

Larry & Dee Woodson

From: Herb Miller [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 17, 2001 3:13 AM
Subject: Khao Lao

Hi Larry

I've been hearing about your efforts with the Khao Lao for years but just got your e-mail address the other day in a message from Mac Thompson. I would certainly like to be included in the list of recipients. What's involved! Do I have to subscribe? I am certainly willing to do so.

I don't know what you include in the Khao Lao but if you pass on information on what has happened to "old Lao hands" over the years I will provide you information on myself to do with whatever it is you do.

I joined USAID in July 1965. In March 1966 I joined the first and only Lao group at the Far East Training Center in Hawaii with Frank Gillespie, Tony Babb, Stu During, "Bud" Lane, et al. In September of 1966 we all arrived in Laos and I was assigned to Wapikomtong in Khong Sedone Province as a CDA with Peter Lyons and John Doolittle. After several months I was reassigned to Pakse and then assigned to open a new Cluster in Paksong on the Bolovens Plateau. After a year or so security became a concern and I was transferred back to Pakse to act as an "absentee" Cluster manager. I later served as Acting Area Coordinator between Diffenderfer and Chris Russell. In 1968, while in Paksong, I met Nguyen Thi Huyen Tran (Martha) who was teaching French at the Teacher's Training School in Pakse. We were married in Vientiane in 1971, attended by the Haffner's and McQueens and other friends.

In late 1971, following home leave and the birth of our first son, Matthew, I was reassigned to Vientiane as the Deputy Chief of Community Development under Bob Anderson, and "Haff" and later "Pop" Buell as Directors of Rural Development. In that capacity I later served several months as Acting CDA in Sayaboury Province until they could find a replacement for (as I remember) Bob Worley and then a couple of months as Acting Area Coordinator in Louang Prabang after the departure of Tony Caterucchi.

In late 1973 (just before the "fall") I was reassigned to Washington after 7 years as an "old Lao hand". I attended the FSI six-month course in economics and was then assigned to the Sahel Drought Unit of the Sahel and West Africa Division (SWA). I was not aware that I was in the process of becoming an "old African hand" which would overshadow my previous incarnation. In January 1976, 15 months after the birth of our second son, Michael, I was transferred to Niamey, Niger as Deputy

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Program Officer. I later became Program Officer and served several times as Acting Mission Director during home leaves of the Director. While in Niger we hired Henri Guillou for our management office and were later visited by "Pop" Buell on his "around the world tour" before his return to Thailand and ultimate demise.

In late 1980 I was transferred to Cameroon as Program Officer and was promoted to Deputy Mission Director in 1984. Shortly thereafter, the Mission Director was reassigned and I served as Acting Mission Director for almost one year. In 1985 I was nominated as the Mission Director in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (former Upper Volta). With only ten direct-hire employees this was NOT the USAID of Joe Mendenhall or Charlie Mann. We spent four years there and then, after almost 14 years in Africa, were transferred back to Washington in 1989.

While serving in Washington I had lots of great experiences including an around the world tour visiting Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guinea, Senegal, Pakistan, Thailand and Indonesia for a special USAID study. Spent a month doing a special study in Benin and two weeks doing another special study in Guinea. One month as Acting Mission Director in Nouakchott, Mauritania and one month as Acting Mission Director of REDSO in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. I was also on the first visit of Americans to the former Soviet Republic of Moldova (former Besarabia) after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and then was sent to open up the USAID missions in Kiev, Ukraine and Yerevan, Armenia. This was especially poignant for me as I had spent most of my career fighting the cold war and competing with the Soviets for "hearts and minds". I was now in the heartland of the "enemy".

Shortly before retirement I was sent to Alma Ata (now Almaty) to open the USAID mission in Kazakstan. I retired in April 1994 and later took Personal Service Contracts to return to the Former Soviet Union to open up Missions in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Bishkek, Kyrgystan. Of the seven USAID Missions in the former Soviet Union I opened up five of them (having missed Moscow itself and Dushanbe, Tajikistan).

Following retirement (other than my two PSC's in 1994 and 1995 and some work with the Census Bureau in 1999 and 2000 to get me out of the house) I have become pretty much of a couch potato doing genealogical research on the internet and grave-hopping in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Michigan. Martha and I drove to Alaska in 1997 to visit relatives and to California in 1998 to visit relatives and friends. Martha has also returned to Vietnam twice to visit relatives and we have been to France a couple of times to visit her family in Toulouse and spend some time on the Cote d'Azur.

Our son Matthew is a veteran of the Gulf war and the recipient of the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Bronze Star. Ironically he is also a Mayflower descendent and the grandson of a Viet Minh veteran who was put to death by the French in 1945 after the end of WW II. He has recently

presented us with a grand daughter (my fourth - Martha's first). His wife is Indian from New Delhi so our grand daughter is one half Indian, one-quarter Vietnamese and one-quarter whatever (a real American). He recently received his Master's Degree in International Conflict Resolution from George Mason University here in Virginia and will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in August (a late bloomer like his father).

Our youngest son, Mike, is an information management technician at Price-Waterhouse-Coopers and he and his wife will be presenting Martha and I with our second grand daughter in October (my fifth).

We have not been very good in keeping contact with all of our old Lao buddies and regret that very much. Since retirement we have been in contact with the Gillespie's who live close by and with Ernie Kunh who also lives fairly close. We also attend the annual "Boon" at the Lao Temple in Nokesville, Virginia. Also live a couple of blocks from Curt Swayze (Saravane) here in Vienna whom I last met in Kyrgystan while he was there as a representat9ve of the American Hospital Association

Best Regards,

Herb Miller

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