

pleiku
22 June 1972

Dear Louis,

As Tom mentioned in his last letter, our Kontum real estate has sustained some damage as a result of the recent fighting. To assess the damage, I made a trip up last week, with the Minister of Health. The findings,

House — Full of bullet holes, it looks like a Civil War battlefield relic. ARVN have broken into every room and taken or destroyed everything of value, including the lighting fixtures. A new photographic enlarger bought by Tom and Glen was rusting on the porch, dismantled.

New House — Slight damage due to its proximity to a major air operation. Cobra fire strafed the east roof, breaking numerous tiles and making holes in several interior walls. Otherwise, the house looks finished and ready for moving in, except electricity, and now water, as the bishop's water tower was demolished in the air strike.

Present Hospital — Despite its nearness to the heaviest fighting, the damage was surprisingly slight. Numerous bullet holes, and one rocket round to the kitchen were all the scars of battle. None of the staff was injured, though one was taken who later escaped and is now back at work. I think, had the evacuation not been made, we might have suffered some casualties with the increased number of people at the hospital.

Minh Quy — Rooves of the pharmacy, warehouses A and B were hit by rocket rounds, and will need repair. ~~sections~~ These structures were tin, and should be easy to fix; the tile rooves had no damage. Vandalism, by the ARVN, according to the villagers nearby, accounted for the rest of the damage, and an ARVN unit now occupies the grounds. The house, both warehouses, and the hospital were broken into and ransacked. In the medical supply warehouse, formerly stacked to the ceiling with full shelves, there is one shelf left. The floor is a sea of soggy bandages and ruined equipment, permeated with the stench of human excrement. The collection is almost a foot deep. A similar situation is found in the house, though no damage was done to the structure itself. It is of interest that the sanitary block, newly finished and with complete toilet facilities, was not appropriated for its intended purpose. The hospital itself has suffered little damage, though I have heard that the x-ray machine was damaged. Several of the rooms are carpeted with loose pills of all sorts, mixed with feces. A microscope was being used as a toy when I was there, and in retrospect, I should have confiscated it. Many windows also were broken.

I propose the following action;

- a) A pictorial record of the damage is enclosed. Please have these films processed by a Kodak agent, and have slides made, plus any prints of appropriate size that portray the damage. Please feel free to make duplicate slides for yourself. (one of the films was taken before, but I managed to mix them up.) Please forward the prints so that they can be enclosed in ;

b) A letter to president Thieu ostensibly informing him of the situation and reminding him of the sacrifices that have come from Minh Quy over the years. This letter would contain a request for;

- 1) A supervised ARVN work detail to clean the grounds
- 2) Removal of all troops on hospital property
- 3) A local Montagnard force to be stationed nearby (one of pat's projects for a long time) to provide security

← No copy survives; details not recalled.

I understand that a rather demoralized, handwritten letter to pat managed to reach the KHF. Please accept my apologies. The letter was not intended to reach the Seattle group, as it reflected problems that were known to be only temporary setbacks. The light and water are back on, and we have taken the liberty to appropriate house funds to eat our meals at MACV (the reason for the high budgetary allotment to House fund). Indeed, now spirits are much better, and most of the problems mentioned in the letter to Dr. Oldham, of which you should have received a copy, have been ameliorated. We are no longer receiving casualties, and most of the old ones are well on the way to recovery. The figure of 500 new patients was a cumulative total, and at no time was our inpatient census higher than 150. Things now look favorable for the move back to Kontum, perhaps within the next month. It should be a good deal easier than the initial evacuation.

My personal plans involve a short in-country recuperation as soon as pat arrives (one M.D. is easily sufficient now), followed by return to the States when the move back to Kontum is accomplished. I hope to work in an emergency room until the first of the year, catching up on some reading, getting my weight back up, and preparing for some teaching and preventive medicine work on a second tour. As the VPPN program will be ending next June, this second tour will be in Spring, 1973, and be of short term. The philosophy I expressed to you in my last letter requires that the Montagnards now assume the brunt of total patient care and administration. For this reason, I could not accept a return tour with Minh Quy if the present attitude of Western domination were to be allowed to persist. Following the second tour, I hope to settle down to a happy relationship with Group Health in Seattle.

Please give my best to Gwen and to KHF.

Warmest personal regards,

John William Taylor, M.D.