



KAFV Reunion, July 10 2010 - English translation of So Satto's speech

Ladies, Gentlemen, and KAF Veterans,

First of all, I would like to express my admiration to all members of the Committee chaired by Mr. Luong Sar. For months and months, they did tremendous preparation works to make this very first reunion possible.

I am pleased and honored to be with you all, here in Long Beach. I thank the Army and Navy veterans, the Khmer organizations: Cambodian Veterans, CCAA, and CAA ... who are attending this reunion.

My wife and I, we do present our respectful and sincere feelings.

Thirty-five years ago, we fled our native land and we are now scattered everywhere. Even today, I can see the events like it was yesterday.

My greatest memory was the months following March 18, 1970. At that time, the Vietnamese communists and their Khmer partners brought the war on our soil, threatening our freedom and our existence. But you, young men that you were; you stood up and you did not hesitate to join our armed forces to face the enemies. In the aviation, we resisted valiantly but we were only a few, with little means. When I think back; I remember you all, leaving the rice field of your parents, your job, your career, high school, and the university... to join the Aviation Nationale Khmère. You saw the danger that befell our country and you came with your courage and your patriotism. You've brought a new impetus.

After the strict and rigorous trainings in all the Air armed force branches, you fought day and night on the battlefields. You made our small aviation become a real Air Force. Be proud.

We lost the war. The entire country has lost but you, airmen veterans; I know your motivation, your mind. You are not defeated. We adapt but we maintain our conducting line and keep the course intact. You knew and know how to overcome the difficulties of life.

I am one of the elders among the veterans; my wish is to see all our comrades, men and women, remain united like a family.

May the spirit of the Khmer Air Force stay alive forever.

Long live the Khmer Air Force.

SO Satto