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LONG TIENG (LONG CHENG), LAOS. ALSO KNOWN AS LS-20A (LIMA SITE 20 ALTERNATE)

SHEEP DIPPED

[the Wanderling](#)

The phrase "sheep dipped," is more-or-less slang and not official terminology. It is commonly used in intelligence circles as a way of saying a person has been given an alternate identity. The paragraph quote below from THE SECRET TEAM, Chapter 7 Page 124, at the source so cited, although speaking specifically toward the Army and use of the phrase, is applicable generally and is about as close as you are going to find to a full scale definition:

"'Sheep-dipped' is an intricate Army-devised process by which a man who is in the service as a full career soldier or officer agrees to go through all the legal and official motions of resigning from the service. Then, rather than actually being released, his records are pulled from the Army personnel files and transferred to a special Army intelligence file. Substitute but nonetheless real-appearing records are then processed, and the man 'leaves' the service. He is encouraged to write to friends and give a cover reason why he got out. He goes to his bank and charge card services and changes his status to civilian, and does the hundreds of other official and personal things that any man would do if he really had gotten out of the service. Meanwhile, his real Army records are kept in secrecy, but not forgotten. If his contemporaries get promoted, he gets promoted. All of the things that can be done for his hidden records to keep him even with his peers are done. Some very real problems arise in the event he gets killed or captured as a prisoner. There are problems with insurance and with benefits his wife would receive had he remained in the service. At this point, sheep-dipping gets really complicated, and each case is handled quite separately." ([source](#)).

As far as the U.S. is concerned, the need for sheep-dipping in clandestine operations may have always have been there in one form or the other. However, the need grew exponentially during the so-called Secret War in Laos, a non-war war that was conducted basically during the same period as the Vietnam war. The U.S., along with a number of other countries, had signed the Geneva Accords which declared Laos an off-limits nation when it came to having foreign troops on their soil utilized in a combat status of which the following will attest too:

"The 1962 Geneva accords obliged America to withdraw all military personnel from Laos. Nearly eight hundred individuals, including military attachés, advisors to the RLA, MAAG staff, and the members of the White Star teams, packed up and left the country." ([source](#)).

When the Accords didn't stop the North Vietnamese from blatantly assisting the Pathet Lao with regulars in their attempt to bring down the legitimate government of Laos, as well as the continuing use of Laos as a staging area for NVA efforts in South Vietnam, the U.S. saw the need to counteract. At first, not wanting to be overtly violating the Geneva Accords, a small number of specially trained on-the-ground American military personnel were sheep-dipped, who then in turn participated in military actions, thus in extent, creating the groundwork for a Secret War. Those military personnel requiring the guise of sheep-dipping basically fell under the following quote:

"The non-communist forces in Laos had a critical need for military support in order to defend territory used by the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese communist forces. The U.S., in conjunction with non-communist forces in Laos, devised a system whereby U.S. military personnel could be 'in the black' or 'sheep-dipped' (clandestine; mustered out of the military to perform military duties as a civilian) to operate in Laos under supervision of the U.S. Ambassador to Laos."

On June 9, 1964 eight F-100D fighter-bombers of the U.S. Air Force's 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron operating out of Da Nang Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam flew the first combat air missions in Laos with strikes against targets in the Plain of Jars. [\[1\]](#)

A few months before those strikes could be fully implemented a number of cross-border forays from surrounding areas were put into place requiring the use of a number of covert ground teams inserted into rather remote and primitive conditions. Each team member and their equipment was sheep dipped and all teams embedded with specially trained communication personnel, each heavily blanketed with security clearances, versed in Morse code and the non-conventional expertise to build from scratch and use, if necessary, easily disposable spark-gap transmitters and QRP transmitters, along with foxhole radios and crystal set receivers, of which all members were trained to travel light, eat indigenous foods, and leave no tracks. However, it didn't take long before some outside [Committee 303](#) off-the-books shining-knights roundtable spooks, playing fast loose in the shadows under a deep cover red-phone presidential mandate, discovered the existence of the ground teams --- if they hadn't been responsible for them in the first place --- and once discovered, under a two-way reversible double blanket of security (an even more covert team pulled from a covert team) a special select few were soon appropriated for other duties.[\[2\]](#)

