

Vang Moua Chang

Vang Moua Chang was a soldier in Laos. He left in 1979 and was in the Nong Khai and Ban Vinai refugee camps.

Back then, I lived in the land of Xieng Khouang by the town of Nalip, but I lived in my town of Xieng Khouang. My time there in the town of Xieng Khouang or elsewhere, we had war fighting going on. People had come to Laos trying to get land from us and forcing our citizens to do certain things. I was a student in the town of Pushan. Soldiers came into the Hmong land where we couldn't live anymore. The moms and dads took us from one place to another and on and on. Then we came to the country of Moncha. I went to school there. The country, where I couldn't live in anymore, had bombings and fighting in it so, I went to school in Vientiane for a year. Then I went back to my home in the town of Lofen. We couldn't live or eat because of the war there. It was just like when we came out of Xieng Khouang. Soldiers were in Moncha. In time I had left my job as a student to learn the ways of being a soldier. I left to learn with soldiers in Sukan and Moncha. We studied for six months. After being a soldier, we got to go out in Palaway Son Sout, Nampoin. We got to go to our old land in the land of Pusaw, Nalapuhua. Then we couldn't go anymore because soldiers saw us and there were too many people. We didn't have enough soldiers, so that is why we just came back. We went to live in Monjet during that time. Then the government sent us back to fight in Xieng Khouang. We went and lost one time but then we won one time in the battle that was when we couldn't live there any longer. In '63 I started to be a soldier and then in 1974-5 we were kicked out of our villages and homes. We only had a chance to go but we would never go back to our homes. We left our spouses, we left our kids, we left practically everything because we were soldiers. There was no day when we could come back and help our spouses, parents, or children. We couldn't even help our villages that well anymore. There was also no way to come and help our relatives and other people. The soldiers lost in the year of '74 and that was when the government officials had fled the country and it was also when people just fled out of the country and into new places. Half of the people stayed - half of the people stayed in Laos and half of the officials from the captains to the general had left and they took some soldiers with them because I was one of the soldiers that was taken with them. There were about 300 soldiers. Most of them were Hmongs, but some were Laotians. The Laotians I really didn't know, but the Hmong I knew. We went with 300 people but then that was too many so they tried to leave us and then they took us to the city of Kankry on the road going to Nanhey. They said that there were too many people. There wasn't enough room for everyone. The captains and the General went on a truck going to Vinai. There was a group that went to Punongkow and going into Vietnam. There were groups, there were groups 1,2,3. Groups 1 and 2 went first and then the people that didn't want to leave went back and fought again. It was our turn to go to the mountainside just in case there were Vietnamese soldiers or bandits hurting people. There were many people that were forced to leave but then they didn't so they came back to the village. We returned to Ning Hang and then we went onto a helicopter which landed on Long Chieng and we lived there for a month. We went to Zonganapagadoo and then we came back to Long Chieng and people said that they wanted to go back home for a couple of days and then come back and fight. The officials told us that the

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buildings were full so they wanted to send people away. No one wanted to be sent back because their homes were all gone mostly. The captains, I went to live in Simphan for a year, and I was waiting for my parents to come before I did papers to leave Thailand and come to America. When I went to Thailand, it was 1979 on the 5th day of the 3rd month. On March fifth I got to Thailand, and then when I came to America it was 1980. March 5th of 1980 I got to America, which is one year after I got to Thailand. All us parents brought you here to be raised in America and you will become parents. You're here and you are not poor like us when we were in Laos/Thailand. So you must keep on going to school and find good jobs and better lives than your parents and all us old people because then you will have a good life and you will have a good reputation. You should also keep your heart somewhere where it is safe and also be long-tempered with a loving heart. If someone is angry at you, feel free to love them and tell them that you're sorry and that you'll never do it again. All your parents are old and we can't do what you young people can do. We don't know words or English really well, and we can't go to school and have good jobs like you guys do, but we brought you here because we love you and we want you to have a better life than us old people. So in the future you'll become parents because we will die one day. We aren't different clans. We are all Hmong so treat each other with respect. If you think something is no good then put it away or throw it away somewhere so you'll never find it again. That is the safe way. We are Hmong and we could never change our ways. You young people just go on with life and love each other. Us old folks are old and everyday that goes by we get older and older. Even if we old folks are gone still love each other like we loved you. I had only three brothers and now they're all gone. This is Vang Moua Chang and this is all I'm going to say.