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FAMILY OF TOLEDO MISSIONARY KILLED IN VIETNAM
Mr. Ziemer, his wife, and children, Tim and Miriam

Learned To Live With War

Slain Missionary Used To Red Attacks, Son Says

Vietnam Village Reported Often Hit

A Toledo missionary killed in Vietnam had been close to death from exploding mortar shells many times in recent weeks, his son said here Friday night.

There's reason to believe, however, that the Rev. Robert Ziemer was killed by a land mine, the son, Tim, 21, a senior at Wheaton College, said.

The missionary's wife, Bess, was critically injured in the Viet Cong attack at Ban Me Thuot that took the life of her husband. A daughter, Miriam, 15, had left Vietnam two days before to return to language studies in Malaysia.

The son learned of the death of his father about midnight Thursday at Wheaton. He came directly to the home of his uncle, Paul Ziemer, at 3825 Woodley Rd.

"We have learned that my father was killed at 8 or 9 p.m. Sunday," the son said.

Tim Ziemer had last talked with his parents for six minutes by radio two weeks ago.

"My father told me the Viet Cong had been bombarding their village of Ban Me Thuot with mortar shells but he had become accustomed to the attacks."

Last Thursday, he received a letter from his father. "He went over some of the things he didn't tell me when we talked," Tim said. "He told me that three of our helicopters at a base nearby had been destroyed by mortar shells the night he called."

The Ziemers had learned to live with the war "as well as anyone can live with that sort of thing," the son, who grew up in Vietnam, said. "They weren't fearful—they just accepted it," he said.

Ban Me Thuot is a city of some 20,000. The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church has the only Protestant mission there.

"Our mission worked with aborigines — not the Vietnamese, who were either Catholic

or Buddhist," the son related. "The tribes are called Rhade."

Ban Me Thuot is about 180 miles northwest of Saigon and about 40 miles from the Cambodian border, the son said.

Dalat, a French-oriented city where he finished high school, is some 80 miles "but a full day's drive from Ban Me Thuot," Tim said.

The Ziemers' mission compound at Ban Me Thuot has three sizable buildings. The son said the last word from his parents gave no indication that the compound had been damaged by the stepped-up Viet Cong attacks.

The Ziemers' daughter, Beth, 23, a medical nurse, and her husband, Richard Drummond, a missionary, are taking language courses at Dalat, Tim said.

Tim said he had not been in contact with his sisters since he learned of his father's death and his mother's injury, but church headquarters indicated that Miriam had been informed of the tragedy.

Mrs. Ziemer, who goes by her middle name, Marie, is a patient in a military hospital, the son said. "We learned about an hour ago," he said early Friday night, "that Mom is off the critical list."

Information about the incident and the fate of the mission compound is difficult to obtain, the son said. "It's all so uncertain—I have received some of my information from New York and some from Washington."

Paul Ziemer, a Toledo businessman, said the death of his brother was "A real shock to all of us."

He said he last saw his brother and family when they left Toledo Express Airport on their return trip to Vietnam in 1966 after a year's furlough in this country.

During a year's furlough in 1963, the slain clergyman served the Toledo Gospel Tabernacle as interim pastor.

The late Rev. L. H. Ziemer, father of the missionary, had been at Toledo Gospel Tabernacle for 23 years. He was succeeded by Rev. William Bryan in 1954.