

A U.S. Doctor in Danang

American Takes Pay Cut, New Name

Reuter

SAIGON — The only American doctor to remain behind in Danang after the Communist takeover has taken a Vietnamese name, Nguyen Van Tom, and a sharp cut in pay but is continuing to work in a hospital there.

In a letter to friends in Saigon, Dr. Thomas Hoskins of Morristown, N.J., said that last month he received the same pay as the other doctors in the hospital — a pound of rice and 3,000 piasters. This was quite a change for doctors, who previously had grossed 150,000 piasters a month, he said.

The new government has not set an exchange rate for the piaster, but in the final weeks of the old government a dollar was worth about 750 piasters.

Hoskins wrote that he had recently been given a raise and was to receive 20,000

piasters for the second half of June.

A bachelor, Dr. Hoskins was assigned to Danang by the American Friends Service Committee of Philadelphia.

Dr. Hoskins said Danang was normal and peaceful and much quieter due to reduced traffic. The market was full and the port bustling with activity, he said, adding that he had seen rice bags being unloaded from a ship and carried into warehouses.

Thousands of refugees who clogged the streets just before the takeover had gone home, as had former soldiers who surrendered to the new authorities, he wrote.

Dr. Hoskins said that before the takeover, he contacted the Alliance for National Democratic and Peace forces, one of the political organizations in the Provi-

sional Revolutionary Government, and began tending wounded patients in the emergency ward of the German-Vietnamese hospital.

His first contact with a Vietcong doctor came four days after the takeover.

"I straightened up from examining a patient on a stretcher," he said, "and discovered a 'liberation cadre' with his hand extended to mine."

He said 15 Vietcong doctors had trudged in, exhausted from the long march down the mountains and laden with huge packs of gear. They immediately set to work.

The doctors were women and men who had four years' medical education after 12 years of basic education.

"They know as much about the practice of medicine as the average Western doctor just finishing his internship," he said.



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Thomas Hoskins, the only American doctor in Danang, examines a patient.