



## Letters by Ernest Kuhn. 1966

Kuhn, Ernest

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1966

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Pha Thong, Laos  
Feb 10-66

10/104

①

Dear Mom, Dad, Jim - I am now staying in at Pha Thong, in Phong Saly Province. This is the area which the Vietnamese and Chinese Red had lost month. We have several thousand refugees somewhere in a 40 mile squared area. On Meo and I have spent 4 days riding a helicopter around locating groups and talking to the refugees. We will spend the night here and go out again tomorrow to more sites where there are refugees. When we are now I have stayed several times before. I wanted to spend the night about 16 miles from here near the Mekong River but they were "hot" last night in the outer perimeter by Vietnamese so I decided to stay here. Actually, I would have stayed there anyway but the American "adviser" (I think you can guess who he works for) suggested I stay here instead. Actually it was I Phenny. These guys are not allowed to stay outside of their HQ of #3 and #36 which is US CID type stay anywhere. The Ambassador has said that US American up here in the north can sleep outside of #3, #28, #36 and Luang Prabang but "Pop" has an agreement that the men working for him can stay out but when we fall in our problem sites I have to write in Luang Prabang each time instead of when I really sleep if one of us US CID types should get killed or captured by the Chinese or Vietnamese it wouldn't be so bad politically because we are here legally with passport etc. However the other guys are here illegally under the Geneva Accords for Laos. If they should get captured Peking and Hanoi and Moscow would really have something to yell about.

Military wise things are bad now. In December we lost all our positions around Site #25, plus the important village in the area of Hau Yen (we just recaptured it in Sept). Then we lost #121 (Pao Ta) and then #38 (Chau Chang) and #132. In January we lost #126 (Dan Haem) I flew over the village and an strip just as it fell to the PL and U.N. Then we lost #174. In February we lost #27 (Hau Vi) which was a stock and fuel storage main supply center in danger. Then the week after we lost #95 and #11 (Kha Thom) got tired of fighting and left for their home in Pak Sone! We found a few Mo robeds there but the VM (and Chinese) could well in and take the place. The town is at the head of a long valley which leads straight to Sam Thong and #98. "Pop" is (half?) serious thinking of places to walk to if we have to evacuate. However I don't think things will get that bad. The T-28's and the jets are hitting all over north now in addition to the "Ho Chi Minh Trail." However in past month also the jets have accidentally hit friendly villages killing several people in each village but I guess that is war. The jets have orders ~~not~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~see~~ hit any village, even enemy village, so I can't understand how they manage to hit friendly ones. Of course the Air Force won't admit it that the jets are making mistakes.

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over the jungles in Washington that we have fighting a modern war here - but what we need are the old World War II bombers that they used in Europe etc. We need planes here that can carry heavy pay loads and can hold over a target for several hours. The jets have only a few minutes to drop their bombs and strap after reaching the target. The T-28's are better and the A-D-1's are the best. We need planes here to bomb every truck convoy and supply line. When they hear the jets come they turn off the track light at night and the trucks hide off the road till the jet leaves because by the time the jet goes off they can't spot their targets in the dark. A good plane could bomb its target, hold till he spotted them and drop on the road until the track began to move again and hit them. One night at \*36 Dr Sproat (ex PW Thailand, working at San Thony) was on the roads talking to the commander of \*27. At \*27 they could see the truck convoy, the jet came over. The C-123 dropped flares right on the target. The jets dived but didn't drop their bombs. The plane then dropped again, this time 3 miles west of the road, then it dropped 5 miles east of the road. Their last drop was on the convoy - but the jet was low on fuel so they jettisoned their bomb in the jungle. Incidentally this plane #27 fell to an overwhelming force of VMars PL the week past people say as many as 300 trucks on the roads night as everyone knew #27 would get hit but the US AF and Navy just wouldn't bomb the road (or couldn't hit it). Our own top command (not in our case) was really cut up at #27 with great loss of life plus 200 refugees surrounded by the enemy. Many people know it has been actually captured and killed. Any soldier caught by the VC can expect to be tortured and killed - I would guess - I get figures when I read about the people who work to end the war in Hanoi I mean for the US to pull out. Herein lies up Communism were so great why did thousands of people trying to escape to our side, - why would we need a refugee program here. These people know what communism is like in SDR and its not pleasant - Better slowdown before I go off on a tirade again about stupid American college kids.

I have to go to Veterans on 16<sup>th</sup>; 17<sup>th</sup> to have my physical. Soon as that is over HIAID will forward all the papers to Washington. They started on my direct line. 2 of my ex POW buddies from Thailand (one is Art McElman, Cleveland) left on the 5<sup>th</sup> for a 10 month AID training program in Washington and Berkeley Calif. I understand only some people wanted Dan and I to attend but Pp said no, we were too valuable at San Thony to work our time in a training program. I don't know - I might earn more money in future years to have gone there. Right now I am a T-2. (\$7200 p/q) Pp has said Dan and I must be 6's when we come back \$8300 p/q - plus 25%

extra in less - total \$10,600 per year. Pretty good pay considering housing is free  
and beer, sugar, luxury items in the PK are tax free! However I have not saved  
nearly as much money as I had originally figured on. I'm sure I've spent a  
\$100 here & there. - Qd, can you find out my Social Security Number? I  
lost my card in Sept and don't think they gave it back taken out & because  
they didn't know my number!! Only 32 days until my contract expires. -  
Nov 14. I expect to be home before the first April.

Did Alan and Don get drafted? What's all dairy, did he ever  
graduate from OSU? It is now 9:00. I'm not sleep although I should be. I've  
been sitting here talking to a local captain who fought with the French at  
Dien Bien Phu.

Sunday 11 AM Morning.

Had a little action last night. About 10 the guards in the fox holes  
along the edge of the hill thought they heard noise in the brush up from  
the stream. I went out to investigate too. They lobbed a grenade down  
the hill and fired a few rounds but that was all. We saw lights in the valley  
but I don't know ~~to~~ what they were. After about an hour of checking the  
trenches and fox holes to make sure the guards were awake, I went to bed with  
all my clothes on. However there was no trouble during the night.  
The weather now is beautiful here. I'm sitting here in the hot sun with a short-  
sleeved shirt and my sleep skin next on - and it still 8 in the morning.  
The first night I ever slept here in Dec. it was bitter cold with strong winds.  
That night I slept with my coat on and used a poncho for blanket - The  
next morning it was noon before I stopped shivering. Right now we are  
waiting for the "chopper" and helo to come so we can get some work done.  
The chopper is the best to use when working up here I am sure because they  
are scattered around over hill sides and valleys and the chopper can  
open land. However the Helo are softer on enemy territory than a  
chopper because the plane can climb rapidly if under fire.

I just figured up that as of now we know where 4500 refugees are. There  
are supposed to be some scattered over other small villages etc but we  
don't have any lists of people yet. Whenever refugee comes into an area the  
local leaders have to record the names of everyone in the family, sex, age,  
where they come from etc. Before this we can't disturbance anything, although  
we do drop rice to them. When we do help a family we give out supplies  
based on the number of people in the family. Up through 4 people in a family we  
give one blanket, 5-8' 2 blankets, 9-12 people, 3 blankets etc. Each family gets one

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(cont.)

cooking pot, one can of cooking oil, one big knife, bowl and plates are given according to the number of blankets - if a family of 2 people get 2 blankets they get 2 plates and 4 spoons. or a family of 3 get 1 blanket then 1 plate and 2 spoons etc. Men and boys get short and pants, women get blouses and long skirts - sometimes we give cloth, thread and needle instead of clothes, sometimes we give both clothes and cloth. When I get home I hope I can collect some groups - maybe the church, a club etc to collect used clothing and send it to me. This used clothing is great. The refugees love it. "Pops" daughter at Glenford sends hundreds of pounds of clothes, until N. Paul's Luther Church in Glenford collects. Of course when you have a couple of thousand refugees in one place everyone can't get clothes, but always try to pick out people and children who need clothes badly. Also the size rarely fits, usually clothes are too large. But after a few days the women will cut the clothes up and make new clothes the correct size. Another thing that people could buy for less is wooden pencils, school math books, rulers etc. Some of these little schools have no way to get pencils and copy books for the students and the students, if they had any money would have no place to buy them. Many of our schools are not recognized by the Lao govt - USIS and USSID like to spend money on the big hairy project. They don't want to spend a few hundred dollars for pencils etc.

So a lot of our school supplies are supplied by donation by individuals. I hope the dropped gets here soon. The .75 m Haute that ever level Phe Thong was moved about 15 miles away but they only had about 20 stalks. Today we have to move about all the .75 stuff and several hundred rounds of .57 m motor shells.

and some traps. If everything goes well there will be an attack tomorrow against the 2 villages we lost last month. The .75 is turned on #38. The

X 121 (200+) X 38  
X CHURCH CHURCH  
X 165 X PHE THONG  
X MINE PLATE

I am here / attack should go off tonight. The terrain here is on mountains that fighting is difficult in the jungle underground. I won't be here tonight but I would like to be - to return to the .75 m and .57 m motor powered

the VM (and Cleone?).

I have started to grow a mustache - no I already have one. The CIA guy I work with in the area is a few years older than I am but we look a lot alike, even though he doesn't wear glasses. So I decided there should be a way to tell the 2 of us apart. Also his name is Harry and Ernie

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can ~~not~~ afford to wait the same to the Lao and Meo. Will Kho just brought in some rice and water buffalo meat so I'll stop again for a while.

