

Three months have passed since my return here with Det and Wir, and it seems as though we had never been away. While some physical changes had been made in my absence, the biggest change from the past is the number of medical staff available. To have three, four, and even, at times, five doctors working at the hospital seems unimaginable luxury. On my arrival, we had Dr. Edric Baker, Dr. George Christian, and Dr. George Pradhan, in addition to Bob Cairns, a fourth year medical student who almost entirely filled the shoes of an additional doctor. Dr. George Pradhan left at the end of July, but we had a replacement for him in Dr. George Lussier, who arrived July 22, and will be with us until next May. He is an ex-Navy Doctor, who has had specialty training in internal medicine. Dr. Edric Baker went on leave a month after my arrival, and I have been doing the surgery and obstetrics since that time. However, Dr. Baker will be back at work next month, at which time he will assume direction of a new project -- a nutritional rehabilitation ward, designed to care for severely malnourished children. We have also had Dr. Al Proskey, from Chicago, with us for one month. He left last week. He is a cardiologist, but plunged into general hospital and clinic work in his time here. Bob Cairns left us two weeks ago, but, with Dr. Baker back to work next week, this still leaves the medical staff at four doctors.

All of this makes for a tremendous difference in the quality of care we are able to give the patients, as well as for much more relaxed and less tired doctors. The death rates at the hospital certainly reflect the increased quality of care -- for some months now, they have been averaging only 1 to 2% of hospital admissions - an unbelievably low average for this country.

The patients continue to come in numbers sufficient to keep all of us busy. Two new waves of refugees have been created in the past month -- from the outposts at Mang Buk and Chuong Nghia, which recently fell to NVA forces. The people from Chuong Nghia have only been straggling in the past few days, many of them spending more than two weeks on trails trying to reach Kontum. These new groups of refugees always provide challenges in medical care, since they come from isolated areas without previous access to medical care. This means they frequently are suffering from chronic untreated disease. It also means that they are much more difficult to convince of the need of hospital care, never having been exposed to it previously. In addition, many had suffered wounds in the fighting before the loss of their homes, and nearly all are suffering from malnutrition and exhaustion on their arrival here.

Kontum city itself remains peaceful, in spite of the loss of the last remaining outpost in the province, when Chuong Nghia fell about two weeks ago. We go ahead making plans for the future. We now have two Montagnard boys interested in medicine, and who will be eligible to enter medical school in Saigon within the next two years. Yol, a girl from Kon Hring, recently completed a one year nursing course in Nha Trang, and is at work at the hospital, and proving very satisfactory. We plan to send two to three others to the one year course at the beginning of next year, and will have two or three candidates for three year nursing schools next year.

Sister Gabrielle, our on-the-job trained anesthetist, has developed impressive new skills in the past year, thanks to the help of Dr. Christian. He is an anesthesiologist, although currently working in pediatrics, and has taught Sr. Gabrielle not only some of the finer points of general anesthesia, but also spinal anesthesia and some blocks.

Det and Wir are adjusting very well to the old-new environment, after some initial hesitations and unfavorable comparisons with the U.S.A. They both go to a school near our house in town, where, in addition to five hours of regular school, they have two extra hours of tutoring in the Vietnamese language.

On September 18, nearly all of the hospital staff, both expatriate and Montagnard, turned out for the evening wedding of John Havican, our construction specialist. This was the first wedding here of any of our Western staff, and Minh-Quy did its best for the occasion. A reception at the house was "catered" by the Montagnard nuns, who also made the wedding cake -- the cake was rather untraditional in the fact that its decorations showed a Montagnard village, but the spirit was there -- and the bride and groom duly fed each other a piece thereof. The following day, the wedding was celebrated in Montagnard fashion -- with a jar party at the hospital.

(Picture of part of wedding party enclosed: left to right: John Havican, his wife, Thu, Wir, Det (they acted as ring bearers), and Bok Tuang, John's counterpart in construction at Minh-Quy, and his best man for the wedding.)

The pig project is now well under way, with some 65 new pigs from litters born this year already. Pigs are already being placed in some of the refugee camps, with the people building pens for them before the pigs are given them. Kerry Heubeck, in charge of the project, now feels that the Montagnards are well enough trained to manage most of the project themselves, and will soon be spending part of his time on other CARE projects in the country, returning here from time to time to check on our pigs.

All at Minh-Quy is geared for progress. The only real problem seems to be that our finances are doing the opposite! Help!

signed Dr. Pat

Another note to KHF Board members

11/1/74

Bill Rose called the KHF office from Philadelphia today stating that he must stay in the States until spring when he may try once again for naturalization papers for his son Terry. He has had confirmation from the American Consulate in Saigon and the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington, D.C. that unless his wife becomes an American citizen the boy will remain a Vietnamese citizen until he is eighteen. Mrs. Rose, at this point, does not want to renounce her Vietnamese citizenship.

Bill has secured employment with the Delaware County Juvenile Court. He and his family will continue living in Pennsylvania at least until spring.

He will come to Seattle on a weekend or try two days during the week after November if the board so desires.