

# One Village In Viet Nam Has No Fear Of Viet Cong

By HUGH A. MULGAN  
**DAK RTHI**, South Viet Nam (AP)—This is one village the Viet Cong will never overrun. Dak Rthi is a drab collection of bamboo huts standing on stilts in a jungle clearing 185 miles northwest of Saigon, near the Cambodian border. In all of Quang Duc province, where hardly a week goes by without some village or hamlet being harassed by the Communists, this is a village that neither side wants.

Dak Rthi is ignored because all 31 families in the village have at least one case of leprosy in their household and, sooner or later, all 177 villagers probably will be stricken by the disease.

Surrounded by teak and mahogany forests, lush and constantly in chorus with the chatter of monkeys, the shrieks of exotic birds and the whistling of the gibbons, the mud-street village sits on the bank of a deep river in the heart of tiger-and-elephant country, deep in the heart of Viet Cong country.

**NEEDS NO PROTECTION**  
 But unlike the village at the top of the next hill or the village across the river, Dak Rthi needs no protection against the Viet Cong.

One night, the guerrillas did come, but fled in panic when they met a man with no nose.

Once or twice a month an American missionary used to come from Ban Me Thuot, bringing supplies for the little-tin-roofed dispensary. Occasionally a Vietnamese missionary, a convert from Buddhism to Christianity, came on foot from Gia Nghia, bringing an encouraging word and maybe some candy for the children. But not in many months has anyone come, not since early May when the Viet Cong stepped up their terror tactics in the area.

Just getting to Dak Rthi involved a three-hour trip over a washboard jungle road, with three armored scout cars up

front, two companies of infantry following on trucks, four jeeps with 50-calibre machine-guns spread among the column and an observation plane hovering overhead. But the tears of joy running down the face of the young mother clutching a bar of soap to wash her new-born baby made the whole operation seem as important as anything else going on in the war that day.

**TROOPS UNEASY**

The troops stood nervously in the village street, keeping as aloof as possible from the people and their drab little huts, the province chief, shook the arms of villagers who had no hands, drank the ceremonial rice wine in their dark, smoky huts and graciously accepted their token gifts of huge, home-grown cucumbers, promising that they would be on his table that very night.

The villagers were given food in C.A.R.E. packages, clothing from Catholic relief services and soap donated by several hotel chains.

Staff Sgt. Alfred Snay, the team medic, worked efficiently

with Nguyen Van Anh, his South Vietnamese counterpart, to re-supply the village dispensary. Lieut. Art Lovgren, the province civil affairs adviser, joined Ho Hom Ha, a South Vietnamese Protestant missionary, in advising the villagers on ways to cut down rat-infestation and improve sanitation.

But for all of their efficiency and devotion to duty, the visitors could hardly suppress a shudder for the children of Dak Rthi — handsome, laughing, bright-eyed children with little blotches of skin already turning

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ward and grey like dirty concrete.

At night the visiting convoy moved down the road, down the gauntlet of villagers waving goodbye from the doorways of their huts. A pale sliver of moon rode in the tree tops and the thatched huts of Dak Rthi retreated quietly into the jungle

into the isolation of the one word that shuts out the world: Leprosy.

**VIOLENCE FEARED**

DETROIT (AP) — With Detroit's 1,600,000 residents urged by clergymen and others to be calm, police combed the city Monday for a car from which a

Negro was shot and killed on a street early Sunday. Eddie Cook, 33, employee of the city's sanitation department and father of three children, was hit in the chest by a shotgun blast a block from his home in a near midtown section.


**VISITS YUGOSLAVIA**

BELGRADE (Reuters)—Italian Premier Aldo Moro arrived here Monday for a four-day visit to Yugoslavia — the first by an Italian premier since Yugoslavia was created 50 years ago.

