

MEKONG EXPRESS MAIL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE THAILAND-LAOS-CAMBODIA BROTHERHOOD, INC. VOLUME 15, ISSUE 4



John Middlewood 1940 — 2014

“We exist for those we have left behind, and for those who remember them as friends, loved ones, and gallant men who stood tall in time of strife.”

Taken from our website, this sentiment is in harmony with John P. Middlewood, who lost his battle with cancer and passed away on November 21, 2014, in the hospital at Nong Khai, Thailand. The TLCB and the children of Nakhon Phanom, Thailand will remember John as a friend, loved mentor, and gallant man who stood as a giant of good works. He is survived by his wife, Maeo.

The Man: An inspiration and fine example

Arriving at NKP in 1969, John Middlewood was stationed in the clinic performing administrative work. He joined the TLCB November 2000 and quickly started working with TLCB Assistance projects. John was married to Maeo, a 6th grade school teacher. He became a minister; worked for and earned Master’s and Doctorate degrees, and preached Christianity in Thai prisons.

He and Maeo lived downtown for a couple of years, then moved farther out where he started building his church and home near the school where Maeo taught. They became active in their community and held worship services in the Christian Mission of Ban Naratchakwai, helping many people with the “Soup of Love” outreach.

They educated many Thai children in their boarding school, English being one of the important subjects taught. Many of their high school and college students earned spe-



John continues on page 12.

TLCB Assistance

by Les Thompson

Chairman TLCB Assistance Committee

Through September of this year, member contributions funded twelve projects in Laos, totaling \$36,240; funded four projects in Thailand, totaling \$10,350; provided \$8,850 in student assistance and \$610 in medical assistance. We had built up a close- to \$45,000 balance in assistance funds over the years. This year’s extraordinary effort drew that fund down close to \$3,000, and it has since built back up to just under \$10,000. While we realize that this level of funding cannot happen on a continuous basis, there was a lot of need this year, and thanks to your donations, we were able to meet most requests. Student assistance and medical assistance are well funded and are kept separate from the general assistance funds.

Assistance continues on page 12

Table of Contents

John Middlewood.....	1
TLCB Assistance — 2014	1
Editor’s Notebook, December 2014	2
From the Archives—“What Really Happened to Karl Richter?”	3
New Member Profiles.....	8
Note to the editor from Sally MacDonald	10
TLCB 2015 Reunion /Annual Meeting.....	11
TLCB By-Laws to be Reviewed	13
Election Results	14
Newest Members in the TLC Brotherhood.....	14
CIA Acknowledges Thailand’s Involvement in the “Secret War.”	15
Colorado Springs Montage.....	16

Editor's Notebook, December 2014

Several of the items in this issue of the *Mekong Express Mail* have special meaning for me.

The Assistance Report: From my perspective, this is the program that makes the Thailand Laos Cambodia Brotherhood unique among all the Vietnam War-era organizations with which I'm familiar. Because of it, the TLCB is not just a bunch of veterans, nearing geezer-hood, swapping war stories. Something in our experiences there impels us to give something back to that faraway part of the world and its lovely people. Frankly, if it were not for the Assistance Program, I would probably still be a member of TLCB, but I would not have been willing to take on the editorship of the *MEM*. As our assistance committee chairman, Les Thompson, makes clear, it has been an extraordinary year. Read it and be proud!

The Archives and Karl Richter: The "From the Archives" feature has been an initiative of mine. I joined TLCB in 2011, which means there was substantially more than a decade of adventures, stories, and information in old issues of the *MEM* that I had never seen. Then when I realized that new members were continuing to join in great numbers, it meant they too did not know those stories either. So, thanks to the archives that are available on our great website, tlc-brotherhood.net, I began wandering through those earlier issues, with the intention of re-publishing some of them on a regular basis. In this issue, our choice is "What Really Happened to Karl Richter?" by Bill Tilton, the TLCB Treasurer. I'm confident that everyone who was in Thailand in the mid-to-late 1960s was aware of the legend of Karl Richter, the heroic F-105 pilot who was shot down and killed on what might have been his 200th mission (he could have gone home after 100). I was at a remote radar site in Central Thailand in 1967 and 1968. I was not a controller,

but my best friend there, the late Jay Steplen, was, and in fact had been stationed on a previous tour at Nakhon Phanom, in '65 and '66, when Bill Tilton met Karl Richter. Jay had told me about Richter and how, probably during the same visit the Thud pilot made it to NKP and flew with Bill, he stopped in the radar operations as well. There Jay showed him around, answered his questions, and then shared some cold beers with him. So, when I came across the "What Really Happened....." article in the archives, I knew it had to be reprinted.

David MacDonald: As long as I am going on about the archives, what would be more appropriate than to mention the letter, on page 10, we received a little while back from Sally MacDonald, the wife of Dave MacDonald, who not only was the founding editor of the *MEM*, but in fact its only editor till health problems forced him to resign in early 2012. It was pretty daunting to try and fill his large shoes. Hell, all I've got to do is improve my work and last another ten years or more. I'm sure all of the TLCB's members will be glad to see Dave is doing well.

New Member Profiles: This is a project I'm particularly interested in. Every new member, along with a TLCB package, receives an e-mail from me asking them (well, perhaps something close to begging them) to submit at least some minimal profile information and some photos, one from back in the day, and a current one. For the most part, the new people have been a little too shy for my tastes. However, this last period was a bit more fertile, and we're publishing some of the details for four new members. So, thanks to Jim Muller, Harley MacLeod, Gary Parker, and Bill Goldstein for sharing at least part of their stories with the brotherhood. Hopefully, their examples will loosen up the memories of some of the shy members. And,

See lower left next page....

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Reunion 2015: Sep 10-13, Boston, MA

What Really Happened to Karl Richter?

by Bill Tilton

The following article first appeared in the June 2002 issue of the Mekong Express Mail.

It was a morning in June, 1966. As I arrived at my assigned O-1F for the day's mission I found a very young-looking officer standing awkwardly by the tail. He was a stranger and not likely a FAC, judging from his flight suit and his junior rank (lieutenants were rare in SEA). This was Karl Richter, now a legend but then just an aggressive, competitive, and very well liked fighter pilot in the 421st Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) at Korat. I was in the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS) at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, located on the Mekong river in Northeast Thailand.

Karl introduced himself to me and explained that he hoped to get a ride with a forward air controller (FAC) to see some of the targets from our unmatched observation altitude and speed. Like us, the fighter pilots got their weekends in 4-day groups about once each month, and this was how Karl had chosen to spend his time off. I told him I would need permission, and somehow I obtained that very quickly. So we headed into Laos, and for about 3 hours he observed, listened, asked questions, watched airstrikes, flew my plane from the back seat, and even fired my M-16 out a rear side-window. That experience led to a later repeat on which Karl brought along his best friend, Ed Harvey. John Taylor and I flew Karl and Ed back to Korat (see photo) on that occasion. And in November Glenn Bremenkamp and I flew to Korat on a crew orientation visit.

At the 421st we found the most famous mascot in Thailand, a yellow dog named Roscoe. A fighter pilot had owned Roscoe, but he was shot down. So Roscoe became the pet of everyone, always sitting in on the commander's staff meetings and often



Bill Tilton, Ed Harvey, Karl Richter, and John Taylor, who solicited 23rd TASS patch from Disney, in front of an O-1F right wing on the ramp at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AFB in 1966. The NKP runway is near the horizon. Photo supplied by Bill Tilton.

riding slowly across the base in the bed of the commander's pickup or even on the trunk of his car. There is a memorial to Roscoe at Korat today.

We also found that Karl already held a special position in the wing. It probably was a combination of his youth and his attitude, but Karl was almost (yes, *almost*) universally liked and respected. It was a time when nerves were very stressed, daily tension was high, losses were frequent, and normally-bold and fearless fighter pilots openly discussed their dread of Route Package Six (the Hanoi area). A few resented him for what they took as excessive self-promotion, but clearly the leadership and most of Karl and Ed's fellow pilots admired their aggressive attitude. Karl frankly realized that he had a lot to offer, and that he was becoming more effective with each mission. And while Ed, who was married, wanted to hurt the enemy as much as possible and then go home, it was not so for Karl.

