads of component agencies of the Mission and Officers responsible for various mission-wide services; the president or a representative of the American Women's Club describes charity and welfare activities; and one portion of the program is devoted to a discussion of local history, culture and customs, and a film showing.

The program presently is scheduled for two one-half days for all participants; an additional two-hour session on the day following is provided for USAID employees and their dependents to acquaint them with local services available through the agency's facilities.

BASIC COMMUNITY SERVICES

Laundry is done in the home. Dry cleaning and shoe repair services are limited, and are not as good as they are in the United States. Ladies' steelspike heels can now be repaired at the post.

Women generally return their most expensive dresses to the United States for dry cleaning, or take them to Bangkok or Hong Kong, where service is considered by some people to be comparable to that in the United States. It would be advisable to ask another American to recommend a dry cleaner in either Bangkok or Hong Kong before leaving a valuable article of clothing for cleaning. Bangkok and Hong Kong offer adequate shoe repairs and can supply the much needed steel taps for new shoes. Local dressmaking and tailoring have improved but are not up to the standards found in Hong Kong or Bangkok, and prices in Laos are reasonable.

There are several beauty shops in the city which offer adequate haircuts, shampoos, permanents, manicures, pedicures and facials. Rinses and permanent tints may be brought from the United States for application by the beauty operator here, and there will be a reasonable charge for this service. The standard of sanitation is considerably lower than that in the United States in most local shops.

There is a barber shop in the ACA center (USAID Compound), and several local barbers are also patronized by Americans.

Competent electrical and home repair services are not available in Vientiane. As the residences occupied by American personnel are government-owned or leased, all but the simplest repair work is done by Mission maintenance crews. Consult old-timers for advice on repair of radios, hi-fi, or appliances.

DOMESTIC HELP

Servants are not as well trained or as competent in Vientiane as in many other parts of the Orient. However, by the trial and error method, it is usually possible to locate and train servants who will perform satisfactorily. Few Lao undertake such work. The best servants have been Vietnamese, Thai or Chinese. Gardeners, as such, are difficult to find. It is possible to hire coolies to do heavy yard work, but they require training and constant supervision. Constant supervision of the kitchen is necessary to insure proper handling of drinking water and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables. Servants should have a physical examination, which includes chest X-ray, serological test and stool examination. These are the responsibility of the employer. They may be obtained at the Vientiane (formerly OB) Hospital for a small fee.

A survey of salaries for servants is made periodically, and a schedule for guiding newcomers is established to which all American personnel are asked to adhere. This schedule is on file in the Personnel office of each agency. Servants' salaries are relatively high for the Orient, and average about \$50 for a maid, or \$50 to \$60 per month for a cook or number one houseboy, or about \$130 per month for a couple.

Many families have only one servant who does the laundry and house-cleaning when the American wife prefers to do her own cooking. Some families attempt to manage without help, but in the heat of this climate such an undertaking is not recommended. The ideal arrangement is to have a couple live in and take responsibility, under supervision, for the entire management of the house. Single personnel find that one servant is adequate, but sometimes employ an extra cook or waiter to help occasionally when they entertain large groups. Most family residences have quarters for at least one servant. The Mission does not supply garden tools and implements, so you might consider including garden hose, sprinkler and lawnmower in your sea freight for whom-ever does your garden work.

It is customary, in addition to salary, to give a New Year's bonus to servants at the time they celebrate their own particular New Year. (The date of this holiday varies according to nationality.) The maximum bonus amounts to one month's salary for servants who have been employed for a year but it is more usual to pay one or two weeks' salary. Some families provide Chinese servants a food allowance in addition to salary but this is determined on an individual basis at the time of employment.

There is no host government social security system, and non-Lao servants are required to have a residence permit, the cost of which is 15,000 Kip per year (about \$30). It is usually paid by the servant. Your Personnel Office can advise you about this.

CHURCHES

Although Buddhism is the state religion of Laos, there are several Christian churches in Vientiane:

The International Protestant Church (interdenominational) has an American pastor. There are regular Sunday morning services and Sunday School with classes for every age, held at the

new International Protestant Church (near That Luang); informal evening services are held at the home of the pastor.

The Church of the Holy Spirit (Anglican Episcopal) holds lay services in English in the New International Protestant Church every other Sunday, in the evening. A vicar from Bangkok visits Vientiane every few months and holds communion services as announced.

There are several other denominations which hold services. Three Catholic Churches, St. Mary's (near the Monument on Old That Luang Road); Sacred Heart (near the prison); and Immaculata Conception (KM-3, Thadeua Road towards the Thailand ferry), offer masses in French, Lao, Meo, Vietnamese and English, with daily as well as Sunday services. The American priest usually offers mass in English at St. Mary's On Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; and the schedule of services in English at Immaculata is published in the Mission Telephone Directory.

There are no facilities for formal Jewish worship; however services can be attended in Bangkok.

EDUCATION

The American School of Vientiane is operated by the American School Association, a non-profit organization. Parents of all students enrolled in the school are Association members. Under the direction of three Association officers, quarterly meetings are held. The School Board, which is composed of seven members elected annually from among the Association membership, is the policy-making body.

The Kindergarten and 10 grades of the American School of Vientiane follow a typical American program with emphasis on basic college preparation. Since its initiation in 1958, the school has steadily improved its physical plant to the present fully airconditioned 5-building campus located within the USAID Compound at Km. 6. A self supporting kindergarten was initiated in 1967-68. In addition, branch schools are located in Pakse and Savannakhet to serve students in grades 1 through 8. In 1967 the enrollment totaled 390 students with a small percentage of Lao students and children of the foreign diplomatic corps admitted. As classes are not offered for juniors and seniors, before arriving at post parents should make arrangements to enroll these students in appropriate schools elsewhere.

Teachers of ASV are qualified Americans, drawn either from the local American community or recruited from the United States. A certified counselor and curriculum director devotes full time to constant improvement in the quality of instruction. Joint meetings of parents and teachers, individual and group counseling of students, educational and vocational guidance, and curriculum improvement are emphasized. Because class sections are small, averaging from 12-14 in the lower grades to 18-20 in the high school, special help can be offered through the individual attention possible.

The school stresses the modern approach to mathematics from grades 1 through 10. At the elementary level team teaching is effected wherever possible in all fields. Carefully planned developmental reading programs with a proper emphasis on phonics are offered in the elementary grades. Emphasis on reading and study skills is stressed in all grades. There is a regular physical education program in grades 1-10. Vocal music and art programs are part of the regular curriculum for grades 1-6. Chorus is offered on an elective basis in the upper grades. Lao, French, and Spanish languages are available in grades 5-10. Instructional materials and curriculum at ASV are similar to those found in the United States. The well-equipped and competently staffed library offers a wealth of recreational and reference reading through current books, news papers, and magazines. The school offers a variety of after-school activities including swimming



The American School of Vientiane, a typical classroom, and part of the playground.

lessons, chorus, drama, newspaper, competitive sports, and various clubs.

For grades 1 through 10 the tuition includes all essential texts and materials. Normally the post education allowance covers full tuition for grades 1 through 10. An off-post educational allowance in the amount of \$2,000, is allotted to cover the major portion of education costs for each student eligible for schooling away from post.

Before departure for Laos and to facilitate enrollment in the proper class and subjects, parents are requested to have their children's former schools forward the students' records and transcripts by AIRMAIL to:

Superintendent
American School of Vientiane
c/o American Embassy
APO San Francisco 96352

This is particularly important because the length of time necessary for return correspondence, due to the great distance, could delay proper placement of the child. The school reserves the right to determine placement by testing and evaluation.

Parents arriving in Laos during summer vacation are further requested to contact the school immediately upon arrival to complete registration of their children and thereby facilitate proper placement in classes.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications - There is limited overseas telephone service from Laos. Direct official or emergency communication by radio and telephone with Bangkok and field offices in Laos is possible during office hours through facilities at USAID.

Telegrams - Interested Party Messages (IPM's) - may be transmitted through Embassy communications channels to the United States within the framework of 5 FAM 251.5. Generally, because of inadequate commercial telecommunications services, mission personnel may send messages of urgent nature involving health or welfare of employees' families at the flat rate of \$5.00 for each IPM. Administrative Support Team Memorandum 66-009 of September 24, 1965 gives details of procedures to be followed.

The U.S. Mission in Vientiane maintains three telephone systems which link all of the offices and most of the residences. The local PTT telephone system is not used in official American homes.

