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IVY LEAF

FAMOUS FOURTH

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11 Aug 68 Ivy Leaf

Medic saves Montagnard's Life

OASIS — Quar had never permitted his people to accept medicine from the American doctors. Today his daughter lay shivering and convulsing with fever. Montagnard medicine had failed —his daughter would die.

The civil affairs team of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry had in the past encountered difficulties in reaching the villagers of Plei Cham Neh. Small children were the only ones who responded to the Ivymen's offer of aid, often against the wishes of their primitive parents.

Quar let his sick villagers die rather than have them treated at Army hospitals. It wasn't that he was unnecessarily cruel, he simply believed in ruling his village as his ancestors had ruled before him, free of outside Interference.

Today, the team sensed something wrong.

The village was quiet. Doors were closed, windows barred, and the children who usually played in the dirt were not in sight.

First Lieutenant Robert Gratty of Longmeadow, Mass., who had seen it before, realized the Montagnards were in mourning.

The 3rd Brigade team moved quickly into action. Specialist 4 William Drehs of Williamsville, N.Y., and the team medic. Specialist 5 James Weinke, of Neeah, Wis., raced front door to door trying to find the reason for the mourning. An old woman whom the team had befriended in the past finally told them the problem. The chief's daughter was dying.

The medic examined the little girl and diagnosed the ailment as malaria. It was not acute malaria, but the disease had been neglected a long time and was now serious.

The lieutenant and his men were in a delicate position. They knew if they saved the girl it could be the turning point they had been looking for in their relations with the Montagnards. If they failed, the project would be doomed.

Proud Quar, who had by this time stoically accepted the fact that his daughter would die, reluctantly agreed to let SP5 Weinke treat the girl. The young medic did all he could, administering the proper pills and serum. All the team could do was sit and wait.

The girl showed immediate improvement. Her temperature dropped steadily and soon the fever broke. A week later she was on her feet again.

The next time the team entered the village they were greeted enthusiastically. The old and young alike were present at the team's MEDCAP. The only one absent was Quar, the aged chief.

Some things can only be changed with the passing of time