Karl Richter was, by the summer of 1966, approaching 100 sorties, called "counters," into North Vietnam. According to the rules, when he reached 100 counters (on October 13, as it turned out), he would be entitled to go home up to two months early, while keeping full credit for his remote assignment. In the meantime he would be given administrative duties on the ground. He was approaching what all the other pilots dreamed of from their first bath of fire in Route PAK VI until the day they died, were captured, or went home (and at that time 43% failed to reach 100 for the reasons given). And he was trying

Editor's Notebook, Continued

the contributions do not have to be limited to short profiles. The MEM loves to publish long pieces. Remember, there are no uninteresting stories, but there are a lot of untold stories out there. Write them down and send them to us.

The 2015 Reunion: The TLCB has got a running start on next year's reunion, which will be in Boston, September 10 to 13. Since that's where the American Revolution began, what could be more appropriate? I am especially pleased with the selection, not so much because it's a relatively short drive for me, but it's on dates that don't conflict with some business obligations I still have, which have kept me away from the last three. So yes, I am certainly going to be there. Although, as I think about it, this little bit of information might keep the crowds down.

John Harrington
MEM Editor
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Richter continues on page 4

Richter continued from page 3

to delay it. Karl told us that if a mission was forced to abort a strike “up North,” he would develop some aircraft problem that would make him fly back to Korat without entering Vietnam at all, thus avoiding a counter when it didn’t involve a chance to strike the enemy.

Karl explained his motive for this, in terms we understood. We understood, that is, but I am not so sure any of us would have considered doing the same. To Karl, the “counter” system of combat tour curtailment would pull him out of the action just as he was reaching his greatest power to contribute to the war effort. It was such a contradiction, to him, that he had made up his mind to try and stay. Karl Richter had formally requested that he be permitted to fly a second 100 strike sorties into North Vietnam. After some delay, his request was granted.

Karl and Ed had many ideas about prosecuting the war effectively. They felt frustrated at how poor many of the targets seemed to be on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, with the obvious movement of trucks every night right under our noses. And one of their big causes, soon to be lost, if not already, was a proposed refinement of their beloved F-105D “Thud.” Karl told us about a variant that Republic had proposed. The 64-foot fuselage of the enormous F-105 was only ten feet shorter than that of a World War II B-17 “heavy bomber,” with its four engines and crew of ten. But in this F-105 fuselage was included a nearly-useless bomb bay designed for the intended role of delivering nuclear weapons in tanker-escorted “wolf packs.” The bomb bay was equipped with a heavy kicker—a ram designed to eject the contents of the bomb bay during high-speed bomb delivery. The bomb bay could hold a modest fuel tank, but the ram was dead weight. In Republic’s new model the fuselage frames would run clear across the bottom and the recovered space would be filled with fuel. The result was expected to yield greatly enhanced range and performance, but of course it never happened. They thought it was to have been the “G” variant, but the next year that letter was used to designate the modified two-seat “F” trainer that was used for Wild Weasel radar-killer missions.

As it was, Karl explained to us, there was no plane in the world that could touch the F-105D at low altitude. This probably grew out of the Thud’s breeding. The Republic F-84 family, sometimes called “Lead Sleds,” were famous for long takeoff

rolls and high wing-loading (pounds of weight per square foot of wing area). The joke used to be, “If all the runways in the world were laid end-to-end, Republic would build a plane that needed the whole thing.” But Karl and Ed proudly described how this high wing loading made them able to escape from MiGs that managed to jump them. By “unloading” the wings (stick forward), dropping the MER (multiple ejection rack for bombs), and lighting the afterburner, the Thud could quickly accelerate to speeds no other production plane in the world could

match in dense low-altitude air. While they were whistling smoothly out of range at twice the speed of sound, their attackers (and others like F-4s) were buffeting and yawing in a regime they were not designed for.

On September 21st, 1966, Karl was #3 in Ford flight, on an air-strike “downtown.” Captain Ralph Beardsley, the squadron vice commander, was on his wing as Ford Four. For some reason Karl was holding his element back while Ford Lead and Ford Two approached the target. But something was wrong. Some planes that didn’t look familiar had slid in behind the lead element ahead of him. Karl said

later that it was so uncommon to come in contact with enemy planes that for several seconds he didn’t realize what was going on. But then it struck him—MiGs! The Thuds lit afterburners and swept in so rapidly on the MiGs that Karl worried about overrunning them and ending up in front as the prey instead of the hunter. But he soon had a MiG-17 in his sights, and let the 20mm gatling gun roar, aiming where the MiG would be when he broke left to get away. But that didn’t happen and Karl had to move his aim right at the fighter. This time he saw the rounds going home, and Beardsley said, “You’re hitting him!” But then the MiG reversed course. Karl stayed with him and ran his gun empty into the tough Soviet plane. The MiG lost a wing, developed an engine fire, and shed large pieces across the sky. Karl was delighted, but also he was relieved to see the pilot eject and get a good parachute, recognizing that he, like Karl, was doing his assigned duty. (The pilot lived, and is today well known in Asia). This was only the sixth MiG shot down by an F-105, and the 28th air victory of the war. And Karl, the youngest pilot to get a MiG, was called to Saigon for personal recognition by General Momyer, and even to attend a party with VNAF Commander Ky, where he danced with Mrs. Ky.

On November 23rd Glenn Bremenkamp and I visited the 421st on our “week end.” Karl had developed a serious rela-



Karl Richter, left, and Ed Harvey at 421st TAC Fighter Squadron headquarters, Korat Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, on Thanksgiving Day 1966. Photo by Bill Tilton

Continued next page.

tionship with Malee, or “Molly,” there in Korat. Molly spoke text-book English and was halfway through business school. She showed Glenn and me the best Korat shops for silk, which was much more reasonable there than in Bangkok. When Karl died, Malee was six months pregnant. Their daughter, Karla, not too long ago was astonished to learn that her dad is an authentic American hero. (Malee later married an F-111 EWO, who adopted Karla, so that she grew up a real Air Force brat.)

And what did happen to Karl Richter? This topic has come up on a number of occasions, and always a group of people jump in with certain knowledge on their side. But there has always been some contradiction and thus some doubt.

I think I now know, thanks to some eyewitness accounts and records kept during the search and rescue (SAR), both of which I have seen.

One thing that is not certain is which “counter” Karl was on. Some say his 198th North Vietnam mission, and some just as firmly assert it was his 199th. The truth doesn’t matter. One source reports that Karl’s Form 5 actually shows he had already passed 200, which would not surprise me at all. Already he was assigned to the wing doing administrative duties in anticipation of his return to the states. And he had been given the principal speaking part in a morale-booster film titled “There Is A Way.” (Fighter pilots in Thailand often exclaimed: “...there ain’t no way!” ...to get 100 “counter” missions). Karl and a Major Piper were supposed to proceed to Saigon after his mission the next day. There General Momyer wished personally to present an award on the occasion of Karl’s 200th sortie, and Piper’s 100th.

On the day of this last mission, Karl was assigned to fly with a newly-arrived pilot in the unit, who was still flying his orientation missions to Route PAK VI. It was not an unusual mission in any particular way. It was July 28th of 1967. The new pilot was Maj Robert Barnett, a 44th TFS pilot who was assigned to fly lead as Hotrod 01 in a two-ship formation with Karl flying wing as Hotrod 02. Barnett was highly-experienced as a fighter pilot, already having logged over 4000 hours, which is very high. But this was only his 4th mission into RP VI, and his first as lead.

Within three months Barnett, too, would be shot down. On October 3rd, while on a strike just eleven miles north of Hanoi, Barnett was struck by a SAM missile. His plane was still flyable at first, and he headed toward the seacoast in flames. In short order he lost oil pressure, engine thrust, and then the controls, and was forced to eject. He landed in jungle northeast of the port of Haiphong and evaded capture for three days. He was a prisoner of war for the next 1,989 days.

