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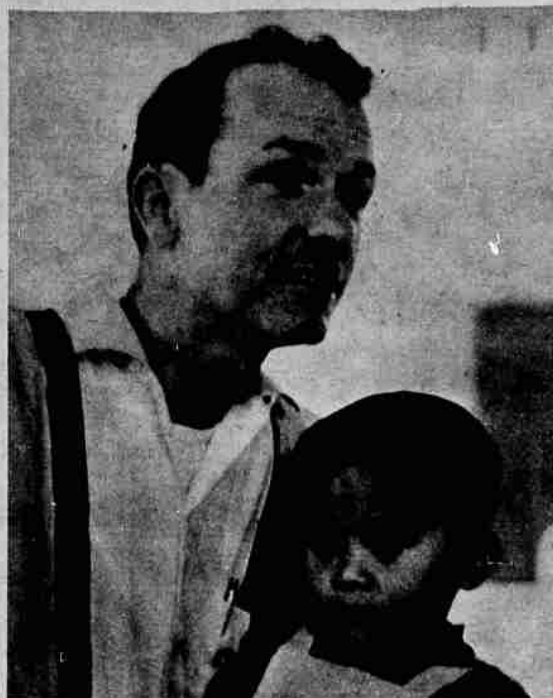
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Dr. Tom brought medicine to 12 backward countries.

The Last Days of Doctor Dooley

By **MALCOLM DOOLEY**
As told to Jack Ryan

Even as cancer was claiming his life, the courageous young medical missionary never gave up his fight; here is the inspiring story told by his brother

ALTHOUGH WE never expressed it, the newsmen and I were part of a death vigil that day last January. My brother, Dr. Thomas Dooley, lay in New York's Memorial Hospital, cancer attacking his lower spinal area; he was dying, and the world was reading daily reports about his condition.

One of Tom's doctors came down the corridor toward us. The newsmen surrounded him, asking information on the young doctor whose medical missionary work in southeast Asia had captured the country's imagination, and who had founded an organization, MEDICO, to bring medical care to the needy in underdeveloped countries. The doctor told the newsmen: "There's always hope."

But I remembered Tom's own diagnosis of malignant melanoma. Half its victims die within the year, he had once said, and most of the rest die in two years. Sixteen months had passed since cancer had first struck Tom.

The doctor took me aside. "He'll be coming out of sedation soon," he said. "If you want to talk to him, now is the time."

Tom and I had a lot to talk about. I was executive director of MEDICO; the organization, only three years old, had 17 projects in 12 countries, and was expanding. Tom had been one of its creators and the driving force. In only 33 years of life, he'd come a long way, making friends and enemies, having successes and setbacks. Now it was ending.

When I saw Tom, I got quite a shock. Only months before, I had been with him in Laos checking some of our hospitals. He hadn't looked much different than he had in college. Now he was nearly 50 pounds lighter, and his face reflected pain. But when he saw me, he gave the old quick grin and started off like always—at a full run.

"There's a lot to be done," he said, "so let's get going." On Jan. 20, we were to have a directors' meeting, and Tom had prepared a full agenda for it. I don't know how he did it. When he wasn't under sedation, the pain was excruciating.

When I left his hospital room, he repeated: "Let's get going on this stuff."

No thanks. No acknowledgement that anything was wrong. Tom had more than his share of critics, and they probably

would have criticized him for this brusqueness, but Tom had once said: "Don't expect any nice words or thanks from me for helping people who need it. I'll say thanks once a year—that's all the time we have."

Brusqueness gave Tom an undeserved reputation for being impetuous, but when I checked his carefully worked-out agenda, I realized again that Tom, for all his impatience, always looked ahead. Much of what he outlined that day was to reiterate for those who would carry on his work his belief that U.S. medical aid could help acquaint the new nations of the world with the selflessness and good will of the American people.

TOM ALWAYS LOOKED ahead, all right, but like anybody else he had his surprises. I remember that last trip with him to Laos. The war there was already in full swing, and we didn't know from hour to hour who was in power—communists, neutralists, or democrats. We were flying to a jungle clinic in a small plane and landed on an air strip only six miles from the Chinese border. Suddenly, we were surrounded by armed troops. A Jeep with a machine gun mounted on its hood pulled up to us.

"I am commandeering this plane for the army," a Laotian lieutenant told Tom.

Tom whipped out a letter of passage from the neutralist leader, Prince Souvanna Phouma. "This will get us through," he explained to me.

Instead, the lieutenant flung the letter back at Tom. "Phouma was overthrown last night. We recognize only Gen. Phoumi Nosavan."

Tom never faltered. He pulled out another letter, this one from Phoumi. "I figured this might happen, too," he said, maybe a little smugly. But Tom's plan backfired this time. The lieutenant didn't believe a foreigner could be friends with two bitter enemies. He ordered us to the clinic and took over the plane.

Tom was crestfallen; he didn't like his plans upset. But he wasn't one to sulk. He learned that the commanding

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