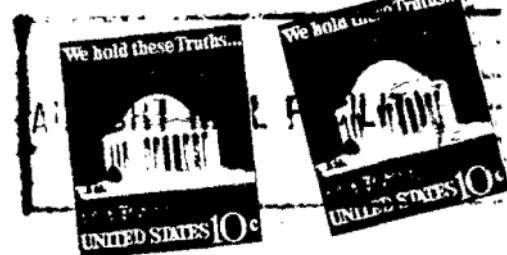


M.O. Brown,
c/o N.Z. Embassy,
45 Phung Khac Khoan,
Saigon,
South Vietnam.

or.
c/o 34 Ethel Street,
Invercargill,
New Zealand.



Rec'd 4/2/75-

Mr. W.E. Rose,
c/o 426 Oweh Road,
Wynnewood,
Pa. 19606,
U.S.A.

Saigon.
28th March 1975.

Dear Bill,

"arvellous to get your letter today ...thanks for using your head and writing to the Embassy...something that none of my clever relatives have thought of doing yet!!!

I can understand your concern and interest in what is going on here....while here, where it is all happening.. it is hard to comprehend. It is like something out of Alice in wonderland. Just thank your lucky stars, that you are well out of it.

I shall try and recount the tale of our last while in Kontum.... there had been odd rocket attacks during the previous few weeks and then came the attack on BMT...a total surprise. From then on, the speed with which things tumbled down, like a deck of cards, was just beyond belief. On the Tuesday (11th) we started sending out people, with dependents and the CARE nurses, who had been up there only three weeks, Wednesday George Lussier went, then Thursday, Dr. Connally, on orders from CARE.

~~We were expect to leave 18th because of Mac's arrival~~
That was an awful day, because Ed and I got a signal from the N.Z. Embassy, informing us that Mac Riding, with the Red Cross Team in Pleiku, had been killed in that Air Vietnam flight from Laos and also recommending that Ed and I leave then.

By Friday night Pat had decided that we would all evacuate on the first available flight, presumably the following Monday, or on Tuesday's chopper. That night we got little in the way of sleep, as the guns pounded away all night long...out going stuff. In the morning, we heard that there had been a ground attack, in that area where Dom d'A. had his office, just over the bridge, but otherwise it was very much, business as usual, until about 12.30, when Pat got a message to go down to the USAID compound, urgently. we got down there, to be told that a plane was coming in to take us out...at 1.10...it was then 12.45!! John was out in the town somewhere and we screamed around trying to find him... but he eventually turned up. And so we left...5 of the 7 who were left...Ed and George, as you know electing to stay...and nothing would persuade them otherwise.

Father Currien was to come out with us...the Bishop wanted him evacuated...but when I went up to collect him...he refused..never was there such dignity, in any refusal.

A Volpar came in and we climbed on...and took off, at a great height...~~and~~ next thing we were coming into land in Qui Nhon. ...the Volpar going back making a couple more trips that day. A couple of the nuns...from the kindergarten came out then..one a niece of Diem....then Jake and Tolle went down to Nha Trang.

It was awful having to say goodbye to everyone, in such haste...even now I have to stop and think..did it all really happen...or am I going to wake up soon.

The Surgical Team took good care of us that night, then in the morning we got a C 47 down to Nha Trang ...jet and Mir had gone down there on the Tuesday ...and from there another Volpar, which

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brought us on down to Saigon, where we have parked on the benevolent... Barbara and the other girls, staying with people in Joyce Horn's apartment building, while Pat and I ^{are} staying with one of the girls from the N.Z. Embassy.

As soon as we got in, we set to work at trying to organise the people who had come out of the Highlands, to work, preferably with Montagnard refugees... USAID, the ministry of Social Welfare etc were all involved and Pat spent a good deal of time each day, attending meetings, but as yet, nothing had happened, as in no place, where the refugees are, is the security reasonable... and the Americans won't want to have to fish us out for the second time. Hope, now though...someone has just dropped off a note for Pat from Nay Luett, saying that he has set up a hostel for Montagnards, in Saigon and wants her help...I, for one, will be pleased to be doing something constructive. In the hopes of doing some work, I went off and got myself, a teach-yourself-steing book, figuring that these would be the people we would most likely be working with.

We have had no positive word of Ed and George, since the 16th, when Tolle went back in...he saw them and again they refused to come out....Oh, the reason for our hasty departure, was that the Military command was abandoning Pleiku...something that could hardly be believed, when you think of how strategically easy it should be to defend it. Between the time that we came out and about 4pm that afternoon the military were withdrawing from Kontum and people were taking to the road to Pleiku.

