

Taken by VC in 1962

Wife certain husband lives

BAN ME THUOT, Vietnam (AP) — Betty Mitchell was stunned that the name of her missionary husband was not on the list of Communist prisoners of war but she says she's had word recently that he's alive — and she won't give up hope.

The tall, handsome Mrs. Mitchell last saw her husband May 30, 1962. He and two other missionaries were captured by Viet Cong guerrillas who broke into a leprosarium near this small mountain town.

For almost 11 years she quizzed mountain tribesmen and Viet Cong prisoners and defectors seeking word of the three missionaries. None had seen them in captivity.

'From Out There'

"But we've had word fairly recently that they're alive," she said, explaining that the word came "from out there" — the jungles surrounding the town. She said it was passed by word of mouth through mountain villagers until it reached the missionary group here.

Mrs. Mitchell said a U.S. State Department official had advised that she and her four children "accept the inevitable" when Archie Mitchell was unaccounted for by the



MRS. BETTY MITCHELL



ARCHIE MITCHELL

Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. But she dismissed the idea that he might not return.

"This is man's word and we don't need to depend on that. We depend on the Lord. I read the promise of God again, that they are prisoners of hope," she said. This referred to Biblical passages in the writings of Paul which she said she read soon after her husband's capture and accepted as a pledge from God.

Newlyweds

Mitchell and his wife came to Vietnam in January 1948 as newlyweds working for the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They went first to Hanoi, then Dalat and in March 1962 moved to Ban Me Thuot.

Two months later, Mrs. Mitchell said the Viet Cong "came in through the door, cutting their way in with bayonets. They were yelling. Three of them came in the house and took my husband out the other door.

"They made me and the three older children come out-

side but they wouldn't let me get my other child. They started to tie me up and my husband said, 'No, just take me.'"

Watched in Fear

The youngest girl, Jerry then 4, was asleep when the attack came. She awoke to watch in fear as the Viet Cong ransacked the house.

Outside, Mrs. Mitchell, her three other children and four nurses watched the Viet Cong lead Mitchell, Dr. Ardel Vieta and Dan Gerber, a Mennonite missionary, into the jungle.

Mrs. Mitchell, who speaks the language of the Rhade, mountain tribesmen in this area, and often wears the straight, floor-length black skirt of the mountain women, has spent her years of waiting in missionary work: religious teaching, especially to children, and helping with administration of the leprosarium.

She lives in a frame house in this cool highland town,

where the blossoms of coffee plants fill the air with a richly sweet smell.

"I really did expect their names to be on the list," she observed. "I don't understand why the VC didn't even mention them. They're not military, they weren't taken in a battle, it was different."

The Mitchell children have grown up. The two older daughters live in the United States; one was married recently and the other is a college student. A son finished high school and now works at a children's hospital in Da Nang. The youngest daughter attends a missionary school in Malaysia.

In VC Hands

The leprosarium where Mitchell was captured is now in Viet Cong hands. The night before the cease-fire went into effect, Mrs. Mitchell said, Communist troops moved in unopposed and raised the Viet Cong flag over the leprosarium and two "segregation villages" in the area which are inhabited by leprosy patients well enough to work.

Knife thugs yield to catsup bottle

SPOKANE, Wash. (UPI) — A grocery owner chased off two knife-wielding robbers by threatening to bash them with a catsup bottle he pulled off the shelves.

Police said the young thieves fled without taking anything when store owner Emil F. Erickson picked up the bottle.