Moh P Lai -

Jul 21-68

- Well a lot has happened since my last letter. It is 5:35 and I'm "resting".  
 - Lots have happened since I started this letter. The plan when I started this letter fell to the Communists just a few days after I last stayed here. Most of our troops had been pulled out to fight against #36. I guess the Reds didn't have too much trouble taking this place. ~~The~~ When #36 fell the big refugee center a few miles away also fell - or rather the people will left out of fear. That left our Div 3 position in Phong Saly completely encircled by the enemy. <sup>Sunday</sup> Morning Jul 21 - It is now 0900 and still no airplane to pick me up - The jets have hit Dien Ben Phu for 10 days, almost everyday in an effort to cut off the DM supply routes to the area. On Wed we spotted several enemy aces - three food depots, Comms GHQ, general staff GHQ, ammunition dump and an aerial early enemy concentration preparing an attack on our further position north in Phong Saly.  
 - We had a Thai FAC up and I sent him to Utrecht to arrange a May Eiffel strike on the targets for the next day. However that night we had unusual weather - rain and 100% cloud coverage of Laos for 2 days - the T-28 never came. Yesterday the last Capt here said that 5 trucks are carrying supplies in Muang Xai north thru. Muang Xai we can zap them soon. Our main big base in North Laos, #36 (Mu Khong) was attacked on the 16<sup>th</sup> and fell on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Estimates that 600 VM hit the base - We think 300 VM were killed - 50% of the enemy attacking force. Dan was there during the entire attack. I guess he really fought like a pro - He said the enemy came so fast you could lob grenade and get them ~~in~~ 10-15 feet away. General Vang Pao was shot on the 18<sup>th</sup>. There. Duck for Dan he was hit in the arm and the bullet passed through and nicked him in the neck inches below the jugular vein. He is in Kord at the hospital. Dan said he (Dan) and Mike had just lobbed a grenade at a VM about 15 feet away the blast blew the guy head off and it came flying over their heads. V.P., had just landed in a chopper and he rankey over to load at the lead. He had just turned around and walked back to the chopper when he was hit. Our jets finally used napalm at #36. This accounted for a great % of the enemy casualties. Dugay later said that the VM carried out dead and wounded for 6 hours. Two thousand refugees walked out to #48. They have been air lifted to Sam Phony. The loss of #36 provided a terrible event.

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#48 is a neutral camp. However the local commander in Savanna Phoune (the PM) never - but the commander, Khoue Kong Leu (1st Reed, general) as he offered his services to "us". In fact 200 "Neuts" were brought in from Savannakhet to strengthen our forces and give them a rest. In the meantime the jet completely destroyed everything at #36 - the fuel and arms depots were bombed and the Napsalm burned the camp, 6 HQ and 3 villages. I flew over the base the next morning on F1C for the T-28's (they are Thai pilots) as no one else could speak Thai. However after a hour we didn't spot any enemy so we flew back to #48. I was at #48 for 2 days and 1 night and then Pz sent me back up here in the area because I am the only one who knows what is going ~~on~~ <sup>up</sup> here. The two dogs after we had lost #169. The refugees, 2000 moved to Xeng Man Nai - a <sup>VIENT</sup> temporary position about 500 went to Mot Plei where I am now. Since the 15th I've been up here every day except one. At Xeng Man Nai we had 1000 Mos and 1000 Lao Khun. They all wanted to come to Mot Plei but we thought the enemy had cut the trail (2-3 day walk). However the Mos said we're going. The Mos began arriving here 3 days ago and are still coming in. We have 1800 refugees here now. I may try to an evacuate the remaining 1000 at Xeng Man Nai to here or where they are a bad area. If the enemy attacks Xeng Man Nai then people would be trapped by the enemy. Funny thing is that the Mos came in and said that they didn't see any enemy. Right before lost the 75 howitzer and 60 mortar fired what seemed like all night uninterrupted by machine gun fire. ~~last~~ Yesterday morning about 0715 a plane came to pick me up but the clouds were so low I couldn't land. It was supposed to come back in the afternoon but he never came. We heard a chopper about 1300 hr and I stalled it down on my radio and he said he would pick me up but he never came back. The local commander thinks that the chopper may have been shot down near Xeng Man Nai or an attack there is imminent. If a Helo ever comes to get me I'll fly over the area. Each with has a signal on the ground made of red cloth - he is a T-28 very man down. If the people do not come out and put the signal up the plane is not supposed to land. However I can't understand why we never hearing the chopper again especially as the field said he would pick me up. I'm afraid that Sam Khun might think the chopper picked me up as they won't send a plane to get me. They may think I'm a Lao spy. Since this is Sunday, the radio is only on 5 hours as the commo is screwed up. I don't mind staying here but I was supposed to have returned much information for Pz last night. He went to Vientiane for the monthly Rec Meeting. This is a meeting where the rice quotas for the coming month are figured up. Since I am the only one

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- in S. who knows how many refugees and how many boats we have here. Pop  
 - has to have my info. to set up the quota for us here. All I have has my 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 - reaction - I left my carbine in Savang Phabang. Oh, I have a Chinese AK automatic  
 - "rifle". Actually I have 2 but I have to take them apart and make one good one.  
 - The one has no stock. The owner's brains are all matted in the bolt and breech area.  
 - The other AK was hit on the barrel and has hole in it. So I'll tramp stock  
 - and put the good barrel on it and have me real nice weapon. Now we  
 - got to figure out some way to get it home as it is illegal to ship fully  
 - automatic weapons into the U.S. I have a plane comes because I've got 2  
 - wounded - A woman shot in the leg. Her son, about 4 yrs, shot in the foot and  
 - his daughter - 2 yrs - went malaria. The father was killed by the UK-PC a few days ago  
 - the little boy has about 1/4 of his rt foot shot away. But he is the cutest little  
 - fella. I smile all the time and let me take his picture and carry him around.  
 - Yesterday the Medic changed the dressing on his foot - leg - but the little kid  
 - just sat there holding my hand and smiling. I want to get him to the  
 - hospital at Sam Thong as soon as possible. - Things are beginning to move here. The  
 - Medics are working in the anatomy, smoothing it out (I was the 1st to be  
 - laid down); The Medic is checking out and wounded in a little lean to,  
 - some of the soldiers are barley rice while others are sorting ammos. We had a ammo  
 - drop yesterday but on the cargo chute came unhooked from the core and  
 - a whole case of M16 ammos smacked into the ground. Many of the clips and  
 - barrels are bent as they are sorting out the good shell and putting new clips.  
 - I have just acquired a large audience here watching me write. I'm sitting in  
 - a sort of dorm room made just off the anatomy. I ordered a few drops for the 3  
 - day pass but it hasn't come yet. We have about 100 beds left for 2500 people!  
 - Until we dropped the refugees go hungry - only the soldiers get rice of the planes  
 - don't drop any for several days. - I guess my physical was OK except I  
 - still have lice worms - left one from Thailand I guess. It is hard to believe  
 - that in 15 days I'll be in Bangkok and on my way home. As any ears as I  
 - am to go home it will be hard to leave here last week when I was getting  
 - ready to go to Vientiane for 2 days for my physical. Pop asked me when I was going  
 - to the U.S. I said "Today". Then he asked me when I was going to the U.S. I said "Next week".  
 - He put his hand on my shoulder and said "H... Come, we have a small work  
 - you haven't got time to go to the U.S." I suppose that was a  
 - compliment. I know Pop has expressed several times how much he will miss  
 - Dan and I - Dan leaves in 7 days. When we leave there will only be Pop.

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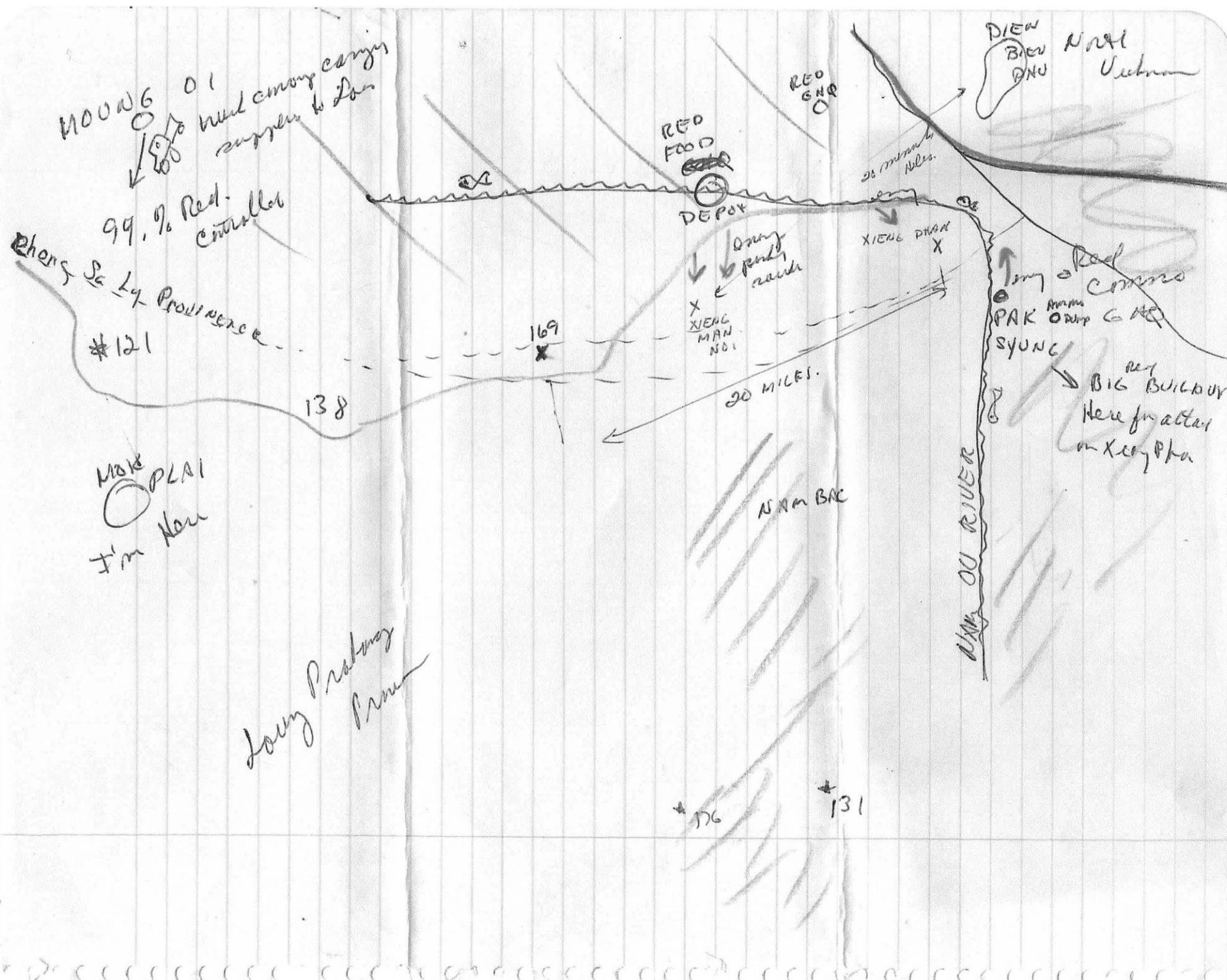
Jarl Willoosan is also here but b/c his hepatitis comes in bed in Vt. Pop died an ex-IVS day for the intended test. Donors I come back but you "kid" really doesn't know the story of what's going on.

