

## No Greater Love

By John W. Mansur

This is a remarkable story of sacrifice born out of deep friendship. The author says: " I heard this story when I was in Vietnam, and it was told me as a fact. I have no way of knowing for sure that it is true, but I do know that stranger things have happened in war."

Whatever their planned target, the mortar rounds landed in an orphanage run by a missionary group in a small Vietnamese village. The missionaries and one or two children were killed outright, and several more children were wounded, including one young girl, about 8 years old.

People from the village requested help from a neighboring town that had radio contact with the American forces. Finally an American doctor and nurse arrived in a Jeep with only their medical kits. They established that the girl was the most critically injured. Without quick action, she would die of shock and loss of blood.

A transfusion was imperative, and a donor with a matching blood type was required. A quick test showed that neither American had the correct type, but several of the uninjured orphans did.

The doctor spoke some pidgin Vietnamese, and the nurse a smattering of high school French. Using that combination, together with much impromptu sign language, they tried to explain to their young, frightened audience, that unless they could replace some of the girl's lost blood, she would certainly die. Then they asked if anyone was willing to give blood to help.

Their request was met with wide-eyed silence. After several long moments, a small hand slowly and waveringly went up, dropped back down, and then went up again. "Oh, thank you " said the nurse in French. "What is your name? " "Heng" came the reply. Heng was quickly laid on a pallet, his arms swabbed with alcohol, and a needle inserted in his vein. Through this ordeal Heng lay stiff and silent.

After a moment he let out a shuddering sob, quickly covering his face with his free hand. "Is it hurting, Heng?" the doctor asked. Heng shook his head. But after a few moments another sob escaped, and once more he tried to cover up his crying. Again the doctor asked him if the needle hurt, and again Heng shook his head.

But now his occasional sobs gave way to a steady, silent crying, his eyes screwed tightly shut, his fist in his mouth to stifle the sobs.

The medical team was concerned. Something was obviously very wrong. At this point a Vietnamese nurse arrived to help. Seeing the little one's distress, she spoke to him rapidly in Vietnamese, listened to his reply and answered him in a soothing voice.

After a moment the patient stopped crying and looked questioningly at the Vietnamese nurse. When she nodded, a look of great relief spread over his face.

Glancing up the nurse said quietly to the Americans, "He thought he was dying. He misunderstood you. He thought you had asked him to give ALL his blood so the little girl could live." "But why would he be willing to do that?" asked the Navy nurse. The Vietnamese nurse repeated the question to the little boy, who answered simply, "She is my friend. "

Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend.