

CAAVWV
Coalition of Allied Afghan & Vietnam War Veterans
PO Box 40141, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104



February 25, 2025

The Honorable Chairman
Senator Aric Putnam
3215 Senate Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Ranking Member
Senator Bruce Anderson
2209 Senate Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Members of the Senate Veterans Committee,

I am writing to highlight serious problems with Senate File 568 recently introduced in the Minnesota State Senate regarding the redefinition of a Veteran. In 2018 I forwarded remedies to Sen. Amy Klobuchar regarding serious issues in the Federal Hmong Burial Bill language which was included and passed in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018* on March 23, 2018.

The flawed provisions of the Act were remedied by adopting most of CAVWV's recommendations in 2024, seven years later. The research and remedies to that law can be found at <https://www.cavwv.org/hmong-burial-controversy.html>.

The current redefinition of a veteran as defined in MN SF568 I believe will prove to be very problematic for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs as it uses *the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-207, * U.S.C. 1423)* as the foundation of SF 568's Language.

The Problem is that the current law only recognizes those Lao veterans who were naturalized under the 2000 Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act. This excludes those veterans who became United States citizens before the year 2000 through other legal channels.

Additionally, few Minnesotans realize that although Hmong veterans made significant contributions to the conflict in Southeast Asia, they were not the only ethnic group fighting in these special units. Ethnic Lowland Lao and Lao Theung tribesmen actually comprised approximately 65% of all SGU-Special Guerrilla Unit forces in Laos. Minnesota is now home to many of these allies who risked their lives supporting American military operations.

Finally, the redefinition of a veteran as described in SF 568 will be applied to the Lao/Hmong veterans exclusively. This omits all other allied veterans in Minnesota who fought during the conflict in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam and who did clandestine missions directed by the CIA and the U.S. Military. Many continue to honor their pledge of secrecy to the United States whereas others have not. This may be why their contribution is not well known and celebrated today.

Recommended Improvements:

- Expand eligibility to include ALL naturalized veterans of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnamese irregular forces, regardless of when or how they became citizens.
- Require that determinations about service be made by qualified individuals who understand the complex history of this secret conflict.

Specifically, Minnesota should:

- Appoint a former U.S. government employee with direct experience in Laos and the Vietnam War as a special advisor to the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs.

This advisor should:

- Review all service determinations
- Verify claimed service using available records
- Work with an advisory committee that includes at least one ethnic Lowland Lao or Lao Theung, ethnic Hmong veteran and other allies who fought secretly in Southeast Asia.

These changes would ensure Minnesota properly recognizes ALL our Lao allies who served honorably - not just those who became citizens through a specific law or belong to a particular ethnic group.

Minnesota has long valued military service and sacrifice. Let's make sure its laws reflect the true diversity of those who fought alongside Americans in one of history's most complex conflicts.

Sincerely,

Thomas Leo Briggs

CIA Operations Officer GS-15 (Ret)

Special Operations Officer Laos 1970-1972

President, Coalition Asian Veterans of the Vietnam War (cavvw.org)

Author, Cash on Delivery: CIA Special Operations During the Secret War in Laos



THE UNITED ROYAL LAO ARMED FORCES
& SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNITS VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

ອົງກອນສມັກຄີບັນທຶກເກົ່າກຳລັງທັບແຫ່ງຊາດລາວ
ແລະກຳລັງທັບວຍຣົບພິເສດໃນສມັຍສົງຄາມຫວຽດນາມ

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Chairman
Senator Aric Putman
3215 Senate Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Ranking Member
Senator Bruce Anderson
2209 Senate Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Members of the Senate Veterans Committee

Subject: Regarding Senate File 568

As an introduction, my name is Khao Insixiengmay, born in Savannahket, Laos in 1944. I am a former Special Guerrilla Unit (SGU) Colonel and Commander of SGU Groupe Mobile (GM) 33, a regimental size unit recruited, trained, supported and directed by CIA case officers in Laos. Currently I am a US citizen living in Brooklyn Park, MN.

I received my Military training in Laos, France and in the U.S. In the United States I went through the English Advanced Class to learn U.S. Military terminology at Lackland Airforce Base, TX. At the U.S. Army Armor School, Fort Knox, KY I went through the Special Leadership Course which is like Officer Basic Training. Furthermore, I attended the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Fort Benning, GA which helped me to become a strong unit commander.

Due to my special skills and capacities, I was recruited on March 18, 1968, by SGU Headquarters from the Royal Lap Army to serve with the Special Guerrilla Units, a surrogate of the US Government. I fought in many battles throughout the Kingdom of Laos. I fought two battles in MR2 supporting the beleaguered Hmong under the commander of General Vang Pao to protect the Hmong from being vanished by the communists. The first battle was in 1969. I was wounded, nearly died, and was hospitalized at the U.S. Air Forces Hospital, Udon, Thailand. The second battle in March of 1972 to penetrate the Plain of Jars with the intention to do the (search and destroy operation).

It is my great intention to inform the members of the Senate Veterans Committee about the proposed SF 568 legislation which cites *The Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000*. I want to clarify this act.