Mar 14-

Leaving Sat tomorrow for  
Thailand and maybe Hawaii = should  
be home in 10 days or 2 weeks -

Love Elmer -

PS Please put these checks on  
my checking account post!! Thank



Aug 18-66

✓

Dear Mom, Dad, Jim:

This note will be rather short  
as I want to get this on a plane this  
afternoon. Arrived in Laos on Sunday after-  
noon of the week. Spent 1 night in Japan and 2  
in Bangkok. I spent all of Monday in the  
offices in Vientiane and came to Sam Thong  
Tuesday morning. Things are real slow  
now due mostly to the rains and clouds. Since  
I left in March ~~70~~ people from Sam Thong (American)  
have contracted Malaria. 3 of them are really  
seriously ill. Pop is really scared so an old  
work schedule is changed. Instead of dawn to  
dark we work only 7:30 to 5:30, and on  
Sunday we only have 1 plane so that we are  
supposed to be at Sam Thong on Sunday to rest. It  
is really hard to believe but Pop means it.  
He hopes to cut down the illness, aggravated  
partially by fatigue.

This is not for publication but an American was  
shot here Sunday night - in the lower left shoulder.  
He is in the hospital in Thailand and doing fine.  
Believe it was a personnel judge shooting by a  
no ~~the~~ soldier concerning a nurse at the hospital.  
The guy was sitting beside an open window when someone  
shot him with a carbine. But there's no danger here.

②

Don, I got Laura a nice little house now. There  
are 4 bedrooms, living room with couch and  
chairs, table etc, stove and refrigerator. I  
brought stereo record player in Japan and I have  
it up here. This is much nicer than before &  
now we have a place to sit down to read or write  
or sleep or listen to music etc. Not like the rat  
hole before. Ah. ~~Jenny~~ ~~for Dad's big dynamite~~  
~~case. But before she went at home, she~~  
~~took the key so I can't be locked. I have all my stocks~~  
~~etc sent and savings book & have them stolen. Address~~  
~~is Jenny Sanger, 2325 92nd St. N.W., Washington D.C.~~

USA 10  
Also, my air freight etc does not need A.P.C., just International  
taxes. Also ~~and~~ ~~please~~ tell me the dates that ~~anything~~  
~~was shipped or A.D. we want to know.~~

~~W. nice of you to come Jenny - I guess~~  
~~if I had stayed in the US we would have gotten~~  
~~married. She has changed in some way from day of the~~  
~~letter. It was quite an affair at Vicksburg when I left.~~

~~Pittsburgh her girl-wife is the same. So (Vicksburg)~~  
~~she). Every a post, from time to time of my enemy~~  
~~feel and the fact that I'm as long as I. Well,~~  
~~had little else for now. Will write more in~~  
~~few days.~~

Laurie.

Emie.

P.S. Do my next check take out enough cash for you  
to buy your "2" wedding present. Let me know when you  
do.

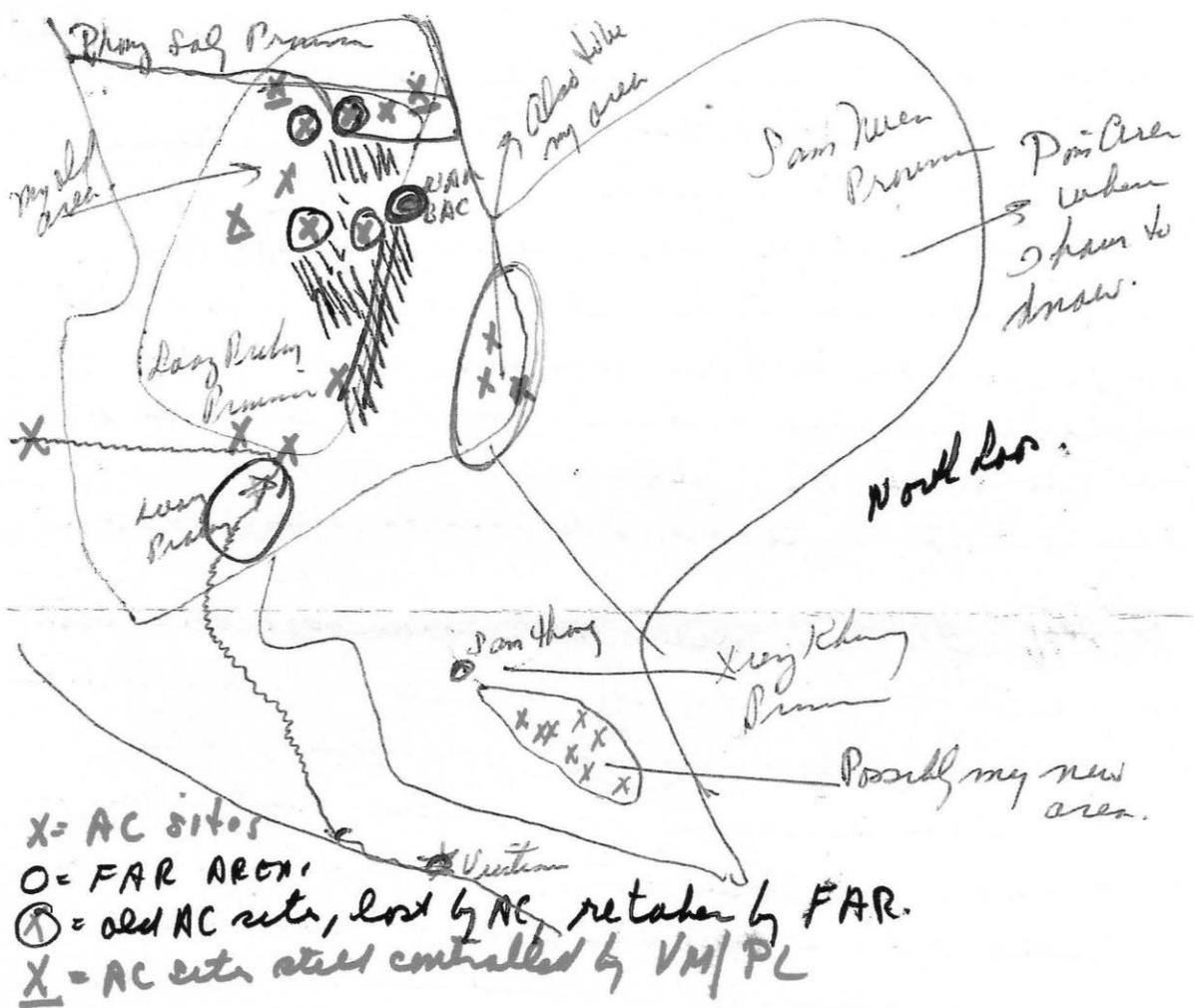
Dear Mom, Dad Jim  
Sam Khong Wed. Aug 31-66  
I got your letter yesterday of the 18<sup>th</sup> I have at hand  
so I'll scan it again and answer any questions first.  
About the charges - that is supposed to be why everything  
is ~~so~~ pages etc from DC - so AID/Walter you can pay. Understands  
the Aeroline has ended - about time. What hospital is Ward  
in? I'll write a letter. Oh - when I forget - As usual I never  
remember birthday etc. When I went into Ph. P. C. you were  
going to make me out a list of all the family etc. Well you please,  
when you have time - send me a list of recent address,  
everyone plus birthday, anniversary etc? I guess the 23<sup>rd</sup> is  
correct. I keep forgetting I didn't get the extra 25%  
until I arrived here. Also Don and Par both still  
getting paid as 7-4's when we are really 7-6's. When  
everything is settled we will receive the relay  
difference retroactive to June 7<sup>th</sup>. Sorry to hear about  
Mary Ann. Please everything went OK. No letter  
from you now. However everything in Vietnam and  
everywhere in Laos along the Mekong River & Chao. We had  
5 solid days and nights of rain. Ban Houi Sai in the north  
had 8-10 feet of water on the airfield. Vietnam is flooded -  
first time since 1941. I understand Vietnam airport  
had over 3 feet of water on the runway this morning.  
Consequently no planes are flying out & there is no  
mail out mail is either still in Bangkok or Vietnam.  
Sunday was the only time here in Sam Khong that was nice. I  
spent the nite at Pha Saly - north of Lao about 40 minutes  
flying time. I understand they are evacuating American  
dependents from Vietnam to Udon Thani, Thailand. Our  
air strip here is slippery and wet but the loading area  
near our office and the repeller areas are gusgnis  
soft holes 1-2 feet deep. Everything is nothing but mud  
wherever you go. Also getting a little colder - a damp cold.  
However as far the floods go, we are safe up here in the  
mountains. We sent down a radio message for food  
supplies for today which hasn't come yet but even if they

don't the Amerindians have lots of food as there are only  
a few Helis and Choppers RON here due to the weather.