Rumours that we have heard are... that there are two Americans at the end of the line of people heading for Tuy Hoa... that Ed and George had "disappeared" from the hospital...an idiot journalist had said that he had phoned Kontum and that Dr Baker was out when he called...we know that the NVA are efficient, but to have set up a telephone system...well!!! A reliable source tells us, that ~~had~~ a plane over-flying Kontum reported that the city appeared deserted...none in the streets or in the fields. There has been no report of Montagnards from the Kontum area, being in the column walking out. Regarding this latter...I could believe, that the NVA could have sent the Montagnards there, in a northly direction.

Pleiku was reported, to be being bombed..when the military pulled out, they did not blow up their ammo dump..at least they did do that in Kontum.

The person we feel most for at present, is Kerry, who married a girl from BMT at the end of January...she went back there to get some papers, for going to the states and got caught...poor Kerry is just shattered...words are so damned useless at times. He spent about 10 days in Nha Trang, going when he could get on a flight, out to the area, where people from BMT were coming in...and from all account his wife's village was flattened by VNAF bombing and while the people were running ~~for~~ the woods...were mown down by NVA bullets...out of a population of 400, only 2 children survived.

Everything is just so God-damned awful

P-t has written to the FRG..the letter is to be delivered tomorrow, requesting that Ed and George, be permitted to write, re their state and the conditions in Kontum. According to their "liberated" Plan, they want foreign teams who had been working in the

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areas, to continue, in their previous capacity. Whether Pat will get a reply, is another matter.

The news gets worse and worse. The evacuation flights out of Danang have been discontinued, because of the chaos on the airfield... and the panic is on in Qui Nhon, ~~with~~ SCF, Holy Family people come out over the last few days and the S.T. is supposed to be going down to Nha Trang today, but there are no means of communication, at present. Skiff, tried phoning through last night, but all he could get, was the CIA compound... to be told, that all the Americans had gone down to Nha Trang, for the night... and that they may be back, today. The Bristol is coming up from Singapore this afternoon, in order to take vehicles etc, out of VN... something totally irrelevant, to me. Nothing has happened, in VN... it doesn't need to, for the whole population is in such a panic now.

Rumours abound here in Saigon, of course, and there are daily reports of Thieu's assassination... Mrs and daughter were supposed to have left the country last week... a reliable source has it that one of the generals shot him in the leg, last Sat.... and he in turn shot the general, who since seems to have vanished from the scene.

Ron Ackerman (?) has just been in, on one of his many abortive trips to see ~~Pat~~... he is going back to the States, next Thurs. and will call you when he gets there. Scott, is supposed to be going back tomorrow... and was supposed to come by this afternoon and we were going to go out and get drunk!! He has stood me up... so I am sitting here typing this ..and drinking gin!!! I just hope that this is making some sort of sense.

Pat has of course been getting a run-around with the kids ~~papers~~, ... she went off early this afternoon, to see about this and came rushing back a short time later, for more bits of paper and from the way she was going on, I think an exit visa for them might be imminent. If this is the case, she will send them out, at the first opportunity and may possibly go herself, though, still with things to be done and ends to be tied up.. she might come back, once she gets the kids settled.

One of the problems at the moment, is that she has far too much money... so many organizations have money they want rid of.. so have given it to her to use up... and now... what is there that she will be able to use it on.

When we first came down here, we felt, that we would probably have two, maybe three months, in which to work ... then it got down, to how many ~~days~~ weeks... and now it is almost to the stage of "how many days?" The speed with which things are happening, is incredible. The RVN are reported to have 19 divisions in-country and another 3 on the way in... things down in the Delta have been quiet.. too quiet... and one cannot help but wonder when an attack is going to be coming from that direction.

Lit, the boy who was doing Physio in Quang Ngai... Pat was organising someone to take him money, but that place fell, so quickly the money did not get there... Trunk is doing the X-Ray course and will continue there... the course doesn't finish, till early next year. Two other boys were down here, taking an entrance exam, for a one year training course... have been accepted and now of course there is no way for them to get to their families. Those fellows are just so lost, in Saigon.

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Heaven knows if this is making any sort of sense... I seem to sit half my time wondering what is going on in Kontum...how everyone is... just how many of them are still alive...and if alive..what sort of state they are in. Some of the stories that one hears fill one with so much horror, that one wants only to be able to stop thinking. One tries to work out a logical thing about what could have happened to Ed and George. My idea would be, that everyone was ordered to get out...as I said, I think, the Montagnards would have been told to go north... Ed and George would have said that they would stay with the people who were incapable of going anywhere...as these people would be, to the NVA only useless mouths to feed...that would have been eliminated...so what has happened to Ed and George???. What has happened to the sisters???. Honestly Bill I hate to think. Maybe I just have a vivid imagination...I just hope so

A few days after we came down here I was talking to one of the N.Z. nuns who was taken prisoner at Phuoc Binh and held for 7 weeks. She seemed to think, that Ed being a NZer would probably be OK...but that George, being American, would find himself in for a hard time.