In the very early years of covert bombing operations, due to the lack of close air support control systems, those ground teams used a variety of makeshift systems to clarify target areas, including markers as simple as bamboo arrows pointing to the target, smoke grenades, etc. Participants in the ground teams that carried out such operations were Thai, Lao, and Hmong, as well as Australian and American. The Americans, primarily used in communication areas, had full and extensive military training and clearances, while other members had little or no specialized training --- in close air support or anything else. Although not universally applied in all cases throughout operations in Laos, the ground teams being referred to here, at least for those whose members could be traced back to being non-indigenous, were sheep-dipped.[\[3\]](#)

In confirmation of the above, the following paragraphs have been extrapolated from the one time limited distribution Top Secret, now declassified source so cited, Project CHECO, Chapter II, The Butterfly FAC, page 15:

Until the end of May 1964, strike control services were provided to the Royal Lao Air Force (RLAF) by civilians not formally associated with the United States Government. These strike controllers supported RLAF T-28s rather than USAF resources.

Prior to late 1964 the need for FAC services was relatively small and was required primarily in Northwest Laos (MR II) in support of General Vang Pao's ground actions. Due to the extreme political and security aspects of military pressure in Laos as well as the relatively minor requirements for Forward Air Guides (FAG) directed strikes, the mission was performed by use of civilian piloted, contract, Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) aircraft, not FAC configured. Operationally oriented civilians were utilized as controllers.

American military personnel first directed air strikes against communist forces in support of Laotian ground troops during Operation Triangle in early June 1964. This operation, which sought to clear enemy forces from the Route 7/13 Junction and to reopen Route 13 between Vientiane and Luang Prabang, used ground Forward Air Guide teams to help with air support. These teams, from the WATERPUMP detachment at Udorn, controlled RLAF T-28 strikes by marking friendly positions with smoke markers. The T-28s were then directed against the enemy by using the friendly smoke as a reference point. The American teams also controlled strikes from RLAF U-6s (de Havilland L-20 Beaver) and U-17s (military version of the Cessna 185E). Ground troops radioed enemy locations to the aircraft by reference to smoke flares marking the friendly positions. The airborne controllers relayed this information to the circling T-28s which then attacked the target. There was no attempt to mark enemy positions directly, since the utility aircraft used by the controllers were not equipped with target-marking ordnance. From June to December 1964 civilian controllers continued to operate in northern Laos and were joined more frequently by military personnel. During these months the U.S. military air strike control program was described.

An ill-defined group of US Air Force and Army personnel who happened to be on the ground in the vicinity of air strikes, had radio contact with strike aircraft, and were able to give some information concerning target location.[\[4\]](#) The strike aircraft used during this early period were from the RLAF or Air America. As USAF interest and commitments in BARREL ROLL increased, an improved system was gradually developed.[\(source\)](#)

And so it goes. Rather anybody likes it or not, from the former Top Secret document so sourced: An ill-defined group of US Air Force and Army personnel who happened to be on the ground in the vicinity of air strikes.

The graphic at the top of the page shows Long Tieng (Long Cheng), also known as LS-20A (Lima Site 20 Alternate) in Laos, circa early 1970s. Ten years before, albeit almost operational immediately, it was just in the early stages of being hewed out of the valley floor and a majority of the support buildings and infrastructure that grew up around the airstrip in the photo were just beginning to be put into place. For all practical purposes Long Tieng was the operational headquarters for the Secret War in Laos.[\[5\]](#)



U.S. SECRET ARMY IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS MEMORIAL, ARLINGTON CEMETERY

[OPERATION WHITE STAR: LAOS, 1959 - 1962](#)

[THE SECRET WAR: PLAIN OF JARS](#)

[THE CODE MAKER, THE ZEN MAKER](#)

SHANGRI-LA, SHAMBHALA, GYANGANJ, BUDDHISM AND ZEN

[AFTERMATH OF GENEVA](#)

[SAIGON TEA](#)

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ON THE RAZOR'S
EDGE

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(please click)

As to the subject of donations, for those of you who may be interested in doing so as it applies to the gratefulness of my works, I invariably suggest any funds be directed toward [THE WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT](#) and/or [THE AMERICAN RED CROSS](#).