Postal and Pouch Services - Air Mail - The most common method of receiving and sending personal mail is through the APO. Air letter mail from the United States through APO channels takes from 4 to 7 days to reach Vientiane; air mail packages slightly longer, and surface mail from six weeks to three months. The standard regulations regarding size of packages sent to Vientiane are applicable, i.e., they are limited to 100 inches in length and girth combined and 70 pounds maximum weight. Packages may be mailed from Vientiane through the APO with or without postal insurance. Money order and registry services are provided bi-weekly by personnel

from Bangkok APO,

The correct address for APO mail is:

(Your name)
American Embassy (or USIS or USAID*)
APO San Francisco 96352

*USAID personnel must also show their office designation. (e.g. USAID/MGT). If possible, find out what this designation is before writing all your change of address notices.

Do not use "Vientiane, Laos" with the APO address.

Personal mail which requires safe handling may be sent through the facilities of the Department; i.e., medicines, eyeglasses, orthopedic supplies, personal papers, checks. Domestic postage at the appropriate rate for type of service (air or surface) desired from point of origin in U.S. to Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20521 must be affixed to all such mail. The correct address is:

(Your name)
(Your organization)
Vientiane
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20521

Airmail between the United States and Laos by international facilities takes an average of seven to ten days.

Broadcasting - There is one local radio broadcasting station, and many Thai stations. The nearest television broadcasting is done from Thailand, but few Americans in Laos have television sets because reception is poor and the audio is in Thai language. Many Americans have short-wave radio and listen to "Voice of America" and foreign news broadcasts. Shortwave receivers should be of high quality. There is no FM.

Newspapers, Magazines and Technical Journals - Two English language newspapers published in Bangkok are available for distribution to American homes in Vientiane, and generally arrive the same day or one day after publication. No English-language newspapers are published in Laos.

Limited supply of American magazines and paper-back books are sold at the Commissary. Airmail editions of "Time" and "Newsweek" are available by subscription at slightly less than newsstand cost per copy and arrive in Vientiane several days after they are put on the newsstand. Subscriptions from a local dealer are available and home delivery can be arranged.

The Pacific edition of the American Armed Forces "Stars and Stripes" is available by mail. Upon arrival at the post, an employee may subscribe by writing directly to :

Pacific STARS AND STRIPES
Capitol Hill
APO 96346

The monthly cost is \$2.50, payable in advance in dollar instruments. It is advisable to subscribe for at least three months in advance.

TRANSPORTATION

Local Transportation - There is a local public transportation system in Vientiane but not frequently used by Americans. A number of taxis cruise about the city, but the drivers speak little or no English, and pick up as many passengers as the vehicle can possibly hold. There are no meters and no fixed rates, the fare depending entirely upon the passenger's bargaining ability. Samlors (tricycle rickshaws), which cost less, also cruise around the town and are easy to find for travel within the city limits. The price for this type of transportation is usually settled by bargaining.

Employees who do not have personal vehicles at the post may use American Government vehicles for non-official purposes on a mileage basis for afterduty and weekend travel within the city limits. The number of vehicles available is limited. The charge is 12 cents per mile, and there is a minimum fee of 50 cents. Bills are payable at the first of each month.

Automobiles - Personnel are urged to bring their own automobiles. Small, compact, American automobiles are best for the roads in Vientiane. Under existing regulations (6FAM 165.8) personnel stationed in Laos are authorized to ship foreign vehicles at Government expense only in certain circumstances. All vehicles should be equipped with heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers. For the most part, the roads within the city and the surrounding areas are full of chuck holes. For this reason, some people prefer the standard shift. The seasons of rain and dust cause vehicles to deteriorate rapidly. Repairs and tightening must be done on a regular basis. Owners of air-conditioning are generally grateful for it even though there are no skilled repair men.

Mechanics in Laos are not highly skilled, although there are numerous local shops to choose from. Facilities are available for either automatic or manual transmission repairs.

Radios in cars are practically useless except to those who enjoy Lao language programs and oriental music, and are not worthwhile.

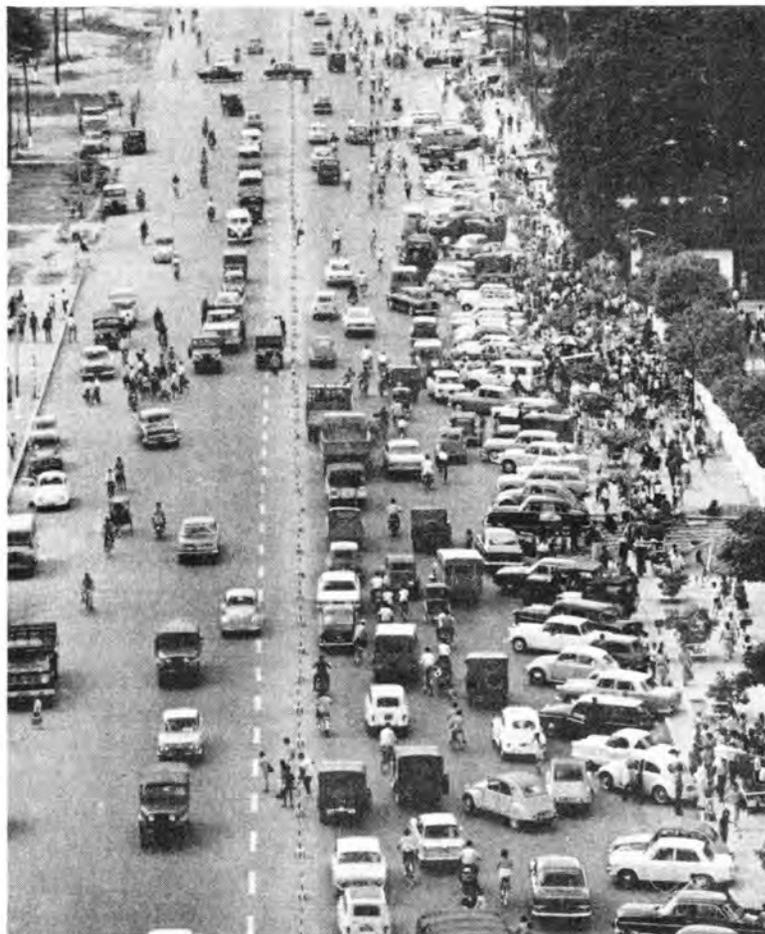
The Embassy arranges for the registration and licensing of private vehicles. There is no charge for registration, but non-diplomatic personnel are required to purchase a tax sticker. The cost of the sticker varies with the size and make of the automobile. Prior to the registration, the owner must show that he has \$5,000 personal injury and \$5,000 property damage on the car. Mission personnel are required to carry at least third party liability coverage in the amount of \$10,000. Insurance from an American company may be purchased in Vientiane through a local dealer. Full coverage, including theft and collision, will average between \$100 and \$150, according to the make of the automobile.

Personnel of all categories may import only one automobile during a tour of duty, and an employee will be permitted to sell only one vehicle during his stay in Laos. The sale of an automobile by an American employee must have the prior approval of the Personal Property Control Board. The Board is empowered to establish a maximum ceiling price for the vehicle. A purchaser of a vehicle who does not have free entry privileges must pay Lao customs duties and taxes.

All personnel who operate vehicles are required by Lao law to have a valid Lao driver's license or properly endorsed international driver's license. Personnel who intend to obtain a Lao driver's license will need their valid American driver's license, two passport-sized photographs and, if non-diplomatic, will be required to pay a nominal fee. If a valid American license is not available, the Lao permit is issued upon successful completion of a driver's test, based on international rules, signs, and signals.



The samlor: Common mode of conveyance.



Lane Xang Avenue Traffic during school days.

The A.C.A. maintains a pump in the Silver City area where gasoline for privately-owned cars may be purchased. Gasoline for privately-owned cars may also be purchased on the open market and is not very expensive.

Air Transportation - Vientiane is served by four international airlines: Royal Air Lao, Air-Vietnam, Thai Airways, and Cathay Pacific. There are four flights weekly to Saigon and eight flights weekly to Bangkok. The trip to Saigon takes approximately four hours, and to Bangkok two hours. Current commercial round-trip fares are: Hong Kong (direct) \$224.40; (via Bangkok both ways \$235.75); Bangkok \$70.75; Rangoon (via Bangkok both ways) \$145.45; Singapore (via Bangkok both ways) \$230.05. There are USAID-leased cargo airplanes travelling between Vientiane and Bangkok twice a week. Transportation on these aircraft is free, on a space-available basis. USAID uses C-46, Caribous, and a variety of other aircraft for official business within Laos. The pilots are American. This is also the standard method of travel for USAID technicians who are assigned to the regional stations and other outlying areas.