The day of Karl’s last mission, things got a little mixed up, as they sometimes do. Barnett and Richter briefed the mission up in the Diem Ven Phu area, to be employed by a FAC against targets there, but when they arrived the FAC was not available. So they were diverted to join up with “Misty” FACs in the southern part of North Vietnam. When they got there they found Misty flight (of two F-100s) was taking a slow drink on a tanker. Misty advised them to return partway North to the area



U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Karl Richter. Photo furnished by David McNeil, boyhood friend.

of the ferry at Ron, where they had seen a train, warning that it could be a “flak trap.” (According to “Wimpy,” the 421st beloved ops officer, Ed Harvey loved trains as targets, and I assume Karl did too.) And so Hotrod headed back up toward Ron, on the coast.

Jinking around and up and down, averaging about 6000 feet above the ground, Barnett and Richter looked for a “lucrative target,” as we say, for their 750 pound bombs (they were each carrying six). Jets burn fuel pretty fast at that altitude, particularly when loaded with external stores, and their loiter time was rapidly disappearing, so Barnett decided it was time to switch leads and have Karl, with his knowledge of the area, find them a

target before they were forced to break off and go find a tanker. They swept along over a land of rice paddies and villages that was by now so familiar to Karl Richter, looking out the huge canopy sides as their magnificent F-105s sped along, turning this way and that to avoid making themselves easy targets. Finally, Karl found a small bridge or ford to attack and they climbed up to 9000 feet to get a decent dive angle (for accuracy). We would like to think this was a worthy target, but in fact my guess is that it was just the best harassment target Karl could come up with as their loiter fuel dwindled. Small water crossings were quickly repaired or bypassed.

Barnett decided to watch for Karl’s strikes and aim on where they hit. Looking back to observe Karl’s roll-in on the target, he noticed bursts of antiaircraft fire at about his own altitude, no more than a half mile behind him. He warned Karl they were under fire, and Karl grunted “roger” as he continued his diving bomb delivery. At about 3000 feet above the ground, Karl pulled up after releasing his bombs, and just then Barnett saw a streak of smoke come from under Karl’s airplane. Karl immediately told Barnett he had been hit and at the same time turned the nose of his wounded F-105 toward Laos.

Barnett salvoed his bomb load and quickly joined up on Karl, who was now in a climb. As Barnett was moving in close to the stricken F-105, Karl reported that he had lost his oil pressure. If that were all that was wrong things may not have been too bad. A jet engine can run quite a while after all the oil drains out. But things turned out to be much more serious than a loss of oil. From only about 30 feet away, Barnett saw flames starting to appear out the J-75’s tailpipe and informed Karl he was on fire. He heard no reply.

Barnett then switched to Guard channel on his radio. This emergency frequency is monitored—and kept clear except in real emergencies—by everyone, including control towers and radar sites. He reported to all who could hear that Hotrod Two was on fire and would be bailing out. The Misty FACs (two F-100s) responded immediately that they were now off the tanker and coming to help.

The report that Hotrod Lead was hit was received by Air Rescue at 0133 Zulu time, or 8:33 AM in Thailand. The location was recorded as 103 nautical miles on the 315 degree radial of Channel 109 TACAN, heading 240 degrees toward Laos. Dong

Richter continues on page 6

Richter continued from page 5

Ha, just below the DMZ, was Channel 109, so that location is Northwest of Ron (see map, opposite page).

The fire coming from Karl's plane had grown longer than his fuselage. Barnett got back on the radio and emphatically told Karl he had better get out now! He was still flying right next to Karl when he felt the sickening shudder, or "burble," that warns a pilot his plane is flying so slow or at such an angle of attack that it is starting to lose lift in a wing stall. Since he was flying formation with Karl, this suggests that Karl's engine thrust was



Republic F-105. Photo supplied by Jim Henthorn.

not sustaining the climb and together they were slowing down. Barnett took his eyes off Karl to glance at his airspeed indicator. When he saw 155 knots he immediately lit his afterburner and simultaneously saw Karl's nose pitch up, then drop violently. Somewhere during that loss of control, Karl ejected, firing the propelled seat Republic Aviation had designed specifically for the F-105. Circling to the left to keep Karl in sight, Barnett reported the bailout on Guard. The chute opened automatically as the ejection seat fell away. But Barnett saw no movement of the figure hanging in that parachute harness. This was not good news.

At 8:40 Rescue was notified that Hotrod Lead had bailed out just 59 miles on the 062 degree radial from Channel 89 TACAN (NKP). That point is in extremely rugged karst mountain terrain that is so inaccessible that FACs seldom bothered checking it out. As seen on the map, it is somewhat Northwest of Mugia Pass, and well inside Laos. Jolly Green 52 and 55, HH-3 rescue helicopters, and Sandy Flight, A-1E rescue cover, were scrambled and enroute, and Misty One One and One Two were cleared to enter Laos to assist. Misty reported heavy but lifting fog in the rescue area at 9:00 AM.

Barnett showed Misty where Karl had entered the clouds, then headed for the nearest KC-135 tanker, as his fuel state became critical. From the tanker he returned to Korat, leaving the SAR in the hands of Misty and the rescue professionals who were headed for the scene.

Crown was a C-130 SAR control aircraft. Crown-1 reported negative voice contact with the ground at 9:03. At 9:10 Jolly 55 and Sandy Flight reported their ETAs at the scene as 24 and 40 minutes after the hour, respectively, and Splendid/Cheetah Flight reported to Crown they were in the area to help if needed. In the tradition of that "certain brotherhood," all available resources were converging to save this anonymous brother who had just

gone down.

At 9:14 Jolly 55 told Crown he would hold on the scene until Sandy Flight arrived, and just then Plymouth Flight, Korat F-105s, reported they were in the area. Misty reported they were searching in the area.

Six minutes later, when they were just 4 minutes away from the bailout site, Sandy reported negative voice contact with the ground; they were hoping to hear Karl calling on his survival radio.

Meanwhile back at Korat there was considerable dismay and confusion. The switch of lead aircraft could not have helped.

They weren't sure who had gone down, even though Barnett had given the tail number of Karl's aircraft to the command post. The wing commander, General Chairsell, had followed Karl's exploits for a year (his replacement took over just four days later), and had great expectations for Karl's Air Force career. When Barnett landed, Chairsell met him at his parking spot, needing to learn the facts as soon as possible, and hoping to hear something good. They proceeded to the general's office for a thorough debrief of the mission.

The rescue helicopters had an exceptionally long hover that day, mainly because of the gradually-breaking clouds, which formed fog at the landing site. At 9:29 Sandy Three assumed on-scene command of the SAR and commenced a search as the fog gradually lifted and Sandies One and Two held in the clear. Sandy Three was still attempting to contact Hotrod Two (Karl) on Guard channel, but there was no response. At 9:40 he reported having heard a beeper, or automatic survival beacon, chirping from a hill in the clouds briefly, but it had stopped.

At 9:55 Sandy Seven arrived and assumed on-scene command. Sandy Three reported the clouds were breaking up at last, and at 10:02 Sandy One got a glimpse of a parachute but suspected it was just a flare chute (these parachutes that made flares hang up high while they burned were all over the mountains from many months of nighttime operations over the Ho Chi Minh Trail). Then at 10:15 Sandies reported unfriendly forces (villagers) in the area and drove them back, probably by flying toward them. The location was still clouded over, but it was now starting to break up in earnest, so that by 10:29 the pararescue jumpers (PJs) on both helicopters reported orange and white parachute panel sighting, and ten minutes later Jolly 52 reported a positive chute sighting, hanging in a tree. This time it was Karl's parachute.