Please read Doctor Yang Dao's letter addressed to Senator Orin Hatch Chair U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, dated May 6, 2000.

“Dear Senator Hatch,

I am writing to show my support to the HR 371 related to the naturalization of aliens who served with Special Guerrilla Unit or irregular forces in Laos. I strongly believe that those who fought side by side

with the United of America during the Vietnam War should be rewarded for their sacrifices they had endured for the cause of Freedom and Democracy in Southeast Asia and in the world.

I am a Hmong from Laos. I received my Ph. D. in social science from the Sorbonne University of Paris, France in 1972. From 1972 to 1975, I served the Royal Lao Government successively as a Director of Human Resource Planning Department in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and as a member of the National Political Council of Coalition (Laotian Congress) during the Coalition Government in Laos. Like hundreds of thousands of my countrymen, I came to know the road of exile. After the take over of my country by the communists Pathet Laos in May 1975. I am now a U/S/ citizen living in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. After serving the University of Minnesota, Hamline University and Metropolitan University for more than one decade, I currently work as an assistant Director of the Communication and Public Information in Saint Paul Public School.

I urge you to use your influence to make the H.R. 371 and S 890 become laws which will ease the process of for our Laotian veterans by eliminating the English language which constitutes a major obstacle toward their process of becoming U.S. citizen. (Khao Insixiengmay taught the citizenship class for the Lao community and was a Supreme Court from 1997 to 2012. However, I would like to remind you that in my terminology of "Laotian", I would like to include Hmong, Lao, Khmu, Mien, Lue, Thai-Dam and Iko and other Laotian ethnic groups who have fought with special Guerrilla Units or irregular forces in Laos. Those irregular forces were present in Military Region I, Military Region II, Military Region III and Military Region IV. To determine who is eligible for the process of naturalization, I would propose that an independent commission should be established to verify the identity of these Laotian veterans. This commission should be composed of representatives from the C.I.A. the state department, the immigration and Naturalization Services, and different group of Lao, Hmong, Khmu, Mien, Lue, Thai-Dam and Iko veterans in the United States. Only a single group of Laotian veterans to certify the citizenship statue would jeopardize the process of naturalization by providing corruption, fraud, distortion and injustice Which will contribute to greater division among the veterans of all Laotian ethnic groups.

As a former member of the Laotian National Political Council, I urge you to do whatever in your power to make the process of naturalization the most equitable for all the Laotian veterans who are called to live in good spirits and relationship among themselves and the community at large. I have good connections with all these Laotian ethnic groups in the United States.

*With great respect,
Yang Dao*

I would like to inform you about what I did previously to support Senate File 568 relating to veterans; expanding the definition of the term veteran; establishing an advisory task force; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.447.

Senate File 568 cites the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-207, *U.S.C.1423) as an identifier to those eligible to be redefined.

Here are some very difficult suggestions to congress with and to the US government.

On Monday, February 10, 2014, we: Colonel Khao Insixiengmay, former SGU GM 33 along with Mr. Thomas Leo Briggs, former CIA case officer, Road watch Team 300, James Bruton Ret. U.S. Special Forces, classmate of Colonel Khao Insixiengmay at the Infantry Officer Advanced Course 6/7, Fort Benning, GA and he was assigned to train the Lao soldiers in Laos in 1972, and Captain Vong Bounta, President of Lao Veterans in Washington DC We met Ms. Nancy Dolan, Democratic Staff Director of the Committee on Veterans Affairs in the U.S. We were invited by Congressman Mike Michaud, Ranking Member of U.S. House of Representative Committee of Veterans Affairs.

The main issues of the meeting are:

1. Information about the make up of the irregular forces that fought on side of the US government in Laos during the Vietnam War.
2. The CIA sponsored irregular forces in Laos were made up of “Low Land Lao,” Hmong and Lao Theung soldiers. Lao Theung (Montagnards in French) being a catchall name for members of hill tribes living in Laos who were not Hmong. Thus. The most accurate way to refer to the irregular soldiers would be to call them Lao. It would be more accurate to name such an act a **“Lao Veterans” act.**

If, in the future, any of the House or Senate Staffs or committees would like to hear from other former CIA officers who served in Laos and are familiar activities of Lao veterans in support of the US government policies in Laos, Mr. Thomas Lao Briggs can endeavor to identify former officers who are familiar with the subject from management and operational points of view and attempt to encourage them to assist the Lao veterans efforts.

The Secretary of Defense and the DoD had little to nothing to do with the activities of the CIA in Laos, which part of a covert action program directed by the CIA. It is highly unlikely the CIA has, or even had, any documentation identifying Lao soldiers, nor could have anyone now employed by the CIA who would know any fact or details about the “Secret War in Laos.” The best source, therefore, of the details of the CIA’s covert program would be former CIA officers who participated in the program. If, in fact, former officers were to be called to assist, it would be necessary to coordinate that participation with the CIA. The standard method for CIA officers to coordinate such participation is for them to query the CIA’s Publication Review Board (PRB) for clearance to participate. Since officers sign a lifelong binding secrecy agreement, they are required to coordinate with the CIA’s PRB whenever they might publish or otherwise make public information about their CIA activities so that the CIA can ensure that no classified information is revealed.