Footnote [1]

The eight F-100D fighter-bombers initially deployed against targets in Laos on June 9, 1964 were from one of four squadrons that flew under the banner of the U.S. Air Forces's 401st Fighter Wing. To clarify the physical steps in that deployment, but not so much so any decisions behind it, the following has been extrapolated from the HISTORY OF THE 401st FIGHTER WING 1943-1992 by Joyce L. DeVaux, TSgt USAF, Chief, 401 Fighter Wing Hlstory Office (October 1992):



615th TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON

On June 30, 1957, the 401st transitioned to Super Sabres, receiving a total of 57 F-100D aircraft. Soon after, on September 25, 1957, the group was inactivated and replaced by the 401st Fighter-Bomber Wing, which absorbed the assets of the group. The 615th Fighter-Bomber Squadron reactivated, assigned to the new wing. Though the 401st Fighter-Bomber Wing was constituted on March 23, 1953, part of an Air Force reorganization which replaced combat groups with wings, it remained on the inactive list until September 25, 1957.

About nine months after its initial activation, on July 1, 1958, the 401st Fighter-Bomber Wing became the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing.

The wing became involved in the Vietnam conflict in 1964. Although the unit as a whole remained at England Air Force Base (located near Alexandria, Louisiana, USA) its squadrons rotated to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, from which one squadron operated at all times. Squadrons flew combat missions from such deployed locations as Da Nang and Bien Hoa Air Bases in South Vietnam, as well as air bases in Thailand, and Taiwan.[\(source\)](#)

In relation to the above and the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron specifically, the quote below was written by Colonel Eileen Bjorkman, USAF retired, from the source so cited:

"(T)he 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, deployed to Clark Air Base in the Philippines in early June 1964. A few days after they arrived, a Navy jet was shot down over Laos, and the US sent the 615th to Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam to retaliate. Although the ferry trip to Da Nang was uneventful, the combat mission into Laos was a disaster. One flight of F-100s bombed the wrong target and the other flight ran low on fuel and diverted to Udorn Air Base in Thailand.[\(source\)](#)

The Navy jet shot down over Laos mentioned in the above quote by Colonel Bjorkman was a RF8A Crusader photo-reconnaissance plane flown by U.S. Naval Officer Charles Frederic Klusmann operating off the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63). During a photo mission over Laos on June 6, 1964 his aircraft was hit by ground fire and Klusmann was forced to eject, inturn being taken prisoner. After spending over 80 days in captivity he escaped from his captors, making it back to friendly forces on August 31, 1964.[\(see\)](#)



In an email to me, referring to the mission by the 615th alluded to above by Colonel Bjorkman, Kim Troboy offers the following:

"My Dad, Maj. Gaylon O. Smith, USAF ret., was in the 615th and was the duty officer preparing for that mission all night before. He received communiques from D.C. to change out ordnance several times. He mentioned that one of the pilots had

managed to acquire a long red aviator scarf to wrap around his neck for the mission (He was a fan of Snoopy and the Red Baron. Their official scarf was black and white checkered). Dad flew on later missions out of Da Nang that summer, too, and earned an Air Medal. He also earned a DFC flying with the 12th out of Cam Rahn the next summer."

Then, in the same email, Troboy writes, in reference to Colonel Bjorkman's account, garnered it would seem from Major Smith's personal observations, the following is offered:

"(It) is a slightly inaccurate account of the first mission, the planes which were low on fuel jettisoned empty fuel tanks to lighten the load and made it back to Da Nang."