There is a paved road from Nongkhai to Bangkok and the trip takes approximately eight hours by car. Many persons fly to Bangkok to pick up their personal automobile when it arrives and drive it to Vientiane.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

MEDICAL FACILITIES

The Embassy operates a six-bed dispensary staffed by two American Foreign Service physicians, one contract physician, six nurses, a pharmacist, and two laboratory technicians. The Dispensary is equipped to handle a busy general practice. It has a modern laboratory, oxygen equipment, X-ray machine, EKG machine, and a well-stocked pharmacy. There is a radio-equipped ambulance for the transportation of seriously ill patients.

Medical care is available 24 hours a day and includes sick call for employees and dependents, prenatal care, immunizations and short-term hospitalization. Patients requiring specialized care, obstetrical care, major surgery or prolonged hospitalization are evacuated to hospitals in Thailand or the Philippines. Flying time to Bangkok is less than two hours and aircraft are always available for emergency evacuations.

The Dispensary physicians make periodic trips up-country to assist with the health problems of Americans stationed outside Vientiane. Plans are being made to establish a small clinic in Pakse for the growing American community there.

Dental care is available in Vientiane. However, most Americans have found the local facilities to be unsatisfactory and they travel to Bangkok when dental treatment is necessary. Transportation to Bangkok for dental care is at the employee's expense and appointments must be set up as much as two or three weeks in advance-- two good reasons for having the family's dental problems attended to before coming to the post.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Laos has all the diseases endemic in a tropical climate- including tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, malaria and dysentery. However, Americans can expect to enjoy good health during their tour here if they take a few simple precautions and keep their immunizations up to date. Servants are usually untutored in the western concepts of hygiene and need constant supervision.



The U.S. Embassy Health Unit.

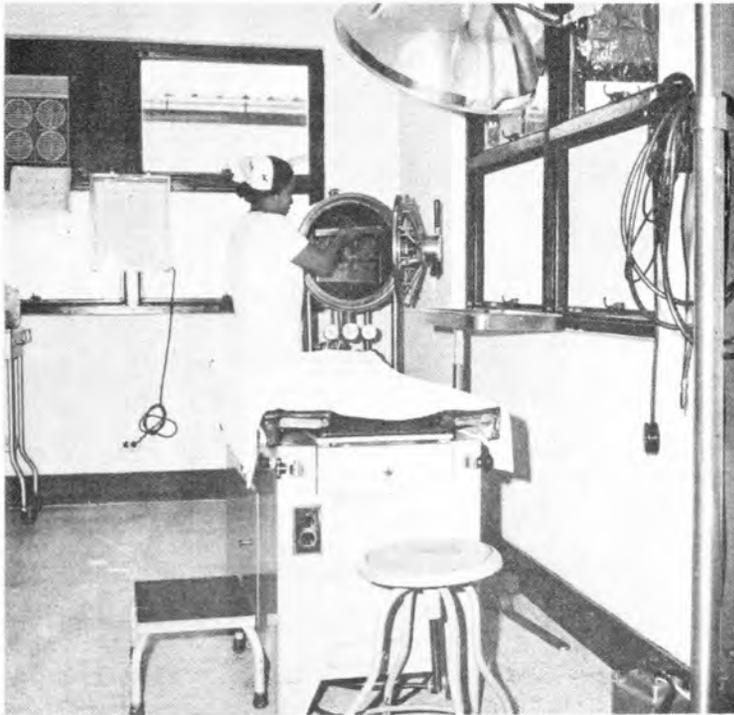


One of the treatment room.



The six-bed ward.

Emergency or minor surgery.....



X-Ray unit.....



Laboratory.



They must be patiently and carefully trained before they can be trusted with the care of small children and the preparation of food.

Rabies is a constant menace. Everyone is encouraged to take the series of pre-exposure rabies immunization injections. Pets should be vaccinated against rabies before being shipped to Laos.

Employees and dependents at the post are provided, through the Health Unit, with medication for the prevention of malaria. Antimalarial medication must be taken regularly, once a week, during the entire stay at the post and for two weeks after departure.

Water

Tap water is not considered safe for drinking anywhere in Laos. Water should be filtered and then brought to a rolling boil for 15 minutes before it is used for drinking, cooking, making ice cubes, brushing teeth, or rinsing of dishes. Filters are provided by the Mission.

Food

Fruits and vegetables should not be eaten raw unless they have first been peeled or disinfected. Instructions for the disinfection of raw vegetables are given in the Health Information Sheet supplied to each family on arrival.

No special precautions are necessary in the preparation of meats, milk products, or packaged foods purchased at the Commissary.

It is safe to eat in most restaurants in Vientiane if discretion is used in selecting from the menu. Only foods which are well cooked and served hot should be ordered. Consumption of raw vegetables, especially lettuce and watercress, is to be avoided because of infection with intestinal parasite.

Insects

The climate of Laos is made to order for a wide variety of insects. The greatest pests are mosquitoes and ants. It is advisable to ship with your household goods a supply of ant traps and "Vapona" strips. Insecticide sprays and repellants are available intermittently in the Commissary and on the local market.

Climate

Except for a few cool days during the dry season, the weather in Vientiane is hot and sticky. Skin rashes are common but can be largely prevented by frequent bathing and powdering and the wearing of light, loose clothing.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Facilities for recreation in Vientiane are increasing but still depend to a large extent upon the individual initiative and ingenuity of Americans here. The American Community Association, an inter-agency organization, sponsors plays, dances, movies, duplicate bridge and activities for small children and teenagers. All U.S. Government personnel are eligible to become members of the Association.



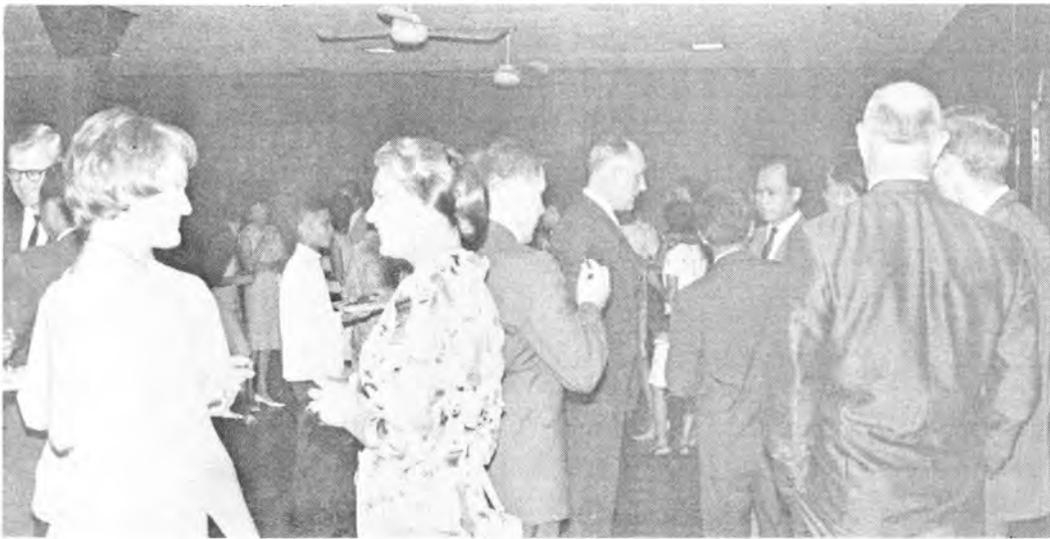
The Theatre



The Dining Room



The Bar



The Recreation Room



The Swimming Pool



Local Entertainment: Lao Orchestra

La Societe Internationale du Mekong sponsors both a play reading group and a choral group. Membership in this society is open to Americans as well as people of other nationalities.

Community Center - The American Community Association has established a Community Center located on the USAID Compound at Na Hai Diao. Kip is used for the restaurant, theater, and other facilities. The Community Center consists of the following:

a. The Theatre has a curtained stage, and is used for plays and concerts. There is an active "little theatre" group. The theater is also available for general meetings.

b. The Dining Room serves three meals daily and is open until 9:00 p.m. for either snack or meals. Catering service for private parties may be arranged through the Club Manager.

c. The Bar is open every day. Each Friday between the hours of 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 there is a "Happy Hour".

d. The Recreation Room may be reserved for special activities, such as the New Year's Ball. The American Women's Club usually has its luncheons in this room.

e. The Swimming Pool is usually open from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 8:00 p.m., except when it is reserved for private parties. Food and drinks are served at pool side.

