

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Roy Wehrle

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember-Vietnam Oral History project

Interview # VRV-A-L-2013-098

Roy Wehrle, a State Department official assigned to the Agency for International Development in Laos and Vietnam from 1959 through 1968, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember - Vietnam* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location: 2001 Bates Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62704

Date: October 30, 31, November 1, 3, 2013

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Christopher N. Breiseth

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:55 (1) + 1:45 (2) + 1:36 (3) + 1:24 (4) + 1:33 (5) + 1:18 (6) + 0:36 (7) / 1.92 (1) + 1.75 (2) + 1.6 (3) + 1.4 (4) + 1.55 (5) + 1.3 (6) + 0.6 (7) = 10.12 hrs

Session 1: Early life, education, and work in Laos with the U.S. State Department

Session 2: Development of economic policies for U.S. effort in S. Vietnam in 1964-1965

Session 3: Service with top ranking diplomats in crafting economic policy for S. Vietnam

Session 4: Work with Jim Killen & Charles Mann of the US Agency for Int. Development

Session 5: Working conditions and diplomacy while in South Vietnam with State Dept.

Session 6: Reflections on overall economic policy and military strategy in S. Vietnam

Session 7: Overview of economic development in S. Vietnam from 1964 thru 1968

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 10, 2014.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Roy Wehrle, Veterans Remember-Vietnam, VRV-A-L-2013-098

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Leroy (Roy) Wehrle was born on February 5th, 1932 in Belleville, Illinois, and graduated from Belleville Township High School in 1949. He attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri in 1953. He served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955. He began graduate school at Yale University majoring in economics, earning a Ph.D. with honors in Economics in 1959. He began working for the Agency for International Development (AID), a branch of the State Department, in 1959, and was assigned to Laos as a junior economist.

From 1961 to 1963 Wehrle served as a senior economist on President Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisors. He then served as a special assistant to Ambassador Leonard Unger in Laos to negotiate a new U.S. aid program for Laos in the fall of 1963. He eventually worked as the Deputy Director of the United States Operations Missions (USOM), later renamed the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to Laos (1963-1964), and also as the Economic Counselor to the US Ambassador in Laos. He then was assigned to South Vietnam serving as economic counselor to three U.S. ambassadors from 1964 to 1967, and was also the Assistant Director of the aid mission there. After his service in South Vietnam, Wehrle was assigned to Washington, D.C. and worked as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Vietnam Bureau, U.S. Department of State from 1967-1968. He left the state Department in 1968 to pursue a career in academics and state government.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Vietnam: 1964-1968; evolving military strategy in the Vietnam War; evolving political strategy in the Vietnam War; impact of U.S. involvement in South Vietnam on its economy, including inflation and rice supply; Agency for International Development (USAID); Robert McNamara; Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge; devaluation of piaster negotiations; budget and U.S. assistance negotiations; new aid program for Laos; Lao hill tribes, Hmong (Meo), Yao, Black Thai; Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker; Ambassador Maxwell Taylor; John Paul Vann; the Kong Le coup; Lao rural development and pacification program; briefing of visiting government leaders; military construction program

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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