

The third morning an advance party of Indians, Poles and Canadians took off in three Indian Air Force planes. There was great movement at the airport, and we were tired but quite excited. Our first stop was Barrackpore, outside Calcutta. After a pleasant lunch, we clambered back into the planes, and nearly roasted on the tarmac until the pilot got us up well over cloud. Later that afternoon we were over Burma - a vast tract of velvet-green forest with never a sign of human habitation. Something gold glittered in the distance and later the great Buddhist golden temple came into view. It dominates Rangoon. We were greeted at the airport and taken to the best hotel there where we had a very pleasant dinner, and most of us turned in early as there was a 5:30 take-off next morning. The place was quiet and there was really nothing to see except great hordes of rats which swarmed over the sidewalks quite unconcernedly after dark. Next morning we were in Bangkok, in Siam. We didn't have time to get into town, but it looked clean and interesting. Then on to Cambodia - Phnom-Penh, the Capital of the state. We arrived there to find great pomp and circumstance awaiting us - cameras and flashlights, flowers and a guard of honour. We were all assigned cars, and after getting organized purred into town in a great long convoy. We were guarded all the way in by soldiers who faced outwards with their guns trained on the distant fields. All the population had turned out to see us, and we gaped back just as interestedly as they.

We were put in separate hotels, so the Canadians found themselves together. Whenever we stuck our heads out of the window great hordes of people would stare at us from across the street, while below armed guards fiercely protected our little selves. The government was taking no chances with an international gang like ours! That night we were whisked off to a banquet given by the mayor - a fine affair, which we all enjoyed - not even speeches after - just more champagne if you wanted it! Next morning we were taken up the river in the royal yachts to see some agricultural school. The river was wide and muddy, and we found plenty of opportunity for taking pictures. The school was crowded with natives with whom of course we couldn't exchange a word. However, when they brought in great quantities of scotch that broke international barriers and we downed that until they produced a very welcome meal. Then back to the hotel to flake out for a couple of hours - we were all wrecks by then with so much movement, early take-offs and all this wining and dining. That night we went to the King's palace

and had another banquet - a gala affair in a very exotic place. The architecture was typical of the country, a semi-Eurasian and Far Eastern mixture. After the banquet we were trotted over to the entertainment wing where for the next hour or so the King's Royal Cambodian Ballet performed for us. They did a national epic, and a couple of shorter things. There seemed to be no male dancers, just kids about 14. Needless to say they were exquisite - they looked like little dolls and were fabulously dressed in brocades, etc. with the peculiar pointed head-gear. There wasn't much physical action, but a lot of the finger-wiggling business one sees in India. After all this we went to bed for a couple of hours before another of those impossible 5:30 take-offs.

We were soon in Viet-Nam. Looking below, one could see little thatched villages settling around muddy, twisting rivers. The rivers looked peculiarly red from the air, probably on account of the great quantities of mud they contained. In the afternoon we arrived at Hanoi airport. Again, great hordes of people, television cameras, flowers, speeches of welcome and staring Viet-Nameese. We checked into the Metropole Hotel, where we have been since then, and which has since been requisitioned for our use. A CBC correspondent came in to interview the Canadians - about 4 of us, but we were a scruffy and rumpled looking lot. Since that time, August 10, we have had a busy and interesting time. Life in the hotel became a lot of fun as we got to know each other. The Indians and Canadians naturally became very friendly, but the Poles are inclined to keep to themselves. Now and again they get in conversation with us, but not too often. They are quite nice once you can get to know them. I tried Russian on them and got along surprisingly well; few of them know any English at all.

Since then, events have moved rapidly. New Army personnel arrived, culminating in the 4 aircraft from the RCAF which blew in. I worked on accommodation for them, and it sure was a headache. We had to double up people in rooms with camp cots, and take over second-class hotels. Some of it was a bit primitive, but luckily most of the army have been posted out to Laos and Cambodia - there, no doubt, things will be much worse! A building was acquired for the Canadian staff - the Burmah-Shell building, a modern affair, which we moved into last week. Here we work with the Army. Our little External Affairs part is slowly but surely taking form, and we don't need to sit on the top of packing cases to bash off telegrams and despatches!

Hanoi is rather an attractive city. I didn't think so when I first arrived here, but after having walked around a lot of it I've changed my mind. It is a dying city now; the