At 10:45 Charles Smith, the PJ on Jolly 55, went down the wire; it had been over two hours since Karl Richter had ejected from his violently maneuvering Thud. Everyone waited anxiously to hear his report. Even Navy Rescue had a helicopter on station out over the water, in case they could help (the callsign was Clementine). The first report from the ground that was entered in the SAR log was that the PJ found the pilot alive and called for a basket. In fact, however, Charlie found a very sad scene. The pilot, Karl, lay flat on the ground near a "steeple

Continued next page.

shaped” karst (the extremely rugged limestone outcrops that give the mountains of Laos that appearance of classic Chinese landscape paintings). His helmet lay about ten feet away, and his parachute harness was still fastened, though the parachute was entangled in a tree. Charlie saw that Karl had sustained severe injury, and he recalls attempting to declare “code 5” (meaning the subject did not survive), and being overridden because he was a medical technician and not authorized to declare death. On the spot, Charlie Smith already knew in his heart that the ejection seat must have killed Karl.

With much difficulty Charlie wrestled Karl’s inert body onto the litter, and at 11:03 Jolly 55 reported they were raising the basket. Since there were “unfriendly” in the area, Charlie went up in the same basket. At 11:07 Karl Richter was back in American hands, but Jolly 55 reported they were “not too optimistic.” They proceeded to Nakhon Phanom, where they reported the flight surgeon was checking Karl at 11:40. At quarter past noon on July 28th, 1967, Karl Richter was pronounced dead on arrival at NKP.

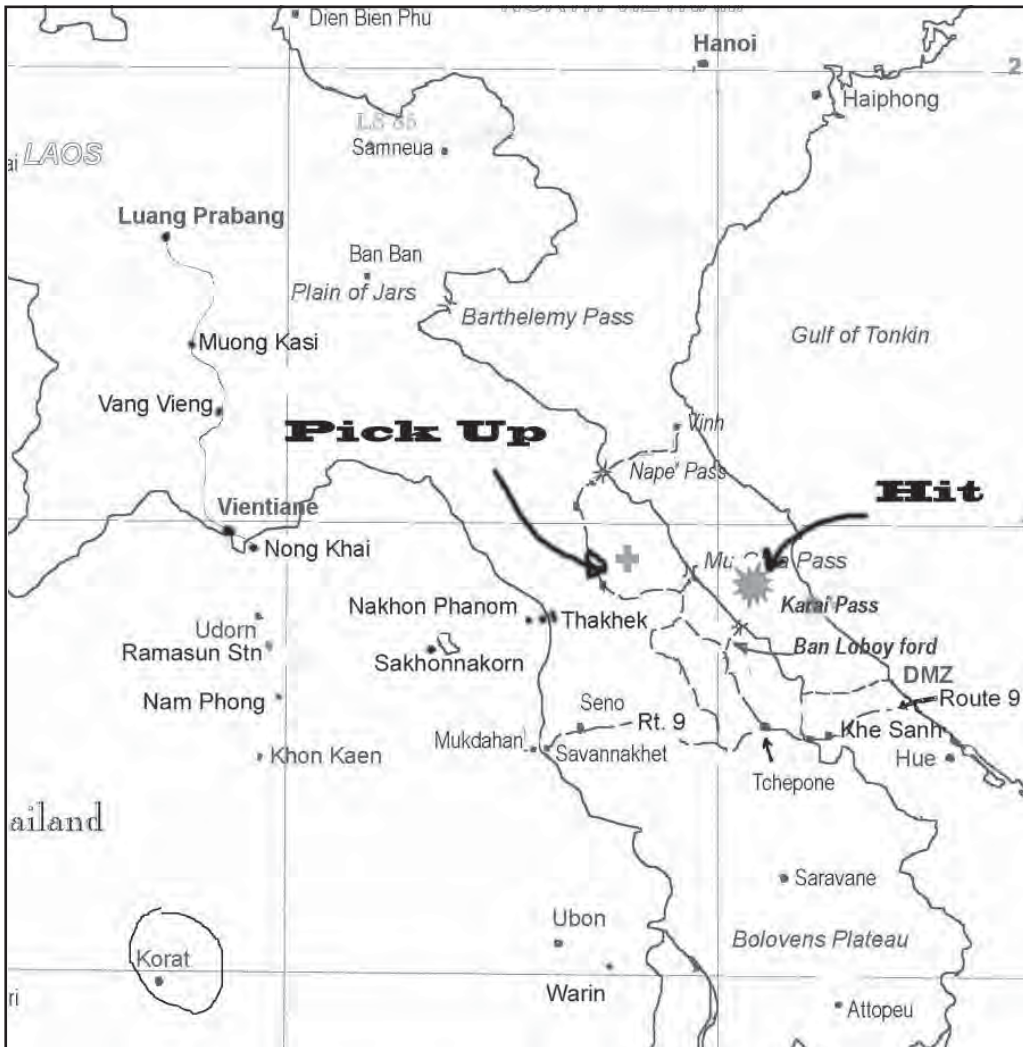
Apparently Karl Richter’s body was then transported to Korat. The squadron flight surgeon who participated in the forensic review of the cause of death is said to have told people around him that Karl had sustained high fractures of both femurs (thigh bones) during bailout and had suffocated on vomit in his mask

(which is worn tightly fastened during ejection). He also is reported to have said there was non-fatal damage to Karl’s scalp during his landing in the karst. It seems likely Karl’s legs were violently broken during ejection, probably sending him into immediate shock. He was probably unconscious when he suffocated, and the subsequent violent landing, possibly hanging in the tree and then swinging hard against the karst, was enough to rip his helmet off and damage his head, then leave him flat on the ground, lifeless.

Why did Karl break his legs during ejection? What was he going through in the final moments in the cockpit, besides suffering loss of thrust and a raging engine fire? We will never know the answers to those questions. But his spirit and exuberant attitude will forever be a model for fighter pilots who must face the most fearsome opposition in order to do their job. Even though he died in an era when America refused to acknowledge there were heroes, Karl was soon recognized as a person the Air Force did not want to forget. A painting was commissioned for the Air Force Art Collection, and hangs prominently in the Pentagon. Later a 10-foot bronze statue of Karl was erected at the Air University, near Montgomery, Alabama, and at the Air Force Academy a dining room in the student center was named for him. Just last year [2001] the new high school in Holly, Michigan, where Karl was first encouraged to apply for

appointment to the Air Force Academy, was named for Karl Richter. A lost Brother of T-L-C gradually gets the recognition he deserves.

The information for this article came from a number of sources, including personal recollections as recorded some years ago. I was most dependent for factual information on David McNeil, who found me through an internet search. David attended Fenton High School, about five miles from Holly, MI. He and Karl took driver’s ed together. He also remembers getting the amused Karl in a lucky tackle in football. After high school they went their separate ways and he had learned only recently of Karl’s exploits and fame. David was in touch with many people who were involved with Karl Richter, including his daughter, Karla. He knew of several books in preparation on this subject. —author.



New Member Profiles

William Goldstein

Present — I've been watching the TLCB site for quite a while now and finally decided to join based on what I've seen. I am currently retired and fighting a six year battle with cancer that I am winning so far. After my discharge I went to work for Boeing in Everett, WA, doing interior electrical work on the 747 jumbo jet. I've had several careers since and retired as the operations manager for a local electronic security company.

Then — I joined the Air Force on a delayed enlistment program in 1964. I graduated high school, and the next day was on my way to basic training at Lackland AFB, in San Antonio, TX. From there I went to tech school at Chanute Field in Rantoul, IL. After school I was assigned to the 551st FMS at Otis AFB in Falmouth, MA on Cape Cod. While at Otis, I received orders to report to Shaw AFB in Sumter, SC, and was assigned to a non-existent squadron.

Upon arrival and presenting my orders, I was the first and only person assigned to an empty barracks. I had to track down the base chaplain and he helped me get a chow pass and some bedding and toilet supplies for my private barracks. Two or three days later, additional personnel started to arrive, and we later found out that we were the initial members of a new squadron being formed, the 21st Helicopter Squadron. Our CH-3E "Jolly Greens" were still being built at the Sikorsky plant in Connecticut.

