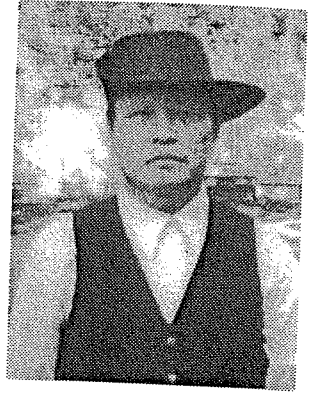


Nhia Blia Xiong

Nhia Blia Xiong is from the Xieng Khouang Province. He was a student in Laos and then became a parachuter for the CIA in 1961. In 1962 he got an office job as a medical and food supply officer. He left Laos in 1978.



I'm Houa Xiong and I'm here interviewing my father. Today is the 19th of February 1998. My father is Nhia Blia Xiong and the interpreter for this interview is Willie Xiong. This interview is based on why the Hmong are in the U.S.

[Couldn't understand] why Hmong came to America is because in Laos the kings don't get along together. There are two groups. In Laos there were two factions -- the pro-communist faction and the pro-Western faction. The pro-communist faction there were several princes like Prince (can't spell name) and some of his followers. On the right hand side Prince (can't spell name) sided with the king, General Vang Pao, and some other key leaders. The pro-Western side...there was some conflict going on in Laos.

By 1960 this country was flipped around by Kong Le to form Vientiane. Prince (can't spell his name) used this time to fight back and reclaim Laos. By now South Vietnam started to fight back and to regain the parts of South Vietnam and Cambodia that had been taken. American troops came to help South Vietnam and Cambodia. Because of this, the North Vietnamese started to fight with the South Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Americans to regain the lands that they had taken.

In the early 1960's, the three princes that sided with the communist princes (can't spell their names) and some others...they took advantage of the conflict in Vietnam. At that time Vietnam was divided into two countries. North Vietnam went to South Vietnam and the United States was also involved in South Vietnam. So in Laos those princes who were on the left hand side and there was a Laotian military leader by the name of Kong Le. He did not favor Laos to choose one side or the other. He seized Laos and neutralized Laos into a neutral country and that neutralization lead to the two factions -- the pro-communist and the pro-Western to seize power and that activity lead to the pro-communist faction inviting the North Vietnamese to come to Laos and to take advantage of going through Laos into South Vietnam.

When Americans saw that North Vietnam was using Laos land to send food, water, and soldiers into South Vietnam and Cambodia to fight they wouldn't have an easy time defending South Vietnam and Cambodia. For this reason, the Americans started to negotiate with the Laotians.

So the North Vietnamese used Laos territory. They used Laos to transport their military supplies to Laos territory into South Vietnam so they can conduct the finding in South Vietnam because like say Laos was spending time in neutralizing the country and they can separate pass to Laos into South Vietnam. This land to the United States to turn...to turn the to the Hmong and to the Laotian government to sign with the United States to attack those supply list and to attack the North Vietnamese troops and...pass...to Laos to South Vietnam -- otherwise have to find it self for Vietnam would be in pass for the United States.

Ever since that time, all of us can see that America (speaking in some other language other than Hmong and English) that's why if we fight with or help the Americans we will win South Vietnam. So all of us became soldiers to help the America and shoot wherever they started shooting. When they needed help, the Americans wanted us to help.

The Hmong and the Laotian learned that the United States had won World War I and also World War II and so we believed that siding with the United States will lead us to win the Vietnam War so we sided with the United States.

Everyone helped America when the CIA came. They helped us Hmong to become soldiers for the Americans and they named us SGU which stands for Special Gorilla Unit. They name us this to

become soldiers to them. Knife, gun, money, food, and clothes were provided and to support for us to be their soldiers for that time.

The United States send a military (can't hear well). The CIA came to Laos and required the Hmong and Laotian to join the United States to fight the war. The military supplied uniforms, clothes, food, fine -natural work?? for (don't understand) the United States just so the Hmong and Laotian will fight with the United States.

