

From:

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To:

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Date: Friday, February 25, 2000 12:32 PM

Subject: Re: Fw: USAID/Laos KIA

I remember him but did not know him well. If I am not mistaken he went down
2/26/00

in the Caribou crash at Savannakhet airport. It was the USAID milkrun heading back to Vientiane. There were reported PL in the woods at the north end of the runway so the pilot did an evasive sharp bank left as soon as it was airborne. It was too much, he lost power in the left engine and couldn't bring her back up. They did a hard crash landing, killing all but a few people in the tail section. Don Kobiashi, a good friend and the ag engineer who did the irrigation project for me in Lahanam, died on that crash as well. Parenteau may have been working on the planning of the secondary school in Savannakhet. I associate him with education. Gus Carlson, Howie Lewin or Joanne Buechler would be the people I would ask. Sandy Stone is gone but Joe Tucker was the admin guy in Savannakhet in those days. He might remember if anyone knows where he is. I am pretty sure Parenteau was USAID.

Ciao, Tony

was a C-46 "Commando" built during World War II to fly over the Hump on the India/Kunming airlift. The plane was on the twice weekly, as recall, milkrun and was returning to Vientiane from Pakse. People on the ground reported that the engines sounded "rough" when the plane departed Pakse. The plane took on passengers at Savannakhet. The C-46 took off from Savannakhet and less than a mile from the runway it crashed. There were no PI around and I do not recall anyone ever suggesting that the enemy was in any way responsible. Interestingly enough the C-46 was one of the safest planes we had. C-46s were used to handles hundreds of rice drops a month in the north for the refugee program.

I happen to remember the incident quite well because my engagement plans were delayed by the crash. Several of my (future) wife's relatives were on board. The wife of Chao Saykham Soutakakhuman, the Governor of Xieng Khouang, was killed, as were a sister and a niece. In his new book Tragedy in Paradise Jigs Weldon has a short chapter about the deaths of both Mr. Kobiyashi and Madam Saykham.

Yes, we were married three months later. Cheers Ernie Kuhn