Footnote [2]

INDIGENOUS FOODS

People ask, what is the point of eating indigenous foods? Is it because of traveling light that carrying food would contribute to an excess weight? That possibly enters into it, but it is only a small factor. I really can't get into it too much, but what people don't realize is the seriousness of it all operating under such conditions we are talking about here. Depending on the situation, any little infraction and you could be discovered. People searching for clues to the existence of a person or a small group of people that may have intruded into an area they otherwise would not be authorized to be in, something as small as human excretion can be a dead give away --- no pun intended.

A full scale discussion around the subject of excretion is seldom brought up because most people that participate in operations don't stay on the ground for any length of time. For most there is usually a quick insertion and a quick extraction. However, for those that do stay any length of time, there is a big difference in the excretion products left behind between one who has consumed western food for their nutrition, say from a military mess hall, MREs, or Snicker bars, and adversaries who may live in a shared remote area far removed from the availability of western foods. To the right people, hunters of others for example, such a difference is noticeable. Eating indigenous foods is another way to contribute toward covering one's tracks.

As to a more indepth look into the construction and use of spark-gap transmitters and QRP transmitters, along with foxhole radios and crystal set receivers as mentioned in the above quote and any potential application for clandestine purposes under extreme and primitive conditions, please see:

[SPARK-GAP AND QRP TRANSMITTERS](#)

[FOXHOLE RADIOS AND CRYSTAL SET RECEIVERS](#)

[WESTERN UNION STANDARD RADIO TELEGRAPH SIGNAL SET](#)

[DRIED TURDS, DRIED DUNG, AND SHIT IN BUDDHISM AND ZEN](#)

Footnote [3]

The title of this page/article is 'Sheep Dipped.' By having read this far you probably no doubt have figured out it deals with sheep-dipping, that is, what it is, it's meaning and use, most especially so the need for it --- or not --- in Laos during the so-called Secret War during the 1960s into the 1970s. While it is true the article was written by me (i.e., the Wanderling), it was done so to offer a clarification and explanation as to what sheep-dipping IS. Although the page as a whole could be extrapolated back to me, it is not about me specifically. However, you would never know it by some of the email I receive.

Always making it personal it seems, every now and then or more, someone comes out of the woodwork harping on the fact --- although failing to mention that it was primarily due to an association through my [Stepmother](#) --- that I was friends with the big time mob heavyweight [Johnny Roselli](#) and thus then could not have been eligible for a security clearance. No clearance, no Laos, no sheep-dipping. From there, so the reasoning goes, how would I know anything about it, especially first hand. Then they usually go on to say they were in Laos in the military and they weren't sheep-dipped, blah blah, this and blah blah that --- insinuating I guess, if I say I was in Laos and sheep-dipped and they weren't, then it

isn't so. So too, IF they are not speaking of themselves specifically or some mysteriously unnamed friend, then they forward something similar to the following, like the one below found in several places in several forms on the net, with this specific one attributed to Thomas E. Lee, Colonel USAF (Retired), Savannakhet, Laos, 1968-1969:

"(M)ost of the U.S. military personnel operating in Laos were NOT 'sheep-dipped.' We were in the 'Black' in that we were technically not there, we were assigned to out of country units and our in-country existence was generally classified for part of the 1964-1973 period. (The existence of these operations was revealed during Congressional Hearings in late 1969 or 1970).

"The Raven Program and the complementary DoD Project 404 both began in 1966. However, there was no mustering out of the service for the Ravens or the Project 404 personnel. To my knowledge the only program that was 'sheep dipped' was Project Heavy Green (the Air Force troops supporting Site 85 and the TACAN site support). That accounted for under 100 people. (13 were lost) There were military personnel operating within the Air America and CIA (CAS) operations that may have operated under different rules.

"Critically speaking the U.S. devised the sheep dipping process. It was used across the U.S. intelligence community. The non-communist forces had virtually nothing to do with that process. They did play a role in accepting the U.S. military members in 'civilian' status by accepting our presence and not 'spilling the beans.' We were not deceiving the opposition because they knew we were military. Our deception was aimed at the World scene and the US population regarding our activities in contravention of the 1962 Geneva Accords.