That's why they gave the name to the soldiers SGU which stands for Special Gorilla Unit.

At this time, all of us at the ages 13 up to 60 were all soldiers involved in the CIA. But later it didn't go as the Hmong dreamed to win the war as they believed the Americans that the Hmong would win the war.

Boys between the ages of 13 and men under the age of 60 have to join the military services -- no exception, but the end turned out that the dream the Hmong had was not achieved and the Hmong or the United States did not win the war.

Between 1972-73, America lost the war between Vietnam. Then America began to take out (couldn't understand) then all of us lost the war the same as the Americans did too.

In late 1970's...1972-73, the United States withdraw troops out of South Vietnam back to the United States and also their assistants into Laos. The Hmong did not get help from the United States and also result the Hmong lost the war with the communist.

Then the Hmong (couldn't understand) from then on until 1975 and by then they got to hold the world. Then the Hmong who lived in Laos moved out into Thailand.

The Hmong continued to fight from 1972-73 after the United States withdrew from South Vietnam until 1975 when Laos fell into the hands of communist and also Cambodia. Then the Hmong escaped from Laos into Thailand and in Thailand there was food in the refugee camp set up by the United Nation...had commission of full refugee and the Hmong refugee camps.

Then when the United Nations came to buy some land for the Hmong to live by the Thai's land...by one to two years the strong people such as American, France, Canada, Australia, and China they saw that the Hmong are living here. The Hmong won't have any places to go. They are like fishes in a pond and if the water dries up the fish in the pond has to die so that's why they all came and to help take the Hmong out during the times of 1976.

So the United Nations had commission for refugees to purchase land from the plan government and built camps, houses for the refugees to live in, but once the camps had been feed up ?? other leaders, other Western countries...those leaders like those countries like the United States, France, Canada, China, Australia -- they knew that the Hmong would be without life if they would not allow them to come to the third world countries and if they were to be left in the camps it would just be like fish in the pond and when the pond dries up and those fish would be dead and the Hmong were rescued by Western countries so that they would have a better life and have the future.

The Americans were the first to come and take all of us out, that's why all the Hmong and Laotians came to the United States. Then France came too, but they didn't get too many people. Australian's came too, but they got less people than France did. China came last and they only got 80 to 90 to 200 people to their land so they've got less people.

The majority of the Hmong came to the United States...ask the United States....had decided to accept the Hmong to come to this country and the United States was the first country to come to the camp to interview refugees and to allow refugees to resettle in the United States then came the French...also did the same thing -- interview the Hmong refugees and accept many of them into their country, and then came the Australian's...also accepting a lot of refugees into Australia and then the Chinese came last and they interviewed and accepted about 80 families into China. Canada also accepted many families into Canada.

The ones that came to the United States...all of us are the ones that don't know how to write or speak

in English but we just came cause we had no place to live and the Americans accepted us to the United States. When we came here the new world was very new and beautiful to us. It is hard for us as living. We have many friends. We live in the United States and it is a whole new place. We don't know how to speak in their language and don't know how to read and that makes life hard -- not like we lived in our world.

Life in the United States is totally opposite of life in Laos. Here everything's not as nice and we don't have excuse?? to live in this modern society, we have education, we don't speak the language, we don't have the skills to make a living in this country and life in Laos is more simple and we have a lot of (couldn't understand) and depression and pressure and just makes life very difficult for middle age and older people who could not learn, who could not speak the language, who could not find job.

But aside that, we have happiness that we got to this country; we don't have any more wars and we got out of the fighting and death, we are happy...that's all, but otherwise everything is still painful.

Everything else we still have problems and we still have concern but only one thing we just concern about that is there is no fighting in this country and we are being spared from the war and we don't have to fight. There is no fighting. Everyone will be safe because there is no fighting like in Laos.