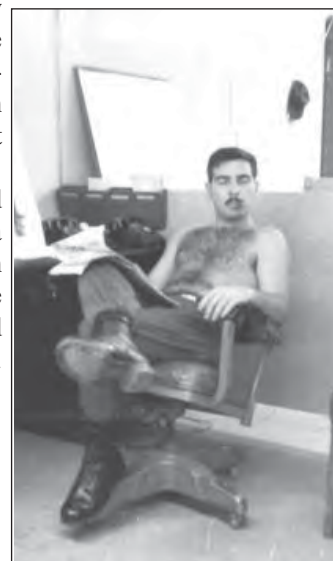
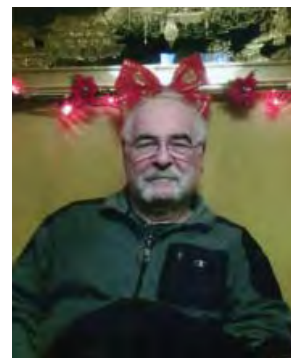
We trained and partied until pilots and aircraft arrived. After all the training, our aircraft and personnel were loaded up, and we flew from South Carolina to Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, via Alaska and Japan for fueling. It was quite a shock when we landed at NKP on a PSP runway in the middle of the jungle. I was there from 1967 to 1969, after being extended for the convenience of the government. I was in a critical career field, so they said. After my tour at NKP, I returned to Travis AFB in California for separation, and then returned home to Revere, Massachusetts.

Regards and welcome home.

Bill Goldstein

My contact info is William A Goldstein, 21 Beckert Ave., Revere, MA 02151

Phone: 781-284-8718. Email: wgoldstein505@yahoo.com



Harley MacLeod

I saw a link to TLCB while reviewing Takhli RTAB sites and was very pleased to see that it specifically represents those that supported the Vietnam conflict from out-of-country locations.

I was a lieutenant in the 355 Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) intelligence shop at Takhli RTAB, Thailand, from February 1969 to February 1970. I was in the Ops Intelligence section, briefing and debriefing F-105 aircrews striking targets in northern and southern Laos. With grease pencil, vu-graphs, and limited imagery, we did our best to give the latest threats and situation reports to a bunch of very talented and professional aircrews, many of which gave their all in support of the "secret war."



Leaving Takhli, I served at 12th Air Force at Bergstrom AFB, Texas, where I organized TACs support west of the Mississippi for Operation Homecoming, and was a de-briefer for returnees at March AFB, California.

I followed that with tours at HQ USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany: AFMPC personnel center, Randolph AFB, Texas, and Air Staff. A great career, but I have always considered the experience at Takhli with the 355 TFW the best and most meaningful.

After retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1989, I have continued to support Department of Defense intelligence activities as an IT project manager, and am currently a project manager for cyber security technology programs at the Department of Homeland Security. My wife and I live in the Washington DC area in Ashburn, Virginia. Here are a couple of pictures that you requested. You can easily tell which one is current!



John Muller

Providing security consulting services to both corporate and government clients throughout South East Asia, John Muller has been a resident in Thailand for 25 years, doing business in Cambodia for 21 years. For the past 17 years John managed one of the largest security companies in Thailand and Cambodia respectively, personally providing close protection for many celebrities, diplomats, and corporate executives in Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, including President George Bush, Richard Gere, and Hillary Clinton.

John now lives full time in Cambodia. He served with the United States Military between 1969 and 1986, with one tour of duty during the Vietnam War in which he was actively involved in special operations providing VIP protection for diplomatic and senior special operations staff. Af-



ter the war he was subsequently employed by the U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Air Force) to supervise the physical security at a sensitive overseas military facility in Australia.

In the 1990s John provided contract security and logistics services to the UN-MIC and UNTAC missions in Cambodia. In 1995, he established the first private security company in Cambodia – MPA International Limited. One month after the U.S. started the War in Afghanistan, he flew on assignment to Kabul for the UN to determine how best to bring in the country's new currency.

In 2003, John went to Iraq for a short term and secured a contract to train Iraqi Police, employed by the Ministry of Power, as bodyguards. John was the Co-Chairman of the Security Committee for the U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) of Thailand for seven years, and he co-founded OSAC in Cambodia, a Member of the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS). He was formerly the Deputy Director General of the IBA, the oldest UK bodyguard association. John is also an honorary member of the Royal Thai Special Forces, a life member of the U.S. Special Forces Association, and Commander, Cambodia Chapter, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). John holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Washington and now lives and works in Cambodia managing Global Security Solutions (GSS) Co., Ltd.



Gary Parker

My first experiences in Southeast Asia (SEA) were in 1963, where I was stationed at Yokota AB, Japan. We flew KB-50 tanker aircraft, refueling fighters. We were first sent to Saigon where we refueled F-100 and F-101 aircraft for missions in Laos and North Vietnam.

On one mission, I was the lead aircraft of three. We had refueled F-100s and were on the way back to Saigon when I heard a "May Day" from a fighter. I located his position, told the other two tankers to go home to Saigon, and headed toward the emergency fighter. We met him and gave him fuel so he could make it home. Being low on fuel ourselves we had to land at Da Nang, and on approach, we picked up 12 bullet holes in our plane. No problem. We got some gas and went on to Saigon.

We then moved to Takhli AB, Thailand, still refueling the F-100s going north. In the fall of 1964, we had a bad day as our aircraft were old and had major problems. The first KB-50 that tried to take off had fuel streaming from it, so they aborted the flight. I was the next aircraft to go, so I took off into very low clouds. We climbed to 12,000 feet and were on top of the clouds. About this time, my left refueling operator shouted, "Sir, you have flames coming out of number one engine, going clear past the tail!" I had our flight engineer feather the engine. Still had fire. We shot the fire bottles into the engine. Still on fire! We came back to Takhli and began an approach to the airport using our navigation aids, which were not good. On final approach at about 500 feet, the GCA controller asked if we would like radar guidance, and we said YES! Grate-



New Member Profiles is continued on page 10.

New Member Profiles continued from page 9.

fully, we landed safely and the ground crews put out our fire.

The last KB-50 to take off that day to support the fighters was climbing through 8,000 feet when his number one engine caught on fire. Then number three was burning. The crew bailed out OK, but the aircraft hit a Thai village near Takhli, killing several villagers. The flight surgeon and I took a jeep and drove to the village and met with the village chief, thinking that he would be mad at us and upset. He was sad for losing some of



Gary Parker *then*, with T-28.

his people, but the first thing he asked us was, "Did your people get out OK?" Then he said, "My pen rai," whatever happens will happen. The Thai are generally beautiful people - tender, kind, and friendly.

We flew the old airplanes back to the bone yard in Tucson, AZ, and then moved from Japan to Clark AB, The Philippines in 1965. I flew C-54s to Vietnam, Thailand, and Hong Kong. I transported the first radar tower to NKP, which still had a PSP runway. My boss at Clark was Col Heinie Aderholt, a great man and leader. He and I became good friends. He went on to be the Wing Commander at NKP.

Also in 1965, I flew Vice President Hubert Humphrey from Bangkok to Vientiane, so he could meet with Lao leaders. He was late for a return meeting in Bangkok, so I burned up two engines on the old C-54 returning, so he could make his meeting.

I then went from Clark to Randolph AFB, Texas where we trained Vietnamese cadets to be pilots. The squadron moved from Texas to Keesler AFB, Mississippi in 1967, and I was an instructor there until 1970, training Vietnamese students.

Next came Udorn, Thailand where I taught Lao cadets how to fly, drop bombs, and fire rockets and guns from the AT-28. We flew with our students from Monday to Friday and flew combat missions in Laos on the weekends. I also taught several Raven FACs how to fly the T-28. Three other guys and I lived off base in Udorn in a five-bedroom house, using a two-ton Dodge truck to travel to and from the base. During the rainy season, there would be as many as 10 to 12 Thais riding in the truck headed for the base.

I loved the Thai people. If we had a Sunday off, we would go down to a local bar owned by a wonderful Thai woman who

would fix us fried rice with an egg on top. After eating the rice, we topped it off with a Thai beer. I said goodbye to Udorn in May 1971, and went to Sheppard AFB, Texas and taught Vietnamese how to fly the T-37. They went on to fly the A-37.