"This was a very unique period and very misunderstood period in our military history due to its classified nature. Fortunately, we are able to tell our story now. Those of us that served in Laos are trying to correct this mis-information and myth that has grown up around these activities so they are better understood in their real context."

However, the author of the previously cited THE SECRET TEAM, again Chapter 7, seems to disagree with the good Colonel, re the following:

"(T)he Army readied several hundred sheep-dipped officers and enlisted men for duty in Laos. They were hired by a private company created by the CIA, and they were called 'White Star' teams. The total number of men involved was kept a secret from all parties, and the teams were infiltrated and entered the country at the airport in Vientiane. Others came in overland by other points of entry. Some came in on clandestine cargo flights."

Martin S. Best, of Pattaya, Thailand, whose works on Air America, Laos, and the Secret War permeate the web, albeit on a low key level, has been working as an Aviation Historian since 1999. At the Annual General Meeting of Air-Britain, the International Association of Aviation Historians, in October 2003, he was awarded the Charles W. Cain Air Writer's Trophy for the most outstanding article published in the Association's Digest during 2002. His article on the CIA's Airlines in Laos was an excellent example of good quality research and effective writing. The following is from Best's article THE CIA'S AIRLINES: Logistic Air Support of the War in Laos 1954 to 1975:

"The US airlines were generally only required to provide communications and logistical support. US military personnel usually worked as military advisors but one exception was the provision of Forward Air Controllers (FACs), who flew Cessna O-1 Bird Dog, O-2 Super Skymaster and U-17 spotter planes to mark enemy targets for attack by Royal Lao Air Force (RLAF) T-28 or USAF fighter-bombers based in Thailand or South Vietnam. These FAC pilots were known as 'Ravens' after their radio call sign. Most of the Ravens worked out of Long Tieng, but a few were also stationed in Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Savannakhet, and Pakse. US military personnel transferred to Laos were 'sheep dipped' out of the services and employed as civilians assigned to USAID Laos."[\(source\)](#)

I can't speak for everybody or how things unfolded later on as the war continued to drag on. However, if the necessity for sheep-dipping waned or ceased to exist, there may have been a breakdown or lowering of standards by those tasked to be putting it into place. So too, maybe the cover became so transparent that it wasn't worth putting on a false front anymore.

I can, however attest to the very early days, and in those early days if you were military to start with you were soon a civilian. Once you were out of Laos on a permanent basis, or what you were doing was no longer tentacled back to Laos in some fashion, you were back in the military. The keyword in the retired Air Force Colonel's statement a few paragraphs back is "most" as in "Most of the U.S. military personnel operating in Laos were NOT 'sheep-dipped.'" Most he says, but not ALL.

For those who may be so interested in having a much more thorough exploration into the Roselli-clearance connection and

how it relates back to me, sheep-dipping, Laos, et al, please see the "HOW I GOT THERE (Part I)" segment of Footnote [7] and "HOW I GOT THERE (Part II)" in Footnote [8] as found in The Code Maker, The Zen Maker.

PROJECT CHECO

(PDF: SEE CHAPTER II THE BUTTERFLY FAC, PAGE 15)

AFTER CLICKING THE ABOVE, PLEASE CLICK 'OPEN' ON THE WINDOW THAT COMES UP BELOW

Footnote [4]

"An ill-defined group of US Air Force and Army personnel who happened to be on the ground in the vicinity of air strikes, had radio contact with strike aircraft, and were able to give some information concerning target location."