~~I am not so optimistic~~

Skiff has just come in and says that a nun who came out from Kontum, said that Father Currien ...was seen...with his hands tied behind his back...and a bullet through his head. Pat is away at ~~church~~ so goodness knows what stories she will come back with.

Now Scott has just come in...he has his tickets squared away...and my mind is blown!!!!

What else do I know...The Bishop stayed of course..he wasn't in town when we left..was over in Pleiky. He is having a book on the Banhar of Kontum, published in Paris, so I shall add your name to my list of people to have them sent to...there is some hang-up with French customs or something, that they cannot be sent out in bulk.

And that Bill, is about the lot...just be glad that you no your family are not here...oh...John and Tu have gone back to Nha Trang to get the papers for her to go to the States. Senia is having all sort of problems with her papers and papers for the kids... Ngay refused to come out, so ~~no~~one has any idea where he is. Lussier went back to the States last week, as I said and Scott goes tomorrow. When the rest of us go depends on what we can find to do...already there are signs of chaos out at Fon Son "hut. If I do go in a hurry, then I shall hopefully spend some time in Singapore, getting board and lodgings with a Chinese family I know there...at the moment I feel totally unfit, for re-joining the human race. My home address, I shall put on the envelope.

This place is rapidly becoming ~~ABP~~ like a railway station...the S.T. are to arrive at T.S.N. at 6.30...now there is doubt that the Bristol will be able to go to T.N. tomorrow.

This whole country is like a patient who has had a cardio-pulmonary arrest and is being maintained on the respirator and on an Isuprel drip...the oxygen and the Isuprel supplies have almost run out. so that it is only a matter of time, till the plug is pulled.

Lets just hope and pray, that the people we know, have all the courage they will need, in order to face the future...whatever is holds for them.

Best wishes Bill...will keep you informed, now that I have your address...oh..I had a letter from Jean Taylor...she too used her head and wrote c/o the Embassy and was in a real panic, about what had happened to us all.

This is all hot off the press...Pat didn't get the exit visa...but as soon as she does, they will all leave.

News from Kontum...the nun, (Vietnamese) who walked out with the convoy, said that from the 16th the Montagnard sisters were told to shed their habits and wear Montagnard clothes, bracelets, etc. According to her, no Montagnards had left, apart from USAID and Govt. employees and Pat seems to think that they are lying low in the villages and that hopefully Ed, George and the Bishop are with them. Pat also said that the nun said that as the convoy was moving down the road..the road was presumed to have been cleared and that 100 or so people went ahead, on Hondas...to be mown down by the NVA. Father C. was also on the road and that his body had been positively identified by one of the Vietnamese priests, from a chopper...when the chopper went in to retrieve the body, it was fired at, so they had to leave him. Water was a problem on the march and at one point where there was a sizable stream, the water was unuseable, for the stream was so filled up with dead bodies. This offensive is just so viscous (? spelling) I recoil in horror, at some of the stories that one hears.

Must be all,

Stay safe.

Marion

P.S. The Bishop had gone over to Pleiku, the day we came out, to see a French priest, who had walked in there from BMT,,,this fellow...I can't remember his name is apparently an unemotional character, normally, but when he got in there...all he could say was "it is terrible...it is terrible...there are thousands and thousands dead"

The Montagnards around BMT had reported the presence of NVA tanks outside there a couple of weeks before the attack came...their report was ignored...and also the Poles and the Hungarians, had pulled out of there a couple of days before the attack...we were keeping an eye on our lot!!!

I really seem to be suffering from VD...verbal diarrhea, that is.

Later...the ST got in tonight...things were still quiet in QN, but it was anticipated that anything could happen at any moment.. there were only two foreigners left in the town...and they will be coming out in the morning. The people had been leaving there for Nha Trang all through the week and the road was thick with people.

Another report..the Province Chief (a good guy) stayed in Kontum and was reported to have been shot, around Chu Pou, as he was walking

along the road.

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God. . I could go on for hours, about the horrors of this thing...have gone on enough already. At this stage, the other side doesn't really need to do anything, so much in the panic, that has been instilled in the people...who are still being fed a load of bullshit, by the Govt.

I never thought I would see the death of this country.

Must really be all,

|||||

MS. sorry. This is
such a result — I
should never try
to write a letter
thank you at the
same time !!

M