



AFD FALLS OUT OF C-46--PARACHUTES SAFELY TO EARTH

by: G. L. Christian, Editor

Air America Air Freight Dispatcher Thavee Homhuan recently fell out of a C-46 (83N) while making a rice drop at Ban Nam Thao in North Laos; he parachuted to safety and sustained only minor injuries. His left hand was slightly cut where the static line he was holding was wrenched from his grasp, he also sustained a cut on his right cheek when he brushed against a tree on landing.

As soon as the Air Freight Dispatcher in charge of the flight, Khamouth Sousadalay, saw Thavee start to fall from the plane, he grabbed Thavee's legs in an effort to hold him back, but Thavee was too heavy and Khamouth could not restrain him. The instant Khamouth saw Thavee clear the aircraft and observed his parachute to open, Khamouth ran forward to the cockpit to alert Pilot-in-Command J. A. Walsh who immediately radioed for help and started circling the scene of the accident. Within minutes, an Air America UH-34 chopper (H-62) arrived at the scene and picked Thavee up. Pilot of H-62 was Udorn-based Captain I. Freedman who brought Thavee back to Vientiane where an Air America ambulance and medical team awaited him on the ramp to drive him to the AAM clinic for a physical check-up.

Except for his hand and face scratches he was uninjured.

Cause for the incident is not completely known. It is believed, however, that just as a pallet of rice (weight: 864 pounds) was being pushed from the plane, wind whipped the pallet static line behind Thavee and forced him out of the aircraft's open door.

Corrective action immediately taken was to fold all pallet static lines over several times to eliminate any slack and stitch the folded line with break cord.

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Captain E. G. Adams, flying a C-46 on a rice drop mission, peers out of cockpit in search for Drop Zone in North Laos.



Air America Air Freight Dispatcher Thavee Homhuan walks away from AAM chopper H-62 which rescued him after fall from a rice drop C-46 and flew him back to Vientiane, Laos.



AFD Thavee smiles for cameraman; lump on right cheek resulted from brush with tree while parachuting to safety.



With a big grin and giving a thumbs-up sign, AFD Thavee is driven to AAM's clinic at Wattay Airport in Company's ambulance.