Colonel Theodore Leonard, USA, Commander of US Special Forces in Vietnam during the period, speaking to the advent of early U.S. covert operations in Laos, provided the following comments as it appears in the once classified above secret, but now unclassified, MACVSOG DOCUMENTATION STUDY Appendix D, Cross-Border Operations in Laos:

"We were told that we would launch indigenous teams only. Although we could train the reconnaissance teams we would not be allowed to accompany them in. I told Mr. McNamara I didn't feel that we could assure any tangible results unless our own people participated. He said, 'I agree With you; however, Mr. Rusk does not at this time feel that we should risk the exposure of American forces in an area that they're not supposed to be in.' I was told by Mr. McNamara that we could not discuss this with the Joint General Staff of ARVN until we got a final clearance from Washington after his return there, then we should be prepared to go within 30 days of his green light. His message to MACV was about three days later. We were told then to get with ARVN and be prepared to go within 30 days. I don't have the exact figure for the dates but it was about mid-May at the time we finally were told that we had the approval." [\(source\)](#)

What Colonel Leonard is saying is that initially he was told, at least with a wink, that going into Laos could only be done with teams made up of indigenous personnel (i.e., no American forces), primarily because of Secretary of State Dean Rusk indicating that at the time 'we should not risk the exposure.' Three days later Leonard was told to "get with the ARVN" and be prepared to go in 30 days, his concerns that 'we could not assure any tangible results unless our own people participated' ameliorated, with approval to do so (i.e., use Americans, just not American forces) granted Leonard says, about mid-May 1964. It should be noted the ill-defined group that happened to be on the ground was not, and I say again, not part of or associated with the WATERPUMP detachment on the ground from Udorn. The ill-defined group were there for other reasons, other more top secret reasons.

In confirmation of the above, The Pentagon Papers, originally a secret study prepared by the Department of Defense intended for internal use only was discovered (some say stolen) and released without authorization to the public in 1971, revealed that U.S. military efforts in Southeast Asia, besides just in the Vietnam conflict, had bombed Cambodia and Laos, participated in ground incursions into both of those countries using U.S. personnel, and initiated coastal raids on North Vietnam, none of which were ever reported publically. The following, relative to Laos is found in Volume V of the Pentagon Papers, pages 269-270 as so sourced:

"Though no plans for large-scale crossborder operations were actually implemented in the summer of 1964, small-scale operations continued in the South and a major operation was mounted in the North.

"The operation in northern Laos, code-named Operation Triangle (also called Operation Three Arrows or Samsone) proved more successful. The operation, mounted during July of 1964, was aimed at clearing the Vientiane-Luang Prabang road. A number of U.S. Army personnel were brought into Laos to help coordinate the operation." [\(source\)](#)

A number of U.S. Army personnel were brought into Laos to help coordinate the operation, some of which as described in the opening quote at the top of this footnote, being an ill-defined group who happened to be on the ground in the vicinity of air strikes, had radio contact with strike aircraft. An ill-defined group that just happened to be on the ground.

It is not quite clear what is meant by no large-scale and small-scale crossborder operations during the summer of 1964 as mentioned in the previous quote, covert-wise or upper-level military intervention wise.

As to the type of insertions we are talking about here, large or small, happening or not happening --- officially or otherwise

--- participating in them was not always like the coming up of roses, but more often so, closer to pushing up daisies. It was downright dangerous. I scathed through almost invisible-like (one of my finer qualities). Others were not so lucky. An example would be an insertion put into motion almost at the exact same time at the exact same place as my situation, albeit much larger in extent and more official in execution and nature, given the codename Leaping Lena and done, rather there was any crossborder interventions or not, during the summer of 1964:

"Between 24 June and 1 July 1964, five teams, laden with combat equipment, and wearing smoke jumper gear, parachuted into the jungle of Laos along Route 9 east of Tchepone. Each team was composed of eight Vietnamese Special Forces, and each team would operate as a separate entity.

"Two teams were inserted north of Highway 9 astride Route 92; and three south in the direction of Muong Nong. This area was selected primarily because of the jungle canopy, which had to be horizontal to make a good tree jump, and insure hang up in the trees for maximum survivability. However, the insertion was less than good. One man was killed repelling from the jungle canopy, and several others were injured.

"Despite specific warnings against going into villages, most of the agents went into the villages in search of food, and were captured or killed. Only five survivors were able to evade capture, and exfiltrate the area.

