

MINH - QUY HOSPITAL

MISSION CATHOLIQUE

KONTUM — VIET - NAM

5 August 1974

Dear DR. JOHN.

July was a pleasant month as regards weather here in Kontum, with little rain and beautiful skies at night. However, a sad thing happened 15 July. The hospital compound received some incoming rockets and one that landed close to the rear of the ward killed one patient and two of our workers, Po and Xrong. After that hit, the attack continued and others were landing close. All the patients who could walk evacuated themselves and we moved the others to the Province Hospital compound in town but were able to return to Minh Quy that same evening. Gabrielle, Nyao, and some of the others remained at the hospital all day to prevent looting and to get things straightened up while the rest of the staff went to Province to take care of the patients.

It is believed that the rockets were aimed at some big guns in a nearby village, and arrangements were made to move them so the area would no longer be a target. Most of the patients who had left on their own also returned that evening or the next day and we were filled to capacity again within a few days. We are thankful for the courage and cooperation of our staff during this time. Besides taking risks to protect the patients and carry out the evacuation, many donated blood for the wounded (even some of the patients were blood donors).

Dr. Pat Smith had just returned to Kontum on 14 July, so the welcome celebration for her was delayed. Her adopted sons Bot and Mir returned with her and they are all living at the team house. The boys have just started to school and will have to learn and re-learn Bakhar and Vietnamese.

At present the staff of doctors here (in addition to Pat), consists of Dr. Eric Baker from New Zealand (surgery, OB, and psychiatry), Mr. George Christian from the U.S. (anesthesia and pediatrics), Mr. George Lassier from the U.S. (internal medicine), and Bob Selras from the U.S. (general duty). Bob is spending 6 months here between his studies and his internship. Dr. Yubler just arrived unexpectedly in July a few days before Dr. Pradhan left (after serving here for one year). This sounds like a relatively large staff at the moment, but some will be taking badly needed vacations soon and some will be terminating within the year.

This year many of the villagers are suffering from food shortages. Some of the land they have been assigned at relocations is very poor, the crops have not had sufficient rain this season, and locusts are attacking crops again. Many people are foraging in the forests for the main substance of their diet and besides being difficult and time-consuming, this is often dangerous. We still get numerous patients wounded by mines and other ordnance.

This morning there was a general meeting for the entire staff with Ya Tih giving a pep talk to reinvigilate fresh spirit; many of the workers offered ideas for solving some of our current problems. This afternoon was pay day; immunizations are being given to the staff at this time and we are starting a malaria prophylaxis program for them and their families as incidence is increasing among them. We hope this finds you healthy and busy. We are happy to hear from you whenever you have time to write.

ya Gabrielle