Lao and Vietnamese Entertainment-Lao or Vietnamese traditional plays are presented during the dry season at outdoor gatherings in connection with religious holidays or fairs. These are colorful and interesting even though some Americans cannot understand the dialogue.

During the past two years several cultural groups have presented programs in Vientiane under the sponsorship of the American Artists Overseas and other foreign missions.

Local fairs known as bouns take place throughout the year under the auspices of the Buddhist Wats. These offer a "midway" atmosphere, and feature gambling, dancing (Lao style), boxing (Thai), outdoor movies and folk plays. These occasions are noisy, but interesting and colorful. In November there is a four-day festival, the That Luang Fair, in which the International community participates.

The Lao are becoming more sports - conscious. There are occasional soccer and track meets and tennis tournaments at the stadium, and it is possible to watch Lao-Thai boxing matches from time to time.

Libraries and Reading Matter - A small library is maintained by USIS, designed for use by Lao, but books may be borrowed by American personnel. Magazines and paper-backs in English can be purchased locally and at the commissary, but it is recommended that a supply of good reading material be brought to the post. Leather-bound books should not be brought because of their susceptibility to mildew. A Technical Reference Library is operated by USAID. Books and reference material covering a wide range of technical fields may be borrowed from the Library.

Both USAID and the American Embassy have a "swap-a-book" shelf and all are encouraged to donate the paper-books they have read for others to enjoy.

Motion Picture Entertainment - American movies are shown at the Recreation Hall on the USAID Compound nightly with matinees on weekends and holidays. There are five local movie

theaters (one air conditioned) where French, Chinese, Thai, Indian and sometimes even American movies are shown. These are patronized increasingly by Americans.

Tennis - There are a number of cement tennis courts in the city, including two courts at Kilometer 6 Housing area, one court at Silver City and one court at the Attache BOQ compound. All are fenced. The ones at KM-6 and Silver City are lighted for night play. There are also courts at the National Stadium Club, at the French Military Mission, at the Australian Embassy and at some private homes.

Use of the courts at the National Stadium are for members only or upon invitation, but Americans may join for a nominal fee. Tennis equipment may be obtained at the post, but it is advised that personnel who have definite feelings on type and make of equipment to be used bring their own. Tennis shoes should be brought since sizes required by Americans are rarely available.

The ACA sponsors at least one tournament a year and a Diplomatic tournament is also held each year.

Volleyball - A volleyball league is operated by the ACA each year to run about four or five months. Play is at Kilometer 6 Tennis Courts two or three nights a week.

Softball - Softball games are held on Sunday afternoon at Kilometer 6 during a good part of the year.

Badminton - There is a badminton court at Silver City. Personnel must bring their own net for use on this court. Equipment can be obtained locally.

Swimming - A swimming pool, equipped with a filter system, is centrally located at the USAID Compound, and is available to all U.S. Government personnel, There is also a pool at the Continental Air Motel near the airport, for use by the residents and guests only.

The American Community Association has swimming classes for the children.

The Post Medical Officer strongly recommends against use of the Mekong River for swimming and water skiing. The Mekong is unsanitary and has an extremely strong current.

Golf - There are presently no golf courses in Vientiane. However, currently under organization is a Vientiane Sports Club, an international organization, with plans to build a golf course. There are two miniature golf courses available.

Bowling - Construction has begun to build a large bowling alley.

Boating - There are several small boats and launches which may be rented or borrowed for excursions on the Mekong. However, due to the political/military situation, travel beyond Vientiane is limited. This is, nevertheless, a pleasant way to spend a day, and there are several boating parties during each dry season.

Horseback Riding - A Community Riding Club has been established at the KM-6 Compound. The American Community Association has assisted the club in building a central stable and club house. Ponies and horses can be obtained locally, and cost from \$40 to \$100. Saddles, harness, bridles, boots, etc., may be obtained in Vientiane or in Thailand at reasonable prices. Owners



Target Shooting: Members of Vientiane Rod and Gun Club.



Tennis Court at Silver City.



Horseback Riding: Club Stables at Km. 6.



Buffalo Fighting: A local sport popular in the villages.

are charged on a prorated basis for the feeding of the horses and for general stable maintenance. Group instruction in riding is given by experienced riders of the community.

Sightseeing - Vientiane, while small, does have a few points of interest to visit, such as the national museum, several picturesque Buddhist temples and monuments, a silk weaving factory and the "morning" and "evening" markets.

Gardening - This is an activity which many Americans here enjoy. Because of poor soil and the climatic conditions, the variety of flowers and vegetables which will grow is limited, but the challenge to produce something attractive from the ground is great and much satisfaction is gained from successful effort. If you plan to make your own garden bring tools and seeds for the type of plants which will tolerate extreme heat and sun. The flowers which seem to grow best are zinnias, marigolds, Sweet William, morning glory, phlox, cosmos and petunias. Some have had success with gladioli. A vegetable which does reasonably well here is corn, and gardeners have had good results from planting green beans, lettuce, onions, parsley, egg plant and tomatoes.

Several people have enjoyed raising orchids at the post as there are numerous varieties found in this area. A garden club has been organized to exchange information with regards to flowers and gardening in general.

Photography - The country is picturesque and many Americans make a hobby of photography. Between the local market and the Commissary one may usually find film for 35 mm cameras, for black and white pictures, Kodachrome, Ektachrome, and film for 8 mm and 16 mm movie cameras, both roll and magazine. It would be well to bring movie film in tropical packs to avoid spoilage from humidity. Developing and printing of black and white film can be done in Vientiane or in Bangkok. Color film may be sent by APO to the United States, Hawaii, Manila, or by international mail to Singapore or France, for developing.

Firearms and Ammunition

The Government of Laos imposes no restrictions or customs duties on the accompanied importation of hunting guns and small arms and ammunition by official Americans. However, firearms, major firearm sub-assemblies or parts and ammunition ordered and imported unaccompanied from outside Laos, require a prior Purchase Authorization from the Lao National Police. Items so imported will be cleared by customs officials upon presentation of the Police Purchase Authorization. Consult current Postal Regulations before mailing or ordering by mail any type of weapon or ammunition through APO or international mail.

Firearms and ammunition must be declared in customs processing upon arrival in Laos. As soon as possible after arrival, all firearms possessed in Laos must be registered with the U.S. Mission Guard Service who will register the weapons with the Lao National Police.

Lost, stolen, destroyed or resold firearms must be promptly reported to the Mission Guard Service. Similarly, post permits must also be reported to the Mission Guard Service.

The discharging or firing of firearms for other than hunting and self-defense requires the prior approval of the local police. (The Regional Security Officer will cover this subject in the Orientation Programs held quarterly for new arrivals.) Police permission to do target practice firing will vary according to the prevailing local situation and should be co-ordinated through the U.S. Mission Guard Service.

Gun collectors are advised not to import collections. The post has recently formed a Rod and Gun Club, comprised of U.S. Mission employees, Lao and Third Country Nationals. The club is arranging for the importation and sale of firearms and ammunition for its members. The club has indicated that it will assist and advise all newly arrived personnel in complying with local regulations regarding firearms and/or ammunition.

Hunting

Hunting in Laos is possible in some areas, but is extremely limited by travel restrictions and a general paucity of game. Hunting requires a license, for which a nominal charge is made. The U.S. Mission Guard Service will secure hunting licenses upon request.

The period of Buddhist Lent is the only closed season, during which hunting of all kinds is prohibited. This period varies every year, according to the Lunar Calendar. The only yearly bag limits are two bull elephants, four gaur, four wild water buffalo and four wild ox.

There are a few animals and birds which are protected by hunting laws. However, since most of these are practically extinct in Laos, hunters need not be overly concerned with these, except for the prohibition on hunting peacocks, and the "Coq de Pagode".

Snipe and duck are the most abundant small game. The Vientiane Rod and Gun Club is in a position to advise newly-arrived personnel regarding local hunting regulations, location of game, etc. The club is active in arranging weekend shooting and hunting trips and plans are being made to provide skeet shooting and a target range.