In 1973, the Air Force sent me to Colorado State University to get a master's degree, and after that, I went to Edwards AFB, CA to evaluate the F-15 during its test phase. My next stop was Hill AFB, UT where I evaluated remotely piloted vehicles (drones).

I retired in 1979 and went to work for Beech Aircraft Missile Systems at White Sands Missile Range, NM. I worked for the Beech/Raytheon Missile division for 18 years and retired to my gentleman's farm outside Rose Hill, Kansas, in 1997. I am glad to be part of the TLC Brotherhood, as I know you have done many good things and hope to help you with them in the future.



Note to the editor from Sally MacDonald

John -

Thank you so much for your kind mention of David (Dave MacDonald) in the latest issue of the *MEM*. To be called "nearly legendary" in such a group is indeed amazing! It means a great deal to both of us, with our decades-long and dear connections and memories of the TLCPB group.

This issue of the *MEM* is terrific - I carry it in my purse for us to read together if we have to wait at appointments, etc. David looks great after his stroke last year, which was "touch and go" at the time. He walks very well, and all say that one would never know that he had had a stroke at all. He has some short-term memory and sequencing problems, so sometimes needs a bit of "prompting."

Thank you so much again. We appreciate so much what you are doing with the *MEM*. Keep up the good work so I can always carry a copy of it with me for us to read and re-read!

All best, Sally MacDonald



Recent photo of Sally and Dave MacDonald, sent by Sally.

TLC Brotherhood 2015 Reunion and Annual Meeting

Boston, MA, September 10-13, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Boston - Woburn
www.hotelbostonwoburn.com

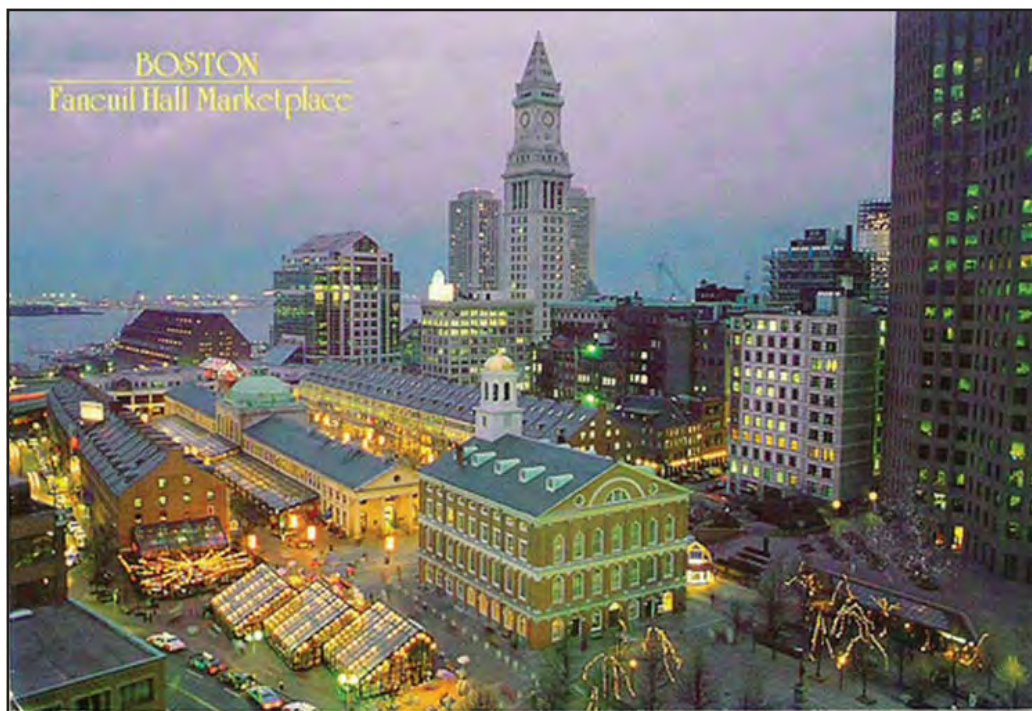
POW Guest

Speaker:

Hugh Buchanan, a retired captain in the United States Air Force has agreed to be our guest speaker, and will tell us about his six-and-a-half year stay as a prisoner of war of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV)

The Venue:

Boston - A friendly, and charming city: You will find that Boston is a smaller and easier-to-navigate city than most, and safer. Boston experiences are within minutes by rail transportation at the Anderson Regional Transportation Center. There is so much to see.



- **Trolley Tours** – Take advantage of these rides to get a better idea of the city. There may also be a ghost tour at night...worth doing.
- **Freedom Trail** – Take a couple of hours to explore this 2.5 mile, red-lined route that leads you to 16 historically significant sites – each one an authentic treasure.
- **Faneuil Hall Marketplace** – Faneuil Hall (photo above) has served as a marketplace and meeting hall since 1742. Today, the first floor is still used as a lively marketplace and the fourth floor is maintained by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. You will enjoy shopping there and sampling its restaurants.
- **Boston's charming North End** – Little Italy on steroids, with the best pizza, pastries, and charm. Treat yourself.
- **Boston Duck Tours** – The fun begins as soon as you board your "DUCK," an authentic World War II amphibious landing vehicle, renovated for sightseeing.
- **Bunker Hill Monument** – "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!" This legendary order has come to symbolize the conviction and determination of the ill-equipped American colonists facing powerful British forces on June 17, 1775. A 221-foot granite obelisk marks the site of the first major battle of the American Revolution.

- **Sports** – The people of Boston love their sports, and you will be able to take advantage of that enthusiasm. Visit the famous Fenway Park, home of the Red Sox.

Hotel Description:

Fresh from a dramatic new renovation, the Crowne Plaza Boston Woburn combines exceptional service, extraordinary style, and upscale amenities including ample free parking, an indoor pool, and new state-of-the-art fitness and business centers. There are 40" televisions with 60 HD channels and an on-site restaurant, the Scoreboard Sports Bar and Grill, which was voted #1 in Boston three years in a row. Quality Accommodations include plush new Crowne Plaza Sleep Advantage Bedding and a wide array of upscale living amenities such as free high-speed Internet, work desks, coffeemakers, and upgraded bathrooms.

Room Rate:

\$115.00 per night plus tax. The group rate is honored three days pre and post contracted guestroom room dates, based on rate and space availability.



John continued from page 1



cial honors throughout the years. John worked to discover deserving students and created the TLCB Student Aid Program while conducting assistance efforts, working with local school officials to provide a better life through development of water systems, classroom and educational equipment, libraries and even school buildings and kitchens.

John's dedication is an inspiration. He encouraged and led young people to a better life through Christian love

and education. For some students this meant completing high school; for others, technical school; for still others, earning a university degree. This strategy directly benefited students who otherwise may have had to drop out of school. One of the best programs that the TLCB provides in Nakhon Phanom, the operation has gone from about 6,000 baht per month and 5 students to the current level of 36,000 baht and 28 students. These children are from poor families — either they have no mother, no father, or have lost both parents. Many live with grand parents or aunts and uncles, all of them with financial problems. They would not have been able to continue their education and dreams for a better life without the support of John and the TLC Brotherhood.

His Legacy: The TLCB is grateful and thankful for John Middlewood and his wife Maeo. Their hard work and their dedication and friendship have touched many lives very positively for many years. John's legacy will live and grow through the accomplishments of each of the students he encouraged and moved along life's way in a positive, spiritual, and caring dedication. We who served there know these gentle people appreciate his works, and like us are saddened by his passing from this world. Rest easy, comrade.



Thelma Tilton

Assistance continued from page 1

Laos:

The majority of the projects involved repairing or replacing roofing and providing concrete floors to replace existing dirt floors. As we have done from the beginning, TLCB provides the supplies and the parents and school staff supply the labor. The table on page 13 contains a quick synopsis of those projects and their locations.

