



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OPERATIONS MISSION
(Special Technical and Economic Mission)
TO CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIETNAM

AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON, VIETNAM

January 25, 1955.

Dear Mike;

The following is the story of my coming to Saigon. In mid August I received an unclassified but priority telegram from FOA Washington asking me if I would come out to Saigon for a one year assignment as one of a team of four to work on the refugee problem. The telegram said that my family could follow in two months. A second paragraph went on to say that if I would not accept the one year assignment, would I consider and the Mission concur to a 90 day temporary duty in Saigon to assist in getting the work organized. It went on to say that it was urgent, and that my qualifications were such that they were highly desirous of having me accept.

I cabled back to Washington saying that for family health reasons I could not accept the one year assignment, but I would accept the 90 day assignment providing that my position could be covered by another person for the period of my absence who had experience in programming. In a second paragraph I went on to say that I was prepared to accept a six month appointment providing my family could be given advance home leave, and that at the end of the six month period I be transferred to a post in the Escapee program where I could be reunited with my family. I further said that I was prepared to move on 48 hours notice.

The reply said that they accepted the 90 day TDY and that they would try to work out the six month proposition during the first 90 days and that the Escapee program was interested. I was given 48 hours to be on my way.

I gambled on the six month period and requested advance home leave for my family which was approved. I came to Saigon, worked two and one half months and came up to Haiphong on the 19th of November, before word was finally received on the extension. I cabled Washington that I was required for the additional three months and referred to the above telegrams to ensure confirmation of the basis upon which I was staying. Approval came through, and here I am. Before coming up Mr. Barrows told me that he could get the extension alright, even if it took Ambassador Collins to push it through. The understanding I made with Mr. Barrows was that I would stay here till the Haiphong area closed to release you for the long range operation. This would be contingent, if course, upon Washington concurrence, and I also asked that I have a certain say in how long I was required here after the six month period which ends with the first of March.

A short time ago I wrote to Larry Dawson, head of the Escapee program in Washington and asked for travel orders dated anytime after March 1, with the request that, if possible, he leave me here till this job was finished, and that May 18 would certainly be the final deadline. I have not received a reply to this as yet. I also asked for advance home leave as I am due in July, and both Dick Brown and I felt it was desirable to take it before starting in the new post.

I loaned the early telegrams received in Cairo to Mr. Barrows because the telegram requesting my extension referenced them, and asked for their return. The telegram asking extension went off about the 20th of November. Anything you can do to help locate them will be much appreciated.

Roger H. Ackley