Though there are no regulations requiring one to do so, it is a traditional Lao courtesy to advise the local police and government administrative head before hunting in their area.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social entertainment revolves primarily around home activities. Barbecues and picnics have become most popular. At the present time, home entertainment is usually "tenue de ville" (business suits and simple cocktail-type dresses) or informal (sport shirt). Officers have frequent social contacts with the Lao and the French. This is facilitated, needless to say, by language competence. The majority of Lao ladies are shy about meeting foreigners and home entertainment on their part is not as frequent as in European and American capitals. Junior officers and staff personnel lead an active social life within the American and international communities. The American women have started an English conversational coffee which has now become international. Ladies entertain each other in their homes one morning a month for conversation and coffee.

The American Women's Club of Laos was re-formed in 1962 after the families returned from Bangkok where they had been evacuated during the coup of 1960. The Club has channeled the efforts of the American women in the community to promote the welfare of the people of the Kingdom of Laos and genuine friendship within the American community.

Its many projects, aside from fundraising activities, include welcoming new arrivals to Vientiane, aid to the city hospitals, orphanages, leper colonies, libraries and youth centers, scholarships to Lao students and many other projects undertaken as the need arises, the most recent need being that of refugee relief and war victims.

The main fund-raising activities are a Thrift Shop, operated by Club members; an Annual

Fashion Show; and an Annual Christmas Bazaar. In addition to their practical purpose, these events offer hours of enjoyment both in their preparation and performance.

An enthusiastic Puppet Group produces several puppet shows a year and trains beginners at the same time. The Club sponsors Art, Bridge, and Sewing Groups also.

Sponsored by the American Women's Club, but operated by a group of mothers, is the Vientiane Pre-School. The Pre-School has very satisfactory facilities for 50 children at the KM-6 American Compound. Scouting is under the sponsorship of the Club also.

Election of officers is held every May and general membership meetings take place on the third Thursday of every month, September through May. Membership is open to all American women and wives of American men in Laos and current dues are \$4 a year.

Rotary Club - There is a Rotary Club in Vientiane which meets on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. at the Hotel Lane Xang.

Masonic Lodge Lang Xang Number 1632 of the Grand Lodge of Scotland meets first Tuesday of each month at 19:30 hours at Lang Xang Hotel.

Vientiane Jaycees - Activities of the Vientiane Jaycees were resumed in early 1965 after several years of inactivity. Membership to the Vientiane Chapter is open to any interested young man. Recent activities have included a citywide clean-up campaign, distribution of garbage collection drums, erection of city street signs, and other civic projects.

The Lao-American Association is a bi-national center for language and cultural exchange. Many Americans, including wives, participate in the program by teaching English. Classes in the Lao language are available to American personnel by registration.

The Association frequently sponsors art shows and music groups. A new building will be completed by the end of 1968 which will greatly facilitate additional cultural activities.

The American Teen Club of Vientiane was organized in April 1963. It has its own Club Room where teenagers 13 through 16 meet for games and music. It plans numerous social and recreational activities, and has contributed to several worthwhile community projects.

The KM-6 Riding Club - If you are a riding enthusiast, there is a riding club with facilities for stabling and maintaining horses. If you have your own equipment, please bring it if weight permits.

The Vientiane Rod and Gun Club was formed in 1965 and reorganized in January 1968. It meets on the second Thursday of each month. Membership is open to all interested Americans and current dues are \$25 per year.

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS

When the Ambassador or Directors of agencies entertain officials, members of the staff who are invited are expected to arrive fifteen minutes before the appointed time in order that they may assist as co-hosts and co-hostesses. They should remain at the party until foreign guests or guests of honor have departed or until they have been informed that their obligation has been fulfilled. Normally it is the practice to remain at an official party until the Ambassador and

~~his wife have departed.~~

The secretary to the Ambassador and secretaries to Directors of agencies maintain a registry of social functions. Before planning an official party or a party of some size, personnel should clear the date with the appropriate secretary to avoid conflict of activities. The secretary will also supply members of the staff and their wives with correct protocol procedure for the seating of guests.

The dress for each function is prescribed in the invitation, and most official functions are "street dress" occasions. A few top-level dinner parties require black or white tie. However, official functions for men often require the wearing of a white suit. Agency chiefs accompany their principal assistants for calls on the Ambassador.

Wives of all employees and all female employees are expected to call on the wives of the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission as well as the wife of their Agency Director. Calls are made as soon after arrival as possible so calling cards should be brought in accompanying baggage.

All posts have their own special calling requirements. Vientiane, being no exception to this rule, issues to all newcomers a special pamphlet on calling procedures at this post.

At the time of departure from the post, officers should extend formal and official farewell to all officers upon whom they are expected to call at the time of arrival. This can be done by sending cards marked "p.p.c." in pencil. For personal and unofficial farewell, a more informal method of saying goodbye is used.

Cards should be left at the time of official calls. Vientiane has some facilities for the printing of cards, however, personnel are advised to bring with them an adequate supply of foldover informals with matching envelopes since the latter are useful in sending and acknowledging invitations. A limited supply of calling cards should be brought in hand luggage, since they are needed immediately upon arrival.

Copies of the booklet "Social Usage Abroad" are available at the post, but it is advisable to request a copy from the Foreign Service Institute while in Washington.

While the dress for official functions is generally prescribed to be business suit and afternoon dress, the dress for strictly American functions is generally sports attire, i.e., short-sleeved, open-necked sport shirts. On such occasions some women prefer sun-backed, dressy cotton or cotton afternoon dresses.



Shopping center in former Evening Market area.



Business district at Sam Sen Thai street.



A local goldsmith shop.

COUNTRY REGULATIONS AND POST ADMINISTRATION

CUSTOMS DUTIES AND PASSAGE

Free Entry Privileges - Personnel of all U.S. Government agencies are given free entry privileges during their entire tour of duty.

Customs Duties - All personal and household effects are admitted into the country dutyfree. If such items are subsequently sold to persons not having free-entry privileges, duties must be paid either by the seller or the buyer. The seller is responsible to assure that duties are paid.

Restrictions and Requirements Upon Entry - A valid Lao visa, smallpox vaccination and cholera inoculation certificate are required by the Lao Government to enter the country. The most direct routing to Vientiane is via Bangkok. Personnel who may think it more convenient to arrive from Bangkok via train should remember that the train to Nongkhai stops some miles from the city and it is difficult to transport luggage from the station to the customs office located on the river, and then to have it placed on the ferry for passage to Vientiane. This mode of entry is discouraged.

Customs authorities may or may not inspect baggage of holders of Official passports. Should they decide to inspect such baggage, it is a cursory examination at most.

It is recommended that each person bring 10 passport-size photographs for visa applications, licenses, etc.

Importation of Pets - According to the law of Laos, a pet which is imported into the country must be accompanied by a certificate of health and evidence that anti-rabies vaccination has been administered. The law also requires the quarantine of a pet for a period of from ten to fifteen days. These laws are not enforced, however, and to date no pet has been held in quarantine. However, anti-rabies vaccination is necessary before bringing a pet to Vientiane, and should be repeated every six months during the stay here. Rabies is prevalent among dogs in this country. If pets are brought here, measures should be taken to isolate them from contact with local animals, and a good supply of flea collars, flea powder and any medicines commonly used in their care should be brought. The commissary usually carries dog and cat food.

TAXES, EXCISES, EXCHANGE AND FINANCE

The official Lao currency is the Kip. The official rate of exchange is 240 Kip to one U.S. dollar, but all Mission personnel are authorized to purchase kip at the prevailing free rate, which is about 500 Kip to the dollar. The Kip is the medium of exchange for local purchasing, and for payment of services and servants.

Personal checks of American employees can be cashed on presentation at the Embassy cashier cage for amounts ranging from \$25 to \$200, and at the A.C.A. for kip at the free rate of exchange less a small service charge. Cashing checks for amount in excess of \$200 must be approved by the Embassy Administrative Officer. It is advisable for employees to maintain checking accounts in the United States, and it is strongly recommended that you arrange to have your salary and allowances paid directly to that account by allotment.

U.S. personnel receive their entire salary, including allowances, by U. S. dollar check, or through allotments.

American personnel do not pay Lao income tax, but non-diplomatic members of all agencies who have cars are requested to pay nominal fees for their automobiles and for driver's licenses.

POST ADMINISTRATION

The Embassy Administrative staff provides administrative support to Embassy, USIS, and Attache personnel, and USAID employees receive the same services from the USAID Office of Management. Medical support is provided to personnel of all agencies by the Embassy Medical Unit.



