

Wayne Briggs Shot 3 Times By VC Sniper

By Garner Roberts
Chronicle News Editor

SAIGON, Vietnam—A 23-year-old missionary in Vietnam, Wayne Briggs, was injured Monday, January 16, when hit three times by Viet Cong sniper fire. He was shot in the right arm and leg while riding a US Army medical evacuation helicopter near what is called the "Iron Triangle" area.

Briggs was serving as temporary administrator for the orphan program in Vietnam, under the direction of the Royal Oak Church of Christ in Royal Oak, Mich. Since Briggs has taken the orphanage leadership, the number of children cared for has jumped to 173.

He was injured while returning from a field trip near Lai Khe, just northeast of the "Iron Triangle" where the biggest American operation of the war has been in progress since January 8.

General William C. Westmoreland's headquarters announced that American forces in Vietnam suffered nearly 1,200 casualties during the week prior to the Briggs incident, with most of them coming from Operation Cedar Falls in the "Iron Triangle" north of Saigon.

Small Clashes

While there were no large-scale battles, there were numerous small clashes and the number of men deployed—estimated at more than 30,000—exceeded any operation of the war.

The helicopter carrying Briggs had landed to pick up a wounded American soldier, and the missionary—seated on an open side of the aircraft—was hit in the right elbow by the sniper's shot.

He climbed out of the helicop-



Wayne Briggs

ter to get in the protected front section of the aircraft, and a second sniper bullet hit him in the right arm, striking a nerve. Fragments of the bullet also hit his chest but a bullet-proof flak vest prevented injury.

As the helicopter took off a third bullet came through the floor and caused a minor knee injury.

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Briggs had been making a tape-recording of the entire incident, and as an Army medical corpsman applied a tourniquet to his arm, he said, "I think an artery is hit. I hope I don't lose my arm."

Doctors treating Briggs told his wife—the former Nina Charlotte McDonald of Sherman in north Texas—that the nerve damage may cost him 50 percent of the use of his right hand, but this couldn't be determined for a few weeks.

He was scheduled to be flown to a US military hospital in Japan on January 20 where he was scheduled to undergo surgery. Mrs. Briggs said that her husband is expected to stay in the Japan hospital for six to eight weeks.

The couple arrived in Saigon in July, 1966 to do mission and orphan work. Briggs was sent by the Lennon Road Church of Christ in Flint, Mich. A. J. Kerr is the preacher for Lennon Road.

Attended MCC

Briggs was born on April 29, 1943 in Bay City, Mich. He was a 1961 graduate of Fairgrove

High School in Akron, Mich. He attended Michigan Christian College in Rochester for two years.

He graduated from Abilene Christian College in Abilene, Tex., in August, 1965. While at ACC he was a member of the National Education Association, mission study class leader and director of the 1964 Student World Evangelism Workshop.

He graduated with a BSE in social science.

Mrs. Briggs graduated from ACC in May, 1965 with a BSE in English. She teaches English to Vietnamese employees of a big American construction combine in Saigon.

Briggs is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Briggs of Akron. His wife's parents are Mr. and Mrs. C. M. McDonald of Sherman. Both Briggs and his wife had taught in the Michigan public schools for one year prior to their Vietnam work.

Briggs also attended Harding College in Searcy, Ark., on the summer seminar basis.

(Editor's Note—This article will continue next week with a report on the orphan work of the Vietnam missionaries, directed by Briggs.)

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