

(Letter from Mrs Ruth Houck.) Nhatrang Feb. 11th 1968 (To her parents)

Conditions out here have been getting worse for quite a while now. We have never seen it ever this bad in the last 20 years of service out here. Auntie and Uncle Jackson say it is also much worse than at the time of the Japanese occupation.

First I will give you the details on the Banmethuot attack. At 4 A.M. on the 30th the V.C.'s entered Carolyn Griswold's house and ordered her and her father upstairs. They then blew up the house. Carolyn lay in the rubble for 9 hours. Her father called to her before he died. Bob Ziemer and Ed Thompson and a Rade man finally dug Carolyn out and moved her to Ziemer's house. She went into shock every time she was moved--evidently because of internal injuries. Bob and Ed. cleaned out the garbage pit to make it into a bunker. On Wed. the 31st the V.C.'s blew up Thompson's house. Carolyn was moved out to the servant's quarters as they expected Ziemer's house to be blown up next. At 4 A.M. Thursday Feb 1st Ziemer's house was blown up. Betty Olsen and Ruth Wilting pleaded with the V.C.'s to let them get medicine for Carolyn. They started out in the car and were shot at but ran back to the bunker safely. Bob ran out of the bunker to ask for mercy for Carolyn and was shot in the head. Betty saw him fall against the clothesline and ran out of the bunker to lower him to the ground. The V.C.'s said, 'Where is his gun?' She said, 'We don't have any, we are missionaries'. Ruth Wilting tried again to get help to Carolyn and they shot her. They then went to the bunker and killed Thompsons. Ruth's face was half blown off. Marie played dead but they called her out and she expected any minute to be in the Lord's presence. She noticed Bob was still breathing as she walked by his body. She was taken to a Rade house across the street and there was Hank Blood tied up and also Betty Olsen. The tribespeople persuaded the V.C.'s to let them walk Marie to the hospital. There she found Carolyn. On Friday they both were evacuated to the 8th Field Hospital at Nhatrang and Carolyn died while Marie was being operated on. (Marie arrives today at ~~the~~ Washington to enter Walter Reed hospital. Her stomach wound is serious DIJ) (Feb 14).

Psalm 91. Nhatrang. The V.C.'s attacked here on the 30th in the middle of the noisy Tet celebrations. We found out later that it was to have been a 2 pronged attack but the group from our side arrived too late so called it off on our side. They are regrouping to attack again. We started off Tet visitation as usual until Mr Thai told us that bodies were lying all over the streets of Nhatrang and he wanted us to get back to the house and stay indoors. We had no lights and I was doing the cooking etcetera as Co Nam was in Cantho for Tet. We had some food on hand so made out fine. Troops from the Academy stalked through the Orphanage property and all around looking for V.C.'s they caught 7. One fellow in uniform was nabbed right as he went out of the Orphanage gate by our house. The Lord gave us many precious promises to stand on and we were at peace. 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength' On Sunday we went over to visit Marie in the hospital. The Lord has brought her through in beautiful victory. On Monday Franklin and Gordon Cathey flew to Nhatrang. On Tuesday Jacksons were evacuated down here and are staying with the Kleinhens. The Pleiku folks were evacuated down and are staying at Lem Morgans. On Wednesday we were told to leave immediately for Nhatrang side by pastors Tuoi and Chan as they said the V.C.'s were infiltrating our side. We and Ingrams are also staying now at Kleinhens. Sutherlands and Longs are staying at Morgans. Many of the army units are helping us with food so we have no lack. On Thursday we were told that women and children were to be evacuated to Bangkok. They can't seem to line up planes as yet. We would like to go to F.E.B.C. in Manila and work on Vietnamese programming as De feels it will be a long time before we can go back on the air out here. Burt had already gotten Thay Kiem trained to take ~~over~~ care of operating the machines etc--the work that he had been doing. We have another year until furlough and feel that with conditions the way they are now we could be of more use to the Church by building up our Manila programs. We will have to wait until we hear what Mr King decides we should do.

The Jacksons left with hardly anything so we have been outfitting them. She had no nightie so I gave her a new one I had. Also my Winter coat fits

er perfectly. A nice suit of Burts was lengthened in the sleeves and leg so it also fits uncle perfectly. I gave Auntie an extra purse I had and Jackie Ingram had some dresses and panties that fitted her. Burt and Spence gave uncle shirts and pyjamas too. We have all been helping each other out all we can and are one big happy family. We plan to leave nearly everything in the house and have told Mr De to sell things if conditions worsen and we can't return and then put the money into the Radio and Church work.

The Nationals don't seem to be too upset by so many leaving as they are very much concerned for the missionaries after the deliberate killing at Bahme-thuot. The V.C. that killed Bob Ziemr said, " We hate the Americans". They hate all whites and that is the propoganda they are working on now. Pray much for the Church.