SPECIAL GUIDANCE

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS ENROUTE POST

Shipping and Packing - All authorized surface shipments from the United States should be arranged through the U.S. Despatch Agents at various American ports, and should be addressed as follows :

American Embassy
(Individual's name)
Vientiane, Laos (via Bangkok)

Shipments arriving in Bangkok for Laos are considered in-transit cargo and are trans-shipped by rail to Nongkhai, Thailand, by ferry across the Mekong and then by truck to Vientiane. Under no condition should surface shipments be routed through Saigon or Hong Kong as there is NO adequate surface transport between either of these cities and mvientiane.

All effects should be well packed, preferably in metal or wooden containers lined with waterproof paper to protect against rough handling and the inclement weather enroute. Before placing inside the crates or vans, wrapping valuable things or those subject to water damage in waterproof, sealed plastic is a wise precaution. Marine insurance for surface shipments and fire and theft coverage for all effects is strongly recommended. The floater-type policy is adequate.

Air shipments arrive in approximately three weeks, and receive reasonably careful handling. Such shipments should be addressed as follows:

(Your name)
American Embassy
Vientiane, Laos

There are no storage facilities in Vientiane. Both USAID and Embassy have contracts for packing. Valuable antiques expensive china and glassware, or delicate objects of art should not be brought to the post.

Stopover in Bangkok Enroute Vientiane - The most frequently traveled route to Vientiane is via Bangkok. Personnel usually stop there at least one night.

Upon arrival in Bangkok USAID personnel should contact the Bangkok Operations Office. This office is part of USAID/Laos Office of Management and has no connection with USOM/Thailand. The personnel of the Bangkok Operations Office will make final arrangements for onward travel to Laos. They may be reached at:

Office - 66 Sukumvit Soi 1
Tel. 55777/55209

Home - 133 Sukumvit Soi 53
Tel. 913505

If USAID knows when you will arrive in Bangkok you will be met at the airport, assisted through customs, and taken to your hotel. It is, therefore, quite important to cable your ETA to USAID/Laos with a copy to "USOM Bangkok for Bangkok Operations Office," if there is any change in your plans after leaving AID/W, or if you are traveling with an open ticket to Bangkok.

Official vehicles of the Bangkok Operations Office or of USOM are not available for personal use in Bangkok, but there is ample taxi service.

Embassy or USIS personnel needing assistance with onward travel should contact the Travel Section, American Embassy at 95 Wireless Road, Tel. 95800-14, Ext. 292/284.

Personal checks may be cashed in Bangkok by "the Bank of America Branch" located at the American Embassy and at the Thailand Regional Exchange. The Embassy cashier will cash up to \$200, and the Exchange up to \$10. Checks written to pay for purchases in the Exchange or Commissary are not limited in this way. Prior to your visit to the Exchange, you must first report to MAGTHAI-JUSMAG, 7 Sathorn Road, Room 119 for a permit to enter the Exchange and Commissary facilities. Identification Card and/or Passport is required to receive permit to enter and purchase.

Mission addresses and telephone numbers in Bangkok are :

American Embassy, Bangkok :

95 Vithayu Road (Wireless Road)
Tel. 59800

USOM/Thailand :

642 Phetburi Road
Tel. 70040

USIS/Bangkok :

125 Sathorn Tai (South) Road
Tel. 33901

Marine Guards wear uniforms only on duty. Off-duty uniform is civilian clothing. Marine Guard personnel assigned to this post should consult the Marine Security Guard Post Report. All Marine Guard personnel are urged to open bank accounts prior to coming to this post.

The remarks relative to the importation and disposal of personal property, including automobiles and the acquisition and conversion of local currency, apply to all military personnel assigned to Vientiane.

RECOMMENDED READING

<u>ENGLISH</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>YEAR OF PUB</u>	<u>No OF PAGES</u>
Dommen, Arthur J.	<u>Conflict in Laos:</u> The Politics of Neutralization	1964	303
Halpern, Joel M.	Government, and Social Structure in Laos	1964	184
Halpern, Joel M.	Economy and Society of Laos	1964	178
(France-Asie)	Kingdom of Laos	1959	486
Lebar, Frank M.	Laos		295
Na Champassak, Sisouk	Storm over Laos		
(Human Ressearch Area Files)	Ethnic Groups of Mainland SEA	1964	350
Gard, Richard A.	Buddhism	1961	243
<u>FRENCH</u>			
Ajalbert, Jean	<u>Sao Van Di</u> Moeurs du Laos	1965	265
Larteguy, Jean	Les Tambours de Bronze	1965	
Pavie, Auguste	<u>A la Conquete des Couers:</u> Le Pays des Millions d'Elephants et du Parasol Blanc	1947	380
	(Reprint)		
Sasorith, Katay D.	Elle est Formidable, la Belle Mere	1958	118
Chaffard, Georges	<u>Indochine:</u> Dix Ans d'Independance	1964	294
Taboulet, Georges	La Geste Francaise en Indochine (2 vols)	1955-6	926
(France - Asie)	Presence du Bouddhisme	1959	958
La Revue Francaise	Le Laos	1967	88



Typical Luang Prabang residence, exterior and interior views.



The Royal Palace at Luang Prabang.

FIELD OFFICES

PREFACE

The Mission has established a number of "area offices" throughout the Kingdom of Laos. The number of American personnel assigned to these areas varies according to the size and program requirements of the area. Some areas have as few as a dozen American employees and others as many as thirty. Employees assigned to major field stations will find services ample and accommodations comfortable; however, they may lack some of the facilities available to employees stationed in Vientiane. Major area offices are described below.

Outside these Area headquarters, larger field posts for Americans (two or three employees) include Sayaboury, Thakhek, Ban Houei Sai, Paksane, and Vang Vieng. These are nearly 40 locations in Laos at which official Americans or IVS volunteers work.

LUANG PRABANG

General Description

This is one of the two capital cities of the Kingdom of Laos, Vientiane being the political and administrative capital, and Luang Prabang the royal and religious capital. The latter is situated approximately 110 miles north of Vientiane, and the trip by plane takes one hour. A highway from Vientiane to Luang Prabang is now under construction. Luang Prabang is the residence of the King and the Royal Family and is one of the most beautiful communities in the entire Kingdom. The city is nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains and is located at the point where the Nam Khane River joins the Mekong. It now has a population of approximately 20,000 people who devote most of their time to farming. There are nearby villages where interesting woven articles are made, and clever artisans also create silver objects such as bowls and other useful articles within the city of Luang Prabang. The climate is a few degrees cooler than Vientiane during the cool season due to the mountainous terrain of the area. Many people from Vientiane and other places visit Luang Prabang and enjoy the many interesting and beautiful Wats and other points of interest in and around the city; perhaps the most interesting place to visit is the Phou Si, a beautiful pagoda located on a 300 foot hill in the center of the city with a magnificent view of the entire valley.

Housing

Personnel assigned to Luang Prabang are given permanent housing as soon after arrival as possible. The houses are Government leased; many are of masonry construction in the French Provincial style, but recently there has been considerable building, and a number of new houses, some of more typically modern Lao design, are now available. The interiors are generally furnished in Western style and are comfortable. The furniture is provided by the Mission, some of rattan type and some of wood, and is adequate.

Utilities and Equipment

Electricity is supplied by a central power plant in the city. The service is very uncertain, is often limited to certain hours of the day, and has a tendency to fluctuate. However, this is partly augmented by individual USAID generators for residence and office areas.

Butagas cook stoves, kerosene refrigerators, freezers and hot water heaters are being used

until an adequate amount of electric power becomes available. An attempt is being made to centralize housing sufficiently so that two sources of USAID power will furnish adequate and constant current. When this electric power is available, an air conditioner will be installed in each occupied bedroom. During the one month of cool weather a kerosene or electric heater is provided by the Mission. Each house is connected to the rather uncertain city water system, and the water must not be used without boiling. A new water system is being installed in Luang Prabang, and it is hoped that an adequate supply will be available for all USAID houses by 1969. At present, the city water is delivered generally to elevated tanks at each USAID dwelling and then runs into the plumbing system by gravity.

Food, Clothing and Services.

Staple foods are ordered from the American Commissary in Vientiane and are flown to Luang Prabang. Orders can also be placed with export concerns in Hong Kong, Copenhagen, Bangkok, and other cities. Many items, such as fresh vegetables, fruits, chicken, corn, rice, turkey, eggs, and so forth can be purchased in the interesting local market, and the quality is generally good.

