

Archives Branch
Naval History and Heritage Command
805 Kidder Breese Street, SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

Processor: Roy Grossnick (Updated November 2012) and originally processed by Megan Maples (June 2003).

John Sylva Papers

COLL/473

Creator: Captain John Sylva, USN

Extent: 12 boxes
4 cubic feet

Date Range: 1957-1972

Classification: Unclassified

Access: Open

Scope and Content Notes

The Papers of Captain John P. Sylva consist of news clippings, slides, personal papers, military correspondence, reports and photographs.

The collection is organized in four series. Series I is a file on Laos. It deals mainly with military papers and correspondence while Sylva was in Laos but there are also personal photographs, construction paperwork and United States Information Services papers. Of note in this series are foreign language documents as well as a transcript of a letter dated 1683. This date has been verified, and is not an error.

Series II are newspapers and magazines dating from 1961-1972. There are folders of *Time* magazines as well as some Navy publications. There are numerous newspaper clippings and five oversize boxes of newspapers.

Series III is a collection of reports and guides belonging to Captain Sylva. There are three boxes with just reports in them; mainly dealing with construction.

Series IV is a collection of slides related to construction and general activities in Laos from 1960-1961.

Series V is a collection of charts and maps related to SE Asia.

Subject Headings

United States. Navy-Military Construction Operations.
Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975.

Laos-Photographs.
Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)-Newspapers.
Bangkok (Thailand)-Newspapers.
Laos-Maps.

Biographical Note

John Sylva was born on 4 March 1932 in New Jersey. In 1949 he entered the Naval Reserve as a Seaman Recruit. He attended Stevens Institute of Technology and graduated in 1954. On 2 September 1954 Seaman Sylva was commissioned into the Navy as an Ensign.

In 1955, Ensign Sylva received his first promotion to Lieutenant (J.G.) and also went to NMCB-1 for his first tour of duty as Company Commander.

In 1957, Lieutenant Sylva was sent to Director, Atlantic Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks for his second tour of duty.

Sylva continued his education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, earning a B.C.E. degree in 1958, and that same year was promoted to Lieutenant. After graduating, he served in Laos and Thailand as the Officer in Charge of Construction. As OCC, his main task was rebuilding parts of the base located in Laos. He served in Thailand 1961-1963 and was advanced to Lieutenant Commander while there. During his service in Southeast Asia, he made a point to go out and meet the local people and observe their way of life, evident from the photographs and slides in this collection.

After serving in Laos, he had duty in Hawaii and South Carolina as Public Works Officer. In 1968 he was stationed at U.S. Naval Public Works Center, Yokosuka, Japan as Operations Officer for a year and Executive Officer for a year and a half.

In 1969, Commander Sylva was sent to Saigon, Vietnam as Officer-in-Charge of Construction, RVN. After serving in Vietnam for two years he was sent to Director Shore Installations Division. After two years, his next tour of duty was with Director Logistics Planning Division.

In 1973, Commander Sylva was sent to Athens, Greece with the Navy Fleet Support Office. He retired from the Navy with the rank of Captain.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1

Series 1: Laos, 1957-1972

1. Construction	1960-1961
2. Construction	1960-1961
3. Construction	1960-1961
4. Construction	1961
5. Construction	1961-1972
6. Foreign Language Documents	1960
7. General Information	1960-1961

8. Photos

Box 2

Series I: Laos, 1957-1972

9. Photos

10. Photos

11. Photos

12. Photos

13. USIS 1961

Box3

Series II: Newspapers and Magazines, 1957-1972

14. Miscellaneous 1969-1972

15. PAC-FACTS 1968-1969

16. Pipeline 1968-1970

17. Newspaper Clippings 1960-1961

18. Newspaper Clippings 1961

19. Newspaper Clippings 1969

20. The Reporter and Newsweek 1961

21. Time 1960-1963

Box 4 (Oversize)

Series II: Newspapers and Magazines 1957-1972

22. Front Pages of various Newspapers 1961-1969

Box 5 (Oversize)

Series II: Newspapers and Magazines, 1957-1972

23. Front Pages of various Newspapers 1964

Box 6 (Oversize)

Series II: Newspapers and Magazines, 1957-1972

24. Front pages of various Newspapers 1965

Box 7 (Oversize)

Series II: Newspapers and Magazines, 1957-1972

25. Front pages of various Newspapers 1961-1964

Box8

Series III: Reports, 1957-1972

26. Activities Report 1968

27. Activities Report 1968

28. Activities Report 1969

29. Activities Report 1969

30. Airfield Pavements 1968

31. Air System Plan 1962-1971

32. Architect-Engineer Guide 1968

Box9**Series III: Reports, 1957-1972**

33. Construction Contract Negotiators	1964
34. CPAF Contract Activity Code 453	1968
35. CPAF Miscellaneous Correspondence	1968
36. Dredge	1969
37. Engineering Report on Highways, Airfields, River Crossings, Water Transportation & External Routes for Supply	1957
38. Forms used by Lump Sum Contractors	1968

Box 10

Series III: Reports, 1957-1972

39. Investigation of Lump Sum Construction Capability	1968
40. Officer in Charge of Construction: Republic of Vietnam Naval Facilities Engineering Command	1969
41. Officer in Charge of Construction: Republic of Vietnam Naval Facilities Engineering Command	1968
42. OICC Indoctrination	1969
43. OICC RVN Data Management Manual	1969
44. Progress Report	1968
45. Report to the Congress of the United States	1965-1966

Box 11

Series IV: Slides, 1957-1972

46. Slides of locals and bases in Laos	
--	--

Box 12

Series V: Maps and Blueprints, 1959-1961

47. Maps and Charts done on blueprint paper	
---	--

Mapcase 7, Drawer 6

Series V: Maps and Blueprints, 1959-1961

48. Map of Highways in Laos	1959
49. Repairs to Wattay Airfield, Vientiane, Laos	1961
50. Wattay Airfield General Plan, Vientiane, Laos	1960