

THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE
260 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y. 10036

February 8, 1968

The following report, written by Rev. Richard Phillips, was hand-carried by a returning serviceman to California, where he phoned it to our Headquarters. It is the first and only detailed report to reach us. We are sending copies by Special Delivery letter to:

Mr. Robert Griswold, son of Leon Griswold and brother of Carolyn
Mr. William Thompson, brother of Ed Thompson
Rev. Thomas Stebbins, brother of Ruth Thompson
Mrs. A. H. Dorn, sister of Ruth Wilting
Mr. Paul Ziemer, brother of Robert Ziemer
Mr. Wilson Otis Ford, father of Marie Ziemer
Wycliffe Bible Translators headquarters

Please share the information in whatever way you deem most appropriate.

H. Robert Cowles
Acting Foreign Secretary

I am sending you this report of the death of the Banmethuot missionaries with the thought that I have probably heard more of the details than others at this point. I talked to Marie Ziemer this morning at the 8th Field Hospital in Nhatrang, where she is recovering nicely from surgery.

Last night I was given quite a few details by phone by a captain on duty at MCV in Banmethuot. Some of the time sequence is still vague to me. Mrs. Blood (the Wycliffe missionary) may be able to clear up some of this but she is not yet arrived in Nhatrang.

In the early morning of Tuesday, January 30, the Griswold house next to the Raday church was blown up. Mr. Griswold was killed and Carolyn seriously injured. Since a general attack was in progress, others on the compound did not at once realize what had happened. Carolyn was under the debris for some seven hours before being rescued by a few nationals including their cook's husband. She was taken to Ziemer's house and cared for by our nurses. Also being treated in Ziemer's house were several Raday casualties.

A garbage ditch far back on the property was dug out and converted into a bunker. This left no time for burying Mr. Griswold that day as had been planned.

That evening, all the missionaries decided to spend the night in Ziemer's dependency (quarters for servants located behind Ziemers' house) thinking that other residences might be attacked. Our two nurses attended Carolyn in one room. Ziemers and Thompsons stayed in the other. That night Thompsons' house was blown up, and early next morning the Ziemers' house. The missionaries took refuge in the bunker but did not move Carolyn, who had gone into shock every time she was moved.

On Wednesday Bob Ziemer and Ed Thompson decided to go out and ask the enemy to allow them to take the wounded to the hospital. Bob was shot in the head. Then the people in the bunker were found and shot. Ed and Ruth Thompson and Ruth Wilting died there. Marie was wounded in the arm, chest, leg,

and abdomen. She pretended to be dead, but came out when ordered to do so. She and Betty Olsen, wounded very little if at all, were taken down to a home in a nearby settlement. The Henry Blood family, including three children, and three nationals were held there, too.

Sometime later Betty Olsen, Henry Blood, and the Raday were led away. I have no further information about them. Marie was released after being held for two days. A Raday boy helped her walk up the road to the main highway. There a Christian appeared and had her taken to the province hospital along a path the Viet Cong were permitting people to travel. Then U. S. soldiers took her to the MCV for a doctor. Dr. Swallow treated her and arranged for evacuation that same day, February 2, to the 8th Field Hospital in Nhatrang, where she had surgery that evening.

How Carolyn got to MCV I don't know. She seems to have been taken there from the Raday church, I think by Americans. She was evacuated with Marie to Nhatrang. She died in the hospital about 6:00 p.m. from hemorrhagic shock and internal injuries.

Bob Ziemer's body must have been found the same day, and was flown to Cam Ranh Bay. Carolyn's body has been sent to Tansonnrut with military orders to be flown to New York. I presume the same destination was ordered for Bob. The other bodies were seen in the bunker on February second, but poor security prevented efforts to recover them.

Mrs. Blood and children arrived at MCV on or before February second, but separately from Marie, I gather. She had a slight leg wound. The Milt Barker family (Wycliffe) living at Hoa Vinh near the Banmethuot east airfield were untroubled throughout all of this period, although no word was heard from them until February 3.

On February 3, Captain Dale Landon, in charge of recovering the other bodies, called to request permission to bury them where they were. We asked that a marker be placed there in case of any future wish to move the bodies. Their personal effects are to be sent to the C. & M. A. headquarters in Saigon.

The Wycliffe Center was demolished, but their people were unhurt.

It is hard to believe that this has happened in Banmethuot. What can we do but trust with Jeremiah that God's thoughts to us are good and not evil, to give us a future and a hope. It seems now that only God can be equal to fulfilling such a promise as this.

Sincerely yours,
RICHARD L. PHILLIPS

Nhatrang, February 4, 1968