Oh, before I forget - Would you take some of my money and  
buy me 4 cans of cold beer and 4 cans of Nestle foot oil  
for best, and send them airmail please. Thanks. Also,  
starting from the next check, put each and all the money  
towards the cabin loan at the Park National. I think I  
should get a check today or tomorrow as it is over 2 weeks since  
the last pay period. So if I check along with the \$450 from the  
last time gives me plenty in my checking account. If  
everything will have to go toward the cabin now. It  
is entirely possible that my net pay maybe less and  
that then will I was on contract because now they take  
out retirement (about \$40 per day!!) allowance plus, try, so at  
I am a little upset as far. I haven't done hardly any  
thing. Of course the weather has been bad and Pop has been  
in Vientiane much of the time leaving me here to run Sam  
Hong - which I hate doing. Also I may not be going back  
up to my old area. This is not definite yet, but the way  
it looks now I will stay with the small staff here in a  
big new refugee center. Also I am to help handle several  
site work of here plus spend a couple days in Sompuea  
learning Don's area for 2 reasons 1) Don is taking a week off  
in the end of Sept and 2) Don is the only one that has gotton  
Malena or hepatitis and Pop feels Don is bound to get some  
thing sooner or latter. So he says I am the only one who can  
work when Don is working. Then the other day he said that I  
may still be working back up in my old area. The problem  
in my old area is that technically it is in Savang Prabong  
Province. Thus USAID in LP should handle it. But LP does  
not as Tom Ward (who worked for Pop for 2 years) is tired of  
living in the boondocks and stays in LP and doesn't

refuge problem from his desk. Then too, my area was defended by Meo and Leothang AC's (Army Clandestine) who are the "irregular" guerrillas. LP's protected by FAR (Forces' Army People) who are the regular ARVN Army. Well the AC's men drove out of some of their sites by the VM/PZ and then the FAR came and captured the big village of Non Bac and also some of the places the AC's had lost. So the AC's pulled south and left much of area to FAR. Right now FAR and the Americans are squabbling. Is FAR older? I want Americans in their territory right now. However things should get better soon. The governor of Luang Prabang province will return from the US next week. Also 2 weeks ago a good friend of mine Colonel (Prince) Vannesay was appointed military governor of the part of Phong Saj we control (also my old area). He has requested that I be sent back to my old area. So when the LP governors return, Pop will meet with him and Col. Vannesay and the FAR officers to straighten the mess out. I hope Vannesay puts the pressure on to get me back up to my old area. I'll draw a map on the back of another sheet until the site only in LP and Phay Saj provinces.

I have my Chinese automaton rifle - and AK - in good shape. I hasn't been able to fire it yet due to the weather. Also have an old homemade M16 rifle I haven't paid for yet - there are old floodlocks. ~~Get a letter~~ from Jerry last week. Did you ~~send~~ ~~mail~~ the key to Dad sometime? Oh - I read an In Star and Stripes that a boy from Newark was killed last week. I wrote his name down but I can't find it now. Didn't recognize the name however. US air activity is less - growing. Let go



over every day that the weather is good. Well guess I'll close for now. With luck I can send this by plane to Luskin tonight & be mailed. Bye for now

Love  
Lynn

Sam Hong Sept 10-66

Loos

1 page

Dear Mom, Dad & Jim - Sorry I have written some  
more now as I have & been that day. In fact  
until the past week I have been here at Sam  
Hong most of the time. The past week I have  
been out 4 nights. Things have been pretty  
quiet here - In fact too quiet. Everyone feels that  
the PL and Viet Minh will really make a big  
attack beginning in Oct and running till the end  
of the dry season in the spring (April). Unfortunately  
they will probably take what they want & we just don't  
have the manpower to hold everything we have.  
Pop is going on some leave on Oct 11 and won't be  
back until January. General Vang Pao is now in  
Hawaii getting his arm operated on. (He was in  
while he was shot in February). I suppose you have  
read about the floods in Laos and parts of Thailand.  
Vietnam is completely flooded and has been for nearly  
2 weeks. The entire city except for a couple of "high" houses  
is still under water. The entire airport has been  
flooded for over a week. I flew over Vietnam a week  
ago Thursday and it was terrible. Nong Chai, the  
Thai town of the opposite bank of the Mekong River  
is completely wiped out. Estimated dead is 300.  
Ladon is partially flooded. Chiangmai in Thailand is  
flooded or is Chiang Khong in Thailand and it is even  
less town across the river Ban/Chai Lai. There was  
28 feet of water over the air field there! We know no  
idea how much rice has been lost especially in  
Thailand because USAID says all of the rice

for our refugee person a less from Thailand  
 I flew over Chiang Khong and Don Haua Saj yesterday.  
 What a mess. I was in Daeng Province last  
 Friday and it was partially flooded. However  
 I guess the sadder story I saw was last  
 Sunday when I landed by helicopter in a little  
 leprosy village. About 25 lepers had been  
 driven out of their villages and had been put in  
 a hell hole in the middle of nowhere. I went  
 to meet Father Davelard - an American Catholic  
 Priest who has been there for years. The Catholic  
 church supplies medicine to the lepers around  
 there. It had rained for several days and the filth  
 leaving was one leg much bad. One guy fellow  
 had both hands and both feet gone. He was  
 crawling around the mud on his hands. It  
 was really sickening - old people and little kids  
 trying to grow rice and corn and living in abject  
 poverty like animals. I have to say it that the  
 Catholic missionary group here has the Protestant  
 program beat a 100 ways. I have to admire the  
 Catholic priests. The way they operate out in the boor  
 dock. Due to the flood you can't receive any mail.  
 All my letters from you all ever go about many com  
 How much? Unless Harold's address? I think I told  
 you to put all my checks to pay off the loan. I will have  
 to push to come up by the end of November. Maybe I might  
 have to extend a month if possible. Those 2½ months  
 in Washington really killed me. And also, even  
 though I am making \$2000 more per year, my  
 2 week checks will be about the same as

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before - this is due to the fact the taxes will be  
high and the fact that now retirement and  
insurance is taken out. Retirement benefit will  
amount to about \$40 per pay period! Don  
and I are wondering if we get the all back  
if we only work for \$10 for 2 1/4 years. We had  
better get it back! I have after the lesson is  
finished can send you and Jim something each  
month. Jim to help him at \$50 if he needs it and  
Mom and Dad to help pay for all the money they  
had to borrow when I was at DPO. The very staff  
gather it from reward yet? I hope so. How old will  
be 203 weeks before Vietnam is back to normal.

We have had no more trouble here as Don, they  
said the American was shot 3 weeks ago tonight.  
Everyone feels it was a political feud. There are 2  
things. One, he was a Negro. When the White Stars  
team were in loss in 1961-62 (the Special Forces) 2  
Negro Special Forces men raped a Mrs girl and  
the Mrs told her Negro. Second, he was a  
lab technician in a hospital. The nurses gather  
on way to the hospital. In the evening the local  
soldiers would go to the舞 hall. This guy  
would go out every night and chase the soldiers  
away. Well the 2nd and Mrs guys on human and  
break the nurses on flirt - so then was reentreated  
by both the nurses and soldiers against him. Hence

someone about him. But I heard he was in Clark  
AFB with Phillips and is OK. Also, did I tell you  
to make a list of all birthday and anniversary?

Today I took my first bath and changed my clothes  
for a week. I slept in my clothes & nights out in  
military. Day did I stink! I couldn't stand to  
smell myself. Well, it is 9:30 and past my  
bed time!! Seems had to believe I go to bed at  
9-9:30 every night. I still have the USAID  
newspapers here & send that contain the pictures  
I took in Laos. I'll send them soon. They & the  
Advertiser run another story on me. It does  
supposed to send an article to the Advertiser.  
Well, will close for now. Until soon.

Love,  
Ernie

P.S. please send me Jon's address if he's  
leaving at state this year.

Sept 15-66  
Saigon, Saigon

~~Dear [unclear]~~  
~~This is it? The general still remains.~~  
~~we hope it is a little. We have made great strides~~  
~~but I gather sent up yet. I wonder when it~~  
~~was the judge [unclear]? Ah, what about my~~  
~~son [unclear]?~~

We had a real review plane crash today. Our  
Pop was here at Saigon - he Ying - was on a flight  
which crashed a few miles away from here. He pilot  
killed him and left the plane burning on fire. He Ying  
survived burn estimated between 65-80% of his body.  
He was still conscious when they got him here. He was  
evacuated to the U.S. Army Field Hospital in Korat,  
Thailand. It will be several days before the doc  
can say if he will live. Human will burn like  
this the doctor says he would be dead by second degree  
burn everyone here is really shocked up especially Pop  
as he has worked with me Ying for a long time. Pop is  
drunk now and I suspect will get drunker as the out-  
jars by. It is 9:10 now. Pop has gone to me Ying's house to  
stay until his 2 wives + 7 girls daughter and one  
son. Pop is taking the first trip to Korat tomorrow morning  
to see me Ying. Dr McCrady says she will meet me Ying  
& Crash in the U.S. Air Force Hospital if necessary. Well  
enough bad news.

I got off the phone (?) Monday with York below  
~~For the last 2 weeks but from your command I~~  
~~you should have seen it - help to you. I hope I~~  
~~will get along and help you I did. Right now a~~  
~~few things still to do. Please all stopped~~

If and I have real good headache. Plus my  
stomach is all screwed up. I went to Saigon  
Hong (Feb 201) yesterday and I used to drink  
beer. When I got there everyone was half drunk.  
A local commander here is 19 year old - say Pop has  
longest he may be a few years older. He is a relative of  
Heng Pao and is still a good man. I have to drink when I  
see him. Then we went to Yang Tong house and he had a  
big Bac for me, Nicks, and 2 other Mes officers. Also Bac  
then this guy took turn tying strong around their wrist.  
This is usually accompanied by a drink of homemade rice liquor.  
I just looked at my wrist. I must have 4+ rings on my left  
wrist. Well, after a few glasses of beer I was bad. I wasn't  
drunk but my stomach really hurt & take it. I lost glasses &  
just spit out a window behind me and vomited a  
little. I didn't feel too bad because Yang Tong did the  
same thing about 2 hours before me. Well after the drinking  
they brought in mounds of rice, fat slices, ham, etc.  
So I had the best treatment because I am still  
eaten up there. They had just gotten them yesterday. I think  
he was stoned and was singing until 2 more girls. I think  
almost never drink but when he gets ploughed. To just go on  
and on. He was still going strong at midnight. I went to  
bed about 9:30. But the person they was Yen Pao, one  
of the other mes, he was stoned he just passed out at  
the table about 8:00. He lost 3 rows of teeth. They were  
carrying him out feet first. He is a little short, stony guy  
about 40 - and he had on a white shirt and black neck  
tie. He woke up at 3 this afternoon with his teeth still  
broken in. He really looked red (burned) (red) (red)  
Today Yang Tong gave me an old M16 rifle.

