

The Ravens Pilots Of The Secret War Of Laos

Back FireThe Key to FailureWar in Shangri-LaCodename MuleBattle for Skyline RidgeShadow WarSecret WarSecret War in LaosThe RavensThe War in Laos 1960–75The Universe UnravelingShooting at the MoonHarvesting Pa Chay's WheatNixon's "intensified Special War" in LaosA Great Place to Have a WarPost-war LaosLaos, Caught In The WebConflict in Indo-ChinaThe RavensAt War in the Shadow of Vietnam Roger Warner Norman B. Hannah Mervyn Brown James E. Parker James E. Parker Kenneth J. Conboy Billy G. Webb Steven Schofield Christopher Robbins Kenneth Conboy Seth S. Jacobs Roger Warner Keith Quincy Neo Lao Haksat. Comité central Joshua Kurlantzick Vatthana Pholsena Judy Rantala Marvin E. Gettleman Christopher Robbins Timothy Neil Castle

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from 1960 to 1973 the united states and the communist powers waged a hidden war in laos which led ultimately to the catastrophe of the vietnam war warner's groundbreaking book offers the first full account of this secret war based on his access to previously closed files and to interviews with intelligence players military officers and government officials who have not spoken out before

sandwiched between us supported thailand and communist north vietnam the tranquil buddhist kingdom of laos the original shangri la became the center of a major cold war crisis in the early sixties when mervyn brown served there as deputy to the british ambassador he has written a fascinating and highly readable account of his often hazardous experiences which included the battle of vientiane passing through his garden and a grueling month as prisoner of left wing pathet lao guerrillas in remote mountainous jungle inhabited by stone age aboriginal people his story is set against a detailed account of the developing

political and military crisis it reveals the tensions that developed in the us between the newly elected president kennedy his secretary of state dean rusk and their advisors in the state department the cia and the pentagon while a regional policy was formulated in the face of the perceived communist threat

at the same time the vietnam war was being broadcast into the living rooms of americans across the country the cia was conducting a large scale secret war in northeastern laos that few heard about agency case officer jim parker s five years of combat and immersion in southeast asian culture had a lasting influence on him and his family his dramatic provocative reminiscence of those years is the first account by a participant to portray america s involvement in laos and the people who served there

the first complete account of the secret battle of skyline ridge 1972 when a ragtag laos thai army supported by the cia threw back a vast nva army

comprehensive account of the war in laos and the cia s involvement in that war

if war really is an extension of politics by other means as carl von clausewitz declared back in 1827 then few wars have served as better examples than the secret war in laos from 1961 1975 a clandestine conflict fought in parallel with the vietnam war the laotian secret war ostensibly set the united states thailand and various laotian factions against ho chi minh s north vietnamese army nva in practice the conflict was as much a civil war as an invasion and ultimately it devolved into a slow motion act of suicide on the part of the lao nation itself the u s military and its laotian hmong allies led by the resourceful general vang pao made a disciplined effort to prosecute the war though from beginning to end that effort was steeped in self serving politics and hamstrung by factional infighting irrational decision making and self imposed constraints that ultimately hurt more than they helped micromanagement by officers and clueless politicians far from the front was bad enough far worse was the corruption of the head butting lao factions who seemed unable to see beyond their own immediate needs and certainly had no vision for a strong united laos the so called rightists leftists and neutralist factions simply could not wrap their heads around the concept that their only hope of survival lay in coming together against the relentless well equipped nva in fact one faction the pathet lao repeatedly allied with the nva against their own countrymen but the americans and vang pao s hmong those who repeatedly found themselves on the sharp end of the spear in the face of waffling lack of discipline and occasionally sheer cowardice on the part of their allies refused to give up until finally their political leadership turned their backs on them this is the story of those brave men and the civilians who helped them fight an increasingly painful and mismanaged war

