

From: THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

Box C, Nyack, New York 10960

(914) 353 - 0750

When phoning from New York City - 562 - 5208

SUBJECT: ALLIANCE MISSIONARIES CAPTURED AT BANMETHUOT, VIET NAM
March 10, 1975

Brief background of Alliance casualties in 1962 - 1968 - 1975.

Pictures of the missionary families with biographical information.

With South Viet Nam wilting before the massive offensive of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, the fate of the Americans captured at Banmethuot on March 10, becomes more precarious.

Alliance experience at the hands of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong compounds our already mounting concern.

RWB:mr
3/31/75



The Christian and Missionary Alliance

NYACK, NEW YORK 10960 • CABLE ADDRESS "PAROUSIA" • PHONE (914) 353-0750

PRESENT SITUATION AT BANMETHUOT, VIET NAM - MARCH 1975

When the massive offensive of the North Vietnamese forces began to build up in early March, there were nine Americans and two Canadians at Banmethuot. Seven of these people are missionaries:

Mrs. Archie Mitchell (Betty)
Mr. Richard L. Phillips, Ph. D.
Mrs. Richard L. Phillips
Rev. and Mrs. Norman Johnson
John and Carolyn Miller (not C & M A)

Since there has been no contact with any of these to our knowledge and since Banmethuot has now fallen to the North Vietnamese forces, we can only presume that these seven people are being held by the North Vietnamese in Banmethuot or somewhere in the vicinity.

There are 490 Christian and Missionary Alliance churches in Viet Nam. There were 58 missionaries in Viet Nam at the time of the attack, all safe and accounted for, except for the seven mentioned above.

BACKGROUND

The Christian and Missionary Alliance began to minister in Viet Nam in 1911. At times during the sixty four years of Alliance ministry in Viet Nam (formerly a part of what was known as French Indo China) the missionary staff was approximately one hundred. This would have represented about ten percent of the overseas staff and financial disbursements of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

PREVIOUS C & M A CASUALTIES

The North Vietnamese killed the six missionaries listed here in the TET offensive that began January 29, 1968:

Rev. Robert Ziemer
(his wife, Marie was wounded
but recovered)
Rev. & Mrs. Edward Thompson
Miss Ruth Wilting
Miss Carolyn Griswold
Mr. Leon Griswold (father of Carolyn)

At the same time, Betty Olsen, R. N., and Hank Blood (missionaries), and Michael Dennis Benge of Heppner, Oregon, a USAID man, were taken captive.

After his release by the North Vietnamese, Michael Benge, in an interview at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington, D. C., on March 15, 1974, gave a detailed account of the deaths of Hank Blood and Betty Olsen on the captive trail.

1 9 6 2 - FIRST CAPTIVES

On May 30, 1962 three of our missionaries were taken captive by the Viet Cong from our leprosarium at Buno Ia Ana, approximately 14 kilometers from Bannethuot:

Dr. Ardel Vietti
Rev. Archie Mitchell
Mr. Daniel Gerber
(Mennonite)

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The acute concern for the people at Bannethuot can be understood in light of our sad experience with the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese forces dating back to 1962 as noted above.

Here is the bleak picture of heartache:

Two in captivity for 13 years.

Eight dead in the TET offensive
that began January 29, 1968.

Seven captive missionaries in
Bannethuot now, plus the five
year old daughter of Millers.

Betty Mitchell taken captive
13 years after her husband.

We are urging all agencies and the media to use their influence and authority to work for the release of the captive missionaries.

In accordance with the terms of the cease fire agreement concluded in January 1973, we urge the International Control Commission to secure from the North Vietnamese the guarantee of safe conduct for all of them to a point of embarkation, with every humanitarian consideration and all speed.

RWB:mr
3/27/75