Son Thong Sept 19, 1966

V

Dear Mom, Dad, Jim -

~~With the greatest respect I have a while ago I do want to  
to you all to think about & remember the following~~  
~~I may repeat myself in this letter. Things are~~  
going a little slow here now. Everyone is sort of  
waiting for the Communists to begin their "big  
day room push" around Act 1. However 2 nights  
ago they hit 2 p.m. area south of Ban Son and we  
lost both places. The really hurt but the area was  
just south of a big enemy concentration area and  
said so the attack wasn't too unexpected. I hope  
to put together a map for you and mark it so you  
can follow what is going. I'll put the numbers of  
place on etc. Also, remember the map I bought at  
Hals? Send that to me and I'll mark it with  
all the important place. We had a real tragic

plane crash last week. A Helio crashed and burned.  
On top Mrs "Nai Khong" was in the plane. When it  
crashed the pilot (American) got the door open and  
rushed out unharmed. Once he took a few steps and  
turned around and saw Nai Ying (The Med) still in  
the plane. Just then the whole thing burst into  
flame. He pulled Nai Ying out but he was burned  
from head to foot. The pilot was burned on the face  
and hands. Nai Ying was sent immediately to  
Korat, Thailand and the next day to Clark Air Force  
Base in the Philippines. The doctor said he probably  
wouldn't live. However he is still alive and tomorrow  
he is supposed to be flown to Brook in Texas, USA.  
Reports say 60-80% of his body is 3rd degree burn.

9/24/66

2

This crash really shook everyone up here. Strangely enough the Helio Cessna is one of the "hot" planes to crash in - I mean you have a pretty good chance of getting out with relatively minor injuries. However the last 2 major crashes the Helios have both killed or maimed an impact. In all crash killed 3 people. We had 2 "Chopper" crashes last week but neither one killed anyone. A "chopper" crashed 2 months ago and killed 8 people. We had a "Polar" shot yesterday I am thinking the pilot was shot in the foot but it wasn't a real serious wound.

I have a cold and headache. Don't feel any too good. Rain has seemed to stop for a couple of days. This is the very end of the rainy season. The floods in Uvita have gone down and I guess the river is within its banks now. However the city is covered with a good layer of mud.

~~I planned to go up to my old book.~~  
~~Then I have to wait for the rest which generally~~  
~~takes about a week. I have an entry 2000~~  
~~red I will make for \$25 I do 2000 it will take~~  
~~me about a different in the balance! Telling up~~  
~~tonight I should just about buy the car I want~~  
~~so paid off the car with a little extra. Now~~  
~~my math is DC self help me financially. goods~~  
~~to go all the time. I need to go to the store~~  
~~but when you want one for a mutual use, they~~  
~~are a pain in the arse and it costs a damn~~  
~~you go you have to pay to park.~~

~~All my gear and things in charge \$38 per  
week. Who will pay the charge for? All you  
shall have been sent with you, and they  
pay all packing and shipping charges. To my  
charge that the individual will pay if the  
weight is over the amount allowed free. Then he  
has to pay for the overweight charges.~~

I was looking through a Sears Catalogue  
tonight. There's a lot of stuff I want to get.

Last week I went to a place, Sam Sang Hong,  
etc. 201 for the night. They had a couple of big  
parties for me and 2 others - another Mrs "Nai Khong".  
Before I left they gave me an old Mos rifle, complete  
with powder, gun, balls, caps etc. It was made  
in Nong Het and they estimated it to be about  
30-40 years old.

I have my record player here on full blast -  
stereo speakers. I am really glad I bought it. It is  
so nice to sit in the evening and read and  
listen to music. Now that we all live our own  
rooms it is especially nice.

~~Did you get my letter asking for a suitable  
ray and what kind of oil?~~

I was out to Site 67 yesterday and  
while I was talking I saw a little baby about  
3 months as I went over his mother you can see

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me and I held him on my right side for about  
10 minutes playing with him. When I gave him  
back to his mother I realized that he had  
"watered me down" good. My T shirt and  
short were really soaked. You can believe I  
smelled good the rest of the day.

Well guess I'll get some sleep. Been taking  
medicine for 3 days now I still have the cold.  
Write soon.

Love,  
Emie.

P.S. ~~I don't feel the best of health today, am coming~~  
~~over~~ ~~back~~.

Sam Thong 9/25/66

Hi, [REDACTED], how is everything? Get your interesting letter a couple of days ago. When I first saw the paper I thought well, this is appropriate, she is probably going to say, "After all the bullshit you've been writing me, I t ought you might need some toilet paper." But you surprised me. Thanks. Just came back from the last night of mourning for Nia Ying. He will be buried tomorrow afternoon. Poured myself a full glass of crème d'menthe or however you spell it. Hey, I really do want those records. Can you pack them in heavy cardboard etc and send them airmail? If you can send them to me and let me know how much everything was and I'll send you the money. I would really appreciate it. About the suitcase, my parents can't find the key so if it is not in your way, hang on to it till they come up with the key. OK? I am feeling pissed off again tonight. I'm not drunk either. I was going right to bed as it is 2220 hours but I decided to write to you first. Say, why don't you come over to Thailand or Japan for a vacation sometime next spring? I could meet you in Japan or Hongkong or Bangkok for a couple of weeks and we could have a real circus. There are some nice bars around to get tanked in during the evening, nice hotels to sleep in at night (together of course) and plenty of things to see and do during the day. Think it over, Huh? I think it would be real cool to wake up in the morning finding you cocooed up against me about 5:30 or 6 in the morning, just when you are feeling "your best"... know what I mean? I think you will. You know I [REDACTED] we the fighting will never return from Laos alive. I just have a funny feeling about getting killed over here. God, we are going to miss Nia Ying. Things in Laos are pretty bad now. The national assembly gave the Prime Minister a virtual vote of no confidence after he told them they weren't within a good damn. So Souvanna headed for the royal capital of Luang Pratang where he has been for nearly two weeks. I understand the king's council voted the same. So in reality there is no government in Laos but no one knows it. Kong Le and Kouprisith are on the outs. Both are Neutralists but Kong Le is a self-made general after he led the coup in 1960. Kouprisith is technically his boss but the two don't get along. Last week there patrols skirmished north of Vientiane and Kouprisith's men captured a half dozen of Kong Le's men.

Colonel Singh, the commander of the neutrals at Moung Soui, north of Sam Fong, is making overtures to our General Vang Pao, the Mee who is commanding Military Region 1 which is all of the provinces of Xieng Khouang, Sam Nuea and his SGU units also operate in Loung Prabang and some in Sayabury and Houa Khong. In short he is leader of all the Mee and most of the

*General Ma hospital Vientiane*

ao Thung Mgn SGU and ADC units. Right now he is in Hawaii living his arm operated on. He was shot in the arm last february when we lost Na Khang. The arm never healed correctly so he finally persuaded to go for treatment in Hawaii, General Ma, another general not to popular in Vientiane (as in Vang Pao because they are both excellent military leaders who don't dilly around in making money, but concentrate on rig ting) in in Kerat hospital suffering from battle fatigue and possible dengue fever. General Ma personally flies lead plane when his T-28's go on bombing missions. I heard one story, true or not I don't know, but it is typical of the man. After one bombing mission one of his planes came back with no damage from ground fire, no holes or anything. The pilot was real proud that his plane was still in perfect shape. So when he landed the General came over and the pilot told how he had gotten back with no holes. General Ma is supposed to have beaten the shit out of the pilot because he said that if the plane had no holes the pilot strafed and bombed from too high an altitude! The next plane landed just full of bullet holes and scorch marks from his own bombs that he dropped. He got scared to death that he would catch hell for the condition of his plane. Instead the General went up and hugged him and congratulated him on his mission because the holes and the scorch marks meant that the pilot had really come in on the deck, tree top level to strafe and bomb. Well enough of that. This note isn't very long but my eyes are about to cease operations for the night so I guess I had better quit as my typing is not so good that I type without looking at the keyboard. Well anyway,

~~be good and say lots and lots of love,~~

from the bald headed old bastard in Laos,  
*Uncle*

*Subhong Journal*

Sam Thong, Laos  
Sept 28, 1966

Dear Dr. Hartman

"yo" I've been meaning to write for some time now - but it takes an "act" by Congress to get me to write a letter.

Have been here 6 weeks now and no problems medical-wise. My left shoulder and upper arm still have those sharp pains when I lift my arm to fast, but other than that I feel fine.

Sam Thong is almost a health hazard in Laos. Off hand I can think of 8 American (USAID) and one an American pilot who have had serious cases of malaria in the past 6 months. One doctor has had 5 serious attacks in less than a year and is restricted to Vientiane. In addition 3 American had hepatitis (one man has had both malaria and hepatitis esp.) But as much for that.

Right now "work" is relatively slow. The Royal has got 8 forces under

the Meo General, general Vang Pao, is making small gains and consolidation in Sam Neua Province. A communist supply road in Sam Neua has been cut by Meo troops. In Luang Prabang Province the RLG captured the ~~strategic~~ valley of Nam Bac plus several villages we had lost in the spring.

However everyone is dreading the arrival of October as this is usually when the Viet Cong and Pathet Lao open up their campaign, ie the dry season. So the refugees will no doubt be pouring out of the fighting areas in a few weeks.