On March 23, 2018, Public Law 115-141 (Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2018) amended Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) section 2402 to add a new category of personnel that is eligible for internment in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries, ***why did Congress only recognize one group to give them an honorable burial?*** The Hmong contribution to the Americans cause was invaluable and deserving of such recognition but ignoring all the rest of us whose number in the CIA’s Special Guerrilla Units were substantially greater than the Hmong is unconscionable and unjust.

As a Lao veteran who served as a surrogate U.S. government and fought on the side of the US government in almost all the battles in Laos where the CIA asked me to fight. We the Lao freedom fighters forced the North Vietnamese communists to keep a very large number of their forces in Laos to

defend the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and their logistical bases in Cambodia. This kept the enemy forces from going into South Vietnam in greater number to fight and kill Americans fighting in South Vietnam.

When I submitted the Application for **Pre-need Determination for Burial in a VA National Cemetery**, I received a reply from the Department of Veterans Affairs saying that my request for an eligibility determination was **denied** by the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries Administrator Amme Callahan.

The reasons for denying the case are.

1. My name is not on the official records and archives of members of the Hmong fighters,
2. I was not naturalized pursuant to the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000.

After receiving the response from the Department of Veterans Affairs, I started writing letters to co-sponsors of the Bill such as: Cong. Jim Costa, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of AK, Sen. Amy Klobuchar of MN, Cong. Dean Philips of MN at least 5 letters to each powerful policy maker sent both to DC and to State offices.

There was no answer.

I also sent letter to President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden and finally to the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs Sec. Dennis McDonough in 2023. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs approved Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 et seq.). He signed the document on July 28, 2023, and authorized the undersigned to sign and submit the document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Amend S 38.620 by revising paragraph (j) to read as follows:

(J) any individual who:

(1) Died on or after March 23, 2018.

And

(2) Resided in the United States at the time of their death; and

(3) Either:

(i) Was naturalized pursuant to section 2(1) of the Hmong Veterans' Act of 2000 (Pub. 106-207, 114 Stat. 316: 8.U.S.C. 1423 note):

or

(ii) Served honorably with a special guerrilla unit or irregular forces operating from a base in Laos in support of the Armed Forces at any time between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975; and was, at the time of the individual's death, a citizen of the United States, or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States.

VA will accept the following types of documentation as evidence of service described in paragraphs

(a)(2)(i)(B) and (C) of this section:

(A) Original documentation issued by a government agency officially documenting the service type, location, and dates served.

(B) An affidavit of the superior officer attesting to the type of service, location, and date served.

(C) Two affidavits from other individuals who were also serving with such a special guerrilla unit or irregular forces and who personally knew the person's service: or

(D) Other appropriate evidence that factually documents the service, location, and dates served.

Who fought in Laos?

“ Kha ”

Perhaps you would like to see and hear what Mr. Hugh B. Tovar, CIA's Chief of Station in Vientiane, Laos, had to say about which Lao fought as irregulars under the guidance of the CIA in support of the U.S. President's policies for the Vietnam War.

The Central Intelligence Central for the study of intelligence held a seminar discussing U.S. Intelligence Activity in Laos in 1960s and 1970s, and broadcast on C-SPAN in April 1996. The C-SPAN video may be found here:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?71353-1/us-intelligence-activity-laos>

Please scroll forward in the video to approximately 1:57:23 where Mr. Tovar describes the makeup of the Lao irregulars and identifies irregulars.

“We had irregular forces in MRI, 3 and 4 who were not Hmong, who were Low Land Lao, who were ethnic Kha, who were-you name it-all over the place, the hill tribes you never heard of and Low Land tribes, and the best soldiers in Laos during my time were not Hmong, (I wouldn't say this to Vang Pao,) but I mean they were the Low Land Lao from Savannahket -I think, Jim, you can bear me out on that. They were tough little guys who took their training, and they fought the Vietnamese to certain instances to a standstill-so they didn't all have two left feet-I mean military.”

I was proud leader of Savannahket's GM33.

To learn more about details information can be found on.

<https://www.cavwv.org/hmong-burial-controversy.html>

Please help us and take action to revise S.F. No. 568 to include all Southeast Asian veterans. A prompt adjustment would be appreciated.

Col. Khao Insixiengmay (Ret)



**President of the United Royal Lao Armed Forces & Special Guerrilla Unit
Veterans of the Vietnam War**

Life US SFA member A-3828 of NC, and life member of US SFA Chapter XXXVIII

Former SGU Colonel, Interpreter, Instructor, Operations Assistant to the CIA in MR3

Former SGU Group Mobile 33 Commander

Contact information:

Khao Insixiengmay

5411 Kings Crossing N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443
612-244-5515
khinsixiengmay@gmail.com
Website: unitedroyallaoveterans.org

A more detailed appeal and history of our service can be found at: [http://www.cavv.org/
lao-veterans-appeal.html](http://www.cavv.org/lao-veterans-appeal.html)