"The five who did get out reported encountering company size elements of VC, and every bridge on Route 9 guarded by soldiers, which appeared to be Pathet Lao."[\(source\)](#)

Of the 40 men that were inserted --- laden with combat equipment, and wearing smoke jumper gear (so much for being taught to travel light and leave no tracks) --- only five escaped capture or being killed, and even then, those five were fortunate. In any case, not a very high return rate.

Footnote [5]

One of the most notorious operatives of the whole Secret War in Laos was a man by the name of Anthony Poshepny, also know as Tony Poe. He was there from the very beginning of Long Tieng circa 1961, training Hmong troops and going into the field with them. As the years went by, being there for such a long time and deeply immersed in the culture, even marrying a Hmong 'princess' and having children, he almost forgot who he was. The following is from the link below the paragraphs and recollects a time only a few years into Tony Poe's deployment in Laos:

"Almost the very second Poe and I made eye contact we recognized each other, Poe asking, 'What the hell are you doing here?', with my response at nearly the exact same instant being, 'I thought you were in Tibet.'

"The last I saw Poe was in 1959 or 1960. He was in Colorado at an old onetime World War II U.S. Army facility called Camp Hale, training covertly off the books, a bunch of Tibetans to fight the Chinese.[\(see\)](#) At the time I was a real civilian yet to be drafted, working instead for a small offshoot of a major aerospace company involved with the then super-secret U-2 project. The person I worked for directly, called Harry the Man, was the top high altitude breathing equipment person in the world.

"Apparently in October of 1959 it was confirmed that China, with Soviet assistance, had established a nuclear test base at Lop Nor with all intentions of testing a nuclear device. U-2 flights over China were becoming extremely dangerous, so powers that be thought if they could put a monitoring station on top of some Himalayan mountain with a clear shot towards Lop Nor they could gather all the information they needed. Before a decision was made as to what mountain would be selected, it was a given it would be at a very high altitude. The same powers wanted to ensure that already existent equipment necessary to accomplish the mission could be modified, if need be, to operate in the rarified atmosphere OR if equipment could be designed to allow it to do so without modification. Enter Harry the Man. We were both at [Area 51 at Groom Lake](#) when the call came through for Harry to meet with some people at Camp Hale. I went along and while there met Tony Poe."

Not long after meeting Tony Poe, who as mentioned, would become notorious in legend and lore of the Secret War in Laos, I also met of all things under the same circumstances, an actual real-life Peace Corps Volunteer who in his own right, unknown to him or any of us at the time, would become more than just a footnote in the war.

It was the first time I ever met a Peace Corps Volunteer, active or otherwise --- which wasn't unusual considering the Peace Corps had only been founded the year before I was drafted. So said, he had to be one of the very first volunteers,

and I have to admit there was something that impressed me about him. We were about the same age. He had already gone off to college, graduated, and joined the Peace Corps, an organization I had barely heard of, doing great humanitarian things by teaching barely educated indigenous folk, and here I was standing there with my face hanging out and hadn't done shit with my life.

The volunteer's name was Don Sjostrom, from Washington state and like me, pushing age-wise toward his mid-20's. He taught English somewhere in the center hinterlands of Thailand at a place called Yasothon. He was going to finish his Peace Corps tour of duty soon and was being recruited by USAID. They had brought him up to Laos to show him around a little to see if he might be interested when we crossed paths. Even though Sjostrom had been living under corrugated tin-roof Southeast Asia conditions in Thailand for many months, I'm sure even then the early wild west Terry and the Pirates-like atmosphere of Long Tieng was something of a shock.

On January 6, 1967 after leaving the Peace Corps and joining up with USAID Don Sjostrom, a civilian with no military training, in the midst of an attack, while trying to secure a machine gun nest defending Site 36 at Na Khang, he was shot dead, taking one round right between the eyes.

OPERATION HAT

THE CIA IN TIBET AND THE HIMALAYAS

MEETING WARLORDS, ET AL

DOING HARD TIME IN A ZEN MONASTERY



PEACE CORPS ZEN