Well, I'm running out of time so I'll have to go for now. Give my regards to Mrs Brasfield and Mrs Long and the nurses who used to stick me with those damn needles all the time.

Sincerely  
Eric Kuhn

Sam Shong, Loo  
September 28, 1866

Dear [redacted],

I just received a letter from [redacted] dated the 10th saying that you all are ~~in~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~well~~, so I thought I'd dash off a line or two while I have the time. I hope by now everything is coming along OK and you are on the road to recovery.

I want to apologize for not calling you to thank you for the cheese cake and the New York Times which I was in the hospital. As Jenny probably told you the cake was gone the next afternoon - with no help from anyone else.

The situation is fairly quiet here at the moment, although events should move pretty fast in a couple of weeks. One, there are rumours of another coup d'état, and I wouldn't be too surprised if one occurred most any time. Radio Vientiane has been playing martial music, the Prime Minister has fled Vientiane (administrative capital) to Luang Prabang (Royal Capital) and the National Assembly was closed yesterday, I understand.

Second, we are waiting for the Communists (Pathet Lao and Viet Minh) to begin their annual dry season offensive. They have been probing around at various locations, but so far they had yet to mount a major campaign. I've investigated 3 of these probes near here and they are all about the same - mortar fire, and then attack by 30 or 40 men about 0300 hours, overrun an outpost and pull back or break off the attack. Should be an interesting year, to say the least.

Well, I've got to go now. If you have the time, please drop me a line & tell. It's always nice to get mail up here in mountains.

Sincerely,  
Eric Keeler

Dear Mom and Dad -

10/13/66 Sunday 10/9/66

No. Sorry I haven't written much recently. I just came back from nearly a week in the field. The last 2 days have been slow here and today I rested mostly. In fact I think the next few days may be slow. Pop left Sam Thong today. Sunday morning he leaves from the AAF. He will be visiting his daughter Harriet Getty (Lambard to Ws) in Glenford sometime and he has your name and address. Told him to call you all but he said he will visit you in Newark. He will call first. The local people here think the world is going to end because Pop is leaving. They don't yet believe that he will be back in 3-4 months.

Ok. ~~got my flight ticket. I got word Monday~~  
~~that the stop over in Vietnam and 1/2 day there~~  
~~to get off plane. I'm playing the records now. I~~  
was getting tired of the same records over and over.  
(I had bought them in Bangkok) ~~I've cleaned up back~~  
~~as far as my books. Do I have any more PAF in~~  
~~the ~~to~~ air freight? Also will you put in ~~in~~~~  
~~PAC and paper for me?~~

The big attack had not yet started here. It has been abnormally dry after all the rain in last August and the first week of September. We had our first good shower today - the first in a month. We have figured the month of Oct to the beginning of the PAF/VN push. So far our troops have done pretty well although we have lost a lot of good old soldiers. We recaptured Nong Khang - a big valley due north and slightly east of Sam Nuea City, near the Vietnam border. I flew up Friday morning and everything seemed to be in good shape. We lost San Sean, south of the Ban Ban valley 3 weeks ago but recaptured it 3 days later. However

2.

we lost one of our ~~best~~ few 105 howitzers. and USMD

We have a new boy up here on refugee relief. He was 105 ~~old~~ years old but returned to the US to finish college. He just came back in August. Also a boy came up yesterday who may teach in the school here. He is from Indiana in fact his home is 10 miles from DePauw. He is Negro which is unfortunate says here as the memory of 2 Negro special forces men raping a US girl here in 1962, I believe, is still remembered. Also the X-Ray tech at the hospital here was Negro (a USAF tech on loan). He tried to be more modest of the nurses and earned the resentment of the nurses boyfriend, because he would go to the mass down every evening and kick ass for girls boyfriend. He was shot through the chest but didn't die. I guess he is in the states now. - Back again. The new US boy was just in talking. He has a Master in SEA studies from the Soc. West Center and speaks Japanese. Sounds impressive. Where Jeff going to study? He caught a So to Thailand & Japan or someplace out of the ordinary. I'll try to write him a few days. If you guys isn't disappointed in the fraternal, I think they are on the way out at big school or they are building new and nice dorms. ~~I hope they stay like~~ I don't understand you? The flood has receded and Vietnam is covered much layers of mud which dried out and become dust. The camp has 3 feet of mud/dust over the runway. Big rumbling of a Camp d. et al in Laos. The North and FAR troops are fighting periodically. Everyone is waiting to see what happens. When the troops fight each other that mean they aren't fighting the Communist. - This is bad. Well if ~~we're~~ ~~hurting~~ ~~the day~~?

June 8

On the way up

Sam Trong, Laos  
Oct. 11, 1966.

How's tricks. Happy Double tenth. In case you don't know what the Hell Double Tenth is, that is the day that the Manchu Empire was overthrown in China in 1911 (or 1912, I forget). I am slightly drunk right now. It is 8:30 at night. I was going to eat dinner and come home and write you a nice good letter. However, Capt. Reid, an attache type came up tonight and he had a new dart board. We started playing darts at 6 o'clock and played to 8. All the time we were drinking beer. I lost 400 K which is 80¢. Then we ate dinner. We invited Col. Tu, the Lao commander here to play with us and then we treated him to dinner at the Air Amraca Mess. Turkey tonight. Frankly I am drunk on my ass, but don't tell anyone OK... Everyone is waiting for the fireworks to begin. Things between the Nuets and FAR is getting worse. Last week the National Assembly voted on the budget for the year. There was more money allotted to the Nuets than to the rightest (mostly AR) so, since the ~~Communist~~ Nuets are, militarily wise so much smaller than the FAR, the National assembly voted the budget.

This in effect was a vote of no confidence for the Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma. I guess there has to elections soon. Rumors of coups are everywhere. The Nuets are moving troops from Muong Souie down to Vang Vieng. They fought a battle, actually ambushed where 7 FAR were killed. General Ma, head of the air force has been in and out of here recently to see General Vang Pao. This may be the end of the Geneva Accords which set up a coalition government with the Far, Nuets and the Communists. However, if a coup occurs the Reds will be left out as they will surely not participate in elections and thus one faction may be eliminated. I wonder if the US may behind this, altho at it is only a guess, as if the Geneva Accords were thrown out the window, then the US would be free to legally station US troops in Laos, or at least have US advisors here. I would not want to see the US in here

a la Viet Nam or Thailand, but I think some selective, good US visitors here in some of our key sites might be a good thing CAS has men in a few places but they are not out in every site or even a fraction of the total sites we have. I found out that the MAPS allotment for Laos, ~~TOP SECRET~~, today. It is fantastic. However I think that most of it is air support. Tonight, or this evening, 2 big tankers circled us for a long time. A few miles north of here they refueled. I would like to see this with the long tubes sticking out from the tanker to the jets. ~~Picture of something like when we were together.~~ The Ambassador has supposedly withdrawn all support from the Nuets except rice. However the asshole has not told the field. So we have people with the Nuets and no one has told them the policy. Naturally I think we should screw the Nuets to bathroom floor. They are half communist anyway and you

gorgon when we backed Kong Le. He is a stupid, no not stupid but treacherous bastard. However Washington, not to lose face has to back the great nutrisist "General" who is realit a captain. He has the smallest fighting force, who don't fight anyway, in Laos and yet he receives more support than anyone. I think we should have Kong Le assassinated (By an American working under cover) and then see over his best officers to the KKAFAR side and wipe out the rest of his army who are worthless bastards anyway. The myth of the mighty Kong Le is only a myth. One wild rumour has it that Kong Le, Vang Pao and Thao Ma (air force) are planning a coup together, but Vang Pao hates Kong Le so I don't see how this could possibly be true. I wish we could knock the shit out of the Nuts. Hey, have you given any thought to coming to Asia next year for a vacation. I would like very much to bite you on the left ~~Boob~~ as I know that really gets you all excited. Or, hell, the right Boob will do. Hell, I want to bite both the left and the right Boobs. I keep reliving those 3 months in Lishingish over and over. You know if I had not called you from the hospital we might have missed the best part of our relationship. God. I wish we had gone camping one weekend. When I come back we will have to go up into the sticks so no one will find us for days and just camp around the woods in the sun... lying together on the sandy beach of a lake, chasing butterflies (?) through the glen going bird watching in the woods with binoculars... however I am afraid I wouldn't see many birds because I would always be looking at Hazel or trying to seduce and annoy. Oh. I am getting excited just thinking about it. Guess tomorrow night I will go to Vientiane for 2 nights, I'm getting horny and the cumby bats in Vientiane sound pretty good. I haven't seen her for over 2 weeks. I miss her in a way. She does have a tremendous body. Such firm breasts and with firm pointed nipples. Don't be in Thailand now. When she comes back I'm going down to Bangkok for 3 days. I have some business down there. Hey, have you ever run into Paul Daly in D.C.? He should be in there about now on Home leave. If you ever meet him tell him I said Hello. Thanks. Things have been real quiet here and I haven't had to play soldier for a couple of weeks. Did watch some air strikes 2 weeks ago from Phou SaVoi. We were right on the tip top of the mountain like an eagles nest. Lots of big booms and smoke but I don't think there were any enemy there. Site 138 was abandoned today as the troops pulled out to 169. Guess CAS was pissed off because I called them to ask what had happened and they didn't even know about it. They kept trying to call their man in Luang Prabang but couldn't get him. So as usual we know about things before they did. Well, my erotic dancer, guess I had better stagger to bed. Please write me bushels of mushy mail, not too dairy jazz, OH? Anyway, bye for now,  
all my love and kisses

11/21/66 Sam Thong Lao

11/27/66

Dear Leon:

Well here is a much belated letter to you all in DC. I have your 2 dolls and I hope to get them mailed very well if I can get down to Vietnam. I didn't get a chance to buy them in August as I cancelled all plans and flew direct - just visited in Tokyo and Bangkok to Laos. I really thought that things were happening. However August, September and October were really dull. In Oct. I slipped down to Bangkok and bought the dolls. I'm afraid I did not get the right size - I don't know. Also I'll send you the Lao stamps. I talked to Dr. Welden about Tongzai's presents. Doc said he thought they wanted the money but I don't know if to give him \$100 or not.

