

Copy of letter from OLIVE KINGSBURY to Agnes Kerr & Helen Geisinger from

Nhatrang, Viet Nam
February 9, 1968

FEB 15 RECD

As I started writing to the various close friends and relatives of our six who have just gone on ahead, I knew you girls would want to hear the details. The worst of it is that my information is still very sketchy, and I am sure that you will be hearing many conflicting reports. Since Marie and Vange Blood have been our chief source of information, and they really weren't in a condition to remember everything clearly, although they have really done very well, things don't always just coincide. I will give a brief outline here -

Early Tuesday morning, the 30th, a satchel charge was thrown into one mission house (Pink House) where Carolyn and her father were. Evidently Carolyn heard her father call out once or twice, but he must have died very soon. However, it took hours to dig Carolyn out, and found she had a broken leg. So they took her over to Ziemers to care for her there. I understand that Ruth and Betty O. were able to get up to the clinic for medicine, although there was such continuous fighting going on around there that they could not get her out to a doctor, or dare to get out themselves, for of course they couldn't leave Carolyn.

Wednesday, down below the road they were hit badly, napalm being used by the VC's as I understand, injuring the ones in Ann Nang's bunker. Y Meng, who is in Bible School this year, was severely burned, and so they were caring for him at Ziemers together with Carolyn. We understand that he died by Thursday or Friday. Helicopters did try to get there to help but there was too much ground fire.

By Thursday morning I guess they were getting desperate about Carolyn, so Bob stepped out to appeal for mercy and was immediately shot down. Then they turned to the bunker where the others were, spraying the occupants with bullets, killing Ed and Ruth Thompson and Ruth Wilting, and wounding Marie Ziemer. Betty Olsen seems to have been in the car trying to get Carolyn out. When they realized Marie wasn't dead, they made her and Betty Olsen, together with a number of the Raday who had been staying with them there, go down to a Raday house in the village where they were kept the rest of the day and night. Friday night morning they let Marie go, and Y Djal(?), who is now in medical training in Saigon but was home for Tet, helped her walk to the hospital. They had to walk up back of the property, through that military camp, as I gathered that too much was still going on down the road. Then they took Marie to the MACV Bungalow, I think, and soon had her and Carolyn evacuated to the 8th Field Hospital at Nhatrang. The pastor Ann Nang or Y Ngui, Y Ton (Bible School student) were captured with Betty and Hank Blood. Marie told of their leading 2 people to the Lord that first night!

Back to the missing link in Carolyn's story. Friday morning, Vange Blood had been allowed to return to her house down in the village with her three young children after they had taken her husband Hank off. As she walked out Friday morning, she went up to our property, saw Carolyn still there and got some ARVN soldiers near who moved her over to the church, and then they later were able to get her out, so she was able to be evacuated with Marie.

However, as they got to Nhatrang, Marie's appearance was so much worse with about 17 bullet wounds up her left side and one in right arm, that they gave her first attention. So when Carolyn suddenly went into shock, they were quite alarmed. A medic said she went into cardiac ~~arrest~~ arrest. They were able to get her going again when she again had cardiac arrest and they couldn't help her. It then appeared that she had many internal injuries with bleeding, which they had not yet had time to discover.

All yours a bit "In a few years - how few we do not know, but let us wait - we shall all be together in joy. So with us, too, all that matters is how we live through these days while we are trusted to trust."

We were really shocked when we got here to Nhatrang Saturday night and found that she had died. Not until Friday afternoon did we in Pleiku know anything of the Banmethuot tragedies. Oh, to get back to the beginning as to the reason I was not in Banmethuot at that time. God works in strange ways, and I still do not understand why I was spared, when such valuable ones in the work are gone. But January 23rd, I was sent to Nhatrang for some blood tests - a sudden drop in hemoglobin had alarmed our American doctor up there. That got all straightened out by the 27th so then I got a flight to Cheo Reo in order to hold a leprosy clinic the following Wednesday since I was afraid there would be no flights closer to Tet. The ironic thing was that the plane went through to Banmethuot, and I really debated about getting off but did want to get to that clinic. So I was in Cheo Reo, one of the few quiet places in the country while everything was popping around everywhere else. After clinic Wednesday morning I got a helicopter to Pleiku, found that the missionaries there were staying out at 71st Evac. Hospital because of all the trouble in town. They were there while much was going on Tuesday, but escaped injury though bullets were flying all around. We were able to go back to town Thursday through the day and help our workers and patients who had been caught there - not allowed to leave town, but no real safe place in town. So much destruction over across the stream from our property - right below the prison was quite an area burned out. Of course that whole side is (or was) now covered with Vietnamese dwellings. The military camp opposite the post office was occupied, ammunition captured there, etc. Then up behind there on road going out to the villages west of town, where a big Chinese school, a high school and Catholic school had been built was the center of the attack. Tunnels were found under the school. Fierce fighting went on all Tuesday - breaking out in various places every day or so. We hear that it is quiet now in town but Holloway - outside the storage area and chopper strip being hit all the time, of course. We came on to Nhatrang on Saturday, the Air Force Chaplain arranging a flight for us, since things were quite uncertain in Pleiku, and we were crowding them at the hospital though helping work nights, too, which I enjoyed. Now we are being evacuated to Bangkok when exit visas are arranged - within a few days. That is, all women and children and some men are going - some men staying to try to help and hold things together. My main regret is that I can't get back to Banmethuot for even a quick visit to confer with Mr. Quang, and try to arrange things. But fortunately, he has been acting as full director since June, so once they can get some money and supplies, the work can go ahead. Amazingly, reports indicate that all of our workers are safe, but property mostly gone. All four mission houses, including the Phillips which was just built, are destroyed. Clinic buildings destroyed but the new and old churches are standing although damaged.

