

Can you send me John's address?

18 June 1975
Vientiane

Dear Bill,

I received your letter of 31 May in Bangkok but had a lot of running around to do before coming here so I didn't get it answered there. For one thing, I "lost" my passport + health card ^{with some money} so had to go through all the red tape of getting ~~passport~~ ^{passport} replaced, getting the Thai Visa re-stamped, new vaccinations, + just barely had time to get Lao Visa before Thai Visa expired. I was to pick it up 3 hours before train time so if they had refused it, I would have had to fly to Malaysia as I couldn't have gotten there by train in time. However, things went well + I did get to Laos. Met the AFSC people + Murray + Linda Hibert yesterday. Their contacts with the No. V.V. Embassy have been discouraging insofar of any hope of returning during the next few months. I had intended to go there + inquire about George + Ed + Minh Quy + feel my way as to whether I should ask about my own request to return, but after talking to them, I think it may not be a good idea because they feel the Vol. Agencies are turning the Embassy people off because of their constant inquiries. Ernie Hoff is supposed to be coming here this week so I'll try to talk to him first about what to do. If it looks like it'll be a 6 mo. or more wait to even find out, then I'll probably return to the U.S. this summer as there is lots I can do at home this time of the year especially. But I will try to find out something about Robbins' repatriation because I doubt if they'll be getting any information on their trip.

As far as CWS is concerned, I am terminating with them at the end of my furlough &/or vacation somewhere around the 1st week of July. They would not grant a leave of absence. I was seconded to them through the Methodist board so am still in the process of finding out if they will give me a l.o.a. or what. When in Saigon, I was assured that CWS was extremely interested in my returning to Kontum & that is why I agreed to leave Saigon - if I had known that was not actually their attitude, I would have resigned there & stayed on my own. I am feeling pretty bitter about this.

I recently talked with Chad Huntley, who was among the last group of journalists to leave Saigon. I thought he might have some news about Kerry & H'Cham but he had only seen Kerry right after the changeover & didn't know about H'Cham. However, he had heard that a Montagnard woman married to an American had walked all the way from BMT to Saigon, accompanied by some children. Chad Huntley said Paul Struck was reportedly still alive with the group captured in BMT in a camp near Pleiku where they are receiving re-education. I called his wife (H'Cham's sister) in Bangkok to see if she had heard anything & she did not seem to be aware of the report you got from Ed that H'Cham was alive. I did not want to say anything, not having any verification. She plans to leave for the U.S. in a week or 2. It is true that foreigners have not been allowed to move abt. the country. Only 1 reporter - a French communist who has been in Hanoi the last few years - was able to drive from Hanoi to Saigon, but that was a unique occurrence. Murray & Linda talked to him here. Earl Metten & Hero did go from Quang Ngai to Saigon, but I

think that was because they were uninitiated out of Quáng Ngãi. Last week 108 V.N. refugees arrived at the U in Bangkok. They had left from Vungtau only a week earlier. For some reason we have not yet been able to determine, the U.N. is helping them. Why them, when all the other refugees are kept from landing or are here illegally, I don't understand. They do not seem to be "special" people.

I was really surprised when you got him in-laws out because when I met him in Hong Kong, there didn't seem to be any possible way of even getting into V.N. from there. I hope they will be happy with their move.

I hope you can keep track of Pawlenko's itinerary in case it is necessary to get information to them about possibilities for Nkong's return to ~~V.N.~~ I told you when I called you that Pawlenko had very strange ideas. Did you ever find out if he received the check you sent to Bangkok in time to cash it at the Military Bank? If not, you should have them stop payment on it so you can get the money back. I had the Consulate in Bangkok forward his mail to the Consulate in New Delhi so it could have been in that & presumably he couldn't cash it anywhere but in Bangkok.

Are you back in probation work or did you find out anything about the refugee processing work? I have thought I might be of some use in that if the chances of going back to V.N. seem too dim, but I'm afraid that most of the refugees are people I wouldn't be in too much sympathy with so I doubt if I should even consider that.

I just got a letter from Harry Hartwig. He said Tan seemed to be making a good adjustment in the U.S. but they didn't know what had happened to her brother & sister in Slicku & were naturally extremely worried. I hope we get news of Kontum soon & that it is good. So glad to hear Senia made it out. She's one person that really needed to leave & seemed to have the greatest odds.

Thanks for sending the \$25.00. It really is coming in handy here because there are new rules about changing baht into kip & my certified check I had sent from the U.S. so I could get traveller's checks was made out incorrectly so had to be returned so I still don't have them.

I was horrified to hear you had written the Director of the Y in Bangkok offering to pick up my bill of exchange left there because Nhung was only there a couple days at extra charge & she should have had money for that & he purposely left his room bill outstanding promising to pay it through the Y system in the U.S. He was there a long time & you shouldn't assume any of his charges there. I'm sure he'll let you know ^{about} any expenses you should be responsible for that involve Nhung & Hoang & you should be sure to get an itemization for these & subtract it from the amounts you have already advanced & what you have repaid to me that I advanced. Please be careful about this.

I am told that postage in Laos is very cheap so will try to get some correspondence caught up here. It's not possible to travel about the country now & doesn't seem like too much to do in Vietiane so I may not stay too long. I can pick up my Thai visa tomorrow. Continue to use FRK address as I'll be returning to Bangkok. Want to make a trip to Chiang Mai before I leave Thailand again & if it does look like it'll be too long a wait, I may visit Nepal & India before coming to U.S.

Hope things are going well with you & Ted & your folks! What did Ed do after leaving ~~Calif~~?
Sincerely, Billie