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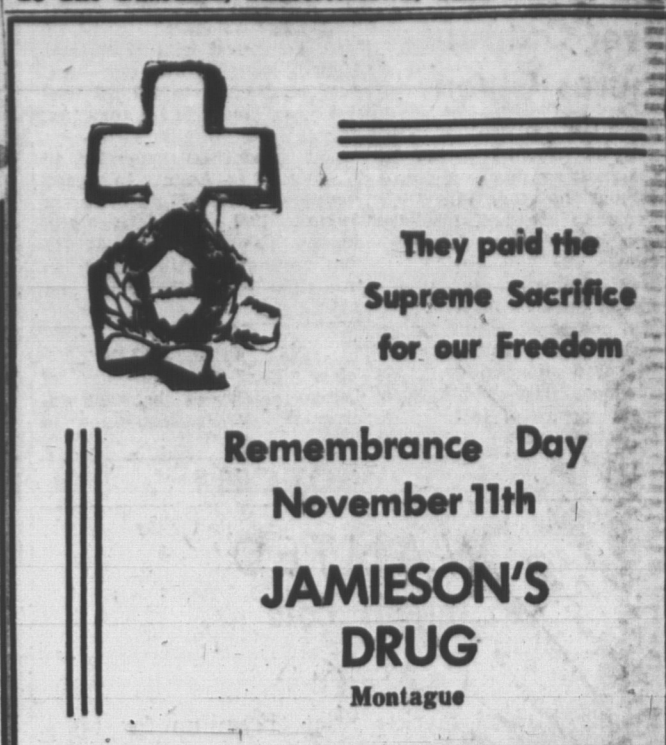
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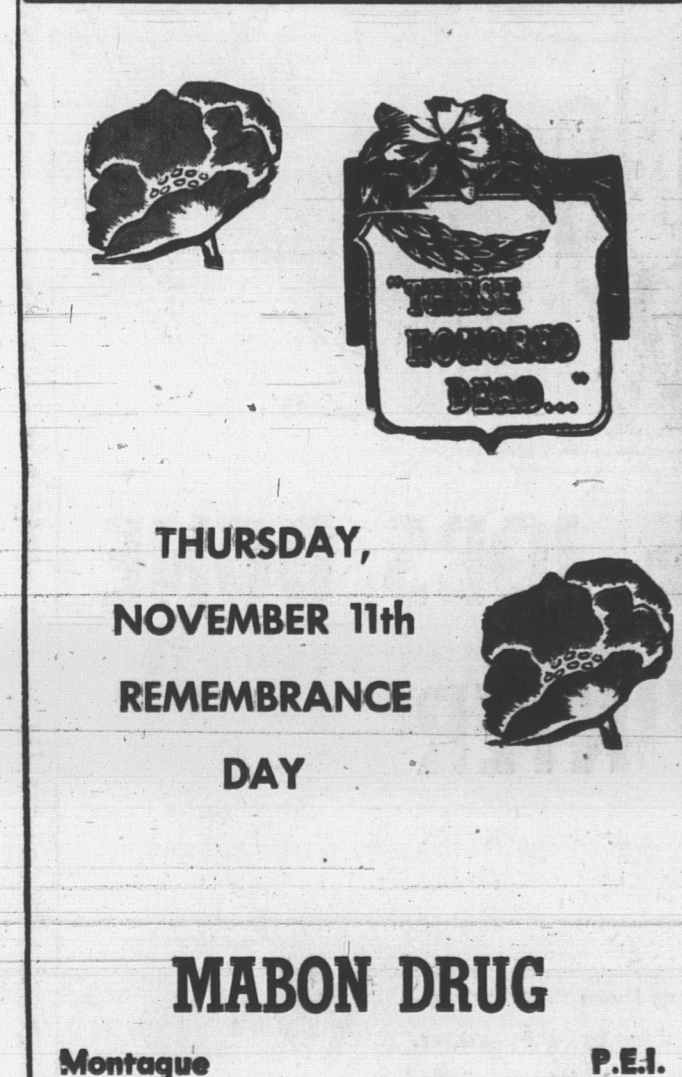


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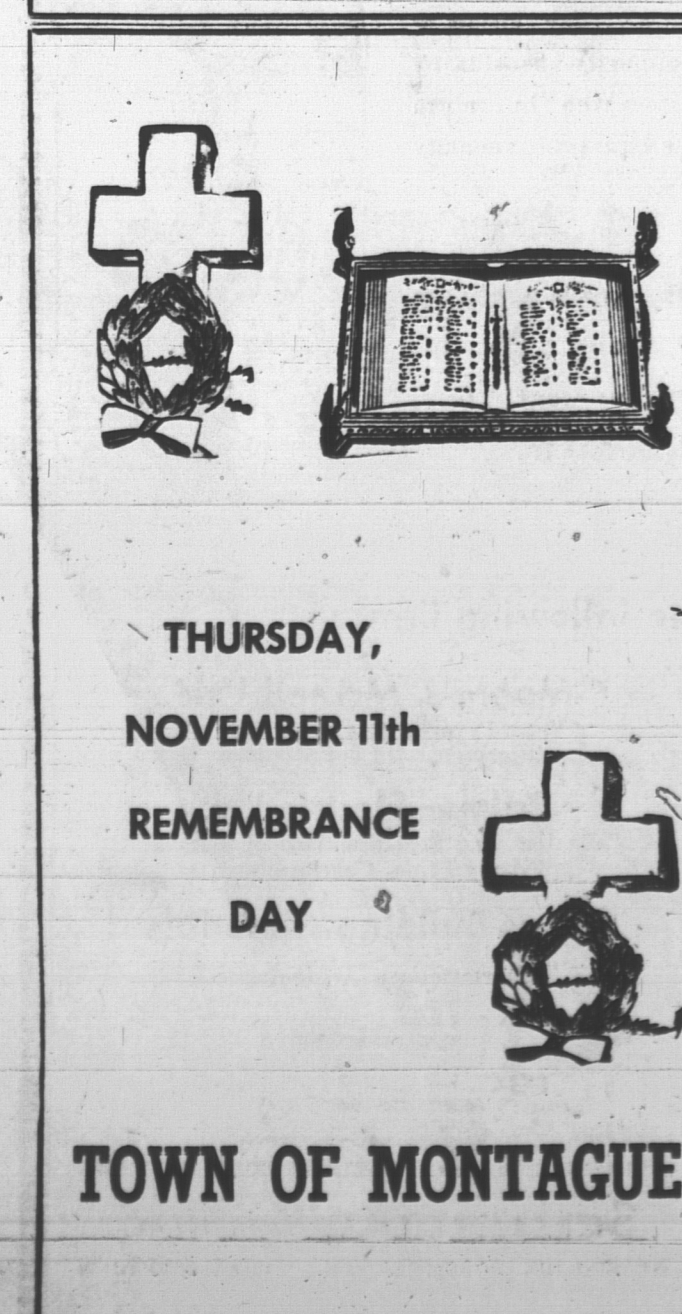
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