Abstract
This research focuses on American aid to the Royal Lao Government from 1955 to 1975. The intention of this research is to highlight the little, or unknown, endeavors of the American government during the Vietnam conflict as a “non-attributable war” but in late 1969 with criticisms of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the draft or matters such as the growing tensions and criticisms were rising in the Vietnam conflict and causing many issues on the home front. In 1962 the CIA took the lead in Laos setting up training facilities for Laotians in Thailand to train up some 750 Hmong, ethnic Laotians from the Lao Sung (mountain top) region, in guerilla warfare tactics and on modern weapons and radios. Then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is quoted as stating in a 1975 questioning in regard to handing the operation to the CIA stating, “One, to avoid a formal avowal of American participation there for diplomatic reasons, and the second, I suspect, because it was less accountable.” By handing the operation over to the CIA, American politicians were able to claim plausible deniability of any interference in Laos. Former CIA director William E. Colby has said that the intelligence agency had a major role in Laos because it was important to understand the accomplishments of the United States government, military, and the CIA. Research indicates that the United States helped bring an end to the Laotian Civil War and the establishment of a representative Laotian government after over twenty years of conflict in Laos. Congressional hearings on U.S. intervention in Laos started in 1969 as the country’s criticism of the role in Vietnam grew. Until that time the United States’ role in Laos had been considered a “non-attributable war” by former CIA Director William E. Colby. This caused it to become an unknown American conflict. It is the aim of this research to bring a new topic to the 1960s and allow American happenings to emerge from the shadows of the Vietnam conflict and domestic American political debates.

Methods
My research began with looking other U.S. operations that were taking place during the Vietnam conflict. After serving time in the military I understood that we aren’t only in one place at a time but typically in multiple regions conducting different types of operations. When looking for other U.S. operations I came across Operation Millpond and was going to focus on that specifically but upon further research found out that there was much more going on than just this one operation and decided to dive deeper into my research on U.S. operation in Laos. This led to a new outlook on what all was going on from 1955 to 1975. I found a source on Operation Millpond by a man who was involved in it and a few secondary sources all about the U.S. and Laos.

American Intervention in Laos: A Conflict in the Shadow of Vietnam
David Armstrong
Colorado State University-Pueblo

Results
Fighting in Laos escalated in the summer of 1960 and with the escalation, the Pathet Lao would make great strides in gaining control of Laos. In March of 1961, President John F. Kennedy was briefed on the deteriorating situation in Laos and U.S. force levels in the Pacific Theater by Admiral Harry D. Felt, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Forces. Upon receiving this briefing, President Kennedy would activate more U.S. troops to aid the Royal Lao Government. The plan that was to be put into effect after the loss of American troops when military aircraft were shot down during reconnaissance missions. The plan was to fly Marines into an airfield in Thailand on civilian aircraft flown by civilian pilots with the U.S. airline, Air America. This insertion of U.S. Marines would be named, Operation Millpond. The U.S. intervention in Laos was not known about to the general public because of its covert nature. Tensions and criticisms were rising in the Vietnam conflict and causing many issues on the home front. In 1962 the CIA took the lead in Laos setting up training facilities for Laotians in Thailand to train up some 750 Hmong, ethnic Laotians from the Lao Sung (mountain top) region, in guerilla warfare tactics and on modern weapons and radios. Then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is quoted as stating in a 1975 questioning in regard to handing the operation to the CIA stating, “One, to avoid a formal avowal of American participation there for diplomatic reasons, and the second, I suspect, because it was less accountable.” By handing the operation over to the CIA, American politicians were able to claim plausible deniability of any interference in Laos. Former CIA director William E. Colby has said that the intelligence agency had a major role in Laos because it was important to understand the accomplishments of the United States Government achieved a great milestone with their intervention in Laos. They helped bring an end to a conflict that raged on for nearly twenty years and bring about sovereignty to a nation that had been seeking it for many years. Before if for U.S. intervention, who is to know if conflict ever would have ended or if Laos would even be a country today as the North Vietnamese military and government was heavily involved in Laos happenings. By extension, U.S. intervention in Laos was really another part of the Vietnam conflict, but in the same sense a conflict all of its own as the U.S. took up a much more defensive or aid and assist role than offensive aside from the bombings in Northern Laos. Without U.S. intervention, Laos may not have established the government that they have today. The United States greatly influenced and helped Laos in their twenty years there even in the midst of a greater conflict in Vietnam and so many domestic problems such as the growing criticisms of Vietnam and the draft or matters such as the Civil Rights Movement. The 1960s is a decade of the same teachings and same faces, this simply highlights a different aspect of American history that is usually left out of the conversation although important to understanding the American mindset in the past.

Bibliography