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Cpt T.N. Castle, USAF
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Dear Captain Castle,

Thank you very much for your letter of April 15, 1988. I am pleased to contribute to your project and you are free to use my name if you so desire.

I was involved in three significant SAR missions in Laos. Today I will respond to your questions and later in the week I will commence with providing you with the information on the missions.

The problem I will have is establishing dates but I would expect my SAR missions were closer to the time of heavy US Military activity in Southeast Asia.

1. I flew in Laos 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965. I flew in Vietnam 1966.
2. Dc-3 C46 Pioneer Dornier Apache Beaver Cessna Wren Beechcraft Baron.
3. Information to follow.
4. I did not transport Hmong teams to crash sites because I was flying fixed wing. The helicopter H 34 pilots would respond with the Hmong teams to assist.
5. Air America, Bird and CAS pilots all monitored 119.1 for we had no ATC system. When flying IMC we would all make transmissions in the clear of our position, altitude and heading to avoid mid air collisions amongst ourselves. Of concern to us was Lao AF planes and US fighter & recon planes in the area not on frequency but we never had a mid air during my time there. Some of the Air America aircraft loaned from the USAF had UHF equipment as well as VHF.
6. I do not know Col Thong and probably because he worked on the H-34's..
7. I cannot recount any specific incidents but I'm positive there were many and especially after I left in 1966 as the military got more heavily involved in Laos.
8. I was aware of the T-28 program but did not fly in it because I was not a fighter pilot in the military and I was married and those rules almost always applied. I can get you the dates of the program

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if you cannot but the program was in the mid sixties.

8a. I flew out of Udorn in Beavers supporting the White Star Special Forces in 1962. When the coalition Of Oct 1962 was formed my services were terminated by Air America and 4 or 5 months later I was hired by Bird & Sons based at Wattay. Continental Air Services, a subsidiary of Continental Air Lines purchd Bird & Sons and took control of operations September 1, 1965. The purchase price was \$4.2 million. Pierre Salinger was a director of Continental Air Services.

8b. Most of my work in Laos was STOL oriented. I made many drops of supplies, rice and what we nicknamed "hard rice".. My flying was primarily daytime. My SAR missions werẽ not from being on an SAR alert. If I were flying a normal mission around Laos and a call came in about a downed pilot, either Air America or US Military or Lao Military I would divert from my regular mission if I was in the area and support directly the SAR mission.

8c. When a call went out about another pilot being down I didn't think much about authority. If a friendly pilot went down any one of us in the area would divert our mission and go to assist.

8d. I did not receive any specific training for SAR work but my U.S. Army training in STOL and unimproved airfield operations was tailored made to SAR work.

8e. To follow.

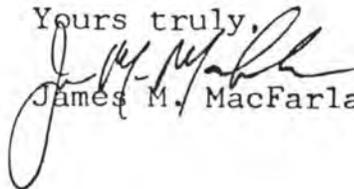
8f. The Project Pay was \$10.00 per hour for all hours flown in Laos or Vietnam. I think we were not paid that for 15 minutes out of Wattay but being mercenary I think we logged it in anyhow.

9. I will be picking up the former CP of Air America Wattay who was there 20+ years on April 30, 1988 at Logan Airport and I will ask him to participate and I think he will.

I also have many newspaper articles I will forward to you for general information to piece your history together.

Thank you for allowing me to participate.

Yours truly,


James M. MacFarlane