

BRISTOL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL,
St. Michael's Hill,
Bristol, 2,
England.

21st November 1969

My dear Charlie,

I was very glad to hear from you, as always. I was silly not to come to the centennial celebration and should have raised the fares myself. I always feel that I am coming home when I arrive at the Medical Center.

I think I have talked about my experiences in Vietnam too much and to too many medical audiences all over the place, but the vivid colour slides, as well as a big movie film made by the B.B.C., still wring my withers.

I was very interested in your suggestion about congenital anomalies. I can give you some impressions which may be interesting.

1. Certainly cleft palates and cleft lips are extremely common. The British surgeon in his first year there operated on between 80 and 90 of them. On the other hand, quite a lot of them were 8 or 10 years old, or older, so this probably pre-dated the defoliant era.

2. Rectal anomalies were very common: in particular, rectal atresia at birth. These were brought in from all over the country and obviously were recent because they quickly died without operation.

3. What struck me most, however, was the vast number of Wilms's tumours. We might see one a week, or as many as three or four a week, and we racked our brains for some reason for this vast number. What I cannot tell you is whether this number antedated the War or not.

4. I may add that I saw more cases of Down's syndrome than I do here. Incidentally, it is quite easy to spot the difference between a Mongolian and Mongolism!

I don't think this will help much, but what I am going to do is to write to a colleague, Dr. Gordon Sohn, who is leader of the British Medical Team in Saigon now. He is a very shrewd and experienced surgeon and he may be able to help with the problem of whether the large number of congenital malformations, which is certain, could have synchronised with the use of defoliants by the Air Force in Vietnam, possibly producing the effect by contaminating water. As soon as I hear from him I will get in touch with you again.

We must think of some good reason (or even a bad one) for meeting up again shortly. It is much too long since I saw you.

All best wishes,

Yours ever,

John Apley

Dr. Charles A. Janeway, M.D.,
Childrens Hospital Medical Center,
300 Longwood Avenue,
BOSTON, Mass. 02115.