

## Nao Por Lor

*Nao Por Lor served for twenty-five years as a soldier. He was involved in maintaining radio communication with air support.*

***What was the hardest part of the war?***

The hardest part was going somewhere to fight. It was really hard when we wanted to take control of a camp and they were already there. It was difficult to take over because there were guards all around the camp.

***Did you see any Americans during the time you were fighting?***

When we were fighting, the Americans were in the airplanes. The Hmong, Laotian, and Americans helped us.

***Did you see any airplanes/jets?***

Yes, we saw some because we had radio contact with the planes. We told each other where the Vietnamese soldiers were and how many were there (an estimate).

***Could you describe what an average day was like back then?***

The average day involved moving all the time. If we didn't kill them, they would come and kill us instead and that would be the end.

***Were you worried about the safety of your family while you were fighting?***

When you go, you forget about your family at home. You don't remember them because if you start thinking about them instead of the war, they will send you back home. You have to worry about fighting the enemy because if you don't, they will kill you before you kill them.

***Was it hard for you that you couldn't kill them?***

Yes, because you have to make a lot of them come so you could kill them. If they kill you first, then they have won instead of you.

***Did you have any relatives that went with you?***

Yes, I did. If you go, you should have two or three friends go with you. Your friends will help you when you are in battle.

***Is there one particular experience that stands out, that you want to tell us?***

We killed a lot of people in one engagement. It was in Bana. That is one small village. We killed 90 people in the three months. Night and day we would kill the soldiers. In the mornings, the enemy soldiers would start fighting until the night. A lot of our people died. There were 100 or 200 people that died.

That village was where the hardest fighting took place. The soldiers would put us in this wired circle and wouldn't let us out at all.

***How many years did you fight?***

I fought for 25 years as a soldier.

***How old were you when you started fighting?***

I was 25 years old when I started.

***Were you sad when you left?***

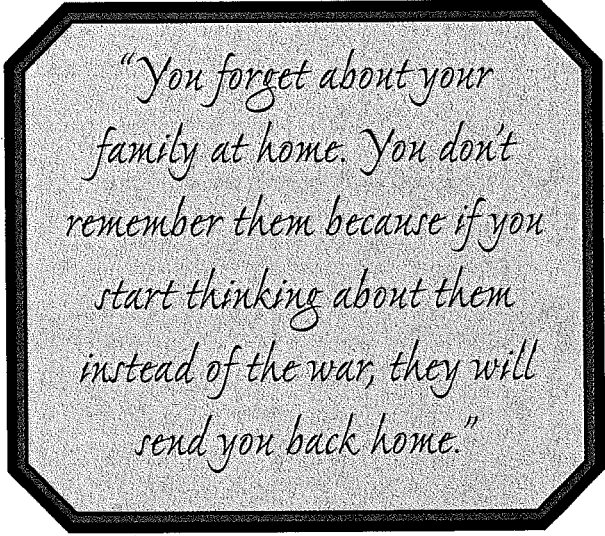
Sad about the airplanes dropping bombs on us. That's the saddest part when we were left in the forest.

***Did you have any family members that were with you in Laos?***

Yes. We had 104 but now there are only 4 of us. All the rest died.

***Where did you live when the United States was leaving the country? How did you feel when General Vang Pao left?***

When we found out that they were leaving, they were already flying out. We called out to them, but they told us that they had pulled out of the war. We didn't even know from the beginning, but later when 75 left, we figured it out. We were all thinking that we would have to live under the communist Vietnamese rule. We thought we were all going to be killed. When we gave them our guns, they told us to stay there, and we stayed there. I knew that if we stayed, they would kill us right there. We were really mad when we heard that the United States left.



*"You forget about your family at home. You don't remember them because if you start thinking about them instead of the war, they will send you back home."*

***Do you feel that most Americans understand the relationship between the Hmong and the Americans?***

When we fought, they didn't know. They knew after we weren't fighting anymore.

***Do you have a message to young people about being Hmong?***

Yes, I do. I want all the kids over here to study hard. Over there, we didn't go to school, but we believed when we were fighting with the Americans that we loved them like we loved ourselves. At night we didn't let them sleep in the forest where it was dangerous. We didn't let them do things that were dangerous to them. Now I want the Hmong kids to love us adults because we brought them over here to get an education. I think that when we're in America, we shouldn't be so out of control. We should stay calm and do things right. I also think that we should love the Americans and the Americans should love us because we all went to war together for a long time. I want the Hmong kids to think of our life back in Laos when we were poor and didn't know how to read and write. I want you to go to school, get a good education, and go to work.

***What was your first impression of America?***

When I came here, I thought they loved us more and we were able to live together. When I arrived I was worried also because I didn't know any English. I didn't know how to drive and I didn't know their

culture and rules over here. But after a couple of years I know the language, how to drive, and the culture and rules of America.

***Is there anything you want them to know about the war?***

I want to tell them that when we were over there, we fought and helped the Americans. I want the Americans to love us because we helped them fight the war. I want them to know about the fighting we did. Some were taught, but some weren't.

***Why did you fight?***

We were just living. Then the Americans came and told us we had to fight in the war because we were free and the others were communist. We wouldn't, but then they said if we didn't, the Communists would come into our country, so we had to fight for our country. We started because the Americans dropped a bomb in South Vietnam first, so they were coming. Then the Americans told us to stop them from coming toward us any further.