Somewhat the work up here doesn't seem as "exciting" - that's not really the word I want to use - as before. I guess I was a little disappointed in not working the northern LP area. However things are going better now and Jack is doing - Hellion good job as acting NC of San Thong.

We really haven't yet had any big refugee movement. Although, our work started 3 days ago under Ho Thom and Ta Ueng were really zapped good by the enemy. Just last month I had helped a Meo group at Phu Mau build a SKOL strip just south of Ho Thom. Was a good thing as that is now the only strip in the area I work.

and I was down yesterday but the people had not yet had time to reach Pha Muang. We still can't get accurate reports as so many soldiers were trapped. 9 KIA reported but there is a possibility that 2 full companies were wiped out. I should find out more today or tomorrow when I go down again. Maybe some escaped. Attacking assault force was first not reinforced by PL after the VN had taken the area.

Precursors to that action has been sporadic - at least in our area of XK, Sam Nuea and the west edge of LP. The air program in Sam Nuea has had fantastic results. We have a new method of fighting guerrilla warfare with ground-to-air and planes in area suddenly swooping in on spatted truck traffic, troop movement etc.

We had some probes near Sam Thong last month at Ban No and Khao Kho, just a few minutes Heli ride from Sam Thong. The enemy had built a road to the base of the mountain behind Khao Kho (which is on the rim of the PDT. Every night trucks were coming from Xeng Khaung Ville to the base of the mts. The planes worked there and we moved up a .75 in RR and hit a position and the road. Not too much real damage done to the enemy but it gave the mes ADC's and the doo lung BV 23 (TAR) traps a big kick to have an American come

out and huts on 3 days and night was a little  
problem. Don does similar things in Sam Nuea  
Some of those poor guys have been anti fighting for so  
many years that any little change in their routine  
is welcome - even a great Longay farang (I took  
along chickens and cigarettes for the soldiers.)

I guess the big question most now is  
how the political thing will come out.  
Gen V.P. has been named for a 3rd star which  
is causing ruffles among the less col - and  
gen in Vte. If only the Lao, Meo and Lao Hung  
could work together with no petty jealousies.

The more I am with AID the more I  
wonder if our AID programs are really a good thing.  
We give - give and the more we give the  
more people want. We were talking about the  
"old day" at Sam Thong (before my time). Everyone  
lived in mud & grass houses - grass roof - dirt floor -  
no electricity - no piped water - no jeeps - but the  
program went on. Today there are pretty palaces all  
over the place. One man official a US \$10 person, (like  
the news) gets metal roofing, another wants some  
etc etc. One guy gets old grass drum to build a house -  
everyone wants them. One gets electricity - all  
want it. water etc etc. We have too many people  
suddenly thinking more about themselves. And  
the local people, like our Nor Khong - are now

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afraid of offending some one that even the  
handing out of bread has to be weighted  
carefully so as not to appear to favor one clan  
over another or one Treasury over another etc.

Then the program is growing and we need to  
have the freedom to act fast and get fast support.  
But too many people in V.H. don't understand this.  
I'm afraid our dear Director is one of the most  
un-loved Americans in Laos (especially by the  
American). I don't really like his part down there  
too much, we seem to pull in pretty bellows. But  
other areas are really complimentary.

CBS seems to be functioning along per usual. ~~they~~  
we here at Sams they still supply them with much of their  
information from the field. Whenever a problem arises they  
scream on the radio for us to help. So bad we can't  
get credit for much of the work we do that really  
isn't our job. They have kept up their Intell team  
and are getting out in the field more and more - but  
often ~~wanted~~ me off.

Well I know I didn't sound too pessimistic - they  
are actually about their usual "confused normalcy".  
Has John gone to Bangkok? Give my regards to Mary,  
Jim, Moma, Bertha and Joanne if she is still there. Any  
of you coming over here on a visit soon? Hope to see you  
all soon.

Best regards  
Ernie

Dear Mom and Dad,

Saturday nite  
Dec 2, 1966

✓

Well I guess I can't apologize too much for not writing. I guess the longer I go without writing the harder it is to sit down and write. I guess I've gotten all your letters although somewhat out of order.

I was so busy & when I got a letter from Mom in '66 [REDACTED] I went back to [REDACTED] when 3 days late. [REDACTED] the mail before she wrote. [REDACTED] I had no time.

[REDACTED] I'll save them for some "special" (?) nite here. Also I got the oil and soap. I wrote to you 2 weeks ago but never finished it. Then last Monday I added a few lines and left it in the office to be mailed - along until we left Wiesbaden on the 2nd Dec. That night I didn't sleep very well. Finally I got to sleep, real deep but I was having a nightmare. At 2 in the morning I hear tremendous burst of firing. I rolled over and went back to sleep. They continued and Jack Williamson my boss pounded on my door to grab my AK rifle. I pulled my pants on and ran expecting to see the enemy all over the place. Instead our USAID warehouse medical warehouse and office was on fire. Jack drove up to make sure the airplanes were far enough away. I ran into the building to make sure the orphan beds there were out. I got out on our radio and all our records for Northern Laos. Other were getting some things out. However the smoke was so heavy we couldn't stay in the building more than a minute or 2. We just gave up and watched the big gunned down. There was probably a

million dollars worth of medicine plus all our supplies  
commodities like blankets, seed, pots, plates, etc. Just  
4 days before the 1170 lbs of clothing came. They  
were of course all burned up. I suppose the exact  
loss will never be fully known. But that was just  
the beginning of a bad day. The next day I flew in  
Porter (angry) and we took off from a very short  
runway. On takeoff we hit a tree stump and tore off  
the rear tailwheel. Back at Dan Hong, in the afternoon  
a Skyraider (American pilot) who shot down the PDJ. He  
was wounded and tried to land at Dan Hong. He  
couldn't make the turn and crossed off the runway  
killing the pilot instantly. (Oh as I had morning a  
Cessna transport come in and lost one of his nose  
wheels - no injury). A big "Jelly Green" rescue helicopter  
came in & got the body. He was coming over a Cambodian  
on the ground waiting for takeoff when he lost pressure  
of some sort and started down top of the Cambodian.  
The Cambodian just got out of the way. Then at 7 that  
night another Jelly Green <sup>overhead</sup> crashed at 30A. (V.H.C.A.S. G.N.Q.)  
First we heard 5 dead but later found out all  
had escaped injury. This 1.2 million dollar chopper  
burned up except for the tail. In fact it melted! Just a  
big pile of magnesium.

General Vang Pao's people feel that a plane  
being ditched in Vietnam by General Kavanaugh  
(dead) and on the other hand Mr. Lee, who used to be in power  
here before Vang Pao. His story is that Mr. Lee is

set for to the workshop and the next item is ~~to~~  
to sell an American. Jack and I had our doubts  
but I carry my .38 at night. The fire seems to have  
been started by a shot in faulty wiring but the loss  
was an enormous catastrophe. - So - This might be a  
good excuse for V.P. to do away with some enemies.

For month another tragedy occurred. John  
Perry, the Area Coordinator ~~of~~ of Savang Prabong led  
his 2 men (21 + 15) ride on a chopper to the Nam Ban  
area in north Laos. The chopper landed at what was  
supposed to be a friendly pad has the PL and captured  
it 40 minutes later. The chopper took 100 rounds.  
One day 20, was suddenly until pulled - & other man  
shot in the belly has died. The chopper managed somehow  
to get airborne and get back to Nam Ban. The boy was to  
leave the next day for France under the most steady  
the body as still in Vietnamese cold storage -ugh!

We have a new program using WW II B-26's.  
We have two teams near every road who contact the  
B-26's by radio when they spot truck. Yesterday the  
no 1. " Men team leader was hit and killed. The  
program was going great - but now? Every mile the  
PL and VN <sup>are</sup> moving 105's of trucks from Vietnam into  
Laos.

Near Sam Thong, maybe 15 miles, to Khang Kho  
on the edge of the PDJ. In a month the PL have been  
moving up trucks to the base of the mountain. 10 days ago  
they started every 105's and shelling an position.

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The day before Thanksgiving I went to Khang Khe and gave  
Majn Khongkaven & more up a 75 RR. I spent  
Thanksgiving and the next day in the trenches. We had a  
little operation to sweep out the trails of the coms.  
However, for 2 nights only, one truck came. However, we  
did shell the road until all T5 and 57's and we  
directed an 105 artillery fire from a couple miles  
behind us. Was a great Thanksgiving. I had taken along  
2 chickens and the soldiers cooked me the chicken.

While I was at Khang Khe, the H'mong was attacked  
and lost to the enemy. Just a month before I took the  
people as Pha Muun, a mountain south of Hoa Thom  
(Hoa Thom is on a big sun wall). I flew down there &  
brought on refugees. 2 days later 2 companies of soldiers  
came to Pha Muun. I tried to get them to go back to  
Hoa Thom but they just kept running to Muang Bo.  
Monday or Tuesday the friendlies 're took to Hoa Thom. Actually  
the enemy only stayed there a few hours. I searched the  
entire village. He or she did not steal any money,  
or steal all the rice or ham laves or anything! I  
guess I was lucky also that they had no boat, tramped  
any laves. No one can figure out why he or she didn't  
stay. They took 17 cases of grenades, bat tipp carbine  
arms and more shells and 2 82mm mortars!!  
Some of the refugees told me about the H'mong. It was  
defended by Group Muab 17 which was worthless -  
never patrolled and soldiers were always drunk

million girl. Also the Commander, a Col at, was a  
frontal and never stayed in the Hm. Now the trains  
have lasted the hours in the Hm. Was a noisy war.  
If we could eliminate some of the generals in Thailand  
we would be OK.

On Sept 21 General Ma my hero the leader of the  
Air force disgruntled and bombed Thailand trying  
to kill Sir Kraproth - has the gen had fled before  
the attack. Ma is now in political exile in Thailand  
for Keng Le, the Neutralist, is just about out. He is just  
now good. The US is really a fool to support him. They  
are a Communist. Keng Le has now fled to Indonesia.  
I hope he stays here.

