

MILPHAP-19 News Letter



MILPHAP Establishes Surgical Training Program in Kon Tum Vietnam's Poorest Province



MILPHAP - 19
c/o GERALD ZELIKOVSKY, M.D.
5 East 84th Street
New York, New York 10028
Tel: (212)744-0700



Dr. Leventhal and Dr. Zelikovsky with Dr. Xuy and Dr. Ba Da the Director and Vice Director of Kon Tum Province Hospital.



Dr. Zelikovsky performing the first endoscopic prostatectomy ever done in Kon Tum



Dr. Zelikovsky, Dr. Nthat performing open surgery on a Behnar montagnard patient.



Vinh Long, Buon Ma Thuot, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon and Kon Tum are present MILPHAP-19 programs. Lao Cai, Viet-Tiep and Bac Ninh are planned projects for the March 2006 visit.



The child in this picture has severe burns over his entire face.

Since MILPHAP-19 was started in 1999, we've had excellent success. The Vietnamese government dedicates most of its financial resources for healthcare to the large populated areas and the areas where there is tourism and a large foreign presence. The areas that we specialize in are the rural areas in far-reaching provinces of Vietnam, which need the most help and which are the least evolved medically, and where we can have the greatest impact. I know that with your help, we can make a difference.

MILPHAP-19 has managed to increase its presence in different areas of Vietnam with your help and with the help of my friends in the medical community.

I thank you for your support and hope that it will continue in the future.

Tax-deductible contributions can be made to:

MILPHAP-19
c/o Gerald Zelikovsky, M.D.
5 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028

In March 2005 we had a very successful training program in Vietnam. I was accompanied by Ronald Chamberlain, the Chairman of the Department of Surgery for Saint Barnabas Hospital, Michael Salem, Associate Professor at George Washington University Hospital, and Irwin Leventhal, Clinical Associate Professor at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine. The purpose of this trip was to evaluate the progress of the programs that we had previously established in Vinh Long, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang, and to establish a new surgical training program in Kon Tum Province.



Dr. Xuy and Dr. Ba Da presented Dr. Zelikovsky and Dr. Leventhal with a silk fabric shawl, hand-woven by the montagnard women.



This patient was so delighted at our performing his surgery that we were invited to his village for dinner with the hospital staff and his family.



We also participated in a funeral service in a Jurai Village.

Kon Tum Province is situated near the junction of Cambodian and Laotian borders in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The population consists of 2/3 aborigines and 1/3 Vietnamese. The aborigines represent two different ethnic minorities, the Behnar and the Jurai. We were very well received by the hospital physicians, staff and patient population. The hospital had no modern surgical equipment and the physicians had no advanced surgical capabilities. MILPHAP-19 donated a complete set-up for endoscopic urological surgery of the prostate and bladder tumors. Two surgeons at the hospital were designated to learn the endoscopic urological procedures. We performed a series of procedures with the Vietnamese surgeons under video monitoring. The Vietnamese surgeons were very enthusiastic and learned quickly.

The surgeons also informed us that they were not very comfortable doing open surgery for the prostate. Dr. Leventhal and I then performed open prostatectomies with the local surgeons, teaching them our techniques.

There was a very emotional moment before we left, when Dr. Xuy addressed the hospital staff and stated, "In Kon Tum Province, we are a forgotten people, even by our own government, but we were



Dr. Chamberlain examining a patient with intestinal obstruction in Vinh Long.

been asked to institute training programs in three province hospitals in the northern part of Vietnam. These provinces are Lao Cai, Bac Ninh and Viet-Tiep. These province hospitals presently have no endoscopic urological capability. If I am to provide medical equipment necessary for this training then considerable resources will be needed. I know that this is an extremely ambitious project and I will proceed according to our financial capabilities.



Dr. Chamberlain explaining the proposed surgery to the Vietnamese surgeon in Vinh Long.



The MILPHAP-19 team being received by the medical staff of the province hospital in Nha Trang City.

Her family did not have the resources or the knowledge to arrange surgery for the child in Ho Chi Min City. I requested that the director of surgery of Nha Trang Province Hospital arrange surgery for the child in Ho Chi Min City and that MILPHAP-19 would pay for this, plus the transportation and living costs.

Having been made aware of this problem, I am going to establish a fund whereby children that require surgery beyond the capability of local surgeons can be transferred to hospitals in Ho Chi Min City with the expenses being paid by MILPHAP-19.

I am anticipating either having a plastic surgeon accompany me on the next trip or possibly arranging transportation for the child to a facility where he can have reconstructive surgery of the face.

“See last page”

Upon visiting Qui Nhon, I was pleased to find that with the equipment that we donated 1½ years ago, the local urologists have performed over 150 prostatic surgeries with excellent results. Dr. Chamberlain and Dr. Salem also performed laparoscopic biliary surgery with the local surgeons.

I am in the process of organizing the next trip to Vietnam for March 2006. In addition to re-visiting and monitoring the progress of the hospitals that we’ve already established programs at, I’ve



A six-week old child with a benign tumor of the neck.



Same child, 3 months later, after a successful surgery in Ho Chi Min City.

**Jurai women
in Kon Tum**



not forgotten by you.” I am in frequent communication with Kon Tum Province hospital and am looking forward to growing the program in the future.

We returned to Vinh Long Province Hospital, in the Mekong Delta. Their endoscopic urological program is progressing very well.

Dr. Chamberlain and Dr. Salem performed several very complicated intestinal bypass procedures with the Vietnamese surgeons, instructing them how to perform this in the future.

In Nha Trang and Qui Nhon, once again Dr. Salem and Dr. Chamberlain instructed the local surgeons on surgical techniques of the most complicated magnitude, including laparoscopic surgery.

While in Nha Trang we were presented with a problem that I was not aware of. A mother presented us with her 6-week old daughter, who had a benign tumor of the neck. Pediatric surgery can only be performed in Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi. It is usually suggested that children go to Hanoi or Saigon for treatment, however economically this is not feasible in a population that is this poor.



Dr. Salem, Dr. Chamberlain, Parice Zelikovsky and Dr. Dung, the director of surgery at Nha Trang Hospital getting ready to perform advanced techniques in abdominal surgery.



Parice Zelikovsky and Leslie Leventhal at Jurai Funeral.