

Winnetkan Serves in Vietnam, But Not With Usual Weapons

Navy Lt. (jg) John Massey of Winnetka is fighting in Vietnam, but he's not using conventional weapons.

The 27-year-old officer is commander of a Marine battalion doing health and sanitation work with the First Marine Division near Da-Nang.

In letters to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Massey, and his wife, Sue, all of 992 Ash St., the civil action officer said the actual war seems far away most of the time and sometimes the only reminders are groups of evacuated casualties awaiting treatment at the nearby hospital.

He said he occasionally sees distant illumination flares in the sky at night and hears the muffled sound of artillery and small-arms fire.

Since the Marines' extensive defensive perimeter around the air base limits Viet Cong activity to probing actions and occasional small night raids, the lieutenant said he's "in the rear with the gear."

Sprays Insecticide

The local man's unit conducts night mosquito-spraying missions in the area surrounding DaNang Air Base, and as the Marines enlarge the "safe" area his job grows.

Rain turns Vietnam's primitive roads into ribbons of mud about three days out every week, he said, adding that the natives say "we haven't seen nothin' as far as rain is concerned until we have seen the monsoons."

The dispensary operated by Lt. Massey's unit treats about 1,000 Vietnamese civilians monthly. The unit's surgical team visits area hospitals to train personnel, while other unit members teach Vietnamese civilians the importance of cleansing wounds, changing bandages, and having preschool children immunized.

Lt. Massey recently visited a Vietnamese village near the air base where some villagers died of the plague.

Examine Villagers

"We sprayed (the village) with insecticide, gave immunization shots, and examined relatives of the dead (for signs of the plague)" he wrote his parents.

Lt. Massey said there is an "incredible" shortage of trained professional people.

Lt. Massey said the nation's education system and fishing, farming, and manufacturing industries must be modernized if it is to recover from the war.

"The Vietnamese are pretty

Men
Only

savvy where it means an extra piastre," he wrote. "We taught the farmers to use commercial fertilizers and now we can't import enough (100,000 tons per month) to meet the demand; and we charge hard cash for it."

He said the Vietnamese learn construction skill like cement work and heavy equipment very quickly, but progress must come slowly so that the people learn the value of small advances and continue to work to continue them.

Lt. Massey said the current generation of French-trained teachers in Vietnam were schooled in the "mandarin tradition," which he said doesn't allow for student-teacher interaction and results in a stultifying education.

According to the lieutenant, the French school system still in use in Vietnam limits higher education to the children of the wealthy by requiring prospective students to pass stiff examinations before entering college.

The local man is a graduate of Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. He received a master's

degree in public health education from the University of Minnesota before enlisting in the Navy in June, 1962.

He earned his Navy commission in officer candidate school and served aboard the aircraft carrier Bennington and at Norfolk, Va., and San Diego before going to Vietnam in February.

He plans to return to the United States in January and teach preventative medicine to Navy personnel. He also plans to work toward a doctor of philosophy degree.

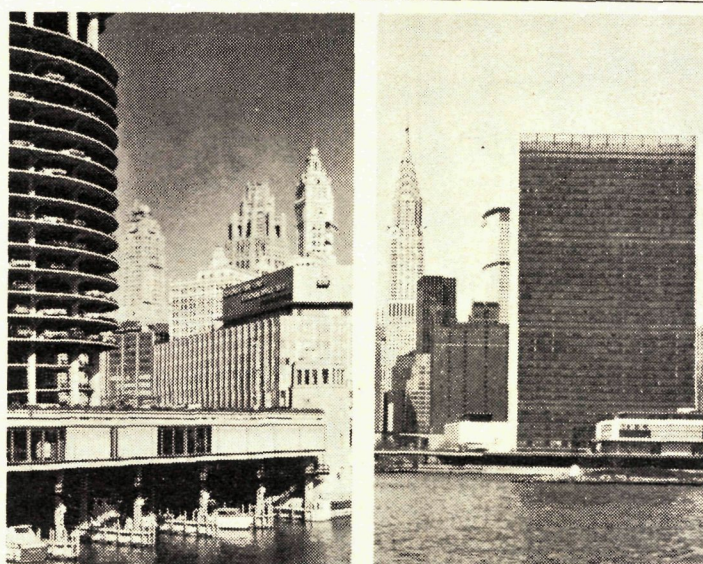
Mr. and Mrs. George Massey operate the Village Toy Shop in Winnetka. Lt. Massey's wife, a registered nurse, works at Evanston Hospital.



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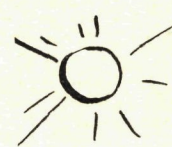
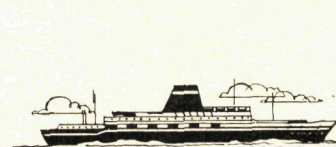
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