Clothing requirements are the same as those in Vientiane.

Cooks and houseboys can be found if one is patient in searching for them; they are relatively expensive, and need considerable supervision.

Services such as barber shops, beauty parlors, tailor shops, shoe repair, etc., are available in Luang Prabang.

Education

There is no American School in Luang Prabang. The Calvert System is the general method of instruction used up to the 9th grade. There is also an excellent French Lycee where classes are conducted in French through approximately the American 12th grade.

Transportation and Communications

The Mission utilizes airplanes for all transportation in and out of Luang Prabang. These flights generally operate twice per week, and there are often special flights. Travel within the city is provided by the Mission. Because of the very limited area in which to drive a vehicle in this town it is recommended that personal vehicles not be shipped. Mission cars, on a limited basis, and when not required for official use, may be rented for private use at 12 cents per mile. This includes gasoline, oil and driver.

Short-wave radio communication facilities are available between Luang Prabang and Vientiane for official use and for emergencies. All APO personal mail is sent to Vientiane for onward forwarding. USAID Personnel should use the mailing address: John Doe, USAID/Field, APO San Francisco 96352. Limited cable and telephone services are available in Luang Prabang.

Health and Medicine

There is a Colombo Plan doctor stationed in Luang Prabang who can be consulted for minor illnesses. Employees are airlifted to Vientiane for treatment of more serious illnesses. Personnel should bring with them an ample supply of any special medicines prescribed by their doctors, as medicines are not always in supply. The Medical Unit doctors in Vientiane pay periodic visits.

Recreation and Social Activities

There are few commercial sports activities available in this town, and there is no playground for children. Playthings, toys, and books should be brought for very young children. It would be wise if you enjoy sports such as badminton, horse shoe pitching, etc., to bring along the necessary equipment. There are two local tennis courts in the Sports Center.

Although there are few commercial entertainment facilities available, there is a great deal of interhome entertaining, which includes teas, cocktail parties, buffet dinners and card parties, and many official functions.

There are a number of restaurants in town and a few movie houses which show films mostly in a foreign language. Arrangements can be made for commercial films to be shown.

SAVANNAKHET

General Description - The city of Savannakhet is situated on the Mekong River approximately 152 miles south of Vientiane. By plane the trip requires about one hour and ten minutes; by road from 10 to 14 hours, depending on luck at the three ferry crossings enroute. Savannakhet is the second largest city in Laos with a population slightly in excess of 36,000 people. However, the city, resembling many French Colonial towns, is continually growing and new construction can be seen everywhere.

The tree lined streets in most parts of town are paved and lined with shops of all kinds. Many restaurants can be found which feature French, Chinese and Vietnamese foods, however, none can be considered first class. There is a large market near USAID headquarters where meat, bread, and fruit and vegetables can be bought in abundance. The airport is used by the Royal Lao Air Force as well as commercial airlines, including those under contract with U.S. Government Agencies.

The surrounding countryside is cultivated with vegetable gardens and rice paddies and there are many picturesque temples within the immediate area. The Mekong River flows south at the western edge of town and it is only a 15 minute boat ride across to Thailand. Several USAID employees reside in Thailand, commuting daily by ferry, and one can see many U.S. dependents shopping in Mukdaharn during the weekend.

The places outside of the Savannakhet Area office where American personnel also work are: Thakhek, capital city of Khammouane Province, Nong Bok Cluster, also in Khammouane, and the Kengkok, Dong Hene and Lahanam Clusters in Savannakhet Province.

Housing - Upon arrival, employees are assigned government-leased houses, which are substantially built and can compare in terms of construction to many "stateside" dwellings. Furniture is supplied by the Mission and the majority is made of rattan, which is most suitable in this part of the world. Many families expand the comfort and beauty of their dwellings by adding decorative furniture made in Thailand.

USAID maintains a small guest house and there is one satisfactory hotel in town which can be used in the event housing is not readily available for permanently assigned employees or overnight guests. A new and more modern hotel is in the final stages of construction and should be ready for business in 1969.



Typical Savannakhet housing and interior view.



The Savannakhet market just across from USAID Headquarters.

All houses are supplied with Butagas stoves, kerosene freezers, electric or kerosene refrigerators, and hot water heaters. Bedrooms are supplied with air conditioners according to existing regulations. The Mission also provides kerosene heaters during the cold months.

Electricity - Electricity is supplied from many sources. Some houses are on USAID power, others have their own generators, but most are furnished with city power, which is quite adequate for our needs. The city power plant is being renovated and new equipment brought in should give excellent service to users in the not too distant future.

Water - Several houses have their own deep wells, but most houses are serviced with water trucked daily and pumped into water towers. The water cannot be used for drinking without boiling and filtering.

Food, Clothing and Services - Meats, frozen foods, accessory items and staple goods are usually ordered and shipped by air from the American Commissary in Vientiane. However, a large quantity of staple goods is available on the local market, at slightly higher prices. Fruits, vegetables, meats, fowl and sea food are also available and usually at prices lower than those in Vientiane.

Services such as barber shops, beauty parlors, shoemakers, dressmakers, tailor shops, drug stores, etc., are plentiful, and prices are extremely reasonable and the service is good.

Transportation and Communications - Because of the poor road system in Laos especially during the rainy season, the Mission has an air transportation service between Savannakhet and Vientiane. Although many personnel have travelled the road between the above two cities, it is a long, hard and dusty drive, and usually must be performed with high clearance or 4 wheel drive vehicles. A personal car can be useful within town and for various side trips outside of Savannakhet. The mission does not operate a bus service but taxis and samplers are cheap, plentiful, and adequate for the short distance travel required.

There are short wave radio communication facilities between Savannakhet and Vientiane for official use and for emergencies. All APO personal mail is processed through Vientiane via Mission air transportation. USAID personnel should use the mailing address: John Doe, USAID/Field, APO San Francisco 96352. A limited public telephone service is available as is an official internal telephone network.

Health and Medicine-Savannakhet has a city hospital which is staffed by a well qualified Lao doctor. The French Government also maintains a good hospital facility in Seno, approximately 35 minutes driving distance from Savannakhet, with two qualified French doctors and one dentist. An Operation Brotherhood Hospital, with 2 good doctors, is located in Kengkok, approximately 1-1/2 hours from Savannakhet. In event of serious illnesses, employees can also be airlifted to Vientiane for treatment at the Embassy Medical Unit or evacuated to Bangkok for hospitalization. Employees who are on special medicines, should bring an ample supply with them to post, for although medicines are plentiful, most are of French origin and one cannot be certain that duplications are available.

Recreation and Social Activities - There are limited sports facilities available. One may find tennis courts near the National Stadium, a basketball court, or even a baseball game at the airport but the Mission does not provide such facilities. Badminton, volley ball and pingpong equipment should be brought by families with children, however, all can be purchased with a little effort in Savannakhet or Thailand. Books should also be brought for very young children.

Two movie houses are available in town, however, they rarely show movies with English dialogue or sub-titles. The American Community does, however, show movies approximately three times per week.

Also available is an American Community Club that is just beginning to function and there is a great deal of house to house entertainment which includes teas, cocktail parties, buffet dinners and bridge sessions. As mentioned above, an adequate number of restaurants are available for an occasional meal "out on the town".

Education - Savannakhet currently has a branch of the American Community School which includes grades 1 thru 8. An Evangelical Mission Kindergarten and school is also available for children who understand or want to learn the French language. A French-run Lycee (high school) is also available for French speaking students. Students of 9th Grade level or higher may also participate in University of Nebraska correspondence work if desired.

Religion - There is a large Catholic church and a small Protestant church in the city.

PAKSE

General Description - The city of Pakse is situated in the southern-most part of Laos, and is approximately 250 air miles from Vientiane. On the regular air "Milk Run" it takes about two and a half hours to reach Pakse. Pakse has a population of some 20,000 people. The province in which the city is located is considered the food belt of Laos. Because of climatic conditions which prevail in this area, fruits and vegetables grow in abundance, and at certain periods of the year large surpluses appear. The pineapples grown are some of the finest, and the prices are reasonable. The airport is used by some international airlines for flights to Vietnam and Cambodia.

Houei Kong, Champassak, Khong Sedone, Saravane, Attopeu and Khong Island are the places where Americans work outside the Area office in the Pakse region.