Phillips' escape from Kontum is another miracle. He was up there working on Miong primer (such as Carolyn did for the Reday last year). Three days they had to spend in bunkers, but they were rescued in time, although children were rather dehydrated by then. Dalat language school and missionaries also had a very narrow escape - rescued within half hour or so of the VC complete take over of property. Actually I should be saying NVA rather than VC, for all this drive was quite definitely North Vietnamese.

When we thought we girls could possibly stay in Nhatrang and help oversee the Leprosarium in Banmethuot, Pleiku, or even work out from Pleiku, I could see a possible reason for my being away from Banmethuot at the time. Now that we are having to leave the country, it is a little more difficult to see, but we know that God's ways are not our ways, and we can trust Him. Was reading in Amy Carmichael's *Thou Givest They Gather* Thursday before even knowing the news, and it has stayed with me - will quote a bit "In a few years - how few we do not know, but few at most - we shall all be together in joy. So with us, too, all that matters is how we live through these days while we are trusted to trust." Isaiah 26:3,4 are so precious

Hanoi, Viet Nam

I have been leaning on that 4th verse - "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

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So much more could be said - you can write to us in Bangkok (2 Pramuan Road) and I hope to have more news as time goes on. Dick Phillips will be staying here and hopes to get up to Banmethot to check on things as soon as flights are available. Right now everything is definitely military.

Remember everything clearly, although they have really done very well, things don't always work out. I will give a brief outline here -

Early Tuesday morning, the 33rd, a patrol came to the house (Phak House) where Carolyn and her father were. He had Carolyn's name on his list and he had to go, but he must have died very soon. However, it took hours to dig Carolyn out, and found she had a broken leg. So they took her over to Hanoi to care for her there. I understand that both Bob and Betty G. were able to get up to the clinic for medicine, although there was such confusion fighting going on around there that they could not get her out to a doctor, or dare to get out themselves, for of course they couldn't leave Carolyn.

OLIVE KINGSBURY

Wednesday, down below the road they were hit badly, again being used by the VC's as I understand, injuring the ones in Ann King's bunker. Y King, who is in Bible School this year, was severely burned, and so they were carrying for him at Hanoi together with Carolyn. He died by Thursday or Friday. Helicopters did try to get there to help but there was too much ground fire.

By Thursday evening I guess they were getting desperate about Carolyn, so Bob stayed out to appeal for mercy and was immediately shot down. Then they burned up the bunker where the others were, spraying the occupants with bullets, killing Ed and Ruth Thompson and Jack Wilting, and wounding Marie Simon. Betty Olson says to have been in the way trying to get Carolyn out when they realized Marie wasn't dead, they took her and Betty Olson, together with a member of the Redy who was been staying with them there, go down to a Redy house in the village where they were left the rest of the day and night. Friday night morning they let Marie go, and Y King (I), who is now in medical training in Saigon but was here for Ed, helped her walk to the hospital. They had to walk up back of the property, through the military camp, as I gathered that too much was still going on over the road. Then they took Marie to the NVA Hospital, I think, and were had her and Carolyn reunited to the 4th Field Hospital at Khamung. The pastor Ann King or Y King, Y King (Bible School student) were captured with Betty and Mark Blood. Marie told of their leading 1 people to the Lord that first night!

Back to the missing link in Carolyn's story. Friday morning, Vance Blood had been allowed to return to her house down in the village with her three young children after they had taken her husband back off. As she walked out Friday morning, she went up to our property, saw Carolyn still there and got some ARVN soldiers near who moved her over to the church, and then they later were able to get her out, so she was able to be reunited with Marie.

However, as they got to Khamung, Marie's appearance was so much worse with about 11 bullet wounds up her left side and one in right arm, that they gave her first attention. So when Carolyn suddenly went into shock, they were quite alarmed. A medic said she had some bad wounds on her arm. They were able to get her going again when the medic had finished treating and they couldn't help her. It then appeared that she had many internal injuries with bleeding, which they had not had time to discover.