Thailand:

We continued our successful student assistance program providing tuition assistance for an average of 25 elementary school students, two junior college students, and seven university students. Medical assistance provided three kids with transportation to Khon Kaen for treatment. The following is a synopsis of the quality-of-life funding the TLCB provided:

- *Sleeping mats and bibs for 10 kindergarten students at Ban Pha Kho Elementary School. The number of students there has increased from 20 students to 30 students*
 - *Four cement tables and benches for Ban Pha Kho kindergarten classrooms, which will allow students to remain in the classroom under supervision when eating meals and snacks*
 - *Materials to construct bulletin boards, tables, and other furnishings for the kindergarten classrooms. The villagers will donate labor at Ban Pha Kho School*
 - *Sports equipment for Cheng Yuen High School*
 - *Supplies to complete the TLCB Kindergarten Building at Bah Pha Kho Elementary School near Thare*
- In John Middlewood's words, "The current principal took

over that school about one year ago, with 35-40 students in grades 1-6. There was no kindergarten. This is the same principal I have been working with for several years and TLCB has contributed towards many projects at his schools.

"The most notable one was the General Aderholt Memorial Dining Facility at Choak Amnuay Elementary School. When he arrived at this new school, the first things the parents asked for was a kindergarten. They did not want their children going out of the village area to school. In October 2013 he started a makeshift kindergarten program with 15-20 students and found funds to hire a teacher – not in the budget. When the new school year in April 2014 began, he expected to have more than 30 students. He also expects increased enrollment in grades 1-6 because of the quality of the education now being given.

"Currently, TLCB is conducting Saturday English Camps at least every month or two and this is one of the few schools that has shown major interest and improvement in their English since we have started."

Near Udorn, the TLCB supplied tables, chairs, and metal trays to assist a local school that rebuilt their destroyed cafeteria through local funding. They were able to repair the cafeteria and put in new toilet facilities, but lacked enough funds to provide the tables, chairs, and trays for the students to use in the new cafeteria.

Wrap-Up:

This has been quite a year for the TLCB Assistance Program and I want to thank our guys on the ground in SEA who devote a lot of their time and energy to research these projects. They are the ones who make sure the projects are completed and ensure that our assistance funds are managed properly.

Assistance continues top of next page

Assistance continued from page 12

Without these individuals, nothing would happen. Our trusted agents, in alphabetical order, are Art Crisfield, Jeff Hudgens, Auke Koopman, the late John Middlewood, Ed Miller, Phomphan Kulapa, and MacAlan Thompson. Gentlemen, you have my heartfelt thanks for all that you do.



Laos: Table of Projects Completed or Ongoing in 2014

AREA AND SCHOOL	PROJECT
Ban Nhot Phe Primary School Phou Kout District, Xieng Khouang Province	Roofing tin replacement and a concrete floor for a school
Ban Vieng Thong Primary School Paek District, Xieng Khouang Province	Tin roofing replacement for two buildings
Lang Khang Preschool, Primary School, High School	Fiberboard roof, room partition for a library and additional classrooms, student desks, computers, school supplies, music instruments, sports equipment, pre-school supplies
Ban Nahom	School supplies and sports equipment
Ban Na Phang Lower Secondary School Phou Kout District	Three-room toilet
Ban Vieng Thong Primary School Paek District, Xieng Khouang Province	Three-room toilet and replacement tin roofing for one older building
Ban Yodt Phair Primary School Phou Kout District, Xieng Khouang Province	Replacement roofing tin and a concrete floor for a second school
Ban Sy Vieng Thong Primary School Paek District, Xieng Khouang Province	New roofing tin
Ban Lang Chong Lower Secondary School Long Hang, Phou Kout District, Xieng Khouang	Cement floor
Long Tieng Secondary School Long Tieng District, Xaysomboun Province	Cement floor
Ban Mixai Secondary School Phou Kout District, Xieng Khouang	Replacement of tin roofing
Primary School That Thom District, Xieng Khouang	Replacement tin roofs and concrete floors for two buildings

TLCB By-Laws To Be Reviewed

by Gary Beatty, Secretary

At the TLCB 2014 reunion, the board of directors instructed President Sweet to appoint a committee to perform a routine review of our by-laws to determine if any changes are needed. President Sweet appointed me to chair that committee.

Periodic review of organizational structure assures efficient operation and any necessary adaptation to changes in circumstances. However, an organization's rules (to quote Thomas Jefferson) "...should not be changed for light and transient causes." So to provide continuity and insight into the history of the current by-laws, I appointed TLCB founding member Bill Tilton as vice chair.

Additionally, two other highly qualified TLCB members have agreed to serve on the committee. We need one more volunteer—and we invite any TLCB member who wishes to serve to contact me at: beattygd@yahoo.com.

Following the precedent set with the 2012 finance audit committee, I secured a commitment from the board that the committee will be independent of the board and is free to review any aspect of the corporate by-laws. To that end, all TLCB members are invited to submit suggestions for amendments to the current by-laws to the committee.

Suggestions should include proposed wording and a brief explanation of why an amendment is necessary or beneficial to the TLCB. The committee will not consider proposed amendments which appear to be directed at any particular individual, or which would undermine the objectives of the TLCB. Please submit any proposals to me, in pdf format, at the same e-mail address.

[You can access the by-laws on the TLCB Website, in the Archives Section.]

Annual Meeting, Election Results

Gary Beatty, Secretary

The 2014 election of TLCB Officers and Board of Directors was held at the annual membership meeting on October 4, at Colorado Springs. The results are as follows:

President - John Sweet

Treasurer - Bill Tilton

Bd.Member-at-Large (2) - Paul Lee & 'Willi Pete' Peterson.

Ballots were counted and results reported by Trusted Agent John Duffin, assisted by Monty Dubs. There was originally a tie between one of the successful candidates and candidate Jim Green, which necessitated a recount. In the recount it was discovered that several voters had selected 3 candidates for member-at-large when only two vacancies existed. Those ballots were disqualified, as were several which appointed Jim Closs, who was absent from the meeting, as proxy. All ballots will be temporarily retained by John Duffin.

Following those disqualifications, Jim Green came in a very

close third. In the event of a vacancy on the board in the next year, Jim will be appointed to fill the vacancy pursuant to our by-laws.

In addition to the election, Secretary Jim Closs tendered his resignation, effective October 4, with one year still remaining in his term. President Sweet appointed Board Member-at-Large Gary Beatty to complete Jim's term. George Shenberger, first runner up in last year's member-at-large election, was appointed to fill Gary's unexpired term.

The MEM is available in full color at
www.TLC-Brotherhood.com.

Newest Members in the TLC Brotherhood

The members 28 listed below joined between the last issue of the MEM and the 23rd of November. You can find more information on our website database. The Mekong Express Mail wishes you all a hearty "Welcome Home."

Member	Branch	First	Last	City	State	Email
1619	USAF	Patrick	Sydor	Walnut	CA	Pat.Sydor49@gmail.com
1620	USAF	Aaron	Olden	Madison	WI	Aaronolden@gmail.com
1621	USAF	Walter	Koziel	Chicago	IL	Kozytunes@clear.net
1622	USAF	Nicholas	Cosentino	Novi	MI	Walkertoolnc@aol.com
1623	USA	Michael	St. Mark	Bellflower	CA	MichaelStMark@MSN.com
1624	USAF	Wayne	Merritt	Machias	ME	ColonelWayne11@Yahoo.com
1625	USAF	Karl	Niemeyer	Carroll	IA	Nemokarl@yahoo.com
1626	Other	James	Innes	Clearview	S. Australia	ATcrowe7@bigpond.com
1627	USAF	Ron	Keith	Blackwell	OK	Bowl800Ron@hotmail.com
1628	USAF	Orrin	Grosjean	Springfield	OH	Willowcreek@CTCN.Net
1629	USAF	James	Hunt	Big Spring	TX	TXHunt06@Yahoo.Com
1630	USAF	Joseph	Myall	Port Orchard	WA	JEMYall@Yahoo.com
1631	USAF	John	Falbo	East Concord	NY	JohnFalbo50@Gmail.com
1632	USAF	James	Carter	Jacksonville	FL	David.Carter229@Gmail.com
1633	USAF	David	Cardon	Mesa	AZ	DCardon47@Hotmail.com
1634	USAF	Jerry	White	Big Stone Gap	VA	BSG208@Gmail.com
1635	USAF	William	Goldstein	Revere	MA	WGoldstein505@Yahoo.com
1636	USAF	Harley	Macleod	Brambleton	VA	MacleodHJ@Gmail.com
1637	USA	John	Muller	Phnom Penh	Cambodia	JMuller@GSS.com.kh
1638	USAF	Robert	Metrision	Wescosville	PA	RJMetrision@Hotmail.com
1639	AA	John	Melton	Washington	DC	Apinakorn@Gmail.com
1640	USAF	Harry	Fisher	Castleton	NY	Harry123@nycap.rr.com
1641	USA	Alexander	Braszko	Colorado Springs	CO	Sophia1235@Gmail.com
1642	USA	Otis	Harris	Kokomo	IN	Pastor1401@Gmail.com
1643	USA	James	Downs	Manassas	VA	JimCT602@Gmail.com
1644	USAF	James	Dunlap	Oceanside	CA	dunlapjim@hotmail.com
1645	USAF	Robert	Paul	Nesquehoning	PA	BobPaul@ptd.net
1646	USA	Tim	Boone	Marietta	GA	Timothy.Boone@Comcast.net