it was a war in which the political leaders involved proved conclusively that they had learned nothing from history or simply didn't care through ineptitude and back room politicking the leadership of both Laos and the United States eventually gave Laos to the communists who proceeded to crush the Lao people into the dust in the name of a morally bankrupt ideology that they themselves neither practiced nor truly believed in. Billy G. Webb lays out their story with both great precision and compassion in this lively well researched book outlining the events that led us into the morass of the secret war and then detailing each bloody campaign of each bloody year in addition to following the key characters on the U.S./Laotian side especially the charismatic Vang Pao. He peppers the story with tales of courageous individuals who fell victim to the NVA and the Pathet Lao and occasionally the stupidity incompetence and gutlessness of people they trusted some survived to fight again but many of these men military and otherwise paid the ultimate sacrifice in their fight to keep Laos free. Webb takes special care to showcase two organizations the brave forward air controllers who called themselves the Ravens and Air America a civilian company run by the CIA that supported the military effort and aided the Lao populace whenever they were called upon. Few people have ever heard of the Ravens those USAF and Army airmen who risked life and limb in tiny Cessna aircraft to locate targets for bombers and fighters to strike. Air America is more famous due to the 1990 movie of the same name a film that unfairly maligned Air America as a parcel service for Laotian powerbrokers moving drugs and gold out of the country. Webb sets the record emphatically straight that's not to say that such things weren't happening in Laos they were. In hindsight it's easy to condemn the CIA and the U.S. military leadership for allowing the corruption to spread but as Nietzsche has pointed out when you look long in

the tale of a young green beret medic Vietnam combat veteran with the top secret studies and observations group SOG who was recruited by the US Agency for International Development USAID. Schofield worked 51/2 years providing medical support for the Hmong and other hill tribes who fought the CIA's secret war in northern Laos and was among the last Americans to leave SE Asia in May 1975. It was a surreal time and place that would be impossible to even imagine today. Schofield's book reflects a genuine love for the Hmong and their culture as well as a vast knowledge of their efforts during our secret war in Laos in the 1960s and 1970s. Read and learn some actual facts not overblown rhetoric from another barstool hero. Stephen R. Leopold is Colonel USAF Ret. Schofield's book will be a welcome informative addition to recent books released on the early days of green beret history in Southeast Asia. De Oppresso Liber. John Stryker Meyer is author of SOG chronicles across the fence and on the ground.

describes the secret aerial missions flown by American pilots over Laos during the

vietnam war

as world war ii drew to a close the imperial japanese military seized control of laos a french protectorate and encouraged nationalist movements to forestall the revival of french power in the region despite these efforts the french re entered indochina and methodically retook the protectorate by 1957 the government of laos and the core of the communist laotian forces known as the pathet lao entered an uneasy truce which plunged the country into 15 years of war this illustrated volume explores the resulting war providing a summary of events and profiling the laotian government forces the government allied forces and the communist forces

during the eisenhower and kennedy administrations laos was positioned to become a major front in the cold war yet american policymakers ultimately chose to resist communism in neighboring south vietnam instead two generations of historians have explained this decision by citing logistical considerations laos s landlocked mountainous terrain they hold made the kingdom an unpropitious place to fight while south vietnam possessing a long coastline navigable rivers and all weather roads better accommodated america s military forces the universe unraveling is a provocative reinterpretation of u s laos relations in the years leading up to the vietnam war seth jacobs argues that laos boasted several advantages over south vietnam as a battlefield notably its thousand mile border with thailand whose leader was willing to allow washington to use his nation as a base from which to attack the communist pathet lao more significant in determining u s policy in southeast asia than strategic appraisals of the laotian landscape were cultural perceptions of the lao people jacobs contends that u s policy toward laos under eisenhower and kennedy cannot be understood apart from the traits americans ascribed to their lao allies drawing on diplomatic correspondence and the work of iconic figures like celebrity saint tom dooley jacobs finds that the characteristics american statesmen and the american media attributed to the lao laziness immaturity and cowardice differed from the traits assigned the south vietnamese making lao chances of withstanding communist aggression appear dubious the universe unraveling combines diplomatic cultural and military history to provide a new perspective on how prejudice can shape policy decisions and even the course of history

in shooting at the moon roger warner chronicles a covert operation that used hmong villagers as guerrilla fighters against the north during the vietnamese war thought to be an expendable resource by central intelligence agency strategists the hmong died by the thousands fighting the north vietnamese those who survived were abandoned to their fate when the united states pulled

out of the war warner's history is the moving and tragic story of how america's secret war devastated its own allies in southeast asia

keith quincy's landmark work shows us the how and why of this terrible outcome lest we forget that when the fighting stops the devastations of war go on book jacket

