

*Rufi: For your Wash. Trip.
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Mr. George Melvin, Regional Representative

August 23, 1963

Major Robert Bannister

Report on Ben Tuong Strategic Hamlet, Binh Duong

At approximately 0100 hours 18 August, an estimated two companies of Viet Cong entered Ben Tuong Strategic Hamlet (XT783361) and destroyed 137 houses by fire. The 15-man SDC platoon on duty was outside the hamlet in ambush position at the time the VC arrived. In addition to houses, food, clothing and household goods were destroyed; one male civilian murdered; the SDC outpost destroyed; and the hamlet office damaged.

The undersigned was contacted and authorized the Province Chief to replace all items lost by families as a result of the raid. USOM has thus far furnished the following items:

4200 kilos - Rice
280 " - Fish
140 jars - Nuoc Nam
3000 sheets
Aluminum roofing material

It is anticipated that additional expenditures will be made to replace personal losses and some expenditure for building materials, although the latter will be minimized due to most of the timber requirements being obtained from the surrounding forest. The Province Chief has also been authorized to pay up to 30\$00 per diem to volunteer workers from outside the hamlet.

The Province has supplied the following personnel and supplies:

100 Civic Action Cadre
50 Laborers from Province Public Works
Department
50 Republican Youth Men
9 Republican Youth Women
50 Volunteer laborers from
Lai Thieu District
20 Prisoners
1 Medical Team (U.S. Army Med. Team
also provided)
350 Sets of donated clothing

The IMCSH has provided 100,000\$00 to the Province to assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the hamlet.

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A USIS team was flown into the hamlet on 20 August to report and record the damage and to interview selected individuals. The team was composed of Mr. Havens (Liaison Officer to USOM), two photographers, one moving picture photographer, and a reporter equipped with a portable tape recorder. In addition to the pictures taken, taped interviews were conducted with the Province Chief, the family of the murdered man, and the parents of a VC squad leader whose house was also destroyed. Results of the team effort, plus exposed film turned over to them, are not known at this time. However, Mr. Havens will be contacted for follow-up.

Leaflets were printed (1000) in the hamlet on 18 August and distributed to the inhabitants. Theme of the leaflets was the GVN sympathy and an appeal to the people to denounce the VC (Ben Tuong is considered a "C" hamlet). An additional 110,000 leaflets have been requested from USIS: 100,000 describing the incident and which will be disseminated throughout the Province and 10,000 directed at the VC describing the unwarranted attack on the people. The 110,000 leaflets should be distributed prior to 26 August.

To date approximately 50 houses have been reconstructed, and completion of all reconstruction targeted for 26 August.

This has been the best organized Civic Action project I have witnessed and could have a tremendous impact on the Province if the psy/war effort is followed up properly.

RBannister:vrh:AD/RA
8/23/63