CIA Acknowledges Thailand's Involvement in the "Secret War."

The book review below was posted on the CIA's website, in its Library, on October 6, 2014. It was brought to the MEM's attention by TLCB member, MacAlan Thompson. Mac and Les Strouse, also a TLCB member, are on the Executive Committee of the Unknown Warriors Association 333, which is mentioned in the review.

Cold War Southeast Asia

Malcolm H. Murfett (ed.).

(Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2012) 376 pp., bibliography, notes, index.

Reviewed by Timothy Castle, Ph.D.

Singapore continues to be a thriving center for academics and other professionals who seek a greater understanding of the region's important past, present, and future place in international affairs. Those in the hunt for the lessons of history will find this collection of 12 wide-ranging Cold War-related essays most rewarding. Editor Malcolm Murfett is associate professor in the Department of History of the National University of Singapore. He declares, "Apart from the mountains of literature on the Vietnam War and innumerable references to the 'domino theory' that Eisenhower and others were so concerned about in the 1950s, the role of the Cold War in Southeast Asia has not been subject to much scrutiny."

Murfett's selection of essayists includes scholars from universities and research centers in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Australia, Malaysia, and the United States. In developing their submissions, the authors consulted archival resources from across the globe, including national repositories in Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Specialty collections, including materials held by the U.S. military, were also consulted.

Far from offering dry recitations of well-established facts, the authors bring forth new information and thoughtfully crafted insights on the Cold War's impact on the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the establishment of Singapore. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) is examined, as is neutralism in Cambodia and Laos. Essays also treat British defense obligations in Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Southeast Asia and the U.S. Army "before the quagmire."

Of particular note to this reviewer, the volume includes an in-depth recounting of the origins of Thai-U.S. involvement in the Laotian "secret war." Written by Sutayut Osornprasop, who holds a PhD from Cambridge University, the essay reveals in

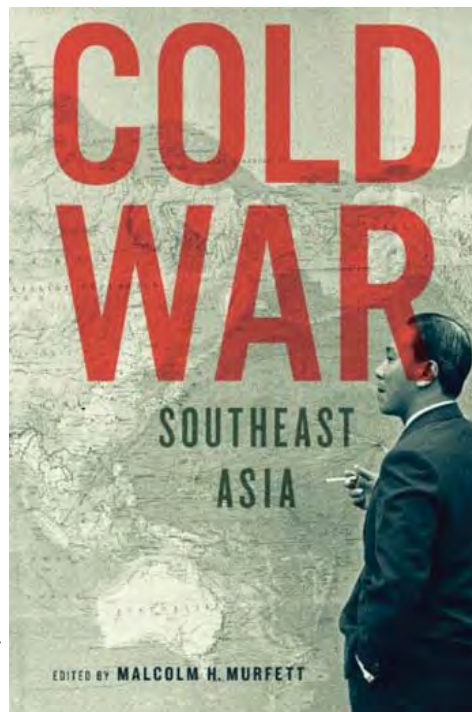
detail the full cooperation between the Thai government and the United States in carrying out what became a key component of the CIA's project there. Osornprasop cast a wide net to gather his material, which includes interviews with key Thai military and CIA participants. Specifically, he details the work of Headquarters 333, the Thai police and military conduit for manpower into Laos. In his earlier dissertation work, Osornprasop established that, while most experts of the period recognize the 1968 deployment of regular Thai military forces to South

Vietnam reached 12,000 men, most do not know that by 1972, twice as many Thais were on the ground in Laos. Indeed, some of Osornprasop's most important data comes from Thai veterans who established an advocacy group called the "Unknown Warriors Association (UWA) – 333."

Dedicated to informing the Thai public and others about their efforts, the UWA has an office, holds education events in schools and other forums, and regularly publishes material in English and Thai related to their efforts during the "secret war." [italics added] Thai participation in the Laos war ranged from the deployment of regular Royal Thai Army artillery batteries and Police Aerial Reinforcement Units (PARU) during the Eisenhower years to the employment of thousands of irregulars drawn from the Thai military through the Johnson and Nixon administrations. Dr. Osornprasop observes that these actions in Laos would, in the early 1970s, "culminate... in the largest expeditionary mission

in Thailand's contemporary history." Not surprisingly, stories detailing the efforts of CIA Laos veterans like Bill Lair and Pat Landry—complete with wartime photos—routinely appear in UWA publications. As a demonstration of the open nature of their efforts, UWA members have also traveled to communist Laos to meet and talk about the war with their former enemies.

Cold War Southeast Asia is easily and inexpensively available electronically via Kindle and is highly recommended for intelligence professionals, regional experts, and others looking for new thoughts on the Cold War.



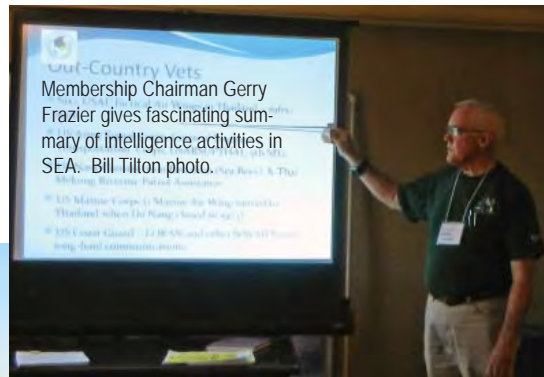
How it was ~ some candid shots from Colorado Springs

The 2014 TLCB Reunion Remembered

Col Jimmie Butler above the TLCB plaque he had placed for the 2000 reunion. Bill Tilton photo.



Above, Bonnie Encinas shamelessly hawking New Mexico wine at TLCB fund-raising auction. Right, our speaker for the evening, Jim "Mule" Parker, delivered a riveting account of his experiences as "The Last Man Out" of Vietnam at the fall of Saigon. Bob Wheatley photo. Left Thelma Tilton and Monty Dubs at the Exchange table by Rosie Wheatley's 2014 raffle quilt. Bill Tilton Photo.



Cadets parade at the Air Force Academy, on an excellent tour guided by a TLCB founder, Col Jimmie Butler. Bill Tilton photo.



Above, Ron Bogota and Cheryl Giannantonio at the Purple Heart monument. Bob Wheatley photo.



Below, our final gathering was at the Forward Air Controller Memorial at Peterson AFB. Bob Wheatley photo.

Above, President Sweet delivers his annual report to the membership at the TLCB, Inc., Annual Meeting, held Saturday morning. Seated are Member at Large, Mike Potaski, Public Relations Chair, Bill (Willi Pete) Peterson, Vice President Les Thompson and at far right, Member at Large, Paul Lee. Bob Wheatley photo.



Below, President John Sweet called Rosie Wheatley to the podium for a special award in honor of her service to the TLCB and the children of Thailand and Laos. Bob Wheatley photo.

