



**Edgar Allan Poe Literary
Society, Inc.**
Raven Forward Air Controllers (FACs)

4320 Saddle Ridge Trail, Flower Mound, TX 75028
Ph: (972) 691-2569
spikemilam@verizon.net



December 31, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter's purpose is to attest that Yee Robin Xiong served with valor and distinction as a lieutenant in General Vang Pao's Special Guerrilla Units (SGUs) which was essentially an army recruited, trained, and paid by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to counter North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao activities in Northern Laos.

A few, very few, Hmong SGU members, based on their intimate knowledge of the terrain and ability to communicate effectively in English, were selected to fly with the American Forward Air Controllers (FACs) known as Ravens. The Ravens were United States Air Force combat pilots who volunteered to serve in what is known as "The Secret War in Laos" during the Vietnam Conflict. These elite Hmong SGU soldiers were known as Robins and flew in the backseats of Ravens, serving as translators, guides, and yes, friends while operating in a very hostile environment.

Lieutenant Yee Xiong was Robin 07 and I was Raven 29. We flew together many times during my tour in Laos (February-December 1972), so I personally, without hesitation, can attest to his valor and willingness to do whatever was necessary to accomplish the assigned missions. Unlike many of the Ravens, I did not keep a detailed account of my missions and my memory has faded with age, but I do recall a few of the times robin 07 and I flew together.

- One of my specialties was hunting for large guns, both ground artillery (85MM and 130MM) and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA). The latter usually found me while I was looking for and destroying the former. Lt. Yee Xiong, Robin 07, helped me locate at least two of the seven 130MM guns I was credited with destroying. While a few of the Robins were a little reluctant to fly with me when I went looking for guns, especially the AAA, Robin 07 was always willing to jump into my backseat.
- Several times we were involved in supporting friendly troops in direct contact with enemy forces. One time which stands out in my memory is when we were supporting Thai "mercenary" forces on Skyline Ridge. Unable to get air support due to deteriorating weather conditions, we resorted to flying very low and firing our personal weapons and tossing grenades out the windows to break an enemy attack.

- Finally, there was the event which Robin 07 remembers as “saving his life”. As the most experienced FAC at the time, I was responsible for checking out the newly arriving FACs. Although we didn’t always fly with a Robin, it was my policy to have a Robin in the backseat of any new Raven. So, when I landed at Long Tieng with Raven 27 and prepared to send him out on his own, i.e., without me, I wanted to have an experienced Robin with him. The only one available that day was Robin 07, who was already in Raven 20’s backseat and preparing for takeoff. I stopped him and had Robin 07 go with Raven 27. As fate would have it, Raven 20 was shot down and killed on that mission. Robin 07 remembers that event as “saving his life”, but I have often thought that perhaps if he had been with Raven 20 on that date, November 7, 1972, he might have saved Major John Carroll’s life.

Lieutenant Yee Xiong was, as he should have been, so proud of his role as a Robin, that when he was able to escape Laos, following the ignominious withdrawal of the Americans and the subsequent persecution by the Communists of those who had helped Americans—persecution which bordered on genocide--he formally adopted “Robin” as his middle name.

I am a member of the Edgar Allen Poe Literary Society (EAPLS) Executive Committee and Chairman of the organization’s Distinguished Raven Scholarship Program that gives numerous scholarships every year to descendants of the Lao and Hmong soldiers and airmen we fought alongside in Laos. We do so to honor the Lao and Hmong who sacrificed so much and were rewarded with so little for their support of the United States efforts during the Vietnam Conflict. Do not be misled by the name of our 501(C) (19) non-profit organization, Edgar Allen Poe Literary Society. It is simply a tongue-in-cheek name since our call sign was “Raven” and our motto was “Nevermore”.

Feel free to contact me with questions or more details needed to ensure Yee R. XIONG, Robin 07, receives the recognition and benefits he and his countrymen so richly deserve.



Jerry W. “Spike” Milam, Colonel (Ret), U.S. Air Force
4320 Saddle Ridge Trail
Flower Mound, TX 75028
972-691-2569
spikemilam@verizon.net