Ok. I have yet to even receive the World  
News Report that Beth sent me. Maybe you check with  
her. I hope to get a letter off to everyone soon. However I've  
been so busy lately that I have had time all the time to  
travel as well I don't feel like it.

Had a few days in Thailand with a nice cool  
Canadian girl.

I went down to Thailand the last week of  
October. Went to Lakkha and bought a lot more  
ancient pottery. I left Super, a girl trade there, some  
money to buy me more of any good pieces come in.

The weather here has finally gotten cold. If  
only we had a little snow! I am afraid my Christmas  
presents will arrive by Christmas. Actually I'm half

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pressed to know what to buy as things are limited -

Well, I guess I'm running out of info.

I'm sure I'll think of more to add later. - But, bye  
for now. I'll get the maps back in a few days. S. [redacted]  
R. [redacted] [redacted], all that's all right.

Sorry to see about Rev. Holland. PS. What's going on?

Dave [redacted]  
Eric [redacted]

Eric.

PS. Both get [redacted] and [redacted] [redacted]  
already have been by. What others have I got.  
By 11? Only, can you give me the date the [redacted]  
particulars & month etc. - Oh I'll stop a week,  
with a copy of New England Journal. I'll call you sometime  
then my next time.

2316  
~~████████~~ (X)

Sam Khong Lao

12/3/66  
Black Tuesday - talk now

4 pages

Hi Honey, how are you? Well, I think perhaps I am to late in this letter but perpaps it will do some good regarding your paper on Laos. I know I have saved every letter of yours but I don't know where the old ones are stored. So, I think that you were writing about US+Lao relations and how they really were, notas professed in public a nouncements or something like that. But first... We had a big fire here Sunday night. Our office/warehouse burned down. with the medices etc we probably lost close to a million dollars. That was the start of two black days. On Tuesday morning a Carabou transport plane landed here and lost a nosewheel. No injuries. Then I went down to Thu Moun to check on the military situation. When we took off on the very short strip the plane hit a tree stump and we tore off the rear wheel etc. Managed to get back here ok. Then at 2 in the afternoon a US Skyraider was shot north of here and the pilot tried to land at Sam Thong but he was wounded and he crashed and was killed on impact not far from the run way. Then a big "Jolly Green" rescue chopper came to pick up the body and as he was coming in a gaget broke and he started to come straight down. However there was another Carabou under him which just managed to gun the engine and averted a crash. Then that night another Jolly Green crashed and burshed up, in fact the plane melted and is nothing but a pile of magnesium. However the crew of 4 managed to escape. Then 2 days ago a Neo, a real tremendous young fellow was killed. He was on a special team that was near Sam Nuea along the Communist road from North Vietnam. He had special radios and when he spotted trucks coming in from Vietnam he would call a B-26 in and they would comb the road. Do not repeat this! His death was a real blow. Last week we lost Tha Thom but the PL/VM didn't stay. I went in right after we reoccupied it to check houses. I prowled all through the village and was lucky that there were no booby traps left by the PL. I spent Thanksgiving in a position overlooking the Plain des Jarres. There is a road here where the PL have been moving in troops and 2 weeks ago they brought in 2 105 howitzers to shell our positions. I wenet over there three days to try to see what was happening. I had things all organized with the FAR (royal Lao army) and the ADC's, ot home defense units of Gen. Vang Pao. We had co-ordinated 105 howitzer fire from our rear, and we acted as forward obersers, and then a team went down with a .57 and hit the road and then we shelled it with a .75 RR. Don't think we killed anyone but it was fun and it did make gwt the 2 groups to work together. I think we should have Americans in many stragetic positions as it gave the locals confidence, especially we you have a radio along. I might ge

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fired if the Ambassador ever found out. I've been working alot with one the CAS guys here gathering intelligence and also with an army Attache. Do you believe me when I say I only work for USAID. Hey, did you ever find out the guys name who said that he used to work in Laos and lives beside your girl friends house? ~~Hey~~, I got two letters recently Glad to hear about your good grades on Asia. I'll be relying on you for information soon. I would like to read your paper on Thailand. Can you send me a copy? Also I got the record today. I immediately played it through twice. Brought back tremendous memories, no it didn't have to bring them back, they were never lost, but it made them more vivid.

LAOS: I really don't know that much to tell you that you can't get from the book Conflict in Laos. Have you read Joel Halsen's series of monographs on Laos. Much of what happened in the past few years I just plain don't know about and much of the present I shouldn't tell you. In general I would say that the CIA has supported Gen Phoumi Nosavan, now in exile in Thailand after his abortive coup in 1964 or 65, please check. The State Dept seemed to favor the more "neutralist" stance of Savanna Phouma and Kong Le. Jens, please check the spelling of these names because I will rattle them off. In our area in north Laos most of the officers are Phoumi men and many of Phoumi's better officers were rounded up by now Gen Kouprasith Abhay. At Paksane Col At was sent to pick up Gen Khamkong but there were no troops there. Forget this statement as I can't go into detail. Anyway, even today many of the "political officers" in the embassy favor the neutralists. One guy, Tom Barnes is coming up here Tuesday. When I was working in Luang Prabang and southern Phong Saly the governor of Phong Saly was a neutral and all he talked about was Tom Barnes. The neutrals are actually about half of them Communist but try to tell the Americans that. The State Dept seems to feel that neutrality is the salvation of Laos when in fact the people in the north actually carrying on the war want increased American Aid, and they are getting it but this is never mentioned publicly. Bombing in Laos has increased tremendously in the last year. Yet the only thing in print mentions the Ho Chi Minh trail. However all the time the US is pretending to back the Geneva Accords when in fact the accords are finished. The Vietnamese fighting in Laos made the accords worthless. Enough have been killed and captured but the International Control Commission is stymied because Poland refuses to accept the evidence. The mere presence of American planes bombing and our supplying the troops negates the accords. Also, when the communists pulled out of that coalition gov't that finished the accords because it called for a gov't of right, neutral and Communist. In fact the accords are dead but neither side wants to officially say that they are finished because that magnify their (and our)

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involvement here in Laos. In other words if neither side is supposed to be here, then we can both deny that we are here and if anyone doubts us or them, it is up to the accuser to prove we or they are here. All you have to do is surprise me but it would be legal for us to be here and the VM, then even though it would come out in the open and their might not be support either in the US or VN for involvement in Laos. How many people in the US know about US involvement in Laos. Again I say Jens we have no US troops in north Laos. Most of what I say pertains only to the north because that's where I work. The CIA handles the logistics and supply for General Vang Pao. The Requirements Office handles logistics for the FAR (Forces Armee Royale) and the nuets. The difference is that RO turns everything over to the FAR and nuets and they disburse it. Up here there is integrated control somewhat over what is done and where support goes, even though Vang Pao issues orders.

Dec 6, 1966 [REDACTED], Sorry but I had to go to Vientiane for 2 days and didn't get this finished. I just lit my pipe with a match and the head of the match fell off on the key board and melted the plastic on the "0" key. Beautiful. I just put on the record, sound track from the movie "Sandpiper". Bought it in Vientiane yesterday. That along with your record by the Letterman really hits pretty deep. Did I mention I wrote Ken the other day. Today a Jolly Green came in with 2 pilots who were shot down over Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam. helped carry them off the chopper. We evacuated them to Korat. I think they will both live but the one guy had a possible broken back. [REDACTED] Both live but the one guy had a possible broken back. [REDACTED] I [REDACTED] with pictures from a Thai female teacher I know. She is buying ancient pottery for me. She sent me photos of the things that she bought recently. Including a nice Buddha. There is another Buddha for sale ... \$5. I want it but I would like to see it first. May make a quick 2 day trip to Thailand to buy it. [REDACTED] I am trying to think what I can tell you about Laos, but I honest to God really don't know much among the lines that you want to know about. We feed all the soldiers and families up here in north Laos, give them weapons, ammo, air support, air transport etc. I just don't know what else I can tell you. Some of this about the plane crashes, Jolly Greens etc I shouldn't have mentioned. I'm afraid that I just can't say much else. I'm sorry but I can't. Do you understand what I mean? I hope so. I drank a bottle of that Mateuse wine that we used to drink tonight for dinner. There was another AID guy about my age, a Catholic priest and an American dentist and we had a bottle of that wine which I had gotten at the Commissary (PX) and after dinner cigars. Felt like a civilized person. Please excuse me but I have to sign off. Again I am really sorry for the lack of info on your paper. Hey, what color of silk would you like for Christmas? You won't get it before maybe groundhogs day, but give me an idea of color.. maybe RED? [REDACTED] and Maryland (SP you know) and the people at PC/Mash that I may have met. Will write

has said that when he is not here he want's me to keep an eye on site 5. As a result every thing that I am upposed to do is my territory only because someone else can't do... but what I am trying to say is that Mop didn't say I was was to have these these areas because he thought I would do a good job, but because for one reason or other someone couldn't do it. Right now things are fairly quiet. There is no sense of urgency. I just can't adjust to this normal routine. Everything has changed here. Instead of 6 in the morning to 7 or 8 at night, we start work at 7:30 and no plane can take off ~~maxima~~ after 5:30 in the evening. I have been up in Sam Thoøg 3 weeks and 1 day. I have been one night at Phu Saly, one nite in Luang Prabang and last nite at Phu Moun. Evrey other nite I have spent in this damn place doing essentially nothing. I don't know, maybe I am ~~xxxxxx~~ bored or something. There is a big operation going on in Don area to recapture site 27. I understand the troops were on the airstrip this evening. However we lost 3 dead and 20 wounded which is a Hehl'va lot. The war causalities in Laos are not spectular like in Vit Nam where hundreds or thousands are threalically killed in every major offensive. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] girl, I'm going to ~~xxg~~ hang it up for tonight. I hope when the flood goes down I'll have lots of mail from you.

Love and kisses