1960 president eisenhower was focused on laos a tiny southeast asian nation washington feared the country would fall to communism triggering a domino effect in the rest of southeast asia in january 1961 eisenhower approved the cia's operation momentum a plan to create a proxy army of ethnic hmong to fight communist forces in laos kurlantzick shows how the brutal war lasted nearly two decades killed one tenth of laos's total population and changed the nature of the cia forever

three decades after the conclusion of the civil war that brought the communist pathet lao to power the leaders of the lao people's democratic republic are still searching for a compelling and unifying national identity as detailed in postwar laos a rigorously researched cogently argued and pathbreaking book laotian nationalism is caught between the rhetoric of preservation and the desire for modernity using fine grained analysis of substantial ethnographic and archival material vatthana pholsena sheds light on the politics of identity the geographies of memory and the power of historical narrative in contemporary laos pholsena pays particular attention to the country's ethnic minorities who had been marginalized politically administratively and symbolically by the french colonial government which ruled for fifty years and by its royal lao successor many members of these minorities fought for the lao people's liberation army in the country's civil war 1960 1975 though and were thus exposed to the processes of modern politics the first book to examine the impact of such forces on laos's ethnic minorities and their perception of laotian nationalism postwar laos also refines established theories of nationalism pholsena addresses a weakness common to all the tendency to deny agency to individuals who may in fact interpret their relationship to and place within the nation in a variety of ways that change according to time and circumstance postwar laos offers a new perspective on the history of southeast asia and more broadly on the formation of national identity that will be welcomed by historians political scientists sociologists ethnographers and cultural anthropologists alike

the small nation of laos wedged between thailand and vietnam is little known to most westerners when the author and her husband a usaid worker moved to laos in 1971 it was a quiet country falling increasingly under the effects of a heavy but unacknowledged u.s. military presence as part of a failing effort in vietnam

befriended by two young laotians the author became a part of village life joining holiday celebrations weddings funerals and feasts over a four year period she developed a deep admiration and affection for the lao people the humor and pathos of these chaotic years before the communist take over of the government in 1975 are chronicled by following one lao family from communist controlled re education camps to their eventual resettlement in the united states being born in laos but raised in america from the tender age of 4 i have not had an opportunity to truly appreciate my own country judy s book opened my eyes heart and mind to the beautiful people and culture of that life and world thanks judy lala rivera former refugee fascinating for its portrayal of an unfamiliar increasingly dangerous world laos 1971 75 this memoir floods readers with admiration and sympathy for lao culture suzanne kosanke university of hawaii at manoa as interest revives in the era of what americans call the vietnam war there is still little accessible information about that part of the world including vietnam s neighboring country laos this book is a warm human account of one person s experiences in laos mary ann mattoon phd minneapolis

on december 2 1975 the lao monarchy was abolished and replaced by the lao people s democratic republic this marked the end of a controversial u s policy in which the state department the cia the department of defense and the united states agency for international development supplied covert military aid to a nation that was technically neutral at war in the shadow of vietnam is the first book to recount the full story of u s covert activity in laos from 1955 to 1975 based on newly declassified materials as well as interviews with scores of key american and laotian participants it describes in detail the structure and execution of america s secret war and the long term consequences in an effort to defend the lao kingdom and to disrupt the flow of communist arms material and soldiers traversing laos en route to south vietnam the u s created and clandestinely administered a covert military aid plan that fueled a unique and little known conflict castle chronicles the close relationship between the cia and the lao army the role of the cia s proprietary airline air america and the evolution of u s thailand cooperation and the impact of thai support on the lao military assistance program until now the covert war in laos has been documented only in fragmented and speculative fashion by synthesizing an enormous amount of source material much of it gathered in laos castle not only deepens our understanding of american intervention in southeast asia but also provides a masterful reconstruction of a secretive and ultimately tragic episode in united states foreign policy

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Introduction

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