

British Club Active Living Section

Lunch Presentation on 9th January 2025:

“KHMER WARFIGHTING: MYSTERIES SUUROUNDING THE FALL OF ANGKOR”

Introduction of the Speaker: Dr. Paul T. Carter

Dr. Paul Carter, an American citizen based in Chiang Mai, is a distinguished historian, researcher, and video documentarian specializing in Southeast Asian history. His background includes academia and 21 years in the United States Army, where he served as Chief of Intelligence Operations for the 82nd Airborne Division in Afghanistan (2002–2003). Later, he spent seven years at the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, completing four wartime deployments to Iraq, including two with Joint Special Operations Task Force-17. If you ask him about his exploits with them, he’s likely to say, “If I tell you, I’ll have to kill you,” so better not to ask!

In 2013, Paul received the U.S. President’s Daily Brief Professional Recognition Award for co-authoring key intelligence briefs on Middle Eastern topics. He is also a recipient of the Military Intelligence Corps Association’s “Knowlton Award.” Other notable contributions include his providing expert insights and research that enhanced the depth and historical accuracy of PBS’s programme *The Hmong and the Secret War*, still used by researchers, and numerous publications in journals such as *Studies in Intelligence*, *East Asia Quarterly*, and Chulalongkorn University’s *Asian Review*.

Paul’s academic papers delve into topics such as Thailand’s economic development during the Cold War, the Royal Thai Army’s role in Laos, and ancient Khmer defensive strategies, which I suggest form the basis of today’s presentation. Three months ago, at Payap University, he presented on Thailand’s wars with Laos from the early 19th century to the signing of the Franco-Siamese Treaty in 1893, their impact on modern Thai culture, and especially on how they impacted the Issan people and region, a subject that is rarely discussed in Thai academia, probably for good reason!

A prolific writer and broadcaster, Paul shares his insights on Southeast Asian history through a popular YouTube channel. Among his many videos is the very interesting *Smokejumpers: A CIA Clandestine Weapon in America’s Secret Wars*, detailing how the CIA trained wild land firefighters for covert operations in Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and beyond. I could go on, but instead please join me in welcoming Dr. Paul Carter.