

**Merry-Go-Round****With the CIA Agents  
In Southeast Asia****Jack Anderson**

THE POPULAR impression of CIA men in Southeast Asia is of lean-faced James Bonds talking in whispers to Indo-Chinese beauties in dingy bars or of bearded guerrilla experts directing Meo tribesmen in the Laotian jungles.

The real McCoy, more often, is a rumpled civil servant going to lard, who worries about when his refrigerator will arrive from the States and plays bingo on Tuesday nights.

This is the unromantic picture that emerges from an instruction sheet handed to CIA pilots leaving for Udorn, Thailand. The CIA uses a front called Air America to fly missions out of Udorn over Indo-China.

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INSTEAD OF pressing cyanide suicide capsules upon new recruits, the state-side briefer slips them a bus schedule for CIA personnel between Udorn's CIA compound, schools and banks.

"A bowling alley in Udorn has league bowling," the CIA confides to its pilot-agents. Their wives are given such hush-hush CIA tips as "water should be boiled three to five minutes prior to drinking, but it is safe for cooking and washing dishes if it is brought to the boiling point."

Wives are also advised to bring "plenty of sheets and pillow cases" and "china-ware, tableware and kitchen utensils."

Other confidential information provided CIA agents includes the intelligence that "Thai mattresses are normally extremely hard and bumpy" and that "shop-

ping is generally done by the servants due to the early hours (6 a.m.) one must shop to insure getting fresh products."

The cloak-and-dagger boys are told they will have a supermarket, swimming pool, free movies, the "Club Rendezvous" (which doubles as a chapel on Sundays) and bingo on Tuesday and Saturday nights. The CIA bars are called The Pub and the Wagon Wheel and shut down at midnight. The same humdrum life style can be found at such CIA outposts as Vientiane, Laos, where CIA men usually live with their families in villas and dine at the town's few French restaurants.

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BUT IF the CIA living conditions are vintage suburbia, some of the missions are dangerous. The CIA pilots fly supplies to CIA-backed Meo tribesmen in Laos hinterlands. There are also more hazardous missions, such as flights along the Red Chinese border and ammo deliveries to tiny airstrips in communist-infested country.

**Footnote:** Much of the recruiting for CIA pilots is done out of a gold-carpeted office in downtown Washington with "Air America" on the glass doors.

Basic pay is \$22.98 an hour for captains, \$13.93 for first officers, with bonuses for special "projects." A top CIA pilot can make as much as \$100,000 a year flying high hazard missions. In addition, station allowances run \$320 a month at Saigon, \$215 at Udorn and \$230 in Vientiane.

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