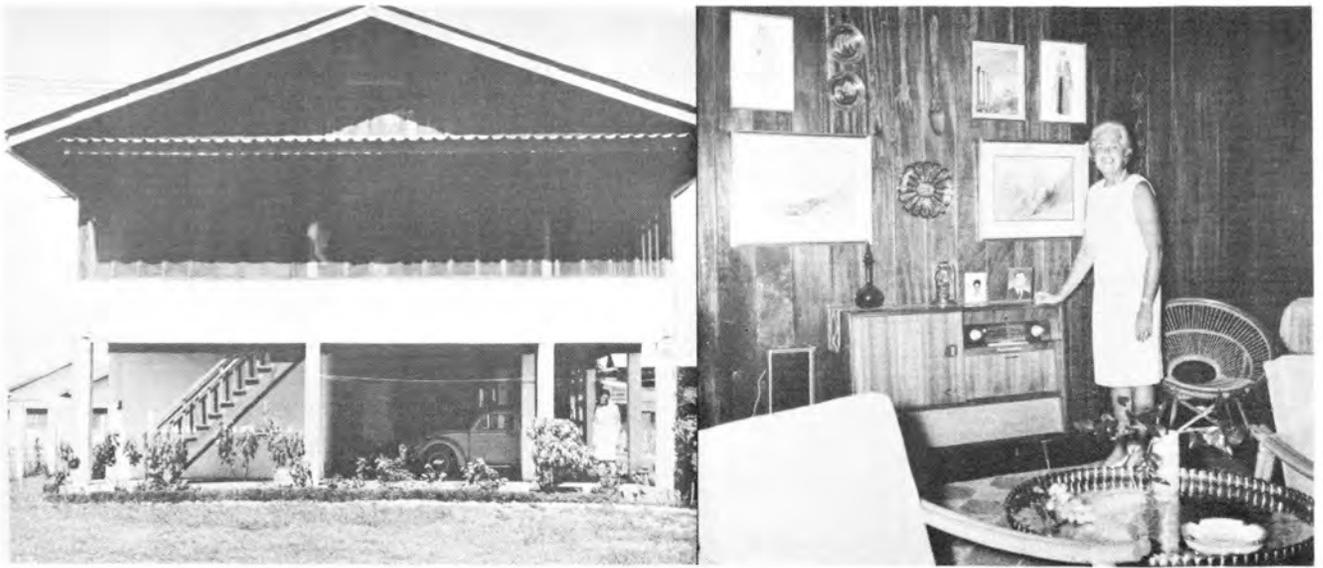
Housing - A new modern guest house is maintained for transients and newly arrived personnel. Personnel assigned to Pakse are given permanent housing upon arrival. All houses are Government leased. Those in the compound are modern Lao-style. Others, off the compound, are brick and masonry construction. Interiors are well planned and comfortable, and compare quite favorably with stateside houses.

Furniture is supplied by the Mission. All houses are provided with butane gas cooking stoves, refrigerators, hot water heaters, and kerosene freezers. Occupied bedrooms are furnished with air conditioners.

Electricity - The city power system is inadequate for ever-increasing requirements. By late 1969 or early 1970, additional power should be available from a new dam constructed for this purpose. Through the Compound power plant and small generators at outlying houses, USAID provides minimum power requirements of Mission personnel and facilities.

Water - For those houses in the Compound area, there is a piped distribution system. For those houses off the Compound USAID delivers water. However, all water must be boiled before using for cooking or drinking.

Food, Clothing and Services - Staple food items are normally shipped by air on a twice-weekly basis from the American Commissary in Vientiane. Many staple items are readily available on the



Typical Pakse residence and interior view.



Selabam Falls, 14 kilometers from Pakse

local market. Fruits and vegetables are always in plentiful supply in the local market at prices lower than in Vientiane. Some employees place orders with export houses in Hong Kong and Denmark to supplement their stocks. These orders generally arrive within three months.

Services such as barber shops, beauty shops, shoe repair, tailors, dressmaking, drug stores, etc., are available, and prices are comparable to those in Vientiane.

Transportation and Communications - Pakse is on the air route ("Milk Run") from Vientiane for planes under contract to USAID which are used for both passengers and cargo.

From time to time the road from Vientiane is impassable and therefore air travel is most commonly used. During certain periods of the year when the Mekong is at a high level, boats are used to ship freight.

The road system in and around Pakse is reasonably adequate. Paksong, situated on a mountain plateau approximately 55 kilometers from Pakse, is considered the most fertile area in Laos. Here there are many plantations which produce pineapples and other fruits and vegetables in large quantity. A personal vehicle can be most useful for many side trips to other places of interest. Mission cars, on a limited basis, if not required for official use, may be rented for private use at the rate of 12 cents per mile.

Almost all official transportation of personnel within the southern region is by small aircraft.

The mission maintains a short wave communications network between Pakse and Vientiane for official use and emergencies. It also maintains a radio communications network (SSB) for communication with those personnel stationed outside Pakse. Although there is no telephone service in town, there is a commercial radio communications facility for messages outside Laos. In addition, cable messages are forwarded to Vientiane for onward transmission. Personal mail is received initially in Vientiane and forwarded to Pakse by air. USAID personnel should use the mailing address: John Doe., USAID/Field, APO San Francisco 96352.

Health and Medicine - There is a hospital run by Operation Brotherhood at Paksong, with a staff of qualified nurses and doctors. In addition, an Operation Brotherhood team is assigned to the Pakse hospital where they are available in case of an emergency. A field dispensary is being established in Pakse under the direct supervision of the Embassy Medical Unit. It will be serviced by a part-time contract doctor, a registered nurse, and a laboratory technician. More serious illnesses are handled by the Embassy Medical Unit in Vientiane and emergency evacuations can be accomplished by air. Employees assigned to this post should arrange to bring along any special medicine which is prescribed by their doctors. Although medicines can be purchased locally, they are not always in supply.

Required dental work can be accomplished in Bangkok and personnel in need of dental attention can travel there by commissary run from Vientiane.

Recreation and Social Activities - The Mission does not provide recreational facilities or playground equipment. Play things, books, outdoor swings and apparatus should be brought along for young children.

There are a number of local movie theaters in town and American movies are available for all employees and dependents. Showing of USIS educational films are also scheduled.

A number of restaurants frequented by Mission personnel serve French and Chinese dishes and have been found to be acceptable.

There are no night clubs or other entertainment facilities in town. However, there is a great deal of house to house entertaining which includes teas, coffees, cocktail parties, outside barbecues, buffet dinners, and bridge sessions.

Schools - A two-class school for grades one through four and five through eight is scheduled to open with the Fall term in 1968.

Although most people prefer to send their children abroad for secondary school education, some do use the University of Nebraska facilities for this purpose.

SAM THONG

General Description - Sam Thong, the present capital of Xieng Khouang Province, lies north east of Vientiane, about forty five minutes' flight away. It has become Second Region military headquarters and it is the nerve center of USAID's refugee relief effort in the North.

Housing - There is no guesthouse in Sam Thong. Temporary board and lodging may be available for visitors at the Air America compound near the Area office. Personnel permanently assigned to Sam Thong are adequately housed, although there are no facilities for families. Dependents are generally housed in Vientiane.

Water - A new four-inch pipe line furnishes water for everyone including the local population. Water must be boiled before using for cooking or drinking.

Food, Clothing, Services - Staple food items are normally shipped in by air. There is very little to be bought by way of foodstuffs in the local market. There are no barber shops, beauty parlors, tailors, dressmakers, etc., to speak of. Warm clothing is required practically the year round as Sam Thong has a cool climate due to its elevation.

Transportation and Communication - Several light passenger and cargo planes shuttle between Vientiane and Sam Thong daily.

The Mission maintains a short-wave communications net work between Sam Thong and Vientiane for official or emergency use. Cable messages are relayed to Vientiane for transmission. Personal mail is forwarded through Vientiane. USAID personnel use the mailing address: John Doe, USAID/Field, APO San Francisco 96352.

Health and Medicine - There is a new hospital in Sam Thong staffed by Lao nurses and medics under the supervision of the Mission's Public Health personnel. The more serious cases, however, are handled by the Embassy Medical Unit in Vientiane.

Recreation and Social Activities - There are practically no recreational facilities and social activities in Sam Thong, except for occasional Lao celebrations or holidays to which Americans are usually invited.



Living Quarters at Sam Thong, exterior and interior views.

